MINNESOTA PYS 2022-2023 (MOD)

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I. WIOA STATE PLAN TYPE AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A. WIOA STATE PLAN TYPE

This is a combined plan

COMBINED PLAN PARTNER PROGRAM(S)

Career and technical education programs authorized under the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act of 2006, as amended by the Strengthening Career and Technical Education for the 21st Century Act (Perkins V) (20 U.S.C. 2301 et seq.)

Temporary Assistance for Needy Families program (42 U.S.C. 601 et seq.)

Employment and Training programs under the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (programs authorized under section 6(d)(4) of the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 (7 U.S.C. 2015(d)(4)))

Trade Adjustment Assistance for Workers programs (activities authorized under chapter 2 of title II of the Trade Act of 1974 (19 U.S.C. 2271 et seq.))

Jobs for Veterans State Grants Program (programs authorized under 38, U.S.C. 4100 et. seq.)

Senior Community Service Employment program (programs authorized under title V of the Older Americans Act of 1965 (42 U.S.C. 3056 et seq.))

B. PLAN INTRODUCTION OR EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

B. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

One Minnesota 2020-2023 WIOA Combined Plan Overview

Introduction & Purpose

Goals: To build on this vision, live out our mission, and continue strengthening the workforce development system, the 2020-2023 WIOA State Plan goals for Minnesota are to:

1. Reduce educational, skills training and employment disparities based on race, disability, gender, or disconnected youth.
2. Build employer-led industry sector partnerships that expand the talent pipeline to be inclusive of race, disability, gender, and age to meet industry demands for a skilled workforce.

As our state faces the reality of a shrinking and diversifying labor force, and to ensure an economic and workforce recovery in light of the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, we must fully utilize the talents, skills, and experience of more people in the workforce. We need an "all hands on deck" approach that brings together more employers, community-based organizations, postsecondary institutions, other training providers, workforce boards, and industry organizations to develop strong statewide and regional approaches to addressing our workforce challenges. Prior to the pandemic, disparities and equities existed in our state's workforce – especially impacting BIPOC populations, women, people with disabilities, and others who already faced barriers to education or employment – and those issues have been exacerbated by COVID-19 and related societal shifts.

Through concentrated efforts that promote collaboration and partnership across sectors and systems, and leveraging our federal and state funds and infrastructure, the vision, mission, strategies, and goals laid out in this Plan can be actualized in a way that directly combats the inequity and disparities we see today in Minnesota. The murder of George Floyd and subsequent aftermath shed additional light on the economic and social inequalities that exist in

our state. It is vitally important that our broader strategic planning, initiatives, and other efforts across our state workforce development system -- at all levels -- must include a racial equity lens to better address the unique barriers facing Black and other BIPOC individuals and communities in Minnesota.

The WIOA 2020-2023 vision and goals are a continuation of the WIOA Modified Plan originally submitted in 2018, and the ongoing work that stemmed from the 2018 Modified Plan that led to Minnesota's WIOA State Plan submitted and approved in 2020. However, since the submission and approval of the 2020-2023 WIOA State Plan in 2020, and despite some ongoing trends and challenges that existed prior to the pandemic, the COVID-19 pandemic has certainly changed workforce trends and the labor market in Minnesota (which is reflected later in this Plan in the "Economic Analysis" section). The Governor's Workforce Development Board of Minnesota, or GWDB, has worked diligently to develop and recommend strategies to the state agencies and system partners since the approval of the state's existing Plan in 2020. While some programmatic or system changes have been made to improve performance and increase access to more Minnesotans, much work remains. Minnesota's system will benefit by improving its career pathway systems, increasing or enhancing community and business engagement, implementing more human-centered (customer-focused) designs into programming, and better alignment between state programs and policies – including those administered through DEED or other state agencies – with the federally-established WIOA system.

The One Minnesota State Plan envisions ongoing and evolving priorities to prepare for future workforce development challenges. Minnesota's strategy for WIOA State Plan implementation includes robust involvement from the GWDB, State Departments, regional and local workforce development boards, and other workforce partners including K-12 and postsecondary education, businesses, industry associations, and community-based organizations. Areas for growth that are currently identified are listed in this summary.

Policy and system alignment is happening across local, regional and state workforce boards, and institutions. In 2021, the GWDB co-hosted the first ever "Minnesota Alignment Summit" with the MN P-20 Education Partnership, in an effort to get our public education and public workforce development systems collaborating more. From this work stemmed an interagency workinggroup, supported by the National Skills Coalition, which is currently working to develop more common definitions, policies, and approaches across systems to improve alignment and performance.

The Minnesota Association of Workforce Boards (MAWB), which represents Minnesota's 16 local workforce development boards and 6 workforce development regions, is working with the GWDB, local boards, and other state and community partners on systems alignment, including working to better understand the systems and institutions that contribute to the economic development of a community and the employment prospects of its members. We call these "workforce adjacent" issues and will continue exploring their impact on employment and our ability to align resources and support to strengthen access to child care, affordable housing, transportation, and health care. The GWDB has also made it a priority to continue sharing promising approaches and best practices in addressing these barriers to employment from other states with agency and program leaders here in Minnesota.

Performance Technical Management & Workforce Outcomes

Under the direction of the GWDB's Operations Committee, DEED's Performance Technical Management Staff tracks program activities and employment outcomes by program, year, and a number of demographic indicators to assess the performance of programs serving job seekers. Previously this data was tracked on a dashboard, but given staffing capacity and general utility, this information is now made available as needed, and included in our WIOA Annual Report.

Minnesota also reports annually on program effectiveness in serving employers. Measures of effectiveness include information and support services, workforce recruitment assistance, strategic planning and economic development activities, training and incumbent worker training services, business downsizing assistance, and planning for layoffs.

Economic Analysis & Demographics

Table 1. Minnesota Labor Force Projections, 2020-2030

	2020 Labor Force Projection	2030 Labor Force Projection	2020-2030 Change Numeric	2020-2030 Change Percent
16 to 19 years	169,642	167,530	-2,112	-1.2%
20 to 24 years	342,326	378,558	+36,232	+10.6%
25 to 44 years	1,234,214	1,290,510	+56,296	+4.6%
45 to 54 years	602,222	611,017	+8,794	+1.5%
55 to 64 years	560,791	489,812	-70,979	-12.7%
65 to 74 years	157,518	193,484	+35,966	+22.8%
75 years & over	24,211	34,278	+10,068	+41.6%
Total Labor Force	3,090,925	3,165,190	+74,265	+2.4%

Source: calculated from Minnesota State Demographic Center population projections and 2013-2017 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

Minnesota's economy remains strong. The state reported a record number of workers, jobs, and job vacancies in the past year. It has now been a full decade since the end of the Great Recession in June of 2009, making this the longest running economic expansion on record. We surpassed 3 million jobs in the summer of 2019, a new record high. The state's seasonally adjusted unemployment rate has hovered between 2.8 and 3.5 percent every month since April of 2017, and the annual rate of 2.9 percent in 2018 was the lowest since 1998 and 1999. In fact, the state has had less than 1 job seeker per vacancy for the past two years, meaning that increasingly tight labor markets and a scarcity of workers with needed skills are now recognized as two of Minnesota's most significant barriers to sustained economic growth.

The tight labor market will make it more challenging for employers to grow, but will also shine a light on the importance of creating positive employment outcomes for all Minnesotans, including groups that have traditionally faced discrimination and systemic barriers in education, employment, housing and other areas, such as communities of color, individuals with disabilities, and immigrants.

Increasing labor force participation rates and reducing unemployment rate disparities for communities of color, as well as for people with disabilities, both younger and older workers, immigrants, people with lower educational attainment and people with a criminal record would lead to notable increases in the size of the state's available labor force.

This will be especially important in Greater Minnesota, which has an older population than the Twin Cities, with 18.2 percent of the population aged 65 years and over, compared to 14.0 percent in the metro area. Greater Minnesota also has a lower percentage of people in their prime working years, as well as less racial diversity than the Twin Cities. While every region in the state saw an increase in the number of jobs held by people of color over the past 20 years, only about 8 percent of jobs in Greater Minnesota are held by people of color, compared to over

18 percent in the Twin Cities. Outside the metro area, the most diverse workforces are found in the Southeast and Southwest regions of the state, while the Northeast has the least diverse workforce overall. However, racial disparities in unemployment, based on inequitable systems, practices and policies are found in every region throughout the state, making eliminating these disparities an opportunity for growth regardless of location. In sum, the data show that current population and aging trends will lead to a tight labor market over the next decade with some local areas already experiencing labor force declines.

Minnesota's State Rapid Response Team (SRRT) at DEED exists to assist workers and businesses through the inevitable periods of economic transition that will occur throughout the business cycle.

Fundamentally, the goal of SRRT is straightforward: to prevent layoffs, when possible, limit their impact on workers should they occur, and help dislocated workers transition to new employment as quickly as possible. SRRT layoffs include business closures, Mass Layoff (50 or more affected workers), Small Layoff (Under 50 employees affected), and layoffs caused by manmade or natural disasters.

Since February 15, 2020, the SRRT has worked to track all layoffs and business closures throughout the state due to the COVID-19 pandemic as well as damage caused to businesses due to the civil disturbances following the murder of George Floyd in May of 2020 and Daunte Wright in April of 2021.

To date, the SRRT has worked with approximately 357 businesses (230 identified as being directly affected by the COVID-19 pandemic) affecting 35,198 employees. The SRRT received and processed 158 WARN's for both permanent and temporary layoffs and closures in the state.

Working with the state's Workforce Investment Boards (WIB), Workforce Development Areas (WDA), Dislocated Worker (DW) program service providers, Community Based Organizations (CBO), and the Governor's Incident Command Team (ICT) for COVID-19, the SRRT created and translated DW program informational materials as well as a multi-agency Worker Resource Guide for food and industrial manufacturing employees affected by outbreaks of COVID-19. Translating materials into many different languages (approximately 15) ensured that the states English as a Second Language (ESL) workers affected by employment dislocation had equitable access to information to help get them back to work as quickly as possible.

Areas for Development and Growth

As previously described, the 2020 plan essentially continues the areas of focus originally identified in 2016 and modified in 2018. The equity goal to reduce disparities in employment rates and the career pathways goal remain top priorities given current analysis and consensus. However, as we look to future modifications to the WIOA Combined State Plan, we see an opportunity to explore innovations in our workforce system in a number of areas: Prioritizing Diversity, Inclusion, and Equity; Equitable Systems; Creating an Age-Friendly Minnesota; and the Future of Work.

Governor Walz has highlighted a number of priorities for the State of Minnesota. By Executive Order, these priorities prominently include Diversity, Inclusion and Equity; Affirming the Government to Government Relationship between the State of Minnesota and Minnesota Tribal Nations and creating an Age-Friendly Minnesota. Our implementation work will include incorporating these priorities into future WIOA Plan Strategies.

Prioritizing Diversity, Inclusion, and Equity: Minnesota recognizes that although limited progress has been made in decreasing employment and educational disparities for people of color and indigenous people, it hasn't been enough. Minnesota is committed to this continued

focus including greater inclusion and outreach to communities of color, immigrant and refugee communities, Tribal Nations and indigenous people.

Equitable Systems: We will continue working across agencies and institutions on "workforce adjacent" issues such as child care, affordable housing, transportation and health care. We recognize that multiple factors contribute to successful employment, and wrap-around services, longer "on-ramps" to employment and engaging additional partners will be key to advancing equitable employment outcomes.

Recognizing the economic reality that, while the State's unemployment rate continues to drop, deep structural barriers continue to limit employment access for specific populations. The Dislocated Worker/Federal Adult Program has applied an equity lens aimed at improving the job prospects for workers. Efforts include:

- Assisting partners with policy development and improvement.
- Building equity specific benchmarks and goals into specific programs such as the Retaining Employment and Talent After Injury/Illness Network (RETAIN).
- Translating outreach materials into languages spoken by individuals with limited English Proficiency (e.g. Dislocated Worker information leaflet and RETAIN program flyers)
- Hiring Community Engagement staff to engage culturally and linguistically diverse populations around the state.
- Conducting a needs assessment to better understand strategies for engaging underserved communities.
- Engaging community influencers and leaders to raise awareness.
- Developing a Community Board Advisory Group to inform program development and implementation for specific programs.
- Conducting targeted outreach via social media to communities of color.
- Developing partnerships with healthcare organizations which serve large proportion of BIPOC members.
- Incorporating Equity Analysis sections in request for proposals to help grantees plan ahead to address equity needs in their organization and processes.
- Encouraging cross-collaboration and the sharing of best practices in supporting diverse populations.
- Establishing, more broadly at DEED, a Community Reviewer program that pays individuals from targeted communities a small stipend to review grant proposals submitted to DEED in order to ensure more viewpoints and life experiences are represented amongst those reviewing RFPs for DEED and making recommendations.

In 2013, DEED implemented Small Layoff Independent Grants (SLIGs), allowing independent dislocated worker service providers to receiving funding to support dislocated workers with state funding. With a tiered funding structure that rewards high performance in targeted metrics –cost efficiency, outcomes for customers, and outreach to minority populations and long-term unemployed, the program is better able to incentivize and fund outstanding service to participants. These independent providers have deep roots in underserved communities and are equipped to provide culturally and linguistically appropriate employment and training services to job seekers.

Creating an Age-Friendly Minnesota: There are one million older adults in Minnesota and that figure is growing rapidly. In 2020, the number of older adults in Minnesota over age 65 exceeded the number of school-age children ages 5-17 for the first time in history[2]. Employment is one of the challenges that many older adults may face. Many older adults want to stay in the workforce, volunteer, and give back to their communities. Given Minnesota's tight labor market, employers stand to benefit from the skills and expertise of older workers. Additionally, with so many training and worker needs across the state, some workforce needs may be met by creating more incentives for individuals to stay in the workforce.

Future of Work: As the nature of work changes, due to globalization, automation, and other trends, we recognize that our workforce development and training systems must adapt and innovate. Our career pathways system must remain relevant to current and emerging occupational needs. We will explore ways that the state workforce development system can align with the state's sustainability goals and support industries and regions in transition and development. Currently, job growth in the clean energy sector is outpacing job growth in the overall economy. We anticipate working with the newly formed Minnesota Subcabinet on Climate Change in areas where its work intersects with creating good-paying jobs, developing the clean economy, and building resilient communities. The workforce development system, including DEED and other state agencies, must work to assist communities and local economies that have relied on industries that may be impacted by climate change or transitions to new technologies. Additionally, the impacts of automation, artificial intelligence, and other technological advancements that will have an enormous impact on the workforce need to be analyzed in order for the state to prepare for drastic changes effecting businesses and workers.

Implementation

Minnesota believes that implementation of the 2020-2023 WIOA State Plan is critical to success in achieving its vision. To that end, the GWDB will create an intentional and dynamic community engagement plan that includes interdepartmental State staff, businesses, local and regional workforce development boards, communities of color and indigenous people, people with disabilities, and community-based organizations. During implementation activities, Minnesota will further identify areas of growth and development for strengthening the statewide workforce development system.

II. STRATEGIC ELEMENTS

A. ECONOMIC, WORKFORCE, AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES ANALYSIS

1. ECONOMIC AND WORKFORCE ANALYSIS

Economic Analysis & Demographics

Through the first 10 months of 2021, Minnesota employers added just over 190,000 jobs back onto their payrolls, climbing back above 2.9 million jobs in October. Though the state is still below pre-pandemic employment levels, this is an encouraging sign of continuing recovery from the COVID-19 recession of 2020.

Minnesota's job gains are outpacing the U.S. growth rate so far this year, but much like the past five years, the state's labor market tightness has constrained even faster economic growth. From the end of the Great Recession in early 2010 until March of 2020, the state's economy continued to reach new employment peaks each year in the longest-running economic expansion on record. However, the state's steady – but slowing – labor force growth constrained even more potential job growth. Essentially, if we had more workers, we could have filled more jobs.

In fact, DEED's semiannual Job Vacancy Survey has revealed a progressively increasing number of vacancies each year since 2010 as employers struggled to find workers for available jobs.

This trend continued all the way up to the start of the pandemic – and is even more pronounced coming out of the pandemic recession. With the state's labor force currently still down about 85,000 workers compared to February 2020, Minnesota employers posted a record high 205,700 job vacancies in the second quarter of 2021. That number was up nearly 95,000 vacancies compared to 2020, during the outset of the pandemic, and broke the previous record from the second quarter of 2019, prior to the pandemic, by almost 60,000 vacancies.

The tight labor market will make it more challenging for employers to grow, but will also shine a light on the importance of creating positive employment outcomes for all Minnesotans, including groups that have traditionally faced discrimination and systemic barriers in education, employment, housing and other areas, such as communities of color, individuals with disabilities, and immigrants.

Increasing labor force participation rates and reducing unemployment rate disparities for communities of color, as well as for people with disabilities, both younger and older workers, immigrants, people with lower educational attainment, and people with a criminal record would lead to notable increases in the size of the state's available labor force.

This will be especially important in Greater Minnesota, which has an older population than the Twin Cities, with 19.1 percent of the population aged 65 years and over, compared to 14.9 percent in the metro area. Greater Minnesota also has a lower percentage of people in their prime working years, as well as less racial diversity than the Twin Cities. While every region in the state saw an increase in the number of jobs held by people of color over the past 20 years, only about 12.5 percent of jobs in Greater Minnesota are held by people of color, compared to over 25 percent in the Twin Cities.

Outside the metro area, the most diverse workforces are found in the Southeast and Southwest regions of the state, while the Northeast has the least diverse workforce overall. However, racial disparities in unemployment, based on inequitable systems, practices and policies are found in every region throughout the state, making eliminating these disparities an opportunity for growth regardless of location. In sum, the data show that current population and aging trends will lead to a tight labor market over the next decade with some local areas already experiencing labor force declines.

The state is committed to an equitable economic recovery -- equity is at the core of DEED's work so we are deeply committed to advancing Minnesota's economy FOR EVERYONE.

JOB VACANCIES, OCCUPATIONS IN DEMAND, EMPLOYMENT PROJECTIONS

The state's surge in job vacancies in the second quarter of 2021 shows that Minnesota's economy is rapidly recovering. Thousands of jobs are being added each month, but thousands more are still open and waiting for workers to fill them. Employers have responded by raising wages, increasing hours, offering benefits, and changing experience and education requirements. But the return to pre-pandemic labor market tightness, pinched even more by the nearly 85,000 workers who exited the labor force over the past year and half, is leading to unprecedented opportunities and challenges.

From the end of the Great Recession in early 2010 until March of 2020, the state's economy continued to reach new employment peaks each year in the longest-running economic expansion on record. However, the state's steady – but slowing – labor force growth constrained even more potential job growth. If we had more workers, we could have filled more jobs. Job Vacancy Survey data show that from 2017 to 2019, the state had less than one available job seeker for each vacancy as hiring demand outpaced labor force growth. There was a short reversal during the second quarter of 2020 as unemployment spiked and employers paused hiring activity due to the coronavirus, then with more than 205,000 vacancies and less than 125,000 unemployed workers in the second quarter of 2021, there were again nearly twice as many open positions as available job seekers in Minnesota.

This unprecedented spike in postings translates into a job vacancy rate of 8.0%, or eight job openings per 100 filled jobs. This is the highest on record, and is double the 4.0% rate one year ago and also up from around 5.0% in 2018 and 2019. The job vacancy rate got as low as 1.0% in the fourth quarter of 2009, and had hovered between 1% and 3% from 2002 until 2014, when vacancies began outpacing worker availability. The current ratio suggests that the labor market is the tightest it's ever been, with employers in every industry finding it difficult to fill open positions.

The median hourly wage offer was $16.64 across all occupations, but ranged from a low of around $13.00 per hour for food prep and serving workers, to more than $35 per hour or more for management and legal occupations. Reflecting heightened demand for occupations and for the workers to fill the openings, wage offers were increasing across occupational groups.

Overall, 32 percent of the openings were part-time, which is down slightly compared to previous years. Likewise, only 32 percent of current openings required postsecondary education, while 50 percent required a year or more of experience. Interestingly, postsecondary educational requirements in the state have been stable or declining over the past 5 years, while work experience requirements were rising.

Ask business owners in Minnesota what their biggest challenge is today, and most will tell you that it is "finding help." Although much of the blame for this problem has been placed on the pandemic, the truth is that workforce shortages were already an issue in Minnesota and have been since the end of the Great Recession.

People dropping out of the labor force due to the pandemic is part of the problem right now, but the more systemic reasons for workforce shortages are years of economic growth, an aging workforce heading toward retirement, and fewer young people to replace them. All these factors are putting significant pressure on Minnesota's employers, making hiring significantly more challenging. This is not a short-term problem, but rather a long-term problem that will need various strategies if we are to overcome it.

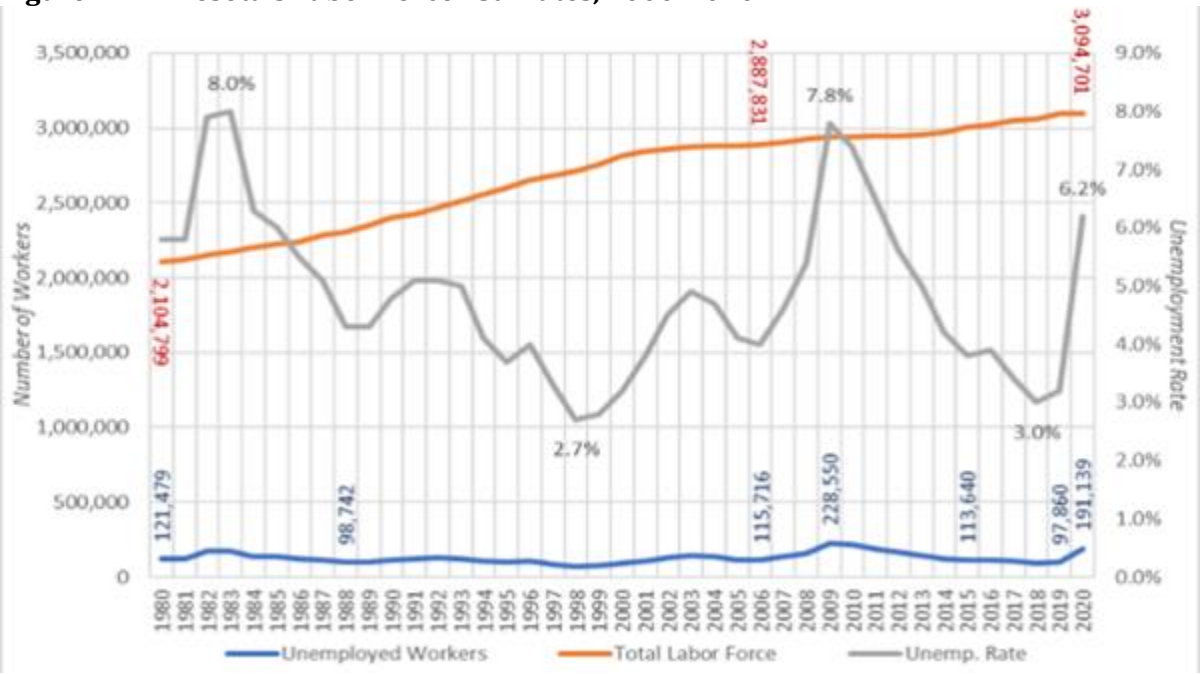
According to data from DEED's Local Area Unemployment Statistics program, Minnesota ended 2020 with an average of 3,095,000 workers. That was about 2,000 more workers than in 2019, narrowly extending the state's streak of 10 straight years of labor force growth coming out of the Great Recession. However, that annual average masks the declines that have been seen across the state as more workers have exited the labor force as the pandemic continues.

In 2021, the state had an average of 3,025,000 workers, a loss of nearly 70,000 workers over the year. Data show that every region has a smaller labor force than one year ago, with Southwest seeing the biggest decrease, and Northwest seeing the smallest. Jobs are available, but so far, the workers to fill them are not.

As the uneven economic recovery from the pandemic continues, employers in service sectors across the state – and around the country – are having their toughest time in the past two decades in finding and hiring enough workers to fill their record-high number of job openings. A large share of the hiring difficulties can be explained by the decline in labor force participation nationally and in Minnesota during the first year of the pandemic.

This lack of available workers coming out of a recessionary period is unique. Following the Great Recession, the number of unemployed workers in the state nearly doubled from 2006 to 2009 and remained elevated for another four years as the recovery slowly took hold. However, that turned into the longest running economic expansion in modern history, with the state's unemployment rate nearing historic lows and the number of unemployed workers falling back to numbers not seen since the late 1980s. Considering the state had gained nearly 800,000 additional workers over that 30-year period, the low unemployment rates and the scarcity of available jobseekers reflect an extremely tight labor market (see Figure 1).

Figure 1. Minnesota's Labor Force Estimates, 2000-2020



Though there was an initial surge in unemployed workers in the summer of 2020, unemployment rates have dropped back to pre-pandemic levels relatively quickly. By July of 2021, four of the five regions in Greater Minnesota recorded lower unemployment rates than in July 2019, prior to the pandemic. Only the Twin Cities and Central Minnesota still had higher rates, even though Central actually had fewer unemployed workers.

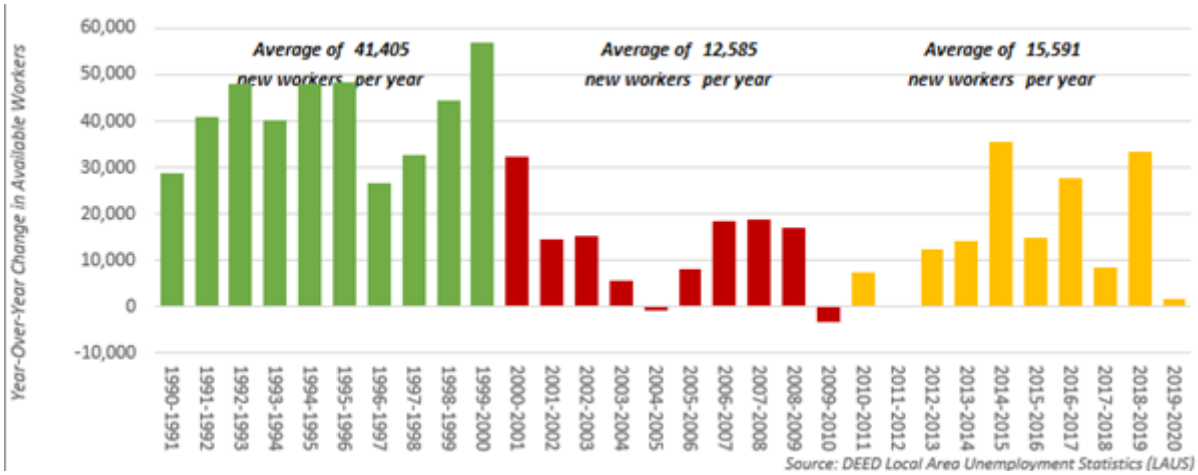
Due to the immediate impact of the pandemic, the state reported a drop of 35,000 fewer job vacancies in the second quarter of 2020 compared to 2019, but by the fourth quarter, the number of job openings was identical to the prior year, and the second quarter of 2021 had record numbers of job vacancies. While job demand is back to pre-pandemic levels, the labor force has not fully recovered. Even when it does, this scarcity of available jobseekers is a long-term issue that has only been exacerbated by the pandemic. Sparing some other major economic shock, these tight labor market conditions are likely to be with us well into the future.

For decades, we knew that a retirement wave was coming based on demographic shifts as baby boomers age. But the behavioral changes due to the pandemic leading to accelerated retirements weren't predictable even two years ago. Both the demographic and accelerated retirement trends are being seen around the country.

As shown in Figure 2, Minnesota employers were able to find talented workers from a steady stream of new workers over the past 40 years. This was due to several factors, including population growth and in-migration, high and rising labor force participation rates for females, and a stable flow of high school seniors and college students graduating into the workforce. Participation rates were also rising among the oldest age groups in the state, indicating workers were staying in the labor force longer.

However, over time the state's labor force growth has slowed considerably, falling from an average of 41,000 new workers per year in the 1990s, to about 12,580 new workers per year in the 2000s (which included two recessions), before rising slightly to an average of about 15,500 new workers each year in the 2010s (see Figure 2).

Figure 2. Minnesota's Annual Change in Labor Force, 1990-2020



Projections from the State Demographic Center suggest this growth will fall further in the years ahead, to an annual average of just over 8,600 additional labor force participants per year between 2023 and 2033. The transition of the Baby Boom generation will have a huge impact on the state's workforce in the next decade, with a projected decline of 81,000 fewer workers in the 55 to 64 year old age group, but an increase of 17,500 workers aged 65 years and older from 2023 to 2033. The state is also expected to see a strong gain of just over 135,000 workers in their prime working years, from 25 to 54 years of age, as well as an increase of around 14,000 young adult and teenage workers.

However, this aging and slowing growth will be the defining characteristic of our labor force in the years to come. Projections show Minnesota will have nearly 225,000 workers aged 65 years and over by 2033, which would be the largest number and share of the workforce ever recorded. This assumes that labor force participation rates will remain the same as they are now, but participation rates may increase for older age groups, which may help provide some additional workers (see Table 1).

Table 1. Minnesota Labor Force Projections, 2023-2033

	2023 Labor Force Projection	2033 Labor Force Projection	*2023-2033 Numeric Change*	*2023-2033 Percent Change*
16 to 19 years	159,058	160,866	*+1,808*	*+1.1%*
20 to 24 years	304,450	316,734	*+12,284*	*+4.0%*
25 to 44 years	1,372,158	1,417,966	*+45,808*	*+3.3%*
45 to 54 years	571,436	661,299	*+89,864*	*+15.7%*
55 to 64 years	524,342	443,208	*-81,134*	*-15.5%*
65 to 74 years	167,645	172,651	*+5,006*	*+3.0%*
75 years & over	29,343	41,861	*+12,518*	*+42.7%*
Total Labor Force	**3,128,431**	**3,214,584**	***+86,153***	***+2.8%***

Source: calculated from Minnesota State Demographic Center population projections and Labor Force Participation Rates from the 2019 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

The tight labor market will make it more challenging for employers to grow, but will also shine a light on the importance of creating positive employment outcomes for all Minnesotans, including groups that have traditionally faced economic disparities in the state, such as communities of color, individuals with disabilities, and immigrants. While these groups have demonstrated a willingness to work with high labor force participation rates, they have also suffered from higher unemployment rates, lower educational attainment, and lower wages.

Racial diversity has been increasing in the state for a long time. Over the past 20 years, Minnesota's white population has grown by 4.7 percent, while its populations of color have grown at rates far exceeding that, including our Black (+107.6%), Asian (+87.8%) and Hispanic (+108.9%) populations (see Table 2).

Table 2. Race and Hispanic Origin, 2019, Minnesota

	Minnesota			
	Number	**Percent**	***Change from 2000-2019 Numeric***	***Percent***
Total	**5,563,378**	**100.0%**	***+643,899***	***+13.1%***
White	4,609,049	82.8%	*+208,767*	*+4.7%*
Black or African American	356,515	6.4%	*+184,784*	*+107.6%*
American Indian & Alaska Native	58,011	1.0%	*+3,044*	*+5.5%*
Asian & Other Pac. Islander	270,375	4.9%	*+126,428*	*+87.8%*
Some Other Race	104,032	1.9%	*+38,222*	*+58.1%*
Two or More Races	165,396	3.0%	*+82,654*	*+99.9%*
Hispanic or Latino origin	299,556	5.4%	*+156,174*	*+108.9%*

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

Going forward, the State Demographic Center projects that through 2030, our population of people of color and indigenous people will grow by 37.3 percent, while the white population will grow by 4.1 percent, most of which will be 65 years and older. While it is difficult to project the racial breakout of our workforce 15 years from now, especially as much of the growing diversity is driven by foreign immigration, it is clear that what growth we are likely to see in our workforce will come in large part from workers who are people of color or indigenous.

These changes are expected to continue and even accelerate in the coming years, especially among Minnesotans of working age. The reasons for these stark differences in the growth of working age populations by race are at least twofold: First, the white population is "aging out" into its retirement years at a much faster rate than our population of people of color or indigenous people. Second, there continues to be a significant influx of foreign-born immigrants who are typically in that working age cohort. Since 2010, the foreign-born population in

Minnesota has increased by 106,000 people (+28.9% growth), and with nearly 475,000 people, immigrants account for over 8.5 percent of the state's total population (see Table 3).

Table 3. Place of Birth for the Foreign Born Population, 2019, Minnesota

	Minnesota		*Change from 2010-2019*	
	Number	Percent	*Number*	*Percent*
Total, Foreign-born Population	472,849	8.5%	*+105,898*	*+28.9%*
Europe:	47,011	9.9%	*+2,007*	*+4.5%*
Asia:	177,334	37.5%	*+41,287*	*+30.3%*
Africa:	120,762	25.5%	*+50,560*	*+72.0%*
Oceania:	2,195	0.5%	*+595*	*+37.2%*
Americas:	125,547	26.6%	*+11,449*	*+10.0%*
Americas: - Latin America:	*113,903*	*90.7%*	*+12,415*	*+12.2%*
Americas: - Northern America:	*11,644*	*9.3%*	*-966*	*-7.7%*

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

Immigrants have become critical to Minnesota's economy, providing a rapid stream of new workers in the face of an aging native-born workforce. Foreign-born workers now account for over 10 percent of the total available labor force in Minnesota, up from 7.5 percent just one decade earlier. Over 40 percent of our recent labor force growth has been driven by immigrants, and this will certainly continue to be the case, with immigrants displaying a much younger age profile than the native-born population, which is aging rapidly and exhibiting lower labor force participation rates as retirements pick up.

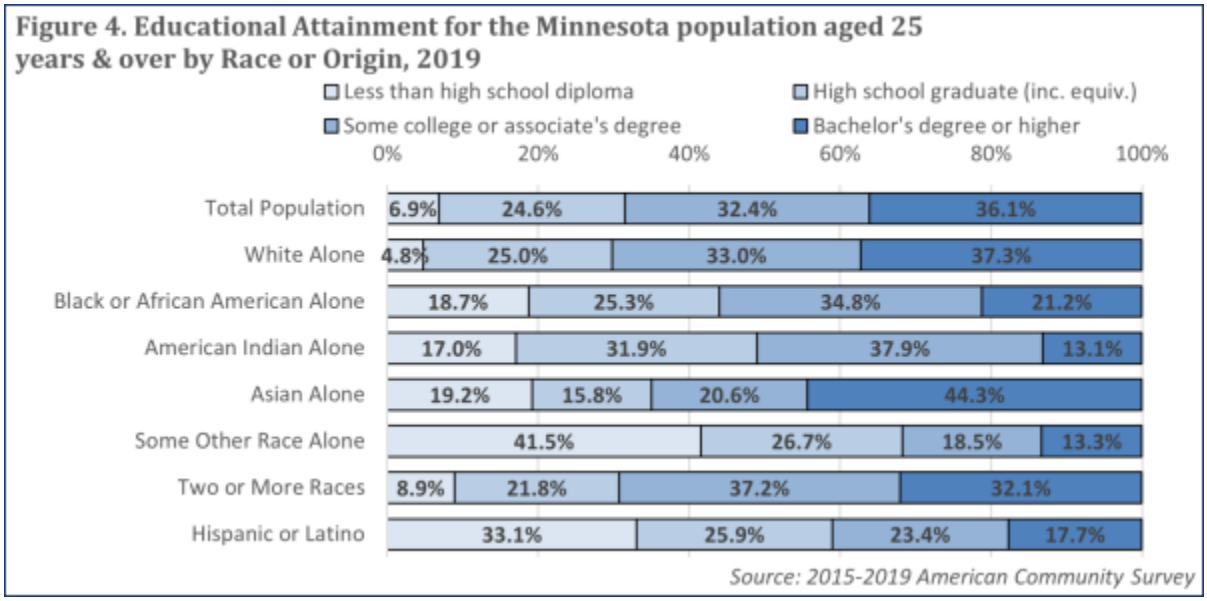
However, despite long-standing awareness that our populations of color generally – and our Black or African American and American Indian communities in particular – have not benefited fully from an improving economy, disparities persist across the state.

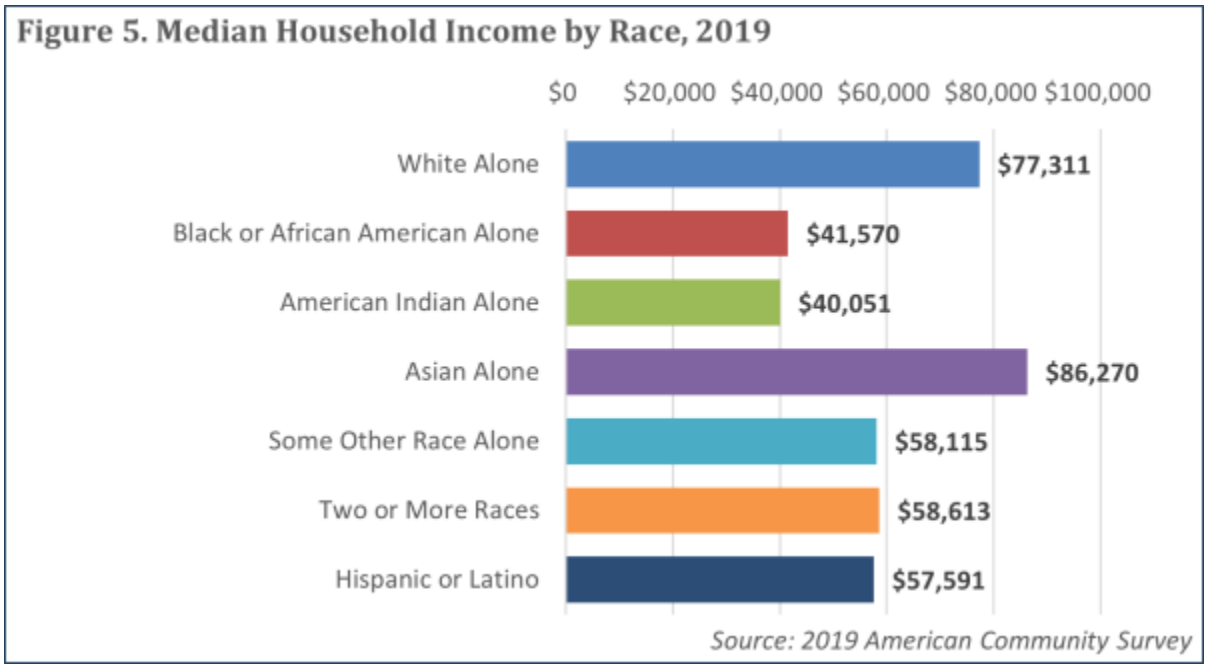
According to recent estimates from the Current Population Survey, Minnesota's unemployment rate among Blacks (6.2% in December 2021) was still nearly twice as high as it was for whites (3.6% in December 2021). According to 2019 American Community Survey estimates, unemployment rates were also higher for American Indians (12.6%), people of two or more races (7.4%), and people of Hispanic or Latino origin (6.1%). In contrast, participation rates were higher for Black or African Americans, Asians, people of some other race or two or more races, Hispanic or Latinos, and for foreign-born immigrants (see Table 4).

Table 4. Minnesota Employment Status by Race and Origin, 2019

	Minnesota		
	In Labor Force	**Labor Force Partic. Rate**	**Unemp. Rate**
Total Labor Force	**3,074,171**	**69.7%**	**3.6%**
White alone	2,606,414	69.3%	3.0%
Black or African American	174,207	71.3%	8.8%
American Indian & Alaska Native	24,560	58.9%	12.6%
Asian or Other Pac. Islanders	145,878	71.2%	4.3%
Some Other Race	55,850	77.7%	6.1%
Two or More Races	63,841	73.6%	7.4%
Hispanic or Latino	149,840	76.5%	6.1%

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





Increasing labor force participation rates and reducing unemployment rate disparities for other race groups, as well as for people with disabilities, both younger and older workers, foreign-born immigrants, and people with lower educational attainment would lead to notable increases in the size of the state's available labor force. Helping BIPOC workers and other people with barriers to employment will be critical to ensuring that Minnesota's employers are able to find workers and our economy is able to continue growing.

This will be especially important in Greater Minnesota, which has an older population than the Twin Cities, with 19.1 percent of the population aged 65 years and over, compared to 14.9 percent in the Twin Cities metro area. Greater Minnesota also has a lower percentage of people in their prime working years, as well as much less racial diversity than the Twin Cities. While every region in the state saw an increase in the number of jobs held by people of color or indigenous people over the past 20 years, only about 8 percent of jobs in Greater Minnesota are held by people of color or indigenous people, compared to over 18 percent in the Twin Cities.

Outside the metro area, the most diverse workforces are found in the Southeast and Southwest regions of the state, while the Northeast has the least diverse workforce overall. However, the

racial disparities in unemployment are found in every region throughout the state, making it an opportunity for growth regardless of location. In sum, the data show that current population and aging trends will lead to a tight labor market over the next decade - with some local areas already experiencing labor force declines.

In addition to the short-term impacts of the pandemic recession, the challenges our state will face over the next 10 years are so great that we'll need to tackle them with a multi-pronged approach to attract and retain workers of all demographic characteristics. Retaining older workers beyond traditional retirement age, attracting and retaining young talent, removing barriers faced by workers of all abilities, welcoming immigrants from other countries, and educating and training the workers we do have are all necessary to overcome these challenges. Because people of color, indigenous and immigrant populations in Minnesota will continue to grow faster than the white native-born population, particularly in the younger working age populations, the labor force will continue to diversify rapidly.

Recognizing that the rapidly increasing share of existing workers are people of color, it becomes obvious that we must address this problem of persistent racial disparities directly. If these disparities continue unabated, disadvantaged groups won't be the only ones who suffer. Businesses and the economic well-being of every resident of our state also will be affected. Developing and implementing meaningful solutions to close these racial gaps between our state's white population and its populations of color is not only the right thing to do, it's the necessary thing to do if we're to provide our economy and its employers with the workforce necessary for success. As the face of Minnesota's workforce continues to change, employers across Minnesota will need to adapt their recruitment and retention strategies and the state will have a role to play in helping businesses do just that.

With record numbers of vacancies reported in 2021, there are hundreds of occupations in demand in Minnesota with a wide variety of knowledge, skills, and abilities required, including several that require credentials and licenses. Included below is a list of the top 10 occupations with existing demand in 2021 and projected 10-year demand, and educational requirement for each occupation.

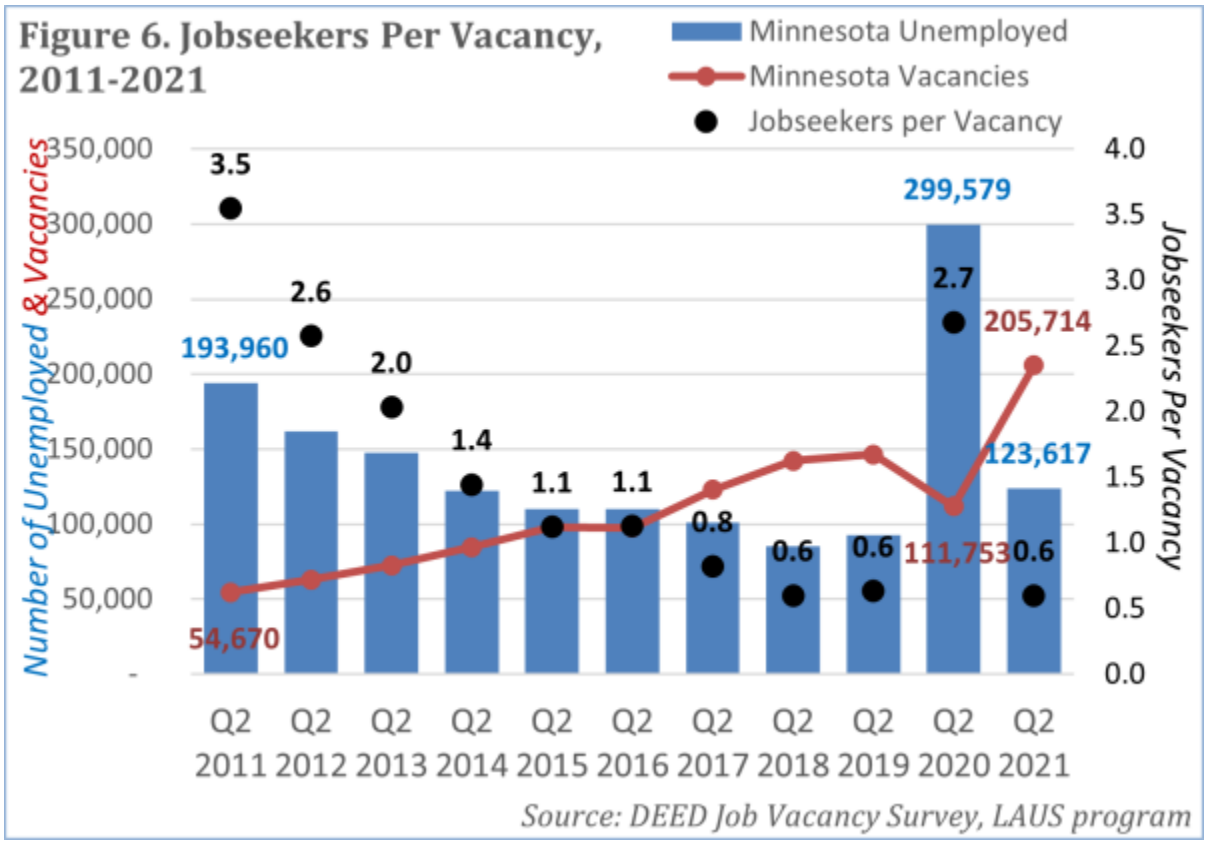
Table 5. Top 10 Occupations in Demand in Minnesota, 2021

SOC Code	Job Title	Median Wage	*Projected 10-year Growth Rate*	Education Requirements
291141	Registered Nurses	$81,154	*+6.6%*	Associate's degree
412031	Retail Salespersons	$29,345	*-3.0%*	High school diploma or equiv.
353023	Fast Food and Counter Workers	$26,229	*+12.4%*	High school diploma or equiv.
311120	Home Health & Personal Care Aides	$30,165	*+24.1%*	High school diploma or equiv.
311131	Nursing Assistants	$37,354	*+3.6%*	Postsecondary award
411011	First-Line Supervisors of Retail Workers	$47,531	*-5.9%*	High school diploma or equiv.
412011	Cashiers	$27,263	*-9.3%*	High school diploma or equiv.
434051	Customer Service Representatives	$41,598	*-4.4%*	High school diploma or equiv.
533032	Heavy & Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers	$51,248	*+4.1%*	High school diploma or equiv.
537065	Stockers and Order Fillers	$31,908	*+2.9%*	High school diploma or equiv.

Source: DEED Occupations in Demand, 2021

Here is an example of how a job seeker would train for the occupation and receive a credential or license for one of those in-demand occupations: a job seeker who is interested in becoming a Registered Nurse would require an associate's or bachelor's degree as well as a license in the state of Minnesota. Job seekers can find a list of Registered Nursing programs at Minnesota colleges and universities through DEED's Career & Education Explorer tool. Through 2020, there were 79 programs in the state, ranging from two-year programs at community and technical colleges to four-year programs at universities. Once they have graduated with a

degree in Registered Nursing, job seekers would also need to pass a licensing exam to practice as a Registered Nurse in the state. The list of licenses needed in Minnesota are available through CareerOneStop, which includes a link to the Minnesota Board of Nursing website. The full process for applying for an RN license by examination requires an application fee, a confirmation of program completion from the school of nursing, and then successful passage of the National Council Licensure Examination (NCLEX). Job seekers will then be qualified to work as a Registered Nurse in Minnesota.



B. WORKFORCE ANALYSIS

The Unified or Combined State Plan must include an analysis of the current workforce, including individuals with barriers to employment, as defined in section 3 of WIOA.[1] This population must include individuals with disabilities among other groups[2] in the State and across regions identified by the State.

EMPLOYMENT AND UNEMPLOYMENT Provide an analysis of current employment and unemployment data, including labor force participation rates, and trends in the State.

1. LABOR MARKET TRENDS Provide an analysis of key labor market trends, including across existing industries and occupations.
2. EDUCATION AND SKILL LEVELS OF THE WORKFORCE Provide an analysis of the educational and skill levels of the workforce.
3. SKILL GAPS

Minnesota has consistently reported lower unemployment rates than the United States as a whole. According to the Local Area Unemployment Statistics program, Minnesota's unemployment rate hovered just below the national rate from 2000 to 2008, before rising as high as 7.8 percent in 2009, then dropping back to pre-recession levels by 2014. Minnesota's 2021 unemployment rate was 3.6 percent, compared to 5.2 percent in the U.S. Within the state,

the Southeast and Southwest had the lowest rates in 2021, while the highest rates have consistently been found in Northeast Minnesota .

Minnesota has much higher labor force participation rates than the United States, ranking seventh highest in the nation in December of 2021. By age, Minnesota has higher labor force participation rates than the nation in all but the oldest age group, but also had lower unemployment rates for all age groups. While participation rates are dropping slightly overall, most notably in the 16 to 54 year old age groups, rates in the older age cohorts were increasing up until the pandemic recession. Whether these workers come back will impact future growth.

Data also show that unemployment rates in Minnesota were higher for younger people, especially those from 16 to 24 years of age, and for people with lower educational attainment. In 2019, people with less than a high school diploma had an unemployment rate of 7.1 percent, compared to high school graduates at 3.7 percent, people with some college or associate's degrees at 2.6 percent, and workers with a bachelor's degree or higher, at just 1.4 percent (see Table 6).

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Table 6. Employment Status by Selected Characteristics, 2019

	Total	Labor Force Participation Rate	Unemp. Rate
Population 16 years & over	4,479,456	69.5%	3.2%
AGE			
16 to 19 years	286,870	54.6%	10.4%
20 to 24 years	345,374	84.9%	5.4%
25 to 29 years	381,052	89.0%	2.8%
30 to 34 years	384,526	88.6%	3.0%
35 to 44 years	730,399	89.3%	2.3%
45 to 54 years	672,810	88.6%	2.4%
55 to 59 years	386,481	81.4%	2.8%
60 to 64 years	370,453	65.6%	2.2%
65 to 74 years	533,366	28.1%	2.1%
75 years and over	388,125	7.0%	2.2%
RACE AND HISPANIC OR LATINO ORIGIN			
White alone	3,782,319	69.0%	2.6%
Black or African American alone	255,685	72.5%	6.1%
American Indian & Alaska Native alone	43,080	60.0%	13.4%
Asian alone	218,610	72.2%	3.7%
Some other race alone	77,858	78.5%	5.7%
Two or more races	99,572	73.7%	8.4%
Hispanic or Latino origin (of any race)	208,825	77.4%	5.8%
DISABILITY STATUS (20 to 64 years of age)			
With any disability	281,191	53.6%	8.4%
EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT			
Population 25 to 64 years	2,925,721	85.0%	2.5%
Less than high school graduate	166,618	68.3%	7.1%
High school graduate (inc. equivalency)	633,529	78.2%	3.7%
Some college or associate's degree	966,824	85.7%	2.6%
Bachelor's degree or higher	1,158,750	90.4%	1.4%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2019 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates

Minnesota also has higher labor force participation rates than the nation for every race group except for American Indians, and higher rates for workers with disabilities and at every level of educational attainment. However, several of these groups have large unemployment rate disparities, which could be a potential source of workers if rates continue to improve for all groups.

About 560,000 Minnesotans aged 16 years and over have disabilities. Of those, nearly 170,500 people with disabilities are employed in the labor market. However, their rate of unemployment, at 8.4 percent, far exceeds the overall unemployment rate in Minnesota (the comparable number was 3.2% for the same time period). People with disabilities in their prime working years also have a much lower labor force participation rate than the general population, at 53.6 percent compared to 85.0 percent overall. However, the rate has been increasing in recent years as employers expand labor pools to deal with a tight labor market. Helping workers with disabilities find and retain employment is a great opportunity for Minnesota employers (see Table 7).

Table 7. Minnesota Labor Force Participation and Unemployment Rate for Workers with Disabilities (20 to 64 years), 2009-2019

	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Labor force participation rate	53.6%	52.0%	51.6%	49.4%	52.4%	49.8%	52.7%	52.2%	52.0%	54.2%	53.6%
Unemployment rate	15.0%	15.3%	17.0%	14.7%	11.8%	10.6%	9.6%	8.0%	7.4%	8.8%	8.4%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey

Another under-utilized source of workers are people with criminal records. According to Census data, there were just over 20,000 adults living in correctional facilities in Minnesota, with about two-thirds residing in state and federal prisons, and the other third held in local jails. Nearly all will be released into the community after serving their sentence with many still under correctional supervision, which often comes with a condition of securing and maintaining employment. Over 111,000 adult offenders are supervised in the community statewide by Community Corrections, County Probation Agents and DOC agents. However, many of these individuals struggle to find employment. In a recent study of employment outcomes for people leaving Minnesota Correctional Facilities, 23 percent were employed during the first 12 months after release from prison. Whether ex-offenders worked in the year prior to their most recent admission to prison had a significant impact on whether they found work after release: of the 12 percent that worked in the year before coming to prison, 87 percent found a job in the first year after release. Of the adults in Minnesota Correctional Facilities, 28 percent have not completed high school or GED; 71 percent have.

EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

With about 93 percent of adults having a high school diploma or higher, Minnesota has one of the highest educational attainment rates in the U.S. We also rank 13th for the percent of people with a bachelor's degree or higher, suggesting a highly skilled workforce available for employers. Through 2019, about 48.7 percent of people aged 25 years and over had earned a college degree, either associate's, bachelor's, or advanced degree, and more than two-thirds of adults in the state had at least some college experience or a degree (see Table 8). And educational attainment rates were increasing for younger age groups, who are making the most out of opportunities that may not have been as available to older age groups.

Table 8. Educational Attainment for the Adult Population, 2019, Minnesota

	Estimate	Percent
Total Population, 18 years & over	4,336,963	
Less than high school graduate	304,899	7.0%
High school graduate (includes equivalency)	1,084,741	25.0%
Some college or associate's degree	1,440,028	33.2%
Bachelor's degree or higher	1,507,295	34.8%

Source: 2019 American Community Survey

Like participation and unemployment rates, educational attainment varies significantly by race and ethnicity in Minnesota. Over one-third of Hispanic or Latino residents or people of Some Other Race had less than a high school diploma, compared to just 4.8 percent of white residents. However, over one-third of Black or African Americans, American Indians, and people of Two or More Races have attended some college or earned an associate's degree, and 44.3 percent of Asian residents had a bachelor's degree or higher, which was above the White population. Data from the American Community Survey show that educational attainment rates were going up across the board, especially for populations of people of color.

SKILL GAPS

During the past few years, there has been a great deal of discussion about the issue of workforce alignment in Minnesota—specifically, a phenomenon known as skill gaps. Recent studies and popular press articles warn us that employers cannot find an adequate supply of workers to meet the demands of the jobs they have: workers may lack the skills, experience, or education needed to adequately carry out job duties. Policymakers and educators in Minnesota are concerned about these deficiencies, and are motivated to ensure that workers' skills align properly with what's needed in the labor market.

Skills mismatches—that is, deficiencies in the workforce supply—become especially salient and problematic during the hiring process. If too few job applicants have the right skills, knowledge, or experience to qualify for the job (or if too few people apply for the position, period), then that is consistent with the interpretation that there is a gap, or mismatch, between workers' skills (supply) and the skills needed to perform the job (demand).

On the other hand, it is important to realize that there are a variety of reasons an employer may have hiring difficulties, and that many of these have nothing to do with the available supply. Characteristics of the firm and/or the job itself could reduce the likelihood that candidates will choose to apply for or accept any given position. Some of the most basic "demand-side" factors include the wage offered, the hours of work, and the location of the work.

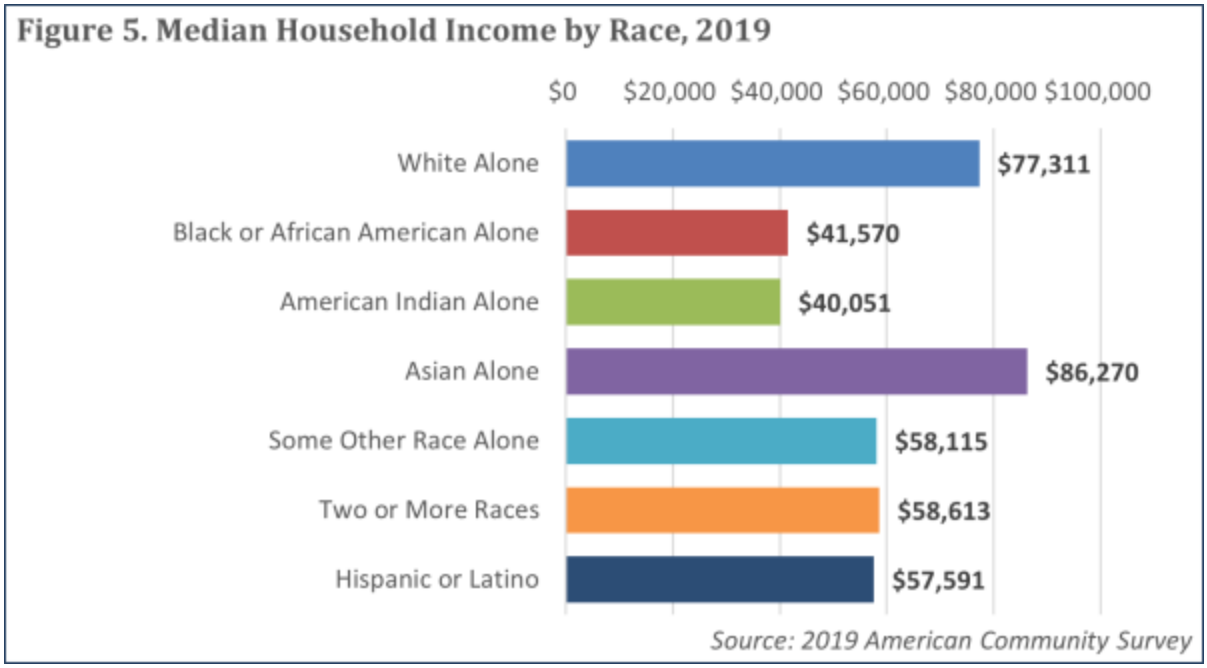
Minnesota is working to help job seekers lacking necessary skills attain them for fulfilling employment. Career seekers participating in skills training programs for in-demand occupations would also be assessed for gaps in support needs, such as child care, transportation and other basic needs. These issues have been amplified during the pandemic recession.

The fundamental basis for the design of our career pathways was initiated in the FastTRAC program. This design continues in Minnesota's Pathways to Prosperity program. The goal is to provide the shortest successful path to educational/credential attainment and transition into occupations in demand.

HOUSEHOLD INCOMES, WAGES AND COST OF LIVING

Not only hard working, Minnesotans are also high earning. At $74,593, Minnesota's median household income is higher than the nation's, at $65,712, according to data from the American Community Survey (ACS) 2019 1-Year Estimates. Approximately 32.5 percent of households in Minnesota had incomes below $50,000 in 2019, compared to about 38.4 percent nationwide. Another one-third (32.1%) of households in Minnesota earned between $50,000 and $100,000, compared to 30.2 percent nationally. Lastly, another one-third of households (35.3%) in Minnesota earn more than $100,000 per year, compared to 31.4 percent of households in the nation.

While Minnesota enjoys higher median household incomes than the nation overall, there again are disparities present between the state's racial and ethnic populations. Overall, household incomes were lower for people of color and indigenous people. For example, those reporting as Black or African American had a median household income of $41,570 in 2019, just over half the median household income reported by the state's white population, at $77,311. Those reporting as Asian were the only non-white group to have a higher median income than white households, at $86,270.



The gaps have persisted over time, though incomes were rising across the board. Over a 10-year period, median household incomes increased around 25 percent for white, Black, Asian, and Hispanic or Latino households, and between 10 and 15 percent for American Indians and households of two or more races. More recently, median household incomes climbed faster for Black or African American households, households of some other race, and Hispanics or Latinos than for white or Asian households in the past two years.

Along with income, it is important to know the cost of living in the State of Minnesota. DEED's Cost of Living tool provides a yearly estimate of the basic needs cost of living in Minnesota, for individuals and families, by county, region, and statewide. Using the state's average family size - which consists of one full-time working adult, one part-time working adult, and one child - the basic needs cost of living in Minnesota is $58,800. As such, each adult worker would need to earn $18.85 to meet the state's basic needs budget for a typical family of three; while the cost of living is lower for a single individual with no children ($15.85).

Estimates vary widely across the state, and different household sizes, work arrangements, and locations provide different costs of living and wage requirements, ranging from a low of $46,620 in Southwest Minnesota to a high of $65,292 in the Twin Cities (see Table 9).

Table 9. Basic Needs Cost of Living Estimates in Minnesota, 2020

Single Adult (working full-time), 0 children	Single Yearly Cost of Living	Hourly Wage Required	Monthly Costs						
			Child Care Costs	Food Costs	Health Care Costs	Housing Costs	Trans-portation Costs	Other Costs	Taxes
Central	$33,192	$15.96	$0	$346	$155	$786	$781	$310	$388
Northeast	$29,268	$14.07	$0	$349	$163	$618	$715	$265	$329
Northwest	$29,244	$14.06	$0	$349	$163	$595	$741	$259	$330
Southeast	$30,228	$14.53	$0	$349	$163	$672	$712	$280	$343
Southwest	$28,344	$13.63	$0	$352	$163	$606	$667	$262	$312
Twin Cities	$35,028	$16.84	$0	$360	$146	$964	$683	$362	$404
Minnesota	$32,964	$15.85	$0	$355	$153	$832	$704	$325	$378
Typical Family: 2 Adults (1 working full-time, 1 part-time), 1 child	Family Yearly Cost of Living	Hourly Wage Required	Child Care Cost	Food Cost	Health Care Cost	Housing Cost	Trans-portation Cost	Other Costs	Taxes
Central	$55,716	$17.86	$380	$790	$542	$1,001	$914	$490	$526
Northeast	$48,804	$15.64	$287	$796	$519	$815	$832	$441	$377
Northwest	$48,108	$15.42	$250	$797	$519	$781	$864	$432	$366
Southeast	$51,540	$16.52	$356	$798	$519	$892	$828	$463	$439
Southwest	$46,620	$14.94	$234	$804	$519	$793	$772	$437	$326
Twin Cities	$65,292	$20.93	$737	$821	$569	$1,230	$792	$562	$730
Minnesota	$58,800	$18.85	$546	$810	$549	$1,069	$819	$515	$592

Source: DEED Cost of Living tool

The median hourly wage for all occupations in Minnesota was $23.00 in 2021, according to data from DEED's Occupational Employment & Wage Statistics program. In fact, median hourly wages for all regions were higher than the wage required to meet a basic needs budget for a typical family. However, like cost of living, wages varied by region with the lowest wages reported in Southwest and Northwest Minnesota, and the highest wages offered in the Twin Cities metro area (see Table 10). The difference in median wages between the Twin Cities and Greater Minnesota works out to around $4.00 an hour, or the equivalent of $8,320 over the course of a full-time work year (40 hours per week, or 2,080 per year).

Table 10. Occupational Employment Statistics by Planning Region, 2021

	Median Hourly Wage	Estimated Regional Employment
Central Minnesota	$20.66	283,560
Northeast Minnesota	$20.49	132,720
Northwest Minnesota	$19.24	207,970
Southeast Minnesota	$21.13	231,950
Southwest Minnesota	$19.34	166,690
Twin Cities Metro Area	$24.93	1,697,060
State of Minnesota	$23.00	2,708,760

Source: DEED Occupational Employment & Wage Statistics

Not surprisingly, the lowest-paying jobs are concentrated in food prep and serving; personal care and service; building, grounds cleaning and maintenance; sales and related; farming, fishing and forestry; and health care support, all of which have lower median hourly wages than

what would be required to meet the basic needs cost of living described above. For the most part, the gap in pay between Greater Minnesota and the Twin Cities is also much lower in these jobs. In contrast, the highest paying jobs are found in management, computer and mathematical, architecture and engineering, legal, health care practitioners, business and financial operations, and life, physical, and social science occupations, which all need higher levels of education and experience, including many that require postsecondary training (see Table 11). The pay gaps between Greater Minnesota and the Twin Cities are much bigger in these occupations.

Table 11. Minnesota Occupational Employment Statistics, 2021

Occupational Group	Median Hourly Wage	Estimated Employment	*Share of Total Employment*
Total, All Occupations	**$23.00**	**2,708,760**	***100.0%***
Education, Training & Library	$24.64	159,060	*5.9%*
Food Preparation & Serving Related	$13.34	195,120	*7.2%*
Farming, Fishing & Forestry	$18.14	4,230	*0.2%*
Office & Administrative Support	$20.93	338,050	*12.5%*
Installation, Maintenance & Repair	$25.45	98,840	*3.6%*
Personal Care & Service	$14.57	51,660	*1.9%*
Transportation & Material Moving	$18.83	209,210	*7.7%*
Architecture & Engineering	$38.90	54,880	*2.0%*
Construction & Extraction	$29.84	102,390	*3.8%*
Legal	$41.02	19,760	*0.7%*
Arts, Design, Entertainment & Media	$25.72	36,260	*1.3%*
Sales & Related	$16.83	250,430	*9.2%*
Community & Social Service	$24.21	55,630	*2.1%*
Building, Grounds Cleaning & Maint.	$16.14	74,550	*2.8%*
Healthcare Practitioners & Technical	$36.90	188,210	*6.9%*
Computer & Mathematical	$44.89	98,240	*3.6%*
Management	$54.22	164,530	*6.1%*
Production	$19.82	202,240	*7.5%*
Protective Service	$24.18	42,520	*1.6%*
Healthcare Support	$15.52	157,140	*5.8%*
Business & Financial Operations	$35.24	179,670	*6.6%*
Life, Physical & Social Science	$35.48	26,120	*1.0%*

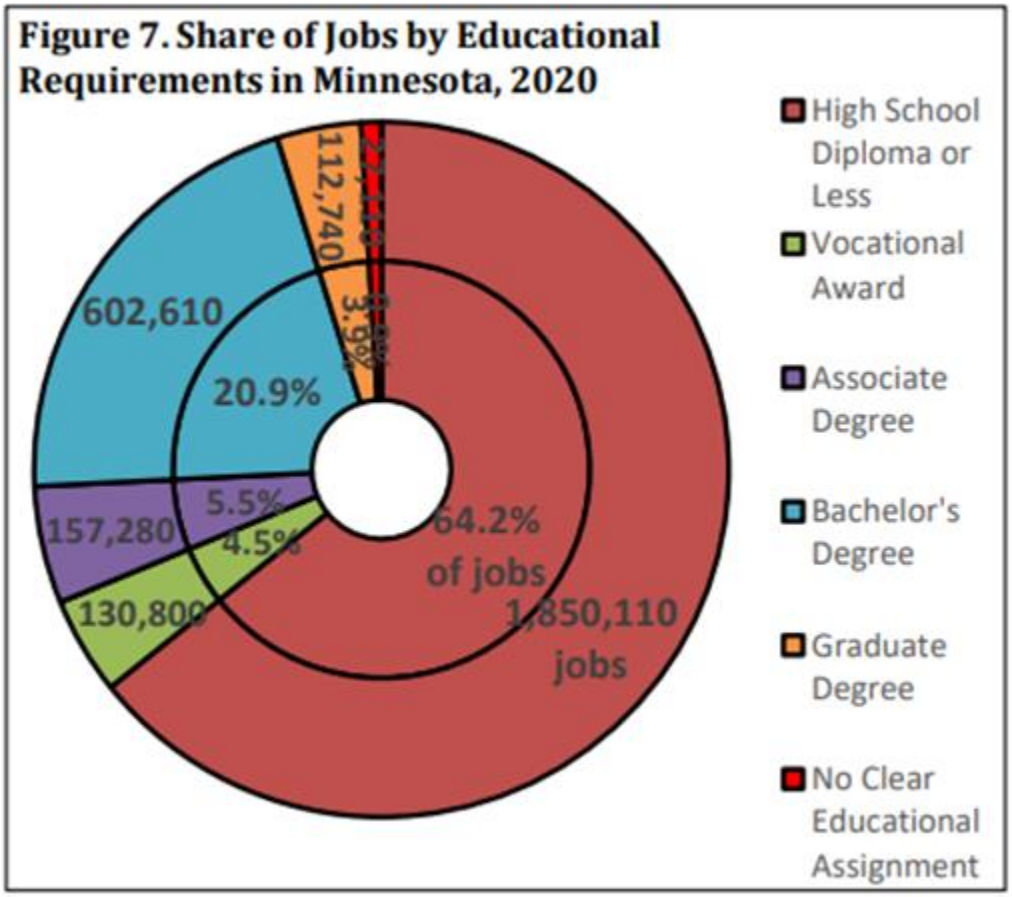
Source: DEED Occupational Employment & Wage Statistics, Qtr. 1 2021

Table 12. Minnesota Job Vacancy Survey Results, 2nd Qtr. 2021

Minnesota	Number of Total Vacancies	Percent Part-time	Requiring Post-Secondary Education	Requiring 1 or More Years of Work Exp.	Requiring Certificate or License	Median Hourly Wage Offer	*Job Vacancy Rate*
Total, All Occupations	**205,714**	**32%**	**32%**	**50%**	**43%**	**$16.64**	***8.0***
Food Preparation & Serving Related	35,206	49%	1%	31%	14%	$13.04	*18.0*
Sales & Related	26,484	30%	18%	41%	20%	$14.32	*10.6*
Healthcare Support	17,169	56%	29%	17%	59%	$13.92	*10.9*
Transportation & Material Moving	14,271	34%	3%	29%	66%	$15.78	*6.8*
Healthcare Practitioners & Technical	13,859	30%	84%	71%	96%	$27.51	*7.4*
Office & Administrative Support	12,250	36%	28%	56%	28%	$15.06	*3.6*
Production	9,175	8%	21%	41%	12%	$17.08	*4.5*
Building, Grounds Cleaning & Maint.	8,063	28%	5%	15%	23%	$17.30	*10.8*
Management	8,031	1%	76%	98%	44%	$36.58	*4.9*
Business & Financial Operations	7,712	2%	79%	96%	50%	$31.28	*4.3*
Education, Training & Library	7,567	36%	75%	87%	96%	$23.95	*4.8*
Construction & Extraction	7,504	10%	9%	45%	41%	$17.32	*7.3*
Installation, Maintenance & Repair	7,445	12%	25%	49%	56%	$19.02	*7.5*
Personal Care & Service	6,111	56%	36%	44%	59%	$14.13	*11.8*
Computer & Mathematical	5,872	2%	72%	98%	43%	$33.91	*6.0*
Community & Social Service	4,738	28%	77%	87%	68%	$20.72	*8.5*
Arts, Design, Entertainment & Media	4,715	39%	29%	90%	46%	$21.04	*13.0*
Architecture & Engineering	2,792	0%	91%	92%	62%	$31.92	*5.1*
Protective Service	2,248	53%	12%	55%	81%	$14.11	*5.3*
Life, Physical & Social Sciences	1,675	5%	87%	90%	75%	$25.97	*6.4*
Legal	411	1%	97%	99%	84%	$36.48	*2.1*

Source: DEED Job Vacancy Survey, 2nd Qtr. 2021

Similar to Job Vacancy Survey results, data from DEED's Occupational Employment & Wage Statistics program shows that only about 36 percent of jobs in the state require postsecondary education for entry. The other 64 percent can be started with a high school diploma or less and some amount of on-the-job training (See Figure 7).



Certain careers – such as dentists, lawyers, and teachers – require a college education, while other jobs – including cost estimators, sales representatives, and correctional officers – do not. College is an excellent way to move up career ladders and open windows of opportunity to fields that would otherwise be closed, such as nursing or engineering. Many of these occupations offer high wages and are in high demand in the marketplace.

While education is typically a worthwhile investment, college can be expensive – with average annual expenses ranging between $14,500 and almost $50,000 per year in Minnesota. For those who go to college, choice of major matters – different programs lead to different jobs that earn different amounts of money. Students and job seekers can use labor market data to make more informed career decisions.

In light of increased vacancies and increased demand for workers, DEED's Occupations in Demand (OID) tool sheds light on those occupations showing the most current need. These occupations are spread across different sectors in each region, but are typically concentrated in major industries. For example, retail salespersons, food prep workers, personal care aides, truck drivers, customer service representatives, registered nurses, computer user support specialists, software developers, industrial engineers, and elementary and secondary school teachers are among the top occupations in demand based on the consistent need for workers in these fields. Much of the current demand is found in health care, accommodation and food services, retail trade, and manufacturing (see Table 13).

Table 13. Minnesota Top Occupations in Demand by Education Requirements with Median Annual Wage, 2020

High School or Less	Vocational Training	Associate Degree	Bachelor's Degree or Higher
Home Health & Personal Care Aides $28,562	Nursing Assistants $35,616	Registered Nurses $79,373	Software Developers $103,763
Retail Salespersons $26,466	Licensed Practical & Vocational Nurses $48,669	Radiologic Technologists & Technicians $69,108	General & Operations Managers $100,347
Stockers & Order Fillers $30,447	Medical Assistants $42,314	Electrical & Electronic Engineering Technicians $60,965	Financial Managers $125,684
First-Line Supervisors of Retail Sales Workers $43,413	Automotive Service Technicians & Mechanics $44,064	Surgical Technologists $60,500	Family Medicine Physicians NA
Heavy & Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers $49,582	Emergency Medical Technicians & Paramedics $40,465	Veterinary Technologists & Technicians $37,898	Elementary School Teachers $61,712
Laborers & Freight & Material Movers $35,264	Electricians $69,051	Computer Network Support Specialists $63,753	Management Analysts $81,895
Customer Service Representatives $39,564	Heating, Air Conditioning, & Refrigeration Mechanics $54,577	Civil Engineering Technologists $65,815	Accountants & Auditors $68,772
Janitors & Cleaners $31,402	Computer User Support Specialists $56,055	Web Developers & Digital Interface Designers $77,949	Secondary School Teachers $63,501
Sales Representatives, Wholesale & Manufacturing $68,288	Medical Records Specialists & Health Technologists $51,286	Cardiovascular Technologists & Technicians $65,734	Computer Systems Analysts $93,660
Light Truck Drivers $38,986	Surgical Assistants, & Healthcare Practitioners & Technical Workers $81,041	Clinical Laboratory Technologists & Technicians $55,186	Substitute Teachers, Short-Term $37,888

Source: DEED Occupations in Demand

In addition to current demand, it is also important to understand future demand. According to employment projections, Minnesota is expected to see job growth of 5.7 percent from 2020 to 2030. That's equivalent to 169,900 net new jobs – though many of these are still tied to recovery from the pandemic rather than rapid new growth. In recent projections, Central Minnesota was anticipated to be the fastest growing region within Minnesota, followed closely by the Twin Cities. Southeast and Northwest have also typically seen steady growth, respectively, while Northeast and Southwest both were expected to see minimal growth due to a lack of available workers. In addition to new jobs created or regained, Minnesota is projected to have 1.3 million labor force exit openings, due to current workers retiring or otherwise leaving their occupation. These replacement openings outpace new jobs in every case, meaning that many jobs may still be available and in demand, even without seeing projected growth (see Table 14).

Table 14. Minnesota Employment Projections by Occupational Group, 2020-2030

SOC Code	Occupation	Estimated Employment 2020	Projected Employment 2030	Percent Change 2020-2030	Numeric Change 2020-2030	2020-2030 Labor Market Exit Openings*
0	Total, All Occupations	2,975,300	3,145,200	+5.7%	+169,900	+1,299,528
110000	Management	225,287	237,754	+5.5%	+12,467	+67,446
130000	Business & Financial Operations	194,738	206,660	+6.1%	+11,922	+52,881
150000	Computer & Mathematical	103,199	115,793	+12.2%	+12,594	+22,665
170000	Architecture & Engineering	55,462	58,392	+5.3%	+2,930	+13,817
190000	Life, Physical, & Social Science	28,259	30,029	+6.3%	+1,770	+5,840
210000	Community & Social Service	65,252	72,662	+11.4%	+7,410	+23,361
230000	Legal	22,327	23,964	+7.3%	+1,637	+6,339
250000	Education, Training, & Library	164,751	178,355	+8.3%	+13,604	+70,050
270000	Arts, Entertainment & Media	50,051	54,147	+8.2%	+4,096	+19,503
290000	Healthcare Practitioners & Tech.	192,413	207,998	+8.1%	+15,585	+50,559
310000	Healthcare Support	165,026	195,744	+18.6%	+30,718	+110,552
330000	Protective Service	46,767	49,561	+6.0%	+2,794	+21,676
350000	Food Preparation & Serving	196,413	230,396	+17.3%	+33,983	+162,071
370000	Building & Grounds & Maintenance	88,554	93,911	+6.0%	+5,357	+52,792
390000	Personal Care & Service	85,350	97,909	+14.7%	+12,559	+57,296
410000	Sales & Related	272,390	265,840	-2.4%	-6,550	+137,391
430000	Office & Administrative Support	353,547	337,006	-4.7%	-16,541	+164,380
450000	Farming, Fishing, & Forestry	16,818	16,596	-1.3%	-222	+6,965
470000	Construction & Extraction	120,028	124,959	+4.1%	+4,931	+36,430
490000	Installation, Maintenance & Repair	105,222	109,437	+4.0%	+4,215	+33,714
510000	Production	205,773	205,003	-0.4%	-770	+76,945
530000	Transportation & Material Moving	217,673	233,084	+7.1%	+15,411	+106,855

Source: DEED 2020-2030 Employment Outlook

Only four occupational groups are expected to see declines through 2030, and three of them are among the largest occupational groups in the state. Office and administrative support is expected to see a small decline in total jobs, but will still have the largest number of labor force exit openings. Likewise, production occupations are projected to decline by -0.4 percent, but will still have nearly 77,000 openings due to retirements or other labor force exits. In contrast, the occupations that are expected to see the most new job growth or recovery include food preparation and serving, health care support and health care practitioners and related, and transportation and material moving occupations (see Table 14).

INDUSTRY TRENDS, PROJECTIONS, AND WORKFORCE DEMOGRAPHICS

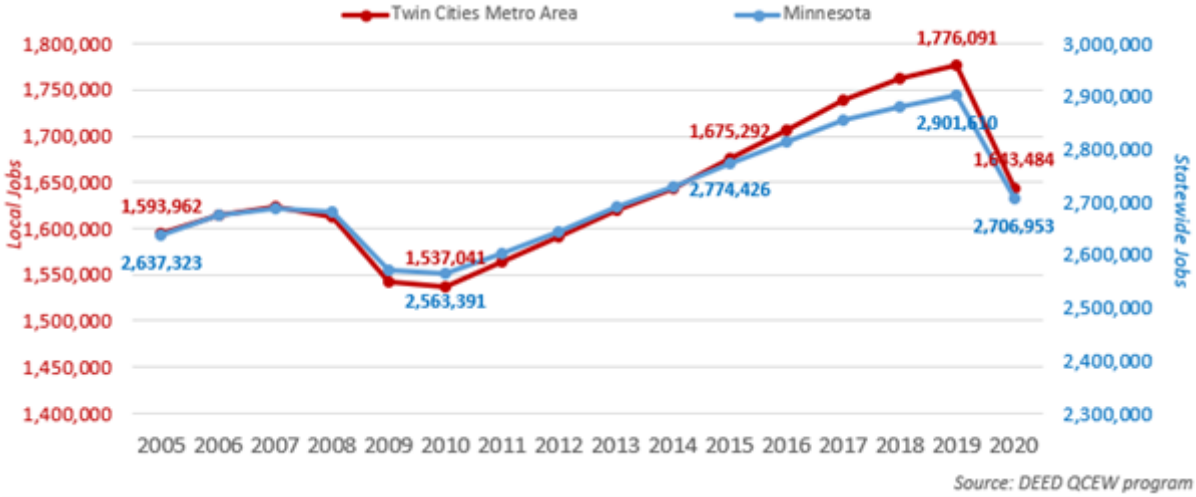
Statewide, Minnesota was home to 182,228 business establishments providing 2,706,953 jobs through 2020, with a total payroll of just under $174 billion. Just over 60 percent of the state's employment is located in the Twin Cities metro region. Central and Southeast are the next largest regions, while Northeast is the smallest region in terms of employment. Average annual wages were $64,163 across the state, but ranged from a low of $45,164 in Northwest to a high of $71,582 in the Twin Cities. After years of growth, employers in the state sliced nearly 195,000 jobs in 2020, wiping out the growth experienced since 2015. The Twin Cities and Northeast saw the biggest declines over the year, while Central, Southeast, Southwest, and Northwest all dropped about 5.5 percent (see Table 15 and Figure 8).

Table 15. Minnesota Employment Statistics, 2020

	2020 Annual Data			Avg. Annual Wages	2015-2020		2019-2020	
	Number of Firms	Number of Jobs	Total Payroll		Change in Jobs	Percent Change	Change in Jobs	Percent Change
Central	18,526	263,167	$12,762,451,297	$48,496	-5,023	-1.9%	-15,264	-5.5%
Northeast	8,955	131,809	$6,519,752,768	$49,464	-10,922	-7.7%	-11,862	-8.3%
Northwest	17,362	210,740	$9,517,906,424	$45,164	-7,124	-3.3%	-12,454	-5.6%
Southeast	12,906	233,093	$13,196,596,841	$56,615	-4,549	-1.9%	-13,687	-5.5%
Southwest	12,416	166,939	$7,742,032,041	$46,376	-8,950	-5.1%	-9,623	-5.5%
Twin Cities	86,401	1,643,484	$117,643,062,255	$71,582	-31,808	-1.9%	-132,607	-7.5%
Minnesota	182,228	2,706,953	$173,687,525,221	$64,163	-67,473	-2.4%	-194,657	-6.7%

Source: DEED Quarterly Census of Employment & Wages (QCEW) program

Figure 8. Industry Employment Statistics, 2005-2020



Source: DEED QCEW program

With over 485,000 jobs, health care and social assistance is the largest employing industry in Minnesota, accounting for 18 percent of the state's total employment. With 309,088 jobs, manufacturing is Minnesota's second largest-employing industry, accounting for 11.4 percent of the state's total jobs. With 276,723 jobs, retail trade rounds out Minnesota's top-three largest employing industries, accounting for 10.2 percent of the state's total employment. Altogether, these three industries account for nearly 40 percent of the state's total employment.

Other large and important industries include educational services, accommodation and food services, professional and technical services, finance and insurance, public administration, construction, wholesale trade, administrative support and waste management services, and transportation and warehousing. Minnesota's economy remains diverse, and there is strength in these numbers, despite the pandemic recession.

The bulk of the jobs lost between the second quarter of 2019 and the second quarter of 2020 were concentrated in just five industry sectors: Accommodation & Food Services, Retail Trade, Health Care & Social Assistance, Other Services, and Arts, Entertainment & Recreation. By far the largest numeric loss in jobs was experienced by Accommodation & Food Services, which saw a job decline to the tune of over 105,000 jobs, down 44.1 percent. This industry alone accounted for almost 30 percent of the statewide job lost during this one-year period. This significant loss was followed by a drop of over 40,000 jobs in Retail Trade (-13.7%), over 34,000 jobs in Health Care & Social Assistance (-6.8%), nearly 30,000 jobs in Other Services (-32.6%) and over 29,000 jobs in Arts, Entertainment & Recreation (-52.7%). Overall, these five industry sectors accounted for 66.5 percent of the jobs lost in the state (see Table 16).

Table 16. Minnesota Industry Employment Statistics, 2020

NAICS Industry Title	2020 Annual Data			Avg. Annual Wage	2015-2020		2019-2020	
	Number of Firms	Number of Jobs	Total Payroll ($1,000s)		*Change in Jobs*	*Percent Change*	*Change in Jobs*	*Percent Change*
Total, All Industries	182,228	2,706,953	$173,687,525	$64,163	*-67,473*	*-2.4%*	*-194,657*	*-6.7%*
Health Care & Social Assistance	20,475	486,345	$27,448,166	$56,438	*+23,567*	*+5.1%*	*-14,651*	*-2.9%*
Manufacturing	8,305	309,088	$21,903,471	$70,865	*-8,224*	*-2.6%*	*-14,853*	*-4.6%*
Retail Trade	18,139	276,723	$9,380,597	$33,899	*-16,734*	*-5.7%*	*-16,675*	*-5.7%*
Educational Services	4,447	217,804	$12,130,686	$55,695	*-4,117*	*-1.9%*	*-13,165*	*-5.7%*
Accommodation & Food Services	11,988	177,640	$3,735,916	$21,031	*-46,371*	*-20.7%*	*-57,929*	*-24.6%*
Professional & Technical Svcs.	23,173	154,980	$15,899,975	$102,594	*+9,073*	*+6.2%*	*-5,484*	*-3.4%*
Finance & Insurance	9,718	147,100	$16,997,580	$115,551	*+7,542*	*+5.4%*	*-1,373*	*-0.9%*
Public Administration	3,367	132,171	$8,508,535	$64,375	*+4,052*	*+3.2%*	*-3,732*	*-2.7%*
Construction	17,182	131,021	$9,522,377	$72,678	*+9,356*	*+7.7%*	*-3,280*	*-2.4%*
Wholesale Trade	13,751	124,785	$11,156,916	$89,409	*-8,114*	*-6.1%*	*-3,634*	*-2.8%*
Admin. Support & Waste Mgmt. Svcs.	8,817	121,413	$5,674,392	$46,736	*-14,365*	*-10.6%*	*-14,583*	*-10.7%*
Transportation & Warehousing	5,920	104,574	$6,039,234	$57,751	*+6,183*	*+6.3%*	*-6,323*	*-5.7%*
Management of Companies	1,710	86,958	$11,456,731	$131,750	*+8,846*	*+11.3%*	*-2,189*	*-2.5%*
Other Services	17,161	77,354	$3,052,635	$39,463	*-11,205*	*-12.7%*	*-14,092*	*-15.4%*
Information	4,397	46,649	$4,177,916	$89,561	*-8,758*	*-15.8%*	*-3,920*	*-7.8%*
Arts, Entertainment, & Recreation	3,529	36,743	$1,605,332	$43,691	*-12,479*	*-25.4%*	*-16,889*	*-31.5%*
Real Estate & Rental & Leasing	6,494	33,940	$1,973,274	$58,140	*-5,550*	*-14.1%*	*-1,684*	*-4.7%*
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing & Hunting	2,960	22,844	$980,966	$42,942	*+1,441*	*+6.7%*	*+380*	*+1.7%*
Utilities	475	13,345	$1,568,954	$117,569	*-905*	*-6.4%*	*-218*	*-1.6%*
Mining	223	5,474	$473,872	$86,568	*-695*	*-11.3%*	*-360*	*-6.2%*

Source: DEED Quarterly Census of Employment & Wages (QCEW) program

Not surprisingly, all six individual planning regions throughout the state experienced job loss to varying degrees from second quarter 2019 to 2020. The largest numeric decrease in jobs was in the Metro region, which lost nearly 234,000 jobs, a decrease of 13.1 percent. However, at 15.2 percent Northeast Minnesota saw the sharpest drop, a decline of almost 22,100 jobs.

The COVID-19 pandemic severely impacted Minnesota's economy and labor market, resulting in significant employment losses, shifts in job vacancies, and unprecedented increases in claims for Unemployment Insurance. As previously mentioned, these impacts were concentrated in several industry sectors: Accommodation & Food Services; Retail Trade; Health Care & Social Assistance; Other Services; and Arts, Entertainment, & Recreation. To get a more complete picture for how these industries, as well as others, were hit by COVID-19, we now turn to impacts by demographic group. More specifically, we will highlight how employment by gender and age were affected in Minnesota between 2019 and 2020.

According to QWI data, Minnesota's total employment plummeted by 9.4 percent between third quarter 2019 and 2020, equivalent to more than 276,700 jobs. Over that period, women saw more job loss than men. Specifically, female employment declined by 10.3 percent while male employment declined by 8.5 percent. Numerically, female workers accounted for an estimated 55.0 percent of the state's total employment losses while male workers accounted for the remaining 45.0 percent. Such losses were more significant for female workers in each sector.

When analyzing industry share of employment loss by gender, Healthcare & Social Assistance was the hardest hit for women workers. Where women accounted for 55.0% percent of

Minnesota's total employment losses between third quarter 2019 and 2020, they accounted for 87.8 percent of employment loss in Health Care & Social Assistance during that period. Similarly, women accounted for significant shares of employment loss in Finance & Insurance (83.3%), Retail Trade (67.7%), Other Services (62.0%), Educational Services (61.7%), Accommodation & Food Services (56.9%) and Real Estate and Rental & Leasing (56.1%).

Losses were significantly more severe for male workers than their female counterparts in Agriculture, Construction, Management of Companies, Educational Services, and Utilities. Overall, however, each of these industries witnessed much smaller job losses during the COVID-19 recession than those hardest-hit industries previously mentioned.

Lastly, when analyzing Minnesota's employment losses by age during the COVID-19 recession, further disparities begin to appear. These disparities are strongest for those workers at either end of the age spectrum. For example, where workers age 14 to 24 made up an estimated 14.9 percent of Minnesota's total employment during the third quarter of 2019, these workers accounted for 28.2 percent of the state's employment losses between third quarter 2019 and 2020. From a different point of analysis, where total employment in the state dropped by 9.4 percent between third quarter 2019 and 2020, total employment for workers ages 14 to 24 dropped by 17.8 percent.

While not impacted as severely as their younger counterparts, workers age 25 to 34 were also affected disproportionately by job loss. This group made up 21.5 percent of Minnesota's total employment during the third quarter 2019, but accounted for 23.8 percent of the state's total employment losses through the following year. This cohort's respective employment loss of 10.4 percent during that period was slightly higher than losses across all ages (9.4%).

For younger workers, especially those between 14 and 24 years, a much higher share are employed in the industries hardest-hit by COVID-19. For example, where workers 14 to 24 years made up approximately 14.9 percent of Minnesota's total employment during the third quarter of 2019, they made up about 37.3 percent of employment in Accommodation & Food Services and about 30.4 percent of employment in Arts, Entertainment, & Recreation. The two hardest-hit industries during COVID-19. Such workers also made up significant shares of total employment in Other Services (18.1%) and Administrative & Support Services (16.3%) before COVID-19 struck.

At the other end of the age spectrum, while workers age 65 and older made up a relatively smaller share of Minnesota's total employment losses during the COVID-19 recession (7.5%), the age cohort did experience more significant respective loss (12.0%). By industry, employment losses for these workers were more significant in Educational Services, Retail Trade, Transportation & Warehousing, Administrative & Support Services, and Other Services. Accommodation & Food Services; Arts, Entertainment, & Recreation; and Health Care & Social Assistance each lost a high number of workers age 65 and older during this period, but the percentage loss of older workers in these industries was similar to that for the total for all ages.

SHORT-TERM PROJECTIONS

According to analysis from DEED's Labor Market Information office, the state of Minnesota is projected to add just under 62,000 jobs between the third quarter of 2021 and the third quarter of 2022, an expansion of 2.1 percent over the year. This rate of employment growth is forecasted to slow from the more robust recovery that characterized mid-2020 to mid-2021, but still continues the state's march back to economic recovery.

One-year employment projections forecast an average of 5,159 added jobs per month which will bring employment to 99.8 percent of the February 2020 pre-pandemic level by third quarter 2022. Based on forecasted growth rates, statewide employment should surpass pre-pandemic levels soon after, likely in the fourth quarter of 2022 or perhaps the first quarter of 2023.

Despite the labor market constraints, all but one industry (Utilities) in Minnesota is expected to add jobs over the next year. The largest number of jobs are expected to be added in Manufacturing, Educational Services, Administrative Support & Waste Management Services, and Accommodation & Food Services. Combined, these sectors account for over 45% of the projected job growth. Much of growth in Administrative Support & Waste Management Services, which has the fastest projected growth rate of all sectors, can be attributed to the return of demand for employment services and temporary staffing agencies, which fell by more than a quarter early in the pandemic.

Of the three largest industries in the state – Health Care & Social Assistance, Manufacturing, and Retail Trade – only Manufacturing is expected to experience above-average employment growth over the year. As a result, Manufacturing is projected to achieve employment levels near 2018 and 2019 averages. Of the 19 nonfarm sectors, Transportation & Warehousing, Wholesale Trade, Construction, Mining & Logging, and Professional & Technical Services are projected to surpass third quarter 2019 employment levels by the third quarter of 2022.

Many of the industries that saw the largest initial employment decline at the beginning of the pandemic will continue to recover, although the pace and extent of each industry's rebound is expected to vary. Arts, Entertainment, & Recreation, which has finally regained all of the 26,000 jobs lost in the second quarter of 2020, is projected to add another 2,000 by third quarter 2022. Accommodation & Food Services, which lost over 100,000 jobs in 2020, is expected to regain about a third of the remaining 19,400 job deficit.

Likewise, Health Care & Social Assistance still had a sizeable employment deficit (-16,700) as of third quarter 2021 that will be only slightly mitigated by a forecast annual growth of 3,200 jobs. Demand has returned, as evidenced by the fact that Health Care & Social Assistance and Accommodation & Food Services accounted for nearly two out of every five job vacancies in the second quarter of 2021; however, both sectors are struggling to find workers. Under almost two years of unprecedented stress, the Health Care & Social Assistance industry is more often dealing with a workforce looking elsewhere for job opportunities. Forecasted Health Care & Social Assistance growth below the all-sector average reflects this increased uncertainty.

Much of the short-term employment growth projected for the next year can still be attributed to the continued recovery from historic employment losses. Several industries and occupations have yet to regain pre-pandemic employment levels and it appears that we are still in a period of correction. For workers that were hit especially hard at the onset of the pandemic, such as those in Leisure & Hospitality and Other Services, large projected growth rates will not quite bring those occupations back to early 2020 employment levels. The context of what happened to a specific occupation or industry between March 2020 and the third quarter of 2021 is crucial to understanding the trajectory that growth may take over the next year.

The COVID-19 pandemic continues to inject uncertainty into the labor market in Minnesota. The future of Minnesota's employment remains difficult to predict among many quickly changing variables. What we do know is that the unpredictable nature of the virus will continue to impact the behavior of businesses, workers, and job seekers alike. These are trends that continue changing how, where, and when we work, both now and for the foreseeable future and are playing out against larger, long-standing demographic trends that limit the size of available labor force and in turn constrain job growth. Despite this uncertainty, the jobs recovery is expected to continue in Minnesota into 2022.

LONG-TERM PROJECTIONS

Looking longer term, Minnesota's economy is expected to grow by 5.7 percent between 2020 and 2030, a gain of 170,000 jobs. The largest and third fastest growing industry is projected to be health care and social assistance, which is anticipated to account for over 35 percent of total growth between 2020 and 2030. The two fastest growing industries are the ones that were

hardest hit by the pandemic recession, and have already experienced a rapid recovery. Arts, Entertainment and Recreation is expected to grow nearly 35 percent, a gain of almost 14,000 jobs; while Accommodation and Food Services is projected to regain more than 35,700 jobs, a 20.7 percent increase. Other Services is also expected to see a return to job growth after suffering significant declines during the pandemic recession.

The state is also projected to see continued rapid job growth in professional and technical services, educational services, administrative support and waste management services, transportation and warehousing, and construction. These industries will need to focus on recruiting new workers to meet their workforce needs. The state is expected to see small job gains in manufacturing, public administration, finance and insurance, management of companies, and wholesale trade. In contrast, the state is expected to see slight declines in retail trade, utilities, agriculture, and mining. However, these industries will still need to fill open positions due to labor market exit openings (see Table 17).

Table 17. Minnesota Industry Employment Projections, 2020-2030

NAICS Code	Industry	Estimated Employment 2020	Projected Employment 2030	*Percent Change 2020-2030*	*Numeric Change 2020-2030*
0	Total, All Industries	2,975,300	3,145,200	*+5.7%*	*+169,900*
62	Health Care & Social Assistance	473,914	533,729	*+12.6%*	*+59,815*
31	Manufacturing	309,108	313,098	*+1.3%*	*+3,990*
44	Retail Trade	276,316	263,653	*-4.6%*	*-12,663*
61	Educational Services	229,788	241,644	*+5.2%*	*+11,856*
72	Accommodation & Food Services	172,515	208,244	*+20.7%*	*+35,729*
9	Public Administration	184,485	188,472	*+2.2%*	*+3,987*
54	Professional & Technical Services	154,228	170,931	*+10.8%*	*+16,703*
52	Finance & Insurance	159,797	164,617	*+3.0%*	*+4,820*
56	Admin. Support & Waste Services	120,228	129,573	*+7.8%*	*+9,345*
23	Construction	123,927	129,479	*+4.5%*	*+5,552*
42	Wholesale Trade	124,780	126,800	*+1.6%*	*+2,020*
81	Other Services	106,083	118,291	*+11.5%*	*+12,208*
48	Transportation & Warehousing	103,467	110,041	*+6.4%*	*+6,574*
55	Management of Companies	86,958	87,685	*+0.8%*	*+727*
71	Arts, Entertainment, & Recreation	39,891	53,804	*+34.9%*	*+13,913*
51	Information	43,138	43,734	*+1.4%*	*+596*
53	Real Estate & Rental & Leasing	33,760	33,693	*-0.2%*	*-67*
11	Agriculture, Forestry, Fish & Hunt	24,004	23,750	*-1.1%*	*-254*
22	Utilities	11,898	10,501	*-11.7%*	*-1,397*
21	Mining	5,474	5,318	*-2.8%*	*-156*

Source: DEED 2020-2030 Employment Outlook

According to DEED's Quarterly Employment Demographics (QED) program, the workforce in the state was aging over the past 10 years. Through 2020, over one fifth (22.4%) of workers in the state were 55 years or older, compared to just 17.4 percent one decade earlier. The percent of the workforce in their prime working years, from 25 to 54 years of age, dropped from 65.5 percent in 2010 to 62.5 percent in 2020. In contrast, the percentage of young workers was falling over time – though that appears to have changed in 2021 due to the pandemic as young workers stepped in after older workers dropped out of the labor force. Overall, wages were

climbing across the board for all workers due to rising demand and a tight labor market. While wages were still lowest for the youngest and oldest workers who tend to fill lower-skilled, less-than-full-time jobs, these two age groups enjoyed the fastest percentage increase in wages from 2010 to 2020. Wages were highest for workers between 45 and 64 years of age, and males worked more hours than females, though the gap was narrowing over time (see Table 18).

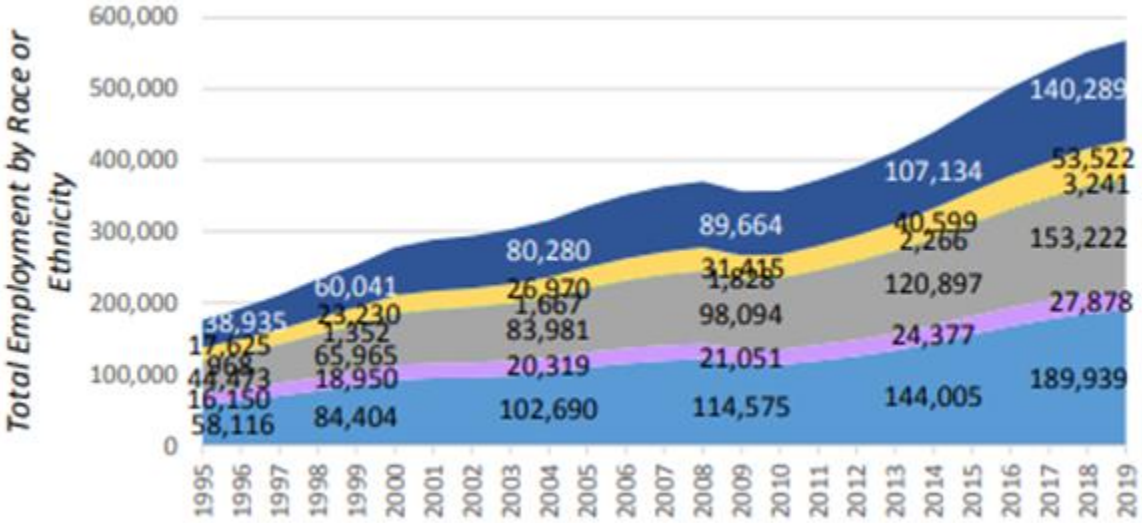
Table 18. Minnesota Workforce Demographics by Age Group and Gender, Total of All Industries, 2010-2020

	Percentage of Workers		Median Hourly Wage		Median Hours Worked	
	2020	2010	2020	2010	2020	2010
Total, all ages	100.0%	100.0%	$22.16	$16.15	430	425
19 years & under	5.7%	6.0%	$12.13	$7.87	120	110
20 to 24 years	9.5%	11.1%	$16.01	$10.57	265	246
25 to 44 years	43.6%	42.6%	$24.86	$18.02	468	466
45 to 54 years	18.9%	22.9%	$28.74	$20.72	480	480
55 to 64 years	17.3%	14.0%	$26.39	$19.86	480	478
65 years & over	5.1%	3.4%	$18.68	$12.96	261	218
Male	49.3%	48.6%	$25.00	$18.27	480	480
Female	50.7%	51.4%	$21.08	$15.02	396	380

Source: DEED Quarterly Employment Demographics

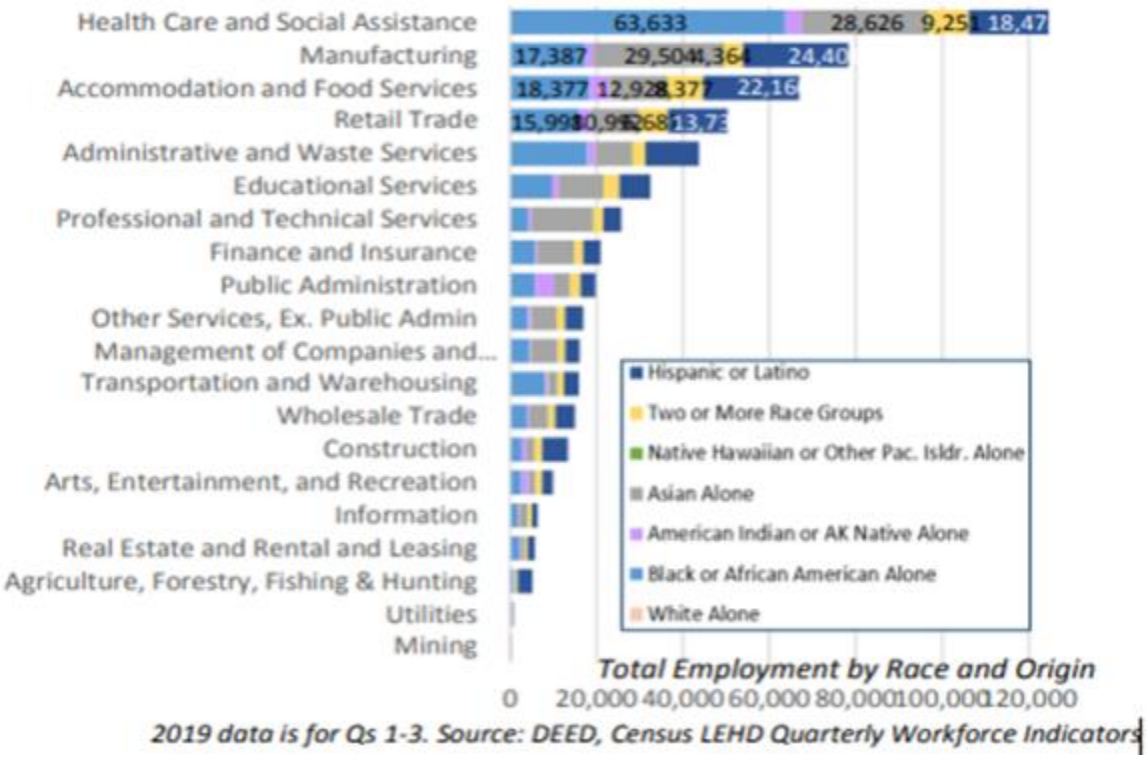
In addition to aging demographics, the racial diversity of the state's workforce has also been changing over time. According to the Quarterly Workforce Indicators dataset, the number of white jobholders across all industries increased steadily from 1995 to 2019, while the number of jobholders of some other race jumped rapidly. In fact, people of color or indigenous people filled well over half of the jobs added in the state in the past decade (see Figure 9).

Figure 9. Employment by Race or Ethnicity, Minnesota, 1995-2019



By industry sector, people of color or indigenous people were most likely to hold jobs in administrative and support services, health care and social assistance, and accommodation and food services, which are all lower-wage industries. People of color were underrepresented in mining, utilities, construction, wholesale trade, agriculture, and educational services, most of which are higher-wage industries. Increasing the diversity of workers within moderate and high paying industries could improve earnings and incomes for people of color and indigenous people (see Figure 10).

Figure 10. Employment by Race or Ethnicity by Industry, Minnesota, 2019



Stark differences in employment losses during the COVID-19 recession also appear when breaking the QWI trends down by race and ethnicity. Between third quarter 2019 and 2020, where total employment across all industries fell by 9.4%, it fell by 13.1% for American Indian or Alaska Native workers, 11.9% for workers of two or more races, and 11.7% for Black or African American workers. Losses were less severe overall for Asian or other Pacific Islander workers, down by7.5%, Hispanic or Latino workers down by 8.0%, and white workers down by 9.3% during that period.

The major industry sectors with higher shares of Black, Indigenous and People of Color (BIPOC) workers include Administrative & Support Services, Health Care & Social Assistance, Accommodation & Food Services, Manufacturing and Transportation & Warehousing. Each of these major sectors did lose a significant number of jobs and/or a significant share of their respective total employment between third quarter 2019 and 2020. Employment losses were also especially sharp for BIPOC workers in Arts, Entertainment & Recreation, despite that industry having a lower share of BIPOC workers. In that industry, employment dropped for Black or African American workers by 53.2%, for Asian or other Pacific Islander workers by 49.4%, for those workers reporting two or more races by 46.6%, and for Hispanic or Latino workers by 43.7%. For reference, total employment in the industry dropped by 39.8%. Employment losses specifically for Black or African American workers were also more significant in Accommodation & Food Services, Administrative & Support Services and Other Services, all hard-hit industries during the COVID-19 recession.

Nearly all industry sectors experienced employment loss between pre-pandemic peaks in 2019 and lows in the spring and summer months of 2020. Select industries, however, were especially hard-hit. By numeric employment loss, these include: Accommodation & Food Services; Retail Trade; Health Care & Social Assistance; Other Services; and Arts, Entertainment & Recreation. QWI data allows us to further understand how industries' labor force make up varied by demographics. In many cases, employment disparities already present were exacerbated by the COVID-19 recession, as seen with significant differences in employment loss by gender, race and ethnicity and age among the hardest-hit industries.

NONEMPLOYERS AND FARMS

Minnesota was home to 416,500 self-employed businesses or "nonemployers" in 2018, which are defined by the U.S. Census Bureau as "businesses without paid employees that are subject to federal income tax, originating from tax return information of the Internal Revenue Service (IRS)." Minnesota saw a small increase in nonemployers over the past decade, though it was not consistent across the state. Only the Twin Cities metro area and Southeast added nonemployers, while Central, Northeast, and Northwest saw big declines. In sum, the state added about 29,500 nonemployers from 2007 to 2018, a 7.6 percent increase. These nonemployers generated sales receipts of nearly $20 billion in 2018 (Table 19).

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Table 19. Nonemployer Statistics, 2018

	Number of Firms	Receipts ($1,000s)	*2007-2018 Change in Firms*	*2007-2018 Percent Change*
Central	49,410	$2,353,779	*-1,137*	*-2.2%*
Northeast	20,466	$812,846	*-1,709*	*-7.7%*
Northwest	43,152	$2,008,609	*-1,231*	*-2.8%*
Southeast	32,598	$1,553,876	*+84*	*+0.3%*
Southwest	27,297	$1,283,235	*-224*	*-0.8%*
Twin Cities	243,564	$11,982,457	*+33,720*	*+16.1%*
Minnesota	416,487	$19,994,802	*+29,503*	*+7.6%*

Source: U.S. Census, Nonemployer Statistics program

Though DEED is not a great source of data on farms, agriculture is also a key industry in Minnesota, including 68,822 farms producing just under $18.4 billion in the market value of products sold in 2017 according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture. As farms continue to get larger, the number of farms in the state declined over the past 5 years. The Northwest and Southwest regions had the largest presence of farms, followed by Central and Southeast Minnesota. In contrast, Northeast and the Twin Cities did not have very many farms or much reliance on agriculture (see Table 20).

Table 20. Census of Agriculture, 2017

	Number of Farms	*Change in Farms, 2012-2017 Number*	*Change in Farms, 2012-2017 Percent*	Market Value of Products Sold
Central	13,540	*-1,246*	*-8.4%*	$2,939,547,000
Northeast	2,362	*+55*	*+2.4%*	$55,215,000
Northwest	19,380	*-2,589*	*-11.8%*	$4,173,089,000
Southeast	11,478	*-601*	*-5.0%*	$2,857,846,000
Southwest	18,319	*-832*	*-4.3%*	$7,758,272,000
Twin Cities	3,743	*-507*	*-11.9%*	$611,422,000
Minnesota	68,822	*-5,720*	*-7.7%*	$18,395,390,000

Source: 2017 Census of Agriculture

Regional profiles have been made available to each of the workforce development regions. Additional information and analysis will be provided to each region as requested.

2. WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT, EDUCATION AND TRAINING ACTIVITIES ANALYSIS

2. WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT, EDUCATION AND TRAINING ACTIVITIES ANALYSIS.

The Unified or Combined State Plan must include an analysis of the workforce development activities, including education and training in the State, to address the education and skill needs of the workforce, as identified in (a)(1)(B)(iii) above, and the employment needs of employers, as identified in (a)(1)(A)(iii) above. This must include an analysis of

A. THE STATE'S WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES

Provide an analysis of the State's workforce development activities, including education and training activities of the core programs, Combined State Plan partner programs included in this plan, and required and optional one-stop delivery system partners.[1]

Minnesota's WIOA Combined State Plan serves as a guide for Minnesota for continuous improvement of the state's workforce development system. This plan and its implementation seek to address challenges to the workforce development system and capitalize on opportunities Challenges include: labor force availability; a skills gap; disparities in employment and educational outcomes for populations experiencing workforce system challenges; and the

need to remain relevant and useful to job seekers and employers, given their rapidly changing capacities and expectations.

Under WIOA, the activities of the workforce development system are categorized within three areas: 1) Career Services; 2) Training Services and 3) Business Services. The following is a high-level description of these three categories of services, as they are provided in the state of Minnesota and represent all core programs, Combined State Plan programs and optional one-stop delivery system partners.

Career Services — WIOA has 11 required elements for career services, all which support customers to make informed decisions about their career choices and to understand the resources needed and available to assist them with pursuing their goals. Minnesota's system focuses on providing career information, job seeker services and connections to support services that help individuals find and retain employment.

System partners provide a robust range of workshops, e-learning, one-on-one meetings and other resources to help people prepare for a successful job search. Minnesota's career services are supported by nationally-recognized labor market information systems and a "Creative Job Search" curriculum, as well as workshops designed for a wide range of needs — including career planning, skills assessment, resume writing, interviewing and how to use social media in your job search. Minnesota's Unemployment Insurance (UI) division also has laid the groundwork for moving services to the web by creating e-learning courses based on the Creative Job Search curriculum. Resource referrals are also a critical component in connecting job seekers with needed resources. These services are provided throughout the system at CareerForce locations, partner sites and are often augmented by services through non-required titles/partners, such as the public library system.

DEED provides required and optional training to all core program, Combined State Plan programs and optional one-stop delivery system partners to ensure consistent approaches and quality services for all job seekers. All core programs with the exception of Title II, participate in career services to the fullest extent possible through collocation at CareerForce locations and other locations determined necessary for serving job seekers. Title II works closely with CareerForce locations to coordinate career services and referrals among the programs for seamless transition for customers. Having a "career and work oriented" context for much of their instruction, including computer literacy, provides strong support for job seekers to transition to services at the CareerForce locations. All other Combined State Plan programs also have direct connections to career services provided to job seekers and program participants through the CareerForce locations. As an example, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) services are currently accessible in a majority of CareerForce locations across Minnesota. Post-secondary Perkins V is the only non-direct individual service provider in the Combined State Plan, but the work they produce aligns with the building of career services that support career pathway thinking.

Training Services — Since WIOA implementation, Minnesota has broadened the system's approach to training services, placing greater emphasis on recognition of work-based and experiential- learning; portable and stackable credentials which lead to a career pathway that supports family sustaining wages. One of the key entry points for many adults and youth is Adult Basic Education, which focuses on a range of educational needs, such as basic literacy and English as a second language; GED preparation; and "bridge" programming that combines basic skills education contextualized for career pathways and preparation for post-secondary training.

As employers are forced by the workforce shortage to hire more people with less experience, they are seeking more support and assistance with providing training on the job to provide existing employees with the opportunity to learn new skills. The state's Incumbent Worker Training program helps provide employers with these training opportunities.

Minnesota's post-secondary options are abundant and varied. These opportunities include traditional education; customized training; private training providers; all levels of credentialing; registered apprenticeships and other work-based learning options. With funding dedicated for education and training, system partners use Minnesota's federal and state training resources, including the state's general and Workforce Development Fund, which helps retrain dislocated workers and has funded career pathways programing, increasing the access through community-based organizations who serve targeted populations and returning veterans. In June of 2020, DEED also entered into a partnership with the online learning platform Coursera, which allowed the state to provide digital reskilling and upskilling training opportunities for anyone in the state from 2020-21. In the end, more than 3,500 unique Minnesotans completed at least one course on the platform, a significant portion of them being dislocated workers.

All core programs participate in training services, as allowed by their federal title rules and regulations. Title I-B and Title IV programs support Youth, Adult, Dislocated Workers and individuals with disabilities, often coordinated with state funding and other community-based services to ensure successful alignment and outcomes of educational and employment goals. Title II provides services to Minnesota's most diverse population of any plan partner and plays a strategic role in basic skills attainment and preparation for postsecondary education. Title III, which doesn't allow for occupational training activities, often serves as a first point of entry for the referral process for low income adults, Dislocated Workers and other targeted populations. Additionally, other Titles and UI refer customers to the career planning services offered by Title III.

As allowed by their federal title rules and regulations, partners in the Combined State Plan participate in the provision of training services. Most of these programs have greater restrictions on the provision of training services, but provide the opportunity for co-enrollment and greater reliance on more traditional sources of financial aid for college or other opportunities. Postsecondary Perkins, as a non-direct service provider, is more embedded in the design of postsecondary education, supporting the development of new education and training for emerging occupations and emphasizing nontraditional occupations, to name a few aspects of their role. Minnesota's Eligible Training Provider List, or ETPL, tracks training programs and their eligibility for federal funding.

Business Services — Minnesota's WIOA Plan continues its emphasis on providing services to businesses and has developed performance metrics for these activities. The primary service provided to employers is to help them find workers. MinnesotaWorks.net, the state's online job bank, allows businesses to post openings with no fee – although processes related to upgrading the platform are underway. At any given time, it has more than 75,000 job postings and more than 25,000 active resumes from job seekers and has the capacity for businesses to be recognized as "veteran friendly", supporting civilian workforce re-entry for Minnesota veterans.

The state along with its many workforce partners work to support and assist employers in their talent attraction and retention efforts whether through workforce planning, innovative workforce solutions, labor market information and training opportunities. Being competitive in today's tight labor market, and having the tools employers need to remain up-to-date in their recruitment and retention efforts, help them to attract and retain a skilled workforce. All core programs participate in and benefit from business services activities.

Although Title III provides a strong basis for all business services activities, all of the other core programs utilize and coordinate resources to support this activity. Title I-B programs utilize this information and engage in supplemental activities such as focus groups and specialized career fairs to engage employers and inform the local boards. Title II business services activities serves to inform curriculum context and direction, to ensure that the basic education being provided serves a broader need of those needing or seeking more immediate employment. Title IV also

has business outreach staff to support and promote expanding opportunities for individuals with disabilities.

All other Combined State Plan partners benefit in similar ways from the business services activities. Some of these programs, like postsecondary Perkins V, have business engagement requirements that assist them with program planning and other aspects of training development. Minnesota also has had great success with the veterans program and strategies that tap into the business services activities. All optional partners have connections to the One-Stop system's career services, training services, and business services through a variety of options. These options include co-location, sharing recruitment information, participating in referral networks, and participating in strategy or service-related activities. These options are designed based on regional presence and access to the services.

Minnesota has worked to enhance focus on business and industry. Employer Navigator duties have been assigned to specific staff at all CareerForce locations. These staff are adept at working with business to meet workforce needs.

In order to best serve Minnesota businesses, the Department of Employment and Economic Development provides many resources through the Regional Workforce Strategy Consultant team, assigned to the 6 Workforce Development Areas of Minnesota. The Workforce Strategy Consultants have developed innovative workforce solutions by aligning resources, facilitating collaboration, convening business leaders, and leveraging expertise in targeted industry sectors that drive economic equity and growth. The Workforce Strategy Consultants team is housed on the "Economic Development" side of the agency at DEED, which is intended to help create more alignment with programming and efforts to attract and support businesses that typically exist "outside" of the WIOA/federally funded workforce system of states.

The Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED) has formed an internal committee to streamline employer services in which to improve collaboration and communications internally and externally with our business customers and will increase employer engagement and the number of employers served in the workforce system while also streamlining the WIOA reporting, data collection, and employer survey processes.

Veteran Service's LVERS, are described in greater detail later in this narrative, also serve as a resource to employers.

B. THE STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES OF WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES.

Provide an analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of the workforce development activities identified in (A), directly above.

Minnesota's strengths and weaknesses analysis of the activities provided under WIOA will be looked at through the lens of a career pathways system and how the six elements identify and support the gap analysis of what the current system offers and what the future system needs to deliver.

Career Services Strengths:

- From entry into the system through One-Stops, to the partnerships with community-based organizations, customers receive career services that are regional or localized to individual labor markets. This is achieved through constant input from regional and local employers through employer engagement and cross-sector partnerships developed primarily through the work of the local workforce development boards.
- Minnesota's workforce development system providers also represent the growing diversity of our state's population, with community engagement by local providers

enhancing and expanding services to assist with target populations experiencing disparate outcomes based on race, disability, gender or disconnected youth. The employer and community engagement also contribute to the customer-focused design, offering individualized or culturallyappropriate approaches. Community engagement efforts in the state have been led primarily by community-based organizations with experience working with communities facing systemic barriers to employment.

- Minnesota also oversees several key workforce development programs that seek to address the state's economic disparities including:
    - Competitive Grants: Competitive grant programs support nonprofit organizations that provide business assistance to targeted groups including women, People of Color, indigenous people, rural residents, innovative startups, entrepreneurs, inventors and people with disabilities.
    - Pathways to Prosperity: The program uses a career pathway design in meeting the skills needs of businesses and individuals. The program's innovative approach helps educationally under-prepared adults succeed in well-paying careers by integrating basic skills education and training in fields where these skills are in-demand.
    - Youth at Work: Provides job training and placement to Minnesota's youth population, in addition to access to networks and problem-solving skills, to support their long-term careers.
    - The CareerForce Partnership: The new CareerForce brand was developed through a partnership MAWB (representing the 16 local workforce boards), GWDB, and DEED. This unified brand, while continuing to be further developed and implemented, helps alleviate confusion around programs and services for employers and jobseekers.

Career Services Weaknesses:

A career pathways approach to Career Services presents several opportunities for improving our services.

Career Services most significant weaknesses, which we are working to address, are:

- Focus on finding a job and meeting job seekers "where they are at" – we want to help people who need family sustaining employment to focus on finding a career pathway that best meets their interests and skills.
- Need for greater focus on employers – we want to develop tools that assist employers in tapping overlooked job seekers while we increase awareness of our services. We want to help all Minnesota meet their workforce needs, but many employers are not aware of our services.
- Need for more diverse, culturally aware service – the makeup of our staff and workforce development boards need to reflect the diverse populations we serve. We need greater outreach to populations experiencing disparities in education and employment outcomes.
- MinnesotaWorks.net, the required federal labor exchange, is outdated and not integrated with CareerForceMN.com. This integration is a priority for state staff in 2020 as it will help provide more seamless service online for career services and for employers.

The strategies and actions for addressing these weaknesses in the system will be led by the regional partnerships and the local workforce development boards. Through the regional planning process, each region identifies in-demand occupations and specific populations experiencing inequities in educational and employment outcomes, and then creates business-led sector partnerships that provide the necessary input for the local boards to direct and guide the workforce development system investments in their region that contribute to the foundation of career services.

System management approaches and tools are also needed to help monitor and measure the impact of new strategies and tools. There is no universal data collection system in Minnesota for all workforce development programs, particularly between federally funded and state funded, which contributes to cumbersome intake processes for service providers and can lead to delays in providing seamless services to customers.

The strategies and actions for addressing these weaknesses in the system will be led by the GWDB and State Agencies that oversee the programs participating in the State Combined Plan. Minnesota continues to experience shifts in funding and resources. This, combined with expanding approaches to career services under WIOA, will require innovative approaches and stronger coordination of efforts through policy and program updates. Technology solutions through system management approaches will be key to bridging existing divides that exist within career services.

Training Services Strengths:

- Alignment with career pathways model: Minnesota's training services reflect the key elements of a career pathways system. Based on the BEST model from the state of Washington, Minnesota modeled its Pathways to Prosperity initiative on a career pathways approach. Pathways to Prosperity grants draw heavily upon employer and community engagement for identifying the initial career pathways and targeting specific populations. The grants include person centered design and offer a career navigator to assist with coordinating supports required to elevate completion and employment rates, with an ultimate goal of a career and family sustaining wages.

- Many of the career pathway projects have specifically addressed services for target populations experiencing disparate outcomes based on race, disability, gender or disconnected youth. . This work is aimed at creating better outcomes through more relevant approaches. It is based on Minnesota's commitment to address systemic barriers for targeted populations and continues to evolve Minnesota's two-year postsecondary education institutions and adult basic education also draw heavily on employer engagement to ensure curriculum and skill requirements remain relevant. This process is leveraged by multiple partners, such as the department of corrections, and serves a strong base for meeting the training needs of employers.

- Minnesota's Pathways to Prosperity grants demonstrate the need for and potential success of a person-centered design and approach. Success requires providing career navigators to assist with the coordination of support services and an alternative to scheduling and instructional approaches. Minnesota's experience implementing Pathways to Prosperity and other career pathway initiatives, the state has gained a better understanding of how to broaden the scalability in moving the system statewide. This is one of, if not the most critical element for broader success of implementing WIOA and a career pathway system.

- Minnesota also has strengths in the area of funding and resources. State, local and philanthropic support for workforce development makes a substantial contribution to the state's workforce development system. Strong performance by the local boards and service providers has led to the awarding of WIA incentive funds and competitive

grants; state appropriations that support additional youth services; services to individuals with disabilities; dislocated and incumbent workers; and adult basic education. Most of these resources augment the activities under WIOA. There are also significant resource coordination activities related to training activities, such as the Youth Practitioners Network, the local workforce development boards and efforts by CBO coalitions.

- Activities have further support through changes or creation of new policy and programming development specific to career pathways projects serving low-income adult populations. Minnesota has strong working relationships between the agencies that oversee the WIOA titles and the Department of Human Services, which oversees the TANF and SNAP E&T programs. Perkins V, also contributes to the policy discussions, through the mapping of career pathways and their understanding of articulation and matriculation needs to align with postsecondary institutional requirements. The majority of the special programming in career pathway pilots have included or required these types of partnerships which will contribute to policy and program changes.

- These efforts also support work in the area of System Management, currently anchored, from a data perspective, within Workforce One. This system supports data management and sharing across WIOA titles I and IV; TANF and SNAP E&T, including all of the local partners delivering the related services. This system is also moving toward having participant documents stored electronically, streamlining administrative activities and monitoring.

Training Services Weaknesses:

Weaknesses in Training Services that we have identified include:

- Room for improvement in coordination between K-12 and postsecondary education to provide accurate guidance to students and prepare them for in-demand occupations.

- Need for broader recognition of the value of a range of education and training options, including work-based learning.

- Better aligning the skills and interests of job seekers with approaches that meet their individual needs. This includes ensuring culturally relevant training and training for job seekers who have experienced significant workforce challenges.

- Broader use of customer-focused services including coordination of housing, childcare, transportation and other support services. Unemployment Insurance funding, for example, can only cover an individual for up to 26 weeks but courses or programs that they could be helped by may last much longer than that funding. This may deter some individuals from participating in programs, while others may start a program but withdraw once UI funding ends.

- Businesses on the state and local boards have indicated a need for more short-term programming where individuals can select from a wide variety of "stackable" training programs needed by their current employer or employers in the region, gradual and incremental benefits can be seen by those participating, and participants can eventually obtain industry-recognized credentials.

The strategies and actions for addressing these weaknesses in the system will be led by the regional partnerships and the local workforce development boards. Through the regional planning process, each region identifies in-demand occupations and specific populations experiencing inequities in educational and employment outcomes, and then creates business-led sector partnerships that provide the necessary input for the local boards to direct and guide the workforce development system investments in their region that contribute to the delivery of

training services in a more accessible and usable way for populations experiencing inequities in educational and employment outcomes.

Funding and resources strategies should also support developing new approaches to training services. Examples of needs in this area are the small number of career counselors in high schools, serving youth who do not finish high school or connect to postsecondary education, and serving students requiring additional education prior to starting a postsecondary field of study.. Through better alignment, programs and policies can guide changes in the system's approach to education and life-long learning.

Improving system management will require a coordinated effort of state agencies, state agency boards, local workforce development and school boards, and service providers across the system. Stemming from a shared vision and an understanding of outcomes and common measures, efforts need to focus on developing better approaches to measuring system processes and outcomes that validate a career pathway system and support the needs of a high-quality workforce.

The strategies and actions for addressing these weaknesses in the system will be led by the GWDB and State Agencies that oversee the programs participating in the State Combined Plan. Minnesota continues to experience shifts in funding and resources. This, combined with expanding approaches to training services under WIOA, will require innovative approaches and stronger coordination of efforts through policy and program updates. Minnesota is fast becoming a State funding dominated system in relation to federal funding for workforce development and the associated programs in the Combined Plan. This phenomenon will require a thoughtful approach to charting the future of workforce development in Minnesota.

- Business Services Strengths:
- Incumbent Worker and On-the-Job training programs are sought after by employers.
- Innovative industry and business engaged workforce initiatives implemented across the state, focused on a particular local area or region.
- Growth of community engagement activities that work with employers to address employment and economic disparities.
- Monthly webinars, workshops social media and other resources for employers expand the engagement with communities seeing the greatest disparities.
- Local board staff and DEED regional employer outreach staff have deep connections with businesses in their areas.
- One-on-one consultations for businesses and are useful in navigating the complex workforce system and all resources.
- Business Services Weaknesses:
- Employer outreach could be more effective in raising awareness or dispelling misperceptions about services and programs available.
- Online resources for employers need further development, while the MinnesotaWorks.net labor exchange needs updating. The relationship between MinnesotaWorks.net and the CareerForceMN.com platform is unclear to some.
- *Strengthen the connection with Workforce Development and Economic Development resulting in increased service to both job seekers and businesses.

The GWDB and State Agencies will work to develop more tools and materials for businesses, while DEED and the GWDB continue to explore and prioritize more opportunities for workforce

development and economic development efforts to be better aligned strategically and operationally. The integration of content between MinnesotaWorks.net and the online CareerForce platform will also be addressed, with updates to MinnesotaWorks.net underway. GWDB staff will continue to convene members of the GWDB from business to help focus efforts on the needs of industry, powering the growth of the Minnesota economy, for everyone, and will work to better connect these efforts to the work of the state agencies, programs, and policies.

C. STATE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT CAPACITY

Provide an analysis of the capacity of State entities to provide the workforce development activities identified in (A) above.

DEED's programs and services are delivered through 50 CareerForce locations, online services and eligibility-based programs. DEED also partners with certified service providers, non-profits, and the Minnesota State college and universities system, and Adult Basic Education programs to deliver workforce development programs to all Minnesotans.

Minnesota has a long history of successful participation in national and state initiatives to expand workforce development activities through cross-agency and systems collaboration. Here are just a few recent examples:

- National Governors Association (NGA) The GWDB takes part in monthly virtual briefings with NGA policy and congressional analysts who provide technical assistance to directors of state workforce development boards and co-create resources and tools to facilitate capacity building for strategic leadership. These peer-to-peer learning opportunities are enhanced by in-person meetings of the NGA's affiliate associations for State Workforce Liaisons and State Workforce Board Chairs, webinars and strategic publications. Minnesota received an Educate for Opportunity grant from the National Governors Association and Strata Education Network to support training initiatives for adult learning. The Minnesota team received technical assistance from NGA over the course of 18 months to refine their data-driven approaches to anticipating and meeting future workforce needs.

- National Skills Coalition Policy Academy for Quality Credentials: DEED, the Minnesota Office of Higher Education (OHE), the Minnesota Department of Education (MDE), Minnesota State Colleges & Universities, , the University of Minnesota, private colleges, businesses (including Chambers), and others are participating in a cross-agency, cross-sector effort to establish more common definitions, policies, and practices between our education and workforce development systems – and to ensure that this work is being done in a way that addresses business and community needs.

Minnesota also has strong internal supports from offices that support workforce development activities through the dissemination of information or evaluation to guide decision-making. These include:

- DEED's Labor Market Information Office and its regional analysts continue to collaborate with local Workforce Boards, DEED staff, and others to provide data and analysis for grant applications, career information tools for customers, and meaningful analysis on the state and regional economies.

- DEED's Performance Technical Management Office, which works throughout the agency to facilitate results-based accountability that is client-focused, impartial, and transparent. The office informs strategic direction by providing data-driven analysis and context to those who use, deliver, and fund the Minnesota economic and workforce development systems.

- The Minnesota P-20 Education Partnership was created by the Minnesota Legislature to promote policies and systems alignment across Minnesota's primary, secondary, and postsecondary educations systems. The GWDB is actively partnering with representatives of the P-20 Partnership on several alignment-focused initiatives, with the P-20 Partnership supporting and helping drive the GWDB's efforts to make progress in this area.

[1] Required one-stop partners: In addition to the core programs, the following partner programs are required to provide access through the one-stops: Career and Technical Education (Perkins), Community Services Block Grant, Indian and Native American programs, HUD Employment and Training programs, Job Corps, Local Veterans' Employment Representatives and Disabled Veterans' Outreach Program, National Farmworker Jobs program, Senior Community Service Employment program (SCSEP), Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) (unless the Governor determines TANF Page 35 will not be a required partner), Trade Adjustment Assistance programs, Unemployment Compensation programs, and YouthBuild.

[2] Populations experiencing disparities based on race, disability, gender, or being a disconnected youth.

B. STATE STRATEGIC VISION AND GOALS

B. STATE STRATEGIC VISION AND GOALS.

The Unified or Combined State Plan must include the State's strategic vision and goals for developing its workforce and meeting employer needs in order to support economic growth and economic self-sufficiency. This must include

1. VISION

Describe the State's strategic vision for its workforce development system.

As described in the economic and workforce analysis above, Minnesota's future economic prosperity requires a workforce development system that provides greater employment opportunity for those experiencing barriers to employment and meets the skill needs of employers. As our state faces the reality of a shrinking and diversifying labor force, along with currently low unemployment rates, we must fully utilize the talents, skills, and experience of more people in the workforce. We need "all hands on deck" at a time when we are leaving too many Minnesotans behind. Minnesota's WIOA State Plan vision continues to be supported by the programs and services of WIOA:

Our vision for Minnesota is a healthy economy where every Minnesotan has meaningful employment and a family-sustaining wage, and where all employers are able to fill jobs in demand.

Inherent in this vision is the reality that employment must be more than a job. Employment must have a career focus aimed at meeting the needs of both job seekers – who are seeking a family-sustaining wage – and employers – most of whom currently have significant workforce needs. Our vision is for meaningful careers at higher wages for all Minnesotans including those who have faced significant challenges. Our vision focuses on placing people on the path to in-demand careers within growing industry sectors while paying attention to industry trends forecasting future growth, and utilizing our system to provide supports and training for individuals entering onto a career pathway – including supports for employers who sometimes need help from the system in ensuring accessibility and inclusion. We realize that progress toward this vision will rely on its alignment with the Governor's priorities, attention to the changing needs of job seekers and employers, flexibility to deal with the pandemic-impacted labor market, and well-executed implementation strategies. As we look to future modifications

to the One Minnesota WIOA Combined State Plan, we see an opportunity to explore innovations in our workforce system in a number of areas:

- Prioritizing Diversity, Inclusion, and Equity (throughout our workforce recovery efforts)
- Equitable Systems
- Creating an Age-Friendly State
- Preparing for the Future of Work

2. GOALS

Describe the goals for achieving this vision based on the above analysis of the State's economic conditions, workforce, and workforce development activities. This must include—

A. GOALS FOR PREPARING AN EDUCATED AND SKILLED WORKFORCE, INCLUDING PREPARING YOUTH AND INDIVIDUALS WITH BARRIERS OF EMPLOYMENT[1] AND OTHER POPULATIONS.[2]

B. GOALS FOR MEETING THE SKILLED WORKFORCE NEEDS OF EMPLOYERS.

In order to realize our vision for a stronger workforce development system, Minnesota's WIOA Plan continues its focus on two primary goals:

1. Reduce educational, skills training, and employment disparities based on race, disability, gender, or disconnected youth.

2. Build employer-led industry sector partnerships that expand the talent pipeline to be inclusive of race, disability, gender, and age to meet industry demands for a skilled workforce.

Minnesota is committed to addressing the needs of individuals who have faced challenges to employment by identifying the disparities based on the data presented in this plan. Regardless Minnesota's ongoing tight labor market and extremely low unemployment rates overall, there are populations experiencing two to three times the average unemployment rate. Minnesota's will continue to address the disparity gaps within targeted populations to improve outcomes of education attainment and employment outcomes. As outlined in plan modifications in 2018 and again in the 2020 WIOA State Plan, Minnesota chose to include gender as an additional focus to reduce workforce disparities. This addition was based on community input as well as workforce and economic analysis. Minnesota recognizes that these target populations are not unique but intersect and that it is often at these intersections where disparities in outcomes are the greatest.

Additionally, through the business-led sector partnerships, a greater focus will be placed on access to career opportunities for disparately impacted populations as included in goal 2 For the One Minnesota 2020 WIOA State Plan, age has been added to our list. Governor Walz has prioritized making Minnesota an Age-Friendly state. There are one million older adults in Minnesota and that figure is growing rapidly. In 2020, the number of older adults in Minnesota over age 65 will exceed the number of children under age 18. Employment is one of the challenges that many older adults face. Many older adults want to stay in the workforce, volunteer, and give back to their communities. Given Minnesota's tight labor market, employers stand to benefit from the skills and expertise of older workers.

The career pathways system is grounded through the vision and goals of this plan. The commitment to career pathways is evident at multiple levels; state, regional, and local areas. Minnesota continues to build upon our experience to develop strategies beyond our local areas to become embedded throughout the six established regions within the state. Each of the six regions within Minnesota have approved regional plans and strategies to support the goals of our state plan. These plans build upon existing career pathways with a focus on serving

individuals with the greatest barriers to employment. The plans identify a minimum of two industry sectors to establish or develop additional capacity through employer-led partnerships. Less than two years has passed since the regional plans have been approved but all six regions have demonstrated significant progress. The regions have developed a regional governance structure, made significant progress in their community outreach, established employer-led partnerships and are in the process of developing career pathways models to meet the needs of the individuals served and establishing benchmarks to measure their outcomes. Minnesota's state investment ($35M) in the equity grants in 2016 and its subsequent investment in successor grants provides further investment for training for youth, communities of color, and individuals with other barriers to employment. Minnesota's vision to meet the needs of these individuals as well as the needs of industry will be our goals for the next four years. In 2016, the GWDB adopted this plan as their four-year strategic plan. The board has established two additional standing committees to address and identify strategies, policies and oversight to support the goals. The Racial Equity in Education, Training and Employment Committee and Disabilities Equity in Education, Training and Employment Committees represent board members and stakeholders at state, regional and local levels. The GWDB continues to provide oversight, technical assistance, and communication around best practices within the regional plans.

The GWDB has made it a priority to address gender opportunity gaps. Workforce participation by gender in some of the industry sectors identify significant gaps. Addressing these gaps and focusing on populations with the greatest barriers will continue to move individuals forward to earning a family sustaining wage. Developing strategies that address these gaps will include intentionality and focus around race, disability, disconnected youth, and gender. Additionally, the workforce development system should be helping to ensure that environments where services for job seekers are provided, along with the workplaces that they are being placed into, are welcoming of all gender identities.

The six regions are instrumental in the implementation of strategies while informing the GWDB and the respective committees of their challenges and successes. Together they will identify best practices, examine the barriers and collectively make recommendations for solutions toward achieving our goals. Over the next two years the priorities will continue to focus on developing career pathways based on building the competencies and skills needed to fill occupations in demand within our growing sectors. The priority will be focused on developing industry recognized credentials that move individuals along a career path that fulfills the demands of industry while providing opportunity for employment and livable wages. Minnesota will continue to focus on industry sectors in; construction, health care, manufacturing, natural resources and professional and business services. These sectors have multiple occupations that allow individuals to continue to develop their skills while moving out of poverty into livable wage occupations.

The combined state plan partners are instrumental in identifying and leveraging resources to support these innovative approaches at local and regional levels. The health care sector across the state and their partnerships, have developed training models (Career Pathways) that support individuals at all levels but also developed the training that allow for individuals to get off and on the "ramps" to skill development which lead to credential and/or degree attainment. The CPP membership represents all partners of this combined plan with three sub- groups being led by Adult Basic Education, CTE, DLI, and Dept. of Human Services (TANF/Snap E & T). In addition, community-based organizations play a major role by identifying the needs of their communities whether it be transportation, childcare, housing, remedial education or ESL, or culture differences. This partnership is able to identify the needs of all individuals served through the program partners but also opportunities for incumbent workers whom provide opportunities for entry level positions for someone entering the workforce. A successful career pathway model allows for individuals, even out of school youth, to move into employment, receive the necessary training leading to credential attainment, receive support services, and

provide future opportunity for forward growth in other occupations by building on previous experience and credentials. This partnership supported by the GWDB is one example of supporting this plan in addition to sector partnerships and regional partnerships being established through the six regional plans. To ensure alignment, transparency, and progress, the GWDB will be holding meetings or workshops for members representing business to better establish policies and directions moving forward. Additionally, the GWDB utilizes each of its full board meetings to have discussions that are synthesized into a memo and sent to the Governor's Office to advise the governor on a particular topic or issues.

3. PERFORMANCE GOALS.

Using the table provided in Appendix 1, include the State's expected levels of performance relating to the performance accountability measures based on primary indicators of performance described in section 116(b)(2)(A) of WIOA. (This Strategic Planning element only applies to core programs.)

Effectiveness in Serving Employers

The USDOL requires us to report on the "Effectiveness for Serving Employers" annually. Below, find the final numbers supplied in Minnesota's WIOA Annual Report Narrative.

Employer Services	Establishment Count PY20	Establishment Count PY19
1. Employer Information and Support Services	46	2145
2. Workforce Recruitment Assistance	18934	8811
3. Strategic Planning/Econ Devt Activities	570	274
4. Untapped Labor Pools Activities	976	1172
5. Training Services	217	156
5b. Incumbent Worker Training Services	182	147
6. Rapid Response/Business Downsizing Assistance	126	313
6b. Planning Layoff Response	101	268
Employer Penetration	8.11 %	6.54 %
Total (De-duplicated)	15,377	12,035
QCEW (2018 Q1)	189,680	183,886
Retention with Same Employer	73.04%	60.16 %
Same employer Q2 Q4	18,888	18,872
Employed Q2	25,860	30,541

4. ASSESSMENT.

Describe how the State will assess the overall effectiveness of the workforce development system in the State in relation to the strategic vision and goals stated above in sections (b)(1), (2), and (3) and how it will use the results of this assessment and other feedback to make continuous or quality improvements.

The performance goals are based on individuals with barriers to employment including Minnesota's communities of color. Under the direction of the Operations Committee of the GWDB, DEED's Performance Technical Management staff prepared a WIOA State Plan Dashboard to provide transparency and accountability towards its state plan goals.

With the restructuring of the DEED's Performance Technical Management team, the WIOA State Plan Dashboard is under review. Enhancements to this data tool, designed to track performance by race, gender and other factors, are pending.

[1] Individuals with barriers to employment include MN Family Resiliency Partnership participants (formerly displaced homemakers); low-income individuals; Indians, Alaska Natives, and Native Hawaiians; individuals with disabilities, including youth who are individuals with disabilities; older individuals; ex-offenders; homeless individuals, or homeless children and youths; youth who are in or have aged out of the foster care system; individuals who are English language learners, individuals who have low levels of literacy, and individuals facing substantial cultural barriers; eligible migrant and seasonal farmworkers (as defined at section 167(i) of WIOA and Training and Employment Guidance Letter No. 35-14); individuals within 2 years of exhausting lifetime eligibility under the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families Program; single parents (including single pregnant women); and long-term unemployed individuals.

[2] Veterans, unemployed workers, and youth and any other populations identified by the State.

C. STATE STRATEGY

C. STATE STRATEGY.

The Unified or Combined State Plan must include the State's strategies to achieve its strategic vision and goals. These strategies must take into account the State's economic, workforce, and workforce development, education and training activities and analysis provided in Section (a) above. Include discussion of specific strategies to address the needs of populations provided in Section (a).

1. DESCRIBE THE STRATEGIES THE STATE WILL IMPLEMENT, INCLUDING INDUSTRY OR SECTOR PARTNERSHIPS RELATED TO IN-DEMAND INDUSTRY SECTORS AND OCCUPATIONS AND CAREER PATHWAYS, AS REQUIRED BY WIOA SECTION 101(D)(3)(B), (D). "CAREER PATHWAY" IS DEFINED AT WIOA SECTION 3(7) AND INCLUDES REGISTERED APPRENTICESHIP. "IN-DEMAND INDUSTRY SECTOR OR OCCUPATION" IS DEFINED AT WIOA SECTION 3(23).

As noted above, the One Minnesota Combined WIOA State Plan will continue its focus on two primary goals:

1. Reduce educational, skills training, and employment disparities based on race, disability, gender, and disconnected youth to provide greater opportunity for all Minnesotans.

2. Build employer-led industry sector partnerships that expand the talent pipeline to be inclusive of race, disability, gender, disconnected youth, and age to meet industry demand for a skilled workforce.

Minnesota will seek to achieve these goals by continuing to build a robust career pathway system driven by six common elements of successful career pathways:

1. Business Engagement
2. Community Engagement
3. Customer-Focused Design
4. Funding and Resource Needs
5. Policy and System Alignment
6. System Management

In 2016, the GWDB adopted the definition and six key elements of career pathways to define work in partnership with providers and funders. This process has helped align WIOA and other Combined Plan partner resources with existing state and philanthropic resources that have been key drivers of career pathways programming. Career pathways programming has continued to grow to best meet the unique situations of the populations being served.

The following narrative lays out a high-level overview of the strategies that Minnesota is pursuing as we make progress toward our goals.

Strategic Element 1 - Business Engagement

Create business-led sector partnerships to guide the development of career pathways in occupations in demand that support family sustaining wages

Business engagement focuses on creating business-led sector partnerships that utilize the 7 principles of Industry Partnerships, published by The National Fund for Workforce Solutions. Based on regularly updated regional Labor Market Information (LMI) data, each region develops sector partnerships that are business—led. The outcome of this effort is Career Pathway models that lay out a clear route to attaining jobs for occupations in demand that pay family-sustaining wages. Components include identifying the demand for each occupation; establishing the technical skill requirements tied to a postsecondary credential that are recognized by the industry; and conducting an analysis of workforce make-up as it relates to employment levels of populations experiencing disparate impact.

The primary responsibility for this strategy lies with DEED (several teams), GWDB, local workforce development boards, within the regional plans submitted by each of the 16 local workforce development boards.

Strategic Element 2 - Community Engagement

Community engagement focuses on reaching out to communities experiencing inequalities in education and employment outcomes. In order to best design programs that meet their needs. It also includes outreach to service providers to review current practices around existing career pathway programs funded by federal, state, private and philanthropic organizations.

Minnesota has a diverse provider network with many community-based organizations offering specialized approaches to serving the populations experiencing inequities in education and employment outcomes, including communities of color, individuals with disabilities, disconnected youth and people experiencing homelessness. The priority is to develop a more coordinated and more inclusive support network among providers.

The second area is to more fully engage communities experiencing disparate impact with educational and employment outcomes. This includes the tribal governments serving the seven Anishinaabe and four Dakota communities. Local Workforce Development Boards, within their respective regions, will be required to engage stakeholders in the development of their regional strategic plans and program development. DEED employs a Tribal Liaison who is available to assist local areas in outreach to Tribal nations or urban indigenous populations. Through more focused efforts, which requires strategy and buy-in at the local and regional level, the state's workforce development system can better serve Tribal nations and their communities.

Additionally, gender opportunity gaps exist that hamper a robust talent pipeline for many of the sectors and occupations in demand that have been selected by the six regions. This impedes business growth and negatively impacts job seekers who need high quality information about the full array of family sustaining wage pathways available to them. Occupational segregation needs to be overcome to create the most robust talent pipeline available to all job seekers and employers.

The state funded Women's Economic Security Act (WESA), passed in 2014, provides resources and support to address gender opportunity gaps. The Minnesota Legislature has continued appropriations for WESA grants in 2016, 2017, and 2019. Of women enrolled in WESA grants since their inception, 55% have been nonwhite.

The primary responsibility for this strategy is the state's 16 local workforce development boards, which also collectively make up (and oversee)the state's six workforce development regions. The regional plans call for local boards to actively engage communities experiencing disparate impacts in education and employment outcomes; gender opportunity gaps; and to engage with service providers who have specialized skills in working with the identified populations. This engagement will play a role in strengthening services, connections among providers, and the accessibility of services for impacted populations. Beginning in 2022, WIOA Local and Regional Plans at the state level – meaning developing guidance for Local/Regional Plans, and overseeing the processes for submission, review, and approval – will be overseen by the GWDB and GWDB staff. The goal for this shift is to create more alignment between the State Plan and Local/Regional Plans, and to better harness successful strategies or best practices from other states throughout the processes. The GWDB expects future Local/Regional Planning guidance to be more explicit in the types of community engagement and related activities required to meet the needs of all communities, including those facing some of the greatest barriers to education or employment.

Strategic Element 3 - Customer-Focused Design

Customer-focused design requires ongoing commitment to assessing and addressing the needs of businesses and job seekers. This strategic element is directly tied to the first two elements: business and community engagement. Viewing the workforce development system from the lens of our customers enhances our ability to achieve greater success. Customer-focused design is also strategically important to improve services for communities experiencing disparities. Outcomes will continue to include more customer driven programming for job seekers needing multiple services and "on-ramps" to be successful and career pathway opportunities based on needs of employers.

This Strategic Element will build upon the efforts already underway through the state's Pathways to Prosperity program, which in SFY 2020-21 will provide nearly $11 million in grants to career pathways partnerships putting job seekers with barriers to employment on the path to high-demand careers with training and employer-valued credentials.

Strategic Element 4 - Funding and Resource Needs

Minnesota's existing career pathway programs and initiatives are funded and supported by a variety of federal, state, and philanthropic resources. As funding and resources have expanded

and brought new opportunities to service providers and job seekers, so has the broadening of career pathway approaches. Minnesota reviews and assesses various models to disseminate best practices. The outcome from this effort will result in more efficient use of resources and an understanding of the resources needed for continued development of the system that achieves our vision and goals of this plan.

Strategic Element 5 - Policy and System Alignment

Minnesota recognizes the need to continue adapting state and local policies and the potential need for federal waivers to better align our career pathway system around equity and economic employment demand. The outcome of these efforts include stronger alignment of system components and more efficient use of resources, especially performance and outcome metrics. Alignment work across secondary education, postsecondary education, state agencies involved in WIOA programs, and the local administrators and providers is ongoing since the initial passage of WIOA.

The primary responsibility for this strategy is with the state agencies. Policy and program alignment strategies is coordinated by each agency responsible for specific programs, as is coordination with the local boards and system partners. The GWDB and staff will support efforts for federal and state legislative rule changes, waivers, or system policy changes that help ensure compliance, continuous improvement, and measurable results.

This Strategic Element will build upon the efforts already underway between DEED and local workforce board leaders, who have been meeting monthly to redesign system program policy. Beginning in 2020, the GWDB will be utilizing task forces to hone in on a narrower issue or set of issues where specific deliverables can be identified, developed, and assessed.

Strategic Element 6 - System Management

Develop an approach that supports the common measures and work of all system partners, including interim measures and end measures.

DEED's Performance Technical Management team tracks and monitors data to provide transparency and accountability toward two goals – reducing educational, skills training and employment disparities based on race, disability, disconnected youth or gender, and building employer-led industry sector partnerships. Through routine updates and the WIOA Annual Report, the Performance Technical Management team is able to track regional outcomes and allows users to filter by race and ethnic group, gender, and disability status.

2. DESCRIBE THE STRATEGIES THE STATE WILL USE TO ALIGN THE CORE PROGRAMS, ANY COMBINED STATE PLAN PARTNER PROGRAMS INCLUDED IN THIS PLAN, REQUIRED AND OPTIONAL ONE-STOP PARTNER PROGRAMS, AND ANY OTHER RESOURCES AVAILABLE TO THE STATE TO ACHIEVE FULLY INTEGRATED CUSTOMER SERVICES CONSISTENT WITH THE STRATEGIC VISION AND GOALS DESCRIBED ABOVE. ALSO DESCRIBE STRATEGIES TO STRENGTHEN WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES IN REGARD TO WEAKNESSES IDENTIFIED IN SECTION II(A)(2).

Two key goals identified by the GWDB to support the foundation from which the Combined Plan builds upon are addressing the disparities gap within education and addressing the disparities gap within employment. GWDB staff and members will work with leaders from DEED and other agencies to either strengthen or identify resources needed to support the overall goals of this plan through existing programs or the development of new programming. In addition, the Minnesota state legislature requires DEED to provide a "report card" of the overall performance of state funded workforce initiatives which can be found at:
https://mn.gov/deed/data/workforce-data/report-card/

This report card also serves as a resource to make data-informed decisions on our performance and any policy recommendations or programming that result in better outcomes.

DEED, including the new leaders across the agency working in workforce development or for the GWDB, are committed to equity measures being at the forefront of the work needed to see a more cohesive workforce development system actualized. Every team across DEED has developed specific equity-focused goals as part of a new agency-wide performance technical management system rooted in the objectives and key results (OKR) model. Additionally, DEED has hired new staff for the Office of Economic Opportunity that will focus on needed system improvements relating to outreach, accessibility, and inclusion – including providing support to state agencies and workforce partners looking to do more outreach and engagement. The OEO team includes an American Indian Liaison that is working with teams across DEED to better improve relationships and partnerships with tribal nations and their workforce development entities.

Broadly speaking, the equity goals at DEED established in 2019-2020 cover four main themes:

- Increasing awareness of programs to reduce geographic and other targeted disparities.
- Increasing the number of program participants served from under-represented communities.
- Addressing achievement gaps for low-income and at-risk populations.
- Improving relationship and partnership with Minnesota's 11 tribal nations.

Also at the state level, the members of the GWDB, MAWB, and DEED meet monthly to share best practices, progress on state, regional, and local plans, and discuss issues with regard to service delivery, resources, and any challenges with serving our customers. This venue provides an excellent opportunity to identify solutions and adjust strategies to meet our overall goals within the plan. DEED leadership and GWDB staff are also leading up regular meetings between program staff across agencies and monthly meetings between leadership at the agencies across the workforce development system.

The full GWDB meets on a quarterly basis and makes recommendations to the Governor focusing on the vision, goals, and strategies outlined in the State Plan and overall recommendations for the system. Additionally, the GWDB Operations Committee dives deeper into the State Plan and state strategies on behalf of the full board. In January 2022, the GWDB launched a New Americans Task Force – with members from business, community-based organizations, labor, education, local workforce boards, and multiple state agencies – which will meet throughout early 2022 to produce a report that includes actionable recommendations that the agencies, Governor, or Legislature can take in order to better serve immigrants and refugees, and meet employer needs in the process.

Minnesota's common data tracking system, Workforce One, serves as a resource for not only the tracking of data but also used as a system which shares information between programs and identifies individuals whom may be co-enrolled in several programs. DEED's staff serve as support to all users of this system and also provide recommendations for system improvements. Workforce One, which is set to see significant upgrades launched in 2022 for more user accessibility and system utility, is Minnesota's primary tool for tracking program participant data.MinnesotaWorks.net, our labor exchange, also tracks data, including the majority of the state's reportable individual activities, as well as Title III program participants and business/employer services data.

Minnesota's core workforce development partners have a long and productive history of collaboration, both across programs and between the state and local areas. The chief conveners of Minnesota's core programs are DEED and the GWDB. As the state's primary workforce

development agency, DEED oversees and strives to align all Title I, III, and IV; TAA, Jobs for Veterans Grant, and the Senior Community Service Employment Programs (SCSEP). Since the adoption of WIOA, DEED has also deepened its partnership with MDE, which oversees Adult Basic Education.

The Office of Higher Education (OHE) Budget included $1 million for FY20-21 to support local partnership programs at Minnesota State Colleges and Universities. These partnerships must be comprised of campuses and local businesses and may also include K-12 school districts, trade associations, local chambers of commerce, and economic development authorities. Funds must be used to develop new and accelerate existing employer-led workforce exposure programs, technical education pathway programs, dual-training programs, internships, youth skills training programs, and other industry-recognized programs in high-growth, high-demand industries.

The state has also established a Diversity and Inclusion Council, which seeks to improve the recruiting and retention of state employees from diverse backgrounds; improve the contracting process for businesses owned by Minnesotans from diverse backgrounds; and promote civic engagement for residents of Minnesota. The Council and its committees are tasked with identifying best practices, developing a legislative agenda and moving forward with an enterprise—wide diversity and inclusion strategic plan. Additionally, a statewide council on aging, to promote Minnesota becoming an "age friendly state", was recently created and will include CareerForce staff from DEED. Additionally, GWDB members serve as members on other committees, such as the state-funded Minnesota Job Skills Partnership and the State Rehabilitation Council. Through collaborative and cross-agency efforts, policy changes and recommendations are discussed and vetted across the workforce development system.

III. OPERATIONAL PLANNING ELEMENTS

A. STATE STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION

1. STATE BOARD FUNCTIONS

III. OPERATIONAL PLANNING ELEMENTS

The Unified or Combined State Plan must include an Operational Planning Elements section that supports the State's strategy and the system-wide vision described in Section II(c) above. Unless otherwise noted, all Operational Planning Elements apply to Combined State Plan partner programs included in the plan as well as to core programs. This section must include

A. STATE STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION. THE UNIFIED OR COMBINED STATE PLAN MUST INCLUDE

1. STATE BOARD FUNCTIONS. DESCRIBE HOW THE STATE BOARD WILL IMPLEMENT ITS FUNCTIONS UNDER SECTION 101(D) OF WIOA (I.E., PROVIDE A DESCRIPTION OF BOARD OPERATIONAL STRUCTURES AND DECISION MAKING PROCESSES TO ENSURE SUCH FUNCTIONS ARE CARRIED OUT).

The state board will fulfill its functions under section 101(d) of WIOA through an Operations Committee. This committee has formulated its approach to the 12 functions of the board by categories its activities into four areas — administration, policy, information technology, and performance. The committee meets monthly and utilizes a work plan to guide their work, which includes working with staff to guide and oversee the preparation and submission of the WIOA State Plan, preparation and submission of an annual report, preparing and submitting a bi-annual state legislative report, and other oversight functions. The Operations Committee also participates in the review and approval of the Regional Plans to ensure alignment with the state Combined Plan and works with GWDB staff to develop and maintain work plans for the board.

Relating to policy changes, the GWDB can address both existing and new policies needed to support the better alignment of resources and services.

The information technology functions will focus on leveraging systems to avoid duplication, addressing the need for more responsive career information — tied to the eligible training provider list, and on data systems. This will drive better coordination of services across the system and support process and outcome metrics as part of the performance functions.

The performance functions will focus on continuous improvement and support the transparency of the system components and how they are contributing to achieving the goals of the state Combined Plan. The performance system will look at process and outcome measures focusing on interim gains and final outcomes related to the WIOA performance common measures and other areas as deemed necessary by the state board.

2. IMPLEMENTATION OF STATE STRATEGY

A. CORE PROGRAM ACTIVITIES TO IMPLEMENT THE STATE'S STRATEGY

2. IMPLEMENTATION OF STATE STRATEGY. DESCRIBE HOW THE LEAD STATE AGENCY WITH RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE ADMINISTRATION OF EACH CORE PROGRAM OR A COMBINED STATE PLAN PARTNER PROGRAM INCLUDED IN THIS PLAN WILL IMPLEMENT THE STATE'S STRATEGIES IDENTIFIED IN II(C) ABOVE. THIS MUST INCLUDE A DESCRIPTION OF

A. CORE PROGRAM ACTIVITIES TO IMPLEMENT THE STATE'S STRATEGY. DESCRIBE THE ACTIVITIES THE ENTITIES CARRYING OUT THE RESPECTIVE CORE PROGRAMS WILL FUND TO IMPLEMENT THE STATE'S STRATEGIES. ALSO, DESCRIBE HOW SUCH ACTIVITIES WILL BE ALIGNED ACROSS THE CORE PROGRAMS AND COMBINED STATE PLAN PARTNER PROGRAMS INCLUDED IN THIS PLAN AND AMONG THE ENTITIES ADMINISTERING THE PROGRAMS, INCLUDING USING CO-ENROLLMENT AND OTHER STRATEGIES, AS APPROPRIATE.

The providers of activities under WIOA core Titles I, III and IV; TAA, the Jobs for Veterans Grant and Senior Community Services Employment will primarily implement the State strategies through services within the system and through special projects that support a career pathways system. The provision of career services will focus on how the information made available contributes to a person's knowledge of their career pathway opportunities. Career services continues its shift from primarily being about the "next job" or a specific skill needed for the next job, to one that helps provide a career trajectory for the individual job seeker.

Minnesota's six regions have identified at a minimum two industry sectors that represent opportunities for individuals with the greatest barriers to employment. Using relevant data and improved workforce planning, service providers have the resources to assist individuals in making informed career decisions leading to opportunities which in turn, address and impact the disparities gaps — race, disability, disconnected youth and gender. Staff and counselors delivering career services continue to receive training and access to professional development and current data. Individuals seeking training services work with counselors who have the most current tools to assist participants in making an informed choice and identify the necessary resources to ensure greater opportunities for successful completion of training and job placement. Partners in the workforce system at local, regional, and state levels continue to collaborate on opportunities to align and integrate programming and resources to achieve our goals.

The providers of activities under WIOA core Title II — Adult Basic Education, will continue to embed career pathways philosophy into their services and administrative capacities. Business engagement extends to pursuing work—based learning opportunities that support the contextualized learning approaches. There are 500 ABE locations throughout the state, all

unique to the needs of the communities they serve and the resources they can leverage. Through their participation on sector partnerships and understanding of the sequence of educational requirements for eventual industry recognized credentials, curriculum will continue to be modified to contextualize learning for future educational needs that align with the goals of the individual. Resources will also be committed to continue professional and system staff development so that career pathways approaches allow Adult Basic Education providers to more flexibly meet the needs of regional sector strategies and the needs of targeted populations and their inherent learning styles. These local and regional partnerships have led and will continue to inform best practices serving disparate populations and result in skill attainment through career pathways and work-based learning strategies that meet the industry demands.

The Perkins V-funded programs and activities provide opportunities for stronger alignment of services to support a career pathways system. These activities include supporting work—based learning, which may expand upon how skills are recognized and credentialed. Teacher credentialing is another focus area which looks at how changes in industry needs impacts the skills and knowledge requirements of faculty. Perkins V-funded activities also promote conducting program feasibility studies, program approval and implementation, all of which are critical to ensure ongoing alignment and relevancy of educational and training opportunities.

The Minnesota Department of Corrections (DOC) has put grant funded career navigator positions in place within the state prisons to work with offenders ready for release. A team approach between CareerForce locations, Minnesota Department of Human Services (DHS), DOC Re-entry, parole, and DOC Career Technical Education staff work closely to coordinate their progras and career services to provide a seamless transition back into the communities. The DOC provides postsecondary Career Technical Education programming in many demand sectors, while providing portable and stackable credentials.

The majority of CareerForce locations in the system also include coordinated services provided by or in conjunction with DHS. Participants have access to resource rooms for job seeking, workshops for developing job seeking skills and referral opportunities for other needed services. The approved six regional plans all identify strategies to align and integrate services and programming to provide opportunities for participants building upon and leading to meaningful employment.

There are several opportunities for activities to be aligned and enhanced with the core programs. Training is needed for staff to understand the appropriate activities and career pathway opportunities for recipients within a system where job search and job placement have been primarily seen as the core activity. We need to continue to better understand how career pathways models including; work-based learning, apprenticeships, and skills training can be implemented to align with the needs of industry. Development of employer-led sector partnerships allow for opportunities for job seekers with a priority to address the disparities gaps in race, disability, disconnected youth, and gender opportunities. This being said, it has been critical for providers to understand the regional sectors in demand.

Another opportunity is to look at the scaling of on-ramps to training programs. This career pathway strategy is a good fit for individuals who need entry level credentials and the need for immediate employment. Such on ramp training programs could include forklift certification, MS office credentialing, CompTia, Paraprofessional training, and other entry level certifications that are feeders to occupations in demand that could allow for transition into further academic credentials such as diplomas or degrees.

Alignment across all required core programs and State Combined Plan partners that began with WIOA continues as career pathways activities are maintained and enhanced across the state workforce system through multiple state and federal programs. Identified as the Pathways to Prosperity program in Minnesota, this national strategy focuses on providing skilled career

counselors, integrated developmental and skills training, application of appropriate sources and comprehensive placement assistance.

B. ALIGNMENT WITH ACTIVITIES OUTSIDE THE PLAN

B. ALIGNMENT WITH ACTIVITIES OUTSIDE THE PLAN. DESCRIBE HOW THE ACTIVITIES IDENTIFIED IN (A) WILL BE ALIGNED WITH PROGRAMS AND ACTIVITIES PROVIDED BY REQUIRED ONE-STOP PARTNERS AND OTHER OPTIONAL ONE-STOP PARTNERS AND ACTIVITIES PROVIDED UNDER EMPLOYMENT, TRAINING (INCLUDING REGISTERED APPRENTICESHIPS), EDUCATION (INCLUDING CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION), HUMAN SERVICES AND OTHER PROGRAMS NOT COVERED BY THE PLAN, AS APPROPRIATE, ASSURING COORDINATION OF, AND AVOIDING DUPLICATION AMONG THESE ACTIVITIES.

Program and activity alignment with core partners is primarily achieved through Minnesota's 50 CareerForce locations, the network of Adult Basic Education providers and community-based organizations who are contracted with through the local workforce development boards. All activities related to career services, training and business services are available through these established working relationships. Minnesota has approved six regional plans which is inclusive of the sixteen local workforce development areas and their respective local plans, and both local and regional plans will be developed and submitted in 2020. These six regions have all organized a regional governance structure which is representative of key stakeholders. Collectively, they continue to develop strong regional networks to address their needs with a keen focus on addressing the disparities gaps — race disability, disconnected youth, and gender opportunities within industry sectors. Local boards have been asked to increase outreach to community groups and representatives of communities facing the greatest disparities during the development of their regional and local plans in 2020 and going forward. As mentioned previously, DEED's Tribal Liaison can provide assistance to local boards, particularly in Greater Minnesota whose areas cover tribal nations or other high populations of American Indians.

One such example is the coordination between Adult Basic Education delivering ESL education and CareerForce locations delivering digital literacy education at CareerForce locations. In addition, all CareerForce locations are official Northstar Digital Literacy Assessment testing sites, so customers who successfully complete an assessment can earn a certificate verifying their competency in a variety of digital skills. Minnesota's Apprenticeship Initiative funded under DOL is yet another example of building capacity through leveraging our CareerForce locations, the Department of Labor and Industry and industry leaders many of whom serve on the local and state board. The six regional plans have all identified and continue to develop new partnerships to align and integrate resources outside of this plan.

Program and activity alignment with training opportunities, inclusive of Registered Apprenticeships, occurs through the activities of the local boards, business partnerships and special grant and funding opportunities

Program and activity alignment with education, including career and technical education, is achieved through local board activities and involvement with special projects. Career and technical education resources through the Perkins V have become a central part of developing Minnesota's Career Pathway model. Staff from Minnesota also participated in the design of the Career Pathways Toolkit and in developing the language for Minnesota's State Combined Plan around the six elements of a Career Pathways System. Through Minnesota's employer-led sector partnerships several best practices have emerged with the development of strategies around youth and developing regional industry recognized credentials. While the sector partnerships are not all at the same level of maturity, they continue to deliver promising practices to "customize" the training needs of individuals while meeting the skills needed for employers.

Program and activity alignment with human service agencies outside the purview of WIOA is a critical element to career pathways success in serving communities of color, individuals with disabilities and disconnected youth. Human services efforts around housing, transportation, health care, and child care have been identified in regional listening sessions and the annual joint MAWB/GWDB meeting. This information will be used in interagency State Department meetings to best coordinate supportive services around workforce development. This is further outlined in the narrative under Coordination.

C. COORDINATION, ALIGNMENT AND PROVISION OF SERVICES TO INDIVIDUALS

C. COORDINATION, ALIGNMENT AND PROVISION OF SERVICES TO INDIVIDUALS. DESCRIBE HOW THE ENTITIES CARRYING OUT THE RESPECTIVE CORE PROGRAMS, COMBINED STATE PLAN PARTNER PROGRAMS INCLUDED IN THIS PLAN, AND REQUIRED AND OPTIONAL ONE-STOP PARTNER PROGRAMS WILL COORDINATE ACTIVITIES AND RESOURCES TO PROVIDE COMPREHENSIVE, HIGH-QUALITY, CUSTOMER-CENTERED SERVICES, INCLUDING SUPPORTIVE SERVICES (E.G. TRANSPORTATION), TO INDIVIDUALS, INCLUDING THOSE POPULATIONS IDENTIFIED IN SECTION II(A)(1)(B), AND INDIVIDUALS IN REMOTE AREAS THE ACTIVITIES DESCRIBED SHALL CONFORM TO THE STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS OF EACH PROGRAM.

Job seekers in Minnesota are served by the statewide network of CareerForce locations as well as by the myriad government, education, and nonprofit organization locations of one-stop partner programs. All CareerForce locations offer the full range of WIOA Title I-B, Wagner-Peyser, Veterans, TAA, and state-funded youth and Dislocated Worker services in a co-located model. Many CareerForce locations across the state include partners from other WIOA titles represented in this plan. All CareerForce location serve customers of the public workforce system with highly-trained professional staff. Both job seekers and businesses have access to services designed to meet their specific needs. DEED serves the CareerForce System in ensuring requirements for operating CareerForce locations are followed. Partners consult DEED for assistance with certification of locations and necessary aspects of the work. Monthly training is offered to Wagner-Peyser Employment Service Program staff and CareerForce partners on the necessary aspects of participating in the one-stop system.

DEED will continue to provide a leadership role in the development of training with the support of the GWDB and their relevant committees and the state program administrators in this plan. The CareerForce locations inclusive of several affiliate sites offer assistance to all individuals. All individuals are greeted by trained professional staff who gather information to best assess priority of service, urgency, and make the initial referral(s) to service(s). Individuals are then guided and assisted by program staff to identify all resources the individual may be eligible for, and identify opportunities for co-enrollment. All staff, including core and other combined partner staff and those not physically located within the CareerForce location, meet on a regular and ongoing basis to discuss program changes, eligibility, and activity. The communication ensures coordination, alignment, and leveraging of resources for better outcomes for the employer and the individual.

Services to Laid-Off Adults

- Unemployment Insurance — DEED houses the state's Unemployment Insurance (UI) division. CareerForce locations provide co-location for UI staff members to coordinate reemployment initiatives for claimants and the long—term unemployed. The Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment (RESEA) engages UI claimants within the first weeks of their benefit payments to provide earlier engagement and increased services through CareerForce locations to expedite their return to work.

- Dislocated Worker Program — This program mitigates the negative impact to businesses, communities, and employees who are facing a layoff. It assists laid—off

workers in returning to work with comparable wages and benefits and connects employers with skilled staff. The Rapid Response team is the first responder when a business has closed down or is planning to lay off workers. The team is trained to assess the situation and inform the affected workers of available services. Participants enrolled in the program can access career planning and counseling; job search and placement services; short—term training upon counselor approval; and support services for expenses such as child care and transportation upon counselor approval. Minnesota maintains both a federally and state- funded Dislocated Worker program.

- Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) — This program provides aid to workers who lose their jobs, or are at risk of losing their jobs, or whose hours of work and wages are reduced as a result of foreign competition. TAA assists laid-off workers in returning to the workforce as quickly as possible by offering them help with work searches, relocation, job training, and weekly cash benefits. There are two major components, separately funded by the U.S. Department of Labor: Trade Readjustment Allowances (TRA), which are special extensions to unemployment insurance; and Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) which includes assistance with training costs, job search allowances, relocation allowances, and similar costs. TAA now uses Electronic Document Storage within the case management database which reduces cost and waste and increases efficiency.

- Assessments for Job Seekers — Local areas use a variety of assessment instruments across the state, but the most commonly used are the DOL Career One Stop's Interest, Skills and Work Value assessments. Interest and skills assessments have been made available on the CareerForceMN.com platform to assist job seekers. Minnesota also developed an "Employment Readiness Profile" assessment that is used across the state. This assessment functions as a triage tool and was developed by Title I and Title III staff. In 2021 CareerForceMN.com also released a "Compare Skills" tool that demonstrates how skills of one job transfer to other jobs, and also filters those results to direct seekers to jobs in demand today.

Services to Adults with Barriers to Employment

- WIOA Adult — The program serves adults who are seeking greater participation in the labor force and prioritizes individuals who receive public assistance, individuals living with low incomes, and veterans. Minnesota is developing additional policy that leverage state resources to address the disparities gaps — race, disability, and disconnected youth which is a priority of this plan. Services include a preliminary assessment of skill levels, support services, occupational or on—the—job training or work-based learning, job search and placement assistance, access to apprenticeship opportunities, and career counseling. It also provides resource libraries providing access to employment— related services such as current job vacancies via MinnesotaWorks.net.net, local education and training service providers, and labor market information. WIOA Adult providers have been partnering with Adult Career Pathway programming to ensure individuals have access to career pathways that lead to family sustaining wages or beyond.

- Minnesota Pathways to Prosperity — Minnesota Pathways to Prosperity (P2P) is an innovative framework built on a Career Pathway programming model, which integrates basic skills education, competency-based skills training, support services, higher-level education for those who choose, employment placement and retention to meet the needs of adults. P2P projects are designed for adults who traditionally face multiple barriers to employment, and who are in need of enhanced educational and supportive services to be successful in securing long-term family sustaining wages. P2P provides opportunities for individuals to build their skills through several "on ramps" career

pathways models that ultimately lead to employment in an industry sector that leads with family sustaining wages.

- This competitively awarded grant program targets populations of color; individuals experiencing housing insecurity; individuals with a criminal record; those lacking a high school diploma or equivalent; individuals with disabilities; and those unemployed for 26 or more consecutive weeks. In addition, special consideration should be provided to veterans, those returning to work after receiving public assistance, low-income, and older workers. Participating individuals obtain, retain, and advance in unsubsidized employment or complete training along an educational path, as demonstrated by annual wage increases, placement and retention in a job or education or training program, and completion of training leading to an industry-recognized credential. P2P is a state-funded, competitive grant program that leverages WIOA programming.

- MN Family Resiliency Partnership program (formerly displaced homemakers) — This program provides pre-employment services that empower participants to enter or re-enter the labor market. Customers are women and men who have worked in the home for a minimum of two years caring for home and family but, due to separation, divorce, death, or disability of spouse or partner, or other loss of financial support, must now support themselves and their families. The participants need to identify, address and resolve multiple barriers before they can be competitive in the workforce. Often they are worried about basic needs such as facing eviction, having utilities services shut off, or caring for a spouse or child with a disability. Eligibility is based on income guidelines. Seven providers offer services covering 51 counties state-funded program.

- Minnesota Family Investment Program (MFIP/TANF) — This program helps families with children meet their basic needs, while helping parents move to financial stability through work. Parents are expected to work, and are supported in working with both cash and food assistance. Most families have a lifetime limit of 60 months on MFIP. DEED works with the DHS Economic Assistance and Employment Supports Division to ensure the program goals of MFIP are met.

- SNAP Employment and Training Program (E&T) — The Minnesota Department of Human Services (MN DHS) administers the state's SNAP Employment and Training Program (SNAP E&T) by supervising local counties and directly contracting with community agencies. Minnesota's SNAP E&T program is built on strong partnerships and offers multiple contracting options. Interested providers can contract through the DHS, Minnesota's Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED), and certain other Minnesota Counties. DHS contracts directly with agencies and organizations seeking to offer a range of jobs-driven employment support programs across the state. This includes organizations already receiving a portion of E&T funding through their local county. DHS is the contracting agency for all tribal contracts and other state agencies. DEED's SNAP E&T program is available as an enhancement to existing contracts for non-federal funding through DEED. Also, some counties elect to contract with organizations who provide a range of jobs-driven employment supports to low-income residents of the county.

- Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP) — The SCSEP program fosters economic self—sufficiency through community service activities for unemployed, low-income persons who are 55 years of age and older and have poor employment prospects. Program clients are Minnesotans with an income of less than 125 percent of the federal poverty levels, who want or need additional income. Service providers include five Local Workforce Development Areas, three community action agencies, three counties, two national sponsors, and one Native American tribe. Program

operations are sub-granted to 11 local agencies that serve workers in 60 counties throughout the state; remaining 27 counties are served by national sponsors.

- Women in High-Wage, High Demand Nontraditional Jobs Grant Program — This program seeks to increase the number of women in high-wage, high-demand, nontraditional occupations including those in the skilled trades, science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) occupations. Grant funds serve women, especially low-income women and women over 50 years of age. This is a state -funded grant program, which began in December 2014 and continues.

- Migrant and Seasonal Farmworkers — This program provides migrant seasonal farm workers with a full range of employment services and referrals to other community services. Migrant and other seasonal employees engaged in farm work that are legally eligible to work in the United States and of legal age to perform services for wages are eligible for services. The full range of services provided includes: job search assistance and placement, job counseling, training opportunities, and referrals to supportive services and programs. The program is administered by a Job Service supervisor who leads the State Monitor Advocate and migrant labor representatives. Migrant Labor Representatives are fluent in both English and Spanish, to better serve the predominantly Spanish-speaking clientele.

- Services for Ex-Offenders — DEED designed and offers a series of "New Leaf" workshops in 20 CareerForce locations across the state's Local Workforce Development Areas. This workshop is designed specifically for job seekers who are having a difficult time obtaining employment due to their barriers and/or records. This workshop combines DEED's Creative Job Search course with special strategies for overcoming barriers to employment, including how, when and why to disclose your record; addressing concerns from employers; answering tough interview questions; and provides state resources on the Work Opportunity Tax Credit, Federal Bonding and "Ban the Box" requirements. In addition, DEED's Veteran employment program has one DVOP working on a special project for Minnesota veterans that have been incarcerated.

- Services for Homeless Minnesotans —In March 2016, Performance Technical Management (PTM) staff assessed these eligibility-based programs to determine which programs do and do not track whether a participant was homeless at the time of program enrollment. Currently, only one program does not track housing insecurity and two programs were found to not make mandatory a question assessing the participant's housing status. As part of ongoing broader efforts around data and performance measures, DEED staff are working on ways to disaggregate data pertaining to employment and wage outcomes for homeless participants to include in a future version of the Uniform Outcome Report Card.

- Southeast Asian Economic Disparities Relief Grant Program — This program was implemented in July of 2016 to address economic disparities in Southeast Asian communities through workforce recruitment and development, job creation, assistance to smaller organizations to increase capacity and outreach services. The Minnesota Legislature has funded this program every year since its inception.

- Adult support services — This competitive grant focuses on low-income communities, young adults from families with a history of intergenerational poverty, and communities of color to provide support services to individuals, such as job training, employment preparation, internships, job assistance to fathers, financial literacy, academic and behavioral interventions for low-performing students, and youth intervention. The Minnesota Legislature has funded this program every year since its inception.

Youth

- WIOA Youth Program: Minnesota's WIOA Youth Program provides comprehensive employment and training services to opportunity youth, including work-based learning, an introduction to career pathways, attainment of recognized credentials and wrap-around support services. Participants are youth ages 16 - 24 who are not attending any school, and in-school youth ages 14-21 who are low-income and at-risk. Minnesota serves a high percentage of youth who are most in need of services such as homeless youth and runaways, youth in foster care, youth with disabilities and youth from families on public assistance. Minnesota is serving youth who are under-represented in the workforce. For example, Native American youth are served at a level that is 3 times the national average. Minnesota supports partnerships with other State and federally-funded youth programs to increase the quality of services available to participants. WIOA Youth Programs provide youth with access to postsecondary training and credentials which reflect 21st century skill requirements. Examples of co-enrollment opportunities for WIOA Youth participants include: the Minnesota Family Investment Program (MFIP), Vocational Rehabilitation Services (VRS/Pre-ETS), , Adult WIOA, Adult Basic Education (ABE), Minnesota Youth Program (MYP), Youthbuild, Job Corps and Youth at Work Equity Grants. For more information, see the WIOA Youth Program webpage: https://mn.gov/deed/programs-services/office-youth-development/youth-programs/wioa-youth.jsp.

- Minnesota Youth Program (MYP): MYP serves low-income youth, ages 14 to 24, and is the only youth employment program available in all 87 counties. Over half of the youth served under MYP receive academic credit or service-learning credit for work-based learning. Other MYP services include: career exploration and counseling, labor market information on in-demand occupations, work readiness skills, financial literacy training, work experience and support services. MYP serves nearly 2,700 youth each year through individual, case managed services and almost 15,000 youth through the Outreach to Schools component. MYP operates in coordination with WIOA, under oversight of Local Workforce Development Boards appointed by Local Elected Officials (business-led majority). Each $1 of MYP funds leverages over $6 of other federal, state and local resources. Youth may be co-enrolled in WIOA, MFIP, VRS, or Youthbuild as a result of strong local partnerships. Worksite supervisors/employers evaluate the contextual work readiness skills of youth on the MYP worksite using pre and post assessments. For more information, see the Minnesota Youth Program webpage: https://mn.gov/deed/programs-services/office-youth-development/youth-programs/youth-program.jsp.

- Youthbuild Program: The state-funded Youthbuild Program offers a construction career pathway for low-income, at-risk youth, ages 16-24, who have dropped out of school or are at-risk of dropping out. Youthbuild provides pre-apprenticeship training, industry-recognized credentials, contextual basic skills and work readiness soft skills; career exploration and counseling; mentoring and leadership development; and support services. Ten organizations provide services across Minnesota. Each $1 of state Youthbuild funding is matched by one local dollar and state funds are used as match for federal YouthBuild resources. The pandemic impacted services for Minnesota Youthbuild grantees and caused construction projects to be delayed. Local Youthbuild staff pivoted construction training and programming to virtual formats in response to pandemic restrictions For more information, see the Youthbuild webpage at: https://mn.gov/deed/programs-services/office-youth-development/youth-programs/youthbuild.jsp.

- Youth at Work Equity Grants: provide workforce development and training opportunities for economically disadvantaged and at-risk youth with special consideration for youth from BIPOC communities and youth with disabilities. 76.5% of the youth served are from BIPOC communities in State Fiscal Year 2021. Experiential

learning opportunities are designed for youth that promote mastery of work readiness competencies and 21st Century skills. Projects promote skill acquisition (academic and work readiness) through project-based instruction and increase exposure to in-demand jobs important to regional economies. In response to the COVID-19 precautions, many programs converted programming from in-person to virtual. This meant many youth needed access to internet hot spots, laptops, and other technology in order to complete required schooling and remote work. Providing these resources to youth ensure low-income youth and BIPOC youth had equitable access to online learning and working. In spite of the COVID pandemic, the program served 7,089 youth in SFY21. Youth at Work Equity grants provide high-quality worksites and overall participant and employer satisfaction. These are two-year grants that emphasize innovation in serving youth. For more information, see the Youth Equity Grants webpage: https://mn.gov/deed/programs-services/office-youth-development/special/grants/.

- Youth Support Services Grants: The Minnesota Legislature appropriated $1,000,000 each year in State Fiscal Year (SFY) 2020 and 2021 for a competitive grant program to provide support services for individuals. Grant funded services include job training, employment preparation, internships, job assistance to parents, financial literacy, academic and behavioral interventions for low-performing students, and youth intervention activities. Grants must serve individuals from low-income communities, and/or young adults from families with a history of intergenerational poverty, and/or BIPOC communities. In SFY 20 and SFY 21 there were 17 Youth Support Services grantees with 54% of the grant funds allocated to the Twin Cities metro area and 46% allocated to Greater Minnesota. Through these grants, 794 young people received individual services in SFY 21 with over 94% receiving education, employment preparation, or work readiness services. The young people served through these grants were 78% from BIPOC communities, 15% identifying as having a disability, and 58% young women. Detailed program information and reports available at https://mn.gov/deed/programs-services/office-youth-development/special/youth-support/

- Disability Employment Initiative (DEI): Partners for Youth Career Pathways - Minnesota is managing a $2.5 million, 42-month DEI grant funded through the U.S. DOL's Employment and Training Administration and the Office of Disability Employment Policy. This grant allowed three of Minnesota's rural WDAs to strengthen partnerships and strategically align career pathways systems to effectively serve youth with disabilities through multiple entry and exit points. The federal DEI grant allowed Minnesota to expand the number of Employment Networks (ENs) in the state which increases services to Social Security disability beneficiaries. The DEI helped Minnesota build the capacity of rural WDA staff to increase the number of youth with disabilities participating in career pathways programs by implementing the Integrated Resource Team (IRT) approach and the Guideposts for Success best practices framework into service delivery. The DEI grant was successfully closed out in the spring of 2020. For more information on the DEI see the Disability Employment Initiative weblink: https://mn.gov/deed/programs-services/office-youth-development/special/disability-employment-initiative/.

- DEED, DHS, and MAWB have worked in partnership since 2009 to serve teen parents receiving Minnesota Family Investment Program (MFIP) benefits or in TANF-eligible households. This partnership has leveraged over $7.8 million of TANF funds to provide work experience and work-readiness training for over 4,600 teen parents who were receiving MFIP benefits or younger youth who were MFIP recipients. The partnership addresses disparities in MFIP outcomes, especially the Work Participation Rate, for African American and American Indian participants. Many of the participants have little

or no previous work experience and they develop work readiness skills through their participation in the project. Participants are assigned a youth counselor/case manager and receive labor market information highlighting in-demand industries and educational opportunities available in the region. Co-enrollment in the WIOA Youth Program and the Minnesota Youth Program, when appropriate, has contributed to the success of these projects.

Some of the industries that are introduced to youth include information technology, manufacturing, transportation, child care, and health care. Person-centered planning is a major key to success. The work experiences that youth receive are targeted to their specific career interest areas as much as possible to provide hands-on exposure to a field that is intriguing to them. Career readiness skills are assessed on the worksite by the worksite supervisors, allowing the youth to gauge their skill level with regards to industry-specific expectations and requirements. Financial literacy tools are used to help each youth navigate having a job and managing the earnings that follows. During the COVID-19 pandemic, providers instituted virtual opportunities for participants to complete work readiness training and earn a stipend for their work. Some virtual work experiences have also been developed to meet the needs of participants and employers during the pandemic and beyond.

The TANF project has enabled young adults, many of whom have significant barriers to obtaining and maintaining employment, to explore educational opportunities and fulfilling careers that will set them and their families up for lifelong success. A 2018 evaluation report and other TANF Youth Innovation resources and participant success stories can be found on the project webpage: https://mn.gov/deed/programs-services/office-youth-development/special/tanf/.

Veterans

- The state's system of CareerForce locations provides the full array of labor and employment services to veterans around the state. Disabled Veteran Outreach Program Specialists (DVOPs) provide eligible veterans with employment services such as job matching and referral to posted job openings, vocational and career guidance, labor market information, plus workshops on resume preparation and conducting effective job searches. DVOPs also refer eligible and qualified veterans to appropriate WIOA—funded training programs and discretionary initiatives, as well as registered apprenticeship programs throughout the state. Local Veteran Employment Representatives (LVER) specialize in promoting veterans to employers, educating one—stop partners on current law, changing regulations, and the value veterans bring to an employer. DEED has recently hired multiple new staff to help support and grow veterans services, including staff with experience working with women veterans and American Indian veterans. A mobile CareerForce center with similar services provided at the One-Stop locations will begin making trips around the state in 2020, particularly in efforts to support American Indian communities.

- Jobs for Veterans State Grants (JVSG) — DVOP and LVER staff are funded through the JVSG and fulfill all responsibilities mandated by the grant programs. Services include the provision of intensive case management services to Chapter 31 Veterans, disabled veterans, homeless veterans, economically or educationally disadvantaged veterans, and veterans with "significant barriers to employment" as defined by the Department of Labor.

- Additional Veterans Outreach — JVSG grant staff also serves other populations of veterans in the State through Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs). Those populations include:

- National Guard and Reserve members returning from overseas deployment. In particular, Virtual Job Fair Technology and social media are being utilized to connect and assist this group with veterans' resource sites, services accessed while they are still overseas, and actual virtual job fairs when they return to this country. Minnesota also stages an annual Veterans Career Fair each July, which is "Hire a Veteran" month as proclaimed by the Governor.
- Service-connected disabled veterans, who are identified through various Veterans Service Organizations (VSO) such as Disabled American Veterans and VFWs, as well as outreach activities at Veteran Centers, Veterans Administration Medical Centers, and Community Based Outpatient Clinics.
- Recently-separated veterans, who are identified at various reintegration events, job fairs, and through partner referrals.
- Wounded and injured veterans, who are identified through the outreach activities of our DVOPS, local VSO's, and partner staff in our local CareerForce location system.
- Incarcerated veterans, who are identified and contacted through "in-reach" activities conducted within correctional facilities managed by DOC, and community based "halfway houses" and similar facilities. Minnesota has dedicated DVOP staff that serve veterans being released from correctional facilities, and those with a criminal history via this special initiative.
- Homeless Veterans, who are served by DVOP Specialists, who work in partnership with the Homeless Veteran Reintegration Program to provide one-on-one employment assistance and supportive services to homeless veterans. These services may include resume and interviewing preparation, employment workshops, job clubs, job search assistance and job referrals.
- Community based "Beyond the Yellow Ribbon" organizations are engaged through DVOP/LVER participation in "Beyond the Yellow Ribbon" committees covering 63 National Guard Armory communities. DEED Veterans Employment Representatives are required partners in these organizations comprised of public and private resources designed to support all veterans in the community.

Individuals with Disabilities

- Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Services — This program assists Minnesotans with significant disabilities to secure and maintain employment. Customers are people whose disabilities cause serious functional limitations in life, specifically in achieving an employment goal. More than 300 VR counselors, placement counselors, and VR techs work within the Minnesota CareerForce location System to deliver services that include: assessment, vocational evaluation, training, rehabilitation counseling, assistive technology, and job placement. Some customers may also receive post—employment assistance. Many of these services are delivered through collaborative partnerships between public and private providers. Coordination between programs will be supported by working and, as appropriate, formal partnership agreements with state community partners to create referral processes and jointly deliver services to customers, including customers from unserved and underserved populations. At the local level, VR will work with core and combined plan partners as well as other community resources, to reach out to unserved and underserved populations.The VR program receives both state and federal funding.
- Disability Employment Initiative (DEI) Career Pathways Disability Resources Coordinators work to strengthen partnerships with Vocational Rehabilitation, disability agencies, and employers and modify career pathway education and employment for

individual success. The GWDB Disability Equity Committee will continue to serve as an entity to help evaluate projects and develop recommendations based on their outcomes.

Adult Learners

- Registered Apprenticeship Programs – The Minnesota Department of Labor & Industry (DLI) is committed to supporting Minnesota's economy by fostering and promoting employment-based career development through registered apprenticeship programs that provide structured training, development and credentialing of highly skilled employees.
- Minnesota Capacity Expansion for Registered Apprenticeship – In 2020, Minnesota received $450,000 to continue building the apprenticeship system, align for apprenticeship expansion, and improve data sharing and data integrity. Key initiatives for this grant include engaging secondary education institutions including career and technical education colleagues to raise awareness of career opportunities available through registered apprenticeship, continuing coordination with workforce development programs, reaching out to post-secondary institutions and about becoming related technical instruction providers for registered apprenticeship programs (RAPs) and promoting educational communications to maximize veterans' knowledge of how GI Bill benefits can be used with registered apprenticeship programs. Improvements to data systems include redeveloping the apprenticeship data management system to improve data tracking and sharing and improving employer and sponsor interfaces in the data management system.
- Minnesota Registered Apprenticeship Expansion (MNRAE) Initiative – In 2019, Minnesota received $1.35 million to continue expanding registered apprenticeship in Minnesota, specifically focusing on those who have been traditionally underrepresented in apprenticeship opportunities. Registered Apprenticeship Program sponsors have been eligible to apply for grants to offset the costs of related technical instruction, on-the-job training, and various supports needed by their apprentices to continue in their programs. Additional programmatic benefits have included translating outreach materials into several different languages, deepening partnerships with workforce development boards by presenting and building relationships, offering training for apprenticeship field representatives, and expanding career readiness and career exploration programs to increase awareness of the registered apprenticeship model.
- Minnesota Dual-Training Pipeline (Private Investment, Public Education, Labor and Industry Experience) Program – Initially established as a pilot project by the Minnesota legislature in 2014, the Minnesota Dual-Training Pipeline exists to support employers in advanced manufacturing, agriculture, health care services, and information technology to develop their own dual-training programs. These programs combine related technical instruction with on-the-job training to create powerful learning opportunities for new or incumbent workers, offers a career pathway into an occupation that pays a family-sustaining wage, and improves retention for participating employers. DLI uses state funds to convene industry experts, employers, higher education institutions, and labor leaders regularly to develop competency standards for in-demand occupations in advanced manufacturing, health care services, information technology, and agriculture industries. Minnesota Dual-Training Pipeline is an innovative approach to expand earn-and-learn training through its own programming as well as by encouraging employers to take steps toward forming registered apprenticeship programs in Minnesota.
- Labor Education Advancement Program (LEAP) — LEAP was established by DLI for the purposes of facilitating the participation of people of color, indigenous people and women into registered apprenticeship opportunities. Grants appropriated by the

legislature are distributed annually to community-based organizations serving the targeted population.

- Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) — As the entity responsible for management and oversight of Title II funds, MDE works collaboratively with partners within the Combined State Plan to ensure effective and efficient career pathways for Minnesotans. ABE transition coordinators and Local Workforce Development Area directors have developed strong partnerships and continue to convene meetings, identify opportunities for collaboration and planning, and host discussions aimed at meeting regional needs. This work was initially funded, in part, by the WIA Incentive funding that Minnesota received. The state invested much of these earnings into WIOA implementation to achieve better alignment and leveraging of resources and opportunities within the six regions in Minnesota.

D. COORDINATION, ALIGNMENT AND PROVISION OF SERVICES TO EMPLOYERS

D. COORDINATION, ALIGNMENT AND PROVISION OF SERVICES TO EMPLOYERS. DESCRIBE HOW THE ENTITIES CARRYING OUT THE RESPECTIVE CORE PROGRAMS, ANY COMBINED STATE PLAN PARTNER PROGRAM INCLUDED IN THIS PLAN, REQUIRED AND OPTIONAL ONE-STOP PARTNER PROGRAMS WILL COORDINATE ACTIVITIES AND RESOURCES TO PROVIDE COMPREHENSIVE, HIGH-QUALITY SERVICES TO EMPLOYERS TO MEET THEIR CURRENT AND PROJECTED WORKFORCE NEEDS AND TO ACHIEVE THE GOALS OF INDUSTRY OR SECTOR PARTNERS IN THE STATE. THE ACTIVITIES DESCRIBED SHALL CONFORM TO THE STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS OF EACH PROGRAM.

Outreach, alignment, and coordination of services is generally determined by the local and regional boards. Additionally, several local workforce board members serve on the GWDB.

The GWDB, regional partnerships, and local boards continue to identify progress and share best practices through the GWDB committees, combined plan partners, and events or meetings held by or in collaboration with MAWB. While Minnesota's economic conditions have continued to remain stable and improve overall since the last recession, employers continue to search for the skilled labor they need while many communities – particularly those facing systemic or historical barriers to employment – face disproportionate rates of unemployment, underemployment, and disparities relating to wages, wealth, and education. Minnesota is committed to building innovative practices at local, regional, and state levels to help business fill positions in demand while creating economic opportunities for more Minnesotans. System alignment progress is needed for existing programs and functions carried out by state agencies and across both secondary and postsecondary education, while innovative approaches and increased collaboration are needed across sectors.

Minnesota has several industry associations and/or partnerships including Minnesota Precision Manufacturing Association (represented on the GWDB), Health Education Industry Partnership, Central MN Manufacturing Association, and Minnesota State College and Universities Centers of Excellence. These partnerships further outreach, coordination, and better alignment within workforce and education and are critical to identifying industry-recognized and valued credentials leading to meaningful employment. The six regional plans have identified industry sectors which are or have established employer-led sector partnerships. The DEED online dashboard collects information on the success of many of these partnerships. The GWDB will be facilitating opportunities for these partnerships to develop more substantive potential policy changes or program pilots.

DEED employs workforce strategy consultants that work with specific industry sectors and the six regions, while they work closely with designated Employer Navigators to best deliver employer services as well as communities and industries to support workforce attraction

efforts, assist with larger job fair efforts, attend regional WIOA planning events, and help serve as a conduit between economic development and workforce development efforts. They also support access to labor exchange services.

The local boards are responsible for developing more specific strategies and approaches through their regional and local plans to guide their workforce development efforts. This local level coordination includes core programs, other state or federally required programs, economic development entities, and both secondary and postsecondary education. The strategies and approaches are aligned with and articulated through the six elements of a career pathways system and supported at the state level by each federal title administrator.

E. PARTNER ENGAGEMENT WITH EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

E. PARTNER ENGAGEMENT WITH EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS DESCRIBE HOW THE STATE'S STRATEGIES WILL ENGAGE THE STATE'S COMMUNITY COLLEGES AND AREA CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION SCHOOLS, AS PARTNERS IN THE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM TO CREATE A JOB-DRIVEN EDUCATION AND TRAINING SYSTEM. WIOA SECTION 102(B)(2)(B)(IV).

Minnesota has an established history of developing partnerships within education. Minnesota's Pathways to Prosperity program represents a strong partnership between Adult Basic Education, DEED, and other training institutions. This program demonstrates the coordination but also the alignment and leveraging of resources, including financial and human, to better serve individuals on a career path to academic achievement and employment. The Minnesota legislature initially funded P2P in State Fiscal Year 2016, and continued to appropriate funds for this program in 2017 and 2019. Since its inception, P2P has served over 5,500 participants. This model exemplifies the six elements of the career pathway system and moves new programming into innovative ways to help more Minnesotans develop skills and obtain credentials.

The Minnesota Department of Labor and Industry (DLI), DEED, MDE, and several state community colleges in the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities system have developed partnerships with industry to implement programs for youth and adults in dual-enrollment apprenticeship programs funded by state and federal funds (including non-traditional occupations in Minnesota's key industry sectors). The success of these strong partnerships are evidenced through the outcomes in the Minnesota Dual-Training Pipeline, Registered Apprenticeship, DEI grants, and sector partnerships like the Healthcare Education Industry Partnership (HEIP) Council.

Educational Initiatives

Minnesota is currently participating in several national grants and initiatives to align higher education and workforce needs:

Minnesota received an Educate for Opportunity grant from the National Governors Association and Strata Education Network to support training initiatives for adult learning. The Minnesota team will receive technical assistance from NGA over the course of 18 months to refine their data-driven approaches to anticipating and meeting future workforce needs. Core team participants include representatives from the Office of Governor Tim Walz, OHE, DEED, DLI, MDE and Minnesota State.

Minnesota was selected to participate in the State Higher Education Executive Officers Association (SHEEO) Communities of Practice to align postsecondary education and the workforce. This initiative will provide an opportunity for states to explore best practices to align educational output with workforce demand, define and measure credentials of value, and increase capacity to utilize linked postsecondary and workforce data. Participants include

representatives from DEED, Minnesota State, the University of Minnesota and a private postsecondary institution.

Minnesota was also selected to participate in the WIOA Credential Attainment Cohort, a gathering of nine states receiving technical assistance from DOLETA, MDE's Rehabilitation Services Administration and Office of Career, Technical, and Adult Education. The cohort is aimed at enhancing state efforts to determine which degrees, certificates, certifications, and licenses qualify as credentials using the parameters established in federal guidance. Participants include representatives from all core WIOA titles in Minnesota.

Education and Workforce Alignment

Minnesota has a fully interoperable, enterprise-level data collection, reporting and analysis system that stores student data from pre-kindergarten through completion of postsecondary and into the workforce. These systems include:

Te Statewide Longitudinal Education Data System (SLEDS), which is led by OHE and brings together data from MDE, DEED and OHE;

The Early Childhood Longitudinal Data System (ECLDS), which is led by MDE and brings together data from MDE and the Minnesota Departments of Health (MDH) and Human Services (DHS).

SLEDS brings together data from education and workforce to identify the most viable pathways for individuals in achieving successful outcomes in education and work. It is used to inform decisions to support and improve education and workforce policy and assist in creating a more seamless education and workforce system for all Minnesotans. The general purpose of the SLEDS system is to identify and analyze the 4 P's of Minnesota's education and workforce systems:

Pathways: The movement of individual students between K-12, higher education, and workforce

Progress: The benchmarks transition points students meet or fail to meet

Predictors: The characteristics or patterns that help explain which students succeed and which do not

Performance: The alignment of education and workforce for individual success

In 2015, Minnesota received a 4-year national SLDS grant through the Institute for Education Sciences (IES) with a focus on early learning and college and career. The grant projects expanded SLEDS use to better inform and improve education programming, policies and resource allocation decisions. The projects supported increased use of SLEDS, improve key stakeholders' data literacy and added linkages to important additional data.

The cross-agency teams also submitted a 2019 SLDS grant proposal, with a focus on equity. Proposed projects would include the development of a cross-agency education and employment dashboard, the complete integration of WIOA Title III and Title IV data, new data sources to track and measure non-educational credentials

State Educational Attainment Goal

In 2015, the Minnesota Legislature set in statute the goal of 70 percent or more of Minnesota residents ages 25 to 44 to hold a postsecondary degree or certificate by 2025. This law emphasized the importance of achieving comparable attainment rates across all race and ethnicity groups. OHE is tasked with reporting on progress towards this goal annually, with progress reports by race and ethnicity groups.

DEED serves as a key stakeholder in this effort to increase educational attainment levels because of our role in administering workforce training programs for adults and youth with barriers to entry, particularly those from communities of color. Approximately 37 percent of CareerForce customers do not have education beyond a high school diploma or GED. Providing customers access to education and training opportunities – including information on the education required for Minnesota's current and future in-demand jobs – will support the state attainment goal.

Transparency of Educational Outcomes

In 2015, the Minnesota Legislature also set in statute the higher education reporting requirements for institutions that participate in state financial aid programs administered by OHE. These requirements included enrollment and graduation data; financial aid information; cumulative debt of graduates by race and ethnicity, gender, and income; persistence and completion; and employment and wage outcomes.

DEED remains a key partner with OHE in this push towards transparency of educational outcomes. Data on institution-level employment and wage outcomes by program of study (i.e. major) are produced by DEED and displayed in the Graduate Employment Outcomes (https://mn/gov/deed/geo) tool, a product of the Labor Market Information Office.

F. PARTNER ENGAGEMENT WITH OTHER EDUCATION AND TRAINING PROVIDERS

F. PARTNER ENGAGEMENT WITH OTHER EDUCATION AND TRAINING PROVIDERS. DESCRIBE HOW THE STATE'S STRATEGIES WILL ENGAGE THE STATE'S OTHER EDUCATION AND TRAINING PROVIDERS, INCLUDING PROVIDERS ON THE STATE'S ELIGIBLE TRAINING PROVIDER LIST, AS PARTNERS IN THE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM TO CREATE A JOB-DRIVEN EDUCATION AND TRAINING SYSTEM.

Describe how the State's Strategies will engage the State's other education and training providers, including providers on the state's eligible training provider list, as partners in the workforce development system to create a job-driven education and training system.

By design, the GWDB represents members from not only public postsecondary institutions but also private postsecondary, career technical education, and two "other" education/training representatives (K-12 Superintendent and secondary/postsecondary vocational education) to be inclusive and ensure engagement.

The GWDB has a standing Operations Committee representing members of the board from education, labor, and community-based organizations to serve as the liaison and voice for these stakeholders. The Operations Committee also reviews the first draft of the WIOA State Plan and Annual Report before they are sent to the full GWDB.

MAWB, representing the 16 local workforce development areas, holds Operations Committee meetings monthly for discussion, presentations, and opportunity sharing. These meetings provide an open forum to specifically address services to meet the education and training needs of individuals. MAWB has established committees to address service delivery, business services, equity, and legislative agendas. The committees also ensure alignment and transparency. Staff from DEED and GWDB attend most of these monthly meetings to provide updates and opportunities for state staff and local board staff to communicate regularly, while other core program partners also attend these monthly meetings at times.

All education and training providers are essential to providing a skilled workforce to meet the needs of employers. The goals and strategies for a Career Pathway system do not make a distinction in this area and apply to other education and training providers. Based on regional industry needs and the selected career pathway occupations, all related providers will be

engaged. Additionally, these institutions may participate in the eligible training provider listing service if they meet the criteria.

G. LEVERAGING RESOURCES TO INCREASE EDUCATIONAL ACCESS

G. LEVERAGING RESOURCES TO INCREASE EDUCATIONAL ACCESS

DESCRIBE HOW THE STATE'S STRATEGIES WILL ENABLE THE STATE TO LEVERAGE OTHER FEDERAL, STATE, AND LOCAL INVESTMENTS THAT HAVE ENHANCED ACCESS TO WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS AT THE ABOVE INSTITUTIONS, DESCRIBED IN SECTION (E).

Minnesota has several initiatives underway that leverage multiple resources across programs and partners. Minnesota's Pathways to Prosperity (P2P) program leverages and braids funding from federal, state, philanthropic, and local investments from DEED, Adult Basic Education, DHS, Minnesota State, and philanthropic funders. These programs align and leverage customized training programs and academic programming at Minnesota State community colleges across Minnesota. In addition, Minnesota State's Centers of Excellence in key industry sectors including agriculture, health care, IT, manufacturing, energy, and engineering are a referral network to workforce and the private sector and align resources to best serve individuals who may already be co-enrolled in a federal or state funded program. DEED and DLI are state agency partners in a DOL apprenticeship funded initiative that aligns and leverages resources within higher education and other workforce programs. DEED and DHS coordinate and leverage resources to better serve SNAP E & T recipients through career pathways models which build on career pathways opportunities within postsecondary.

Each of Minnesota's six workforce development regions developed Regional Plans most recently in 2018 during the revision of the last WIOA State Plan and corresponding local and regional updates. Each of the six regional plans identified key industry sectors and helped lay the groundwork for ongoing employer-led sector partnerships. These partnerships vary greatly across sectors and regions but they are vital in developing local and regional workforce strategies that are actually backed by industry leaders. For region-encompassing plans to be successful, the outcome of this work is also dependent on bringing together stakeholders from workforce development, education, economic development, philanthropic communities, and leaders from the private sector to become invested in the career pathways model and the local or regional implementation of such models.

The Minnesota Job Skills Partnership (MJSP) programs provides state funding for low-wage workers and the incumbent workforce in key industry sectors. This funding is awarded to training and education providers, businesses and nonprofit organizations. Program eligible individuals are co-enrolled in multiple programs to ensure successful outcomes for skill development and meaningful employment.

In 2017, the Minnesota State Legislature established funding for five Greater Minnesota Rural Career Counseling Coordinators, RC3, over two years. The RC3s provide a connection to businesses, secondary and higher education, and other workforce stakeholders. They provide services to job seekers through better coordination and access to resources. The impact of their efforts is reported to the Minnesota Legislature which includes their outcomes on the value of sector strategies, work-based learning opportunities, and how career pathways models are implemented in the region.

Early indicators of their impact is evident throughout the organizing and development of the six regional plans. These coordinators were able to prioritize the development and building the regional relationships. This work included bringing together key stakeholders in the regions to begin to develop strategies to focus on the six elements in this plan. This work continues to be

focused on the first three elements in this plan — business and community engagement and customer-focused design. The outcomes of their efforts will provide a perspective on the successes of career pathways models to assist the state board, state agencies and local boards with understanding what the access issues are and how coordination could be improve. This effort focuses on greater Minnesota and is being overseen by the local workforce development boards.

The Minnesota Youth Program (MYP) provides short-term, contextualized and individualized training services for at-risk youth, ages 14 to 24. Coordinated at the local level by the Workforce Development Boards/Youth Committees, MYP eligibility criteria is more flexible (inclusive) than the WIOA Youth Program. MYP serves an extremely disadvantaged group of young men and women: participants have multiple challenges such as substance abuse, criminal records, mental health issues, and cognitive learning limitations, in addition to being poor. The COVID-19 Pandemic caused disruption to established in-person service models. Services to youth that were previously provided in-person shifted to virtual models. Various state and funding sources were leveraged to increase educational access in spite of the pandemic health protocols.

- Credential Attainment Rate (of all students)
- Number Enrolled (of all students)
- % completed (of all students)
- % WIOA participants
- % employed in MN -- 2nd quarter after exit (of all students, WIOA and others)
- % employed in MN -- 4th quarter after exit (of all students, WIOA and others)
- Median wages 6 months after exit (only those employed) as hourly/quarter/annualized
- Average wages 6 months after exit
- Average wages 12 months after exit
- Average ITA value (include by program cost)

H. IMPROVING ACCESS TO POSTSECONDARY CREDENTIALS

H. IMPROVING ACCESS TO POSTSECONDARY CREDENTIALS DESCRIBE HOW THE STATE'S STRATEGIES WILL IMPROVE ACCESS TO ACTIVITIES LEADING TO RECOGNIZED POSTSECONDARY CREDENTIALS, INCLUDING REGISTERED APPRENTICESHIP CERTIFICATES. THIS INCLUDES CREDENTIALS THAT ARE INDUSTRY-RECOGNIZED CERTIFICATES, LICENSES OR CERTIFICATIONS, AND THAT ARE PORTABLE AND STACKABLE.

Minnesota's Department of Labor and Industry (DLI) is Minnesota's agency responsible for expanding registered apprenticeships in Minnesota. DEED is collaborating with the Department of Labor and Industry to align workforce needs along with other statewide workforce partners. DLI is the lead state agency in developing apprenticeships in traditional and non-traditional industry sectors in partnership with the core partners in this plan. In addition, DLI is also the lead agency in identifying and establishing opportunities that may lead to registered apprenticeships.

The Minnesota Dual-Training Pipeline (Private Investment, Public Education, Labor and Industry Experience) Program was established by the Minnesota Legislature in 2014 to expand dual-training in Minnesota. In 2015, additional legislation was passed to create a grant

program to help employers develop dual-training programs. Dual training is employment-based career development training which has three components: employment in a dual-training occupation; structured on-the-job training of occupation-specific competencies; and related instruction in industry-sector technical competencies.

The development of industry-recognized competency standards is a core component of the Minnesota Dual-Training Pipeline. The Legislature required DLI to develop competency standards for occupations in the following four industries: advanced manufacturing, agriculture, health care services, and information technology. DLI assists groups of industry-technical experts to develop occupational competency standards for the Minnesota Dual-Training Pipeline Industry identified occupations. Competency Councils review and validate the foundational competencies for each occupation including personal effectiveness, academic, workplace, industry-wide technical, industry-sector and occupation specific competencies using modified versions of the U.S. DOL occupational competency pyramids. Using their technical expertise, the members of the competency council identify Industry Sector Technical Competencies and Industry-Wide Technical Competencies for each occupation. These competencies are typically those that will be provided during the related instruction component of dual training.

Competency council members also identify the occupation-specific competencies for each occupation. These competencies are typically gained during the on-the-job training component of dual training. A critical component in the development of industry valued competency standards is to acknowledge that each individual employer will also provide employer-specific training to its employees. Each of the Minnesota Dual-Training Pipeline occupational competency standards templates includes space for individual employers to reflect their own training needs as part of a broader industry-based dual-training program. All of the competencies developed by the competency councils are validated through stakeholder engagement and used to develop baseline occupational competency standards templates.

More than 3,120 industry leaders are engaged in the Minnesota Dual-Training Pipeline at this time. Occupational competency standards are developed and validated for 68 occupations, including a completely reworked set of 13 competency models for the information technology industry. There have been nearly 1,900 dual-training participants who are participating in dual-training programs since the inception of the dual training grant. Minnesota Office of Higher Education (OHE) is responsible for the oversight and reporting of the outcomes of the grant to the Minnesota Legislature. Employers, including dual-training grantees, are receiving technical assistance in the creation of new dual-training programs and registered apprenticeship programs.

DLI has also created resources for employers to improve their on-the-job-training as part of Minnesota Dual-Training Pipeline and those can be accessed on its website at: http://www.dli.mn.gov/business/workforce/minnesota-dual-training-pipeline-tools . Additionally, Pipeline hosts industry forums throughout the year to connect with employers, educators and additional stakeholders to discuss ways to further improve the ability to of the program to do more outreach, exposure and awareness of the model as well as to better provide assistance for employers hoping to start their own dual-training programs.

Lastly, Minnesota Dual-Training Pipeline also maintains a related instruction inventory as required by state statute that serves as an inventory of education and training programs in the state of education opportunities to earn credentials and/or degrees and certificates that are in line the with Pipeline approved occupations. A link to the related instruction inventory can be accessed here: http://www.dli.mn.gov/business/workforce/pipeline-related-instruction-inventory .

I. COORDINATING WITH ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES. DESCRIBE HOW THE ACTIVITIES IDENTIFIED IN (A) WILL BE COORDINATED WITH ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ENTITIES, STRATEGIES AND ACTIVITIES IN THE STATE.

DEED oversees the state's workforce development system and is home to a majority of the programs within WIOA. The agency is also responsible for Minnesota's economic development initiatives, including business finance programs, business expansion incentive programs, export and trade promotion, and a variety of education and technical services for small businesses.

DEED's Business Development Managers located throughout the state provide assistance and solutions to businesses locating or expanding in Minnesota. The Business Development Managers work directly with business and identify and connect available resources including workforce solutions. The Regional Business Development Managers work directly with the Workforce Strategy Consultant team and connect with the DEED staff located in the CareerForce locations to identify potential resources to meet the employer needs. By state law, economic development projects funded by state resources must coordinate with a CareerForce location to post any new or vacant positions. The Minnesota Trade Office in addition to the business development representatives have expertise in key industry sectors. The staff understands the needs of these industries and markets specifically to attract and retain these businesses. The Business Development Managers and Workforce Strategy Consultants serve as liaisons to support regional initiatives and strategies critical to their regional economies.

The Minnesota Jobs Skills Partnership (MJSP) program administered by DEED works strategically with businesses and educational institutions to train or retrain workers, expand work opportunities, and keep high—quality jobs in the state. The MJSP Board also has statutory authority over the state and federal Dislocated Worker Program (DWP), which provides training and services to laid-off Minnesota workers who meet specific eligibility requirements.

By state law, DEED is responsible for supporting the GWDB. The GWDB works in alignment with the MJSP board. Four of the GWDB members also serve on the MJSP board to ensure that we are meeting our goals and avoiding duplication in programming or investments.

In addition, the GWDB and DEED senior leaders meet regularly to discuss workforce challenges for Minnesota businesses and identify new opportunities to help companies. The Workforce Housing Development Program is an outgrowth of that collaboration. The program targets the lack of affordable housing in Greater Minnesota, which makes it difficult for businesses to attract the workers they need.

Many of DEED state-funded business financing programs address the common vision of workforce development of providing Minnesotans with meaningful employment at family-sustaining wages.

- **Minnesota Job Creation Fund** — This program encourages capital investment and high-wage job creation in key industries throughout the state. The program provides financial benefits to expanding business that spend at least $500,000 in real property improvements with one year, create at least 10 new full-time positions that meet compensation requirements within two years, and possess expansion outside the state. In SFY 2015, $11.65 million in state dollars were awarded, with 1,620 projected jobs created. All financing is performance-based and provided as business meet capital investment and job creation thresholds.

- **Minnesota Investment Fund** — This program provides financing that creates and retains high—quality jobs, with a focus on industrial, manufacturing, and technology-related industries, to increase the local and state tax base and improve economic vitality for all Minnesota citizens.

- Grants are awarded to local units of government who provide loans to assist new and expanding businesses. Cities, counties, townships and recognized Indian tribal government are eligible. All projects must meet minimum criteria for private investment, number of jobs created or retained, and waged paid. In SFY 2015, $7.9 million in state dollars were awarded, with an estimated 1,106 jobs created or retained.

Several state-funded business financing programs directly target communities of color in Minnesota:

- **Minnesota Angel Tax Credit Program** — Minnesota's Angel Tax Credit provides a 25-percent credit to investors or investment funds that make equity investments in startup companies focused on high technology, new proprietary technology, or a new proprietary product, process or service in specified fields. In 2019, $5 of the total of $10 million in funding is reserved for people of color, indigenous and women owned & managed businesses, and businesses located in Greater Minnesota

- **Launch Minnesota** Launch Minnesota Innovation Grants are targeted to the most promising innovative scalable technology businesses in Minnesota. The goal is to help reduce the risk for Minnesota technology startups and entrepreneurs, who are solving problems and growing our state's innovation ecosystem. The application process is now open for three types of Innovation Grants. Startups located in Greater Minnesota, as well as businesses owned by women, veterans, or people of color are given increased consideration.

- **Minnesota Indian Business Loan Program** — This program supports the development of Indian-owned and -operated businesses and promotes economic opportunities for Native American people throughout Minnesota. Eligible applicants must be enrolled members of a federally recognized Minnesota-based band or tribe. Each band or tribe is allocated funds from the program based on the number of enrolled members. DEED administers the program and services the loans, while the appropriate tribal council approves loan applications. In SFY 2019, 2 projects were approved, with $85,766 in loan amounts. .

- **Minnesota Emerging Entrepreneur Loan Program** — This program supports the growth of businesses owned and operated by people of color or indigenous people, low-income persons, women, veterans and/or persons with disabilities. DEED provides grant funds to a network of nonprofit lenders which use these funds for loans to start-up and expanding businesses throughout the state. The program has additional goals of providing jobs for people of color, indigenous people and/or low-income persons, creating and strengthening business enterprises owned by people of color or indigenous people, and promoting economic development in low-income areas. In SFY 2019, 47 projects were approved with $1.16M in loans granted.

The nine Regional Development Commissions (RDC) in Minnesota were established to provide technical assistance to the local units of government in their region. While RDCs perform a variety of unique services based on the needs of their region they intentionally align and collaborate with stakeholders in the workforce system and often serve as local workforce development board members.

Through the establishment of the six workforce development regions and approval of six regional plans, the coordination and alignment is also heightened. The six elements in this plan, in particular, the first three identify the opportunity and the need for local and regional economic development organizations to be aligned and integrated into the reginal workforce development plans. Regional economies are dependent on a future skilled workforce and strategies that develop the skills and training needed for industry to thrive. The coordination

and leadership from economic development is evident in the regional governance structures and their participation in these plans.

The six workforce development regions, and their corresponding regional plans that are modeled after the WIOA State Plan, helps the coordination and alignment of programs and efforts between the state and regional levels. Local and regional workforce development board structures include members representing professional economic development, which helps ensure alignment between economic and workforce development. Additionally, leadership at DEED under the new administration has begun making structural changes to better align workforce and economic development, some of which remains to be determined.

B. STATE OPERATING SYSTEMS AND POLICIES

DEED houses several data systems that work together to advance the statewide strategy, by providing necessary information to make data—driven decisions, monitor and track our interactions with employer and job-seeking customers, and to communicate effectively with external audiences.

Labor Market Information

The state's Labor Market Information (LMI) office gathers, analyzes, and disseminates economic data on Minnesota's business community, workforce, and job market. It also provides:

- Key economic indicators
- Employment projections
- Job vacancy data
- Regional and statewide industry and workforce analysis
- Information and tools to help individuals make informed career decisions

Key customers include businesses, job seekers, students, economic developers, education and training planners, workforce development professionals, policymakers, researchers and economists, government entities, media, and the general public.

For job seekers and career counselors specifically, the office has developed web tools that combine a range of data relevant to career decision-making:

- The My Goals and Experience feature on CareerForceMN.com provides a wide range of occupational information, including wages, current and future demand, education and training resources, and job opportunities. The Regional and industry pages on CareerForceMN.com provide easier access to local and regional employment information. Regional pages provide local wage, demand and other information for each of Minnesota's six regions, as well as workforce-related blog and news content specific to each region.
- The Graduate Employment Outcomes tool on mn.gov/deed shows how many Minnesota college graduates found jobs and at what wages. Outcomes are available at an institution and program of study level.

- The Cost of Living tool on mn.gov/deed provides a yearly estimate of the basic—needs cost of living in Minnesota by county, region, and statewide. The tool can be customized by family size and number of workers.

The Labor Market Information office's telephone and email helpline respond to thousands of data and information requests per year. A team of six regional labor market analysts, stationed within Local Workforce Development Areas, give hundreds of public presentations every year on economic conditions, workforce issues and key industries to key internal and external stakeholders. They also provide analytical and grant-writing support on demographic and labor force topics, and customized support to organizations involved in regional planning.

To leverage existing career information tools — and to meet the requirements of WIOA to maintain and publish lists of eligible training providers and programs — DEED built an integrated Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL) database and an online Career and Education Explorer tool, which launched in 2016.

The ETPL Training Provider Portal is a secure database and data entry portal to house and maintain Minnesota's official ETPL. This portal is available to training providers who meet the requirements for listing in Minnesota and it allows trainers to manage their own program listings. By policy, training providers will be required to validate the accuracy of their program data every two-years.

The Career and Education Explorer web tool allow the public to search for educational opportunities in Minnesota, including those that result in an industry-recognized credential. Enhanced labor market data is provided to allow users to explore occupations and to find related training opportunities.

Customer Data Systems

In 2021 DEED completed the process of selecting Geographic Solutions as Minnesota's vendor to replace the aging MinnesotaWorks.Net labor exchange that was launched in 2007. Minnesota's labor exchange is an online system for helping job seekers find work and employers fill job vacancies. The replacement labor exchange system will collect data on employer and job seeker account characteristics, demographics, numbers of job openings and resumes, and web analytics.

The new data combined with historical data will help us better understand the needs of job seekers, businesses and industries and to guide the direction and focus of future outreach activities, developments and strategies. The new labor exchange will be mobile-friendly, accessible and secure. CareerForceMN.com was funded by a federal Workforce Innovation Fund grant awarded in 2015 and launched in 2019.

The quantitative performance data collected by the labor exchange helps to inform the work of the Employment Service Program, the Workforce Strategy Consultants and other CareerForce staff, as well as Local Workforce Development Area leadership.

Minnesota's labor exchange is used by job seekers to register for services. Local CareerForce staff create workshop listings for registration and track workshop attendance. Staff also track individual services delivered in the CareerForce services, as well as other reportable services provided. Management utilizes data to create and analyze activity reports.

The new labor exchange is intended to offer new opportunities to track CareerForce System utilization, including in-person visits to locations, utilization of resources, referrals to programs and other important data.

Minnesota's labor exchange is currently the sole source of reportable individual and participant information that is needed to generate the federal Wagner-Peyser Employment Service Program reports and other internal planning and performance activities. For example, data on usage rates and customer characteristics are used to plan and provide appropriate customer services and connections to resources more effectively and efficiently.

Customer Case Management Data System

Workforce One (WF1) is a web-based case management application used by 2,000 state, city, county, and non-profit employees to track services to more than 100,000 customers across Minnesota's county offices, CareerForce locations, and Vocational Rehabilitation Services Offices. WF1 was created through a partnership of two Minnesota state agencies — the DHS and the DEED. State and federally-funded workforce training programs — including WIOA Adult, Dislocated Worker and Youth — track program participants in WF1.

Tracking customer services for participants in all employment and training programs in a single system helps to ensure consistency in service delivery and data collection. Case managers are able to view enrollments and services in some programs outside of those they work on, allowing them to target resources where customers need them most. Providers are able to closely monitor their customers' outcomes and deliver additional services when necessary to ensure the best outcome. Meeting federal and state employment and training reporting requirements is more efficient and less expensive because of standardized data collection and reporting within WF1.

For its business customers, DEED leverages Salesforce. The use and cost of SalesForce is shared by both internal users (Workforce Strategy Consultants, Veterans employment representatives, DEED's economic development programs, the Minnesota Trade Office, Communications, and the Rapid Response team) and some external users.

Salesforce allows these organizations to collaborate on business visits, to share information, and communicate to reduce duplication of services. Salesforce provides customized reports on business needs and services.

Communications Systems

DEED makes a concerted effort to communicate job and training opportunities to job seekers through GovDelivery, our email marketing tool. Enhanced communications with employers and customers is supported by DEED's Communications Office.

In the last year, we have added 40,000 new subscribers to this email tool, with the total number of subscribers currently at 451,200 — most of those job seekers. And, in the last year, we sent a total of 1,867 bulletins to 73 different job seekers lists, broken down by geographical area, resulting in 27,027,220 potential bulletin views.

1. THE STATE OPERATING SYSTEMS THAT WILL SUPPORT THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE STATE'S STRATEGIES. THIS MUST INCLUDE A DESCRIPTION OF–

A. STATE OPERATING SYSTEMS THAT SUPPORT COORDINATED IMPLEMENTATION OF STATE STRATEGIES (E.G., LABOR MARKET INFORMATION SYSTEMS, DATA SYSTEMS, COMMUNICATION SYSTEMS, CASE-MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS, JOB BANKS, ETC.).

DEED houses several data systems that work together to advance the statewide strategy, by providing necessary information to make data—driven decisions, monitor and track our interactions with employer and job-seeking customers, and to communicate effectively with external audiences.

Labor Market Information

The state's Labor Market Information (LMI) office gathers, analyzes, and disseminates economic data on Minnesota's business community, workforce, and job market. It also provides:

- Key economic indicators
- Employment projections
- Job vacancy data
- Regional and statewide industry and workforce analysis
- Information and tools to help individuals make informed career decisions

Key customers include businesses, job seekers, students, economic developers, education and training planners, workforce development professionals, policymakers, researchers and economists, government entities, media, and the general public.

For job seekers and career counselors specifically, the office has developed web tools that combine a range of data relevant to career decision-making:

- The My Goals and Experience feature on CareerForceMN.com provides a wide range of occupational information, including wages, current and future demand, education and training resources, and job opportunities. It also provides the Eligible Training Provider listings, including WIOA—certified trainings.
- The Regional and industry pages on CareerForceMN.com provide easier access to local and regional employment information. Regional pages provide local wage, demand and other information for each of Minnesota's six regions, as well as workforce-related blog and news content specific to each region.
- The Graduate Employment Outcomes tool on mn.gov/deed shows how many Minnesota college graduates found jobs and at what wages. Outcomes are available at an institution and program of study level.
- The Cost of Living tool on mn.gov/deed provides a yearly estimate of the basic—needs cost of living in Minnesota by county, region, and statewide. The tool can be customized by family size and number of workers.

The Labor Market Information office's telephone and email helpline respond to thousands of data and information requests per year. A team of six regional labor market analysts, stationed within Local Workforce Development Areas, give hundreds of public presentations every year on economic conditions, workforce issues and key industries to key internal and external stakeholders. They also provide analytical and grant-writing support on demographic and labor force topics, and customized support to organizations involved in regional planning.

To leverage existing career information tools — and to meet the requirements of WIOA to maintain and publish lists of eligible training providers and programs — DEED built an integrated Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL) database and an online Career and Education Explorer tool, which launched in 2016.

The ETPL Training Provider Portal is a secure database and data entry portal to house and maintain Minnesota's official ETPL. This portal is available to training providers who meet the requirements for listing in Minnesota and it allows trainers to manage their own program listings. By policy, training providers will be required to validate the accuracy of their program data every two-years.

ETPL performance reporting as required by DOLETA leverages our state's SLDS infrastructure. Data collection is being expanded to non-degree credentials, including from eligible training providers that are not institutions of higher education.

The Career and Education Explorer web tool allows the public to search for educational opportunities in Minnesota, including those that result in an industry-recognized credential. Enhanced labor market data is provided to allow users to explore occupations and to find related training opportunities.

Customer Data Systems

MinnesotaWorks.net is currently DEED's online system for helping job seekers find work and employers fill job vacancies. The MinnesotaWorks.net system collects data on employer and job seeker account characteristics, demographics, numbers of job openings and resumes, and web analytics. The data helps us better understand the needs of job seekers, businesses and industries and to guide the direction and focus of future outreach activities, developments and strategies. This data is also helping guide exploration of updating Minnesota's labor exchange system to be more mobile-friendly, accessible and secure. The MinnesotaWorks.net website was launched in 2007 and there have been significant advancements in technology in the intervening years. One option being explored is the integration of labor exchange and reporting functionality within the new DEED managed website, CareerForceMN.com. CareerForceMN.com was built thanks to funding provided by a federal Workforce Innovation Fund grant awarded in 2015.

The MinnesotaWorks.net quantitative performance data helps to inform the work of Workforce Strategy Consultants and other CareerForce staff, as well as Local Workforce Development Area leadership..

MinnesotaWorks.net is used by job seekers to register for services, by local CareerForce staff to create workshop listings for registration and track workshop attendance and other reportable customers services they have provided, and by management to create and analyze activity reports.

Customers using computers in CareerForce location log in to MinnesotaWorks.net, which captures volume and activity patterns in the Career Labs.

MinnesotaWorks.net is currently the sole source of this information that is needed to generate the federal Wagner—Peyser reports, gather data needed for cost allocation plans, and many other internal planning and performance activities. For example, data on usage rates and customer characteristics are used to plan and provide appropriate customer services and connections to resources more effectively and efficiently.

WIOA Title II (Adult Education) uses the state adult education database, named SiD, for customer data. Enrollees in adult education programs can log into SiD in order to see their class and programming schedules, see their personal information, verify attendance to partner entities (e.g. TANF counselors), and verify their testing and diploma outcomes with employers, counselors, and others, as needed.

Minnesota receives a TANF block grant to design and operate programs that accomplish the four purposes of the TANF program. It collects for the Office of Family Assistance data on caseloads, expenditures data, and TANF work participation rate data. It uses its data warehouse system that is depends on case management information from MAXIS and DEED's Workforce 1 system to produce monthly, quarterly, annual and ad hoc reports directly related to employment and education for internal and external stakeholders..

Hours that participants attending vocational education and courses explicitly developed for low-income individuals within the Pathways to Prosperity structure are exchanged between the eligibility systems (MAXIS and Workforce One) of the Department of Human Services and Department of Employment and Economic Development. In addition, an application called the WF1 Connect app that these two state agencies co-developed with the University of Minnesota

allows seamless and convenient communication between employment counselors and TANF clients accessing services.

Customer Case Management Data System

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Tracking customer services for participants in all employment and training programs in a single system helps to ensure consistency in service delivery and data collection. Case managers are able to view enrollments and services in some programs outside of those they work on, allowing them to target resources where customers need them most. Providers are able to closely monitor their customers' outcomes and deliver additional services when necessary to ensure the best outcome. Meeting federal and state employment and training reporting requirements is more efficient and less expensive because of standardized data collection and reporting within WF1.

For its business customers, DEED leverages Salesforce. The use and cost of SalesForce is shared by both internal users (Workforce Strategy Consultants, Veterans employment representatives, DEED's economic development programs, the Minnesota Trade Office, Communications, and the Rapid Response team) and some external users.

Salesforce allows these organizations to collaborate on business visits, to share information, and communicate to reduce duplication of services. Salesforce provides customized reports on business needs and services. In WIOA Title II (Adult Education), adult education enrollee, program, class/instruction, staff, and volunteer data is entered into SiD (state adult education database). All enrollee data needed for both federal reporting and matching requirements and for local program management are entered into SiD by local program staff. SiD not only ensures compliant and quality federal reporting, but it provides important data to state staff for desktop monitoring and for local programs to effectively operate their adult education centers using data-driven decision-making options.

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B. DATA-COLLECTION AND REPORTING PROCESSES USED FOR ALL PROGRAMS AND ACTIVITIES, INCLUDING THOSE PRESENT IN ONE-STOP CENTERS.

Enhanced program performance data is a key element of DEED's data—driven policy initiative to better address some of the most critical policy challenges. State law requires DEED to report performance outcomes for adult programs funded by the state's Workforce Development Fund. Programs include those administered by Local Workforce Development Areas, awarded by a competitive grant process, and direct appropriations to non- governmental organizations.

DEED must report the total number of people served in programs, the number who received training, the number who completed training and earned a credential, the number who found employment, and the average wages earned. This workforce program report card provides uniformly defined measures, allowing outcomes to be viewed and compared across different program models and by additional layers of disaggregation, including participants' educational level, race, gender and geography. The report card is available online and is updated quarterly at https://mn.gov/deed/performance.

DEED goes beyond the legislatively required demographic characteristics and identifying the percentage of program participants served who have a disability, are homeless at enrollment, as immigrants or refugees, and have a criminal record, among others characteristics. This shows the wide range of state-funded programs – as well as the WIOA Title I Adult and Dislocated Worker programs – which serve adults with barriers to employment. This ensures continued movement towards consistent and transparent performance tracking across the entire workforce development and training system, regardless of funding source.

State law also requires a workforce program net impact analysis to include the impact of workforce services on individual employment, earnings and public benefit usage outcomes and a cost-benefit analysis for understanding the monetary impacts of workforce services from the participant and taxpayer points of view. A pilot report was conducted in 2015 and found that WIA Adult and Dislocated Worker (both federal- and state-funded) programs were responsible for large net impacts on annual earnings and employment likelihood during the two periods (2007-2008 and 2009-2010) examined. The 2017 analysis expanded the outcomes of previous cohorts and added adult career pathway programming. We also found that the monetary benefits outweigh the costs. This is true when taking into account not just the cost of the programs themselves, but the cost of increased public benefit usage among participants and the benefit of increased tax revenue when participants see a higher income as a result of participation.

Interestingly, the 2017 report also illustrated strong business cycle effects in program outcomes. One theory that could explain this would be that employers view workforce program participants more favorably during periods of economic downturns when unemployment is high and less favorably when the economy is good. Under this theory, enrolling in a workforce development program during economic downturns may introduce a signaling bias – or extra motivation to find a job – while enrolling during strong economic times may signal some barrier to employment. DEED tested this theory in a survey of employers asking them to consider hypothetical economic conditions and their willingness to hire program participations.

The next iteration of the report will further expand analysis to include DEED's newest equity focused grant programs. This report is due to the Minnesota Legislature in January 2021.

Overall, data confirms racial and occupational employment disparities exist among participants in workforce development programs administered by DEED and targeted to low-income and recently laid-off adults. This is particularly true among participants confronting such common barriers to employment as low educational attainment, criminal background, limited work experience, and limited English skills. While we can make tangible progress in serving people of color more intentionally and engaging with employers around how to successfully employ individuals with barriers, we must also find performance solutions to serving participants with barriers.

WIOA Title II (Adult Education) uses instructional schedules developed by programs in SiD (state adult education database) to our state adult education hotline, operated by Literacy Minnesota (http://hotline.mnabe.org and 1-800-222-1990). This hotline includes program contact information, locations, and instructional schedules and is used by programs, partners, and potential students to help determine which sites have the best educational options. In

addition, this same information is regularly shared via data upload with DEED to share program and class information, especially for the Eligible Training Provider List.

Minnesota receives a TANF block grant to design and operate programs that accomplish the four purposes of the TANF program. It collects for the Office of Family Assistance data on caseloads, expenditures data, and TANF work participation rate data. It uses its data warehouse system that is depends on case management information from MAXIS and DEED's Workforce 1 system to produce monthly, quarterly, annual and ad hoc reports directly related to employment and education for internal and external stakeholders..

Minnesota's TANF programs (MFIP and DWP) use a three-year Self-Support Index measure that starts with all adults receiving MFIP or DWP cash assistance in a quarter and tracks what percentage of them, three years later, are no longer receiving family cash assistance or are working an average of 30 hours a week if still receiving cash assistance. Those who left MFIP after reaching 60 counted months and those who left due to 100 percent sanction are only counted as a success if they worked an average of 30 hours per week in their last month of eligibility or if they began receiving Supplemental Security Income (SSI) after family cash assistance ended. To provide fair comparisons across service areas, DHS calculates a "Range of Expected Performance" for the S-SI that is based on local caseload characteristics and economic conditions. The service area's Self-Support Index value is whether the service area was above, within, or below its expected Range.

The S-SI and Range are annualized for the four quarters in the April through March year ending in the reporting year before the funding year. A service area with an annualized S-SI "above" its customized Range of Expected Performance for 2021 will receive a 2.5 percent bonus added to its Consolidated Fund allocation for calendar year 2022.annualized S-SI "above" its customized Range of Expected Performance for 2021 will receive a 2.5 percent bonus added to its Consolidated Fund allocation for calendar year 2022.

How services and referrals are made for programs within a compliant OSO and for programs not housed in a CareerForce Location. Specifically how Adult Education and VRS referrals work.

The CareerForce brand reinforces the ideas of "no wrong door approach" and "warm handoffs." As a result we have developed training and guidance to ensure that anyone who comes to the CareerForce/One Stop/AJC system receives a welcoming greeting, followed by an assessment of their needs. The CareerForce team will do everything they can to address those needs, however, if a referral is needed a warm handoff will be provided. We define a warm handoff as one that will be a person-to-person connection facilitated by CareerForce staff.

For example, if the referral is to ABE, which is not usually on-site, the staff will work with the seeker to complete the Conditional Work Referral form and offer to reach out to ABE on the customer's behalf and ask that ABE contact the customer. This is essentially facilitating an introduction to the off-site partner. Of course, this would be in addition to providing the contact information to the customer which we see as the bare minimum for a referral.

The Minnesota Department of Education prioritizes and measures program quality through accountability expectations and activities that focus on both compliance and best practice according to research and experience. The expectations and activities include:

1. The state ABE Management Information System (MIS) data: Minnesota's MIS balances both program quality and program compliance with state and federal expectations. In addition to required reports, local providers can use the state MIS to analyze student persistence, program outcomes, and other measures at the consortium, site, class and student level.

2. A state AEFLA grantee report card: The report card notes actual performance and ranks providers by key program data measures, including measurable skill gain by population, cost of programming per individual served, intensity of service provided, and percentage of population served.
3. A program improvement process: Programs will be identified for review based on rankings in the state AEFLA report card and will undergo a comprehensive review and monitored implementation of a program improvement plan that requires local providers to complete site visits, workshop activities, reports, and plans to strengthen program performance and quality. *(For more information on Program Improvement, see the response to (D) above.)*
4. Intensive program application cycle: On a five-year basis, ABE providers are required to complete an in-depth application as a method to adhere to state statute governing local ABE programs. In this intensive application, local providers describe their:
    a. Consortium,
    b. Program accountability procedures,
    c. Professional development priorities and activities,
    d. Proposed programming,
    e. Local program governance,
    f. Program collaboration with key stakeholders and partners,
    g. Technology resources and integration,
    h. Future plans, and
    i. Performance.

These in-depth applications are reviewed and scored by a team of state staff from the Minnesota Department of Education and local AEFLA providers.

1. Local program monitoring site visits: All grantees are subject to monitoring site visits that focus on policy compliance and program quality through multiple methods:
    a. Providers with low performance participate in site visits through the program improvement process;
    b. All AEFLA grantees receive site visits on a rotating basis, at least once every five years, when the program participates in in-depth application process to continue receiving state ABE funding to comply with state statute;
    c. Monitoring visits based on periodic desk review of provider data;
    d. Local ABE providers that participate in state initiatives and/or receive special grants through state or federal funding typically receive site visits as part of their participation; and
    e. Local providers request special technical assistance site visits as they face issues.

In addition, Vocational Rehabilitation Services uses an internal Reports Portal to disseminate production and performance outcomes by team and region as well as statewide. These reports are linked to our case management system, Workforce One, which is shared with Title I and state funded programs. In addition, caseload management and data quality review reports are built into Workforce One and used by counselors, technicians and rehabilitation area managers.

In 2019, representatives from Adult Basic Education, Title I Youth, Adult and Dislocated Worker, Title IV VRS General and SSB and Title III Wagner Peyser participated in a national ETA cohort group around maximizing the use of WIOA performance data. This group drafted an action plan for Minnesota which includes the following activities:

- Present all WIOA Titles Performance in the WIOA Annual Report Narrative
- Create a space for performance data information sharing
- Present WIOA performance data in a more integrated way to the public/stakeholders
- Create opportunities for local areas and locations to view and utilize their specific performance data

As always, the intent is that we make working with our system as simple and easy as possible without passing on the frustrations that accompany a system as complex as ours, to the customer.

2. THE STATE POLICIES THAT WILL SUPPORT THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE STATE'S STRATEGIES (E.G., CO-ENROLLMENT POLICIES AND UNIVERSAL INTAKE PROCESSES WHERE APPROPRIATE). IN ADDITION, PROVIDE THE STATE'S GUIDELINES FOR STATE-ADMINISTERED ONE-STOP PARTNER PROGRAMS' CONTRIBUTIONS TO A ONE-STOP DELIVERY SYSTEM

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Under the Workforce Investment Act, DEED operated as the lead on writing, soliciting feedback, publishing, and enforcing policies. Under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, DEED will still perform many of these duties, but will engage partner state agencies to ensure continuity and shared awareness. The GWDB will provide high-level consultation on new draft policies that touch multiple core programs.

DEED plans to publish policies that address cross-agency program co-enrollment. In practice, most core programs use Workforce One, the state's client management information system, to encourage co-enrollment across programs. The allowable co-enrollment in this system serves as Minnesota's policy. DEED staff will follow-up to publish formal guidance on program co-enrollment. Currently there is co-enrollment activity between several federal programs with state programs. A prime example of how co-enrollment is considered involves dislocated workers. Depending upon the scenario, a dislocated worker may have options for federal and state dislocated worker support, such as a TAA grant, depending upon the type and category of lay-off that has occurred.

Universal intake processes have some layers in Minnesota. All individuals who access job seeker support services via CareerForce and through Minnesota's labor exchange system are accessing programs funded through Wagner-Peyser's Employment Service Program. Many of those customers seek deeper services with counselors that require program enrollment. In those cases, the majority of WIOA enrolled customers are co-enrolled with Wagner-Peyser Employment Service Program, but the opposite is not true. Service providers in Minnesota will continue to work to make the program enrollment process as seamless as possible to the customer.

Minnesota fulfills its obligation to provide guidance on infrastructure cost allocation procedures to be reflected within the memorandums of understanding through an existing policy put in place in 2018. Also, DEED is currently facilitating discussion on a new IFA policy and procedure that will streamline and simplify the process for the one-stop system and all of its required partners.

Minnesota adheres to all current rules and regulations pertaining to the selection of one-stop operators as dictated by WIOA. Minnesota's one-stop system, the "CareerForce" system, has 51 comprehensive and affiliate locations. The infrastructure costs as well as the additional costs of operating these locations are allocated based on the infrastructure funding agreements attached to the memorandums of understanding in each of Minnesota's 16 local workforce development areas.

INFRASTRUCTURE FUNDING AGREEMENTS (IFAs)

As Minnesota is in the process of updating the IFA policy, what follows is an outline of current guidance provided to the system on Infrastructure Funding Agreements.

Infrastructure Funding Agreements (IFAs) must be submitted at least every 3 years for each CareerForce Center (CFC) to ensure that all required CareerForce partners are equitably contributing to the costs of the CareerForce System, as defined in WIOA. The IFA will be included in every Local Workforce Development Area's (LWDA) Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). In the wake of changing guidance on these agreements, in Minnesota in coordination with guidance received from the United States Department of Labor (DOL), we guide the IFA process in the following ways.

An IFA must be submitted at least every 3 years for each CareerForce Center (CFC) to ensure that all required CareerForce partners are equitably contributing to the costs of the CareerForce System. The IFA recognizes the shared resources of key partners delivering workforce development and related services. Mutual consent and cooperation of all partners is an essential part of the IFA process. IFAs are guided by the Coordination Unit of DEED's Administrative and Financial Services Division.

The IFA must be completed and submitted to the Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED) for the CFC prior to the expiration date of the current IFA. Participants in an IFA can request the IFA to be amended if a material change occurs during the covered period.

If the IFA is not submitted and finalized in a timely manner as described above, the existing IFA will remain in place until a new IFA is agreed to. If the local board reports to DEED and the Governor's Workforce Development Board (GWDB) that an impasse cannot be resolved, the State Funding Mechanism (SFM) replaces any operational cost sharing agreement in place at the CareerForce Center.

Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) law as well as federal Department of Labor (DOL) and Minnesota Management and Budget (MMB) guidelines require that all actual and required partners in a CareerForce Center (CFC) share benefitting expenses associated with infrastructure. Minnesota's IFA policy recognizes the principles of proportionate benefit and applies it to all required WIOA titles, with different principles for co-located and non-co-located required partners. This policy details the approach and process for both scenarios. WIOA requires the following programs to contribute to infrastructure costs of the CareerForce system:

1. WIOA Title I - Adult, Dislocated Worker, Youth and YouthBuild
2. WIOA Title II – Adult Education and Family Literacy
3. WIOA Title III – Wagner-Peyser Employment Service Program

4. WIOA Title IV – Vocational Rehabilitation Services/State Services for the Blind
5. National Farmworker Jobs Program
6. OAA, (Older Americans Act) Title V – SCSEP (Senior Community Service Employment Program)
7. Temporary Assistance for Needy Families
8. Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program E&T
9. Career & Technical Education Programs (post-secondary)
10. Trade Adjustment Assistance
11. Jobs for Veterans State Grants
12. Community Services Block Grant E&T
13. Housing & Urban Development E&T
14. Unemployment Insurance
15. Job Corps
16. Native American Programs (contribution is optional for Native American Programs. Additionally, they must be part of the MOU, but their participation in the IFA is optional)

LOCAL FUNDING MECHANISM

Co-Located Partners Procedure for Completing IFAs

CareerForce partners are required to follow this procedure in completing and submitting their IFAs:

1. DEED can provide necessary customer data from Workforce One (WF1) and the labor exchange data, as well as the previous approved IFA.
2. Local partners will complete, negotiate costs with local partners, obtain all necessary local signatures on the IFA, and send the IFA either electronically or physically to DEED no later than the last week of May prior to the IFA's effective program year date.
3. DEED will obtain necessary central DEED signatures on the IFAs prior to its effective date. If central DEED authorities disagree with any aspect of an IFA and refuse to sign it, DEED will notify local partners of this no later than one week after the IFA has been submitted to DEED in order to allow adequate time for an agreement to be reached.

DEED will keep central records of all IFAs.

Career Lab Costs

As of 7/1/2020 a special agreement was reached between DEED and the Minnesota Association of Workforce Boards, on the Trade Adjustment Act Program's (TAA) contribution to the CareerForce System. TAA now covers the costs of operating a state-run Career Lab in CareerForce Centers in every Local Workforce Development Area. This includes the associated costs of running a Career Lab resource room supported by the State of Minnesota.
This includes: Wide Area Network (WAN) Internet costs; public-use computers; public-use printer, scanner, fax machines; and the Cybrarian software used to secure and track activity. The State Funding Mechanism appeals process per 121(h)(2)(D) is described in State

Policies and Guidance, however, the responsibility for IFAs is transitioning to DEED's Administration and Financial Services Division and current policies are under review.

Other Sub-Lease or Space Rental Agreements
Note on situations of special space rental not reflected within the IFA- if any organization that is allocated space within an IFA wishes to rent some of their space to any other organization outside of the IFA, they may do so. The particulars of this agreement don't need to be tracked in the IFA as long as the space is accounted for within the IFA and allocated to the organization responsible for it.

Security and/or Site Management Costs
Some CFCs allocate "Site Management" costs. Site Managers take on the business of the facility they are located in and handle things such as communication with landlords on matters of snow removal, ordering supplies, and/or keeping usage logs of conference room space up to date. These must be considered as in-kind contributions of time.

Some CareerForce Centers allocate "Security" costs such as the cost of security guards on site. Other security costs that could be allocated according to the above formula instead of directly to one program could include examples like the following: a new lock system in the front entrance of the facility; security cameras throughout the facility; a panic button and announcement system.

Methodologies Described

Dedicated Space. Dedicated space is space that is used exclusively by a CareerForce partner. Examples could include office, meeting or storage space. The partner agrees to pay for their dedicated space 100% of the time, whether occupied or not, within the lease period.

Usage Logs/Metering. Usage logs are records of how space or items were used. Examples could include a sign-up sheet for shared meeting space. Partners agree to pay their percentage of total usage for the cost of the item being tracked in this manner.

FTEs. The number of full-time equivalents on site. Staff with office space at multiple sites may not be counted as more than one FTE, with fractions totaling one FTE being allocated across the multiple sites. Vacant or unfilled positions must be included in the FTE count.

Workforce One Data (WF1). Workforce One participant enrollments can be used for allocating costs of operations. However, the breakdown of these costs are still subject to local negotiation of partners involved.

Exemptions – Program exemptions from allocation of certain costs are allowed if the program can document/attest to the fact that these customers do not receive direct services out of their assigned (by WF1) CareerForce. Exemptions must be approved by DEED and included in this section of the IFA policy. Current exemptions include:

- Youth participants from Title IB and Title IV
    - MFIP participants receiving services in non-CFC counties
- Title VII program of State Services for the Blind, (SSB"u" only, not SSB"w"), for visually impaired individuals

Career Lab Costs. Career Lab costs are negotiated by CareerForce system partners at the local and regional level. Quantitative metrics should be used when appropriate for allocating costs of a Career Lab. If this issue becomes an impasse issue for the local board or rises to the State Board for resolution.

Total Dedicated and Shared Space. The sum of dedicated and shared space indicated on an IFA.

Reconciliation

If usage data or other changes that affect any allocations of the IFA deviate more than 5% during a biannual review, this is considered to be a material change and adjusting reconciliation payments will be required. If the review identifies material changes during consecutive bi-annual reviews a new IFA must be completed within 3 months, and will be coordinated by DEED.

If all local partners agree that a new IFA is not needed or desired, then they can inform DEED of this decision and the current IFA will stay in effect for another year from the date of the request for a new IFA and the current IFA will stay in effect for another year. At the end of that year, one or more partners may again request to negotiate a new IFA. If all partners agree, the existing IFA may be retained through the original ending date.

IFA Amendments

If a substantial change, (with "substantial change" generally interpreted as a more than 5% deviation of any allocation percentages within the IFA), as interpreted by local management, occurs within a CareerForce Center local partners can request that the IFA be amended to more accurately reflect the actual allocation of infrastructure costs in the location. Examples of how this could happen include but are not limited to: a number of staff either enter or exit the location; the size of the leased space decreases or increases; many computers that use MN.IT internet are installed at the location.

Non-Co-Located Partners Procedure for Completing IFAs

A non-co-located partner is defined as a partner who does not deliver services on a regular basis at one CareerForce Center per local area. Non-Co-Located Partners are required to participate in the costs of at least one CareerForce Center in each local area. Programs that have multiple providers within a local area are viewed as one program, requiring that only a single contribution be agreed to by the state agency that oversees that program.

Local Boards are encouraged to work with non-co-located partners to assess an appropriate contribution to the IFA, based on proportionate benefit of the use of the CareerForce system. These partners should produce some form of documentation to share with the board to make this determination.

If this can't be achieved, it is recommended that a process be applied that assumes proportionate benefit can be assessed based on the distribution of their program eligible individuals within each of the local areas and the recognition of total financial contributions equaling 1.5% of the State's total federal allocation for that program based on the current Federal fiscal year funding for the program. The following table illustrates this process to establish the required contribution within each local area.

Federal Title	Title's Total Federal Allocation	1.5% IFA Contribution
"X"	$1,000,000	$15,000

Eligible Program Population by Local Workforce Development Area

#1	#2	#3	#4	#5	#6	#7	#8	#9	#10
20%	3%	15%	10%	15%	10%	10%	5%	10%	2%

#1	#2	#3	#4	#5	#6	#7	#8	#9	#10
$3,000	$450	$2,250	$1,500	$2,250	$1,500	$1,500	$750	$1,500	$300

These contributions can be achieved in two ways – cash contributions or in-kind contributions.

Cash Contributions

Cash contributions must be documented and included in the IFA. Two examples of cash contributions are:

- Cash contributions to the local board to support local or reginal plan strategies
- Cash payments for use/rental of space for the delivery of services

In-Kind Contributions

In-kind contributions can be made in lieu of cash contributions. Examples of these contributions include:

- Staff support for CareerForce or board activities beyond required participation
- Other services that leverage the expertise of the program or customize the work of the program
- Non-cash contributions are comprised of –

1. Expenditures incurred by one-stop partners on behalf of the CareerForce system; and

2. Non-cash contributions or goods or services contributed by a partner program and used by the one-stop center.

In-kind contributions must be valued consistent with 2 CFR 200.306 to ensure they are fairly evaluated and meet the partners' proportionate share. A short explanation of 2 CFR 200.306 is as follows: the value of the donated non-cash contribution must be reasonable and the lesser of fair market value or book value per accounting records; for example, if a desk that is donated is 10 years old the value of the donation can't be its purchase price as if it was brand new; an additional example is if a donation is made of staff time for a CareerForce's reception desk, then the value of that staff-time donation must be what the donated staff time would normally cost the organization which is donating their staff's time.

Dispute Resolution

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 and the GWDB that an impasse has been reached. DEED and the GWDB will review the process and make a dispute resolution recommendation. If this is not successful and it has been more than 3 months since the expiration of the previous IFA, the SFM will take effect for that CareerForce, taking into consideration the distribution and allocation of services of all required partners within the local area.

THE STATE FUNDING MECHANISM (SFM)

Consistent with sec. 121(h)(1)(A)(i)(II) of WIOA, if the Local WDB, chief elected official, and one-stop partners in a local area do not reach consensus agreement on methods of sufficiently

funding the costs of infrastructure of one-stop centers for a program year, the State funding mechanism is applicable to the local area for that program year.

In the State funding mechanism, the Governor, subject to limitations, determines one-stop partner contributions after consultation with the chief elected officials, Local WDBs, and the State WDB. This determination involves:

(1) The application of a budget for one-stop infrastructure costs as described in regulation Sec. 20 CFR 678.735, (all regulation numbers in this section pertain to Sec. 20 CFR), based on either agreement reached in the local area negotiations or the State WDB formula outlined in regulation 678.745;

(2) The determination of each local one-stop partner program's proportionate use of the one-stop delivery system and relative benefit received, consistent with the Uniform Guidance at 2 CFR part 200, including the Federal cost principles, the partner programs' authorizing laws and regulations, and other applicable legal requirements described in regulation 678.736; and

(3) The calculation of required statewide program caps on contributions to infrastructure costs from one-stop partner programs in areas operating under the State funding mechanism as described in regulation 678.738.

The Governor is limited to determining the infrastructure cost contributions for some one-stop partner programs under the State funding mechanism in the following situations:

(1) The Governor will not determine the contribution amounts for infrastructure funds for Native American program grantees described in regulation part 684. The appropriate portion of funds to be provided by Native American program grantees to pay for one-stop infrastructure must be determined as part of the development of the MOU described in 678.500 and specified in the MOU.

(2) In States in which the policy-making authority is placed in an entity or official that is independent of the authority of the Governor with respect to the funds provided for adult education and literacy activities authorized under title II of WIOA, postsecondary career and technical education activities authorized under the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act of 2006, or VR services authorized under title I of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (other than sec. 112 or part C), as amended by WIOA title IV, the determination of the amount each of the applicable partners must contribute to assist in paying the infrastructure costs of one-stop centers must be made by the official or chief officer of the entity with such authority, in consultation with the Governor.

Any duty, ability, choice, responsibility, or other action otherwise related to the determination of infrastructure costs contributions that is assigned to the Governor in regulation 678.730 through 678.745 also applies to this decision-making process performed by the official or chief officer described in paragraph in paragraph (2) above.

To initiate the State funding mechanism, a Local WDB that has not reached consensus on methods of sufficiently funding local infrastructure through the local funding mechanism as provided in regulation 678.725 must notify the Governor by the deadline established by the Governor in the IFA policy.

Once a Local WDB has informed the Governor that no consensus has been reached:

(1) The Local WDB must provide the Governor with local negotiation materials in accordance with regulation 678.735(a).

(2) The Governor must determine the one-stop center budget by either:

(i) Accepting a budget previously agreed upon by partner programs in the local negotiations, in accordance with regulation 678.735(b)(1); or

(ii) Creating a budget for the one-stop center using the State WDB formula (described in regulation 678.745) in accordance with regulation 678.735(b)(3).

(3) The Governor then must establish a cost allocation methodology to determine the one-stop partner programs' proportionate shares of infrastructure costs.

(4)(i) Using the methodology established in this policy, and taking into consideration the factors concerning individual partner programs listed in regulation 678.737(b)(2), the Governor must determine each partner's proportionate share of the infrastructure costs, and

(ii) In accordance with regulation 678.730(c), in some instances, the Governor does not determine a partner program's proportionate share of infrastructure funding costs, in which case it must be determined by the entities named under the limitation section of the IFA policy.

(5) The Governor must then calculate the statewide caps on the amounts that partner programs may be required to contribute toward infrastructure funding, according to the steps found in regulation 678.738(a)(1) through (4).

(6) The Governor must ensure that the aggregate total of the infrastructure contributions according to proportionate share required of all local partner programs in local areas under the State funding mechanism do not exceed the cap for that particular program. If the total does not exceed the cap, the Governor must direct each one-stop partner program to pay the amount determined toward the infrastructure funding costs of the one-stop center. If the total does exceed the cap, then to determine the amount to direct each one-stop program to pay, the Governor may:

(i) Ascertain whether the local partner or partners whose proportionate shares are calculated above the individual program caps are willing to voluntarily contribute above the capped amount to equal that program's proportionate share; or

(ii) Choose from the options provided in regulation 678.738(b)(2)(ii), including having the local area re-enter negotiations to reassess each one-stop partner's proportionate share and make adjustments or identify alternate sources of funding to make up the difference between the capped amount and the proportionate share of infrastructure funding of the one-stop partner.

(7) If none of the solutions given in paragraphs (b)(6)(i) and (ii) of IFA regulation prove to be viable, the Governor must reassess the proportionate shares of each one-stop partner so that the aggregate amount attributable to the local partners for each program is less than that program's cap amount. Upon such reassessment, the Governor must direct each one-stop partner program to pay the reassessed amount toward the infrastructure funding costs of the one-stop center.

If a local area has reached agreement as to the infrastructure budget for the one-stop centers in the local area, it must provide this budget to the Governor. If, as a result of the agreed upon infrastructure budget, only the individual programmatic contributions to infrastructure funding based upon proportionate use of the one-stop centers and relative benefit received are at issue, the Governor may accept the budget, from which the Governor must calculate each partner's contribution consistent with the cost allocation methodologies contained in the Uniform Guidance.

The Governor may also take into consideration the extent to which the partners in the local area

have agreed in determining the proportionate shares, including any agreements reached at the local level by one or more partners, as well as any other element or product of the negotiating process provided to the Governor as required by paragraph (a) of this section.

If a local area has not reached agreement as to the infrastructure budget for the one-stop centers in the local area, or if the Governor determines that the agreed upon budget does not

adequately meet the needs of the local area or does not reasonably work within the confines of the local area's resources in accordance with the Governor's one-stop budget guidance (which is required to be issued by WIOA Sec. 121(h)(1)(B) and under regulation 678.705), then in accordance with regulation 678.745, the Governor must use the formula developed by the State WDB based on at least the factors required under regulation 678.745, and any associated weights to determine the local area budget.

Once the appropriate budget is determined for a local area through either method described in regulation 678.735 (by acceptance of a budget agreed upon in local negotiation or by the Governor applying the formula in regulation 678.745), the Governor must determine the appropriate cost allocation methodology to be applied to the one-stop partners in such local area, consistent with the Federal cost principles permitted under 2 CFR part 200, to fund the infrastructure budget.

The Governor must use the cost allocation methodology—as determined under Sec. 678.736—to determine each partner's proportionate share of the infrastructure costs under the State funding mechanism, subject to considering the factors described in paragraph (b)(2) of this section.

(2) In determining each partner program's proportionate share of infrastructure costs, the Governor must take into account the costs of administration of the one-stop delivery system for purposes not related to one-stop centers for each partner (such as costs associated with maintaining the Local WDB or information technology systems), as well as the statutory requirements for each partner program, the partner program's ability to fulfill such requirements, and all other applicable legal requirements. The Governor may also take into consideration the extent to which the partners in the local area have agreed in determining the proportionate shares, including any agreements reached at the local level by one or more partners, as well as any other materials or documents of the negotiating process, which must be provided to the Governor by the Local WDB and described in Sec. 678.735(a).

Determining Caps on Contributions

(a) The Governor must calculate the statewide cap on the contributions for one-stop infrastructure funding required to be provided by each one-stop partner program for those local areas that have not reached agreement. The cap is the amount determined under paragraph (a)(4) of this section, which the Governor derives by:

(1) First, determining the amount resulting from applying the percentage for the corresponding one-stop partner program provided in paragraph (d) of this section to the amount of Federal funds provided to carry out the one-stop partner program in the State for the applicable fiscal year;

(2) Second, selecting a factor (or factors) that reasonably indicates the use of one-stop centers in the State, applying such factor(s) to all local areas in the State, and determining the percentage of such factor(s) applicable to the local areas that reached agreement under the local funding mechanism in the State;

(3) Third, determining the amount resulting from applying the percentage determined in paragraph (a)(2) of this section to the amount determined under paragraph (a)(1) of this section for the one-stop partner program; and

(4) Fourth, determining the amount that results from subtracting the amount determined under paragraph (a)(3) of this section from the amount determined under paragraph (a)(1) of this section. The outcome of this final calculation results in the partner program's cap.

(b)(1) The Governor must ensure that the funds required to be contributed by each partner program in the local areas in the State under the State funding mechanism, in aggregate, do not exceed the statewide cap for each program as determined under paragraph (a) of this section.

(2) If the contributions initially determined under Sec. 678.737 would exceed the applicable cap determined under paragraph (a) of this section, the Governor may:

(i) Ascertain if the one-stop partner whose contribution would otherwise exceed the cap determined under paragraph (a) of this section will voluntarily contribute above the capped amount, so that the total contributions equal that partner's proportionate share. The one-stop partner's contribution must still be consistent with the program's authorizing laws and regulations, the Federal cost principles in 2 CFR part 200, and other applicable legal requirements; or

(ii) Direct or allow the Local WDB, chief elected officials, and one-stop partners to: re-enter negotiations, as necessary; reduce the infrastructure costs to reflect the amount of funds that are available for such costs without exceeding the cap levels; reassess the proportionate share of each one-stop partner; or identify alternative sources of financing for one-stop infrastructure funding, consistent with the requirement that each one-stop partner pay an amount that is consistent with the proportionate use of the one-stop center and relative benefit received by the partner, the program's authorizing laws and regulations, the Federal cost principles in 2 CFR part 200, and other applicable legal requirements.

(3) If applicable under paragraph (b)(2)(ii) of this section, the Local WDB, chief elected officials, and one-stop partners, after renegotiation, may come to agreement, sign an MOU, and proceed under the local funding mechanism. Such actions do not require the redetermination of the applicable caps under paragraph (a) of this section.

(4) If, after renegotiation, agreement among partners still cannot be reached or alternate financing cannot be identified, the Governor may adjust the specified allocation, in accordance with the amounts available and the limitations described in paragraph (d) of this section. In determining these adjustments, the Governor may take into account information relating to the renegotiation as well as the information described in Sec. 678.735(a).

(c) Limitations. Subject to paragraph (a) of this section and in accordance with WIOA Sec., the following limitations apply to the Governor's calculations of the amount that one-stop partners in local areas that have not reached agreement under the local funding mechanism may be required under Sec. 678.736 to contribute to one-stop infrastructure funding:

Program Title	Limitation	Program Title	Limitation
Title IB (Youth, Adult, DW)	3.00%	Temporary Asst. Needy Families	1.50%
Title II - AFLA	1.50%	Sup. Nut. Assistant Program E&T	1.50%
Title III – Wagner-Peyser	3.00%	Community Serv. Block Grant	1.50%
Title IV – VRS/SSB FY16	.75%	Jobs for Veterans State Grants	1.50%
Title IV – VRS/SSB	1.00%	Trade Adjustment	1.50%

Program Title	Limitation	Program Title	Limitation
FY17		Assistance	
Title IV – VRS/SSB FY18	1.25%	Unemployment Compensation	1.50%
Title IV – VRS/SSB FY19	1.50%	Sr. Community Ser. Emp. Program	1.50%
Carl Perkins	1.50%	Native American Programs	1.50%
YouthBuild	1.50%	Employment and Training Administration	1.50%
Natl. Farmworker Jobs Program	1.50%	Second Chance Act Grants	1.50%
Job Corps	1.50%		

Federal direct spending programs. For local areas that have not reached a one-stop infrastructure funding agreement by consensus, an entity administering a program funded with direct Federal spending, as defined in Sec. 250(c)(8) of the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985, as in effect on February 15, 2014 (2 U.S.C. 900(c)(8)), must not be required to provide more for infrastructure costs than the amount that the Governor determined.

For programs for which it is not otherwise feasible to determine the amount of Federal funding used by the program until the end of that program's operational year—because, for example, the funding available for education, employment, and training activities is included within funding for the program that may also be used for other unrelated activities—the determination of the Federal funds provided to carry out the program for a fiscal year may be determined by:

1. The percentage of Federal funds available to the one-stop partner program that were used by the one-stop partner program for education, employment, and training activities in the previous fiscal year for which data are available; and
2. Applying the percentage determined under paragraph (d)(1) of this section to the total amount of Federal funds available to the one-stop partner program for the fiscal year for which the determination under paragraph (a)(1) of this section applies.

In the State funding mechanism, infrastructure costs for WIOA title I programs, including Native American Programs described in part 684 of this chapter, may be paid using program funds, administrative funds, or both. Infrastructure costs for the Senior Community Service Employment Program under title V of the Older Americans Act (42 U.S.C. 3056 et seq.) may also be paid using program funds, administrative funds, or both.

In the State funding mechanism, infrastructure costs for other required one-stop partner programs (listed in Secs. 678.400 through 678.410) are limited to the program's administrative funds, as appropriate.
In the State funding mechanism, infrastructure costs for the adult education program authorized by title II of WIOA must be paid from the funds that are available for local administration and may be paid from funds made available by the State or non-Federal resources that are cash, in-kind, or third-party contributions.

In the State funding mechanism, infrastructure costs for the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act of 2006 must be paid from funds available for local administration of postsecondary level programs and activities to eligible recipients or consortia of eligible recipients and may be paid from funds made available by the State or non-Federal resources that are cash, in-kind, or third-party contributions.

The State Formula

The State WDB must develop a formula to be used by the Governor under Sec. 678.735(b)(3) in determining the appropriate budget for the infrastructure costs of one-stop centers in the local areas that do not reach agreement under the local funding mechanism and are, therefore, subject to the State funding mechanism. The formula identifies the factors and corresponding weights for each factor that the Governor must use, which must include: the number of one-stop centers in a local area; the population served by such centers; the services provided by such centers; and any factors relating to the operations of such centers in the local area that the State WDB determines are appropriate. As indicated in Sec. 678.735(b)(1), if the local area has agreed on such a budget, the Governor may accept that budget in lieu of applying the formula factors.

The State Funding Formula will be based on the following analysis:

1. The number of WorkForce Centers in the local area and total operational costs of WFCs.
2. The total number and ratio of workforce participants, including disparately impacted populations included in the state plan using the WorkForce Centers.
3. The availability/accessibility of services by core and required programs.

The analysis of WFC costs will be used to establish the total budgeting level for the WFC in question. The budget determined by the State Board should not vary more than 15% from the originally submitted budget for local areas with only 1 WFC, or the average cost of all WFCs within the local area. Variances above that amount may require reclassification of the WFC or adjusting of IFA contributions, based on the analysis of #2 and #3.

Appeals of the SFM

(a) The Governor must establish a process, described under sec. 121(h)(2)(E) of WIOA, for a one-stop partner administering a program described in Secs. 678.400 through 678.410 to appeal the Governor's determination regarding the one-stop partner's portion of funds to be provided for one-stop infrastructure costs. This appeal process must be described in the Unified State Plan.

(b) The appeal may be made on the ground that the Governor's determination is inconsistent with proportionate share requirements in Sec. 678.735(a), the cost contribution limitations in Sec. 678.735(b), the cost contribution caps in Sec. 678.738, consistent with the process described in the State Plan.

(c) The process must ensure prompt resolution of the appeal in order to ensure the funds are distributed in a timely manner, consistent with the requirements of Sec. 683.630 of this chapter.

(d) The one-stop partner must submit an appeal in accordance with State's deadlines for appeals specified in the guidance issued under Sec. 678.705(b)(3), or if the State has not set a deadline, within 21 days from the Governor's determination.

The IFA as Part of the MOU

The MOU, fully described in Sec. 678.500, must contain the following information whether the local areas use either the local one-stop or the State funding method:

(a) The period of time in which this infrastructure funding agreement is effective. This may be a different time period than the duration of the MOU.

(b) Identification of an infrastructure and shared services budget that will be periodically reconciled against actual costs incurred and adjusted accordingly to ensure that it reflects a cost allocation methodology that demonstrates how infrastructure costs are charged to each partner in proportion to its use of the one-stop center and relative benefit received, and that complies with 2 CFR part 200 (or any corresponding similar regulation or ruling).

Identification of all one-stop partners, chief elected officials, and Local WDB participating in the infrastructure funding arrangement.

Steps the Local WDB, chief elected officials, and one-stop partners used to reach consensus or an assurance that the local area followed the guidance for the State funding process.

Description of the process to be used among partners to resolve issues during the MOU duration period when consensus cannot be reached.

Description of the periodic modification and review process to ensure equitable benefit among one-stop partners.

In addition to jointly funding infrastructure costs, one-stop partners listed in Secs. 678.400 through 678.410 must use a portion of funds made available under their programs' authorizing Federal law (or fairly evaluated in-kind contributions) to pay the additional costs relating to the operation of the one-stop delivery system. These other costs must include applicable career services and may include other costs, including shared services.

For the purposes of paragraph (a) of this section, shared services' costs may include the costs of shared services that are authorized for and may be commonly provided through the one-stop partner programs to any individual, such as initial intake, assessment of needs, appraisal of basic skills, identification of appropriate services to meet such needs, referrals to other one-stop partners, and business services. Shared operating costs may also include shared costs of the Local WDB's functions.

Contributions to the additional costs related to operation of the one-stop delivery system may be cash, non-cash, or third-party in-kind contributions, consistent with how these are described in Sec. 678.720(c).

The shared costs described in paragraph (a) of this section must be allocated according to the proportion of benefit received by each of the partners, consistent with the Federal law authorizing the partner's program, and consistent with all other applicable legal requirements, including Federal cost principles in 2 CFR part 200 (or any corresponding similar regulation or ruling) requiring that costs are allowable, reasonable, necessary, and allocable.

Any shared costs agreed upon by the one-stop partners must be included in the MOU.

Non-Required Co-Located Partners

Any additional co-located partners at one stop centers are required to contribute toward infrastructure and other additional costs. The contributions from any additional partners shall be based on proportionate use and relative benefit.

Additional Costs

In addition to jointly funding infrastructure costs, one-stop must use a portion of funds made available under their programs' authorizing Federal law (or fairly evaluated in-kind contributions) to pay the additional costs relating to the operation of the one-stop delivery system. These other costs must include applicable career services and may include other costs, including shared services.

Shared services' costs may include the costs of shared services that are authorized for and may be commonly provided through the one-stop partner programs to any individual, such as initial intake, assessment of needs, appraisal of basic skills, identification of appropriate services to meet such needs, referrals to other one-stop partners, and business services. Shared operating costs may also include shared costs of the Local WDB's functions. Contributions to the additional costs related to operation of the one-stop delivery system may be cash, non-cash, or third-party in-kind contributions.

The shared costs must be allocated according to the proportion of benefit received by each of the partners, consistent with the Federal law authorizing the partner's program, and consistent with all other applicable legal requirements. Any shared costs agreed upon by the one-stop partners must be included in the MOU.

3. STATE PROGRAM AND STATE BOARD OVERVIEW

A. STATE AGENCY ORGANIZATION

3. STATE PROGRAM AND STATE BOARD OVERVIEW

A. STATE AGENCY ORGANIZATION DESCRIBE THE ORGANIZATION AND DELIVERY SYSTEMS AT THE STATE AND LOCAL LEVELS FOR THE PROGRAMS COVERED IN THE PLAN, INCLUDING THE ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE. INCLUDE AN ORGANIZATIONAL CHART.

The Deputy Commissioners of the Workforce and Economic Development divisions meet on a regular basis with the Commissioner to discuss overall department strategies and linkages between the two divisions. This supports stronger coordinated efforts in service delivery, particularly at the local level with serving business needs. Additionally, assistant commissioners or deputy commissioners from each of the state agencies involved in workforce development meet monthly at DEED to discuss programming and ways to collaborate.

Under the Deputy Commissioner of Workforce Development are WIOA titles I, III and IV, as well as unemployment insurance, TAA, veterans programs, MN Family Resiliency Partnership program and the Senior Community Services Employment Program. The Director of the Governor's State board also reports to the Deputy Commissioner, as outlined in state statute.

Within the titles of WIOA, separate directors oversee each of the WIOA titles, including one for Vocational Rehabilitation Services and State Services for the Blind, under title IV. TAA is under the WIOA DW program director and the displaced homemaker and SCSEP programs are under the WIOA Adult programs director. Unemployment Insurance has its individual director overseeing those activities.

The following is a list of state agency leadership:

- DEED Commissioner: Steve Grove
- DEED Deputy Commissioner - Workforce Development: Marc Majors
- GWDB: Ben Baglio
- Title IA: Marc Majors, DEED
- Title IB: Marc Majors
- Title II: Heather Mueller, MDE Commissioner (voting member)

Brad Hasskamp, also with MDE, serves as State Adult Education Director and is a resource to the GWDB and its committees

Eric Nesheim, Literacy Minnesota Executive Director (non-voting member per state statutes)

- Title III: Lorrie Janatopoulos
- Title IV: Dee Torgerson, Vocational Rehabilitation; Natasha Jerde, State Services for the Blind
- Unemployment Insurance: Jim Hegman, DEED
- Veterans: Lorrie Janatopoulos
- TAA, SCSEP, and MN Family Resiliency Partnership (formerly displaced homemakers): Adult Programs Director.

The Workforce and Economic Development divisions are supported by support divisions within DEED, including human resources; administrative and financial services; Office of Economic Opportunity; and communications, analysis and research division, which includes labor market information. Information technology needs are supported by the state agency known as MN-IT@DEED.

At the local level, Minnesota has 16 local workforce development areas overseen by Local Area Workforce Development Boards. In Greater Minnesota, the term used to describe areas of the state outside of the seven-county metropolitan area that includes Minneapolis and St. Paul, there are five regions that combine the efforts of two local area boards for regional planning purposes. The Twin Cities metropolitan area has six local workforce development areas and combines the efforts of six Local Area Boards for regional planning purposes. Additionally, the Greater Metropolitan Workforce Council works closely with local boards and staff in the metropolitan area to develop regional goals, projects, initiatives, and to provide support for WIOA regional planning efforts.

Provide a description of the State Board, including—

Under Section 101 (d) of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), the State Board shall assist the Governor in the development, implementation, and modification of the State plan through the review of statewide policies and programs; and of recommendations on actions that should be taken by the State to align workforce development programs in a manner that supports a comprehensive and streamlined workforce development system, including the review and provision of comments on the State plans, if any, for programs and activities of one—stop partners that are not core programs. The GWDB is the state's workforce

development Board under WIOA, which seeks to improve the effectiveness of and streamline the governing structures of the public workforce system, empower elected officials and workforce Boards, establish structures for working with regional economies and engage the key stakeholders needed to lead the system to achieve the goals of WIOA.

The State Board was established prior to the passing of the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) in 1997 and the Board structure was grandfathered in under WIA. With the passing of WIOA, significant changes to the composition and role of the Board have taken place. The duties and structure of the board are laid out in Minnesota Statutes 116L.665.[1]

OPERATIONAL STRUCTURE

Membership to the GWDB is based on WIOA requirements, but does include additional members added in by the Minnesota Legislature. Members include:

- The Governor;
- Two local elected officials;
- A member from both the minority and majority parties from both the Minnesota House and the Minnesota Senate (four total);
- The Commissioner of DEED (on behalf of the majority of WIOA programs), along with an additional representative responsible for Title IV programming (Assistant Commissioner);
- Commissioners or Chancellors (or their designees) from MDE, DHS, Minnesota State Colleges and Universities, the University of Minnesota, and a private postsecondary institution;
- Six labor unions (one must have an apprenticeship program, although multiple do currently);
- Two community-based organizations;
- A voting membership made up of a majority of members coming from business (23 currently).

Additional non-voting members of the GWDB consist of the following: representative of Adult Basic Education (ABE); representative of Public Libraries; representative of the Women's Economic Security Act (WESA), the Director of MAWB; Commissioner of the Department of Labor and Industry (DLI); Commissioner of OHE; Commissioner of the Department of Corrections (DOC); Commissioner of the Office of Management and Budget (MMB); two (2) representatives of community—based organizations; district superintendent of a public school district; representative of school—based service learning; and representatives of the Latino Affairs Council, the Council on Asian Pacific Islanders, Minnesotans of African Heritage, the MN Indian Affairs Council, and the MN Council on Disability.

The Governor appoints all members of the Board, with the exception of legislative members. State and local leadership, GWDB staff, and representatives of local areas encourage potential candidates from specific sectors, organizations and regions to apply for open positions in alignment with the state vision.

After several months of discussion during committee and full Board meetings, five (5) industries for private sector membership on the GWDB were identified, which align with the five priority industries identified by the GWDB:

- Health Care & Social Assistance

- Manufacturing
- Professional & Business Services
- Construction
- Natural Resources (including Agriculture and Mining)

[1] Minnesota Statutes 116L.665: https://www.revisor.mn.gov/statutes/2018/cite/116L.665?keyword_type=all&keyword=Governors+Workforce+Development+Board

Provide a membership roster for the State Board, including members' organizational affiliations.

i. MEMBERSHIP ROSTER

Name	Business or Organization	Member Type
Anderson, Carol	Anderson Farms	Business Representative
Barnes, Shirley	Crest View Senior Communities	Business Representative
Beeth, Laura	Fairview Health Services	Business Representative
Blake, Robert	Solar Bear Solar Installation Services	Business Representative
Boelter, Dr. Vance	7-Eleven	Business Representative
Broberg, Deb	Real Time Talent	Business Representative
Duininck, Jason	Duininck, Inc.	Business Representative
Ferguson, Mary	Essentia Health	Business Representative
Husen, Abdiwadi	Minnesota Quality Care	Business Representative
Kalina, Steve	Minnesota Precision Manufacturing Association	Business Representative
Louis, Lance	Louis Industries	Business Representative
Lundmark, Katie	Ecumen	Business Representative
Morioka, Priya	Global Language and Staffing Connections	Business Representative
Nelson, Bill	Mille Lacs Health System	Business Representative
Nelson, Loren	Aurelius Manufacturing	Business Representative
Ramirez, John	Latino Economic Development Center	Business Representative
Rodway, Ali	Caribou Coffee	Business Representative

Name	Business or Organization	Member Type
Schalkle, Tory	U.S. Bank	Business Representative
Sweeney, Jerrilyn	Innovative Building Concepts	Business Representative
Theisen, Jennifer Ufford, Michelle	DiaSorin Essentia Health	Business Representative Business Representative
Kraus, Benya Miranda, Suyapa	Lead for America Prepare + Prosper	Community-Based Organization Community-Based Organization
Palmer, Tuleah Van Acker, Kyle	Blandin Foundation Goodwill-Easter Seals Minnesota	Community-Based Organization Community-Based Organization
Grove, Steve	Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development	Core Program Representative (Titles I and III)
Mueller, Dr. Heather	Minnesota Department of Education	Core Program Representative (Title II)
Torgerson, Dee	Vocation Rehabilitation Services, DEED	Core Program Representative (Title IV)
Davies, Barry Heimlich, Samuel	Iron Workers North Central States Regional Council of Carpenters	Labor Union Labor Union
McCarthy, Bill	Minnesota AFL-CIO	Labor Union
Parker, Scott	International Union of Painters and Allied Trades	Labor Union
Reynoso, Ed	Teamsters Joint Council 32	Labor Union
Sayles, Laura	Minnesota Nurses Association	Labor Union
Fernando, Commissioner Irene	Hennepin County	Local Elected Official
Kautz, Mayor Elizabeth	City of Burnsville	Local Elected Official
David Dively	Minnesota Council on Disability	Non-Voting Member (required by State Statutes)
Fortney, Jeanna	Minnesota Association of	Non-Voting Member (required

Name	Business or Organization	Member Type
	Workforce Boards (MAWB)	by State Statutes)
Showalter, Jim (MMB)	Minnesota Management & Budget	Non-Voting Member (required by State Statutes)
Geshick, Shannon	Minnesota Indian Affairs Council	Non-Voting Member (required by State Statutes)
Hughes, Nerita	Women's Economic Security Act (WESA) representative	Non-Voting Member (required by State Statutes)
Robertson, Roslyn	Minnesota Department of Labor & Industry	Non-Voting Member (required by State Statutes)
Nesheim, Eric	Literacy Minnesota	Non-Voting Member (required by State Statutes)
Olson, Dennis	Minnesota Office of Higher Education	Non-Voting Member (required by State Statutes)
Penkert, Catherine	St. Paul Public Libraries	Non-Voting Member (required by State Statutes)
Prakash, Ekta	Council on Asian Pacific Islanders (CAPI)	Non-Voting Member (required by State Statutes)
Schnell, Paul	Minnesota Department of Corrections	Non-Voting Member (required by State Statutes)
Smith, Roy	Iron Range Resources & Rehabilitation Board	Non-Voting Member (required by State Statutes)
Sloan, Linda	Council for Minnesotans of African Heritage	Non-Voting Member (required by State Statutes)
Tock, Rosa	Minnesota Council on Latino Affairs	Non-Voting Member (required by State Statutes)
Pribbenow, Paul Dr.	Augsburg University	Other Member as Required by State Statute
Boyd, Dr. Jeffery	Rochester Community and Technical College	Other Member as Required by State Statute
Gabel, Joan	University of Minnesota	Other Member as Required by State Statute
Harpstead, Jodi	Minnesota Department of Human Services	Other Member as Required by State Statute
Malhotra, Dr. Devinder	Minnesota State Colleges & Universities	Other Member as Required by State Statute
Hoffman, Sen. John	Minnesota Senate	State Legislator
Nelson, Sen. Carla	Minnesota Senate	State Legislator

Name	Business or Organization	Member Type
Haley, Rep. Barb	Minnesota House of Representatives	State Legislator
Noor, Rep. Mohamud	Minnesota House of Representatives	State Legislator

The regularly updated membership roster can also be found on the GWDB website at: https://mn.gov/deed/gwdb/.

Provide a description of the activities that will assist State Board members and staff in carrying out State Board functions effectively.

Provide a description of the activities that will assist State Board members and staff in carrying out State Board functions effectively.

DECISION—MAKING PROCESSES

GWDB committees and functions as of January 2020 are as follows:

Executive Committee

The Executive Committee is a standing committee of the Governor's Workforce Development Board (GWDB), and the membership is made up of the GWDB Chairperson (who also serves as the Chairperson of the Executive Committee), the GWDB Vice Chairperson, the Chairs of standing committees appointed by the Chairperson, a labor representative, an education representative, an at-large member, and each of the state agency officials that represent WIOA Titles I-IV on the GWDB (or their designees)

The Executive Committee is empowered to meet on an interim basis between regular full Board meetings and make emergency or time-sensitive decisions on behalf of the full GWDB membership when necessary as it relates to the explicit duties or responsibilities of the GWDB as the state's designated state workforce development board under WIOA. Immediate notification to the full Board will take place if any action is ever taken by the Executive Committee without prior consent of the full Board. Actions taken by the Executive Committee on behalf of the GWDB that require official approval by the full board are brought forward for approval at the next regularly scheduled meeting of the board. The Executive Committee shall monitor the work of other Board committees and the Board staff, develop and approve agenda items for the full board's meetings, work on legislative issues, and develop policy proposals for the full board to consider for approval.

Operations Committee

The Operations Committee is a standing committee of the GWDB, which reviews, recommends, and approves the necessary reports, information, and all requirements under the functions listed above. State agency staff members provide subject matter expertise, data, information, and recommendations to the committee. Committee members are members of the GWDB who represent business and industry, state agencies, education and community-based organizations. The Operations Committee works closely with state agency staff during the development of the WIOA State Plan and reports regularly to the Executive Committee and full board.

The following are additional summaries of the work of the GWDB.

- Development of Minnesota's Combined State Plan — The GWDB establishes a broad vision for workforce development in Minnesota, and this vision helps guide the development of Minnesota's Combined State Plan.

- Workforce Development System Strategic Plan and Continuous Improvement — The Executive Committee of the GWDB is required to submit a report to the legislature regarding the performance and outcomes of Minnesota's CareerForce locations in January of each odd—numbered year.
- Designation of Local Areas — The GWDB reviews and approves Local Workforce Development Area designations.
- Interagency Work: GWDB staff facilitate cross-agency meetings with program administrators from across the workforce development system and will be utilizing information and dialogue from these meetings to develop more robust recommendations around system alignment and program coordination. Additionally, the GWDB Director serves on an interagency working group – funded and coordinated through a grant from the National Governors Association and Strada called "Educate for Opportunity" – in order to provide the perspective of the GWDB in the group's effort to better align workforce development and postsecondary education. NSC/alignment with higher ed and business
- Development of Allocation Formulas — The GWDB reviews and approves the allocation plans development by DEED for the distribution of funds for adult employment and training activities and youth activities to local areas.
- Preparation of the Annual Report to the Secretary of Labor — The GWDB provides input on the annual report to the Secretary of Labor.
- Statewide Employment Statistics System — The GWDB works closely with DEED's LMI Office and program managers within the agency to ensure Minnesota's statewide employment statistics system meets the needs of state— and local—level policy makers.
- Incentive Grants and Other Federal Grants — The GWDB plays an integral role in setting the vision for and the managing of the incentive grant application process. The GWDB convenes Board members, program partners and key stakeholders to identify how incentive funds can be used to meet the demands of employers and job seekers. The GWDB plays a similar role in the development of proposals for other federal grant opportunities, where appropriate.
- Sunshine Provision — The Board shall make available to the public, on a regular basis through electronic means and open meetings, information regarding the activities of the Board, including information regarding the State Plan, or a modification to the State Plan, prior to submission of the plan or modification of the plan, respectively, information regarding membership and, on request, minutes of formal meetings of the Board. The GWDB's accessible web site includes notices of upcoming GWDB meetings, minutes and materials from past meetings and information on each of the GWDB committees.
- Conflict of Interest — A member of the Board may not vote on a matter under consideration by the Board regarding the provision of services by such member (or by an entity that such member represents); or that would provide direct financial benefit to such member or the immediate family of such member; or engage in any other activity determined by the Governor to constitute a conflict of interest as specified in the State Plan. A Conflict of Interest statement is to be signed by Board members at the time of their appointment and on an annual basis thereafter.
- Board Staff — The GWDB staff shall be attached to the Minnesota DEED (DEED) for administrative and staff purposes. The GWDB may ask for assistance from other units of state government as it requires in order to fulfill its duties and responsibilities.

- Legislative Report – As required by Minnesota state statutes, the GWDB prepares a biannual legislative report to the Minnesota Legislature which captures the insight and recommendations of the GWDB for consideration by the Legislature and state agencies.
- Committees, Task Forces, and Other Recommendations – The GWDB Executive Committee, Operations Committee, other standing committees, and any task forces or other working groups established by the GWDB Chairperson also meet throughout the calendar year in order to produce policy recommendations or reports to be considered by the full GWDB for approval.
- Funding — The DEED commissioner shall develop recommendations on a funding formula for allocating Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act funds to the GWDB with a minimum allocation of $350,000 per year.

Describe how the core programs will be assessed each year based on State performance accountability measures described in section 116(b) of WIOA. This State assessment must include the quality, effectiveness, and improvement of programs broken down by local area or provider. Such state assessments should take into account local and regional planning goals.

Each of the core programs will be assessed based on the performance accountability measures and other means to assess the quality, effectiveness and improvements of the programs by local area or provider. The performance accountability measures will continue to follow federal requirements which are pending within the approval of final regulations from the Department of Labor for WIOA Titles I and III and pending legislative changes from MDE for WIOA Titles II and IV. Based on the results of those negotiations, all of these efforts will be modified to take into consideration the local and regional planning goals once the local and regional plans are approved. At the time of this State Combined Plan submission, this process has not been completed.

Additionally, programs are assessed in various ways and through different methods. Each WIOA title has existing approaches to gauge the quality, effectiveness and improvements of programs that can be broken down by local area or provider. For the title I and III programs, the following methods are used.

- Mandated Reports to the Legislature for those programs funded by state workforce, general fund, and other special state funds.
- Annual Program Results/Reports for both federal and state programs, which often provide the federal negotiated performance goals and outcomes.
- Customer Satisfaction assessments for job seekers and employers.
- A Uniform Report Card for specific workforce development programs.
- For many programs, solicitations for services (requests for proposals) are posted on DEED's website and through the State Register in an effort to attract the best possible proposals.
- At the request of the GWDB in an attempt to monitor program performance towards meeting the two existing (and again revised) WIOA State Plan goals, Performance Technical Management staff at DEED maintain the public WIOA State Plan Dashboard on the DEED website for Adult, Dislocated Worker, Wagner Peyser (Staff Assisted), Vocational Rehabilitation, and SSB programs.

Not only are programs assessed, sub-grantees and partners are analyzed in several ways, and the agency has standardized and consistent processes in place for conducting assessments.

Prior to awarding a grant, a DEED conducts a risk analysis. In addition, in the early part of each year sub-grantees complete an electronic assessment and a fiscal monitoring guide. These assessment tools provide a sweeping array of information, in such important areas as:

- How sub-grantees will serve and provide priority services to veterans
- Policies regarding sub-grantee conflict-of-interest processes
- The longevity of key directors and/or stakeholders
- Sub-grantee customer complaint processes and physical and program accessibility
- Sub-grantee accounting procedures, positive cash flow, third-party audit reports, review of debt ratio, including federal and state tax debt

For the duration of each grant, sub-grantees are monitored to ensure they're complying with the provisions of the grant and meeting performance goals. Monitoring, which usually takes place on-site, consists of assessing appropriate expenditures, conducting financial reconciliations, assuring proper eligibility of customers, case management, equal opportunity, reviewing options of co-enrollment with other partners and programs, and reviewing monthly and quarterly financial reports. Technical assistance may be provided through monitoring, on-site visits, training of case managers and fiscal staff to ensure that state and federal regulations are being met.

Workforce One (WF1) is an important tool for monitoring and technical assistance, specifically case management. Most sub-grantees and programs are required to use WF1 to ensure a consistent method of tracking participants. In addition, many small, locally-operated employment and training grants use WF1. Nearly 2,000 state, city, county, and nonprofit employment and training providers use the web-based system to track employment and training services to more than 100,000 customers across Minnesota's one-stop network.

The WIOA Title II program is operated by the MDE, which prioritizes and measures program quality through accountability expectations and activities that focus on both compliance and best practice according to research and experience. The expectations and activities include:

- The state ABE Management Information System (MIS) data: Minnesota's MIS balances both program quality and program compliance with state and federal expectations. In addition to required reports, local providers can use the state MIS to analyze student persistence, program outcomes, and other measures at the consortium, site, class and student level.
- A state AEFLA grantee report card: The report card notes actual performance and ranks providers by key program data measures, including measurable skill gain by population, cost of programming per individual served, intensity of service provided, and percentage of population served.
- A program improvement process: Programs will be identified for review based on rankings in the state AEFLA report card and will undergo a comprehensive review and monitored implementation of a program improvement plan that requires local providers to complete site visits, workshop activities, reports, and plans to strengthen program performance and quality. (For more information on Program Improvement, see the response to (D) in the WIOA Title II program information.)
- Intensive program application cycle: On a five—year basis, ABE providers are required to complete an in—depth application as a method to adhere to Minnesota statute

governing local ABE programs. In this intensive application, local providers describe their:

  - Consortium
  - Program accountability procedures
  - Professional development priorities and activities
  - Proposed programming
  - Local program governance
  - Program collaboration with key stakeholders and partners
  - Technology resources and integration
  - Future plans
  - Performance

- These in-depth applications are reviewed and scored by a team of state staff from the MDE and local AEFLA providers.
- Local program monitoring site visits: All grantees are subject to monitoring site visits that focus on policy compliance and program quality through multiple methods:
  - Providers with low performance participate in site visits through the program improvement process;
  - All AEFLA grantees receive site visits on a rotating basis, at least once every five years, when the program participates in in—depth application process to continue receiving state ABE funding to comply with Minnesota statute;
  - Monitoring visits based on periodic desk review of provider data;
  - Local ABE providers that participate in state initiatives and/or receive special grants through state or federal funding typically receive site visits as part of their participation; and
  - Local providers request special technical assistance site visits as they face issues.

WIOA Title IV also has an extensive approach to measuring quality, effectiveness and improvement in services. In the area of quality there is a strong focus on staff development. The Comprehensive System of Personnel Development is the planning framework for recruiting, developing and retaining qualified staff to carry out the state's vocational rehabilitation mission. Pursuant to Section 101 of the Rehabilitation Act, the plan addresses the following topics:

- The Need for Qualified Personnel
- Regional Higher Education for the Preparation of Vocational Rehabilitation Professionals
- Recruitment and Retention of Qualified Personnel
- Staff Training and Development
- Personnel to Address Individual Communication Needs
- Coordination with Personnel Development of the State's Secondary Education System under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act

Specific to service provision, Title IV reviews and monitors how the state strategies will be implemented, including the following:

- Methods to expand and improve services
- Assistive technology availability and services
- Methods used to address and improve services and coordination to transition age youth
- Plans for establishing, developing or improving community rehabilitation programs
- Specific to supported employment, Title IV reviews and monitors how the state strategies will be implemented, including the following:
- Identifying strategies that contribute to goal achievement
- Identifying the factors that impede achievement of goals and priorities
- Measuring the timing of transitions to extended services

These efforts are expressed in greater detail within the Title IV Program Requirements section of the State Combined Plan.

B. STATE BOARD

B. STATE BOARD PROVIDE A DESCRIPTION OF THE STATE BOARD, INCLUDING—

Under Section 101 (d) of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), the State Board shall assist the Governor in the development, implementation, and modification of the State plan through the review of statewide policies and programs; and of recommendations on actions that should be taken by the State to align workforce development programs in a manner that supports a comprehensive and streamlined workforce development system, including the review and provision of comments on the State plans, if any, for programs and activities of one—stop partners that are not core programs. The GWDB is the state's workforce development Board under WIOA, which seeks to improve the effectiveness of and streamline the governing structures of the public workforce system, empower elected officials and workforce Boards, establish structures for working with regional economies and engage the key stakeholders needed to lead the system to achieve the goals of WIOA.

The State Board was established prior to the passing of the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) in 1997 and the Board structure was grandfathered in under WIA. With the passing of WIOA, significant changes to the composition and role of the Board have taken place. The duties and structure of the board are laid out in Minnesota Statutes 116L.665.[1]

OPERATIONAL STRUCTURE

Membership to the GWDB is based on WIOA requirements, but does include additional members added in by the Minnesota Legislature. Members include:

- The Governor;
- Two local elected officials;
- A member from both the minority and majority parties from both the Minnesota House and the Minnesota Senate (four total);

- The Commissioner of DEED (on behalf of the majority of WIOA programs), along with an additional representative responsible for Title IV programming (Assistant Commissioner);
- Commissioners or Chancellors (or their designees) from MDE, DHS, Minnesota State Colleges and Universities, the University of Minnesota, and a private postsecondary institution;
- Six labor unions (one must have an apprenticeship program, although multiple do currently);
- Two community-based organizations;
- A voting membership made up of a majority of members coming from business (23 currently).

Additional non-voting members of the GWDB consist of the following: representative of Adult Basic Education (ABE); representative of Public Libraries; representative of the Women's Economic Security Act (WESA), the Director of MAWB; Commissioner of the Department of Labor and Industry (DLI); Commissioner of OHE; Commissioner of the Department of Corrections (DOC); Commissioner of the Office of Management and Budget (MMB); two (2) representatives of community—based organizations; district superintendent of a public school district; representative of school—based service learning; and representatives of the Latino Affairs Council, the Council on Asian Pacific Islanders, Minnesotans of African Heritage, the MN Indian Affairs Council, and the MN Council on Disability.

The Governor appoints all members of the Board, with the exception of legislative members. State and local leadership, GWDB staff, and representatives of local areas encourage potential candidates from specific sectors, organizations and regions to apply for open positions in alignment with the state vision.

After several months of discussion during committee and full Board meetings, five (5) industries for private sector membership on the GWDB were identified, which align with the five priority industries identified by the GWDB:

- Health Care & Social Assistance
- Manufacturing
- Professional & Business Services
- Construction
- Natural Resources (including Agriculture and Mining)

[1] Minnesota Statutes 116L.665: https://www.revisor.mn.gov/statutes/2018/cite/116L.665?keyword_type=all&keyword=Governors+Workforce+Development+Board

I. MEMBERSHIP ROSTER

i. MEMBERSHIP ROSTER

The regularly updated membership roster can also be found on the GWDB website at: https://mn.gov/deed/gwdb/.

II. BOARD ACTIVITIES

Provide a description of the activities that will assist State Board members and staff in carrying out State Board functions effectively.

DECISION—MAKING PROCESSES

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The Executive Committee is empowered to meet on an interim basis between regular full Board meetings and make emergency or time-sensitive decisions on behalf of the full GWDB membership when necessary as it relates to the explicit duties or responsibilities of the GWDB as the state's designated state workforce development board under WIOA. Immediate notification to the full Board will take place if any action is ever taken by the Executive Committee without prior consent of the full Board. Actions taken by the Executive Committee on behalf of the GWDB that require official approval by the full board are brought forward for approval at the next regularly scheduled meeting of the board. The Executive Committee shall monitor the work of other Board committees and the Board staff, develop and approve agenda items for the full board's meetings, work on legislative issues, and develop policy proposals for the full board to consider for approval.

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Career Pathways Partnership

The Career Pathways Partnership (CPP) is an ongoing committee of the GWDB, formed to establish state leadership and an operational framework to support sector-based Career Pathways. It is a foundational group that provides an exchange of information and, through the development of short- and long-term goals, impacts Career Pathways programs and policies from a state, regional, and local perspective. The CPP is chaired by two members of the GWDB and includes a broad spectrum of members from all regions of the state, including business and industry, state agencies, education, higher education and community-based organizations.

The following are additional summaries of the work of the GWDB.

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- Statewide Employment Statistics System — The GWDB works closely with DEED's LMI Office and program managers within the agency to ensure Minnesota's statewide employment statistics system meets the needs of state— and local—level policy makers.
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- Funding — The DEED commissioner shall develop recommendations on a funding formula for allocating Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act funds to the GWDB with a minimum allocation of $350,000 per year.

4. ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION OF PROGRAMS AND ONE-STOP PROGRAM PARTNERS

A. ASSESSMENT OF CORE PROGRAMS

4. ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION OF PROGRAMS AND ONE-STOP PROGRAM PARTNERS.

A. ASSESSMENT OF CORE PROGRAMS. DESCRIBE HOW THE CORE PROGRAMS WILL BE ASSESSED EACH YEAR BASED ON STATE PERFORMANCE ACCOUNTABILITY MEASURES DESCRIBED IN SECTION 116(B) OF WIOA. THIS STATE ASSESSMENT MUST INCLUDE THE QUALITY, EFFECTIVENESS, AND IMPROVEMENT OF PROGRAMS BROKEN DOWN BY LOCAL AREA OR PROVIDER. SUCH STATE ASSESSMENTS SHOULD TAKE INTO ACCOUNT LOCAL AND REGIONAL PLANNING GOALS.

Each of the core programs will be assessed based on the performance accountability measures and other means to assess the quality, effectiveness and improvements of the programs by local area or provider. The performance accountability measures will continue to follow federal requirements which are pending within the approval of final regulations from the Department of Labor for WIOA Titles I and III and pending legislative changes from MDE for WIOA Titles II and IV. Based on the results of those negotiations, all of these efforts will be modified to take into consideration the local and regional planning goals once the local and regional plans are approved. At the time of this State Combined Plan submission, this process has not been completed.

Additionally, programs are assessed in various ways and through different methods. Each WIOA title has existing approaches to gauge the quality, effectiveness and improvements of programs that can be broken down by local area or provider. For the title I and III programs, the following methods are used.

- Mandated Reports to the Legislature for those programs funded by state workforce, general fund, and other special state funds.
- Annual Program Results/Reports for both federal and state programs, which often provide the federal negotiated performance goals and outcomes.
- Customer Satisfaction assessments for job seekers and employers.
- A Uniform Report Card for specific workforce development programs.
- For many programs, solicitations for services (requests for proposals) are posted on DEED's website and through the State Register in an effort to attract the best possible proposals.

- At the request of the GWDB in an attempt to monitor program performance towards meeting the two existing (and again revised) WIOA State Plan goals, Performance Management staff at DEED maintain the public WIOA State Plan Dashboard on the DEED website for Adult, Dislocated Worker, Wagner Peyser (Staff Assisted), Vocational Rehabilitation, and SSB programs.

Not only are programs assessed, sub-grantees and partners are analyzed in several ways, and the agency has standardized and consistent processes in place for conducting assessments.

Prior to awarding a grant, a DEED conducts a risk analysis. In addition, in the early part of each year sub-grantees complete an electronic assessment and a fiscal monitoring guide. These assessment tools provide a sweeping array of information, in such important areas as:

- How sub-grantees will serve and provide priority services to veterans
- Policies regarding sub-grantee conflict-of-interest processes
- The longevity of key directors and/or stakeholders
- Sub-grantee customer complaint processes and physical and program accessibility
- Sub-grantee accounting procedures, positive cash flow, third-party audit reports, review of debt ratio, including federal and state tax debt

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The WIOA Title II program is operated by the MDE, which prioritizes and measures program quality through accountability expectations and activities that focus on both compliance and best practice according to research and experience. The expectations and activities include:

- The state ABE Management Information System (MIS) data: Minnesota's MIS balances both program quality and program compliance with state and federal expectations. In addition to required reports, local providers can use the state MIS to analyze student persistence, program outcomes, and other measures at the consortium, site, class and student level.
- A state AEFLA grantee report card: The report card notes actual performance and ranks providers by key program data measures, including measurable skill gain by population, cost of programming per individual served, intensity of service provided, and percentage of population served.

- A program improvement process: Programs will be identified for review based on rankings in the state AEFLA report card and will undergo a comprehensive review and monitored implementation of a program improvement plan that requires local providers to complete site visits, workshop activities, reports, and plans to strengthen program performance and quality. (For more information on Program Improvement, see the response to (D) in the WIOA Title II program information.)
- Intensive program application cycle: On a five—year basis, ABE providers are required to complete an in—depth application as a method to adhere to Minnesota statute governing local ABE programs. In this intensive application, local providers describe their:
    - Consortium
    - Program accountability procedures
    - Professional development priorities and activities
    - Proposed programming
    - Local program governance
    - Program collaboration with key stakeholders and partners
    - Technology resources and integration
    - Future plans
    - Performance
- These in-depth applications are reviewed and scored by a team of state staff from the MDE and local AEFLA providers.
- Local program monitoring site visits: All grantees are subject to monitoring site visits that focus on policy compliance and program quality through multiple methods:
    - Providers with low performance participate in site visits through the program improvement process;
    - All AEFLA grantees receive site visits on a rotating basis, at least once every five years, when the program participates in in—depth application process to continue receiving state ABE funding to comply with Minnesota statute;
    - Monitoring visits based on periodic desk review of provider data;
    - Local ABE providers that participate in state initiatives and/or receive special grants through state or federal funding typically receive site visits as part of their participation; and
    - Local providers request special technical assistance site visits as they face issues.

WIOA Title IV also has an extensive approach to measuring quality, effectiveness and improvement in services. In the area of quality there is a strong focus on staff development. The Comprehensive System of Personnel Development is the planning framework for recruiting, developing and retaining qualified staff to carry out the state's vocational rehabilitation mission. Pursuant to Section 101 of the Rehabilitation Act, the plan addresses the following topics:

- The Need for Qualified Personnel

- Regional Higher Education for the Preparation of Vocational Rehabilitation Professionals
- Recruitment and Retention of Qualified Personnel
- Staff Training and Development
- Personnel to Address Individual Communication Needs
- Coordination with Personnel Development of the State's Secondary Education System under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act

Specific to service provision, Title IV reviews and monitors how the state strategies will be implemented, including the following:

- Methods to expand and improve services
- Assistive technology availability and services
- Methods used to address and improve services and coordination to transition age youth
- Plans for establishing, developing or improving community rehabilitation programs
- Specific to supported employment, Title IV reviews and monitors how the state strategies will be implemented, including the following:
- Identifying strategies that contribute to goal achievement
- Identifying the factors that impede achievement of goals and priorities
- Measuring the timing of transitions to extended services

These efforts are expressed in greater detail within the Title IV Program Requirements section of the State Combined Plan.

B. ASSESSMENT OF ONE-STOP PARTNER PROGRAMS

B. ASSESSMENT OF ONE-STOP PROGRAM PARTNER PROGRAMS. DESCRIBE HOW OTHER ONE-STOP DELIVERY SYSTEM PARTNER PROGRAM SERVICES AND COMBINED STATE PLAN PARTNER PROGRAMS INCLUDED IN THE PLAN WILL BE ASSESSED EACH YEAR. SUCH STATE ASSESSMENTS SHOULD TAKE INTO ACCOUNT LOCAL AND REGIONAL PLANNING GOALS.

Minnesota established several WIOA working committees to address the implementation of WIOA. The committee formed for the one-stop service delivery has members from the local workforce service areas, service delivery providers, and state agencies representing the combined plan partners in this plan. This One-Stop committee will continue to serve as the subject matter experts and will be responsible for the annual review of the one-stop delivery. This committee will provide an overview, analysis, and recommendations for improvement to the GWDB Operations Committee. The Operations Committee will use the framework established by the results-based accountability sub-committee to make data informed decisions and recommendations. The Operations Committee will make their recommendations to the GWDB for discussion and actions. The GWDB, in partnership and support from the Combined State Plan partners (whom serve as voting and non-voting members) will be responsible to the Governor by advising the Governor and/or Minnesota Legislature (bi-annually) on the one-stop delivery system with any recommendations for improvement.

Minnesota's Combined State Plan will be under review the third quarter of the second year. The GWDB will be responsible for the review of the Combined Plan, Regional Plans, and Local Plans to allow for any economic changes or regional impacts on industry or populations served as a priority in this plan.

The assessment of the one-stop delivery system partner programs will be based on a combination of factors — including the service categories under WIOA and the six strategic elements of the career pathways system within the context of the local and regional plans. The development of this process will be based on a results-based accountability model which will be developed under the oversight of the GWDB. The following is an illustrative framework that will guide the process with the engagement of state agencies, local boards, service providers and disparately impacted populations.

	Quantity	Quality
Effort	**How much service did we deliver?**	**How well did we deliver it?**
—	Career Services	Reduced Duplication
—	Training Services	Better Coordination
—	Business Services	Effective Engagement
Effect	**How much change/effect did we produce?**	**What quality of change/effect did we produce?**
—	WIOA Performance Measures	Alignment of Services
—	Placements in Pathways to OID with Family Sustaining Wages	Maximizing Resources
—	Impact on Disparate Impact Populations	Greater System Output

TANF Assessment

TANF services in the state are administered by the MN Department of Human Services, which helps ensure that TANF services are available on-site at 40 CareerForce locations where participants partake in FastTRAC/Pathways to Prosperity Initiatives in high-demand career fields (including the elder care workforce). These Initiatives provide grants to collections of local partners to operate as part of the state's employment services system, and are available to low-income families on public assistance in order to comply with participants' work requirements. Furthermore, DHS pulls directly from Workforce a monthly assessment report that counties use for their planning and decision-making (https://edocs.dhs.state.mn.us/lfserver/Public/DHS-4014A-ENG). In addition, an Employability Measure is a comprehensive assessment tool utilized by TANF in the state, based on information in the WorkforceOne database, and is utilized by employment counselors to assess and plan with participants on their journey to search for jobs, and for job retention/advancement.

C. PREVIOUS ASSESSMENT RESULTS

C. PREVIOUS ASSESSMENT RESULTS. BEGINNING WITH THE STATE PLAN MODIFICATION IN 2018 AND FOR SUBSEQUENT STATE PLANS AND STATE PLAN MODIFICATIONS, PROVIDE THE RESULTS OF ASSESSMENTS OF THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE CORE PROGRAMS AND OTHER ONE-STOP PARTNER PROGRAMS AND COMBINED STATE PLAN PARTNER PROGRAMS INCLUDED IN THE UNIFIED OR COMBINED STATE PLAN DURING THE PRECEDING 2-YEAR PERIOD (I.E. THE 2-YEAR PERIOD OF THE PLAN MODIFICATION

CYCLE). DESCRIBE HOW THE STATE IS ADAPTING ITS STRATEGIES BASED ON THESE ASSESSMENTS.

Minnesota has several resources available to assess the effectiveness of its WIOA programs. First, Minnesota is required to report by Minnesota Statute 116L.98 to report employment and wage outcomes by state-funded workforce training programs by disaggregated population groups.

Participants in each of the state-funded adult workforce training programs, whether by competitive grant funding or by direct legislative appropriation that have been served since SFY14 are included in the report card. The report card also included the WIOA Title I Adult and Dislocated Worker programs, to serve as points of comparison. Outcomes are available by fiscal year, with quarterly updates.

Data points included in the report card include:

- Program enrollment includes all participants served at any point in the chosen timeframe. Enrollment in training includes participants who engaged in training through the program, including postsecondary certificates and degrees, occupational licenses, and industry recognized credentials.
- Measures of participants enrolled in training by occupational area and the industry of employment post-exit. By providing occupational and industrial information, we can identify how well the training received is related to the job the participant after exit.
- Comparisons of pre-enrollment work and earnings to post-exit measures are also important to identify the relative gain program participants receive. Pre-enrollment earnings are drawn from the second, third, fourth, and fifth quarters prior to program enrollment. Among all served participants, the median earnings calculation excludes those with no earnings. In other words, participants must have earned at least $1 in the year prior to enrollment to be included in this calculation. This measure uses Unemployment Insurance wage detail, so it does not capture self-employment income or income earned in other states.
- Number of participants who exited in the chosen timeframe and those who completed training and who attained a credential, such as a postsecondary certificate or degree, occupational license, or industry-recognized credential.
- Measure of consistent employment in the third and eight quarters after exit. This means the participant showed earnings in each of the quarters after exit. The number consistently employed is not comparable to the number exited, because employment outcome information is only available for a subset of exiters. Again these employment measures uses UI wage detail, so it does not capture self-employment or employment in other states.
- Median earnings only among participants who are employed in the first quarter after exit and then are consistently employed in the third and eight quarter after exit.

Second, Minnesota developed a public-facing WIOA State Plan Dashboard to provide transparency and accountability toward the two goals in Minnesota's Combined State Plan for WIOA:

1. Reduce educational, skills training and employment disparities based on race, disability, gender or disconnected youth.

2. Build employer-led industry sector partnerships that expand the talent pipeline to be inclusive of race, disability, gender and age to meet industry demands for a skilled workforce.

The dashboard shows how the characteristics of participants who participant in Minnesota's WIOA Title I, III and IV programs compare to the population at large, specifically in our service to people of color and Native Americans and individuals with a disability. Users can filter program outcomes by gender and disability status to see measures of second quarter employment, credential attainment and change in income pre- and post-program participation.

The dashboard also records Minnesota's progress to the development of regional industry sector partnerships. We also provide labor market data on regional job vacancy rates by targeted industry and workforce statistics on the race/ethnic, gender and disability status composition of region's targeted industries. Finally, DEED's performance team also conducts unique analyzes to inform our understanding the effectiveness of WIOA programs. One 2019 report studied the co-enrollment patterns among core WIOA titles, state-funded workforce programs, and other partners in Minnesota WIOA Combined State Plan. Currently, there is no formal co-enrollment policy and limited information about how and when referrals to other workforce programs occur. The analysis sought to inform stakeholders about the number and demographics of participants who are co-enrolled in selected programs and their employment and wage outcomes.

During Program Year 2016 and 2017, over 22,000 individuals – or a little less than 14% of all participants – participated in more than one of the workforce programs. Nearly 19,000 of those individuals, 85 percent, had some form of overlapping or contiguous enrollments.

The highest number of co-enrolled participants are in the Wagner-Peyser program and the Adult Basic Education (ABE), the two largest programs in terms of participation numbers. Wagner-Peyer provides a set of universal workforce services that do not have eligibility requirements, such as resume assistance and workshops; only participants are included, not those individuals who only post a resume to MinnesotaWorks.net. For this report, all ABE students are included, even those with a short amount of class time.

Rates of co-enrollment vary across programs – with the some of the highest rates of concurrent program enrollments including:

- Around 47% of Dislocated Worker and 25% of Veteran Services participants also enrolled in Wagner Peyser staff-assisted services
- About 40% of Pathways to Prosperity participants are enrolled in ABE.
- Nearly 11% of SNAP E&T participants are enrolled in ABE.

Overall, there seem to be early employment and wage benefits of co-enrollment. For the first quarter after the final program exit, median wages are $5,959 for individuals with concurrent co-enrollment versus $5,283 for all other participants. Employment rates for the first quarter after final exit are similarly higher for those individuals with concurrent co-enrollment versus all others; 68.3% and 57.1% respectively.

Title II Assessment

Minnesota's Title II system met two of the five negotiated targets in federal program year 2020 (employment rate at Q4 and median earnings).

WIOA Indicator	PY19 Outcomes	PY19 Targets	PY20 Outcomes	PY20 Targets
Measurable skill gain (MSG)	36.89%	44%	23.01%	43%
Employment at second quarter after exit	37.74%	N/A	34.25%	38%
Employment at fourth quarter after exit	36.46%	N/A	35.26%	34%
Median quarterly earnings at second quarter after exit	$6,070	N/A	$6,188	$5,660
Credential Attainment	13.41%	N/A	19.03%	23%

The COVID pandemic has had a drastically negative impact on the adult education system's outcomes, especially regarding measurable skill gains. With many program physical sites closed, many students struggled and were not able to take official NRS-approved tests remotely or in-person. Minnesota adult education is responding by purchasing more computer-based tests for local programs and increasing remote test training using resources from the test publishers. Also, to increase credential attainment, the Minnesota Department of Education is participating in groups with other WIOA programs and postsecondary systems to review our accepted credentials and is also providing more intensive training on Integrated Education and Training (IET) programming models.

D. EVALUATION

D. EVALUATION. DESCRIBE HOW THE STATE WILL CONDUCT EVALUATIONS AND RESEARCH PROJECTS ON ACTIVITIES UNDER WIOA CORE PROGRAMS; HOW SUCH PROJECTS WILL BE COORDINATED WITH, AND DESIGNED IN CONJUNCTION WITH, STATE AND LOCAL BOARDS AND WITH STATE AGENCIES RESPONSIBLE FOR THE ADMINISTRATION OF ALL RESPECTIVE CORE PROGRAMS; AND, FURTHER, HOW THE PROJECTS WILL BE COORDINATED WITH THE EVALUATIONS PROVIDED FOR BY THE SECRETARY OF LABOR AND THE SECRETARY OF EDUCATION UNDER WIOA.

Minnesota will conduct evaluations and research based on utilizing the data and processes from the uniform report card, results based accountability methods and the elements from the career pathways system design, as well as the federal initiatives around customer-focused design and the metrics for measuring business services. The final regulations will most likely impact the finer details of this process. Minnesota will provide a more formalized and detailed approach after the regulations are issued.

This process will be overseen by the GWDB and conducted in partnership with the state agencies overseeing the required partner federal titles of WIOA, the state association for local workforce boards, representatives from the provider network and impacted communities of color, individuals with disabilities and disconnected youth. Plans and updates will be routinely shared with Minnesota's federal program officer in the Chicago regional office and with other appropriate DOL representatives as determined by the national office. The efforts will most likely be funded by a portion of the 15% Governor's set aside. Minnesota will additionally seek resources from state funds, philanthropic organizations and DOL for these efforts.

5. DISTRIBUTION OF FUNDS FOR CORE PROGRAMS

A. FOR TITLE I PROGRAMS

I. YOUTH ACTIVITIES IN ACCORDANCE WITH WIOA SECTION 128(B)(2) OR (B)(3)

5. DISTRIBUTION OF FUNDS FOR CORE PROGRAMS. DESCRIBE THE METHODS AND FACTORS THE STATE WILL USE IN DISTRIBUTING FUNDS UNDER THE CORE PROGRAMS IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE PROVISIONS AUTHORIZING SUCH DISTRIBUTIONS.

A. FOR TITLE I PROGRAMS FOR TITLE I PROGRAMS, PROVIDE A DESCRIPTION OF THE WRITTEN POLICIES THAT ESTABLISH THE STATE'S METHODS AND FACTORS USED TO DISTRIBUTE FUNDS TO LOCAL AREAS FOR—

i. YOUTH ACTIVITIES IN ACCORDANCE WITH WIOA SECTION 128(B)(2) OR (B)(3),

TITLE I — YOUTH

Minnesota will obligate 85 percent of the WIOA Youth Formula allocation to local service providers.

1/3 is based on the WDA's relative share of the number of unemployed in areas with an unemployment rate of 6.5% or higher.

1/3 is based on the WDA's relative share of the number of unemployed in excess of 4.5% of the civilian labor force (in the WDA or in the areas of substantial unemployment within the WDA—whichever is higher).

1/3 is based on the WSA's relative share of the number of youth between the ages of 16 and 21 whose income or family income is at or below poverty or below 70 percent of the lower living standard income level. Since it is a designated as a Rural Concentrated Employment Program under section 107 of WIOA, Rural Minnesota CEP has a slightly different requirement for the number of persons in this category. Data is provided by DOL for this portion of the formula.

The state ensures that no WDA allocation falls below 90 percent of the previous two year's average share of youth allocations. Adjustments are made as necessary to maintain the 90 percent hold-harmless provision for impacted WDAs.

II. ADULT AND TRAINING ACTIVITIES IN ACCORDANCE WITH WIOA SECTION 133(B)(2) OR (B)(3)

ii. ADULT AND TRAINING ACTIVITIES IN ACCORDANCE WITH WIOA SECTION 133(B)(2) OR (B)(3),

TITLE I — ADULT

Minnesota will obligate 85 percent of its WIOA Adult program formula allocation to local service providers, reserving 15 percent for administration and "10 percent" allowable activities for statewide goals.

When distributing the remaining amount to local service providers, staff take into account the following elements by converting them into shares of Minnesota as a whole and weighted equally:

- The number of economically disadvantaged adults in each Local Workforce Development Area (LWDA)
- The total number of unemployed individuals
- The number of excess unemployed individuals (above the state average) in areas of substantial unemployment

Adjustments are made as necessary to maintain the 90 percent hold-harmless provision ensuring that no local area has less than 90 percent of their two year average.

III. DISLOCATED WORKER EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING ACTIVITIES IN ACCORDANCE WITH WIOA SECTION 133(B)(2) AND BASED ON DATA AND WEIGHTS ASSIGNED

iii. DISLOCATED WORKER EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING ACTIVITIES IN ACCORDANCE WITH WIOA SECTION 133(B)(2) AND BASED ON DATA AND

WEIGHTS ASSIGNED.

TITLE I — DISLOCATED WORKER

Minnesota will obligate 75 percent of its WIOA Dislocated Worker program formula allocation to local service providers using a combination of labor market information, census data and unemployment insurance information. DEED first reserves five percent of the total allocation for administration, ten percent for allowable statewide activities, and the fully allowable 25 percent for rapid response activity (grants to fund mass layoff projects and statewide rapid response staff).

Three factors to distribute the 75 percent are weighted equally, impacting the preliminary share to local providers:

1. The share of the state's unemployed persons living in a WDA
2. The share of the state's permanently separated unemployed persons living in that WDA
3. The share of statewide total weeks paid of UI to permanently separated claimants

Minnesota then adjusts the share by job and earnings density, measuring a LWDA's standard deviation from the state average, and adjusts the dollars up or down accordingly. Finally, Minnesota includes a 90 percent hold—harmless provision as well as a 130 percent funding cap to minimize any significant changes in funding. This means that each local area is guaranteed to receive an allocation percentage per year that is no less than 90 percent of the average of the preceding two years' allocations.

As stated in WIOA sec. 133(a)(2), a State may reserve up to 25 percent of its allotted dislocated worker funds for rapid response activities. Once the State has reserved adequate funds for rapid response activities, such as those described in §§ 682.310, 682.320, and 682.330, any of the remaining funds reserved may be provided to local areas that experience increases of unemployment due to natural disasters, mass layoffs or other events, for provision of direct career services to participants if there are not adequate local funds available to assist the dislocated workers. States may wish to establish the policies or procedures governing the provision of additional assistance as described in § 682.340.

B. FOR TITLE II

I. DESCRIBE HOW THE ELIGIBLE AGENCY WILL AWARD MULTI-YEAR GRANTS OR CONTRACTS ON A COMPETITIVE BASIS TO ELIGIBLE PROVIDERS IN THE STATE, INCLUDING HOW ELIGIBLE AGENCIES WILL ESTABLISH THAT ELIGIBLE PROVIDERS ARE ORGANIZATIONS OF DEMONSTRATED EFFECTIVENESS

B. FOR TITLE II:

i. Describe how the eligible agency will award multi-year grants or contracts on a competitive basis to eligible providers in the State, including how eligible agencies will establish that eligible providers are organizations of demonstrated effectiveness.

TITLE II - AEFLA PROVIDER SELECTION AND FUNDING ALLOCATION PROCESS

The MDE is the State's Eligible Agency for Adult Education and Literacy programs. MDE is responsible for administering funds and providing program/performance oversight to grantees.

Adult Education and Literacy eligible providers approved under Workforce Investment Act of 1998 requirements continued to receive funding through June 30, 2017, as long as they adhered to state and federal grant expectations, as measured through annual applications, financial reports, and program performance reports.

During grant year 2016–17, MDE implemented a competitive application process for all federal AEFLA funding that was based on the 13 considerations in Title II of WIOA and included additional state ABE priorities. As a result of that process, 41 providers from throughout Minnesota were selected to receive funding beginning July 1, 2017. Minnesota will conduct a new grant competition during the 2021-22 program year in order to identify grantees who will begin receiving federal ABE funds on July 1, 2022.

TIMELINE

The following steps and timeline were followed in 2017 and will be used again for the 2021-22 WIOA AEFLA competition:

February MDE publishes and promotes WIOA-aligned federal AEFLA grant application request for proposals (RFP)

February MDE provides technical assistance to inquiries from eligible providers

February-March MDE recruits reviewers to score and rate WIOA-aligned federally-funded AEFLA grant applications

March Due date for WIOA-aligned federally-funded AEFLA grant applications

March-April Reviewers score and rate WIOA-aligned federally-funded AEFLA grant applications

April MDE decides which applicants will be approved as providers based on reviewer scores and ratings and application's response to the conditions and criteria in the RFP

April-May MDE announces WIOA-aligned federally-funded AEFLA grant applicants that will receive funding

July 1st WIOA-aligned federally-funded AEFLA grant providers begin grant cycle, programming and funding

ELIGIBLE PROVIDERS

An eligible local provider is an organization that has demonstrated effectiveness in providing adult education activities to eligible individuals and may include:

- A local education agency;
- Community-based or faith-based organization;

- Volunteer literacy organization;
- Institution of higher education;
- Public or private nonprofit agency;
- Library;
- Public housing authority;
- Nonprofit institution with the ability to provide adult education and literacy services;
- Consortium or coalition of agencies, organizations, institutions, libraries, or authorities described above; and
- A partnership between an employer and an entity described above.

Multi-year grant competition will be held in accordance with 34 CFR Part 463, Subpart C

During grant year 2016–17, the Minnesota Department of Education implemented a competitive application process for all federal AEFLA funding that was based on the 13 considerations in Title II of WIOA and included additional state ABE priorities. As a result of that process, 41 providers from throughout Minnesota were selected to receive funding beginning July 1, 2017. Minnesota will conduct a new grant competition during the 2021-22 program year in order to identify grantees who will begin receiving federal ABE funds on July 1, 2022.

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- Nonprofit institution with the ability to provide adult education and literacy services;
- Consortium or coalition of agencies, organizations, institutions, libraries, or authorities described above; and
- A partnership between an employer and an entity described above.

APPLICATION PROMOTION AND PUBLICATION

In February 2017, the grant competition for the 2017-18 grant year was publicized in compliance with federal law, Minnesota statute, and Minnesota Department of Education policy in order to ensure that all eligible providers had direct and equitable access to apply and compete for grants. The process was fair and equitable and followed federal AEFLA grant funding requirements and other federal grant procedures. The Minnesota Department of Education published and promoted all grant opportunities on its website. Any eligible entity (described above) was able to submit a proposal. A similar process will be followed in 2022.

ALLOCATIONS

The Minnesota Department of Education dedicates 82.5 percent of the state allocation of federal AEFLA funding to grants to eligible providers. This amount is allocated to grantees based on scope of service (number of prior year contact hours for eligible service), accountability aid, regional aid to help local programs implement AEFLA initiatives and aid to support services to participants with low incidence disabilities.

In addition, 12.5 percent of the state allocation is dedicated to Leadership supporting activities such as: professional development; volunteer recruitment and training; technology; serving students with disabilities; distance learning and digital literacy; program quality support; assessment training; and career pathway and other transitions-related collaborations.

13 CONSIDERATIONS

The Minnesota Department of Education used the considerations specified in Section 231(e) of WIOA and listed below as the criteria for selecting and funding eligible providers in 2017 and will do so again in 2022. As part of the RFP process, agencies were/will be required to provide narrative detail describing how they will meet each consideration.

1. Needs Assessment: The degree to which the provider is responsive to (A) regional needs as identified in the local plan under Section 108; and (B) serving individuals in the community who are identified in such plan as most in need of adult education and literacy activities, including individuals who have low levels of literacy skills and who are English language learners.
2. Individuals with Disabilities: The degree to which the provider is able to serve eligible individuals with disabilities, including eligible individuals with learning disabilities.
3. Past Effectiveness: The degree to which the provider demonstrates past effectiveness in improving the literacy of eligible individuals, to meet State-adjusted levels of performance for the primary indicators of performance described in Section 116, especially with respect to eligible individuals who have low levels of literacy.
4. Alignment with One-stop Partners: The degree to which the eligible provider is responsive to, and demonstrates alignment between, proposed activities and services and the strategy and goals of the local plan under Section 108 as well as the activities and services of the one-stop partners.
5. Intensity, Quality, and Instructional Practices: The degree to which the eligible provider's program is of sufficient intensity and quality, and based on the most rigorous research available so that participants achieve substantial learning gains; and uses instructional practices that include the essential components of reading instruction.
6. Research Based Educational Practices: The degree to which the eligible provider's activities including reading, writing, speaking, mathematics, and English language acquisition instruction, are based on the best practices derived from the most rigorous research available and appropriate, including scientifically valid research and effective educational practice.
7. Effective Use of Technology: The degree to which the eligible provider's activities effectively use technology, services, and delivery systems, including distance education in a manner sufficient to increase the amount and quality of learning and how such technology, services, and systems lead to improved performance.
8. Integrated Education and Training: The degree to which the eligible provider's activities offer learning in context, including through integrated education and training, so that an individual acquires the skills needed to transition to and complete postsecondary education and training programs, obtain and advance in employment leading to economic self-sufficiency, and to exercise the rights and responsibilities of citizenship.
9. Qualified Staff: The degree to which the eligible provider's activities are delivered by well-trained instructors, counselors, and administrators who meet any minimum qualifications established by the state, where applicable, and who have access to high quality professional development, including through electronic means.
10. Partnerships and Development of Career Pathways: The degree to which the eligible provider's activities coordinate with other available education, training, and social service resources in the community, such as by establishing strong links with elementary schools and secondary schools, postsecondary educational institutions, institutions of higher education, local workforce development boards, one-stop centers, job training programs, and social service agencies, business, industry, labor organizations, community-based organizations, nonprofit organizations, and intermediaries, for the development of career pathways.

11. Flexible Schedules and Coordination with Support Services: The degree to which the eligible provider's activities offer flexible schedules and coordination with Federal, State, and local support services (such as child care, transportation, mental health services, and career planning) that are necessary to enable individuals, including individuals with disabilities or other special needs, to attend and complete programs information management system that has the capacity to report measurable participant outcomes (consistent with Section 116) and to monitor program performance.
12. Information management system: The expectation will be that the eligible provider will use the State-administered designated MIS for all grant-related data collection and reporting; and
13. English Language Acquisition and Civics Education: The degree to which the eligible provider has a demonstrated need for additional English language acquisition programs and civics education programs.

ADDITIONAL CRITERIA

In addition to the above considerations, the grant application also required descriptions of applicants:

- Location, service area, the scope of the program, a description of the population to be served, fiscal management procedures, and audit history;
- Capacity to offer day, evening, and distance education programming including evidence of the organization's AEFLA-eligible activity services in the prior year.
- Budget, as well as programmatic information regarding statutory requirements;
- Coordination with other service providers to provide wrap-around services to participants (e.g., child care, transportation);
- A description of how the program will align activities to the Local Plan for WIOA providers and supportive services; and
- The ability to match federal funding with other funding from state, local, organizational or other sources that would directly go to providing AEFLA-eligible activities.

REVIEW PROCESS

Proposals were rated and scored by teams of reviewers approved by the Minnesota Department of Education Grants Office. The review process for selecting successful applicants included formally scoring applications on their responses to each of the 13 considerations of WIOA, the programming proposed and its alignment to the four instructional components, the articulated use of funds, and additional criteria listed above. The Minnesota Department of Education selected applicants for federal AEFLA funding based on proposals with the highest scores, noting also the additional criteria listed above. Applicants selected for federal AEFLA funding were notified in May-June and were eligible to start programming on July 1. The same process will be followed in 2022.

Annually

All approved providers are required to comply with all state and federal regulations, policies and expectations for AEFLA grantees including:

1. Using the state AEFLA database system;
2. Reporting annual performance data; and
3. Additional requirements or reporting upon request by state and local agencies.

II. DESCRIBE HOW THE ELIGIBLE AGENCY WILL ENSURE DIRECT AND EQUITABLE ACCESS TO ALL ELIGIBLE PROVIDERS TO APPLY AND COMPETE FOR FUNDS AND HOW THE ELIGIBLE AGENCY WILL ENSURE THAT IT IS USING THE SAME GRANT OR CONTRACT ANNOUNCEMENT AND APPLICATION PROCEDURE FOR ALL ELIGIBLE PROVIDERS

III. b. 5. B. ii. Describe how the eligible agency will ensure direct and equitable access to all eligible providers to apply and compete for funds and how the eligible agency will ensure that it is using the same grant or contract announcement and application procedure for all eligible providers

APPLICATION PROMOTION AND PUBLICATION

In February 2017, the grant competition for the 2017-18 grant year was publicized in compliance with federal law, Minnesota statute, and MDE policy in order to ensure that all eligible providers had direct and equitable access to apply and compete for grants. The process was fair and equitable and followed federal AEFLA grant funding requirements and other federal grant procedures. MDE published and promoted all grant opportunities on its website. Any eligible entity (described above) was able to submit a proposal. A similar process will be followed in 2022.

ALLOCATIONS

MDE dedicates 82.5 percent of the state allocation of federal AEFLA funding to grants to eligible providers. This amount is allocated to grantees based on scope of service (number of prior year contact hours for eligible service), accountability aid, regional aid to help local programs implement AEFLA initiatives and aid to support services to participants with low incidence disabilities.

In addition, 12.5 percent of the state allocation is dedicated to Leadership supporting activities such as: professional development; volunteer recruitment and training; technology; serving students with disabilities; distance learning and digital literacy; program quality support; assessment training; and career pathway and other transitions-related collaborations.

13 CONSIDERATIONS

MDE used the 13 considerations specified in Section 231(e) of WIOA and listed in Section VI, Adult Education and Family Literacy, as the criteria for selecting and funding eligible providers in 2017 and will do so again in 2022. As part of the RFP process, agencies were/will be required to provide narrative detail describing how they will meet each consideration.

ADDITIONAL CRITERIA

In addition to the 13 considerations, the grant application also required descriptions of applicants:

- Location, service area, the scope of the program, a description of the population to be served, fiscal management procedures, and audit history;
- Capacity to offer day, evening, and distance education programming including evidence of the organization's AEFLA-eligible activity services in the prior year.
- Budget, as well as programmatic information regarding statutory requirements;

- Coordination with other service providers to provide wrap-around services to participants (e.g., child care, transportation);
- A description of how the program will align activities to the Local Plan for WIOA providers and supportive services; and
- The ability to match federal funding with other funding from state, local, organizational or other sources that would directly go to providing AEFLA-eligible activities.

REVIEW PROCESS

Proposals were rated and scored by teams of reviewers approved by the MDE Grants Office. The review process for selecting successful applicants included formally scoring applications on their responses to each of the 13 considerations of WIOA, the programming proposed and its alignment to the four instructional components, the articulated use of funds, and additional criteria listed above. MDE selected applicants for federal AEFLA funding based on proposals with the highest scores, noting also the additional criteria listed above. Applicants selected for federal AEFLA funding were notified in May-June and were eligible to start programming on July 1. The same process will be followed in 2022.

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1. Using the state AEFLA database system;
2. Reporting annual performance data; and
3. Additional requirements or reporting upon request by state and local agencies.

C. VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION PROGRAM

C. VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION PROGRAM: IN THE CASE OF A STATE THAT, UNDER SECTION 101(A)(2)(A)(I)OF THE REHABILITATION ACT DESIGNATES A STATE AGENCY TO ADMINISTER THE PART OF THE VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION (VR) SERVICES PORTION OF THE UNIFIED OR COMBINED STATE PLAN UNDER WHICH VR SERVICES ARE PROVIDED FOR INDIVIDUALS WHO ARE BLIND, DESCRIBE THE PROCESS AND THE FACTORS USED BY THE STATE TO DETERMINE THE DISTRIBUTION OF FUNDS AMONG THE TWO VR AGENCIES IN THE STATE.

The distribution of Minnesota's allotment of VR110 funds between the General and Blind agencies is based upon a methodology submitted to the Rehabilitation Services Administration in 1975. This methodology, still being used today, distributes 82 percent of Minnesota's allotment to the General Agency and 18 percent to the Blind Agency. Funds are distributed to states based on a statutory formula that takes into account population and per capita income in determining the amount of Federal funds that are available to states for vocational rehabilitation program purposes.

6. PROGRAM DATA

A. DATA ALIGNMENT AND INTEGRATION

6. PROGRAM DATA

A. DATA ALIGNMENT AND INTEGRATION DESCRIBE THE PLANS OF THE LEAD STATE AGENCIES WITH RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE CORE PROGRAMS, ALONG WITH THE STATE BOARD, TO ALIGN AND INTEGRATE AVAILABLE WORKFORCE AND EDUCATION DATA SYSTEMS FOR THE CORE PROGRAMS, UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE PROGRAMS, AND EDUCATION THROUGH POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION, AND

TO THE EXTENT POSSIBLE, THE COMBINED STATE PLAN PARTNER PROGRAMS INCLUDED IN THIS PLAN. THE DESCRIPTION OF THE STATE'S PLAN FOR INTEGRATING DATA SYSTEMS SHOULD INCLUDE THE STATE'S GOALS FOR ACHIEVING INTEGRATION AND ANY PROGRESS TO DATE.

i. DESCRIBE THE STATE'S PLANS TO MAKE THE MANAGEMENT INFORMATION SYSTEMS FOR THE CORE PROGRAMS INTEROPERABLE TO MAXIMIZE THE EFFICIENT EXCHANGE OF COMMON DATA ELEMENTS TO SUPPORT ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION.

Currently, in Minnesota, four of the six required titles share the same customer management information system. This system is called Workforce One and is described in more detail in other Sections of this Combined State Plan. WIOA Title III (Wagner-Peyser) participant data are currently integrated into MinnesotaWorks.net, the State's labor exchange. WIOA Title II (Adult Basic Education) has a newly designed customer management information system that serves purposes beyond just participant data.

Performance Technical Management staff have full access to all data needed to support assessment and evaluation.

With the restructuring of the DEED's Performance Technical Management team, the WIOA State Plan Dashboard is under review. Enhancements to this data tool, designed to track performance by race, gender and other factors, are pending.

ii. DESCRIBE THE STATE'S PLANS TO INTEGRATE DATA SYSTEMS TO FACILITATE STREAMLINED INTAKE AND SERVICE DELIVERY TO TRACK PARTICIPATION ACROSS ALL PROGRAMS INCLUDED IN THIS PLAN.

Currently, in Minnesota, seven of the 13 participating titles share the same management information system. This system is called Workforce One and is described in more detail in other Sections of this Combined State Plan. Minnesota will continue to explore the possibilities of additional titles sharing the same management information system.

With the restructuring of the DEED's Performance Technical Management team, the WIOA State Plan Dashboard is under review. Enhancements to this data tool, designed to track performance by race, gender and other factors, are pending.

iii. EXPLAIN HOW THE STATE BOARD WILL ASSIST THE GOVERNOR IN ALIGNING TECHNOLOGY AND DATA SYSTEMS ACROSS REQUIRED ONE-STOP PARTNER PROGRAMS (INCLUDING DESIGN AND IMPLEMENTATION OF COMMON INTAKE, DATA COLLECTION, ETC.) AND HOW SUCH ALIGNMENT WILL IMPROVE SERVICE DELIVERY TO INDIVIDUALS, INCLUDING UNEMPLOYED INDIVIDUALS.

The State Board, through its functions under WIOA, will lead the management information system study to ascertain to practicality and functionality of such a broad based system and make a recommendation to the Governor.

With the restructuring of the DEED's Performance Technical Management team, the WIOA State Plan Dashboard is under review. Enhancements to this data tool, designed to track performance by race, gender and other factors, are pending.

iv. DESCRIBE THE STATE'S PLANS TO DEVELOP AND PRODUCE THE REPORTS REQUIRED UNDER SECTION 116, PERFORMANCE ACCOUNTABILITY SYSTEM. (WIOA SECTION 116(D)(2)).

Minnesota has dedicated program performance and information technology staff to develop and produce the reports required for performance accountability. All programs underwent a substantial review and revision to align data elements, data collection and reporting to the WIOA requirements.

This work continues, as need, when new USDOL guidance is provided.

Minnesota continues to offer program and local area performance tracking through a contract with Futureworks (FWS) for MN Performs.

B. ASSESSMENT OF PARTICIPANTS' POST-PROGRAM SUCCESS

B. ASSESSMENT OF PARTICIPANTS' POST-PROGRAM SUCCESS DESCRIBE HOW LEAD STATE AGENCIES WILL USE THE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM TO ASSESS THE PROGRESS OF PARTICIPANTS WHO ARE EXITING FROM CORE PROGRAMS IN ENTERING, PERSISTING IN, AND COMPLETING POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION, OR ENTERING OR REMAINING IN EMPLOYMENT. STATES MAY CHOOSE TO SET ADDITIONAL INDICATORS OF PERFORMANCE.

Under Minnesota statute 116L.98, the Minnesota legislature has required specific and long-term performance indicators of state-funded workforce training programs since 2014, known as the Uniform Outcome Report Card.

These indicators include:

- Employment and median wage prior to enrollment
- Program enrollment
- Training enrollment, occupation associated with training activity, and training completion
- Credential attainment
- Program exit and duration of time in program
- Consistent employment and median wages for three and eight quarters after program exit
- With comparisons available by participants' education level, race, gender, and geography

DEED's agency-wide performance staff has already integrated WIOA programs into the Uniform Outcome Report Card.

State law also requires a workforce program net impact analysis to include the impact of workforce services on individual employment, earnings and public benefit usage outcomes and a cost-benefit analysis for understanding the monetary impacts of workforce services from the participant and taxpayer points of view.

Finally, DEED submits workforce training and UI wage records to the Minnesota Statewide Longitudinal Education Data System (SLEDS), which links secondary and postsecondary education and workforce to identify the most viable pathways for individuals in achieving successful outcomes in education and work. Through access to a secure data mart, the performance management team at DEED is able to access more robust data on WIOA – and

other state workforce – program participants who enter, persist and complete postsecondary education after exiting when program tracking typically commences.

C. USE OF UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE (UI) WAGE RECORD DATA

C. USE OF UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE (UI) WAGE RECORD DATA EXPLAIN HOW THE STATE WILL MEET THE REQUIREMENTS TO UTILIZE QUARTERLY UI WAGE RECORDS FOR PERFORMANCE ACCOUNTABILITY, EVALUATIONS, AND AS A SOURCE FOR WORKFORCE AND LABOR MARKET INFORMATION, CONSISTENT WITH FEDERAL AND STATE LAW. (THIS OPERATIONAL PLANNING ELEMENT APPLIES TO CORE PROGRAMS.)

DEED houses the state's Unemployment Insurance (UI) division, which makes access to state wage detail available for the completion of official performance reporting requirements as required by federal or state laws. Minnesota's dedicated program performance and information technology staff also coordinate the data extracts from WRIS/SWIS to develop and produce the reports required for performance accountability under WIOA.

As a part of the net impact analysis required under Minnesota State statute and described in more detail in the section prior, we were also able to leverage UI data in several ways. First, we were able to identify individuals who applied for UI benefits in the same period that our program participants, or treatment group, were entering programs to construct a nonparticipant control group. Second, we were able to use UI wage records to track both our treatment and control group participants longitudinally.

Under a data sharing agreement, DEED also supplies UI wage records to the Statewide Longitudinal Education Data System (SLEDS) for tracking student pathways from high school, postsecondary completion and into the work force. Public reporting on the SLEDS website shows aggregate outcomes for high school students who do not enter college in the first year after high school graduation, but instead enter the workforce. Expanded postsecondary employment and wage outcomes reporting is also available at the institution level by programs of study (i.e. major) and award type. DEED also leverages SLEDS postsecondary program completers and UI data linkages for Eligible Training Providers reporting.

DEED has studied relevant and timely issues on graduate employment and wage outcomes in Minnesota:

Racial disparities in wage and employment after graduation. This study provided qualitative evidence to help explain post-college wage disparities, including choice of major, industry of employment after graduation, time to degree completion and age of student at time of completion.

Labor market returns to higher education for older graduates. This study looked at work experience (continuous employment, interrupted employment, laid off from employment) to model the impact of additional education.

Regional economic factors in shaping high school graduate decisions to enroll in college following graduation or entering the workforce. This study looked at the longitudinal employment and wage trends of high school graduates entering the workforce instead of enrolling college during the year after their graduation.

D. PRIVACY SAFEGUARDS

D. PRIVACY SAFEGUARDS DESCRIBE THE PRIVACY SAFEGUARDS INCORPORATED IN THE STATE'S WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM, INCLUDING SAFEGUARDS REQUIRED BY SECTION 444 OF THE GENERAL EDUCATION PROVISIONS ACT (20 U.S.C. 1232G) AND OTHER APPLICABLE FEDERAL LAWS.

DEED relies on data to operate its programs and provide services. The public has a right to know about DEED activities and to protect their own individual privacy. Federal and state data practices laws and rules balance these rights and responsibilities. Compliance with federal and state laws, including the Minnesota Government Data Practices Act, which govern the protection of private data on individuals is and remains a priority for DEED.

We, therefore, take the following safeguards:

- Participants who are asked to provide data about themselves that is not public will be given notice through a Tennessen Warning, with written consent required when we need to use or release private data for specific purposes not explicitly authorized by statute.
- Only staff responsible for delivering employment and training services are authorized recipients of nonpublic data, with access to systems to track, monitor or view program data containing personally-identifiable information restricted to those who have been determined by internal DEED staff to require access.
- Workforce One (WF1), which tracks WIOA programs, grants user permissions based on role in relation to data subjects, thereby preventing users from accessing data which does not belong to them or otherwise pertain to relevant clients.
- Use of UI wage detail for program performance reporting is allowable only for employment and training providers who have obtained informed consent from the individual.

As DEED submits both workforce training participant and Unemployment Insurance wage detail to Minnesota's Statewide Longitudinal Education Data System (SLEDS), we also fully understand and comply with confidentially requirements as required by Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and State and Federal UI Confidentiality Laws and Regulations.

Data on individuals intended for public use is reported in aggregate form, meaning outcomes are only disclosed for groups of 10 individuals or more. No personally identifiable data on individuals, including Social Security Numbers, are shared publicly.

7. PRIORITY OF SERVICE FOR VETERANS

7. PRIORITY OF SERVICE FOR VETERANS. DESCRIBE HOW THE STATE WILL IMPLEMENT AND MONITOR THE PRIORITY OF SERVICE PROVISIONS FOR VETERANS IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE REQUIREMENTS OF THE JOBS FOR VETERANS ACT, CODIFIED AT SECTION 4215 OF 38 U.S.C., WHICH APPLIES TO ALL EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING PROGRAMS FUNDED IN WHOLE OR IN PART BY THE DEPARTMENT OF LABOR. STATES SHOULD ALSO DESCRIBE THE REFERRAL PROCESS FOR VETERANS DETERMINED TO HAVE A SIGNIFICANT BARRIER TO EMPLOYMENT TO RECEIVE SERVICES FROM THE JOBS FOR VETERANS STATE GRANTS (JVSG) PROGRAM'S DISABLED VETERANS' OUTREACH PROGRAM (DVOP) SPECIALIST.

Veterans and eligible spouses receive priority of service in all Minnesota CareerForce locations. Also, veterans and eligible spouses who are also recipients of public assistance, other low-income individuals, or individuals who are basic skills deficient would receive first priority of services with the WIOA Adult formula funds.

Priority is given in the following order:

1. First, to veterans and eligible spouses who are also funded in the groups given statutory priority for WIOA Adult formula funds. This means that veterans and eligible

spouses who are also recipients of public assistance, other low-income individuals, or individuals who are basic skills deficient would receive first priority of services with the WIOA Adult formula funds.

2. Second, to non-covered persons (that is, individuals who are not veterans or eligible spouses) who are included in the WIOA's priority groups.
3. Third, to veterans and eligible spouses who are not included in the WIOA's priority groups.
4. Fourth, to any other populations identified by the Governor or Local Board for priority.
5. Last, to non-covered persons outside the groups given priority under the WIOA.

Veterans and other eligible persons, defined as covered persons, are ensured Priority of Service (POS) upon entering the CareerForce System with the implementation of the following services:

- Identified at the point of entry to programs & services
- Made aware of priority of service
- Made aware of the full array of programs and services available to them
- Take precedence over non-covered person in accessing and obtaining services

Veteran

Veterans who have served at least **one day** in the active military, naval, or air service, who were discharged or released from service under any condition other than a condition classified as dishonorable, and who are otherwise eligible for participation in programming are included as covered persons. This definition includes Reserve units and National Guard units activated for Federal Service.

Spouses of Veterans

An "eligible spouse" means a spouse of any of the following:

a. A spouse of any veteran who died of a service-connected disability;

b. A spouse of any member of the Armed Forces serving on active duty who, at the time of application for the priority, is listed in one or more of the following categories and has been so listed for a total of more than 90 days;

i. Missing in action;

ii. Captured in the line of duty by a hostile force; or

iii. Forcibly detained or interned in the line of duty by a foreign government or power.

c. A spouse of any veteran who has a total disability resulting from a service-connected disability, as evaluated by the Department of Veterans Affairs; or

d. A spouse of any veteran who died while a disability was in existence.

Implementing and Monitoring Priority of Service Compliance

Priority of Service to Covered Persons means when customers self-attest they are a veteran or an eligible spouse, they are given precedence over eligible non-covered persons for the receipt of employment, training, and placement services provided under new or existing qualified job training programs. Veterans or eligible spouses receive access to the services or resources before noncovered persons. If the service or resource is limited, the veteran or Covered Person receives access to the service or resource instead of or before the non-covered person. For example, this could mean:

- The Covered Person receives access to the service or resource earlier in time than the noncovered person; or
- If the service or resource is limited, the Covered person receives access to the service or
- resource before the non-covered person.

Priority of Service is monitored by the State Veterans Services Coordinator in collaboration with CareerForce to ensure priority of service is provided in all Minnesota CareerForce locations.

Monitoring activities include on-site visits, interviews with staff, and regular reviews of local office plans, and if available policies related specifically to "Priority of Service for Covered Persons." USDOL will also conduct visits and federal audits, as scheduled. The JVSG staff submit Quarterly Managers Reports to the local office managers that identify Priority of Service for Covered Persons and will identify issues and resolutions to Priority of Service as necessary.

Local Veterans Employment Representatives (LVER) staff provides ongoing training to CareerForce staff and partners statewide to ensure a successful implementation and understanding of Priority of Service for Covered Persons.

In addition, LVER staff reviews how Priority of Service is being implemented within each of the Minnesota CareerForce locations in their respective regions and offers guidance on how/where to improve Priority of Service efforts if necessary. The goal is to make certain that local CareerForce front desk personnel is fully versed on veteran priority of service.

Point of Entry — signage at all CareerForce locations advises Veterans and other eligible persons of Veterans Priority of Service (POS). Information on Priority of Service is also provided during various program orientations, from staff, and during workshops. LVER staff train and update local CareerForce staff and management on the provisions of POS and Public Law 107-288

Questionnaire — given to Veterans to assist reception to identify Veterans with significant barriers to employment. The Minnesota Veterans Questionnaire is given to Veterans to assist reception area staff to identify Veterans with significant barriers to employment. This questionnaire is also available online on the Veterans Resources landing page on the CareerForceMN.com website: https://www.careerforcemn.com/veterans-resources. We ask all customers that come to the CareerForce locations if they ever served in the US Military. If the answer is yes, we ask them to complete the Veterans Questionnaire. Non-JVSG staff do the initial assessment, review of the questionnaire, and make appropriate referrals based on the responses to the questionnaire.

Veterans with Significant Barriers to Employment (SBE)— All veterans with SBE will be referred to and will receive assistance and individualized career services from a DVOP or in the absence of the DVOP, a designated intensive services provider. Veterans are eligible for DVOP services if they meet the criteria for having a significant barrier to employment or if they are designated as a special population. VPL 03-14, including changes 1 and change 2, and the companion TEGL 19-13 define the criteria for having significant barriers to employment (SBEs) and provide expansion and clarification of SBEs. Veterans Questionnaire needs to be assessed by non-JVSG staff only. Veterans with SBEs should be referred to a DVOP or identified intensive

services providers when a DVOP is not available. New guidance identifies a distinction between LVERs and DVOPs; the term "Veteran Staff or Veterans Representative" is no longer acceptable per VPL 03-14 including change 2. You must identify DVOP or LVER staff per DOL refocusing.

Referral Process — All other non-SBE Veterans will be referred to a trained partner staff person within the CareerForce who will provide job search information/assistance, program information and priority referral to services and resources.

Access to U.S. DOL funded programs — Veterans and other eligible persons entitled to POS will be referred to U.S. DOL funded programs immediately. If a waiting list for the program exists, the Veteran will be put at the top of the list for service.

Workshops — all workshops available in the CareerForce through CareerForce will have open slots available to Veterans up to the day the workshop is scheduled

State Job Bank — Veterans and current and former Military members are able to identify themselves as such and are listed at the beginning of searches done by recruiters and employers. Employers are also able to self-designate as "Veterans Friendly Employer" so that Veterans can do keyword searches to find employers seeking Veterans for hire.

Training of Partner Staff — Non-DVOP staff is trained specifically as the point-of-contact for Veterans not receiving intensive services from DVOPs. To ensure that CareerForce reception staff is deeply familiar with the priority of service provisions for veterans, all staff participates in priority of service training provided by LVERs and via webinars provided by the JVSG program. Front desk CareerForce staff received WIOA JVSG Desk Reference flyer. Staff, particularly those who work at the reception desks, are encouraged to participate in the online training and instructor-led training provided by the National Veterans Training Institute (NVTI) geared toward educating one-stop staff about the veterans service and priority of service.

Several processes will be used to monitor POS statewide and within each area of the State in which covered programs operate:

- Information provided by DVOP/LVER staff or customers,
- DVET onsite visits (including U.S. DOL—VETS audits with the State Director of Veterans Employment Programs,
- Managers Quarterly Reports.

Services are made available and provided within the CareerForce and through other service providers to eligible Veterans, transitioning service members, Chapter 31 participants, other eligible persons and other such groups targeted for special consideration, including Veterans with significant barriers to employment.

Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) has been developed with the VA Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (VR&E) and the Jobs for Vets Program in providing referrals and priority services for Veterans.

8. ADDRESSING THE ACCESSIBILITY OF THE ONE-STOP DELIVERY SYSTEM FOR INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES

8. ADDRESSING THE ACCESSIBILITY OF THE ONE-STOP DELIVERY SYSTEM FOR INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES. DESCRIBE HOW THE ONE-STOP DELIVERY SYSTEM (INCLUDING ONE-STOP CENTER OPERATORS AND THE ONE-STOP DELIVERY SYSTEM PARTNERS), WILL COMPLY WITH SECTION 188OF WIOA(IF APPLICABLE) AND APPLICABLE PROVISIONS OF THE AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT OF 1990 (42 U.S.C. 12101 ET SEQ.)WITH REGARD TO THE PHYSICAL AND PROGRAMMATIC ACCESSIBILITY OF FACILITIES, PROGRAMS, SERVICES, TECHNOLOGY, AND MATERIALS FOR INDIVIDUALS

WITH DISABILITIES. THIS ALSO MUST INCLUDE A DESCRIPTION OF COMPLIANCE THROUGH PROVIDING STAFF TRAINING AND SUPPORT FOR ADDRESSING THE NEEDS OF INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES. DESCRIBE THE STATE'S ONE-STOP CENTER CERTIFICATION POLICY, PARTICULARLY THE ACCESSIBILITY CRITERIA.

DEED meets its ongoing obligation not to discriminate on the basis of disability by developing system wide policy and procedure initiatives that comply with Section 188 of WIOA. These policies include physical and programmatic accessibility of facilities, programs, services, technology and materials to serve the needs of customers with disabilities.

The Determining the Location policy requires that the "The WFC location will be accessible to all populations including individuals with disabilities." The Office of Diversity and Equal Opportunity is the final authority in determining if a location meets the accessibility criteria to be certified as a CareerForce location.

The Minnesota CareerForce location System Certification Standards policy provides guidance on the implementation standards for the equal access obligations under WIOA. CareerForce locations must be universally accessible to all populations including but not limited to various racial and ethnic groups, persons for which English is not their first language, ex— felons, people who are homeless, Veterans, various age groups, different genders, and individuals with disabilities.

All partners are covered by Title II of the ADA and the equal opportunity and nondiscrimination elements of Section 188 of WIOA and, therefore are subject to the same standards.

PROVIDE ARCHITECTURAL ACCESSIBILITY FOR INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES

The CareerForce location System provides integrated program services through the development and maintenance of an accessible environment. All facilities open to the public as well as administrative offices must be accessible to and useable by the broadest population. All partners are covered by Title II of the ADA and the equal opportunity and nondiscrimination elements of Section 188 of WIOA and, therefore, are subject to the same set of standards.

The **Determining the Location policy** states, "DEED must ensure that all services are compliant with applicable laws, regulations and policies. DEED may therefore, withhold certification and/or funding from a location that does not meet the criteria established in this and related policies and laws." The Policy goes on to state, "the WFC location will be accessible to all populations including individuals with disabilities (see Site Selection document for guidance.)"

The Section of the Policy titled Minnesota CareerForce location System Certification Standards provides detailed information regarding the criteria and the process for selecting, remodeling or moving a CareerForce location. CareerForce locations must meet the standards set forth in the Policy.

The Policy identifies the tools used to assist in evaluating and determining access requirements. They include:

- The ADA Site Selection Criteria and Access Standards — The standards were developed to assess the accessibility of potential CareerForce location and identify the building elements that are critical to program access. The standards address the obligation by all WFC partners under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Section 188 of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA).

- The site and building element descriptions are intended to help determine if a site location has the most basic accessible features to ensure equal access to participants with disabilities. If the site does not have the required features, modifications can be made to create improved access. It is imperative that a review be conducted prior to lease negotiations so that access issues can be addressed and remediated.
- It is the responsibility of DEED and its partners to choose sites that are accessible to and usable by the broadest population. DEED, as the designated state agency for WIOA implementation, is responsible for oversight and implementation of access standards regardless of the WIOA entity that holds the lease.
- During site reviews, the ADA Checklist for Existing Facilities is used. The checklist is based on the 2010 ADA Standards for Accessible Design. The Institute for Human Centered Design and the ADA National Network developed the checklists. Using the checklists, a comprehensive review is done on sites, including approach and entrance, access to goods and services, toilet rooms, and additional access.

DEED developed a review schedule for all Comprehensive CareerForce locations. Site visits for recertification of the 50 CareerForce locations are scheduled on a three—year cycle. Comprehensive CareerForce locations that are newly developed, remodeled or relocated are included in the review and are prioritized. There is generally an eighteen month lead time on remodeling or relocation.

Affiliate CareerForce locations are required to provide full access and opportunities to all job seekers including serving individuals with disabilities. Physical locations, services and programs must comply with Section 188 of WIOA and provisions of the American with Disabilities Act of 1990, as amended.

DEED will work closely with Affiliate CareerForce locations to have them provide an annual assessment on architectural and programmatic accessibility for individuals with disabilities. A review schedule for Affiliate CareerForce locations will occur during Program Monitoring Visits.

PROVIDE PROGRAMMATIC ACCESSIBILITY FOR INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES

All DEED and its partners CareerForce locations programs and activities must be programmatically accessible, which includes providing reasonable accommodations for individuals with disabilities, making reasonable modifications to policies, practices, and procedures, administering programs in the most integrated setting appropriate, communicating with individuals with disabilities as effectively as with others and providing appropriate auxiliary aids or services, including assistive technology devices and services, where necessary so individuals with disabilities have an equal opportunity to participate in, and enjoy the benefits of the program or activity."

DEED has developed a variety of methods to ensure that its programs and activities are universally accessible to individuals with disabilities. They include:

- The Minnesota CareerForce location System Certification Standards described earlier identifies both physical and programmatic accessibility requirements. Customers with disabilities must be able to participate and benefit from the services available in the CareerForce location System, as do all customers. In addition to the site accessibility standards, the Policy identifies the following requirements:
- Development of an evacuation and safety plan
- Notice displayed and available in alternate formats upon request

- Inclusion of tag lines
- Identification of Minnesota Relay
- Availability of accommodation and modifications
- Staff knowledge of assistive technology
- Use of auxiliary aids and services
- Community resources
- Complaint processes.
- Technology standards have been developed for all CareerForce locations.

A variety of assistive technologies are available in CareerForce locations.

In 2014, DEED did an assistive technology upgrade in all the CareerForce locations. The JAWS software and Zoom Text was upgraded to the most recent version. In 2018, DEED reviewed the assistive technology in all the CareerForce locations. CareerForceMN.com is fully accessible for use with screen readers and other adaptive technology.

- DEED's Policy and Procedure Manual (PPM 215), Office Identification Policy includes requirements for interior signage. The policy provides information on character proportion, character height, raised/Brailed characters, contrast, placement height and pictorial symbols.
- All CareerForce location staff must be trained in and promote the use of Minnesota Relay or a customer's preferred relay service. A relay service is used to effectively communicate with individuals who have speech, hearing, or other disabilities.

ARE ABLE TO COMMUNICATE WITH INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES AS EFFECTIVELY AS WITH OTHERS

Public entities are required to ensure that applicants, participants and members of the public with disabilities have communication access that is equally as effective as that provided to people without disabilities.

All printed communications provide contact information for a person with a disability to request the information in an alternative format.

When developing, purchasing, maintaining, or using electronic and information technology, DEED and its partners must utilize electronic and information technologies, applications, or adaptations which: 1) Incorporate accessibility features; 2) Are consistent with modern accessibility standards, such as Section 508 Standards (36 CFR part 1194) and W3C's Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0 AA; and (3) Provide individuals with disabilities access to, and use of, information, resources, programs, and activities that are fully accessible, or ensure information provided by the electronic and information technologies are provided to individuals with disabilities in an equally effective and equally integrated manner.

MN.IT's Office of Accessibility provides services and technical support to the State of Minnesota executive branch. MN.IT has set standards for IT Accessibility. On their website a page is devoted to accessibility information for state agencies. It includes information on creating electronic documents, an information implementation toolkit for accessibility, and tools, training and testing information for creating accessible videos, podcast and webinars. The Chief Information Accessibility Officer is a dedicated position within MN.IT that is focused solely on assisting state agencies in identifying solutions to technology access issues.

Accessibility has been a central focus for the web development team. DEED's accessibility resources in the Vocational Rehabilitation Unit as well as staff at State Services for the Blind continue to be involved in any webpage updates ensuring accessibility for the blind and visually impaired, as well as users who are Deaf or hard-of-hearing, or who have mobility impairments, and those with cognitive and reading disorders. DEED's web development team strives for accessibility that extends beyond minimum compliance. If, however, users are unable to access information, they may request information in alternate formats and it will be provided in a timely manner.

STAFF TRAINING AND SUPPORTS

DEED's Workforce Coordination Training Team is able to provide on-demand training for all CareerForce location staff and partners. These trainings can be in person or webinar based depending on the topic and need.

9. ADDRESSING THE ACCESSIBILITY OF THE ONE-STOP DELIVERY SYSTEM FOR INDIVIDUALS WHO ARE ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS

9. ADDRESSING THE ACCESSIBILITY OF THE ONE-STOP DELIVERY SYSTEM FOR INDIVIDUALS WHO ARE ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS. DESCRIBE HOW THE ONE-STOP DELIVERY SYSTEM (INCLUDING ONE-STOP CENTER OPERATORS AND THE ONE-STOP DELIVERY SYSTEM PARTNERS) WILL ENSURE THAT EACH ONE-STOP CENTER IS ABLE TO MEET THE NEEDS OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS, SUCH AS THROUGH ESTABLISHED PROCEDURES, STAFF TRAINING, RESOURCES, AND OTHER MATERIALS.

Minnesota's One-Stop system addresses the needs of ELL clients in a variety of ways:

•Each CareerForce location attempts to hire staff that reflect the local community, including non-English languages spoken in the area. For example, Somali-speaking staff are housed in the Minneapolis, St. Paul, St. Cloud, and Willmar CareerForce locations where Somali communities are growing. Every CareerForce location has an account with Language Line Translation Services. CareerForce locations are able to access translation services via phone, video remote, or on site in 240+ languages. • Every CareerForce location is knowledgeable of community-based organizations who specialize in serving LEP learners. The local Adult Basic Education (ABE) provider offers English language classes in every region of the state and is often one of the first referral sources. There are also community-based organizations in larger communities that are an important partner and referral source for the One-Stops. • DEED targets areas of the state with significant populations of LEP clients by investing existing resources in those areas. For example, additional Wagner Peyser funding is provided to the Minneapolis and St. Cloud CareerForce locations so they can employ Community Liaison Representatives who speak the local languages. DEED invested significant WIOA and Wagner Peyser resources into a new One-Stop in North Minneapolis that houses all WIOA programs, adult and K-12 education programming, and a community health care clinic to better serve the growing LEP population. •Top-level content on CareerForceMN.com is translated into Somali and Spanish.

DEED and its partners already collect the preferred language of each applicant, registrant participant, and terminee, which is a requirement for all states. For languages spoken by a significant number or portion of the population eligible to be served, or likely to be encountered, vital information will be translated into those languages and made readily available in hard copy, upon request, or electronically.

The State has a policy and procedure that provides guidance to local areas on serving public assistance recipients and other low-income individuals. This policy establishes a broad guideline for local judgment of those participants who are "most in need" and require a service plan and outreach process to serve this population. Local providers must establish a system of

prioritizing the enrollment of participants and delivery of services in times of limited availability of State and/or Federal resources.

Local providers must write and implement a policy outlining a priority of service policy and include the criteria impacting this policy in annual planning documents required by DEED. The criteria should apply to all dislocated workers and adults served and ensure availability of program services throughout the program year for those who meet the local priority of service.

Local providers should determine priority on an individual basis. Staff members with the local provider may determine an individual's "most in need" status based on his/her unique factors and barriers. Local providers should intervene early with eligible customers. DEED monitors these activities through our client data system to ensure this priority is addressed. The outcomes of these efforts become a part of monitoring reports.

The State (DEED) implements an annual monitoring schedule on all Federal grants to ensure that local areas are following and implementing the required Federal and/or State policies relevant to the grants being executed. A part of the monitoring process is ensuring that local areas are enrolling participants based on priority of service. Local areas are also required to provide the State a copy of their priority of service policy. If they do not have one in place, they have the option to follow the DEED's Priority of Service Policy and inform the State of such decision.

During monitoring, monitors ensure that priority is given based upon the priority of service outlined in DEED's WIOA Adult Eligibility and Priority of Service Policy (https://apps.deed.state.mn.us/ddp/PolicyDetail.aspx?pol=508), with first priority going to Veterans and eligible spouses who are low income or recipients of public assistance or who are basic skills deficient.

Additionally, DEED will also be updating the case management system to allow staff to pull and monitor this data efficiently. Furthermore, DEED will continue to ensure that local areas have updated strategic plans, policies and procedures implementing priority of service to ensure that at least 75% of the participants in the Adult program are from at least one of the priority groups as outlined in TEGL 7-20.

English learners are addressed in both state and federal legislation. The Civil Rights Act of 1964 initially determined that students limited in English language proficiency have a right to a language instruction educational program that provides them access to the academic content instruction that all children receive. Court decisions and guidance from the Office for Civil Rights with the United States Department of Education have described in more detail the responsibilities of school districts. The Elementary and Secondary Education Act, reauthorized under the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), delineated more specifically the responsibilities of schools, districts, and states to ensure that ELs become proficient in English and meet the same challenging state academic standards as expected of their English-only peers.

The ESSA provides an opportunity to meaningfully include and support English learners. In the past, Minnesota did not mandate statewide EL entry and exit criteria or procedures. However, as part of ESSA implementation, states are required to develop and implement standardized entry and exit criteria and procedures. For more information on the laws, regulations and court cases surrounding the needs of ELs, see the English Learners in Minnesota Report at https://education.mn.gov/MDE/dse/el/.

IV. COORDINATION WITH STATE PLAN PROGRAMS

IV. COORDINATION WITH STATE PLAN PROGRAMS.

Describe the methods used for joint planning and coordination among the core programs, and with the required one-stop partner programs and other programs and activities included in the Unified or Combined State Plan.

Plan Development

The work plan below was modified due to the COVID-19 Pandemic. The WIOA Implementation Team held virtual meetings in August and November 2021, in preparation for submitting modifications to the One Minnesota WIOA State Plan in 2022. State Program Administrators collaborated with the State Board and each other via a SharePoint platform that was set up specifically for planning and coordination.

A WIOA Implementation Team was created in September 2019 to plan for the coordinated and successful development of the One Minnesota WIOA State Plan 2020-2023. That team consisted of representatives from the Minnesota Association of Workforce Boards (MAWB), State Program Administrators from WIOA titles I-IV, as well as State Program Administrators from each of the combined partner programs including TANF, Perkins V, Department of Corrections, and Jobs for Veterans State Grant (JVSG). This team assisted in determining the strategic planning process for the development of the WIOA State Plan. Further planning sessions were conducted in November 2019 and February 2020 to review progress, address strengths and weaknesses of the workforce development system, and develop processes for ongoing implementation of the State Plan following implementation. In addition to this Implementation Team, the Department sought ongoing input on plan development from the MAWB Operations committee and the Governor's Workforce Development Board (GWDB) Operations Committee. The Implementation Team, as well as these stakeholders, had an opportunity to review and comment on the plan prior to publication for public comment. At its February 2020 meeting there was Implementation Team consensus on a recommendation to continue to meet regularly during implementation of the One Minnesota State Plan as outlined below. The GWDB Operations Committee agreed with this recommendation.

Implementation

Minnesota believes that coordination among state plan partners for implementation of the 2020 WIOA State Plan is critical to success in achieving its vision. To that end, the GWDB will create and monitor a dynamic community engagement plan for the WIOA Plan over the next four years. This will include interdepartmental State staff, businesses, local and regional workforce development boards, communities of color and indigenous people, people with disabilities, and community based organizations. During implementation activities, Minnesota will further identify areas of growth and development for strengthening the statewide workforce development system.

This coordination plan will be developed early following the adoption of the WIOA 2020 State Plan. Joint planning and coordination is anticipated to be inclusive of interested entities and multidimensional as indicated below:

- Input from community engagement sessions and public comment on the WIOA 2020 State Plan will be incorporated as a basis for implementation and initial identification of areas for growth.
- High-level monthly workforce development discussions including Deputy Commissioners from across Minnesota State Departments will be aligned with State Plan goals.
- State Program Administrators from across Minnesota State Departments and including representatives from the local boards will meet monthly to discuss implementation progress, identify areas for development and growth, and ensure agreement on impact measures.

- On-going state-wide community outreach and engagement will be implemented in partnership with businesses, local and regional boards, Community-based organizations, Tribal communities, refugee and immigrant communities, and other interested people and organizations.
- Results of the work will be presented to the GWDB Operations Committee on a quarterly basis.

Timeline for Implementation

May-July 2020:

- Community Outreach and Engagement: The Director of the GWDB, the CareerForce Director, and the Director of the Equal Opportunity Office will develop a statewide community engagement plan with input from MAWB. This plan will focus on gaining input specifically tied to Minnesota's vision, goals, and strategies.
- The GWDB formalizes the One Minnesota State Plan coordination initiative and determines timeline for progress reports.
- Implementation Team meetings scheduled on bimonthly basis to be led by the Director of the GWDB.

July 2020-December 2020:

- WIOA Implementation Team meetings are scheduled on a bimonthly basis to review community input, discuss WIOA Plan Progress, and determine strategies for continuous improvement and growth.
- Quarterly updates regarding Implementation Team progress presented to the GWDB Operations Committee as well as MAWB Operations Committee.
- WIOA State Plan coordination strategies and alignment are shared with Deputy Commissioners from across Minnesota State Departments twice a year.

January 2021:

- WIOA Implementation Team, GWDB Operations Committee and MAWB Operations Committee will jointly create schedule for the year for ongoing One Minnesota WIOA State Plan 2020-2023 coordination work.

V. COMMON ASSURANCES (FOR ALL CORE PROGRAMS)

The State Plan must include	Include
1. The State has established a policy identifying circumstances that may present a conflict of interest for a State Board or local board member, or the entity or class of officials that the member represents, and procedures to resolve such conflicts;	Yes
2. The State has established a policy to provide to the public (including individuals with disabilities) access to meetings of State Boards and local boards, and information regarding activities of State Boards and local boards, such as data on board membership and minutes;	Yes

The State Plan must include	Include
3. The lead State agencies with optimal policy-making authority and responsibility for the administration of core programs reviewed and commented on the appropriate operational planning elements of the Unified or Combined State Plan, and approved the elements as serving the needs of the populations served by such programs;	Yes
4. (a) The State obtained input into the development of the Unified or Combined State Plan and provided an opportunity for comment on the plan by representatives of local boards and chief elected officials, businesses, labor organizations, institutions of higher education, the entities responsible for planning or administrating the core programs, required one-stop partners and the other Combined Plan programs (if included in the State Plan), other primary stakeholders, including other organizations that provide services to individuals with barriers to employment, and the general public, and that the Unified or Combined State Plan is available and accessible to the general public; (b) The State provided an opportunity for review and comment on the plan by the State Board, including State agency official(s) for the Unemployment Insurance Agency if such official(s) is a member of the State Board;	Yes
5. The State has established, in accordance with WIOA section 116(i), fiscal control and fund accounting procedures that may be necessary to ensure the proper disbursement of, and accounting for, funds paid to the State through allotments made for the core programs to carry out workforce development activities;	Yes
6. The State has taken appropriate action to secure compliance with uniform administrative requirements in this Act, including that the State will annually monitor local areas to ensure compliance and otherwise take appropriate action to secure compliance with the uniform administrative requirements under WIOA section 184(a)(3);	Yes
7. The State has taken the appropriate action to be in compliance with WIOA section 188, Nondiscrimination, as applicable;	Yes
8. The Federal funds received to carry out a core program will not be expended for any purpose	Yes

The State Plan must include	Include
other than for activities authorized with respect to such funds under that core program;	
9. The State will pay an appropriate share (as defined by the State board) of the costs of carrying out section 116, from funds made available through each of the core programs;	Yes
10. The State has a one-stop certification policy that ensures the physical and programmatic accessibility of all one-stop centers with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA);	Yes
11. Service providers have a referral process in place for directing Veterans with Significant Barriers to Employment (SBE) to DVOP services, when appropriate; and	Yes
12. Priority of service for veterans and eligible spouses is provided in accordance with 38 USC 4215 in all workforce preparation, development or delivery of programs or services funded directly, in whole or in part, by the Department of Labor.	Yes

VI. PROGRAM-SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS FOR CORE PROGRAMS

PROGRAM-SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS FOR ADULT, DISLOCATED WORKER, AND YOUTH ACTIVITIES UNDER TITLE I-B

A. GENERAL REQUIREMENTS

1. REGIONS AND LOCAL WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT AREAS

VI. PROGRAM-SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS FOR CORE PROGRAMS

The State must address all program-specific requirements in this section for the WIOA core programs regardless of whether the State submits either a Unified or Combined State Plan.

PROGRAM-SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS FOR ADULT, DISLOCATED WORKER, AND YOUTH ACTIVITIES UNDER TITLE I-B

The Unified or Combined State Plan must include the following with respect to activities carried out under subtitle B--

A. ADULT, DISLOCATED WORKER, AND YOUTH ACTIVITIES GENERAL REQUIREMENTS

1. REGIONS AND LOCAL WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT AREAS

A. IDENTIFY THE REGIONS AND THE LOCAL WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT AREAS DESIGNATED IN THE STATE.

The following is a list of the six regions created in Minnesota and the associated local workforce development areas:

- Region 1: LWDA 1 (NW MN Private Industry Council); LWDA 2 (Rural MN CEP);

- Region 2: LWDA 3 (NE MN Office of Job Training); LWDA 4 (City of Duluth);
- Region 3: LWDA 5 (Central MN Job & Training Service); LWDA 17 (Career Solutions);
- Region 4: LWDA 9 (suburban Hennepin and Carver Counties); LWDA 10 (Minneapolis Employment and Training); LWDA 12 (Anoka County Job Training Center); LWDA 14 (Dakota & Scott Counties); LWDA 15 (Ramsey County— Workforce Solutions); LWDA 16 (Washington County);
- Region 5: LWDA 6 (SW MN Private Industry Council); LWDA 7 (South Central Workforce Council/MN Valley Action Council)
- Region 6: LWDA 8 (SE MN Workforce Development, Inc.); LWDA 18 (Winona County Workforce Council)

B. DESCRIBE THE PROCESS USED FOR DESIGNATING LOCAL AREAS, INCLUDING PROCEDURES FOR DETERMINING WHETHER THE LOCAL AREA MET THE CRITERIA FOR "PERFORMED SUCCESSFULLY" AND "SUSTAINED FISCAL INTEGRITY" IN ACCORDANCE WITH 106(B)(2) AND (3) OF WIOA. DESCRIBE THE PROCESS USED FOR IDENTIFYING REGIONS AND PLANNING REGIONS UNDER SECTION 106(A) OF WIOA. THIS MUST INCLUDE A DESCRIPTION OF HOW THE STATE CONSULTED WITH THE LOCAL BOARDS AND CHIEF ELECTED OFFICIALS IN IDENTIFYING THE REGIONS.

The designation of the local areas followed the requirements in WIOA. The State, through review and consultation with the Minnesota Association of Workforce Boards, which represents the chief elected officials and the private sector leadership of the local boards, accepted requests for initial designation of all 16 existing local areas, based on satisfactory performance and sustained fiscal integrity. Satisfactory performance was defined as meeting or exceeding performance standards for the two most recently completed program years. Sustained fiscal integrity was defined as having no audit exceptions for the two most recently completed program years. Documentation included published performance reports and audit letters issued by the State of Minnesota. Opportunities for public comment on the State plan specific to the designation of local areas occurred at local area board meetings, a State board meeting, regional listening sessions and the 30 day public comment period published in the State Register.

The designation of regions followed the requirements in WIOA. The State, through review and consultation with the Minnesota Association of Workforce Boards, which represents the chief elected officials and the private sector leadership of the local boards, considered various options based on the criteria contained in WIOA law. Additional criteria included having one metropolitan statistical area in each region and the partnering of two or more local areas. Other considerations, based on feedback from local boards and economic development regions in the state, was to keep existing boundaries intact, as to not require local boards or existing regional economic development regions to engage in multiple regional planning efforts, stressing their resources and capacity to fully participate. The proposed regions were approved by the GWDB and MAWB and adopted in 2015. Opportunities for public comment on state plan specific to the designation of local areas occurred at local area board meetings, a state board meeting, regional listening sessions and the 30 day public comment period.

C. PROVIDE THE APPEALS PROCESS REFERRED TO IN SECTION 106(B)(5) OF WIOA RELATING TO DESIGNATION OF LOCAL AREAS.

Subsequent to initial designation, any local unit of government, including a combination of such units, may appeal the State's decision to not grant designation as a local area. The basis for not granting designation is presumed to be failure to satisfactorily perform or failure to not maintain sustained fiscal integrity. The State must provide technical assistance to the local area to address performance or fiscal integrity issues before such action can be taken.

Any local unit(s) of government may also be denied subsequent designation based on not meeting the State criteria for regional planning, as outlined in section 106(c)(1) in WIOA, as articulated in the State Combined Plan and any planning guidance issued to local areas. The State must provide technical assistance to the local areas within the region to address regional planning issues before such action can be taken.

Following the course of action that denies local designation, the appeals process will allow for the local unit(s) of government to present their appeal to the Governor's Workforce Development Board. The State Board will make a recommendation to the Governor. If the determination is not satisfactorily resolved with the Governor's decision, the local unit(s) of government may appeal to the Secretary of Labor. See DEED Policy and Guidance site: https://apps.deed.state.mn.us/ddp/PolicyDetail.aspx?pol=505

D. PROVIDE THE APPEALS PROCESS REFERRED TO IN SECTION 121(H)(2)(E) OF WIOA RELATING TO DETERMINATIONS FOR INFRASTRUCTURE FUNDING.

WIOA requires an infrastructure funding policy to support the CareerForce (One-Stop) delivery system. Minnesota has had such a policy in place since 2010 for operations of the 50 CareerForce Locations. This policy uses general customer, participant and staffing data to determine the proportional benefit that each title derives from the shared services now known as "Career Services" under WIOA. All infrastructure funding is borne by the local budgets of service providers. This policy includes a dispute resolution process based on regulation 678.700, allowing the local partners to appeal the infrastructure funding dispute to the Governor's Workforce Development Board, who will review all documentation and recommend a resolution. If the resolution is not accepted, the state funding mechanism will be used.

2. STATEWIDE ACTIVITIES

A. PROVIDE STATE POLICIES OR GUIDANCE FOR THE STATEWIDE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM AND FOR USE OF STATE FUNDS FOR WORKFORCE INVESTMENT ACTIVITIES.

DEED oversees the administration of the WIOA titles IB, III and IV. As the administrator of these titles, the department issues policy and guidance and maintains a publicly accessible database of policies at https://apps.deed.state.mn.us/ddp/PolicyList.aspx .

Policy and guidance covers all areas of department operated core partner titles and additional titles, and includes the following categories of policy: Equal Opportunity & Complaints; Administration & Operations; Multi-Program Administration Requirements; One-Stop Centers; WIOA Adult, Dislocated Worker and Youth; Wagner-Peyser Employment Service Program; Vocational Rehabilitation Services; Displaced Homemaker; Foreign labor Certification; Migrant & Seasonal Farmworker; Senior Community Services Employment; Trade Adjustment Act; Work Opportunity Tax Credit; Minnesotaworks.net and new elements under WIOA.

These policies have been updated and several are in the process of continued review as TEGLs are released and clarifying guidance is provided by DOL. Examples include board membership, both state and local; changes in the eligible training provider list requirements; transfers among Adult and Dislocated Worker programs; and training related activities.

The GWDB's Operations Committee has also played an integral role in supporting the implementation of WIOA through reviewing and approving pertinent policy and guidance issued by the department. This committee has been preparing for a complete system review of all policies for updates and other needed changes or additions. The basis for this review will come from state administrators who meet on a regular basis and will be focusing on policy alignment.

Considerations for the use of Minnesota's set aside will include, but not limited to: Enhanced employer engagement and sustainability strategies, development of career pathways and pre-apprenticeships, development and ongoing support of technology infrastructure and systems enhancements, comprehensive sector specific WIOA youth and adult program development and administration, Governor's Workforce Development Board and continued of support of local regional planning activities.

RAPID RESPONSE

Federal law provides discretion to the Governor to develop specific policy. Minnesota's Rapid Response team has evolved since the implementation of WIOA, with the State working closely with regional and local partners to develop leading innovative and proactive local Rapid Response services. In addition, the WIOA requires States and Local Areas to include layoff aversion as an integral component of Rapid Response policy. Minnesota's Rapid Response team works closely with state and local partners to develop action plans in response to proposed layoffs and actual layoff activities. Local workforce development board staff and their partners play an integral part in maintaining active relationships with local employers and often serving as the first source of information about potential layoffs.

The primary purpose of Rapid Response, as stated in federal guidance, is to enable affected workers to return to work as quickly as possible following a layoff, or to prevent layoffs altogether. To accomplish this, the workforce development system must be coordinated, comprehensive, and proactive in communicating with business. This includes providing labor market and workforce information, integrating industry requirements into training strategies and career pathways, brokering relationships and job connections, making services efficient and easy to access, and coordinating with regional partners to reduce duplication.

A sound business engagement infrastructure should include early warning systems, which are necessary to ensure a timely response to worker dislocations. Early indicators can be recognized in a variety of ways, including through close communication with employer representatives, industry groups, organized labor, utilities, or through local media. Rapid Response also tracks labor market trends, increased Unemployment Insurance claims, public announcements through the Minnesota Worker Adjustment and Retraining Notification (WARN) Act notices, and analyzes economic data to assess the health of businesses. In each region, systems should be in place to regularly monitor all potential early warning indicators and notification channels, and employers must be informed about their legal responsibilities to issue advance notifications of layoffs and closures.

It is critical that regional workforce strategist consultants build relationships with employers, labor organizations, workforce and economic development agencies, training institutions, service providers and community-based organizations. Proactive business engagement systems rely on good intelligence. Their value to economic development efforts can be increased by providing ready access to information regarding available talent. Regions can gain a competitive edge when they can leverage accurate information about regional economic trends, labor markets, new business development, impending layoffs, regional assets, and education and training resources.

LAY-OFF AVERSION

Lay-off aversion tactics are difficult to deploy. Holistic workforce planning and early communication with employers supports workers during times of transition and layoff. Minnesota also offers a shared work program through the Unemployment Insurance Division, which minimizes layoffs.

In addition, Minnesota offers Incumbent Worker (IW) training, and continues to develop policies to guide such work. As we fully implement WIOA, we plan to use a portion of DW program formula—allocated funding to work with companies to provide IW training, which

strengthens the existing labor force and helps to prepare for retirement and other natural attrition. Minnesota also offers other types of IW training, including Minnesota Job Skills Partnership grants, which bring employers and training institutions together to support the existing labor force. This kind of training, in and of itself, strengthens the workforce, which helps to avert layoffs in an indirect manner.

C. IN ADDITION, DESCRIBE THE STATE POLICIES AND PROCEDURES TO PROVIDE RAPID RESPONSES IN CASES OF NATURAL DISASTERS INCLUDING COORDINATION WITH FEMA AND OTHER ENTITIES.

Natural disasters are covered under the Governor's Executive Order which assigns emergency responsibilities to State agencies. Each agency has an Emergency Operations Plan that details their responsibilities and roles in coordinating with other state and federal agencies, as deemed necessary by the disaster event and declaration by the President to engage FEMA. The following is a high level description of the role DEED plays in a disaster response:

1. Disaster Unemployment Assistance (DUA) DUA helps unemployed workers and self-employed individuals who are unable to work as a direct result of a major disaster, and if the individual is not eligible for other unemployment insurance benefits. DUA is administered by the Unemployment Insurance Division. For DEED to initiate DUA, the President must issue a disaster declaration providing for individual assistance. Individuals can apply for unemployment insurance benefits at www.uimn.org or 1-877-898-9090.

2. National Dislocated Worker Grant (NDWG) A NDWG creates temporary employment to assist with clean-up on public land and infrastructure resulting from a natural disaster. Work under the NDWG program is administered by the Workforce Development Division's Dislocated Worker Unit. For DEED to initiate a NDWG application, the President must declare a major disaster for public assistance. A NDWG is issued by the U.S. Department of Labor, lasts six months, and can provide up to $12,000 to each eligible individual in wages. After a NDWG is awarded to DEED, Job Seeker Services sub-grants the funding to a local level project operator to implement activity within counties that had been designated by FEMA for public assistance. Individuals interested in employment through the NDWG would obtain information through their local CareerForce location.

3. Temporary CareerForce location (One If a disaster strikes a community and a DEED CareerForce location is not available within close proximity, a temporary center may be opened. Services provided at the location would be for answering questions related to Disaster Unemployment Insurance, Dislocated Worker Services and the National Dislocated Worker Grant temporary employment. The logistics of a temporary center being opened would be handled in conjunction with Administrative and Financial Services' Facilities Coordinator. 2. Provide materials or representation at Disaster Recovery Centers (DRCs) and public meetings, as requested by the Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Management, to furnish information relative to disaster unemployment, dislocated worker, job training and applicable programs.

To fulfill the tasks outlined in provision above, DEED units provide the following programs.

1. Program Awareness & Materials Preparation DEED's Communications Analysis and Research Division (CARD) will assist in the development of materials and representing the department. The public information officer is the director of CARD who will work with graphic design and writing staff to develop materials and represent DEED. These individuals would work with personnel from DEED, including the Rapid Response Team to assist dislocated workers and other state/local agencies to collaboratively create and provide the necessary information. An additional responsibility of CARD is coordinating

DEED information through Disaster Recovery - Minnesota Recovers Task Force (mn.gov) which is the state's clearinghouse for all information about federal, state and local government disaster-assistance efforts.

2. Representation at Disaster Recovery Centers (DRC's) For a FEMA - Disaster Recovery Center (DRC) to be opened, a Presidential declaration for Individual Assistance within several counties is required for the activation of these centers. However, HSEM through a state disaster declaration, may elect to open these centers before or in the absence of a federally declared disaster.

DEED provides Rapid Response events for 100% of all Trade-certified workers who live in Minnesota. Rapid Response events are triggered when a plant closing or mass layoff occurs, and includes TAA benefits and services information if a petition has been filed. When a small layoff is identified as Trade-affected, Trade Adjustment Assistance takes the steps to petition USDOL for certification and then handles all other concerns regarding worker eligibility.

Additionally, Minnesota co-enrolls all TAA-eligible workers into the State or WIOA Dislocated Worker program in order to provide wrap-around case management and supportive services. Due to the in-depth approach for Rapid Response and TAA-eligible workers, eligible workers have the opportunity to learn about available services multiple times; including via USPS mail, website, recorded informational sessions, phone or email, the initial Rapid Response event, and Dislocated Worker program enrollment meetings. Brochures are available in five languages, and staff speak multiple languages to better serve and represent the community.

B. ADULT AND DISLOCATED WORKERS PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

1. WORK-BASED TRAINING MODELS

B. ADULT AND DISLOCATED WORKER PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

1. WORK-BASED TRAINING MODELS

If the State is utilizing work-based training models (e.g. On-the-job training, Incumbent Worker training, Transitional Jobs, and Customized Training) as part of its training strategy and these strategies are not already discussed in other sections of the plan, describe the State's strategies for how these models ensure high quality training for both the participant and the employer.

The COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated and amplified the racial inequities prevalent in employment and access to quality training. Even before the pandemic, inherent inequities in the labor market disproportionately affected young people and communities of color. Young adults from low-income backgrounds have lower employment rates and work in lower-paying jobs. In addition, Black and Latinx individuals are disproportionately represented among the low-wage workers and the unemployed. With the pandemic upending school operations and access to training for those with limited internet access, the long-term impact on underserved communities will be significant. As the State weathers this crisis and rebuilds the economy, work-based training models will be a critical component of the economic recovery.

The WIOA Adult and Dislocated Worker programs will continue to work closely with local Workforce Development Areas to promote work-based training models through the provision of a framework for local action .. This framework ensures compliance with federal regulations and state policies that provide guidance to local areas in establishing processes that are data driven. Local areas collect, evaluate, and track their progress against determined goals as well as alignment with local demand.

Many local areas have processes and key personnel assigned to perform employer outreach in order to establish work-based training models that best fit their customers' needs. Local areas continue to create partnerships with various stakeholders including training institutions and

employers to ensure coordination efforts are best utilized and customers receive the services needed to obtain suitable employment.

Moreover, the state will continue to invest in tools and activities that support quality work-based experiences for eligible participants. Coordination and communication across state agencies involved in this work will also remain central to ensuring that quality work-based trainings are available and accessible to those who need it. An example a successful work-based training model is the MN Pathways to Prosperity (P2P) program which supports participation of enrollees in career pathway programming that increases career awareness, promotes acquisition of basic skills, provides skills-training and education that lead to credentials, and works with employers to place participants into positions in high growth, high demand industries that offer long-term employment at family-sustaining wages.

2. REGISTERED APPRENTICESHIP

Apprenticeship Minnesota at DLI supports Minnesota's economy by fostering and promoting employment-based career development through registered apprenticeship programs that provide structured on-the-job training and related classroom instruction to develop a highly skilled, diverse and inclusive workforce. Apprenticeship Minnesota is the State Apprenticeship Authority designated by the US Department of Labor. Registered apprenticeships have been governed by the Minnesota Apprenticeship Act since its inception in 1939.

Apprenticeship Minnesota's strategies include:

- Expand registered apprenticeship in Minnesota with a focus on high-growth industries as an effective employment-based tool to recruit, train and retain a highly skilled, diverse and inclusive 21st Century workforce.
- Deliver direct employer and industry engagement providing high-touch, program development services while overseeing training program administration to ensure integrity and quality that benefits apprentices.
- Promote workforce diversity and inclusion through registered apprenticeship programs, grants, and partnerships.
- Ensure portability and support of the career development continuum for youth, apprentices and graduates through outreach, engagement, and collaborations.

There are approximately 200 apprenticeship programs with more than 12,000 apprentices currently registered and active in the State of Minnesota. These numbers continue to grow as employers seek to address the growing wave of generation retirements and slowing workforce growth. The vast majority of apprentices and registered programs are primarily in the construction industry, but there are more than 100 programs in advanced manufacturing, health care, information technology, transportation, agriculture and utilities.

Registered Apprenticeships are considered a part of the continuum of training opportunities in the career pathways system providing a premier earn-as-you-learn model that provides employers a talent development and retention pipeline while ensuring apprentices obtain a nationally recognized credential when completing their apprenticeship.

Registered Apprenticeship is an important part of the sector strategies within the 6 WIOA regions in Minnesota. Apprenticeship Minnesota seeks opportunities to collaborate and align on the program development of occupations in-demand leading to good wages and career advancement. Registered Apprenticeships are also invited to participate as a part of the Eligible Training Provider List following federal guidance.

Apprenticeship Initiatives, Innovation & Investments include:

- Minnesota Apprenticeship Initiative (MAI) – DLI is the state of Minnesota registered apprenticeship administering authority. The MAI grant closed out on 9/30/2021. Final performance numbers: 1,272 new apprentices registered, 108 new employers participated, and we created 54 new registered apprenticeship programs in 5 non-traditional industries.
- The State of Minnesota received a $5M grant from the US Department of Labor to engage more than 100 employers in developing registered apprenticeship programs to recruit, train and retain 1,000 new apprentices in 30 occupations over the next five years in the following industries: advanced manufacturing, agriculture, health care, information technology and transportation. Employers are awarded grants to assist with the costs to develop registered apprenticeship programs. This helps off-set education costs, apprentice supplies and materials, and infrastructure costs to establish a registered apprenticeship. The grant is a partnership between DEED and DLI.
- Apprenticeship Expansion (APEX) Grant Apprenticeship – Minnesota received a $3.3M to expand and support apprenticeship programs to facilitate greater diversity and inclusion, support best practices for recruitment and retention and expand awareness about the benefits of registered apprenticeship as a career and a workforce solution. Concluding on October 31, 2021, the entire grant program was a success story. Utilizing APEX funding, Apprenticeship Minnesota increased awareness of registered apprenticeship benefits and expanded career opportunities for Minnesotans. Through increased engagement, Apprenticeship Minnesota exceeded the grant goal to grow the number of registered apprentices by more than 15 percent. DLI is also very proud of the diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) work completed through this grant. DLI brought DEI to the forefront through apprenticeship Career Pathways Programs, DEI trainings and workshops for sponsors and apprenticeship staff, and communications and outreach materials. DEI efforts permeated every grant program.
- Labor Education and Advancement Program Initiative Apprenticeship Minnesota – Grants $100,000 per year to fund community-based efforts to facilitate the participation of people of color, indigenous people and women in registered apprenticeship. These grants are awarded annually to community-based partners who apply on a competitive request-for-proposal basis. Funds are used for training and services to remove barriers to apprenticeship opportunities.
- The Minnesota Dual-Training Pipeline (Private Investment, Public Education, Labor, and Industry Experience) Program is an innovative, industry-based, employer-driven approach to engaging and supporting employers in the development and expansion of dual training through tools and technical support. Leveraging Minnesota's success in registered apprenticeship, Pipeline engages employers, industry, education and other interested stakeholders to facilitate how employers can deliver workers the skills needed. Dual-training grants, administered by the Minnesota Office of Higher Education (OHE), provide funding for employers to create new dual-training programs and provide dual-training opportunities.

3. TRAINING PROVIDER ELIGIBILITY PROCEDURE

WIOA requires that a training program or course whose completion results in a recognized credential must be "WIOA-certified," in order to use WIOA training dollars and get credit for that credential. Program providers, interested training providers, and their partners should

comply with this policy to ensure high-quality training experiences for WIOA program customers.

WIOA certification in Minnesota occurs in four steps:

1.Ensuring that the training institution has a physical location in Minnesota, is licensed, registered, or otherwise exempt by the Minnesota Office of Higher Education (OHE), or, depending on program, other appropriate state agency.

2.Entering and updating information on all programs and courses to be WIOA-certified on the state's eligible training provider list.

3.Submitting an WIOA certification application to DEED.

4. All eligible training providers are required to submit ongoing performance data (enrollments and completions) and maintain eligibility criteria.

The ETPL and WIOA certification application for a program, course or Registered Apprenticeship collects the following information:

-Program code and title

-Description of program content and purpose

-Program delivery model

-If and how the program awards credit or contact hours (for non-credit program)

-Award type

-Tuition and fee costs to students

-CIP code of program

-Type of credential (if non-credit program)

In order to be eligible to be WIOA-certified, a training program or course must be delivered by an eligible training provider as defined above. The provider must provide an industry-recognized credential upon successful completion of that program or course. The receipt of the credential must depend on the successful completion of the certified program. Being an eligible provider is a necessary, but not sufficient, condition for offering WIOA-certified training.

When a program is certified, it gains initial eligibility, which lasts for one year. After that year, if providers would like the training to remain certified, training providers must work with DEED to ensure continued eligibility DEED and OHE, as appropriate, will work with the providers of provisionally and permanently certified training programs and courses to acquire certain data, such as the wages of those who complete training and acquire employment.

After the year of initial eligibility is completed, training providers who provide the required information may be considered for continued eligibility. Programs certified under WIA will be grandfathered in under WIOA and will not be subject to initial eligibility, but providers will need to provide any required information for continued eligibility for these programs for participants (including tuition and fees), and information on the program completion rate of participants. DEED will generally acquire as much information (e.g., entered employment rate, wages) through existing data collection processes, without necessitating any paperwork from the training provider. DEED will leverage our inter- agency Minnesota State Longitudinal Data System (SLEDS) to meet the Workforce WIOA reporting requirements for the ETPL.

Only a training institution that has a physical location in Minnesota may apply for listing on Minnesota's ETPL - except for Registered Apprenticeship sponsors, who may apply even if

located outside Minnesota. And only a training institution approved for listing on Minnesota's ETPL may request WIOA certification of its programs or sources. WIOA specifically requires training providers to apply for program or course certification.

Any Registered Apprenticeship sponsor in Minnesota whose program is registered with the Minnesota Department of Labor and Industry (DLI) can apply to DEED to be listed on Minnesota's ETPL. Any out-of-state Registered Apprenticeship sponsor whose program is registered with the US Department of Labor can apply to DEED to be listed on Minnesota's ETPL.

Minnesota's ETPL will be embedded in a comprehensive Career and Education Explorer tool being developed by Minnesota's Labor Market Information Office and is intended to better meet the needs of the state's customers and counselors.

Finally, Minnesota has a dedicated staff person to oversee the state's ETPL and WIOA certification process. The State's policy of WIOA Certification for Training Programs that providers definitions, detailed procedures, general and performance reporting requirements, is available online.

To be listed on the state's eligible training provider list (ETPL), a training institution's programs must be licensed, registered, or otherwise legally exempt through the Minnesota Office of Higher Education. There are a few programs that are authorized by other state agencies (for example, nursing assistant training programs are authorized by the Minnesota Department of Health, not OHE).

If a training provider is not sure of their status, they are to contact OHE to obtain full information about what if anything, is required of them for full legal authorization.

The State is updating the Career Profile Tool to with WIOA (displaying required performance metrics, cost, completion rates, etc.) and to better meet the needs of the state's customers and counselors.

The State's policy of WIOA Certification for Training Programs that providers definitions, detailed procedures, general and performance reporting requirements, is available online. See: https://mn.gov/deed/about/what-we-do/objectives-plans/wioa.jsp

4. DESCRIBE HOW THE STATE WILL IMPLEMENT AND MONITOR THE PRIORITY FOR PUBLIC ASSISTANCE RECIPIENTS, OTHER LOW-INCOME INDIVIDUALS, AND INDIVIDUALS WHO ARE BASIC SKILLS DEFICIENT IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE REQUIREMENTS OF WIOA SEC. 134(C)(3)(E), WHICH APPLIES TO INDIVIDUALIZED CAREER SERVICES AND TRAINING SERVICES FUNDED BY THE ADULT FORMULA PROGRAM

The State has a policy and procedure that provides guidance to local areas on serving public assistance recipients and other low-income individuals. This policy establishes a broad guideline for local judgment of those participants who are "most in need" and require a service plan and outreach process to serve this population. Local providers must establish a system of prioritizing the enrollment of participants and delivery of services in times of limited availability of State and/or Federal resources.

Local providers must write and implement a policy outlining a priority of service policy and include the criteria impacting this policy in annual planning documents required by DEED. The criteria should apply to all dislocated workers and adults served and ensure availability of program services throughout the program year for those who meet the local priority of service.

Local providers should determine priority on an individual basis. Staff members with the local provider may determine an individual's "most in need" status based on his/her unique factors and barriers. Local providers should intervene early with eligible customers. DEED monitors

these activities through our client data system to ensure this priority is addressed. The outcomes of these efforts become a part of monitoring reports.

The State (DEED) implements an annual monitoring schedule on all Federal grants to ensure that local areas are following and implementing the required Federal and/or State policies relevant to the grants being executed. A part of the monitoring process is ensuring that local areas are enrolling participants based on priority of service. Local areas are also required to provide the State a copy of their priority of service policy. If they do not have one in place, they have the option to follow the DEED's Priority of Service Policy and inform the State of such decision.

During monitoring, monitors ensure that priority is given based upon the priority of service outlined in DEED's WIOA Adult Eligibility and Priority of Service Policy (https://apps.deed.state.mn.us/ddp/PolicyDetail.aspx?pol=508), with first priority going to Veterans and eligible spouses who are low income or recipients of public assistance or who are basic skills deficient.

Additionally, DEED will also be updating the case management system to allow staff to pull and monitor this data efficiently. Furthermore, DEED will continue to ensure that local areas have updated strategic plans, policies and procedures implementing priority of service to ensure that at least 75% of the participants in the Adult program are from at least one of the priority groups as outlined in TEGL 7-20.

5. DESCRIBE THE STATE'S CRITERIA REGARDING LOCAL AREA TRANSFER OF FUNDS BETWEEN THE ADULT AND DISLOCATED WORKER PROGRAMS

5. DESCRIBE THE STATE'S CRITERIA REGARDING LOCAL AREA TRANSFER OF FUNDS BETWEEN THE ADULT AND DISLOCATED WORKER PROGRAMS.

The State's criteria is as follows -

- This policy provides the mechanism for transferring up to 100 percent of formula-allocated WIOA Title I-B Adult funds to WIOA Title I-B formula-allocated Dislocated Worker funds and vice versa.
- Background In accordance with WIOA Law, local workforce investment boards shall ensure the formula-based WIOA Dislocated Worker program, like all partners, contributes proportionally to one-stop core services' costs. Some providers have expressed a wish to use WIOA Law, Section 133(b)(4) to transfer funds between Dislocated Worker and Title I-B Adult to accomplish this.
- Procedures in accordance with WIOA Law, Section 133(b)(4), a local workforce council can, with state approval, transfer up to 100 percent of a program year allocation for Adult employment and training activities, and up to 100 percent of a program year allocation for Dislocated Worker employment and training activities, between the two programs. A local service provider cannot transfer funds to or from a WIOA Title I-B Youth Program.

In order for DEED to approve the request, the local provider will need to provide a rationale for the transfer in accordance with the request form given below.

A requesting provider must submit the following three documents:

1. a completed and signed form (Request to Transfer Funds: Adult/Dislocated Worker - attached);

2. a revised Dislocated Worker program budget and participant information forms (found in the Planning Guidelines); and

3. a revised Adult program budget and participant information forms (found in the Planning Guidelines)

C. WITH RESPECT TO YOUTH WORKFORCE INVESTMENT ACTIVITIES AUTHORIZED IN SECTION 129 OF WIOA—

1. IDENTIFY THE STATE-DEVELOPED CRITERIA TO BE USED BY LOCAL BOARDS IN AWARDING GRANTS OR CONTRACTS FOR YOUTH WORKFORCE INVESTMENT ACTIVITIES AND DESCRIBE HOW THE LOCAL BOARDS WILL TAKE INTO CONSIDERATION THE ABILITY OF THE PROVIDERS TO MEET PERFORMANCE ACCOUNTABILITY MEASURES BASED ON PRIMARY INDICATORS OF PERFORMANCE FOR THE YOUTH PROGRAM AS DESCRIBED IN SECTION 116(B)(2)(A)(II) OF WIOA IN AWARDING SUCH GRANTS OR CONTRACTS.[11]

C. YOUTH PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

With respect to youth workforce investment activities authorized in Section 129 of WIOA—

1. IDENTIFY THE STATE-DEVELOPED CRITERIA TO BE USED BY LOCAL BOARDS IN AWARDING GRANTS OR CONTRACTS FOR YOUTH WORKFORCE INVESTMENT ACTIVITIES AND DESCRIBE HOW THE LOCAL BOARDS WILL TAKE INTO CONSIDERATION THE ABILITY OF THE PROVIDERS TO MEET PERFORMANCE ACCOUNTABILITY MEASURES BASED ON PRIMARY INDICATORS OF PERFORMANCE FOR THE YOUTH PROGRAM AS DESCRIBED IN SECTION 116(B)(2)(A)(II) OF WIOA IN AWARDING SUCH GRANTS OR CONTRACTS.

Request for Proposals (RFPs) issued by Local Workforce Development Boards (LWDBs) reflect the need to provide a connection to the WIOA indicators of youth program performance. See Minnesota's Procurement of Youth Services Policy (Chapter 16) under WIOA: https://mn.gov/deed/programs-services/office-youth-development/youth-programs/wioa-youth.jsp

The following criteria have been established by the state to used by local boards in awarding grants or contract for youth workforce investment activities. These criteria support the ability of youth providers to meet primary indicators of performance.

1. Programs provide Adult Support, Structure and Expectations (State WIOA youth policy Chapter 11 can be found at: https://mn.gov/deed/assets/wioa-chapter11_tcm1045-283528.docx). Examples include:

- Adult Support, Structure and Expectations (State WIOA youth policy Chapter 11 can be found at: https://mn.gov/deed/assets/wioa-chapter11_tcm1045-283528.docx)
- Strengthen and practice cultural competency while building youth's ability to advocate for services and opportunities.
- Committed/skilled adults mentor youth and communicate high expectations for what youth can do and achieve.
- Youth and families assisted with accessing and learning how to use technology.

Connection to primary indicators of performance: These services support attainment of industry recognized credentials leading to placement and retention in high-growth jobs

important to regional economies. With adult support/mentoring, youth are better able to overcome barriers, attain credentials, enter employment and reach education goals.

Connection to the Guideposts for Success: These services are correlate with Guidepost three and five: Youth Development and Leadership and Family Involvement. Youth who participate in activities related to the Guidepost competencies are better prepared to successfully transition to adulthood.

2. Programs provide Introduction to Career Pathways (State WIOA youth policy Chapter 9 can be found at: https://mn.gov/deed/assets/wioa-chapter9_tcm1045-134291.docx and Chapter 13 can be found at: https://mn.gov/deed/assets/wioa-chapter13_tcm1045-284385.docx) Examples include:

- Career pathways aligned with industry-recognized credentials. Youth prepared to meet secondary and postsecondary education goals, including pre-apprenticeship opportunities.
- Career assessment and exploration strategies.
- Work-based learning and service-learning experiences.
- Career and technical education and other career related applied learning. Training that builds skills and knowledge needed to effectively use technology.

Connection to primary indicators of performance: These services promote youth employment in high growth jobs with wage increase potential. Youth learn necessary skills and develop expertise in specific occupational/industrial areas. A career pathways model leads to program retention as youth participants clearly see the relevance of what they are doing to overall labor market demands.

Connection to the Guideposts for Success: The services outlined under this policy are reinforced by Guidepost two: Career Preparation and Work-based Learning. Experiences related to Guidepost two supports youth in obtaining core competencies to succeed in the adult workforce.

3. Programs provide a Combination of Guidance and Connections to the Workplace (State WIOA youth policy Chapter 11 can be found at: https://mn.gov/deed/assets/wioa-chapter11_tcm1045-283528.docx) Examples include:

- Use of readily accessible and understood Labor Market Information (LMI) to assess employment opportunities in high-growth industries and in-demand occupations.
- Activities demonstrate strong employer engagement, involvement of the business community.
- Activities that build career exploration skills that enable youth to identify how various career options match their interests, skills, and work experience.
- Activities support development of career-specific work skills and knowledge; and employability or soft skills such as communication, leadership, decision-making, and conflict management.

Connection to primary indicators of performance: These services facilitate the development of a path for youth to become economically and socially self-sufficient. Youth acquire credentials and develop skills and abilities to meet the demands of the local labor market.

Connection to the Guideposts for Success: Activities and services provided under this policy relate to Guideposts one: School-based Preparatory Experiences. These experiences provide

youth with a solid educational foundation and exposure to in-demand and high-growth career fields.

4. Programs provide Support and Follow-Up (State WIOA youth policy Chapter 11 can be found at: https://mn.gov/deed/assets/wioa-chapter11_tcm1045-283528.docx) Examples include:

- Services appropriate to youth needs, such as: English language instruction, childcare, financial literacy, transportation, housing or health care.
- Activities with strong built-in follow-up mechanisms to support strong participant outcomes.
- Effective case management skills that provide comprehensive guidance, counseling, and referrals to coordinate a progression of services and activities.
- Activities that engage parents, families, and other caring adults who are involved in the young person's life and can support their ability to achieve independence and self-sufficiency.

Connection to primary indicators of performance: These services lead to employment retention as youth understand that they have support following program exit. Problems on the job can be resolved working through the follow-up components, the employer, and the youth. These services will also lead to increased employer satisfaction with the youth programs leading to increased participation by the private sector.

Connection to Guideposts for Success: Services tied to this policy are supported by Guidepost four and five: Connecting Activities and Family Involvement. Youth and families that are aware of available support services and community opportunities help youth transition more successfully to adulthood.

5. Programs leverage Youth as a Resource (State WIOA youth policy Chapter 10 can be found here: https://mn.gov/deed/assets/wioa-chapter10_tcm1045-271796.docx) and Chapter 11 can be found here: https://mn.gov/deed/assets/wioa-chapter11_tcm1045-283528.docx) Examples include:

- Peer to peer leadership activities that build critical thinking skills, conflict resolution skills and recognize young people as an important resource in improving their own lives.
- Self-advocacy skills that allow youth to make choices about and take an active role in setting education and career goals.
- Self-determination skills that enable youth to identify interests, skills and values.

Connection to primary indicators of performance: With the acquisition of self-advocacy skills by participants, youth will be more valuable assets to employers leading to greater program satisfaction by both employers and participants.

Connecting to the Guideposts for Success: The activities and services provided related to this policy are also described by Guidepost three: Youth Development and Leadership. Youth who have developed the skills to be advocate for their own needs as well as participate in leadership experiences are better prepared to contribute positively to their communities.

6. Programs demonstrate Implementation Quality: (State WIOA youth policy Chapter 10 can be found at: https://mn.gov/deed/assets/wioa-chapter10_tcm1045-271796.docx) Examples include:

- Well thought-out implementation strategies followed and tracked through a continuous improvement process.

- Flexible services that address regional needs and proven methodologies.
- Services that incorporate evaluation components that include customer input and satisfaction.
- Equality of opportunity for everyone, including nondiscrimination, individualization, inclusion and integration.

Connection to primary indicators of performance: These criteria support the WIOA Youth performance accountability measures. DEED's Youth Services Team provides customized training and peer to peer technical assistance to WDAs to support a continuous improvement process. The individualized WDA-level training on WIOA Youth performance and use of WorkForce One, serves as a first step in the local planning process and preparing the WDA to negotiate local performance goals. Minnesota WDAs serve high numbers of at-risk youth, including homeless youth, foster youth, youth with disabilities and youth on public assistance. These target groups are taken into consideration as WDAs work with DEED's Youth Services Team to negotiate the following local WIOA Youth performance goals:

- Education and Employment Rate- 2nd Quarter after Exit
- Education and Employment Rate- 4th quarter after exit
- Credential attainment

Connection to Guideposts for Success: Programmatic quality can be enhanced by connecting the Guideposts for Success to the 14 required program elements. Service providers can leverage existing partnerships including family members to support youth as they make the transition from youth settings to adult settings. The core competencies described in the Guideposts for Success have been identified as valuable for achieving goals related to economic success and participation in community life during adulthood.

All policies supporting Minnesota's WIOA Youth program can be found at:

https://mn.gov/deed/programs-services/office-youth-development/youth-programs/wioa-youth.jsp

At the onset of the COVID-19 Pandemic, WIOA Youth service providers shifted program models from in-person service provision to virtual models. As the pandemic restrictions have been lifted, services have slowly returned to in-person. Many WIOA Youth service providers are simultaneously leveraging virtual means to provide services to customers. Although the pandemic has created many challenges for service providers, opportunities to provide virtual services has only expanded. Providing services virtually will continue to be a useful method of customer engagement moving forward.

2. DESCRIBE THE STRATEGIES THE STATE WILL USE TO ACHIEVE IMPROVED OUTCOMES FOR OUT-OF-SCHOOL YOUTH AS DESCRIBED IN 129(A)(1)(B), INCLUDING HOW IT WILL LEVERAGE AND ALIGN THE CORE PROGRAMS, ANY COMBINED STATE PLAN PARTNER PROGRAMS INCLUDED IN THIS PLAN, REQUIRED AND OPTIONAL ONE-STOP PARTNER PROGRAMS, AND ANY OTHER RESOURCES AVAILABLE.

2. DESCRIBE THE STRATEGIES THE STATE WILL USE TO ACHIEVE IMPROVED OUTCOMES FOR OUT-OF-SCHOOL YOUTH AS DESCRIBED IN 129(A)(1)(B), INCLUDING HOW IT WILL LEVERAGE AND ALIGN THE CORE PROGRAMS, ANY COMBINED STATE PLAN PARTNER PROGRAMS INCLUDED IN THIS PLAN, REQUIRED AND OPTIONAL ONE-STOP PARTNER PROGRAMS, AND ANY OTHER RESOURCES AVAILABLE.

2. DESCRIBE THE STRATEGIES THE STATE WILL USE TO ACHIEVE IMPROVED OUTCOMES FOR OUT-OF-SCHOOL YOUTH AS DESCRIBED IN 129(A)(1)(B), INCLUDING HOW IT WILL LEVERAGE AND ALIGN THE CORE PROGRAMS, ANY COMBINED STATE PLAN PARTNER PROGRAMS INCLUDED IN THIS PLAN, REQUIRED AND OPTIONAL ONE-STOP PARTNER PROGRAMS, AND ANY OTHER RESOURCES AVAILABLE.

Recruitment of out-of-school youth includes outreach to eligible youth ages 16-24 interested in pursuing occupational skill training and access to postsecondary education and credentials. Services to out-of-school youth requires a program mix that is flexible and varied enough to address a spectrum of individual needs and skill levels and has the means (through assessment) to identify those needs. Interagency partnerships are established between the WDA, local technical colleges, universities, adult basic education (ABE) and other workforce development and education partners. The WDA's on-site presence at technical colleges and ABE Centers promotes communication with Financial Aid Officers who identify out-of-school youth who qualify for and could benefit from WIOA Youth services.

Out-of-school youth in need of occupational skills training and access to postsecondary training and credential are recruited from programs such as: Adult Basic Education (ABE), Vocational Rehabilitation Services (VRS), the Minnesota Family Investment Program (MFIP), and the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). Key staff in local school districts provide information on WIOA for students who drop out of school. Area Learning Centers (ALCs) include WIOA Youth applications in senior student portfolios.

Integrated Resource Teams (IRTs) develop action plans to serve out-of-school youth. IRT partners may include (but are not limited to): representatives from county social services foster care units, juvenile corrections, homeless youth service providers and drop-in centers, ABE service providers, mental health professionals, chemical dependency counselors, youth, parents, and community-based organizations.

WIOA Youth service providers receive referrals of out-of-school youth from: United Way, Lutheran Social Services, Catholic Charities, Salvation Army, Veterans Services staff, Community Action Agencies and local libraries.

All Local Workforce Development Boards/Youth Committees develop a Shared Vision for Youth Blueprint as part of their Local Youth Plans. The Blueprints depict local strategies and partners engaged in improving outcomes for youth served under WIOA. To view the Blueprints and the Local Youth Plans, please visit DEED's webpage: https://mn.gov/deed/programs-services/office-youth-development/special/shared-vision/

The Shared Vision for Youth Blueprints identify interagency projects underway at WDA level to improve transition outcomes for:

- Homeless youth and runaways;
- Dropouts and potential dropouts;
- Youth with disabilities; and
- Youth in foster care.

The five Guideposts for Success, a best practices framework developed by the National Collaborative on Workforce and Disability for Youth (NCWD), aligns closely with WIOA goals and outcomes in serving out-of-school youth.

LWDB's co-enroll WIOA youth participants in other federally-funded programs outside of the Department of Labor (MFIP, VRS, ABE for example). Out-of-school youth may also be co-enrolled in the WIOA Adult program. Leveraging these additional resources increases the potential for shared positive outcomes in youth and adult programs at the state and local level.

3. DESCRIBE HOW THE STATE WILL ENSURE THAT ALL 14 PROGRAM ELEMENTS DESCRIBED IN WIOA SECTION 129(C)(2) ARE MADE AVAILABLE AND EFFECTIVELY IMPLEMENTED, INCLUDING QUALITY PRE-APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAMS UNDER THE WORK EXPERIENCE PROGRAM ELEMENT. [12]

3. DESCRIBE HOW THE STATE WILL ENSURE THAT ALL 14 PROGRAM ELEMENTS DESCRIBED IN WIOA SECTION 129(C)(2) ARE MADE AVAILABLE AND EFFECTIVELY IMPLEMENTED, INCLUDING QUALITY PRE-APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAMS UNDER THE WORK EXPERIENCE PROGRAM ELEMENT.(See: State WIOA youth policy Chapter 11 can be found at: https://mn.gov/deed/assets/wioa-chapter11_tcm1045-283528.docx)

Each WDA develops a Local Youth Plan which identifies how the following 14 required program elements are available to WIOA youth participants. Local Youth Plans are posted on DEED's website, see: https://mn.gov/deed/about/what-we-do/objectives-plans/wioa.jsp

- Tutoring, study skills training, instruction, and dropout prevention services
- Alternative secondary school services or dropout recovery services
- Paid and unpaid work experience
- Occupational skill training
- Education offered with workforce preparation activities and training
- Leadership development activities
- Supportive services
- Adult Mentoring
- Follow-up Services
- Comprehensive guidance and counseling
- Financial literacy education
- Entrepreneurial skills training
- Labor market and employment information about in-demand industry sectors/occupations
- Postsecondary preparation and transition activities

DEED's desk review of the Local Youth Plans assures that each WDA describes how the 14 required program elements will be available to WIOA participants. On-site Program Monitoring by DEED confirms that the 14 required program elements are available at the WDA level (as described in the Local Youth Plans).

State and federally-funded Youthbuild programs offer a nationally-recognized model for pre-apprenticeship training. Co-enrolling out-of-school youth in WIOA Youth and federal Youthbuild programs is underway at the WDA level. The number of Youthbuild participants entering registered apprenticeship programs has increased through partnering. For more information, see the Youthbuild webpage: https://mn.gov/deed/programs-services/office-youth-development/youth-programs/youthbuild.jsp.

At the onset of the COVID-19 Pandemic, WIOA Youth service providers shifted program models from in-person service provision to virtual models that ensured delivery of the 14 program elements. More information on the various online/virtual resources developed and

implemented by LWDAs can be found here: https://mn.gov/deed/programs-services/office-youth-development/resources/.

4. PROVIDE THE LANGUAGE CONTAINED IN THE STATE POLICY FOR "REQUIRING ADDITIONAL ASSISTANCE TO ENTER OR COMPLETE AN EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM, OR TO SECURE AND HOLD EMPLOYMENT" CRITERION FOR OUT-OF-SCHOOL YOUTH SPECIFIED IN WIOA SECTION 129(A)(1)(B)(III)(VIII) AND FOR "REQUIRING ADDITIONAL ASSISTANCE TO COMPLETE AN EDUCATION PROGRAM, OR TO SECURE AND HOLD EMPLOYMENT" CRITERION FOR IN-SCHOOL YOUTH SPECIFIED IN WIOA SECTION 129(A)(1)(C)(IV)(VII). IF THE STATE DOES NOT HAVE A POLICY, DESCRIBE HOW THE STATE WILL ENSURE THAT LOCAL AREAS WILL HAVE A POLICY FOR THESE CRITERIA.

4. PROVIDE THE LANGUAGE CONTAINED IN THE STATE POLICY FOR "REQUIRING ADDITIONAL ASSISTANCE TO ENTER OR COMPLETE AN EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM, OR TO SECURE AND HOLD EMPLOYMENT" CRITERION FOR OUT-OF-SCHOOL YOUTH SPECIFIED IN WIOA SECTION 129 (A)(1)(B)(III)(VIII) AND FOR "REQUIRING ADDITIONAL ASSISTANCE TO COMPLETE AN EDUCATION PROGRAM, OR TO SECURE AND HOLD EMPLOYMENT" CRITERION FOR IN-SCHOOL YOUTH SPECIFIED IN WIOA SECTION 129(A)(1)(C)(IV)(VII). IF THE STATE DOES NOT HAVE A POLICY, DESCRIBE HOW THE STATE WILL ENSURE THAT LOCAL AREAS WILL HAVE A POLICY FOR THESE CRITERIA.

(See: State WIOA youth policy Chapter 2 can be found at: https://mn.gov/deed/assets/wioa-chapter2_tcm1045-134284.docx. All other policies including Chapter 2 can also be found here: https://mn.gov/deed/programs-services/office-youth-development/youth-programs/wioa-youth.jsp)

Minnesota's Workforce Development Boards include in their Local Youth Plans their definition of "an individual who requires additional assistance to enter or complete an educational program or to secure or hold employment." This definition must be reasonable, quantifiable, and based on evidence that the specific characteristic of the youth identified objectively requires additional assistance. Examples may include, but are not limited to: Migrant youth, incarcerated parent, behavior problems at school, family literacy problems, domestic violence, substance abuse, chronic health conditions, one or more grade levels below appropriate age, immigrant/refugee.

5. INCLUDE THE STATE DEFINITION, AS DEFINED IN LAW, FOR NOT ATTENDING SCHOOL AND ATTENDING SCHOOL AS SPECIFIED IN WIOA SECTION 129(A)(1)(B)(I) AND SECTION 129(A)(1)(C)(I). IF STATE LAW DOES NOT DEFINE "NOT ATTENDING SCHOOL" OR "ATTENDING SCHOOL," INDICATE THAT IS THE CASE AND PROVIDE THE STATE POLICY FOR DETERMINING WHETHER A YOUTH IS ATTENDING OR NOT ATTENDING SCHOOL.

5. INCLUDE THE STATE DEFINITION, AS DEFINED IN STATE LAW, FOR NOT ATTENDING SCHOOL AND ATTENDING SCHOOL AS SPECIFIED IN WIOA SECTION 129(A) (1)(B)(I) AND SECTION 129(A)(1)(C)(I). IF STATE LAW DOES NOT DEFINE "NOT ATTENDING SCHOOL" OR "ATTENDING SCHOOL" INDICATE THAT IS THE CASE AND PROVIDE THE STATE POLICY FOR DETERMINING WHETHER A YOUTH IS ATTENDING OR NOT ATTENDING SCHOOL.

11 Sec. 102(b)(2)(D)(i)(V)

12 Sec. 102(b)(2)(D)(i)(I)See (State WIOA youth policy Chapter 2 can be found at: https://mn.gov/deed/assets/wioa-chapter2_tcm1045-134284.docx)

In Minnesota, school is defined as a "public school, or nonpublic school, church or religious organization, or home school in which a child is provided instruction in compliance with Minnesota statute 120A.22, subdivision 4 (https://www.revisor.mn.gov/statutes/?id=120A.22)

and Section 120A.24 (https://www.revisor.mn.gov/statutes/?id=120A.24). The compulsory age of school attendance is 17 (Minnesota statute 120A.22.subdivision 5).

In Minnesota, the following are included in the definition of dropout/not attending any school: 1) students with 15 consecutive days of unexcused absences (excluding school breaks and official days off of school); 2) students who are "voluntary" withdrawals from school (as described in Minnesota statute 120A.22); 3) expelled students (as described in Minnesota statute 121.A.45) (https://www.revisor.mn.gov/statutes/?id=121A.45)

6. IF USING THE BASIC SKILLS DEFICIENT DEFINITION CONTAINED IN WIOA SECTION 3(5)(B), INCLUDE THE STATE DEFINITION WHICH MUST FURTHER DEFINE HOW TO DETERMINE IF AN INDIVIDUAL IS UNABLE TO COMPUTE OR SOLVE PROBLEMS, OR READ, WRITE, OR SPEAK ENGLISH, AT A LEVEL NECESSARY TO FUNCTION ON THE JOB, IN THE INDIVIDUAL'S FAMILY, OR IN SOCIETY. IF NOT USING THE PORTION OF THE DEFINITION CONTAINED IN WIOA SECTION 3(5)(B), INDICATE THAT IS THE CASE.

6. IF USING THE BASIC SKILLS DEFICIENT DEFINITION CONTAINED IN WIOA SECTION 3(5)(B), INCLUDE THE STATE DEFINITION WHICH MUST FURTHER DEFINE HOW TO DETERMINE IF AN INDIVIDUAL IS UNABLE TO COMPUTE OR SOLVE PROBLEMS, OR READ, WRITE, OR SPEAK ENGLISH, AT A LEVEL NECESSARY TO FUNCTION ON THE JOB, IN THE INDIVIDUAL'S FAMILY, OR IN SOCIETY. IF NOT USING THE PORTION OF THE DEFINITION CONTAINED IN WIOA SECTION 3(5)(B), INDICATE THAT IS THE CASE.

The State of Minnesota uses the "basic skills deficient" definition as outlined in WIOA Section 681.290(a)(1) and Section 681.290(a)(2) of the DOL Final Rule. This definition is included in State Administrative Policy, on page 8, Chapter 2, Eligibility and Targeting. Local Workforce Development Boards include the definition of "basic skills deficient" in the Local Youth Plans.

The term "basic skills deficient" means, with respect to an individual, who is a youth:

- That the individual has English reading, writing, or computing skills at or below the 8th grade level on a generally accepted standardized test; or that the individual is unable to compete or solve problems or read, write, or speak English, at a level necessary to function on the job, in the individual's family or in society.
- The state has declined to establish a policy for WIOA section 3(5)(B). Consistent with 20 CFR 681.290(b), DEED allows local WDBs the option to use the basic skills definition contained in WIOA section 3(5)(B) if it has established policy within its Local Plan. DEED's full policy and additional context can be found in Chapter 2 and Chapter 4 of the Youth Administrative Manual.

D. SINGLE-AREA STATE REQUIREMENTS

1. ANY COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD THAT REPRESENT DISAGREEMENT WITH THE PLAN. (WIOA SECTION 108(D)(3).)

2. THE ENTITY RESPONSIBLE FOR THE DISBURSAL OF GRANT FUNDS, AS DETERMINED BY THE GOVERNOR, IF DIFFERENT FROM THAT FOR THE STATE. (WIOA SECTION 108(B)(15).)

3. A DESCRIPTION OF THE TYPE AND AVAILABILITY OF WIOA TITLE I YOUTH ACTIVITIES AND SUCCESSFUL MODELS, INCLUDING FOR YOUTH WITH DISABILITIES. (WIOA SECTION 108(B)(9).)

N/A

4. A DESCRIPTION OF THE ROLES AND RESOURCE CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE ONE-STOP PARTNERS.

N/A

5. THE COMPETITIVE PROCESS USED TO AWARD THE SUBGRANTS AND CONTRACTS FOR TITLE I ACTIVITIES.

N/A

6. HOW TRAINING SERVICES OUTLINED IN SECTION 134 WILL BE PROVIDED THROUGH INDIVIDUAL TRAINING ACCOUNTS AND/OR THROUGH CONTRACTS, AND HOW SUCH TRAINING APPROACHES WILL BE COORDINATED. DESCRIBE HOW THE STATE WILL MEET INFORMED CUSTOMER CHOICE REQUIREMENTS REGARDLESS OF TRAINING APPROACH.

N/A

7. HOW THE STATE BOARD, IN FULFILLING LOCAL BOARD FUNCTIONS, WILL COORDINATE TITLE I ACTIVITIES WITH THOSE ACTIVITIES UNDER TITLE II. DESCRIBE HOW THE STATE BOARD WILL CARRY OUT THE REVIEW OF LOCAL APPLICATIONS SUBMITTED UNDER TITLE II CONSISTENT WITH WIOA SECS. 107(D)(11)(A) AND (B)(I) AND WIOA SEC. 232.

N/A

8. COPIES OF EXECUTED COOPERATIVE AGREEMENTS WHICH DEFINE HOW ALL LOCAL SERVICE PROVIDERS WILL CARRY OUT THE REQUIREMENTS FOR INTEGRATION OF AND ACCESS TO THE ENTIRE SET OF SERVICES AVAILABLE IN THE ONE-STOP DELIVERY SYSTEM, INCLUDING COOPERATIVE AGREEMENTS WITH ENTITIES ADMINISTERING REHABILITATION ACT PROGRAMS AND SERVICES.

N/A

E. WAIVER REQUESTS (OPTIONAL)

WIOA YOUTH WAIVER REQUEST: Use of Individual Training Accounts for In-School Youth. PROGRAM YEARS 2022 and 2023

STATE OF MINNESOTA

MINNESOTA DEPARTMENT OF EMPLOYMENT AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

1. **Identification of the statutory or regulatory requirements for which a waiver is being requested:**

Minnesota is requesting a waiver to provide Minnesota WDAs with the flexibility to use Individual Training Accounts (ITAs) for in-school youth under WIOA Youth. The waiver impacts WIOA Regulation 20 CFR 681.550.

According to current WIOA Regulations, ITAs were established to provide individual customer choice in their education and training plans and provide flexibility to service providers. At present, only out of school youth, ages 18-24 can use ITAs. In school youth, ages 18-21, deserve the same flexible opportunities for support as out of school youth. Without this waiver, in-school youth, ages 18-21, would have to be closed and enrolled as out of school youth.

2. **Goals that Minnesota and its Workforce Development Areas (WDAs) intend to achieve as a result of the waiver:**

The goal of this is to allow WIOA youth service providers the option to use ITAs for in-school youth, ages 18-21. Serving in school and out of school youth with the same ITA policy allows for continuity of services for all WIOA youth. All youth will be eligible to receive training services, connection to work-based learning and job search support. To better connect youth to

work-based learning, both in school and out of school youth would be able to use the ETPL to find training programs that support individualized needs. The waiver would permit youth service providers to customize services to in school youth, ages 18-21, to match their interests and abilities.

3. **Relationship of Goals to the Minnesota State Plan:**

Minnesota's State Plan describes how resources will be used to assist individuals who need assistance to become economic and socially self-sufficient. The populations targeted in Minnesota's plan are those for whom WIOA Youth Programs are critical. The PY 20-23 State plan pointed out that Minnesota needs to diversify its labor force in order to grow economically:

In sum, the data show that current population and aging trends will lead to a tight labor market over the next two decades – with some local areas already experiencing labor force declines. The challenges our state will face over the next 15 years are so great that we'll need to tackle them with a multi–pronged approach to attract and retain workers of all demographic characteristics. Retaining older workers beyond traditional retirement age, attracting and retaining young talent, removing barriers faced by workers of all abilities, welcoming immigrants from other countries, and educating and training the workers we do have are all necessary to overcome these challenges.

Because minority populations in Minnesota continue to grow faster than the white population, particularly in the younger working age populations, the labor force will continue to diversify rapidly. Recognizing that the rapidly increasing share of existing workers are people of color, it becomes obvious that we must address this problem of persistent racial disparities directly.

If these disparities continue unabated, disadvantaged groups won't be the only ones who suffer. Businesses and the economic well–being of every resident of our state also will be affected. So, working on solutions to close these racial gaps between our state's white population and its populations of color is not only the right thing to do, it's the necessary thing to do if we're to provide our economy and its employers with the workforce necessary for success.

If approved, this waiver will positively impact disadvantaged populations: both in-school youth, ages 18-21, and out of school youth will be able to receive all WIOA youth program services. The waiver supports continuity of services without disruption for WIOA Youth.

4. **Actions the State has undertaken to remove State or local statutory or regulatory barriers:**

No State or local statutory or regulatory barriers exist that would prevent the implementation of this waiver.

5. **Detailed Goals of the Waiver and the Expected Programmatic Outcomes if the Request is Granted:**

Goals of the waiver include:

- Supporting customer choice;
- Supporting employer engagement;
- Connecting education and training strategies;
- Supporting work-based learning; and
- Improving job and career results.

As Minnesota's ETPL grows, the choices available to in-school youth will grow as well. This waiver will allow the in-school student to participate in and benefit from the growth of the employment and training network.

- Specific numeric goals are hard to set, especially in light of the ongoing pandemic and its varying effects on participants and program operations. However, we are indicating the following:75 percent of in-school undertaking occupational training will have ITAs;
- The number of training providers serving youth will increase by at least 5% in the next 12 months and will be registered on the ETPL; and
- All ITAs will use training providers on the ETPL.

Alignment with Department of Labor policy priorities

This waiver is in alignment with Department of Labor priorities as follows:

Connecting Education and Training Strategies

This waiver allows WIOA youth service providers to offer in school youth the flexible option to use ITAs to access training programs on the ETPL. The waiver expands the education and training opportunities for in school youth.

Improving Job and Career Results

Allowing both in-school and out-of-school youth to use ITAs to find training opportunities that match their interest, support their learning styles and better prepare them for work-based learning and employment.

With the reduced administrative burden on youth service providers, there can be an increased effort on networking and partnering to assure that meet the needs of both eligible in-school and out of school youth and improve shared outcomes.

2. **Individuals Affected by the Waiver**

In-school students (secondary school attendees) who meet the age requirements (ages 18-21 at the time of enrollment) will be the individuals affected by the waiver, especially youth who are under-represented in the workforce. These youth often have multiple barriers to employment requiring additional resources to become self-sufficient. This waiver provides WIOA youth service providers with more flexibility to serve in-school youth who are most in need of services.

3. **Monitoring/Local Comment**

Monitoring

DEED's youth program staff will be responsible to ensure that the process to implement the waiver is accomplished as well as monitoring the progress to meet the goals indicated above. As required, DEED will report to DOL progress in achieving the waiver as well as any changes needed. Additionally, DEED will report information on the waiver and its outcome in Minnesota's WIOA Annual Report.

Local Comment

DEED will ensure through direct communications and through its website that local comment (local Workforce Development Boards, local business and organized labor is obtained on this waiver. Additionally, DEED staff will meet with local WDA staff to obtain comments. DEED will inform the Department of Labor of any comments received.

UPDATED: January 20, 2022

WIOA WAIVER REQUEST: Reduce OSY Expenditure Requirement From 75 Percent to 60 Percent

STATE OF MINNESOTA

TITLE I YOUTH PROGRAM

PROGRAM YEARS 2022

I. Identification of the statutory or regulatory requirements for which a waiver is being requested:
The State of Minnesota is requesting renewal of a waiver for Program Year 2022 from the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Section 129(a)(4)(A) and the corresponding regulation at 20 CFR 681.410 which requires that at least 75 percent of WIOA youth funds be spent on "out-of-school youth." The State of Minnesota is requesting that Minnesota's current waiver be extended to allow Workforce Development Areas (WDAs) to expend 60 percent of WIOA youth funds on out-of-school youth and 40 percent on in-school youth who meet the U.S. Department of Labor's definition of homeless and/or foster youth.

A youth is considered a homeless if the individual:
Lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence; this includes an individual who:
i. Is sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason;
ii. Is living in a motel, hotel, trailer park or campground due to a lack of adequate alternative accommodations;
iii. Is living in an emergency or transitional shelter;
iv. Is abandoned in a hospital; or
v. Is awaiting foster care placement.

Has a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not designed for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings, such as a car, park, abandoned building, bus or train station, airport, or camping ground;

Is a migratory child who in the preceding 36 months was required to move from one school district to another due to changes in the parent's or parent's spouse's seasonal employment in agriculture, dairy, or fishing work; or

Is under 18 years of age and absents himself or herself from home or place of legal residence without the permission of his or her family (e.g. runaway youth).

Note: this definition does not include an individual imprisoned or detained under an Act of Congress or State Law. An individual who may be sleeping in a temporary accommodation while away from home should not, as a result of that alone, be recorded as homeless.

A youth is in foster care if the individual:

Is in foster care or has aged out of the foster care system, a child eligible for assistance under section 477 of the Social Security Act (42 USC 677), or in an out of home placement.

This waiver extension request is to continue the previous waiver granted to the State of Minnesota, allowing it to reduce its required out of school expenditure rate from 75 percent to 60 percent so that it could address a gubernatorial priority of serving homeless youth and foster youth before they drop out of school. If this request is approved and extended, this waiver would be made available again to all 16 Local Workforce Investment Boards as an option, beginning in PY 2022.

II. Goals that Minnesota and its Workforce Development Areas (WDAs) intend to achieve as a result of the waiver:

The authors of WIOA recognized the special needs of out-of-school youth, especially those disconnected from school and/or work and who need extraordinary attention to get them on the path to economic and social self-sufficiency. DOL approved Minnesota's Homeless Youth/Foster Youth In-School Waiver request recognizing the special needs of these populations. Youth transitioning out of foster care have special needs and, unfortunately, many become homeless youth statistics.

Shalita O'Neale **(Foster Focus** magazine (Volume 5, Issue 3) indicated the following regarding foster youth in school:

"They (foster youth) move from home to home, foster family to foster family, and often from school system to school system, an average of twice a year. Often they are labeled with a behavioral disorder and prescribed medication upon the slightest of evidence that they may not be easily controlled due to their emotional reactions to being removed from their family. They are almost never allowed to feel and express the pain, frustration, and anger associated with being taken from the only 'normality' they have ever known. Often, child welfare professionals wait to start asking youth about 'life skills' until they've become teenagers with less than a few years to "age-out" when many have been in foster care multiple times since very young ages.

Voices for Children, a California advocacy group, provides national data:

• 75 percent of children in foster care are working below grade level in school
• 50 percent of children in foster care will never graduate from high school or obtain a GED
• Only 15 percent of children in foster care will attend college, and fewer than 3 percent will earn a college degree
• Over 33 percent of all foster teen males will be incarcerated before age 21
• 25 percent of foster children experience PTSD and tend to suffer high rates of debilitating depression and low self-esteem
• After "aging out," over 25 percent of foster teens will become homeless

The Minnesota Department of Human Services (DHS) indicated in 2017, that over 16,500 Minnesota youth were in foster care (Minnesota Department of Human Services: "Minnesota's Out-of-Home Care and Permanency Report, 2017." November 2018) Specifically,

Youth between 12-14 Years of Age	Youth between 15-17 Years of Age	Youth at or above 18 Years of Age	Total Youth in Foster Care
2,291	2,865	529	16,593

DHS indicated that Native American children were 18.5 times more likely, African-American children 3.0 times, and those of two or more races were 4.8 times more likely than white children to experience foster care.

Many foster youths aging out of the system lack a source of income, access to housing, or healthy and reliable social supports. In examining the relationship between out of home placement and homelessness, the St. Paul based Wilder Foundation (Wilder Research: "Homelessness in Minnesota: Youth on their Own, Findings from the 2015 Minnesota Homeless Study," April 2017) stated that 68 percent of homeless youth experience an "out of home placement," either a social service or corrections placement. These movements were foster homes (most common), correctional facilities, and mental health institutions. Of those in a social service placement, 28 percent of the youth said they had run away from foster care, a group home, or other out of home placement, and 10 percent had to leave placement because they became too old to stay.

The goal of expanding the waiver request to include foster youth is to improve high school graduation rates and the entrance into post-secondary education for this at-risk population.

WIOA Youth Service providers in each Minnesota County will identify foster youth in their jurisdictions and offer services to address unmet needs and prevent homelessness.

The United States Department of Education (June 27, 2016) indicated that a "positive PK-12 education experience has the potential to be a powerful counterweight to the abuse, neglect, separation, impermanence and other barriers faced by youth in foster care." Attaining a postsecondary credential can enhance their well-being, help make successful transitions to adulthood, and increase the opportunity for personal fulfillment and economic self-sufficiency.

Reducing homelessness across Minnesota has been a priority dating back nearly 10 years. One of the areas of particular concern has been the number of elementary and secondary school students who are identified as homeless. Since WIOA youth eligibility often begins with eighth grade students, the Minnesota Department of Education has provided the number of homeless students statewide between the 8th and 12th grades:

Number of 8th-12th Grade Students Identifying as Homeless in Minnesota

DOL Program Year (7/1 to 6/30)	Number of Homeless 8th-12th Graders
PY 2018	6,597
PY 2019	6,274 (-4.9% from PY 2018)
PY 2020	5,066 (-19.3% from PY 2019)

WIOA youth service providers in Minnesota will continue coordinating with the various schools' McKinney-Vento Program for the Homeless coordinators (see http://education.state.mn.us/MDE/fam/home/ for information about the McKinney-Vento Program).

Approval of this waiver will allow Minnesota's service providers to continue to develop services to address specific needs of homeless youth and foster youth at a time when they are at the greatest risk of becoming homeless.

WIOA WAIVER REQUEST: Relationship of Goals to the Minnesota State Plan:

One of the purposes of the State Plan is to describe how resources will be used to assist individuals who need assistance to become economic and socially self-sufficient. The populations cited in Minnesota's State Plan are those most in need of WIOA youth services. Minnesota's plan points out that the State needs to diversify its labor force in order to grow economically:

In sum, the data show that current population and aging trends will lead to a tight labor market over the next two decades – with some local areas already experiencing labor force declines. The challenges our state will face over the next 15 years are so great that we'll need to tackle them with a multi–pronged approach to attract and retain workers of all demographic characteristics. Retaining older workers beyond traditional retirement age, attracting and retaining young talent, removing barriers faced by workers of all abilities, welcoming immigrants from other countries, and educating and training the workers we do have are all necessary to overcome these challenges.

Because minority populations in Minnesota will continue to grow faster than the white population, particularly in the younger working age populations, the labor force will continue to diversify rapidly. Recognizing that the rapidly increasing share of existing workers are people of color, it becomes obvious that we must address this problem of persistent racial disparities directly.

If these disparities continue unabated, disadvantaged groups won't be the only ones who suffer. Businesses and the economic well–being of every resident of our state also will be affected. So, working on solutions to close these racial gaps between our state's white population and its populations of color is not only the right thing to do, it's the necessary thing to do if we're to provide our economy and its employers with the workforce necessary for success.
This waiver allows Minnesota to target WIOA Youth resources to a population that is at-risk of homelessness, a group that is experiencing an opportunity gap.

IV. Actions that the State has undertaken to remove State or local statutory or regulatory barriers:
No State or local statutory or regulatory barriers exist that would prevent the implementation of this waiver.

V. Detailed Goals of the Waiver and the Expected Programmatic Outcomes if the Request is Granted:

Anticipated outcomes for youth targeted by this waiver (homeless in-school youth and youth in foster care):

• Increased school attendance rates
• Increased number of youths earning academic credit for work-based learning
• Increased high school graduation rates
• Increased number of youths entering post-secondary training
• Increased number of youths attaining credentials
• Increased number of youth who participate in work experience or internships in an in-demand/high growth regional occupation

Data on MN's Waiver to OSY Expenditure Requirement: From 75% to 60% for Minnesota WDAs Serving Foster or Homeless Youth
(PY19 and PY20 Actual; PY21 estimated – Updated 4/28/22)

Measure	PY19 Actual	PY20 Actual	PY21 (As of 4/28/22)
Total Number of Foster Youth Served (Served 7/1 to 6/30)	129 (39 ISY)	121 (32 ISY)	103 (38 ISY)
Total Number of Homeless Youth Served (Served 7/1 to 6/30)	524 (59 ISY)	484 (52 ISY)	307 (51 ISY)
Number of Foster Youth High School Diplomas/GEDs (Exited/served - 1/1 to 12/31)	17 (12 ISY)	13 (10 ISY)	11-(7 ISY)
Number of Homeless Youth High School Diplomas/GEDs (Exited/served - 1/1 to 12/31)	14 (8 ISY)	18 (8 ISY)	12 (10 ISY)
Increased Number of Homeless/Foster Youth Entering Post-Secondary Training (Exiters only - 1/1 to 12/31)	3 Youth	5 Youth	19 Youth
Increased Number of Homeless/Foster Youth Attaining Industry-Recognized Credentials (Exited/served – 1/1 to 12/31)	26 (1 ISY)	27 (2 ISY)	91 (10 ISY)
Increased Number of Homeless/Foster Youth Who Participated in Work Experience or Internship in an In-Demand/High-Growth Regional Occupation (Exited/served – 7/1 to 6/30)	55 (30 ISY)	59 (29 ISY)	44 (12 ISY)

Data Source: Workforce One Advanced Search Results, 4/28/2022. Appropriate date ranges used with corresponding performance reporting dates.

Minnesota WIOA Youth Performance For Foster Youth: PY 2019 and PY 2020

WIOA Youth Performance Measure - PY 2019	PY 19 Negotiated MN Goal	All Exiters PY 2019 Actual	Percent	PY 2019 Foster Yth Exiters	Pct. Of PY19 MN Goal
Youth Education/Employment/ Training Rate Second Quarter After Exit	67.0%	79.4%	118.5%	67.4%	100.6%
Youth Education/Employment/ Training Rate Fourth Quarter After Exit	62.5%	79.6%	127.4%	84.6%	135.4%
Credential Attainment Rate	47.7%	65.9%	138.2%	60.9%	127.7%
Measurable Skills Gain	Baseline	50.9%		46.2%	
Median Earnings Second Quarter After Exit	Baseline	$ 4,465		$ 2,276	
Number of Exiters		918		43	4.7%

WIOA Youth Performance Measure - PY 2020	PY 20 Negotiated MN Goal	All Exiters PY 2020 Actual	Percent	PY 2020 Foster Yth Exiters	Pct. Of PY20 MN Goal
Youth Education/Employment/ Training Rate Second Quarter After Exit	75.0%	68.8%	91.7%	47.5%	63.3%
Youth Education/Employment/ Training Rate Fourth Quarter After Exit	73.0%	71.4%	97.8%	66.7%	91.4%
Credential Attainment Rate	62.0%	63.5%	102.4%	65.2%	105.2%
Measurable Skills Gain	49.0%	42.9%	87.6%	37.0%	75.5%
Median Earnings Second Quarter After Exit	$ 3,700	$ 4,542	122.8%	$ 3,399	91.9%
Number of Exiters		989		56	5.7%

Data Source: ETA-9169 reports, respective years

Minnesota WIOA Youth Performance For Homeless Youth: PY 2019 and PY 2020

WIOA Youth Performance Measure - PY 2019	PY 19 Negotiated MN Goal	All Exiters PY 2019 Actual	Percent	PY 2019 Homeless Yth Exiters	Pct. Of PY19 MN Goal
Youth Education/Employment/ Training Rate Second Quarter After Exit	67.0%	79.4%	118.5%	74.4%	111.0%
Youth Education/Employment/ Training Rate Fourth Quarter After Exit	62.5%	79.6%	127.4%	71.3%	114.1%
Credential Attainment Rate	47.7%	65.9%	138.2%	65.0%	136.3%
Measurable Skills Gain	Baseline	50.9%		33.3%	
Median Earnings Second Quarter After Exit	Baseline	$ 4,465		$ 3,673	
Number of Exiters		918		143	15.6%

WIOA Youth Performance Measure - PY 2020	PY 20 Negotiated MN Goal	All Exiters PY 2020 Actual	Percent	PY 2020 Homeless Yth Exiters	Pct. Of PY20 MN Goal
Youth Education/Employment/ Training Rate Second Quarter After Exit	75.0%	68.8%	91.7%	56.2%	74.9%
Youth Education/Employment/ Training Rate Fourth Quarter After Exit	73.0%	71.4%	97.8%	58.6%	80.3%
Credential Attainment Rate	62.0%	63.5%	102.4%	63.5%	102.4%
Measurable Skills Gain	49.0%	42.9%	87.6%	20.4%	41.6%
Median Earnings Second Quarter After Exit	$ 3,700	$ 4,542	122.8%	$ 4,891	132.2%
Number of Exiters		989		258	26.1%

Data Source: ETA-9169 reports, respective years

WIOA youth service providers maintain regular contact with youth shelters, youth opportunity centers, county social service agencies to recruit foster youth into WIOA. Minnesota's employment and training service to its foster youth population is further illustrated by the link below:

https://mn.gov/deed/programs-services/office-youth-development/special/shared-vision/

In Program Year 2020, Minnesota's WIOA Youth Program served 121 foster youth. However, only 32 of these individuals were classified as in-school youth. The new 60 percent out-of-

school expenditure rate would permit Minnesota's youth service providers to increase services to foster youth who are in-school but most at risk of homelessness. This effort will reduce the current dropout rate and homelessness rate among the foster youth population. It also comes at a time where many at-risk youth (especially homeless and/or foster youth) rely more on schools to provide food and support as the effects of the pandemic linger.

The expanded waiver will further Minnesota's needed efforts, as identified in the State Plan, to diversify its workforce given that the "in-school" foster youth population is becoming much more diverse.

Specific Goals for the Waiver

Measure/Goal	PY 2022	PY 2023
Total Number of Foster Youth to be Served	135 (45 ISY)	140 (48 ISY)
Total Number of Homeless Youth to be Served	300 Homeless Youth	300 Homeless Youth
Increased School Attendance Rate for Homeless/Foster Youth	+10 Percent	+11 Percent
Increased Number of Foster Youth Earning Academic Credit for Work-Based Learning	+25 Foster Youth	+30 Foster Youth
Increased Number of Homeless Youth Earning Academic Credit for Work-Based Learning	+50 Homeless Youth	+60 Homeless Youth
Increased High School Graduation Rate for Homeless/Foster Youth	+10 Percent	+11 Percent
Increased Number of Homeless/Foster Youth Entering Post-Secondary Training	+15 Homeless/Foster Youth	+20 Homeless/Foster Youth
Increased Number of Homeless/Foster Youth Attaining Industry Recognized Credentials	+30 Homeless/Foster Youth	+40 Homeless/Foster Youth
Increased Number of Homeless/Foster Youth Who Participate in Work Experience or Internship in an In-Demand/High Growth Regional Occupation	+20 Homeless/Foster Youth	+22 Homeless/Foster Youth

Specific Services to be Given to Foster Students

WIOA youth service provide a comprehensive sets of youth employment and training and community-based services through the Integrated Resource Team (IRT) methodology. The IRTs bring together school and social service resources enhancing the ability of in-school youth to be successful in school and on the job. The IRT approach permits Minnesota to build the capacity of youth service providers to introduce targeted youth to career pathways and high growth/in demand jobs in regional economies. The waiver will enhance coordination with the foster care coordinators in each county and result in shared outcomes for partners serving youth who are most in need of services and at risk of homelessness.

VI. Alignment with Department of Labor Policy Priorities

This waiver is in alignment with Department of Labor priorities as follows:

Connecting Education and Training Strategies

The intent of the waiver is to provide coordinated services to foster youth who are in-school and at risk of homelessness. Education and training services will be provided based on

individual need. Integrated Resource Teams (IRTs) and the Guideposts for Success are integral parts of this effort.

Supporting Work-Based Learning

The expanded waiver will increase the number of youth aging out of foster care who participate in work-based learning. Targeted youth have the opportunity to work in high growth/in-demand jobs in regional economies.

Improving Job and Career Results

WIOA youth services to targeted youth will result in an increase in the number of youth who earn academic credit for work-based learning and the number of youth who attain industry-recognized credentials and enter post-secondary education.

VII. Individuals Affected by the Waiver

Foster youth who are in-school but at risk of homelessness will be positively impacted by the expanded waiver. Youth from communities of color who are under-represented in the workforce are priorities in Minnesota's State Plan and they will be impacted by this waiver.

VIII. Monitoring/Local Comment

Monitoring

DEED's youth program staff will monitor the implementation of the waiver at the WDA level. As required, DEED will report to DOL progress in achieving the waiver as well as any changes needed. Additionally, DEED will report information on the waiver and its outcome in Minnesota's WIOA Annual Report.

Local Comment

DEED will ensure through direct communications and through its website that local comment (local Workforce Development Boards, Youth Committees, local business and organized labor) is obtained on this waiver. Additionally, DEED staff will meet with local WDA/LWDB staff to obtain comments. DEED will inform the Department of Labor of any comments received

Updated April 28, 2022

WIOA WAIVER REQUEST: Governor's Reserve Funds

STATE OF MINNESOTA

TITLE I YOUTH PROGRAM

PROGRAM YEAR 2022

I. Identification of the statutory or regulatory requirements for which a waiver is being requested: The State of Minnesota is requesting renewal of a waiver for Program Year 2022 from the Workforce Investment and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Section 129(a)(4)(A) and its corresponding regulation at 20 CFR 681.410. There is a requirement that at least 75 percent of WIOA Governor's Reserve funds be expended on out-of-school youth. The State of Minnesota is requesting that the requirement be eliminated for projects providing direct services funded under the WIOA Youth Governor's Reserve Funds. Minnesota is asking for flexibility to increase services to under-represented youth, 16 to 24 years of age, who meet the following definitions:

- Qualify for the High School Graduation Incentives Program or are "economically disadvantaged"; and
- Are a high school dropout or, in the opinion of a school official, are in danger of dropping out of school.

The High School Graduation Incentive Program eligibility is found at Minnesota Statutes 124D.68. As stated in the legislation:

The legislature finds that it is critical to provide options for children to succeed in school. Therefore, the purpose of this section is to provide incentives for and encourage all Minnesota students who have experienced or are experiencing difficulty in the traditional education system to enroll in alternative programs.

The waiver of the 75 percent requirement would allow the State to use Governor's Reserve Funds to fund projects based on the Youthbuild program model but allow grantees the flexibility to determine the mix of out-of-school youth (dropouts) and in-school youth (potential dropouts). Service providers would place participants in an integrated work and learning setting with intensive wrap-around services ensuring the youth would attain a high school diploma/GED, industry recognized credentials, and placement in registered apprenticeship, employment, and/or post-secondary education. Older youth participants who complete the Youthbuild "pre-apprenticeship" project would be supported as they have the option to enter registered apprenticeship.

II. Actions that the State of Minnesota has undertaken to remove State or local statutory or regulatory barriers: No state or local statutory or regulatory barriers exist that would prevent the implementation of this waiver. Minnesota leverages federal WIOA funds by providing WDA's with State youth employment funds through the Minnesota Youth Program (MYP). The waiver of the 75 percent expenditure requirement as indicated in WIOA Section 129(a)(4)(A) and the corresponding 20 CFR 681.410 for projects funded with Governor's Reserve Funds would allow the State to further blend and braid state and federal funds.

III. Relationship to State strategic goals: Minnesota's WIOA State Plan describes how resources will be used to support individuals who need assistance to become economically and socially self-sufficient. The youth population groups cited in the State Plan are targeted for services under the WIOA Youth Program. Minnesota's WIOA State Plan continues to highlight the need to diversify its labor force to grow economically.

The data shows that the current population and aging trends will lead to a tight labor market over the next two decades – with some local areas already experiencing labor force declines. The challenges our State will face over the next 15 years are so great that we need to tackle them with a multi-pronged approach to attract and retain workers of all demographic characteristics. Retaining older workers beyond traditional retirement age, attracting and retaining young talent, removing barriers faced by workers of all abilities, welcoming immigrants from other countries, and educating and training the workers we do have are all necessary to overcome these challenges.

Minority populations in Minnesota will continue to grow faster than the white population, particularly in the younger working age populations, and the labor force will continue to diversify rapidly. Recognizing that the rapidly increasing share of existing workers are people of color, it becomes obvious that we must address this problem of persistent racial disparities directly.
If racial disparities continue unabated, businesses and the economic well-being of every resident of our state will be affected. So, working on solutions to close opportunity gaps between our state's white population and populations of color is not only the right thing to do, it's the necessary thing to do if we're to provide our economy and its employers with the workforce necessary for success.

If approved, this waiver will allow the State to continue to provide grantees with additional funding for direct services using WIOA Youth Governor's Reserve Funds to provide direct services to youth dropouts and youth who are at-risk of dropping out of school and who are experiencing a skills and opportunity gap.

IV. Projected programmatic outcomes resulting from implementation of the waiver:
The approval of this waiver will further enable Minnesota to provide higher levels of service to under-represented youth who are WIOA eligible, both in-school and out of school. The State strongly believes that the flexibility provided with this waiver will result in the following:
• Career pathways training in the construction trades integrated with basic skills instruction,
• Contextual academic learning and support leading to a high school diploma/GED,
• Integrated soft skills, work readiness, leadership, and life skills with a service-learning focus,
• High-quality mentoring by caring adults and peers,
• Counseling/case management, skills assessment, and support services helping youth to succeed in the program,
• Career planning and exploration in the building trades and other high demand/high wage occupations and exposure to union apprenticeships,
• Industry-recognized certification and/or credentials in construction-related, high-demand/high-wage occupations that meet the needs of local employers and growing skill demands of Minnesota's economy;
• Placement services in career-specific apprenticeships, post-secondary education, and/or employment,
• 12 months of follow-up services, including counseling, and support to maintain employment.

These services will result in the following performance metrics:

• Increased school attendance and dropouts returning to school
• Increased number of youth earning academic credit for work-based training
• Increased high school graduation rates or received secondary diploma or equivalent
• Increased number of under-represented youth entering post-secondary training or registered apprenticeships
• Increased number of under-represented youth who participate in work experience or internships in high-growth, in-demand occupations
• Increased number of youth attaining credentials in high-growth/high-demand industries.

This waiver supports the goals described in Minnesota's WIOA State Plan and the overall objectives set by DOL for WIOA Youth. Since this is still a new approach to serving "opportunity youth," performance data is still limited due to many youth still enrolled in WIOA and working towards their individual goals, coupled with the impacts of the pandemic.
Using a Request For Proposal process, Goodwill/Easter Seals of Minnesota (GESM) and Southeast Minnesota Workforce Development, Inc. were selected to serve participants with grants of $125,000 each. These grants follow the YouthBuild program model for preparing these young people for entry-level positions in the building trades, or related occupations.

To date, both grantees have served a combined 29 youth since the grant became effective on July 1, 2021. We can report that GESM has served a total of 18 youth to date, with 11 exiters. Nine continue to be served by GESM staff. Southeast Minnesota WDI is serving a total of 11 youth, with zero exiters as of 4/28/2022.

Even though there have been 11 exiters from GESM, they are too recent to be captured in any official performance metrics other than Measurable Skill Gain. The MSG outcome for these nine persons is a combined 33.3 percent. Based on case notes and reported outcomes in Minnesota's case management system (Workforce One), at least five of the 11 have been placed into unsubsidized employment, but have yet to be officially verified for the second quarter after exit quarter. Many of the 11 exiters report at least one credential; however, other credentials may be added during the follow-up process.

At present, these two grants are scheduled to end on 6/30/22; extending this waiver into PY22 will give both organizations a chance to succeed in helping these youth succeed in earning recognized credentials and moving into entry-level employment.

V. Alignment with DOL policy priorities: This waiver request aligns with the following DOL policy priorities as found in the DOL Fiscal Year 2018 - 2022 Strategic Plan and the WIOA law and federal regulations.

DOL focuses on programs that support work-based learning, skills development, and work readiness while promoting training strategies leading to credential attainment and skills gap closing. DOL has also prioritized the implementation of evidence-based programs and strategies. Additionally, WIOA places a strong emphasis on work experience for youth participants and requires 20 percent of WIOA youth formula funding to be spent on work experience. WIOA also encourages strong partnership to leverage resources to increase opportunities for youth.

VI. Individuals, groups, and populations affected by the waiver: The individuals affected by this waiver are out-of-school youth and in-school youth who are eligible to receive WIOA services. In addition, Minnesota is intentionally targeting youth who meet WIOA Youth eligibility criteria and who are under-represented in the workforce including: youth from communities of color, young women, youth with disabilities, and young veterans. Employers, parents, and educational institutions will also benefit from this waiver.

As previously stated, Minnesota allocated $250,000 of WIOA Youth Governor's Reserve Funds during the summer of 2021. Recipients are expanding services and access to WIOA youth services, including work experience for eligible and targeted youth under-represented in Minnesota's workforce.

The waiver request is supported by evidence-based practices intended to eliminate the economic barriers faced by youth. For all youth, ages 16-24 in 2020, the Bureau of Labor Statistics reported a national unemployment rate of 14.9%. When broken by racial demographics, the unemployment rates for youth of color underscore the racial disparities in employment.

VII. State plans for monitoring waiver implementation, including collection of waiver outcome information: Programmatic reviews of service providers will include an evaluation of how this waiver is being used ensuring that programmatic goals and outcomes are being met. The State-level administration of the program will continually examine the waiver throughout the program year.

VIII. Assurance of state posting of the request for public comment and notification to affected local Workforce Development Boards: In accordance with WIOA Section 102(c)(3) and the corresponding regulation at 20 CFR 676.135, the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development has posted this waiver request on its website for review and comment by required parties and the general public. A copy of this waiver request was provided to all local Workforce Development Boards, Youth Committees, and relevant associations.

Updated April 28, 2022

WIOA WAIVER REQUEST: Allow Use of Individual Training Accounts (ITAs) for In-School Youth

STATE OF MINNESOTA

TITLE I YOUTH PROGRAM

PROGRAM YEAR 2022

I. Identification of the statutory or regulatory requirements for which a waiver is being requested:
Minnesota is requesting renewal of a waiver to provide Minnesota WDAs with the flexibility to use Individual Training Accounts (ITAs) for in-school youth under WIOA Youth. The waiver

impacts WIOA Regulation 20 CFR 681.550.
According to current WIOA Regulations, ITAs were established to provide individual customer choice in their education and training plans and provide flexibility to service providers. At present, only out of school youth, ages 18-24 can use ITAs. In school youth, ages 18-21, deserve the same flexible opportunities for support as out of school youth. Without this waiver, in-school youth, ages 18-21, would have to be closed and enrolled as out of school youth.

II. Goals that Minnesota and its Workforce Development Areas (WDAs) intend to achieve as a result of the waiver:
The goal of this is to allow WIOA youth service providers the option to use ITAs for in-school youth, ages 18-21. Serving in school and out of school youth with the same ITA policy allows for continuity of services for all WIOA youth. All youth will be eligible to receive training services, connection to work-based learning and job search support. To better connect youth to work-based learning, both in school and out of school youth would be able to use the ETPL to find training programs that support individualized needs. The waiver would permit youth service providers to customize services to in school youth, ages 18-21, to match their interests and abilities.

III. Relationship of Goals to the Minnesota State Plan:

Minnesota's State Plan describes how resources will be used to assist individuals who need assistance to become economic and socially self-sufficient. The populations targeted in Minnesota's plan are those for whom WIOA Youth Programs are critical. The Introduction to the modified State Plan for 2020-23 indicates that Minnesota needs to diversify its labor force in order to grow economically:

Goals: To build on this vision, live out our mission, and continue strengthening the workforce development system, the 2020-2023 WIOA State Plan goals for Minnesota are to:

1. Reduce educational, skills training and employment disparities based on race, disability, gender, or disconnected youth.
2. Build employer-led industry sector partnerships that expand the talent pipeline to be inclusive of race, disability, gender, and age to meet industry demands for a skilled workforce.

As our state faces the reality of a shrinking and diversifying labor force, and to ensure an economic and workforce recovery in light of the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, we must fully utilize the talents, skills, and experience of more people in the workforce. We need an "all hands on deck" approach that brings together more employers, community-based organizations, postsecondary institutions, other training providers, workforce boards, and industry organizations to develop strong statewide and regional approaches to addressing our workforce challenges. Prior to the pandemic, disparities and equities existed in our state's workforce – especially impacting BIPOC populations, women, people with disabilities, and others who already faced barriers to education or employment – and those issues have been exacerbated by COVID-19 and related societal shifts. Through concentrated efforts that promote collaboration and partnership across sectors and systems, and leveraging our federal and state funds and infrastructure, the vision, mission, strategies, and goals laid out in this Plan can be actualized in a way that directly combats the inequity and disparities we see today in Minnesota.

Because minority populations in Minnesota continue to grow faster than the white population, particularly in the younger working age populations, the labor force will continue to diversify rapidly. Recognizing that the rapidly increasing share of existing workers are people of color, it becomes obvious that we must address this problem of persistent racial disparities directly.

If these disparities continue unabated, disadvantaged groups won't be the only ones who suffer. Businesses and the economic well–being of every resident of our state also will be affected. So, working on solutions to close these racial gaps between our state's white population and its

populations of color is not only the right thing to do, it's the necessary thing to do if we're to provide our economy and its employers with the workforce necessary for success.

If approved, this waiver will positively impact disadvantaged populations: both in-school youth, ages 18-21, and out of school youth will be able to receive all WIOA youth program services. The waiver supports continuity of services without disruption for WIOA Youth.

IV. Actions the State has undertaken to remove State or local statutory or regulatory barriers:
No State or local statutory or regulatory barriers exist that would prevent the implementation of this waiver.

V. Detailed Goals of the Waiver and the Expected Programmatic Outcomes if the Request is Granted:

Goals of the waiver include:

• Supporting customer choice;
• Supporting employer engagement;
• Connecting education and training strategies;
• Supporting work-based learning; and
• Improving job and career results.

As Minnesota's ETPL grows, the choices available to in-school youth will grow as well. This waiver will allow the in-school student to participate in and benefit from the growth of the employment and training network.

We are indicating the following:

• 75 percent of in-school youth, ages 18-21, undertaking occupational training will have ITAs; and,
• The number of training providers serving youth will increase by at least 5% in the next 12 months and will be registered on the ETPL; and
• As required by federal policy, all ITAs will use training providers on the ETPL.

Since this waiver was previously granted to Minnesota, we can report preliminary PY 2021 outcomes (through 4/15/2022).

Preliminary Analysis of ISY ITA Waiver on Minnesota PY 21 WIOA Youth Performance

(ISYs w/HS Equivalent and w/1+ years of Post-Secondary at Enrollment)

WIOA Youth Performance Measure	PY 21 Negotiated MN Goal	All Exiters PY 2021 4/15 Prelim	Percent	PY 2021 4/15 ISY w/ITA	Pct. Of PY21 MN Goal
Youth Education/Employment/ Training Rate Second Quarter After Exit (7/1/20 to 6/30/21)	76.0%	64.9%	85.4%	68.2%	89.7%
Youth Education/Employment/ Training Rate Fourth Quarter After Exit (1/1/20 to 12/31/20)	74.0%	68.2%	92.2%	81.5%	110.1%
Credential Attainment Rate (1/1/2020 to 12/31/20)	62.5%	53.9%	86.2%	81.5%	130.4%
Measurable Skills Gain (7/1/21 to 6/30/22)	49.0%	24.4%	49.8%	36.5%	74.5%
Median Earnings Second Quarter After Exit (7/1/20 to 6/30/21)	$3,700	$4,619	124.8%	N/A	N/A

PY21 ISY/ITA Youth Served YTD (7/1/21 to 4/15/22)	104
PY 21 ISY/ITA Youth Enrolled YTD (7/1/21 to 4/15/22)	38
PY 21 ISY/ITA Youth Exited YTD (7/1/21 to 4/15/22)	48

Source: Internal DEED Data via FutureWorks, as of 4/15/22

Minnesota WDAs Using ITAs: PY 21 (as of 4/15/22)

LWDA	In Program	Exited
2-Rural CEP	4	1
3-Northeast	3	0
4-Duluth	1	0
5-CMJTS	10	3
6-Southwest	7	13
7-South Central	4	1
8 Southeast	10	1
9-Hennepin/Carver	1	0
10-Minneapolis	9	6
12-Anoka County	1	0
15-Ramsey County	6	23
State Total	**56**	**48**

Source: FutureWorks data (as of 4/15/22)

Based on the data gleaned from our online FutureWorks WIOA data as of April 15, 2022, we have determined that all 56 ISYs who are in Occupational Skills Training and have an ITA are all using a provider that is on the Minnesota Eligible Training Provider List. The 48 who exited from WIOA Youth from July 1, 2022 through April 15, 2022 were also using providers from the ETPL.

VI. Alignment with Department of Labor Policy Priorities

This waiver is in alignment with Department of Labor priorities as follows:

Connecting Education and Training Strategies

This waiver allows WIOA youth service providers to offer in school youth the flexible option to use ITAs to access training programs on the ETPL. The waiver expands the education and training opportunities for in school youth.

Improving Job and Career Results

Allowing both in-school and out-of-school youth to use ITAs to find training opportunities that match their interest, support their learning styles and better prepare them for work-based learning and employment.

With the reduced administrative burden on youth service providers, there can be an increased effort on networking and partnering to assure that meet the needs of both eligible in-school and out of school youth and improve shared outcomes.

VII. Individuals Affected by the Waiver

In-school students (secondary school attendees) who meet the age requirements (ages 18-21 at the time of enrollment) will be the individuals affected by the waiver, especially youth who are

under-represented in the workforce. These youth often have multiple barriers to employment requiring additional resources to become self-sufficient. This waiver provides WIOA youth service providers with more flexibility to serve in-school youth who are most in need of services.

VIII. Monitoring/Local Comment

Monitoring

DEED's youth program staff will be responsible to ensure that the process to implement the waiver is accomplished as well as monitoring the progress to meet the goals indicated above. As required, DEED will report to DOL progress in achieving the waiver as well as any changes needed. Additionally, DEED will report information on the waiver and its outcome in Minnesota's WIOA Annual Report.

Local Comment

DEED will ensure through direct communications and through its website that local comment (local Workforce Development Boards, local business and organized labor) is obtained on this waiver. Additionally, DEED staff will meet with local WDA staff to obtain comments. DEED will inform the Department of Labor of any comments received.

UPDATED: April 27, 2022

TITLE I-B ASSURANCES

The State Plan must include	Include
1. The State has implemented a policy to ensure Adult program funds provide a priority in the delivery of training services and individualized career services to individuals who are low income, public assistance recipients and basic skills deficient;	Yes
2. The State has implemented a policy to ensure local areas have a process in place for referring veterans with significant barriers to employment to career services provided by the JVSG program's Disabled Veterans' Outreach Program (DVOP) specialist;	Yes
3. The State established a written policy and procedure that set forth criteria to be used by chief elected officials for the appointment of local workforce investment board members;	Yes
4. The State established written policy and procedures to ensure local workforce investment boards are certified by the governor every two years in accordance with WIOA section 107(c)(2);	Yes
5. Where an alternative entity takes the place of a State Board, the State has written policy and procedures to ensure the alternative entity meets the definition under WIOA section 101(e) and the	Yes

The State Plan must include	Include
legal requirements for membership;	
6. The State established a written policy and procedure for how the individuals and entities represented on the State Workforce Development Board help to determine the methods and factors of distribution, and how the State consults with chief elected officials in local areas throughout the State in determining the distributions;	Yes
7. The State will not use funds received under WIOA Title I to assist, promote, or deter union organizing in accordance with WIOA section 181(b)(7);	Yes
8. The State distributes adult and youth funds received under WIOA equitably throughout the State, and no local area suffers significant shifts in funding from year-to-year during the period covered by this plan;	Yes
9. If a State Workforce Development Board, department, or agency administers State laws for vocational rehabilitation of persons with disabilities, that board, department, or agency cooperates with the agency that administers Wagner-Peyser services, Adult and Dislocated Worker programs and Youth Programs under Title I;	Yes
10. The State agrees to report on the impact and outcomes of its approved waivers in its WIOA Annual Report.	Yes
11. The State has taken appropriate action to secure compliance with the Uniform Guidance at 2 CFR 200 and 2 CFR 2900, including that the State will annually monitor local areas to ensure compliance and otherwise take appropriate action to secure compliance with the Uniform Guidance under section WIOA 184(a)(3);	Yes

ADULT PROGRAM PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Performance Indicators	PY 2022 Expected Level	PY 2022 Negotiated Level	PY 2023 Expected Level	PY 2023 Negotiated Level
Employment (Second Quarter After Exit)	63.8%	71.0%	63.8%	71.0%
Employment (Fourth Quarter	59.7%	67.0%	59.7%	69.0%

Performance Indicators	PY 2022 Expected Level	PY 2022 Negotiated Level	PY 2023 Expected Level	PY 2023 Negotiated Level
After Exit)				
Median Earnings (Second Quarter After Exit)	$7,306	$7,500	$7,306	$7,600
Credential Attainment Rate	67.7%	72.0%	67.7%	73.0%
Measurable Skill Gains	53.9%	59.0%	53.9%	59.0%
Effectiveness in Serving Employers	Not Applicable [1]	Not Applicable [1]	Not Applicable [1]	Not Applicable [1]

1

"Effectiveness in Serving Employers" is still being developed and this data will not be entered in the 2022 State Plan modifications.

DISLOCATED PROGRAM PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Performance Indicators	PY 2022 Expected Level	PY 2022 Negotiated Level	PY 2023 Expected Level	PY 2023 Negotiated Level
Employment (Second Quarter After Exit)	76.7%	80.0%	76.7%	80.0%
Employment (Fourth Quarter After Exit)	74.7%	79.0%	74.7%	79.0%
Median Earnings (Second Quarter After Exit)	$11,500	$12,300	$11,500	$12,300
Credential Attainment Rate	68.1%	78.0%	68.1%	78.0%
Measurable Skill Gains	53.8%	65.0%	53.8%	66.0%
Effectiveness in Serving Employers	Not Applicable [1]	Not Applicable [1]	Not Applicable [1]	Not Applicable [1]

1

"Effectiveness in Serving Employers" is still being developed and this data will not be entered in the 2022 State Plan modifications.

YOUTH PROGRAM PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Performance Indicators	PY 2022 Expected Level	PY 2022 Negotiated Level	PY 2023 Expected Level	PY 2023 Negotiated Level

Performance Indicators	PY 2022 Expected Level	PY 2022 Negotiated Level	PY 2023 Expected Level	PY 2023 Negotiated Level
Employment (Second Quarter After Exit)	67.0%	68.0%	67.0%	69.0%
Employment (Fourth Quarter After Exit)	68.0%	69.0%	68.0%	69.0%
Median Earnings (Second Quarter After Exit)	$3,800	$4,000	$3,800	$4,000
Credential Attainment Rate	62.0%	62.0%	62.0%	62.0%
Measurable Skill Gains	40.0%	41.0%	40.0%	42.0%
Effectiveness in Serving Employers	Not Applicable [1]	Not Applicable [1]	Not Applicable [1]	Not Applicable [1]

1

"Effectiveness in Serving Employers" is still being developed and this data will not be entered in the 2022 State Plan modifications.

PROGRAM-SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS FOR WAGNER-PEYSER PROGRAM (EMPLOYMENT SERVICES)

A. EMPLOYMENT SERVICE STAFF

1. DESCRIBE HOW THE STATE WILL STAFF THE PROVISION OF LABOR EXCHANGE SERVICES UNDER THE WAGNER-PEYSER ACT, SUCH AS THROUGH STATE EMPLOYEES, INCLUDING BUT NOT LIMITED TO STATE MERIT STAFF EMPLOYEES, STAFF OF A SUBRECIPIENT, OR SOME COMBINATION THEREOF.

WAGNER-PEYSER ACT PROGRAM (Employment Services)

A. EMPLOYMENT SERVICE(S) STAFF

1. DESCRIBE HOW THE STATE WILL STAFF THE PROVISION OF LABOR EXCHANGE SERVICES UNDER THE WAGNER PEYSER ACT, SUCH AS THROUGH STATE EMPLOYEES, INCLUDING BUT NOT LIMITED TO STATE MERIT STAFF EMPLOYEES, STAFF OF A SUBRECIPIENT, OR SOME COMBINATION THEREOF. (NOTE - STATES NOT SEEKING TO UTILIZE THE STAFFING FLEXIBILITY IN THE FINAL RULE AS PART OF THE 2020 STATE PLAN SUBMISSION CAN ANSWER THIS QUESTION BY ENTERING THAT THE STATE WILL CONTINUE TO UTILIZE STATE MERIT STAFF EMPLOYEES).

The State of Minnesota will continue to utilize state merit staff employees to provide labor exchange services, also known as the Employment Service Program, under the Wagner Peyser Act. The Job Service unit shall oversee these employees and ensure all services are provided as outlined under WIOA.

2. DESCRIBE HOW THE STATE WILL UTILIZE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES FOR EMPLOYMENT SERVICE STAFF TO ENSURE STAFF IS ABLE TO PROVIDE HIGH QUALITY SERVICES TO BOTH JOBSEEKERS AND EMPLOYERS

2. DESCRIBE HOW THE STATE WILL UTILIZE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES FOR EMPLOYMENT SERVICE STAFF TO ENSURE STAFF IS ABLE TO PROVIDE HIGH QUALITY SERVICES TO BOTH JOB SEEKERS AND EMPLOYERS.

The state will use several professional development activities for Job Service staff:

- State-wide staff training on the provisions of Career Services to job seekers started in December of 2017 and will continue throughout 2022 and 2023 with monthly webinars.
- All staff who serve job seekers in are required to complete the Reception and Resource Area Certification Program.
- Classroom presentation skills training based on the state's Creative Job Search workshop will continue to be offered to all employees who facilitate workshops.
- Training specific to each employee is documented in the employee's Individual Development Plan and supervisory file.
- Ongoing training in the areas of dealing with diverse populations, accessibility, safety, and financial literacy will continue to be offered to all employees.
- Training will continue to be provided in specific program areas such as Migrant Seasonal Farm Worker Services, Foreign Labor Certification, Fidelity Bonding, Work Opportunity Tax Credit program, and Trade Adjustment Assistance.
- The goal of these training activities is to ensure staff and managers are able to effectively assist job seekers with improving their job search skills, obtaining the best job possible, and progressing in a career pathway. These training activities will also provide staff and managers with the skills necessary to provide employers with access to qualified candidates and strengthen their businesses. The delivery methods of these trainings will include on-the-job training, conference calls, and online training using platforms like Teams, WebEx and Zoom.

In order to improve demand-driven workforce services to our businesses on both a state and regional level, six Regional Workforce Strategy Consultants coordinate activities to serve employers in the state by coordinating, leading, and delivering demand-driven regional and statewide business services relating to attracting, retaining, and developing talent for the regional economy.

This work includes developing workforce planning strategies with businesses, emphasizing talent pipeline development for key regional industries through collaboration and employer-led sector partnerships. The strategy consultants specifically focus on working with business leaders in targeted industry, high growth sectors to help determine their workforce planning needs including talent attraction, and retention, hiring, succession planning, equity, workforce development and job growth. In addition to working directly with businesses, they also initiate and build partnerships with community organizations, industry associations, education partners, and in addition to helping businesses get connected to available resources they also help serve as a bridge between the work of the workforce development and economic development divisions at DEED. These staff also assist stakeholders in implementation of the regional plan and by designing tools and resources to support businesses developing strategic workforce solutions.

The Workforce Strategy Consultant team is located within the Economic Development division of DEED to better align with the needs of employers receiving services from their various projects and initiatives.

3. DESCRIBE STRATEGIES DEVELOPED TO SUPPORT TRAINING AND AWARENESS ACROSS CORE PROGRAMS AND THE UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE (UI) PROGRAM AND THE TRAINING

PROVIDED FOR EMPLOYMENT SERVICES AND WIOA STAFF ON IDENTIFICATION OF UI ELIGIBILITY ISSUES AND REFERRAL TO UI STAFF FOR ADJUDICATION

3. DESCRIBE STRATEGIES DEVELOPED TO SUPPORT TRAINING AND AWARENESS ACROSS CORE PROGRAMS AND THE UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE (UI) PROGRAM, AND THE TRAINING PROVIDED FOR EMPLOYMENT SERVICES AND WIOA STAFF ON IDENTIFICATION OF UI ELIGIBILITY ISSUES AND REFERRAL TO UI STAFF FOR ADJUDICATION.

At least once or twice a year, Unemployment Insurance Division staff participate in Job Service training webinars that all Employment Service program staff are required to attend. These trainings include direct training on how to identify and handle eligibility issues, the best ways for how to refer UI applicants to UI staff and other important topics relevant to timely issues.

During the pandemic as new programs were rolled out and eligibility issues changed, additional training was provided. Staff were prepared to handle basic questions and issues related to new programs. Additionally, staff were trained in how to assist UI applicants with finding relevant information to issues they may be facing as a result of the pandemic.

Additionally, the state will use several professional development activities for Job Service staff:

- State-wide staff training on the provisions of Career Services to job seekers started in December of 2017 and will continue throughout 2022 and 2023 with monthly webinars.
- All staff who serve job seekers in are required to complete the Reception and Resource Area Certification Program.
- Classroom presentation skills training based on the state's Creative Job Search workshop will continue to be offered to all employees who facilitate workshops.
- Training specific to each employee is documented in the employee's Individual Development Plan and supervisory file.
- Ongoing training in the areas of dealing with diverse populations, accessibility, safety, and financial literacy will continue to be offered to all employees.
- Training will continue to be provided in specific program areas such as Migrant Seasonal Farm Worker Services, Foreign Labor Certification, Fidelity Bonding, Work Opportunity Tax Credit program, and Trade Adjustment Assistance.
- The goal of these training activities is to ensure staff and managers are able to effectively assist job seekers with improving their job search skills, obtaining the best job possible, and progressing in a career pathway. These training activities will also provide staff and managers with the skills necessary to provide employers with access to qualified candidates and strengthen their businesses. The delivery methods of these trainings will include on-the-job training, conference calls, and online training using platforms like Teams, WebEx and Zoom.

In order to improve demand-driven workforce services to our businesses on both a state and regional level, six Regional Workforce Strategy Consultants coordinate activities to serve employers in the state by coordinating, leading, and delivering demand-driven regional and statewide business services relating to attracting, retaining, and developing talent for the regional economy.

This work includes developing workforce planning strategies with businesses, emphasizing talent pipeline development for key regional industries through collaboration and employer-led sector partnerships. The strategy consultants specifically focus on working with business leaders in targeted industry, high growth sectors to help determine their workforce planning

needs including talent attraction, and retention, hiring, succession planning, equity, workforce development and job growth. In addition to working directly with businesses, they also initiate and build partnerships with community organizations, industry associations, education partners, and in addition to helping businesses get connected to available resources they also help serve as a bridge between the work of the workforce development and economic development divisions at DEED. These staff also assist stakeholders in implementation of the regional plan and by designing tools and resources to support businesses developing strategic workforce solutions.

The Workforce Strategy Consultant team is located within the Economic Development division of DEED to better align with the needs of employers receiving services from their various projects and initiatives.

B. EXPLAIN HOW THE STATE WILL PROVIDE INFORMATION AND MEANINGFUL ASSISTANCE TO INDIVIDUALS REQUESTING ASSISTANCE IN FILING A CLAIM FOR UNEMPLOYMENT COMPENSATION THROUGH ONE-STOP CENTERS, AS REQUIRED BY WIOA AS A CAREER SERVICE

B. EXPLAIN HOW THE STATE WILL PROVIDE INFORMATION AND MEANINGFUL ASSISTANCE TO INDIVIDUALS REQUESTING ASSISTANCE IN FILING A CLAIM FOR UNEMPLOYMENT COMPENSATION THROUGH ONE-STOP CENTERS, AS REQUIREDBY WIOA AS A CAREER SERVICE.

Local CareerForce location staff receive the training described in the prior section to provide assistance to UI claimants. Staff use this knowledge to assist the claimants in using computers and phones available to use in the local CareerForce locations. The computers and phones give the claimants and local CareerForce staff direct access to the UI program and UI staff.

C. DESCRIBE THE STATE'S STRATEGY FOR PROVIDING REEMPLOYMENT ASSISTANCE TO UI CLAIMANTS AND OTHER UNEMPLOYED INDIVIDUALS

C. DESCRIBE THE STATE'S STRATEGY FOR PROVIDING REEMPLOYMENT ASSISTANCE TO UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE CLAIMANTS AND OTHER UNEMPLOYED INDIVIDUALS.

Minnesota's strategy is centered on the Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment (RESEA) program. It's important to note that due to the state's low unemployment rate, ALL UI claimants who are seeking work (i.e. not attached to a job) are called in to RESEA sessions at CareerForce locations. This helps ensure that the Wagner-Peyser program will have direct contact with all UI applicants in the state who are not attached to a job.

Minnesota's strategy in this area will be as follows:

-
    - A Job Service staff person will attend every RESEA session that UI offers across the state. The UI program plans on offering RESEA sessions to all UI claimants who are not attached to a job.
    - The RESEA and Job Service staff will conduct a quick assessment of every UI claimant to determine who will most likely need additional services from the CareerForce location.
    - The Job Service staff person will conduct an orientation to CareerForce services either 1:1 or in a group setting (depending on the size of the group) that includes information on how to register for the state's labor exchange system, i.e.

MinnesotaWorks, and information about programs such as the Dislocated Worker program that they may be eligible for.

- The Job Service staff person will assist the RESEA customer with creating an initial registration and enrolling in the Creative Job Search workshop. Creative Job Search is typically the first job finding/job placement service that is offered to UI applicants. The workshop consists of training on how to find a job that includes career planning, preparing for the job hunt, skills identification, resumes and cover letters, applications and references, social media, interviewing skills, and more.
- Job Service will follow up with UI applicants who are not enrolled in a program to ensure that they have a complete registration and resume in MinnesotaWorks, and that they are taking advantage of job placement services.

Wagner-Peyser services will also be available to all other unemployed individuals. Anyone can enroll in the job search classes offered to UI claimants, can access 1:1 staff assistance to obtain job search assistance, career guidance, labor market information, etc., and can use MinnesotaWorks.net to search for jobs. One of the strategies employed by Wagner-Peyser that is marketed and offered to all citizens are onsite hiring events and career fairs. These events have grown in popularity and will continue to be used as a vehicle to connect all job seekers with employers.

D. DESCRIBE HOW THE STATE WILL USE W-P FUNDS TO SUPPORT UI CLAIMANTS, AND THE COMMUNICATION BETWEEN W-P AND UI, AS APPROPRIATE INCLUDING THE FOLLOWING:

D. DESCRIBE HOW THE STATE WILL USE W-P FUNDS TO SUPPORT UI CLAIMANTS, AND THE COMMUNICATION BETWEEN W-P AND UI, AS APPROPRIATE, INCLUDING THE FOLLOWING:

1. COORDINATION OF AND PROVISION OF LABOR EXCHANGE SERVICES FOR UI CLAIMANTS AS REQUIRED BY THE WAGNER-PEYSER ACT;

The UI program strongly encourages all UI applicant participants to register with the state's labor exchange system, MinnesotaWorks.net, and create a resume. Once registered, job seekers have access to all of the online features such as searching for jobs and making their resume viewable by employers registered in the system. As described in the previous Section, RESEA participants, who represent ALL UI applicants who are not attached to a job, also receive information on Wagner-Peyser services, information and referrals to eligibility-based programs (such as WIOA Dislocated Worker), orientations to CF services, and workshop enrollments.

Planning is in process to move the labor exchange system into the newly created CareerForceMN.com website. Integrating these two websites into one system will bring additional value and resources to UI claimants.

Other unemployed individuals as well as universal customers have access to the same re-employment services. Staff-assisted services such as job search workshops, assistance registering with MinnesotaWorks.net, resume writing assistance, provision of labor market information, referral to veteran services, and referral to education, training, and supportive services are offered to all job seekers.

By providing RESEA Services to all non-job attached UI Recipients, Minnesota is meeting the requirements of WPRS by providing employment services to the required UI claimants including those most likely to exhaust benefits.

2. REGISTRATION OF UI CLAIMANTS WITH THE STATE'S EMPLOYMENT SERVICE IF REQUIRED BY STATE LAW;

State law does not require UI claimants to register with MinnesotaWorks.net, however UI requires registration for RESEA program participants. As described earlier, Wagner-Peyser staff attend every RESEA workshop and provide follow up services with the intent of having every participant create a viewable resume in MinnesotaWorks.net.

3. ADMINISTRATION OF THE WORK TEST FOR THE STATE UNEMPLOYMENT COMPENSATION SYSTEM, INCLUDING MAKING ELIGIBILITY ASSESSMENTS (FOR REFERRAL TO UI ADJUDICATION, IF NEEDED), AND PROVIDING JOB FINDING AND PLACEMENT SERVICES FOR UI CLAIMANTS; AND

Wagner-Peyser Employment Service staff in Minnesota are not involved in administration of the work test or making eligibility assessments. The UI program administers the work test and does all eligibility assessments. Please refer to previous Sections for the description on how job finding and placement services are provided to UI applicants. As noted earlier, ALL UI applicants who are not attached to a job are required to attend a RESEA session, which means that all UI applicants are receiving the work test and getting an eligibility assessment.

4. PROVISION OF REFERRALS TO AND APPLICATION ASSISTANCE FOR TRAINING AND EDUCATION PROGRAMS AND RESOURCES.

All UI claimants who are not attached to employment are provided information about the availability of training and education programs at the RESEA session. This includes an explanation of how the UI claimant, if eligible, can collect benefits and receive training.

Customers who would like further information about training are assisted either by Job Service staff to gain more information and application assistance, or by program staff if the customer is eligible for a WIOA or state funded program. This same information is provided to all other unemployed individuals and the universal customer by either self-service (information provided at the CareerForce location or online links to training programs) or with staff assistance.

E. AGRICULTURAL OUTREACH PLAN (AOP). EACH STATE AGENCY MUST DEVELOP AN AOP EVERY FOUR YEARS AS PART OF THE UNIFIED OR COMBINED STATE PLAN REQUIRED UNDER SECTIONS 102 OR 103 OF WIOA. THE AOP MUST INCLUDE AN ASSESSMENT OF NEED. AN ASSESSMENT NEED DESCRIBES THE UNIQUE NEEDS OF FARMWORKERS IN THE AREA BASED ON PAST AND PROJECTED AGRICULTURAL AND FARMWORKER ACTIVITY IN THE STATE. SUCH NEEDS MAY INCLUDE BUT ARE NOT LIMITED TO: EMPLOYMENT, TRAINING, AND HOUSING.

1. ASSESSMENT OF NEED. PROVIDE AN ASSESSMENT OF THE UNIQUE NEEDS OF FARMWORKERS IN THE AREA BASED ON PAST AND PROJECTED AGRICULTURAL AND FARMWORKER ACTIVITY IN THE STATE. SUCH NEEDS MAY INCLUDE BUT ARE NOT LIMITED TO: EMPLOYMENT, TRAINING, AND HOUSING.

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Migrant labor participation is concentrated between the months of May to October, based on the growing or harvesting of the particular crops and the arrival of farmworkers attempting to secure housing for the season. The use of mechanization and chemicals in the state has reduced the number of farmworkers needed per acre in fieldwork. Many migrant farmworkers have

continued to take advantage of other longer-term employment opportunities in vegetable, meat and poultry processing companies. Farmers have also opted to use more of the H-2A foreign workers to ensure that they are able to obtain the needed workers and that the workers will remain throughout the period needed by the employer. As a result, there have been less opportunities for domestic workers to obtain farm work that includes housing that is not H-2A housing. Migrant farmworkers tend to travel with their families, including young children, and lack of housing for their families results in fewer migrant families traveling to Minnesota in search of farm work.

Because some workers return to areas where they have established relationships, they do not seek the services of the CareerForce locations. Therefore, it is difficult to provide an exact number of migrant farmworkers in this state. The 2017 Census of Agriculture released in April 2019 reports that there were 3,044 migrant farmworkers, in Minnesota, reported by farmers using their payroll records. This number is from self-reporting and may not reflect the number of farmworkers that work in food processing, smaller farms and operations, and farmworkers that were not counted due to non-participation of farmers in the 2017 Census of Agriculture. The best estimate of farmworkers for Minnesota is 5000 to 6000 migrant farmworkers residing in Minnesota during the peak season. The total number of registered Migrant and Seasonal Farmworkers in the last full program year, PY20, was 299 compared to 510 registered in PY19 .

Minnesota is expecting an increase in Hemp farming and an increase for farmworker labor in this newer industry. The Minnesota Department of Agriculture (MDA) has seen this industry more than triple in size since the beginning of their pilot program in 2016. It is expected that the harvesting of hemp for CBD oil will be the crop that generates the need for more farmworkers as this is the more labor intense product for hemp farming.

Currently, the majority of the agricultural employers in Minnesota include: Southern Minnesota Beet Sugar Cooperative (SMBSC), Lakeside Foods, Seneca Foods, and Bird's Eye Foods. Smaller agricultural employers include potato farmers, strawberry farmers, Syngenta (seed company), farmers who hire for rock pickers, smaller vegetable farmers (cucumber, cabbage, zucchini), apple farmers, and nurseries who hire seasonal workers. A concern heard from the majority of these agricultural employers is the difficulty in obtaining farmworkers due to the lack of housing in their rural areas. Small farmers and larger agricultural employers are not generally willing to provide housing for domestic workers. Larger employers that have used H-2A workers are leading the industry in Minnesota when it comes to providing housing to H-2A workers but only within the H-2A program. A need for farmworker housing for domestic workers is a need that has not been met by our state.

2. AN ASSESSMENT OF THE AGRICULTURAL ACTIVITY IN THE STATE MEANS: 1) IDENTIFYING THE TOP FIVE LABOR-INTENSIVE CROPS, THE MONTHS OF HEAVY ACTIVITY, AND THE GEOGRAPHIC AREA OF PRIME ACTIVITY; 2) SUMMARIZE THE AGRICULTURAL EMPLOYERS' NEEDS IN THE STATE (I.E. ARE THEY PREDOMINANTLY HIRING LOCAL OR FOREIGN WORKERS, ARE THEY EXPRESSING THAT THERE IS A SCARCITY IN THE AGRICULTURAL WORKFORCE); AND 3) IDENTIFYING ANY ECONOMIC, NATURAL, OR OTHER FACTORS THAT ARE AFFECTING AGRICULTURE IN THE STATE OR ANY PROJECTED FACTORS THAT WILL AFFECT AGRICULTURE IN THE STATE

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Minnesota has 68,822 farms totaling 25,516,982 million acres of the state's 50 million acres. The average farm size is 371 acres. Minnesota's growing season varies depending on where you are in the state: 100 days in the north to 150 days in the south. The Agricultural and Food Industry is the 2nd largest employer in Minnesota with (2/3) two-thirds of all agricultural jobs are off-farm, in processing, distribution, supply and service sectors. This type of employer hires domestic workers who travel, primarily, from the southern portion of the U.S., specifically, Texas, and work seasonally for this industry. There is not a shortage of workers for this industry. Minnesota has seen an increase in the implementation of H-2A workers in the more traditional farm work and nursery type work and dairy industry. Employers implementing the H-2A program, in these industries, report they have some shortage of workers and thus, turn to H-2A for labor. Minnesota is a top producer of frozen and canned vegetables. Corn is the state's most valuable crop followed by soybeans. Minnesota's leading fruit crop are apples. Minnesota leads the nation in producing sugar beets, turkeys, oats, and sweet corn and green peas for processing. The state is second only to California in wild rice production. Minnesota is unique in the production of wild rice with it being cultivated paddy wild rice and traditional Native American hand harvested wild rice. The state is also a major producer of spring wheat, canola, hogs, dry beans and milk cows.

Minnesota is a leading state in annual farm income. It ranks at 5 among the states, generating about 4% of the nation's total agricultural receipts. In terms of revenue generated Minnesota's top five agricultural products are corn for grain, hogs, soybeans, dairy products, and cattle and calves. Livestock and livestock products account for about half of the state's farm income. The most valuable livestock products are hogs, accounting for 18% of the state's total agricultural revenues.

The top crops and months of heavy activity include:

Sugar beets NW/SW MN June- October

Vegetables SE MN April-October

Potatoes Statewide March-October

Corn Central/Southern June-September

Soybeans Central/Southern June-August

Apples SE/Metro July -October

3. AN ASSESSMENT OF THE UNIQUE NEEDS OF FARMWORKERS MEANS SUMMARIZING MIGRANT AND SEASONAL FARM WORKER (MSFW) CHARACTERISTICS (INCLUDING IF THEY ARE PREDOMINANTLY FROM CERTAIN COUNTRIES, WHAT LANGUAGE(S) THEY SPEAK, THE APPROXIMATE NUMBER OF MSFWS IN THE STATE DURING PEAK SEASON AND DURING LOW SEASON, AND WHETHER THEY TEND TO BE MIGRANT, SEASONAL, OR YEAR-ROUND FARMWORKERS). THIS INFORMATION MUST TAKE INTO ACCOUNT DATA SUPPLIED BY WIOA SECTION 167 NATIONAL FARMWORKER JOBS PROGRAM (NFJP) GRANTEES, OTHER MSFW ORGANIZATIONS, EMPLOYER ORGANIZATIONS, AND STATE AND/OR FEDERAL AGENCY DATA SOURCES SUCH AS THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR (DOL) EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING ADMINISTRATION

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SECTION 167 NATIONAL FARMWORKER JOBS PROGRAM (NFJP) GRANTEES, OTHER MSFW ORGANIZATIONS, EMPLOYER ORGANIZATIONS, AND STATE AND/OR FEDERAL AGENCY DATA SOURCES SUCH AS THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR (DOL) EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING ADMINISTRATION.

Minnesota had 510 registered MSFWs for PY19 and 299 registered in PY20. In PY19 97.84% of those MSFWs identified as a person of Hispanic or Latino ethnicity compared to 97.99% in PY20. The number of registered MSFWs were identified during the high-peak season. Gender breakdown showed 50.98% reporting male gender and 49.02% reporting female gender. Data records show that in PY19 80.98% of MSFWs identified as migrant farmworkers versus seasonal farmworker, with 90.20% identifying as migrant farmworkers in PY20. The majority of the MSFWs registered identified a language barrier for a total of 67%. The primary language identified for 77.52% of the MSFWs was Spanish and 62.35% of registered MSFWs identified as having dropped out of high school.

Migrant labor participation is concentrated in the months between May-October based on the growing or harvesting of the particular crops. The use of mechanization and Roundup Ready chemicals in the state has greatly reduced the number of farm workers needed in fieldwork. Many farm workers have continued to take advantage of other longer-term employment opportunities in vegetable, meat and poultry processing companies.

Since some workers return seasonally to areas where they have established employer relationships, they do not seek the services of the local one-stop CareerForce location. Therefore, it is difficult to provide an actual number of migrant farm workers in this state. The best estimate of 5,000 to 6,000 migrant and seasonal farm workers residing in Minnesota during the peak season (May-October) with most being recruited and contracted at their permanent home base, for hire by the Food Processing and the Turkey & Poultry company recruiters/contractors. These employers offer on-site housing to the hired workers. The majority of this housing is for single adult workers. The farmworkers working in Minnesota are primarily employed by food processing companies. Food processing companies recruit the workers in Texas every spring. The migrant food processing workers arrive to the work sites in Montgomery, Glencoe, Blue Earth, Brooten, Owatonna, and Plainview, MN. Minnesota has experienced the recent closing of two food processing plants, Seneca Foods in Rochester, Minnesota, and Del Monte in Sleepy Eye, Minnesota. The number of migrant and seasonal workers affected by these closures is estimated to be almost 600. Some of the workers affected had been working, seasonally, with these employers for 15-20 years. The most recent closure occurred in 2019 at Del Monte, located in Sleepy Eye, MN.

The period of lowest MSFW activity in Minnesota is between the months of January – March. Migrant farmworkers begin to arrive in Minnesota in late April to attempt to secure their housing and this is oftentimes weeks prior to when their seasonal farm work begins.

The migrant farmworker stream in Minnesota continues to evolve with workers only wanting to assist with seasonal crop production and returning home in the off-season. Employment opportunities have shifted from actual field work to more food processing, thus changing the dynamics that makes employment more predictable based on the growth season. Workers are recruited prior to seasons, as producers recruit in Texas. Farmworkers are less interested in staying in Minnesota for training, due to family members elsewhere and climate reasons.

The majority of farmworker housing is dedicated to contracted adult workers or is severely limited in availability for migrant families. The inability to pay for housing in non-farmworker housing results in fewer migrant workers remaining in Minnesota which has caused employers to struggle with their farmworker labor needs.

Seasonal farmworkers are more likely to consider training for other occupations and to take advantage of the services provided at the AJCs due to their established residence in Minnesota.

Migrant farmworkers are faced with high cost for housing, language barrier, and limited family roots in Minnesota. This affects the level of interest in committing to training opportunities in Minnesota. Short-term training opportunities provided by Motivation Education & Training (MET), NFJP partner, are more attractive to migrant farmworkers because they are able to take advantage of those opportunities in their state of residence and not necessarily just in Minnesota.

4. OUTREACH ACTIVITIES

4. OUTREACH ACTIVITIES. THE LOCAL OFFICES OUTREACH ACTIVITIES MUST BE DESIGNED TO MEET THE NEEDS OF MSFWS IN THE STATE AND TO LOCATE AND CONTACT MSFWS WHO ARE NOT BEING REACHED THROUGH NORMAL INTAKE ACTIVITIES. DESCRIBE THE STATE AGENCY'S PROPOSED STRATEGIES FOR:

A. CONTACTING FARMWORKERS WHO ARE NOT BEING REACHED BY THE NORMAL INTAKE ACTIVITIES CONDUCTED BY THE EMPLOYMENT SERVICE OFFICES.

When the Migrant Labor Representative (MLR) is conducting outreach, the MSFW Program (bilingual) Resource Guide provides local staff and agency contact information to the MSFWs. The information is important and sometimes crucial to MSFWs, whether they are seeking agricultural or non-agricultural employment and services. The MLRs post contact information with local businesses and agencies that are frequented by the MSFWs and this information includes tear-off tabs with their names and phone numbers. These postings are written in English and Spanish. This is consistent with our commitment to universal access to labor exchange services and the requirement to ensure that all job seekers with LEP and/or little or no computer knowledge or access to computer-based labor exchange services will be provided services and assistance.

The MLRs target early outreach efforts prior to the high-peak season at its highest point. This is to make contact with MSFWs during a time when they not yet started working and to be able to connect them to support services in the area and to review AJC services information and provide farmworker rights and complaint process information. Once the MSFWs begin working they are difficult to meet with as their work schedules become a priority. Having access to farmworkers prior to the peak-season allows the MLRs to invite the farmworkers into the AJCs so that they become more familiar and comfortable with seeking services available at the AJCs. This includes job seeking services and training opportunities.

Outreach activity is concentrated in the summer and fall months when MSFW activity is at its peak. The majority of the workers that the outreach staff make contact with are food processor workers that are recruited and contracted in Texas by employers. They arrive to work in three 8 to 14 hour shifts during (June-October) the peak season

There are four one-stop CareerForce locations with significant MSFW activity in Minnesota. These CareerForce locations include a bilingual Spanish/English MLR, all of whom are bilingual / bicultural, have farmworker backgrounds and a strong commitment to their work. The MLR outreach staff perform outreach activities during the peak time of the season including scheduling and coordinating outreach efforts with the other service providers. The outreach staff provide the farmworkers and employers with information, presentations, and handouts related to employment rights and protections, job referrals and job search services. The majority of MSFWs encountered by the MLRs and other service providers (Migrant Health, Legal Services, NFJP) indicated that they are limited-English (LEP) or non-English speakers. The outreach staff assist MSFWs with translation, program registrations, the Unemployment compensation application process if needed, and provide and inform workers of all employment services to those who qualify. The staff provides informational resource guides that include eligibility information for all agency partners, and local community resources. Services will be actively promoted to farm workers as described above under the local outreach plan

Collaborating with partner agencies and organizations that provide service to MSFWs is a vital key to serving MSFWs in Minnesota. MLRs are available to attend parent meetings at Tri-Valley Opportunity Council, Inc. (migrant schools) throughout Minnesota. These meetings are held in the evenings and begin as early as 3:00 p.m. or as late as 6:00 p.m. and run for 2 to 3 hours. These meetings are scheduled to accommodate the work schedules of the MSFWs and are a perfect opportunity for MLRs to come into contact with farmworkers and present MSFW information and provide services, on-site.

Collaborative work also includes working with the Community Health staff and traveling to different locations to address the needs of the MSFWs who do not have medical coverage and cannot afford medical coverage. MLRs provide translation services for Community Health staff and are able to provide MSFW information and complete registrations for MSFWs, on-site. These collaborative efforts/events are scheduled at migrant housing camps and public parks where MLRs can strategically gain access to otherwise non-accessible farmworkers.

MLRs will often extend outreach invitations to enforcement agencies to these events and when appropriate. Employer owned housing is difficult to access and thus in those situations outreach focuses on distributing the information for partner agencies/enforcement agencies to maintain a working relationship with the employers.

Local food shelves, churches and any other opportunities that arise for outreach are always considered in order for outreach workers to provide the required services to farmworkers. Attending local community meetings and providing information on the MSFW population is a key role for our outreach efforts.

The outreach staff in the four significant local offices develop a yearly outreach plan which, in part, describes the coordination and referral system with other local community MSFW service providers and partners. This includes setting goals and objectives on employer and worker contacts, registration number of workers, job referrals and following- up on referrals to record results, increasing the number of employer visits and making contacts for job development and making assessments of the needs of farmworkers and employers. These plans are monitored by the State Monitor Advocate (SMA) as part of the office review process to ensure that MSFWs and employers have full access to all CareerForce services.

Outreach workers (MLRs) work with the Rapid Response team when a food processing company is permanently closed. They coordinate with the Rapid Response team to be able to present information on the MSFW services provided by the MLRs and they are able to present this information in Spanish. MLRs also coordinate this type of event to include the NFJP partner and include them in the presentation provided to the workers.

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B. PROVIDING TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE TO OUTREACH WORKERS. TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE MUST INCLUDE TRAININGS, CONFERENCES, ADDITIONAL RESOURCES, AND INCREASED COLLABORATION WITH OTHER ORGANIZATIONS ON TOPICS SUCH AS ONE-STOP CENTER SERVICES (I.E. AVAILABILITY OF REFERRALS TO TRAINING, SUPPORTIVE SERVICES, AND CAREER SERVICES, AS WELL AS SPECIFIC EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES), THE EMPLOYMENT SERVICE AND EMPLOYMENT RELATED LAW COMPLAINT SYSTEM("COMPLAINT SYSTEM" DESCRIBED AT 20 CFR 658 SUBPART E), INFORMATION ON THE OTHER ORGANIZATIONS SERVING MSFWS IN THE AREA, AND A BASIC SUMMARY OF FARMWORKER RIGHTS, INCLUDING THEIR RIGHTS WITH RESPECT TO THE TERMS AND CONDITIONS OF EMPLOYMENT.

Minnesota has a Specialist position dedicated as a year-round full-time State Monitor Advocate (SMA) and four full-time Migrant Labor Representatives (MLRs). The SMA provides training for the outreach workers (MLRs) includes an orientation on the WF1 (MIS) system components and the integration of the MSFW Program within WF1 to effectively and efficiently ensure the documentation of the full range of employment, career and training services provided to the farmworkers. The SMA conducts an annual Pre-Season training for the MLRs and agencies such as the Department of Labor and Industry, Office of Attorney General, Agricultural Workers Project, Community Health, Tri-Valley Opportunity Council, Inc., and NFJP partner are presenters and/or attendees. UI staff are also invited to present and discuss the unique needs of the MSFW population as it applies to their UI benefits and the role of the outreach worker. Quarterly meetings are scheduled for MSFW staff to address any areas of concern and/or to review training materials received from federal trainings attended by the SMA. The SMA also provides technical assistance to AJC staff throughout Minnesota and to the MLRs, as needed. NFJP partner, MET staff, are invited to attend and provide input on the MSFW population that we both serve and how we can work together to provide services.

The MLRs also receive updated training on customer services, workshops on Dislocated Worker programs, Employer services, SNAP, MFIP, Job Fairs, and WIOA compliance. The MLR staff are invited to and do present at company's Employee Orientations for the food processors, facilitated by the food processing companies.

MLRs (outreach workers) were able to attend the National MAFO conference in May 2018 to receive training on issues concerning and affecting farmworkers. The National MAFO conference was also attended by the NFJP partner. This training opportunity also provided valuable networking opportunities with other outreach workers from across the U.S., and other SMAs, and the National Monitor Advocate and Regional Monitor Advocate. The SMA will continue to promote the attendance of MLRs to this valuable training opportunity.

MLRs are able to participate in DOL training opportunities and to contribute to the discussions on how to best meet the needs of MSFWs in our state.

C. INCREASING OUTREACH WORKER TRAINING AND AWARENESS ACROSS CORE PROGRAMS INCLUDING THE UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE (UI) PROGRAM AND THE TRAINING ON IDENTIFICATION OF UI ELIGIBILITY ISSUES.

Migrant Labor Representatives are also required to attend monthly training webinars. These are known as Job Service training webinars and feature regular updates about providing Career Services as defined in WIOA. Additionally, these trainings focus on additional resources, strategies and concepts. The focus is usually related to providing services funded by the Wagner Peyser Act. Furthermore, an annual update about Migrant and Seasonal Farm Worker program is featured on these training webinars.

UI staff are invited to the MSFW Pre-Season trainings in order to offer updates on UI and UI processes. UI informational brochures are available for distribution by MLRs in Spanish and other languages. This information is reviewed by the MLR with MSFWs to provide all information in the MSFWs native language. Current updates from UI include the information that the online UI application will be available to the public in the next two years. This will enable MSFWs to easily complete their applications for UI.

D. PROVIDING STATE MERIT STAFF OUTREACH WORKERS PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES TO ENSURE THEY ARE ABLE TO PROVIDE HIGH QUALITY SERVICES TO BOTH JOB SEEKERS AND EMPLOYERS.

To ensure that MLR staff provides professional, high quality services to employers and job seekers. The SMA provides technical assistance and support to the outreach staff on outreach for the MSFWs and related functions, including Pre-Season Trainings on topics related to the MSFW program including Complaint Process, MIC, state and federal regulations affecting the MSFW customer. The SMA provides onsite reviews of local services provided to MSFWs. The SMA and MLRs train local staff and provide technical assistance to enhance services to MSFWs (e.g. introducing migrants and other customers to office technology, and offering translation assistance within local communities). Additionally, the SMA performs the following required activities:

- Conducts annual State-level reviews of one-stop centers and career center services and protections provided to MSFWs
- Consults with State and local staff to ensure accurate reporting of MSFW-related information
- Compiles and reports on all statistical and other MSFW-related data reported by agricultural offices quarterly
- Reviews proposed State directives, manuals, and operating instructions that pertain to MSFWs
- Participates in federal monitoring reviews
- Prepares an annual summary report of statewide services

The outreach workers (MLRs) participate in the annual Pre and Post Season MSFW Program training, which is developed and facilitated by the State Monitor Advocate (SMA). The emphasis of the training include outreach efforts, coordination with other agencies, the Complaint Process and the rights and protections afforded to MSFWs by state and federal laws. The NFJP, Motivation, Education and Training (MET, Inc.) staff is always invited to attend and present at the annual trainings. The MET staff work in partnership and collaboration with the outreach staff to deliver services and community information and resources to MSFWs and employers.

The training also includes information on services and training provided by the local CareerForce locations and all agency partners. Enforcement agencies are also invited to attend and present at the post season training, including; Wage and Hour, OSHA, Labor & Industry, Human Rights, Legal Services, Dept. of Transportation, and EEOC. The information presented and obtained from these agencies is vital and important when providing agency referrals to the farmworkers.

E. COORDINATING OUTREACH EFFORTS WITH NFJP GRANTEES AS WELL AS WITH PUBLIC AND PRIVATE COMMUNITY SERVICE AGENCIES AND MSFW GROUPS.

Minnesota has a Memorandum of Understanding with Motivation, Education and Training, Inc. (MET) the NFJP grantee since 1997. The collaboration includes team outreach days to the farmworker camps, and informational meetings held for the workers. The NFJP staff is invited to attend bi-weekly team meeting MSFW outreach staff and present at the SMA pre-season training.

MET, Inc. staff are invited and participate in conference call meetings and quarterly meetings with MSFW staff to provide input on current status of funding for training and support services offered to MSFWs by MET, Inc.

The following data is derived from the NFJP database of MET, Inc., who is an NFJP grantee for the state of Minnesota. The NFJP services and referrals were provided to farmworkers across a large area stretching from the counties of Kandiyohi, Brown, Blue Earth, Waseca, Steele and Olmsted in the southern half of the state. NFJP services were also provided in the western counties of Clay and Wilken.

- PY 2019 (7/1/2019 to 6/30/2020), the number of MSFW contacts by NFJP partner with Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED) reached 510 farmworkers.
- PY 2020 (7/1/2020 to 6/30/2021), the number of MSFW contacts by NFJP partner with Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED) reached 299 farmworkers.
- NFJP is a co-located partner in the Willmar CareerForce and the Monticello CareerForce locations and are also located in the Clay County Social Services building which is the location of the Moorhead CareerForce. . Their main office is located in Waseca, Minnesota, which is located in the southeastern portion of Minnesota.

The outreach staff in the four significant local offices develop a yearly outreach plan which, in part, describes the coordination and referral system with other local community MSFW service providers and partners. This includes setting goals and objectives on employer and worker contacts, registration number of workers, job referrals and following- up on referrals to record results, increasing the number of employer visits and making contacts for job development and making assessments of the needs of farmworkers and employers. These plans are monitored by the State Monitor Advocate (SMA) as part of the office review process to ensure that MSFWs and employers have full access to all CareerForce services.

5. SERVICES PROVIDED TO FARMWORKERS AND AGRICULTURAL EMPLOYERS THROUGH THE ONE-STOP DELIVERY SYSTEM

A. PROVIDING THE FULL RANGE OF EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING SERVICES TO THE AGRICULTURAL COMMUNITY, BOTH FARMWORKERS AND AGRICULTURAL EMPLOYERS, THROUGH THE ONE-STOP DELIVERY SYSTEM. THIS INCLUDES:

i. HOW CAREER AND TRAINING SERVICES REQUIRED UNDER WIOA TITLE I WILL BE PROVIDED TO MSFWS THROUGH THE ONE-STOP CENTERS

ii. HOW THE STATE SERVES AGRICULTURAL EMPLOYERS AND HOW IT INTENDS TO IMPROVE SUCH SERVICES.

DEED and MSFW Services' goals are to ensure that MSFWs are offered meaningful employment services, and information on benefits and protections, including counseling, testing, and job training referral services. These services and always equivalent and proportionate to services provided to non-MSFWs. Migrant Labor Representatives assist with work registration, and job

leads and provide information about the complaint system and assistance with submitting complaints and referrals for supportive services in the language of the significant proportion of the States Migrant Seasonal Farm Worker population.

MSFWs are provided the full range of employment services by outreach staff also known as Migrant Labor Representatives (MLRs) who meet with MSFWs directly at CareerForce locations and where they live and work, on an as-needed basis. Information provided to MSFWs includes the MSFW Program (bilingual) Resource Guide which provides staff and agency contact information. The information is important and sometimes crucial to MSFWs, whether they are seeking agricultural or non-agricultural employment. In addition to the full range of CareerForce services information, the Resource Guide provides a listing of resources such as: education services, food shelf contact information, health services including vaccination information, legal services, labor and workplace resources, and government agencies information. If needed services are not available through CareerForce, the MLR's will then make referrals to other agencies and organizations that are able to provide the appropriate assistance.

Through established and newly formed relationships MLR's are frequently scheduling outreach events at local businesses, schools and community based agencies that are frequented by the MSFWs. MLR's share business cards and post contact information including tear-off tabs with their names and phone numbers. These postings are written in English and Spanish. This is consistent with our commitment to universal access to labor exchange services and the requirement to ensure that all job seekers with LEP and/or little or no computer knowledge or access to computer-based labor exchange services will still be provided services and assistance. There are 50 one-stop CareerForce locations throughout Minnesota. CareerForce programs are targeted to dislocated workers, low-income adults, disadvantaged youth, welfare-to-work participants, Veterans, Justice-Involved individuals, and low-income seniors.

However, any person who lives in Minnesota can use their services. The centers offer many different classes and workshops. The locations also have services geared specifically for veterans, and Justice Involved individuals, including networking groups, job clubs and reintegration training.

- Workshops to help with job search and career planning. Examples of workshops include:
- Interviewing skills
- Networking
- Internet job searches
- Completing job applications
- Resumes and cover letters

The SMA and MLRs will continue to hold informational meetings throughout the high-peak season at the camps to provide information relevant to the MSFWs such as the Employment Service Complaint Process, the Unemployment Compensation application process, and the full range of employment services available at the local CareerForce Locations. The meeting notices are posted in advance, and held in the evening and or a weekend day, to accommodate shift work schedules. Other MSFW service provider agencies are invited to attend and present information regarding agency service eligibility, type of services offered and benefits available. The meetings are well attended by the workers and their families and provide the outreach workers an opportunity to exchange agency contact information with other agency staff. MLRs will also call or text MSFWs to let them know that they will be available to meet with MSFWs at their residence (housing camps) or location of outreach event.

The MLRs continue to contact farm workers at their work sites, living areas and gathering places. The MLRs collaborate with advocacy groups and enforcement agencies including County Social Service agencies (SNAP), Migrant Education centers, Health Service centers, local community agencies, Migrant Head Start, Migrant Legal Services, Agricultural Worker Project (AWP), Wage and Hour, Department of Labor and industry, Department of Health, and other service providers to enable them to provide outreach and locate farm workers that are missed through CareerForce outreach efforts. The cooperative referral arrangements with these agencies are based on long-standing agreements. Minnesota has a Memorandum of Understanding with Motivation, Education and Training, Inc. (MET) the NFJP grantee.

Outreach staff contact agricultural and non-agricultural employers, providing them with information about the employment services available for employers such as posting jobs, viewing resumes, hiring priority targeted populations, apprentice programs, Federal WOTC Tax Credit and Bonding programs and local Job Fairs. We distribute informational pamphlets directed to agricultural and non-agricultural employers that include contact information for the local Workforce Strategy Consultants. The SMA visits communities with substantial farmworker activity to meet with workers, local agencies and employers, to access their needs and determine the effectiveness of the CareerForce services. Also, promoting to employers the labor exchange system services website which contains information of particular importance to agricultural and non-ag employers.

Agricultural and non-agricultural employers in the area are provided information on:

- The Agricultural Recruiting System (ARS)
- Posting their job orders, Job Fairs, Apprenticeship programs
- Federal and state employment compliance regulations
- The availability of presentations by compliance agencies to growers associations, and other affected groups and organizations
- Field and quality assessments
- Mediation/interpreter services
- Liaison between migrant service providers and employer

Minnesota is working to improve outreach to agricultural employers by better marketing the ARS to all agricultural employers to ensure Minnesota meets the DOL regulatory requirements. Moving forward, the Migrant Labor Representatives and the SMA will seek new opportunities to market the ARC. Effective marketing for all CareerForce services including ARS will be accomplished through continued relationship building with the agricultural community via in-person contacts, local office recruitment activities, networking events, job fairs, and community engagement events. New outreach materials are also being developed to provide information on compliance assistance, worker protections, labor laws, and other services available to agricultural employers and job seekers. In addition, Minnesota is in the process of upgrading our labor exchange to one provided by Geographic Solutions. The new labor exchange will have greater technical capacity to serve agricultural workers and employers with improved features and significant enhancements to the ARS.

Finally, Minnesota's Governor has created a Governor's Committee on the Health, Safety, and Wellbeing of Agricultural and Food Processing Workers. The Committee is Co-Chaired by DEED and consists of representatives from multiple State Departments as well stakeholders from across the spectrum – both agricultural employer groups as well as worker advocacy organizations. This Committee presents a great forum to ensure that connections and relationships are strengthened to improve services to agricultural employers.

B. MARKETING THE EMPLOYMENT SERVICE COMPLAINT SYSTEM TO FARMWORKERS AND OTHER FARMWORKER ADVOCACY GROUPS.

The SMA and MLRs hold informational meetings throughout the peak-season at the camps to provide information relevant to the MSFWs such as the Employment Service Complaint Process, the Unemployment Compensation application process and the full range of employment services available at the local one-stop centers. The meeting notice is posted in advance, farmworkers are contacted by phone and via text messaging, partner agencies are made aware of outreach events so that they may promote the event with other agencies or workers, and the outreach events are held (usually) in the afternoons to accommodate shift work schedules. Other MSFW service provider agencies attend and present regarding agency service eligibility, type of services and benefits available. The meetings are well attended by the workers and their families and provide the outreach workers an opportunity to exchange agency contact information with other agency staff.

Collaborative outreach events will oftentimes include enforcement agencies who can review specific laws and regulations and address legal concerns from farmworkers. When conducting outreach to farmworkers the MLRs will review the complaint process with each farmworker and provide business cards for other enforcement agency contacts to assist farmworkers in obtaining legal action, when needed.

The MLRs play a significant role in assisting MSFWs with the Employment Service Complaint Process and the Unemployment Compensation application process. Farmworkers may be unfamiliar with timeframes for filing, the appeals process or deadlines for applications. The majority of these farmworkers are limited English speakers, and most are also illiterate, the wages earned in Minnesota are for the most part their total yearly earnings. LEP customers often lose their benefits because they do not understand nor respond to the information they receive. They are not aware to request that correspondence regarding services be written in their language. Many times these customer will have to reapply for a benefit/service or start over with the process, which can cost time and decrease the amount of benefits. Therefore, it is imperative that the MLRs identify these LEP customers in the registration process and inform them of their options for assistance including Language Line availability as well as translator assistance.

C. MARKETING THE AGRICULTURAL RECRUITMENT SYSTEM FOR U.S. WORKERS (ARS) TO AGRICULTURAL EMPLOYERS AND HOW IT INTENDS TO IMPROVE SUCH PUBLICITY.

Outreach staff contact agricultural and non-agricultural employers, providing them with information about the employment services available for employers such as posting jobs, viewing resumes, hiring priority targeted populations, apprentice programs, WOTC, tax credit program and local Job Fairs. We distribute informational pamphlets on the MSFW program and resources (bilingual) directed to Agricultural and non-agricultural employers that include contact information for the local one- stop offices. The SMA visits communities with substantial farmworker activity to meet with workers, local agencies and employers, to access their needs and determine the effectiveness of the CareerForce services. Also, promoting to employers is the labor exchange system services website which contains information of particular importance to agricultural and non-ag-employers. Minnesota's online labor exchange system is called MinnesotaWorks.net.net

The Agricultural Recruitment System (ARS) is promoted to employers through in-person contact during outreach to employers or at the local AJC. An informational sheet is provided to employers which lists the services provided and the requirements for participating in ARS. An employer brochure titled, "Get Help Hiring Farm Workers", is also distributed to employers during outreach. Both the ARS informational sheet and the brochure are available in the local AJC for walk-in customers who may be employers.

Farmworkers also receive information on the ARS which explains how ARS functions. Contact information for the MLRs and the SMA is listed on the informational sheet. The MLRs promote the ARS to both the employers and the farmworkers.

Employers create an employer account in MinnesotaWorks.net.net, our online self-service labor exchange system, and once approved, they may enter job postings. Employers in search of workers may also contact the local offices staff for assistance in searching for candidates who match the employers' job categories and other requirements of the positions. In addition, the outreach staff is acquainted with employers in their prospective areas who repeatedly hire seasonal workers.

Agricultural and non-agricultural employers in the area are provided information on:

- The Agricultural Recruitment System (ARS)
- Posting job orders, Job Fairs, industry events, work-based learning opportunities including apprenticeships and other training programs
- Federal and state employment compliance regulations
- The availability of presentations by compliance agencies to growers associations, and other related groups and organizations
- Field and quality assessments
- Mediation/interpreter services
- Liaison between migrant service providers and employers

The ARS will be upgraded in 2022 when Minnesota's aging MinnesotaWorks.Net system is replaced with a new compliant labor exchange. The request for proposal process that selected the new vendor included information sufficient to ensure the new system is capable of performing the required activities of the ARS.

6. OTHER REQUIREMENTS

A. COLLABORATION

4. OTHER REQUIREMENTS.

A. COLLABORATION. DESCRIBE ANY COLLABORATIVE AGREEMENTS THE STATE WORKFORCE AGENCY (SWA) HAS WITH OTHER MSFW SERVICE PROVIDERS INCLUDING NFJP GRANTEES AND OTHER SERVICE PROVIDERS. DESCRIBE HOW THE SWA INTENDS TO BUILD UPON/INCREASE COLLABORATION WITH EXISTING PARTNERS AND IN ESTABLISHING NEW PARTNERS OVER THE NEXT FOUR YEARS (INCLUDING ANY APPROXIMATE TIMELINES FOR ESTABLISHING AGREEMENTS OR BUILDING UPON EXISTING AGREEMENTS).

The SMA and MLRs hold informational meetings throughout the high-peak season at the camps to provide information relevant to the MSFWs. Other MSFW service provider agencies attend and present information regarding agency service eligibility, type of services and benefits available. The meetings are well attended by the workers and their families and provide the outreach workers an opportunity to exchange agency contact information with other agency staff.

The MLRs continue to contact farm workers at their work sites, living areas and gathering places. The MLRs collaborate with advocacy groups including County Social Service agencies (SNAP), Migrant Education centers, Health Service centers, local community agencies, Migrant Head Start, Migrant Legal Services and other service providers to enable them to provide

outreach and locate farm workers that are missed through CareerForce outreach efforts. The cooperative referral arrangements with these agencies are based on long-standing agreements.

Minnesota has had Memorandum of Understanding with Motivation, Education and Training, Inc. (MET) the NFJP grantee since 1997. In May 2019, Minnesota developed an MOU with Tri-Valley Opportunity Council, Inc. (TVOC), in order to establish more co-enrollment opportunities and increase the area of coverage in Minnesota for providing MSFW services. It is hoped that this newer MOU will assist TVOC in their goal to increase their enrollments as well as increase registrations for MSFWs.

The outreach staff in the four significant local offices develop a yearly outreach plan which, in part, describes the coordination and referral system with other local community MSFW service providers and partners. This includes setting goals and objectives on employer and worker contacts, registration number of workers, job referrals and following-up on referrals to record results, increasing the number of employer visits and making contacts for job development and making assessments of the needs of farmworkers and employers. These plans are monitored by the State Monitor Advocate (SMA) as part of the office review process to ensure that MSFWs and employers have full access to all CareerForce services.

The State Monitor Advocate and the Migrant Labor Representatives maintain close contact with the following organizations in the interest of providing effective and inclusive service to their customers:

- Southern Minnesota Regional Legal Services
- Motivation Education and Training Inc. (MET)
- Migrant-Community Health Services, Inc.
- Tri-Valley Opportunity Council, Inc. (TVOC)

B. REVIEW AND PUBLIC COMMENT

B. REVIEW AND PUBLIC COMMENT. IN DEVELOPING THE AOP, THE SWA MUST SOLICIT INFORMATION AND SUGGESTIONS FROM NFJP GRANTEES, OTHER APPROPRIATE MSFW GROUPS, PUBLIC AGENCIES, AGRICULTURAL EMPLOYER ORGANIZATIONS, AND OTHER INTERESTED ORGANIZATIONS. IN ADDITION, AT LEAST 45 CALENDAR DAYS BEFORE SUBMITTING ITS FINAL AOP, THE SWA MUST PROVIDE A PROPOSED PLAN TO NFJP GRANTEES, PUBLIC AGENCIES, AGRICULTURAL EMPLOYER ORGANIZATIONS, AND OTHER ORGANIZATIONS EXPRESSING AN INTEREST AND ALLOW AT LEAST 30 DAYS FOR REVIEW AND COMMENT. THE SWA MUST: 1) CONSIDER ANY COMMENTS RECEIVED IN FORMULATING ITS FINAL PROPOSED AOP; 2) INFORM ALL COMMENTING PARTIES IN WRITING WHETHER THEIR COMMENTS HAVE BEEN INCORPORATED AND, IF NOT, THE REASONS THEREFORE; AND 3) TRANSMIT THE COMMENTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS RECEIVED AND ITS RESPONSES WITH THE SUBMISSION OF THE AOP.

The AOP was posted on https://mn.gov/deed/gwdb/priorities/wioa/ and sent out to stakeholders by the director of the GWDB and made available for public comment. The AOP was made available via email notification to the following MSFW groups: NFJP grantee, Motivation Education and Training, Inc., (MET), Community Health Services (CHS), Tri-Valley Opportunity Council, Inc. (TVOC), Southern Minnesota Rural Legal Services/Agricultural Worker's Program (SMRLS/AWP), and all State Agencies in Minnesota. The aforementioned advocacy groups were notified and no comments were received.

C. DATA ASSESSMENT

C. DATA ASSESSMENT. REVIEW THE PREVIOUS FOUR YEARS WAGNER-PEYSER DATA REPORTS ON PERFORMANCE. NOTE WHETHER THE STATE HAS BEEN MEETING ITS GOALS TO PROVIDE MSFWS QUANTITATIVELY PROPORTIONATE SERVICES AS COMPARED TO NON-MSFWS. IF IT HAS NOT MET THESE GOALS, EXPLAIN WHY THE STATE BELIEVES SUCH GOALS WERE NOT MET AND HOW THE STATE INTENDS TO IMPROVE ITS PROVISION OF SERVICES IN ORDER TO MEET SUCH GOALS.

In PY 19, Minnesota met 4 of the 5 Equity Ratio Indicators and met 2 of the 5 in PY 20. The loss of our SMA in 2021 contributed to decreased performance in the Equity Indicators. Continued training for outreach workers to ensure that all data is accurately recorded will also assist our state to be in compliance in this area.

We met 2 of the 5 Minimum Service Level Indicators for PY 20. The replacement of Minnesota's labor exchange will improve our ARS which will improve our field checks of job orders. Having a new SMA onboard will help with our processing of complaints.

In PY 20 Minnesota surpassed the minimum number of 40 outreach contacts per week contacts per week, increasing it to 90 contacts per week total for the outreach staff..

All State Workforce Agencies (SWAs) must provide MSFWs the full range of career services of the workforce development system on a basis which is qualitatively equivalent and quantitatively proportionate to services provided to non-MSFWs (TEGL 20-16). SWAs must meet the equity indicators which include: 1) Referral to Jobs, 2) Received Staff Assisted Services, 3) Referred to Support Services, 4) Career Guidance, and 5) Job Development Contact. Four of the five equity indicators must be met. To meet the equity performance standards the percentage of services provided to MSFWs must be equal to or great than the percentage of services offered to non-MSFWs. For example, if there are 100 non-MSFWs and 50 MSFWs registered for services in the local ES office, and 50 of the non-MSFW participants are referred to employment, the local office must refer at least 25 (50%) of the MSFWs in order for that office to meet this equity ratio indicator (TEGL 20-16).

D. ASSESSMENT OF PROGRESS

D. ASSESSMENT OF PROGRESS. THE PLAN MUST INCLUDE AN EXPLANATION OF WHAT WAS ACHIEVED BASED ON THE PREVIOUS AOP, WHAT WAS NOT ACHIEVED AND AN EXPLANATION AS TO WHY THE STATE BELIEVES THE GOALS WERE NOT ACHIEVED, AND HOW THE STATE INTENDS TO REMEDY THE GAPS OF ACHIEVEMENT IN THE COMING YEAR.

Please note achievements and areas of improvement in response to the previous question. Our plan is to continue to increase our efforts in every aspect of our program requirements as we will strive to improve the number of MSFW registrations, referrals to ESL/GED, referrals to job placements, and referrals for training. Continuing to be fully staffed to ensure that we are serving the MSFW population throughout our state and maintaining our full-time SMA will enable our state to maintain compliance level in all areas. As we continue to work in a collaborative manner with our partners it will led to an increased number of placements in jobs and training for our customers.

Minnesota will be increasing the promotion of the Agricultural Recruitment System (ARS) to employers in order to make them aware of this system and the need to begin farmworker recruitment at the local level. The SMA will be working with the FLC in order to educate and guide employers in this process and provide the labor needs of the employers while providing the job opportunities to the U.S. workers prior to having employers recruit foreign workers. Promoting the ARS to farmworkers will also increase more opportunities to U.S. workers and our state will be complying with regulations in promoting and implementing ARS.

Minnesota will also be increasing the promotion of H-2A positions with MSFWs to make them aware of these job opportunities and this will increase the number of Field Checks conducted in our state.

E. STATE MONITOR ADVOCATE

E. STATE MONITOR ADVOCATE. THE PLAN MUST CONTAIN A STATEMENT CONFIRMING THE STATE MONITOR ADVOCATE HAS REVIEWED AND APPROVED THE AOP.

The State Monitor Advocate has been afforded the opportunity to review and comment and approves the AOP.

WAGNER-PEYSER ASSURANCES

The State Plan must include	Include
1. The Wagner-Peyser Act Employment Service is co-located with one-stop centers or a plan and timeline has been developed to comply with this requirement within a reasonable amount of time (sec 121(e)(3));	Yes
2. If the State has significant MSFW one-stop centers, the State agency is complying with the requirements under 20 CFR 653.111, State Workforce Agency staffing requirements;	Yes
3. If a State Workforce Development Board, department, or agency administers State laws for vocational rehabilitation of persons with disabilities, that board, department, or agency cooperates with the agency that administers Wagner-Peyser Act services, Adult and Dislocated Worker programs and Youth Programs under Title I; and	Yes
4. SWA officials: 1) Initiate the discontinuation of services; 2) Make the determination that services need to be discontinued; 3) Make the determination to reinstate services after the services have been discontinued; 4) Approve corrective action plans; 5) Approve the removal of an employer's clearance orders from interstate or intrastate clearance if the employer was granted conditional access to ARS and did not come into compliance within 5 calendar days; 6) Enter into agreements with State and Federal enforcement agencies for enforcement-agency staff to conduct field checks on the SWAs' behalf (if the SWA so chooses); and 7) Decide whether to consent to the withdrawal of complaints if a party who requested a hearing wishes to withdraw its request for hearing in writing before the hearing.	Yes

WAGNER PEYSER PROGRAM PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Performance Indicators	PY 2022 Expected Level	PY 2022 Negotiated Level	PY 2023 Expected Level	PY 2023 Negotiated Level
Employment (Second Quarter After Exit)	59.0	59.0	60.0	60.0
Employment (Fourth Quarter After Exit)	64.0	64.0	65.0	65.0
Median Earnings (Second Quarter After Exit)	7,200	8,000	7,300	8,100
Credential Attainment Rate	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
Measurable Skill Gains	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
Effectiveness in Serving Employers	Not Applicable [1]	Not Applicable [1]	Not Applicable [1]	Not Applicable [1]

1

"Effectiveness in Serving Employers" is still being developed and this data will not be entered in the 2022 State Plan modifications.

PROGRAM-SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS FOR ADULT EDUCATION AND FAMILY LITERACY ACT PROGRAMS

A. ALIGNING OF CONTENT STANDARDS

The content standards for the Minnesota adult education system comprise three components:

- The federally-developed **College and Career Readiness Standards (CCRS) for Adult Education** (https://lincs.ed.gov/publications/pdf/CCRStandardsAdultEd.pdf), which identify key English Language Arts/Literacy, Math, and Foundational Reading Skills;
- The Minnesota-developed **Academic, Career and Employability Skills (ACES) Transitions Integration Framework (TIF)** (http://atlasabe.org/professional/transitions), which identifies key professional or soft skills in the areas of Effective Communication, Learning Strategies, Critical Thinking, Self-Management, Developing a Future Pathway, Navigating Systems; and
- The Minnesota-developed **Northstar Digital Literacy Standards** (available at www.digitalliteracyassessment.org), which identify key basic digital literacy skills needed to perform tasks on computers and online.

The CCRS for Adult Education are drawn from the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) and the Minnesota state-adopted K-12 standards for English Language Arts and Literacy and align with the CCSS. The current Minnesota state-adopted K-12 standards for Mathematics encompass some content that is beyond the scope of the CCSS, but are largely aligned with the CCSS.

As part of Minnesota's federal grant competition and the state reauthorization process, awardees are required to affirm and show that their curriculum, instruction, and assessment

align to these Minnesota adult education content standards and that their staff are trained on the use of the standards.

In order to ensure that all adult education practitioners are knowledgeable about the standards listed above and understand how to use them effectively to guide instruction and programming, the Minnesota adult education system has provided ongoing systematic professional development and other support to grantees including:

- Face-to-face workshops and online trainings;
- Online courses;
- Training modules based on the College and Career Readiness Standards-in-Action training tools and processes;
- Technical assistance to eligible providers focused on standards implementation;
- Support for local Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) focused on standards implementation; and
- Online standards resource libraries.

B. LOCAL ACTIVITIES

ADULT EDUCATION AND LITERACY ACTIVITIES (SECTION 203 OF WIOA)

ADULT EDUCATION PROVIDER SELECTION AND FUNDING ALLOCATION PROCESS

The Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) is the State's Eligible Agency for Adult Education programs. MDE is responsible for administering funds and providing program/performance oversight to grantees.

During grant years 2016–17 and 21-22, MDE implemented a competitive application process for all federal AEFLA funding, including WIOA Sections 203 (adult education) and 225 (corrections education) activities. The grant competitive applications are based on the 13 considerations in Title II of WIOA and included additional state ABE priorities. As a result of that process, 41 providers from throughout Minnesota were selected to receive funding beginning July 1, 2017. Minnesota will announce the results of the 21-22 competition in June 2022. Minnesota will conduct a new grant competition during the 2027-28 year in order to identify grantees who will begin receiving federal ABE funds on July 1, 2028 (unless WIOA is reauthorized before then and requires a competition earlier).

Adult education eligible providers approved in 2022 will continue to be eligible to receive AEFLA funding, as long as they adhere to state and federal grant expectations, as measured through annual applications, financial reports, and program performance reports.

TIMELINE

The following steps and timeline were followed in 2017 and are being used again for the 2021-22 WIOA AEFLA competition:

January: MDE publishes and promotes federal AEFLA provider grant application materials

January-February: MDE provides technical assistance to inquiries from eligible providers

February-March: MDE recruits reviewers to score and rate WIOA-aligned federally-funded AEFLA grant applications

March: Due date for federal AEFLA provider grant applications

March: MDE screens applications to determine which providers in each application meet demonstrated effectiveness requirements

March/April: Applications from providers that have demonstrated effectiveness are forwarded to official reviewers and to the appropriate workforce development boards that serve the same area as the proposed application

April-May: Official reviewers score and rate federal AEFLA provider grant applications by region; workforce development boards review and provide feedback on federal AEFLA provider grant applications that fall within their workforce service areas

May-June: MDE decides which applicants will be approved as providers based on reviewer scores and ratings, workforce development board feedback, and application's response to the conditions and criteria in the application materials

June: MDE announces awarded grant applicants that will receive federal AEFLA funding as providers

July 1: Awarded federal AEFLA providers begin grant cycle, programming and funding with technical assistance provided by the MDE Adult Education team

ELIGIBLE PROVIDERS

An eligible local provider is an organization that has demonstrated effectiveness in providing adult education activities to eligible individuals and may include:

- Local education agency;
- Community-based or faith-based organization;
- Volunteer literacy organization;
- Institution of higher education;
- Public or private nonprofit agency;
- Library;
- Public housing authority;
- Nonprofit institution with the ability to provide adult education and literacy services;
- Consortium or coalition of agencies, organizations, institutions, libraries, or authorities described above;
- A partnership between an employer and an entity described above and
- Any other entity that has demonstrated effectiveness in serving eligible individuals.

APPLICATION PROMOTION AND PUBLICATION

In 2017 and in 2022, the grant opportunity was publicized in compliance with federal law, Minnesota statute, and MDE policy in order to ensure that all eligible providers had direct and equitable access to apply and compete for grants. The process was fair and equitable and followed federal AEFLA grant funding requirements and other state and federal grant procedures. MDE published and promoted all grant opportunities on its website. Any eligible

entity (described above) was able to submit a proposal. A similar process will be followed in 2028.

ALLOCATIONS

MDE dedicates at least 82.5 percent of the state allocation of federal AEFLA funding to grants to eligible providers. This amount is allocated to grantees based on scope of service (number of prior year contact hours for eligible service), accountability aid, aid to support services to participants with low incidence disabilities, regional aid to help local programs implement AEFLA initiatives, and aid to promote career pathway and integrated education and training programming.

In addition, up to 12.5 percent of the state allocation is dedicated to Leadership supporting activities such as: professional development; volunteer recruitment and training; technology; serving students with disabilities; distance learning and digital literacy; program quality support; assessment training; and career pathway and other transitions-related collaborations.

13 CONSIDERATIONS

MDE used the considerations specified in Section 231(e) of WIOA and listed below as the criteria for selecting and funding eligible providers in 2017 and 2022, which will be used again in future competitions until WIOA is reauthorized and the considerations change. As part of the RFP process, agencies were/will be required to provide narrative detail describing how they will meet each consideration.

1. Needs Assessment: The degree to which the provider is responsive to (A) regional needs as identified in the local plan under Section 108; and (B) serving individuals in the community who are identified in such plan as most in need of adult education and literacy activities, including individuals who have low levels of literacy skills and who are English language learners.

2. Individuals with Disabilities: The degree to which the provider is able to serve eligible individuals with disabilities, including eligible individuals with learning disabilities.

3. Past Effectiveness: The degree to which the provider demonstrates past effectiveness in improving the literacy of eligible individuals, to meet State-adjusted levels of performance for the primary indicators of performance described in Section 116, especially with respect to eligible individuals who have low levels of literacy.

4. Alignment with One-stop Partners: The degree to which the eligible provider is responsive to, and demonstrates alignment between, proposed activities and services and the strategy and goals of the local plan under Section 108 as well as the activities and services of the one-stop partners.

5. Intensity, Quality, and Instructional Practices: The degree to which the eligible provider's program is of sufficient intensity and quality, and based on the most rigorous research available so that participants achieve substantial learning gains; and uses instructional practices that include the essential components of reading instruction.

6. Research Based Educational Practices: The degree to which the eligible provider's activities including reading, writing, speaking, mathematics, and English language acquisition instruction, are based on the best practices derived from the most rigorous research available and appropriate, including scientifically valid research and effective educational practice.

7. Effective Use of Technology: The degree to which the eligible provider's activities effectively use technology, services, and delivery systems, including distance education in a manner sufficient to increase the amount and quality of learning and how such technology, services, and systems lead to improved performance.

8. Integrated Education and Training: The degree to which the eligible provider's activities offer learning in context, including through integrated education and training, so that an individual acquires the skills needed to transition to and complete postsecondary education and training programs, obtain and advance in employment leading to economic self-sufficiency, and to exercise the rights and responsibilities of citizenship.

9. Qualified Staff: The degree to which the eligible provider's activities are delivered by well-trained instructors, counselors, and administrators who meet any minimum qualifications established by the state, where applicable, and who have access to high quality professional development, including through electronic means.

10. Partnerships and Development of Career Pathways: The degree to which the eligible provider's activities coordinate with other available education, training, and social service resources in the community, such as by establishing strong links with elementary schools and secondary schools, postsecondary educational institutions, institutions of higher education, local workforce development boards, one-stop centers, job training programs, and social service agencies, business, industry, labor organizations, community-based organizations, nonprofit organizations, and intermediaries, for the development of career pathways.

11. Flexible Schedules and Coordination with Support Services: The degree to which the eligible provider's activities offer flexible schedules and coordination with Federal, State, and local support services (such as child care, transportation, mental health services, and career planning) that are necessary to enable individuals, including individuals with disabilities or other special needs, to attend and complete programs information management system that has the capacity to report measurable participant outcomes (consistent with Section 116) and to monitor program performance.

12. Information management system: The expectation will be that the eligible provider will use the State-administered designated MIS for all grant-related data collection and reporting; and

13. English Language Acquisition and Civics Education: The degree to which the eligible provider has a demonstrated need for additional English language acquisition programs and civics education programs.

ADDITIONAL CRITERIA

In addition to the above 13 considerations, the grant applications also required descriptions of applicants:

- Location, service area, the scope of the program, a description of the population to be served, fiscal management procedures, and audit history;
- Capacity to offer programming and evidence of the organization's past effectiveness in providing AEFLA-eligible activities and services;
- Budget, as well as programmatic information regarding statutory requirements;
- Coordination with other service providers to provide wrap-around services to participants (e.g., child care, transportation); and

- A description of how the program will align activities to the Local, Regional, and/or State Plan for WIOA providers and supportive services.

REVIEW PROCESS

During years when we have a competition, MDE screens all applications. This screening includes determining which providers meet the demonstrated effectiveness requirement. Starting in 2022, applicants are required to submit a Provider Details Worksheet for each provider included in the application. This worksheet asks each provider to share data and any additional information on past effectiveness in serving eligible adults.

- Continuing providers submit data available from the state adult education database (SiD) or any other sources that align with the WIOA indicators.
- New providers submit data on past effectiveness with eligible adults from any available sources on metrics similar to the WIOA indicators.

MDE staff review all the Provider Details Worksheets to determine which applications to send to workforce development boards and reviewers to be evaluated and scored.

Next, proposals are evaluated and scored by teams of reviewers approved by the MDE Grants Office and Adult Education Office. Reviewers score applications based on their responses to each of the 13 considerations of WIOA, the programming proposed and its alignment to the four instructional components, the articulated use of funds, and additional criteria listed above. An MDE staff person is part of each review team and facilitates the group review session, during which scores and evaluation comments are compiled into an official review document.

Workforce development boards evaluate applications for alignment to local needs and plans. Boards also document the strengths, weaknesses, and questions they have for each application. This review document is sent to MDE.

MDE selects applicants for federal AEFLA funding based on scores and feedback from reviewers and the workforce development boards. Applicants selected for federal AEFLA funding are notified in May or June and are eligible to start programming on July 1.

Annually

All approved providers are required to comply with all state and federal regulations, policies and expectations for AEFLA grantees including:

1. Using the state AEFLA database (SiD);
2. Reporting annual performance data; and
3. Additional requirements or reporting upon request by state and local agencies.

Adult Education Programming

The focus of adult education instruction in Minnesota will be the above noted content standards contextualized to enhance readiness for employment, citizenship, postsecondary education and training provided through comprehensive services that meet the diverse educational needs of students.

In accordance with federal regulation, grantees receive adult education funding for the delivery of any of the following adult education and literacy activities:

- adult education;
- literacy;
- workplace adult education and literacy activities;
- family literacy activities;
- English language and acquisition activities;
- integrated English literacy and civics education (IEL/Civics);
- workforce preparation activities; or
- integrated education and training, which

1. provides adult education and literacy activities, concurrently and contextually with both, workforce preparation activities, and workforce training for a specific occupation or occupational cluster, and

2. is for the purpose of educational and career advancement.

Eligible providers are required to implement such activities in accordance with the following federal definitions:

Adult education means academic instruction and education services below the postsecondary level that increase an individual's ability to read, write, and speak in English and perform mathematics or other activities necessary for the attainment of a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent; transition to postsecondary education and training; and obtain employment.

Literacy means an individual's ability to read, write, and speak in English, compute, and solve problems, at levels of proficiency necessary to function on the job, in the family of the individual, and in society.

Workplace adult education and literacy activities means adult education and literacy activities offered by an eligible provider in collaboration with an employer or employee organization at a workplace or an off-site location that is designed to improve the productivity of the workforce.

Family literacy activities means activities that are of sufficient intensity and quality to make sustainable improvements in the economic prospects for a family, and that better enable parents or family members to support their children's learning needs, and that integrate all of the following activities:

A. Parent or family adult education and literacy activities that lead to readiness for postsecondary education or training, career advancement, and economic self- sufficiency.

B. Interactive literacy activities between parents or family members and their children.

C. Training for parents or family members regarding how to be the primary teacher for their children and full partners in the education of their children.

D. An age-appropriate education to prepare children for success in school and life experiences.

Special Rule for Family Literacy

MDE will not use any funds made available under this title for adult education and literacy activities for the purpose of supporting or providing programs, services, or activities for individuals who are under the age of 17 and are enrolled or required to be enrolled in secondary school under State law, except that the agency may use such funds for such purpose if

such programs, services, or activities are related to family literacy activities. In providing family literacy activities under this title, MDE will attempt to coordinate with programs and services that are not assisted under this title prior to using funds for adult education and literacy activities under this title for activities other than activities for eligible individuals.

English language acquisition program means a program of instruction designed to help eligible individuals who are English language learners achieve competence in reading, writing, speaking, and comprehension of the English language; and that leads to attainment of a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent; and transition to postsecondary education and training; or employment.

Integrated English literacy and civics education means education services provided to English language learners who are adults, including professionals with degrees and credentials in their native countries, that enables such adults to achieve competency in the English language and acquire the basic and more advanced skills needed to function effectively as parents, workers, and citizens in the United States. Such services shall include instruction in literacy and English language acquisition and instruction on the rights and responsibilities of citizenship and civic participation, and may include workforce training.

Workforce preparation activities means activities, programs, or services designed to help an individual acquire a combination of basic academic skills, critical thinking skills, digital literacy skills, and self-management skills, including competencies in utilizing resources, using information, working with others, understanding systems, and obtaining skills necessary for successful transition into and completion of postsecondary education or training, or employment.

Integrated education and training means a service approach that provides adult education and literacy activities concurrently and contextually with workforce preparation activities, and workforce training for a specific occupation or occupational cluster for the purpose of educational and career advancement.

All funded programs will be required to offer the above listed kinds of programming concurrently based on the needs of the population served and encouraged to blend as much programming as possible into coordinated occupational training, employment, and academic pathways as possible by addressing all standards (CCRS, ACES, and Northstar) in all program components, contextualizing secondary credential programming and providing "navigation" support.

Federal funds may be used to increase the level of other funds that would be available in the absence of federal funds, and, in no case, replace those other funds. Federal funds must not be used for the purpose of supplanting, only for supplementing.

C. CORRECTIONS EDUCATION AND OTHER EDUCATION OF INSTITUTIONALIZED INDIVIDUALS

Each eligible agency using funds provided under Programs for Corrections Education and Other Institutionalized Individuals to carry out a program for criminal offenders within a correctional institution must give priority to serving individuals who are likely to leave the correctional institution within 5 years of participation in the program.

Correctional Institution Programs

MDE awards funds to carry out corrections education and education for other institutionalized individuals within correctional institutions in accordance with the requirements of section 225. Funds for corrections education are competed as part the Federal Adult Education competitive grant process for Section 203 activities. The application asks potential grantees and providers that are applying to offer corrections education activities must describe the proposed specific

corrections education activities in the application narrative. Applicants wanting to provide corrections education activities must be approved through the federal adult education grant competition in order to receive funding.

Each grantee that receives funds provided under section 225 to carry out a program for criminal offenders within a correctional institution shall give priority to serving individuals who are likely to leave the correctional institution within five years of participation in the program. Applicants must describe in their grant application how they give priority to individuals most likely to leave the correctional institution within five years of participation in the program.

Section 225(a) of WIOA states, "from funds made available under Section 222(a)(1) for a fiscal year, each eligible agency shall carry out corrections education or education for other institutionalized individuals. The funds described shall be used to provide: (1) Adult education and literacy services, (2) Special education as determined by the eligible agency, (3) Secondary school credit, and (4) Integrated education and training; (5) Career pathways; (6) Concurrent enrollment; (7) Peer tutoring; and (8) Transition to re-entry initiatives and other post-release services with the goal of reducing recidivism."

MDE reserves no more than 20 percent of its federal AEFLA grant funding to provide programs for corrections education and education for other institutionalized individuals as described in Section 225 and uses the same application process being used for section 231 funds. A single applicant was approved to provide services to Minnesota's Department of Corrections system. County corrections facilities as well as other facilities such as state hospitals, rehabilitation centers, and limited retention facilities will be addressed by applicants competing for the service area in which they are located.

D. INTEGRATED ENGLISH LITERACY AND CIVICS EDUCATION PROGRAM

Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education (IELCE)

The goals of IELCE are to:

(1) prepare adults who are English language learners for, and place such adults in, unsubsidized employment in in-demand industries and occupations that lead to economic self-sufficiency; and

(2) integrate with the local workforce development system and its functions to carry out the activities of the program.

The IELCE grant opportunity allows potential eligible providers to show evidence of their past effectiveness in serving adult English language learners. All applicants must demonstrate past effectiveness by providing performance data on their record of improving the skills of eligible individuals, particularly eligible individuals who have low levels of literacy, in the content domains of reading, writing, mathematics, English language acquisition. An eligible provider must also provide information regarding their outcomes for participants related to employment, attainment of secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent, and transition to postsecondary education and training.

There are two ways in which an eligible provider may meet the requirements above. An eligible provider that has been funded under title II of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act must provide performance data required under section 116 to demonstrate past effectiveness.

Or, an eligible provider that has not been previously funded under title II of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act must provide performance data to demonstrate its past effectiveness in serving basic skills deficient eligible individuals, including evidence of its success in achieving outcomes listed in paragraph (A1) of this section. (CFR § 463.24)

Minnesota accepts all applications that have shown demonstrated past effectiveness for at least a year within the past five years. For applicants using WIOA performance data they must not be significantly below the state average in all areas.

A concerted effort has been made by the MDE Adult Education Team to identify populations of professionals with degrees and credentials in their native countries. Work will continue with the Office of Refugee Resettlement and the Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED) to identify individuals in this category.

All IELCE grantees are required to provide all four instructional components as outlined in WIOA including:

1. English Literacy
2. Civics (defined as instructing on the rights and responsibilities of citizenship and civic participation in the U.S.A.)
3. Workforce Preparation (operationalized in Minnesota as the ACES Transitions Integration Framework that identifies key workforce preparation skills in the areas of self-management, developing a future pathway, navigating systems, effective communication, learning strategies, and critical thinking in addition to Northstar Digital Literacy)
4. Work Training and Certification

All IELCE applicants must articulate within their grant application a plan that outlines how the provider will develop an instructional program that integrates all four essential IELCE instructional components. In addition, providers are eligible for ongoing technical assistance and are required to evaluate the effectiveness of their programming and report on outcomes, lessons learned and best practices.

Minnesota grantees are required to address the College and Career Ready Standards (CCRS), Minnesota's Academic, Career and Employability Standards (ACES) Transitions Integration Framework (TIF), and Northstar Digital Literacy Standards. In addition, grantees will be required to provide English instruction contextualized to both civics content and occupational training with the occupational training opportunities comprising both short-term certificate programs as well as more extended career pathways.

The grant opportunity is a multi-year grant offered through a competitive application process specifically for IELCE Education (Section 243) grant funds. Spring of 2022 the next grant opportunity will be offered. The maximum amount for the grant is $150,000 and the minimum is $20,000. In the past, 12 -14 applicants have been approved to receive an IELCE award.

The application materials require that applicants describe:

- The programming they would implement and how it incorporates the four instructional components as described above;
- How the grant funds will be used to fund the described programming; and
- Address the WIOA Title II 13 considerations.

Eligible providers for IELCE include local education agencies, community-based organizations (including faith-based organizations), volunteer literacy organizations, institutions of higher education, public or private nonprofits, public housing authorities, libraries, consortiums of the above, and a partnership between an employer and an entity described above

A fair and equitable process is followed to allow all eligible entities the opportunity to apply for the IELCE grant. MDE publishes all grant opportunities on its website. IELCE are rated and

scored by teams of reviewers approved by the MDE Grants Office and Adult Education Office. Each application is also reviewed by the local workforce development board in which they are located and the review is taken into consideration when awarding grants.

The review process for selecting successful applicants includes formally scoring applications on their responses to each of the 13 considerations of WIOA, the programming proposed and its alignment to the four instructional components, and the articulated use of funds. IELCE grantees are also required to describe how their program comprises a clear pathway to occupational training that incorporates the IET model including: how the civics and literacy instruction relates to and prepares students for successful transition to and participation in the IET component of the pathway.

Grantees are also asked to describe how their program collaborates with other entities and aligns to workforce development regional needs including providing:

1. Evidence of alignment to local or regional needs as outlined by local workforce boards and/or partners in the workforce development plans, including how applicant will promote concurrent enrollment with programs in Title I.
2. Indications of alignment between proposed activities and services and the strategy and goals of the local plan under section 108 of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, as well as the activities and services of the one-stop partners.
3. How IELCE programming is developed in coordination and collaboration with other educational, training, and social service resources in the community. Partner entities could include elementary schools and secondary schools, postsecondary educational institutions, institutions of higher education, local workforce development boards, one-stop centers, job training programs, social service agencies, business, industry, labor organizations, community-based organizations, nonprofit organizations, and intermediaries.

In addition, IELCE grantees are also required to describe how their program comprises a clear pathway to occupational training that incorporates the IET model including: how the civics and literacy instruction relates to and prepares students for successful transition to and participation in the IET component of the pathway. IELCE grant applications must also describe how their program aligns with local WIOA plans including preparing participants for living-wage, in-demand occupations identified in the plan and must include English Language programming designed to provide participants the means to developed skills that are contextualized to in-demand occupation. Grant applications that propose more extensive coordination and integration of local workforce services into the IELCE program receive higher scores.

A state ABE staff member meets monthly with the LWDB staff and the Office of Refugee Resettlement to ensure the grant activities are promoted and connected to the services provided by other WIOA titles. In addition, ABE representatives to the LWDBs receive ongoing support to integrate ABE programming, including IELCE, with the one-stop partners. Grantees receive considerable technical assistance from the MDE Adult Education Team and will be convened for targeted professional development that emphasizes current best-practices.

E. STATE LEADERSHIP

1. DESCRIBE HOW THE STATE WILL USE THE FUNDS TO CARRY OUT THE REQUIRED STATE LEADERSHIP ACTIVITIES UNDER SECTION 223 OF WIOA

MDE uses funds made available under section 222(a)(2) to enhance the quality of programming in the adult education system. Not more than 12.5 percent of the grant funds made available are used to carry out State leadership activities under section 223.

STATE LEADERSHIP

A. THE ALIGNMENT OF ADULT EDUCATION AND LITERACY ACTIVITIES WITH OTHER CORE PROGRAMS AND ONE-STOP PARTNERS, INCLUDING ELIGIBLE PROVIDERS, INCLUDING THE DEVELOPMENT OF CAREER PATHWAYS TO PROVIDE ACCESS TO EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING SERVICES FOR INDIVIDUALS IN ADULT EDUCATION AND LITERACY ACTIVITIES.

MDE will work collaboratively with other core programs and partner agencies to align and coordinate services for program participants. State-level policy and planning bodies provide an opportunity for Minnesota's Adult Education system and local programs to partner with workforce development, human services, higher education and other key agencies. Leadership funds will be used to build the capacity of grantees to coordinate and align services. Specific areas of capacity building include intake/orientation, eligibility screening, and referral between partners, and other joint mechanisms developed through agency partnerships. In addition, the development of all components of career pathways will continue to be a priority with a focus on bridge programming and integrated education and training.

B. THE ESTABLISHMENT AND OPERATION OF HIGH QUALITY PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS TO IMPROVE THE INSTRUCTION PROVIDED PURSUANT TO REQUIRED LOCAL ACTIVITIES, INCLUDING INSTRUCTION INCORPORATING THE ESSENTIAL COMPONENTS OF READING INSTRUCTION AS SUCH COMPONENTS RELATE TO ADULTS, INSTRUCTION RELATED TO THE SPECIFIC NEEDS OF ADULT LEARNERS, INSTRUCTION PROVIDED BY VOLUNTEERS OR BY PERSONNEL, AND DISSEMINATION OF INFORMATION ABOUT MODELS AND PROMISING PRACTICES RELATED TO SUCH PROGRAMS.

Minnesota supports a statewide adult education professional development (PD) advisory committee that meets quarterly to identify key present and future PD needs, develop PD plans and resources, identify and implement best practices in PD, and coordinate and align PD activities for an efficient and effective PD system. This advisory committee has approximately 25 members, and includes state adult education staff, PD providers and local ABE instructors and administrators.

The Minnesota PD system uses a data-driven planning process to identify PD needs and set priorities for each year. The results of an annual statewide PD needs assessment of local providers, along with evaluation data from previous PD efforts, research regarding best practices, and federal recommendations are used to inform PD priorities and the design and delivery of PD activities. Professional development activities are aligned to the MN adult education PD standards, which emphasize research-based features of effective professional development – longer-term, job-embedded activities with opportunities for collaborative participation and the application of new knowledge and skills. Both statewide and regional opportunities are provided for adult educators to develop and share their knowledge and skills in order to improve the quality of instruction delivered in local programs. These PD activities include professional learning communities, study circles, statewide and regional conferences, online courses, webinars, and others. Evaluation of PD outcomes, especially evidence of teacher change and quality of implementation of new knowledge and skills, is integrated into every initiative to ensure the effectiveness of PD activities.

State leadership funds will be used to support professional development activities that focus on a variety of areas of emphasis, including content standards implementation, evidence-based reading instruction (EBRI), adult learning, research-based instructional methodologies, volunteer training and management, effective program management, integrated education and training, bridge programming, transition to postsecondary education, use of technology, distance education, universal design, serving students with disabilities, and volunteer training and recruitment.

The MDE adult education office contracts for professional development services related to research-based literacy, numeracy, English language instruction, content standards, and transitions. These PD activities include STAR (Student Achievement in Reading) training and technical assistance; EBRI study circles, online courses, and resource dissemination; and the implementation of content standards. More information regarding existing training provided may be viewed on the ATLAS (ABE Teaching and Learning Advancement System) homepage: www.atlasabe.org.

In addition, the MDE adult education office contracts to deliver professional development and technical assistance in the arena of serving adults with disabilities and to maintain a disabilities website: https://pandamn.org/. The disabilities website has received considerable national attention and is used by adult education professionals across the country. The disabilities service provider also provides training on using Universal Design for Learning principles and strategies to address the varied needs of adult learners. All disability-related activities are consistent with and contribute to implementation of Minnesota's Olmstead plan.

The MDE adult education office contracts to provide statewide services in the areas of volunteer tutor training, volunteer management, and client referral services (an online Literacy Hotline and a phone hotline). The services are described in detail at: https://www.literacymn.org.

C. THE PROVISION OF TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE TO ELIGIBLE PROVIDERS OF ADULT EDUCATION AND LITERACY ACTIVITIES RECEIVING FUNDS UNDER THIS TITLE, INCLUDING—

- The development and dissemination of instructional and programmatic practices based on the most rigorous or scientifically valid research available and appropriate, in reading, writing, speaking, mathematics, English language acquisition programs, distance education, and staff training;
- The role of eligible providers as a one-stop partner to provide access to employment, education, and training services; and
- Assistance in the use of technology, including for staff training, to eligible providers, especially the use of technology to improve system efficiencies.

MDE will deliver technical assistance to eligible providers to enhance program effectiveness, increase the ability of providers to meet established performance standards, and fulfill obligations associated with being a one-stop partner. Specific areas of focus will include:

(1) Increasing the capacity of instructors and programs to provide quality instruction in the areas of reading, writing, speaking, mathematics, English language acquisition, and distance education via implementation of professional development activities and associated technical assistance such as:

- STAR training and Evidence-Based Reading Instruction study circles;
- EBRI online courses;
- Annual Language and Literacy Institute;

- Annual Math Institute;
- Adult Career Pathway and IET (Integrated Education and Training) workshops and institutes;
- Distance and Blended Learning Basics for Minnesota Adult Education online course;
- Distance learning professional development cohorts (DL 101 and DL 102);
- Minnesota distance learning website; and
- Online resource libraries in the areas of ACES (academic, career, and employability skills), adult career pathways, adult diploma/high school equivalency, adult education staff orientation, CCR standards, cultural competency, ESL, numeracy, project-based learning, reading, science, social studies and civics, and writing

(2) Enabling providers to establish, build upon, or maintain effective relationships with other core providers via training on referral systems, data sharing/reporting, integrating education with occupational training, and transition strategies for postsecondary enrollment or employment.

(3) Using technology to improve program effectiveness through training and technical assistance focused on preparing instructors and program administrators to identify and utilize technology to enhance instruction, programming, and distance education. The MDE Adult Education Office contracts with supplemental service providers to provide professional development in the area of educational technology, digital literacy instruction, and distance learning through activities such as face-to-face and online training. More information about current technology training can be found at: https://www.literacymn.org/distancelearning-PD. A list of current online courses available can be found at: https://literacymn.crhosts.cloud/. Training and technical assistance around distance education and digital literacy is also offered through a contracted provider. More information about current training and resources can be found at: www.literacymn.org/distancelearning.

In addition, other training and technical assistance focuses on the effective use of the statewide data system to maintain accurate student data and continuously improve programming. This support is offered in a variety of formats and venues.

D. THE MONITORING AND EVALUATION OF THE QUALITY OF, AND THE IMPROVEMENT IN, ADULT EDUCATION AND LITERACY ACTIVITIES AND THE DISSEMINATION OF INFORMATION ABOUT MODELS AND PROVEN OR PROMISING PRACTICES WITHIN THE STATE.

MDE will provide grantee oversight to include data monitoring, site visits and a program improvement process for low performing grantees. The following strategies will be implemented:

- Data Reviews – The statewide MIS (SiD) has local and state-level reports to facilitate ongoing review in the areas of assessment, attendance and compliance. In addition, the MDE Adult Education team meets with SiD staff monthly to review current data issues and providers flagged through the technical assistance and reporting processes.
- Monitoring Calls and Visits – MDE creates monitoring visits for the following grantees: 1. all grantees have a visit as part of the five- to six-year state reauthorization process; 2.

grantees identified via data review with issues that get escalated by the MDE Adult Education team and SiD staff due to a need for more in-depth investigation; 3. grantees flagged as low-performing during the program improvement process; and 4. Grantees that are part of a state or federal initiative where a visit is deemed an important part of the process; and 5. Grantees or providers that request monitoring visits. Monitoring calls and visits can be virtual or in-person. Monitoring visits focus primarily on compliance-related issues but additional issues can be included by the grantee, the provider, and/or the MDE Adult Education team. (For more information on monitoring visits, please see the response to (f) below.)

- Program Improvement Process - Local providers that fall significantly below state and federal program performance targets and grant expectations will be subject to a program improvement process. Over the course of one year, a provider in program improvement will:

○ Host site visits from staff from MDE;

○ Participate in workshops focusing on analyzing and improving local program results;

○ Develop a program improvement plan that will highlight key local challenges, ensure program compliance with state and federal policy, and identify strategies and timelines to improve program performance; and

○ Receive additional technical assistance from MDE and other adult education specialists, as needed.

The program improvement process will last at least one program year. The grantee will have successfully completed the process once they: develop and implement a program improvement plan that is approved by the MDE Adult Education team; adhere to grant and program improvement expectations as established by the MDE Adult Education team; and show acceptable student outcomes (based on state and federal targets) at the end of the process through the annual grant performance reports. Grantees that continue to fall significantly below state and federal targets and grant expectations will be subject to participate in program improvement again. Grantees that fall significantly below state and federal targets and do not meet grant expectations three consecutive years, may be subject to a special review by MDE to determine if the grantee should continue to receive AEFLA funding.

Regarding sharing best practices, the Minnesota Adult Education team and professional development providers will employ a variety of methods to ensure that information about proven or promising practices and models is disseminated to eligible providers and practitioners working in the Adult Education system. These will include activities such as:

- Local program site visits, as described in f.5 below;
- A weekly electronic professional development newsletter with information about training opportunities, high-quality resources, and promising practices for instruction and programming;
- Sessions at state and regional conferences showcasing promising practices and models;
- Webinars showcasing promising practices and models; and
- Job-embedded professional development activities, including professional learning communities, study circles and peer observations.

2. DESCRIBE HOW THE STATE WILL USE THE FUNDS TO CARRY OUT PERMISSIBLE STATE LEADERSHIP ACTIVITIES UNDER SECTION 223 OF WIOA, IF APPLICABLE

Permissible State Leadership Activities

Some of the WIOA Adult Education Leadership funds will be used to support permissible leadership activities in a variety of areas including: professional development; volunteer training and outreach; technology and distance education training; assessment and support staff training; disability-related training and support; transitions and workforce development services; statewide initiatives; and racial equity in adult education.

Racial equity is a key priority for the Minnesota adult education system. In order to advance this priority, state funds have been allocated to support a new grant focused on racial equity in adult education. Grant activities include conducting a racial equity analysis of the state adult education system, making recommendations to support racial equity efforts at the state and program level, and convening adult education stakeholder and learner advisory groups to support equity efforts.

F. ASSESSING QUALITY

MDE prioritizes and measures program quality through accountability expectations and activities that focus on both compliance and best practice according to research and experience. The expectations and activities include:

1. THE STATE ADULT EDUCATION MANAGEMENT INFORMATION SYSTEM (MIS) DATA: Minnesota's MIS, called SiD, balances both program quality and program compliance with state and federal expectations. In addition to required reports, local providers can use SiD to analyze student persistence, program outcomes, and other measures at the consortium, site, class and student level.

2. A STATE ADULT EDUCATION GRANTEE REPORT CARD: The report card notes actual performance and ranks providers by key program data measures, including measurable skill gain by population, cost of programming per individual served, intensity of service provided, and percentage of population served.

3. A PROGRAM IMPROVEMENT PROCESS: Programs will be identified for review based on rankings in the state adult education report card and will undergo a comprehensive review and monitored implementation of a program improvement plan that requires local providers to complete site visits, workshop activities, reports, and plans to strengthen program performance and quality. (For more information on Program Improvement, see the response to (D) above.)

4. INTENSIVE PROGRAM APPLICATION CYCLE: On a five- to six-year basis, adult education providers are required to complete an in-depth application as a method to adhere to state statute governing local adult education programming. In this intensive application, local providers describe their:

1. Consortium,
2. Program accountability procedures,
3. Professional development priorities and activities,
4. Proposed programming,
5. Local program governance,
6. Program collaboration with key stakeholders and partners,
7. Technology resources and integration,
8. Future plans, and
9. Performance.

These in-depth applications are reviewed and scored by a team of state staff from MDE and local AEFLA providers.

5. GRANTEE MONITORING SITE CALLS AND VISITS: All grantees are subject to monitoring calls and site visits that focus on policy compliance and program quality through multiple methods:

1. All AEFLA grantees receive site visits on a rotating basis, at least once every five-to-six years, when the program participates in in-depth application process to continue receiving state adult education (ABE) funding to comply with state statute;
2. Monitoring visits based on items that get escalated by the MDE Adult Education team through the monthly data review process;
3. Providers with low performance participate in site visits through the program improvement process;
4. Local adult education providers that participate in state initiatives and/or receive special grants through state or federal funding typically receive site visits as part of their participation; and
5. Local providers request special technical assistance site visits as they face issues.

6. ASSESSING THE QUALITY OF PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS:

1. Minnesota will continue to implement the Student Achievement in Reading (STAR) program. Evaluation of STAR training comprises both training participant surveys as well as analysis STAR classroom assessment results.
2. Minnesota's Adult Education Supplemental Services system, which is funded with a combination of state and federal leadership funds provides training the supports local programs in implementing program components needed to meet the wide range of needs of Minnesota's adult education participants including: distance education, use of technology for instruction as well as program management; services related to serving students with disabilities; instructional methodology including STAR and the Minnesota Numeracy Initiative; content standards including CCRS, ACES and North Star; IET, contextualization and career pathway programming; volunteer recruitment and training; assessment; partner collaborations including workforce, TANF and SNAP, etc. Information regarding the relevance, quality and success of each component is collected through an annual professional development survey. In addition, quarterly reporting regarding participation and locally collected participant evaluations are required of all Supplemental Services providers.
3. The statewide Supplemental Services noted above are available to all paid and volunteer staff.
4. Dissemination of information about models and promising practices are facilitated by Minnesota's Supplemental Services providers. Each provider maintains a website of related resources and all providers provide content for Minnesota's monthly PD Update newsletter. Minnesota also maintains a career pathway-related curriculum repository. Information regarding the success of the dissemination system is collected annually as part of the Professional Development Survey and via locally collected participant evaluations.

ADULT EDUCATION AND FAMILY LITERACY ACT PROGRAM CERTIFICATIONS

The State Plan must include	Include

The State Plan must include	Include
1. The plan is submitted by the State agency that is eligible to submit the plan;	Yes
2. The State agency has authority under State law to perform the functions of the State under the program;	Yes
3. The State legally may carry out each provision of the plan;	Yes
4. All provisions of the plan are consistent with State law;	Yes
5. A State officer, specified by title in the certification, has authority under State law to receive, hold, and disburse Federal funds made available under the plan;	Yes
6. The State officer who is submitting the plan, specified by the title in the certification, has authority to submit the plan;	Yes
7. The agency that is submitting the plan has adopted or otherwise formally approved the plan; and	Yes
8. The plan is the basis for State operation and administration of the program;	Yes

ADULT EDUCATION AND FAMILY LITERACY ACT PROGRAM ASSURANCES

The State Plan must include	Include
1. The eligible agency will expend funds appropriated to carry out title II of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) only in a manner consistent with fiscal requirements under section 241(a) of WIOA (regarding the supplement-not-supplant requirement);	Yes
2. The eligible agency will ensure that there is at least one eligible provider serving each local area, as defined in section 3(32) of WIOA;	Yes
3. The eligible agency will not use any funds made available under title II of WIOA for the purpose of supporting or providing programs, services, or activities for individuals who are not "eligible individuals" within the meaning of section 203(4) of WIOA, unless it is providing programs, services or activities related to family literacy activities, as defined in section 203(9) of WIOA;	Yes
4. Using funds made available under title II of WIOA to carry out a program for criminal	Yes

The State Plan must include	Include
offenders within a correctional institution, the eligible agency will give priority to serving individuals who are likely to leave the correctional institution within five years of participation in the program.	
5. The eligible agency agrees that in expending funds made available under Title II of WIOA, the eligible agency will comply with sections 8301 through 8303 of the Buy American Act (41 U.S.C. 8301-8303).	Yes

AUTHORIZING OR CERTIFYING REPRESENTATIVE

APPLICANT'S ORGANIZATION	**Enter information in this column**
Applicant's Organization	Minnesota Department of Education
PRINTED NAME AND TITLE OF AUTHORIZED REPRESENTATIVE	**Enter information in this column**
First Name	Heather
Last Name	Mueller
Title	Commissioner, Minnesota Department of Education
Email	brad.hasskamp@state.mn.us

SECTION 427 OF THE GENERAL EDUCATION PROVISIONS ACT (GEPA)

The Minnesota Department of Education Grants Office ensures that a fair and equitable process is followed that allows all eligible entities the opportunity to apply for the grant.

The Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) requires that Adult Education grant applicants describe the race/ethnicity and other demographics of the student population served in comparison to the demographics of the geographic area served. In addition, applicants must describe how they plan to address equitable access to and participation in programming for all members of the communities they serve; how they will build a common understanding of equity among program staff; and what staff professional development regarding equity they will provide. MDE monitoring activities include reviewing: dis-aggregated enrollment data in comparison with K-12 Limited English Proficiency enrollment and local demographic data; agency outreach, intake and course placement practices; agency program course and progression structures; and implementation of the above noted plans.

The Minnesota Department of Education supports Adult Education providers in addressing equity by providing both program supports and professional development through a several competitive state and federally (leadership) funded Supplemental Services grants. The Supplemental Service grants are competed every three years and include grants focused on providing services for students with disabilities; using instructional technology including distance/asynchronous learning; and instructional methodology including evidence-based practices in reading (STAR) and math; and ELL instructional best practice. Program supports provided by Supplemental Services grantees include: a web site focused on providing services to participants with disabilities, an accommodations resource lending library, outreach materials, and statewide access to technical assistance from specially trained staff. Professional

development opportunities available to all Adult Education program staff include Universal Design, inclusive programming, cultural competency, mental health, shared programming, career pathway development, course design and other topics. The Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) requires that Adult Education grant applicants describe the racial and other demographics of the student population served in comparison to the demographics of the geographic area served. In addition, applicants must describe how they plan to address equitable access to and participation in programming for all members of the communities they serve; how they will build a common understanding of equity among program staff; and what staff professional development regarding equity they will provide. MDE monitoring activities include reviewing: dis-aggregated enrollment data in comparison with K-12 Limited English Proficiency enrollment and local demographic data; agency outreach, intake and course placement practices; agency program course and progression structures; and implementation of the above noted plans. The Minnesota Department of Education supports Adult Education providers in addressing equity by providing both program supports and professional development through a several competitive state and federally (leadership) funded Supplemental Services grants. The Supplemental Service grants are competed every three years and include grants focused on providing services for students with disabilities; using instructional technology including distance/asynchronous learning; and instructional methodology including evidence-based practices in reading (STAR) and math (Minnesota Numeracy Initiative); and ELL instructional best practice. Program supports provided by Supplemental Services grantees include: a web site focused on providing services to participants with disabilities, an accommodations resource lending library, outreach materials, and statewide access to technical assistance from specially trained staff. Professional development opportunities available to all Adult Education program staff include Universal Design, inclusive programming, cultural competency, mental health, shared programming, career pathway development, course design and other topics.

ADULT EDUCATION AND LITERACY PROGRAM PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Performance Indicators	PY 2022 Expected Level	PY 2022 Negotiated Level	PY 2023 Expected Level	PY 2023 Negotiated Level
Employment (Second Quarter After Exit)	34.3%	34.3%	35.0%	35.0%
Employment (Fourth Quarter After Exit)	35.0%	35.4%	36.0%	36.0%
Median Earnings (Second Quarter After Exit)	$6,000	$6,190	$6,100	$6,200
Credential Attainment Rate	19.0%	19.3%	20.0%	20.0%
Measurable Skill Gains	25.0%	27.5%	27.0%	28.0%
Effectiveness in Serving Employers	Not Applicable [1]	Not Applicable [1]	Not Applicable [1]	Not Applicable [1]

1

"Effectiveness in Serving Employers" is still being developed and this data will not be entered in the 2022 State Plan modifications.

PROGRAM-SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS FOR VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION (COMBINED OR GENERAL)

A. INPUT OF STATE REHABILITATION COUNCIL

1. INPUT PROVIDED BY THE STATE REHABILITATION COUNCIL, INCLUDING INPUT AND RECOMMENDATIONS ON THE VR SERVICES PORTION OF THE UNIFIED OR COMBINED STATE PLAN, RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE COUNCIL'S REPORT, THE REVIEW AND ANALYSIS OF CONSUMER SATISFACTION, AND OTHER COUNCIL REPORTS THAT MAY HAVE BEEN DEVELOPED AS PART OF THE COUNCIL'S FUNCTIONS;

VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION (GENERAL)

The State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) provides ongoing input and recommendations to VRS.

The SRC made several recommendations to the designated state unit, which fell into six broad categories:

1. Communications

- Recommended improving communications with the broader community about what VR does to alleviate current misconceptions.
- Recommended communicating effectively with families if their student doesn't say they are interested in services. There appears to be a possible gap from the PACER perspective.
- Recommended VRS prep all participants in a placement plan meeting so the individual parties know what to expect and know their individual roles and responsibilities in the meeting.
- Recommended changing the website temporarily while there are fewer staff available to answer calls.
- Recommended having a dedicated point of contact/specialist for organizations, similar to the Autism specialist Abbie Wells Herzog, who is a VRS contact for AusM.

2. Building relationships with business

- Recommended creating tangential self-learning tools to the bite size learning modules (such as evaluations, measures of learning, take-away cards to spark discussion with teammates, etc.)

3. Strengthening the VRS team

- Recommended VRS have dedicated HR and talent acquisition staff.
- Recommended surveying outgoing staff to determine reasons for exit.

4. Serving underserved populations/Inclusivity

- Recommended a pilot project lifting some restrictions (incentivizing), especially around PBAs, for LUVs that work with New Americans and collect data to show its effectiveness. Incentivizing the organizations that are active and connected to underserved communities may bring more people who have been marginalized by the system.
- Recommended targeting young parents up to age 21. A local organization contacted PACER because many of its participants have identified disabilities and have had difficulty getting connected to VR in a way that results in a plan for employment.

- Recommended exploring the relationship between the barriers that some organizations face and the disparities we see in services provided to people who are typically underserved (e.g., are there individuals with disabilities accessing housing vouchers or food stamps but not VR services? Does that reflect on VR's lack of outreach to that population? If they are struggling to access those services as well, there may be a different issue).
- Recommended consideration of reading levels, complexity of the information being provided and training for individuals to work appropriately with someone who has significant cognitive and other adaptive skill limitations.
- Recommended adding benefits coaching to the CSNA as a gap area in service delivery. There needs to be more consistency across the service spectrum. Participants should be aware of other support programs, such as MAEPD (Medical Assistance for Employed People with Disabilities). SRC members reported that sometimes there is inaccurate information coming from counties or the Disability Hub, making it more important for VRS to have correct information.
- Recommended changes to RSA and DEED to make gender reporting more inclusive.

5. Measuring Customer Satisfaction

- Collect information over several points in the process, not just at the end.
- Continue to explore accessible modes of data collection. Phone surveys or email surveys may not be the best mode for some individuals.
- Track where responses are coming. If there's a disability group or other group we don't get responses from, that may need to be explored further.
- Track who filled out the survey. Was it the participant or other (family member, etc.)?
- SSB did a survey of transition-aged youth and had one survey for the participant and a separate one for the parent/guardian. Recommend following using this approach as both points of view are very important.
- Consider surveying individuals if they have been in the same activity status for a long period, not just at changes in status.
- Call surveys (and think of them as) "satisfaction check-ins."
- Let people know the results of the check-ins will not go directly to their counselor. Individuals should not fear retaliation for giving honest feedback.
- Track trends not only at the organizational level, but at the office and counselor levels as well.
- Recommended looking further into data to determine how often "No longer interested in services" might be individuals who are lacking executive functioning skills.

6. Strengthening Direct Services

- Recommended providing services for students who missed services due to COVID, such as Career-intensive programs geared toward students with disabilities.
- Recommendations for in-home services:
    - Recommended staff go in as teams during the pilot

- Recommended having one team member be responsible for documentation during meetings. Less time is spent on case noting later.

2. THE DESIGNATED STATE UNIT'S RESPONSE TO THE COUNCIL'S INPUT AND RECOMMENDATIONS; AND

The Director of Vocational Rehabilitation Services and the Director of Public Affairs attended most meetings of the SRC and responded to questions from the council. The director has reviewed the recommendations put forth by the council and agrees to maintain transparency with the council and keep recommendations at the forefront in decisions regarding the broad categories identified in this report.

Responses to specific recommendations:

1. Communication

All recommendations from the SRC in this area are carefully considered. Vocational Rehabilitation Services continues to maintain a close collaboration with the communications office of the designated state agency (the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development – DEED). Communications and social media staff routinely disseminate information and notifications specific to the VR program and its activities, and VRS regularly leverages that capacity to provide public information in a timely and efficient manner. VRS also seeks to strengthen its website to give people more ways to quickly and easily connect with VRS, such as a web form to prevent back and forth phone calling. We are also working with partners on better facilitating "warm handoffs" in a virtual environment.

VRS has many points of contact in specialized areas and assigned staff available as resources to individuals and organizations and will work to make that information more available.

2. Serving underserved populations/Inclusivity

This area is one of VRS' top priorities, in which it seeks continuous improvement. Some of the following actions were taken to address the recommendations of the SRC:

- VRS lifted funding limits significantly to incentivize LUVs, which includes those that work with New Americans and other underserved populations.
- VRS assumed they were already reaching individuals up to the age of 21 who are parents with transition services and Pre-ETS. We will seek clarifying information from the SRC and pursue this area in the coming year and develop a targeted action plan.
- VRS does not have access to the type of data the SRC recommended exploring (e.g. individuals with disabilities accessing housing vouchers or food stamps, etc.) but do make connections through discussions with the Olmstead Implementation Office and local Workforce Development Boards. VRS will continue to actively participate in these conversations at the statewide and local levels.
- Benefits Planning services, including benefits coaching services, are offered for VRS participants receiving SSA benefits. Policy Guidance and Benefits Planning and Ticket to Work (TTW) training were developed and provided to VRS staff serving students and adult participants. Also, VRS partners with the state Medicaid agency to build capacity and opportunity for youth and adults receiving SSA benefits to learn about work and benefits. VRS staff and Medicaid agency staff provide training and mentoring to any Community Rehabilitation provider who wants to offer benefits coaching services. The goal is to build capacity statewide so that people on SSA can access information about their benefits and work.

- VRS has made the recommendation for gender reporting to be more inclusive. This cannot be implemented at the local level until there is consensus between the core programs and also at the federal level (Departments of Labor and Education).

3. Strengthening direct services

VRS is still unable to go into schools and continues to attempt to provide services and Pre-ETS as able. We are also in ongoing discussions and development of an in-home services pilot.

4. Building relationships with business

These recommendations were implemented.

5. Measuring Customer Satisfaction

This information will be utilized as customer satisfaction tools are developed.

6. Strengthening the VRS team

VRS is currently hiring dedicated HR and talent acquisition staff. We also offer exit interviews to every exiting employee.

3. THE DESIGNATED STATE UNIT'S EXPLANATIONS FOR REJECTING ANY OF THE COUNCIL'S INPUT OR RECOMMENDATIONS.

There were no formal recommendations made to VRS that were rejected by the designated state unit.

B. REQUEST FOR WAIVER OF STATEWIDENESS

1. A LOCAL PUBLIC AGENCY WILL PROVIDE THE NON-FEDERAL SHARE OF COSTS ASSOCIATED WITH THE SERVICES TO BE PROVIDED IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE WAIVER REQUEST;

VRS has no waivers of statewideness at this time.

2. THE DESIGNATED STATE UNIT WILL APPROVE EACH PROPOSED SERVICE BEFORE IT IS PUT INTO EFFECT; AND

VRS has no waivers of statewideness at this time.

3. REQUIREMENTS OF THE VR SERVICES PORTION OF THE UNIFIED OR COMBINED STATE PLAN WILL APPLY TO THE SERVICES APPROVED UNDER THE WAIVER.

VRS has no waivers of statewideness at this time.

C. COOPERATIVE AGREEMENTS WITH AGENCIES NOT CARRYING OUT ACTIVITIES UNDER THE STATEWIDE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM

1. FEDERAL, STATE, AND LOCAL AGENCIES AND PROGRAMS;

Following is a discussion of Vocational Rehabilitation Services' collaborative arrangements with federal, state and local agencies and with private entities that are not formal components of the statewide workforce investment system.

(A) Interagency agreement with Minnesota Department of Human Services Minnesota State Operated Community Services (DHS-MSOCS)

Beginning May 15, 2019, DEED-VRS implemented an interagency agreement with DHS Minnesota State Operated Community Services (MSOCS) to coordinate trainers and mentors for the Minnesota Customized Employment Training (MNCE). The agreement, which is revised annually, lays out the expectations of both DEED and DHS staff who will ensure that training and

mentoring services are available for MNCE students and auditors. The agreement also makes plain how funding generated from the training will be split between the two agencies. The funds generated by the training are intended to only cover the costs of the MN CE Trainers and Mentors.

(B) Interagency agreement with Minnesota Department of Human Services (DHS)

Beginning 10/27/21, DEED-VRS entered an interagency agreement with DHS to develop a series of videos with Kevin Kling, a nationally renowned author, storyteller and artist. The videos will focus on students and youth with disabilities who are developing their career paths. They will reflect students and youth of diverse backgrounds, diverse abilities and goals. The students and youth will also reflect racial, cultural and gender diversity. These videos will be used by DEED-VRS Transition Counselors and Pre-ETS Representatives to support Pre-ETS students thinking about career planning. They will also support VRS' role with students for LEAs and families. The videos will be embedded in the Disability HUB, a DHS web-based site focused on information and resources for people with disabilities, and reside in the Youth in Transition Toolkit that was developed by DHS and VRS.

(C) Olmstead Subcabinet

The Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED) is active on the Governor's subcabinet to implement the Olmstead Plan that was approved by the U.S. District Court on September 29, 2015. The subcabinet "embraces the Olmstead decision as a key component of achieving a better Minnesota for all Minnesotans and strives to ensure Minnesotans with disabilities will have the opportunity, both now and in the future, to live close to their families and friends, to live more independently, to engage in productive employment and to participate in community life" (2013 vision statement). The employment section of the plan listed two population-level indicators: 1) Increase the employment rate of persons with disabilities so it is comparable to the employment rate of persons without disabilities and 2) Increase the employment earnings of persons with disabilities so they are comparable to the earnings of persons without disabilities.

(D.) Governor's Council on Developmental Disabilities

Vocational Rehabilitation Services is active on the Governor's Council on Developmental Disabilities and provides a representative for each term. The mission of the Minnesota Governor's Council on Developmental Disabilities is to provide information, education, and training to build knowledge, develop skills, and change attitudes that will lead to increased independence, productivity, self-determination, integration and inclusion (IPSII) for people with developmental disabilities and their families.

(E) Minnesota Autism Interagency Committee

Representatives from Minnesota's Departments of Education, Human Services, Health, and Employment and Economic Development meet monthly to share information, departmental innovation, and the ongoing needs of individuals and families affected by autism.

(F) Minnesota Council on Disability

Vocational Rehabilitation Services provides ex-officio membership to the Minnesota Council on Disability (MCD). MCD's mission is to serve people with disabilities in Minnesota through development of effective policy, training, technical resources and collaborations with public and private stakeholders. Their vision is "a barrier-free Minnesota where every person with a disability has full access to all aspects of life."

(G) Cooperative agreements with the White Earth Nation Tribal VR program and the Red Lake Nation Tribal VR program

VRS and State Services for the Blind provide information, technical assistance, training opportunities, and support to the state's two tribal VR programs. A formal process is in place for referral and transfer of cases in accordance with best practices ensuring choice. Although not a part of the formal written agreement, the Social Security Administration's Area Work Incentive Coordinator plays a crucial role in providing technical assistance on benefits planning.

(H) U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment Services

Memorandum of Understanding to enhance work opportunities for veterans with disabilities by sharing information, coordinating activities, and offering complementary services.

(I) Ticket to Work Employment Networks

Beginning January 19, 2021, VRS hosts quarterly meetings with existing and prospective Employment Networks to promote Partnership Plus job retention services following VRS/SSB case closure and provide important updates about SSA's Ticket to Work. Also invited to these meetings are Social Security Liaison, Department of Human Services, Disability Hub, and Minnesota's WIIPA (Goodwill's Work Incentives Connection). This level of collaboration between VR, the WIIPA SSA and DHS is unprecedented in Minnesota.

(J) Professional Vocational Rehabilitation counseling organizations

Active participation relating to ongoing professional development for staff and to counselor recruitment takes place through well-established working relationships with and memberships on the boards of the Minnesota Rehabilitation Association, including the Minnesota Rehabilitation Counseling Association chapter.

(K) Performance-based funding for placement services provided by Community Rehabilitation Programs and Limited Use Vendors

Placement providers receive milestone and outcome payments for facilitating successful outcomes for VR customers. The first milestone is payable when the Placement Plan is developed, the second milestone is paid when the first employment shift is completed, and a final outcome payment is paid with successful placement closure. Beginning July 1, 2017, VRS included Placement and Retention Services information in both VRS Policy and Guidance as well as an electronic link to that same guidance within the Professional/Technical Contract for all Community Rehabilitation Providers (CRP) and Limited Use Vendors (LUV). Guidance includes information on Performance Based Agreement (PBA) milestones and outcomes as well as definitions and Service Types and Titles. VRS staff and Community Rehabilitation Providers express that the consistent guidance has reduced confusion and is leading to better common understanding about PBA milestones, invoicing and payments.

2. STATE PROGRAMS CARRIED OUT UNDER SECTION 4 OF THE ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY ACT OF 1998;

The Minnesota STAR (System of Technology to Achieve Results) Program: The STAR Program, a program within the Minnesota Department of Administration, is funded by the Department of Health and Human Services in accordance with the Assistive Technology Act of 1998, as amended. Vocational Rehabilitation often refers people to STAR for a device demonstration. This allows consumers to compare benefits and features of a particular device or category of devices. Once a decision on a device is made, the person can borrow the device for 30 days to make sure it meets their needs before VR purchases the item. VR also maintains an agreement with STAR to provide VR assistive technology specialists with commonly used devices for use in doing assessments with consumers.

3. PROGRAMS CARRIED OUT BY THE UNDER SECRETARY FOR RURAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE;

There currently is no formalized working relationship between the Department of Agriculture and Vocational Rehabilitation Services. Historically, a Memorandum of Understanding existed between the USDA's AgrAbility Project and Vocational Rehabilitation Services field offices under which consumers accessed programs funded by USDA Rural Development in support of their employment plans. However, the provider which held that grant did not get refunded and have closed down. The Minnesota USDA Rural Development Office does use technical economic and forecasting information provided by DEED to develop and market its services.

4. NON-EDUCATIONAL AGENCIES SERVING OUT-OF-SCHOOL YOUTH; AND

The designated state unit maintains a close working relationship with the local Workforce Development Boards' Youth Programs, including the Youth Disability Employment Initiative. One of the service providers has become an Employment Network so they can continue benefits planning and job retention services after WIOA services have ended.

VECTOR Youth Project for Deaf/DeafBlind: state funding managed by VRS provides support for enhanced transition services to youth who are deaf, hard-of-hearing, or DeafBlind in Minnesota. Enhanced services include work readiness classes, college preparation classes, driver's education, community-based work experiences, and paid internships in competitive employment. For students who transition to college, high school instructors work with the college for the first semester to make sure all needed accommodations are in place and students are supported.

5. STATE USE CONTRACTING PROGRAMS.

Since the mid-1990s, Minnesota state agencies have been legislatively encouraged to purchase goods and services from small businesses operated by individuals with disabilities. In 2007, the Legislature enacted a set-aside program, providing that 19 percent of the total value of all state janitorial contracts be awarded to community rehabilitation organizations approved by VRS as service providers under the VRS Extended Employment Program. During the 2010 legislative session, the set-aside program was expanded to include document imaging, document shredding, mailing, collating, and sorting services. Further, the amount of each contract awarded under this section may exceed the estimated fair market price for the same goods and services by up to 6 percent.

D. COORDINATION WITH EDUCATION OFFICIALS

1. THE DESIGNATED STATE UNIT'S PLANS, POLICIES, AND PROCEDURES FOR COORDINATION WITH EDUCATION OFFICIALS TO FACILITATE THE TRANSITION OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES FROM SCHOOL TO THE RECEIPT OF VR SERVICES, INCLUDING PRE-EMPLOYMENT TRANSITION SERVICES, AS WELL AS PROCEDURES FOR THE TIMELY DEVELOPMENT AND APPROVAL OF INDIVIDUALIZED PLANS FOR EMPLOYMENT FOR THE STUDENTS

(A) Memorandum of Understanding

Vocational Rehabilitation Services (VRS), State Services for the Blind (SSB), and Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) have a memorandum of understanding (MOU) to achieve better coordination between schools and VR services and to create a bridge from the school to VRS or SSB prior to school exit. The intent of the agreement is to:

- Provide consultation and technical assistance to Local Education Agencies (LEAs) in planning for the transition of students with disabilities from school to post-school activities including postsecondary education, training, competitive integrated employment and independent living.
- Provide secondary transition planning by personnel of DEED's VRS alongside secondary special education and career and college readiness staff through the delivery of pre-

employment transition services and vocational rehabilitation services under the Rehabilitation Act and transition services under the IDEA.

- Define the roles and responsibilities, including financial responsibilities, of each agency, including provisions for pre-employment transition services, vocational rehabilitation services and IDEA transition services.
- Designate procedures for outreach to and identification of students with disabilities who are in need of pre-employment transition services and/or vocational rehabilitation services. Outreach to students should occur as early as age 14.
- Outline services and documentation requirements set forth in section 511 of the Rehabilitation Act, as added by the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), with regard to youth with disabilities who are seeking subminimum wage employment.
- Provide assurance that neither the SEA nor the LEA will enter into an arrangement with an entity holding a special wage certificate under section 14(c) of the Fair Labor Standards Act for the purpose of operating a program under which a youth with a disability is engaged in work at a subminimum wage.

(B) Coordinated services for youth in special education

Minnesota law mandates a coordinated system of services for youth, birth to 21, who are involved in special education. The Minnesota System for Interagency Collaboration (MnSIC) was formed to develop and implement this system. VRS is represented on MnSIC, and VRS staff participate on subcommittees that develop service strategies for students and recommendations for governance and coordination of state and local collaborative efforts.

(C) Personal Learning Plans

Minnesota statute 120B.125, "Planning for Students' Successful Transition to Postsecondary Education and Employment" requires Minnesota school districts to assist all students by no later than age 14 to explore their educational, college, and career interests, aptitudes, and aspirations and develop a plan for a smooth and successful transition to postsecondary education or employment. VRS staff work with students and schools to ensure that VRS pre-employment transition services and transition services align with and contribute to each student's Personal Learning Plan.

(D) Community Transition Interagency Committee (CTIC)

CTICs promote statewide interagency coordination to remove system barriers and expand community services. CTICs are regional groups that include parents, students, advocacy groups, local businesses, county government, postsecondary education, vocational education, community education, corrections, SSA health care, and other local service providers. VRS staff serve on all CTICs, thereby helping to improve and expand vocational services that result in employment outcomes.

(E) Rehabilitation counselors assigned to high schools

VR counselors are assigned to all public, private, and charter high schools in Minnesota. They are active participants on transition planning teams so that each VR eligible student with a disability can access VR and Pre-Employment Transition services and establish a written VR plan before leaving school. Outreach efforts include working with school nurses, guidance counselors, case managers, principals, social workers, 504 personnel, community agencies and work experience coordinators to identify students with disabilities who are not in special education programs. Referrals of students with disabilities that might benefit from VR is sought as soon as possible so that employment services can begin well before the student leaves school.

(F) Pre-Employment Transition Services rehabilitation representatives assigned to high schools

At least one Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) Rehabilitation Representative is assigned to each of VRS' 23 teams. In cases of VRS teams covering vast service areas, there are two Pre-ETS Rehabilitation Representatives assigned. The Pre-ETS Rehabilitation Representative's role is to provide outreach and Pre-ETS to potentially eligible students in all schools within their team's geographic area. Their outreach is similar to what is explained in the counselor's outreach described above. They provide Pre-ETS to students with disabilities age 14 through age 21.

(G) Interagency agreement to purchase used assistive technology devices

When a student with a disability transitions into a work environment or postsecondary program, VRS may purchase any assistive technology device that the student's former school district purchased on his or her behalf.

2. INFORMATION ON THE FORMAL INTERAGENCY AGREEMENT WITH THE STATE EDUCATIONAL AGENCY WITH RESPECT TO:

A. CONSULTATION AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE TO ASSIST EDUCATIONAL AGENCIES IN PLANNING FOR THE TRANSITION OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES FROM SCHOOL TO POST-SCHOOL ACTIVITIES, INCLUDING VR SERVICES;

DEED's VRS and MDE's Special Education and Career and College Success Divisions will work together to ensure that consultation and technical assistance, which could include video conferences and conference calls, is provided to LEA staff in planning for the transition of students with disabilities to post-school activities. This includes implementing a structure for ensuring pre-employment transition services and vocational rehabilitation services are made available statewide for those who need these services.

DEED's VRS and MDE's Special Education and Career and College Success Divisions will collaborate and promote transition to adult services through participation in existing councils, committees, and other work groups within respective agencies.

DEED's VRS will ensure that a counselor(s) is assigned to each school district and charter school in the state who will provide consultation and technical assistance to LEA staff on an as-needed basis related to the transition of students with disabilities from school to post-school activities.

MDE's Special Education and Career and College Success Divisions in consultation with DEED's VRS will develop training and communication tools for the LEA staff regarding WIOA and how it intersects with IDEA and the schools.

B. TRANSITION PLANNING BY PERSONNEL OF THE DESIGNATED STATE AGENCY AND EDUCATIONAL AGENCY THAT FACILITATES THE DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THEIR INDIVIDUALIZED EDUCATION PROGRAMS;

1. DEED's VRS and SSB and MDE's Special Education and Career and College Success staff will provide technical assistance and consultation regarding these five required pre-employment transition services made available to students with disabilities who need them, ages 14 through age 21 statewide:

- Job exploration counseling to assist students with disabilities in understanding their work-related strengths and interests and what career possibilities there are;
- Work-based learning experiences, which may include in-school or after school opportunities, or experience outside the traditional school setting (including

internships), that is provided in an integrated environment in the community to the maximum extent possible;

- Counseling on opportunities for enrollment in comprehensive transition or postsecondary educational programs at institutions of higher education;
- Workplace readiness training to develop social skills and independent living; and
- Instruction in self-advocacy (including instruction in person-centered planning), which may include peer mentoring (including peer mentoring from individuals with disabilities working in competitive integrated employment).

2. DEED's VRS counselors will attend meetings for the development of Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) when invited. Counselors will use the IEPs with students to assist in developing the Individualized Plans for Employment (IPE).

DEED's VRS and MDE's Special Education and Career and College Success Divisions agree to share responsibility for ensuring that schools are aware of and how to use the tools to support students with disabilities to receive current information about their strengths, interests and preferences in order to make informed choices about competitive integrated employment prior to leaving school.

DEED's VRS and MDE's Special Education and Career and College Success Divisions agree to share responsibility for ensuring that schools which serve students with disabilities receive information about the benefits of providing career information.

C. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES, INCLUDING FINANCIAL RESPONSIBILITIES, OF EACH AGENCY, INCLUDING PROVISIONS FOR DETERMINING STATE LEAD AGENCIES AND QUALIFIED PERSONNEL RESPONSIBLE FOR TRANSITION SERVICES;

DEED's VRS assists students with disabilities in making informed choices to prepare for, obtain, maintain, advance in, or regain competitive integrated employment. Services include the provision of pre-employment transition services for students who are eligible or potentially eligible for VR services. They also include assessing an individual's VR needs, developing and implementing an IPE, and assisting in the achievement of the employment goals for the individuals that have applied for VR services, have been found eligible and are in an open priority category.

MDE's Special Education Division is responsible for ensuring that local education agencies provide special education and related services as documented in students' IEPs.

DEED's VRS and MDE's Special Education and Career and College Success Division are responsible for coordination necessary to satisfy documentation requirements set forth in WIOA and 34 CFR 397.10 (b)(i) and (ii) with regard to students and youth with disabilities who are seeking subminimum wage employment.

DEED's VRS and MDE's Special Education and Career and College Success Divisions are financially responsible for the services they provide under their own laws and rules. Nothing will be construed to reduce the obligation under IDEA of a local educational agency or any other agency to provide or pay for any transition services that are also considered special education or related services and that are necessary for ensuring a free appropriate public education to children with disabilities within Minnesota.

DEED's VRS and MDE's Special Education and Career and College Success Divisions are responsible to ensure that neither the LEA nor VR agencies may shift the burden for providing a service, for which it otherwise would be responsible, to the other entity. Decisions related to which entity will be responsible for providing transition or vocational rehabilitation services

that can be considered both a special education and a VR service will be made at the state and local level as part of the collaboration between the VR agencies, SEAs, and LEAs.

Considerations in making funding decisions could include:

- The purpose of the service: Is it related to outcomes for employment or education?
- Which agency customarily provides the service?
- Is the student eligible for transition services under the IDEA and/ or pre-employment transition services or vocational rehabilitation services under the Rehabilitation Act?

D. PROCEDURES FOR OUTREACH TO AND IDENTIFICATION OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES WHO NEED TRANSITION SERVICES.

Outreach and Identification

1. DEED's VRS and MDE's Special Education and Career and College Success Divisions will work together to develop outreach tools related to competitive integrated employment for students with disabilities, parents or representatives of students with disabilities, school personnel, and other community agencies. Materials will include a description of the purpose of the VR programs, application procedures, eligibility requirements, priority for services, and scope of services that may be provided to eligible individuals.
2. DEED's VRS and MDE's Special Education and Career and College Success will work together with LEAs to ensure that outreach and identification of students in need of/ who could benefit from pre-employment transition services takes place statewide.
3. To provide information to students and their families/guardians about pre-employment transition services and/or vocational rehabilitation services, DEED's VRS will be allowed to receive "directory information" from LEAs. In accordance with Minnesota (M.S. 13.32) and federal (20 U.S.C.A. 1232g (5)(A)) laws, "directory information" is defined, in part, as the student's name, address, telephone listing, and date of birth.
4. DEED's VRS and MDE's Special Education and Career and College Success will work together with LEAs to ensure outreach to: students receiving special education services under IDEA; students receiving accommodations under section 504; students receiving school psychological, health, nursing, or social work services; and other students who have disabilities as defined in Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, but who do not receive IDEA services nor have a 504 plan.
5. DEED's VRS will provide outreach to the following school staff to identify students in need of pre-employment transition services and/ or vocational rehabilitation services: teachers/case managers, work coordinators, guidance counselors, school nurses, 504 coordinators, school social workers, alternative learning center staff, principals, school mental health coordinators, and school psychologists.

Coordination and documentation requirements under WIOA Section 511 and 34 CFR 397, Limitations on use of subminimum wage:

1. DEED's VRS, in collaboration with MDE's Special Education and Career and College Success Divisions will work together with LEAs to ensure that students with disabilities have meaningful opportunities to prepare for, obtain, maintain, advance in, or regain competitive integrated employment, including supported or customized employment.
2. DEED's VRS and MDE's Special Education and Career and College Success Divisions will work together with LEAs to ensure that outreach and identification of students with disabilities who are seeking subminimum wage employment in order for VRS to offer

vocational counseling, guidance, information and referral related to competitive integrated employment.

3. DEED's VRS will ensure, as appropriate, that students with disabilities who are seeking subminimum wage employment and who have applied for VR services are determined eligible or ineligible for VR services; have an approved IPE; receive pre-employment transition services; and receive appropriate reasonable accommodations and appropriate supports and services, including supported and customized employment services, that assist in obtaining and maintaining a competitive integrated employment outcome.
4. DEED's VRS and MDE's Special Education and Career and College Success Divisions will provide LEAs the required processes and forms to document the required actions specified under WIOA for all students with disabilities who are seeking subminimum wage employment.
5. MDE's Special Education and Career and College Success Divisions will work with LEAs to ensure that documentation of completed IDEA transition services is provided to DEED's VRS staff within 30 calendar days of the completion of the IDEA transition services for students who are seeking subminimum wage employment and have applied for VR services.
6. DEED's VRS and MDE's Special Education and Career and College Success Divisions will work together with LEAs to ensure that in the event a student with a disability or, as applicable, the youth's parent or guardian, refuses, through informed choice, to participate in the actions required under WIOA, the refusal is documented. LEA staff will provide this documentation to VRS or within 5 calendar days of the refusal and VRS or staff will provide the documentation to students within 10 calendar days of the refusal.
7. DEED's VRS will ensure that all students with disabilities who are seeking subminimum wage employment receive documentation of the required actions specified under WIOA within 45 calendar days of completion of the required actions.

Assurance related to WIOA Section 511 and 34 CFR 397, Limitations on use of subminimum wage

1. In accordance with 34 CFR 397.31, MDE's Special Education and Career and College Success Divisions, through the MDE Career Technical Education Program approval and expense approval process, will ensure that neither the SEA nor LEAs enter into a contract with an entity, as defined in WIOA 34 CFR 397.5(d) for the purpose of operating a program under which a student with a disability is engaged in work compensated at a subminimum wage.

E. COOPERATIVE AGREEMENTS WITH PRIVATE NONPROFIT ORGANIZATIONS

The VR program provides specialized, one-on-one employment services for individuals with disabilities. While VR program state-staff provide some services directly, the VR program also partners with businesses and organizations in local communities throughout the state to provide employment services. A Community Partner must have a Professional/Technical Master Contract (P/T Contract) with the VR program to provide services as a Community Partner for an individual in the VR program. The P/T Contract is the mechanism that contains the employment services structure, expectations, purchases, and pricing.

The VR program purchases services such as vocational evaluation, skill training, internships, job development and job placement, on-the-job training, and time-limited job coaching. Services must be consistent with an employment plan developed between counselor and customer, based on the consumer's informed choices and offered in integrated settings.

(1) Community Partners

Minnesota distinguishes between two categories of vendor: a "limited use vendor" and the unlimited use community rehabilitation program (CRP). This arrangement permits wide selection of services and system flexibility and emphasizes the use of providers accredited by the national Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF).

Community Partners designated as Community Rehabilitation Programs (CRPs) are accredited by the Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF). Accreditation represents an industry assurance that the CRP meets or exceeds nationally and internationally recognized service standards and is focused on delivering the most favorable results for persons served. Per state rule, service providers that are CARF accredited have no pre-determined maximum budget cap for their P/T contract. A budget maximum is negotiated with the VR program as part of the contract application and negotiation process.

Community Partners designated as Limited-Use Vendors (LUVs) are service providers that are not CARF-accredited. Per state rule, VRS must limit the amount of business it does with LUVs through funding limits and shorter contract terms. Upon negotiation with the VR program, LUVs may conduct business up to $100,000 a year with VRS after a Professional and Technical (P/T) Services Master Contract has been approved. Limited use providers (those without CARF accreditation) introduce competition to the rehabilitation marketplace and provide an entry point for new providers in response to an unmet or emerging service need.

(2) Written Assurances

Providers must provide written assurances about their organizational missions, operations (including audits and lines of authority), staff development and qualifications, services, fees, populations served, standards of professional practice, and adherence to customers' employment plans. They must also provide written assurance regarding vendor compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, Minnesota Human Rights Act and other employment law on individual rights, accessibility, occupational health and safety, and data privacy.

(3) VRS Support for Community Partners

VRS employs 4 program specialists to help maintain a mutually supportive professional relationship and to negotiate modifications to agreements with Community Partners. VRS and Community Partners work together to promote mutually held goals, including:

- Develop and maintain choices for consumers.
- Meet workforce needs identified by the state's employers.
- Ensure that services are provided in integrated settings.
- Facilitate state-level planning and coordination of training needs of Community Partner staff.
- Facilitate communication between VRS and Community Partner staff at the administrative level.
- Increase Community Partner awareness of vocational rehabilitation issues at state and national levels.
- Identify and provide training for Community Partner and VRS staff.

(4) VRS Community Partner Committee

VRS has an active Community Partner Committee (CPC). The purpose of the Vocational Rehabilitation Services (VRS) Community Partners Committee (CPC) is: 1) Strategic Advice and

Consultation: The committee offers VRS Community Partner representative members opportunities to provide strategic advice and consultation to VRS leadership on topics and issues affecting the statewide network of community partners and employment services for individuals with disabilities in Minnesota; 2) Collaboration and Capacity Building: The committee provides a forum for VRS and VRS Community Partners members to work collaboratively and build the capacity of Minnesota's rehabilitation community to advance competitive, integrated employment for Minnesotans with disabilities.

F. ARRANGEMENTS AND COOPERATIVE AGREEMENTS FOR THE PROVISION OF SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES

(1) Statewide Collaboration

VRS collaborates with MDE, DHS, and county and local service providers to offer statewide supported employment services. VRS is a partner in several state-level agreements that provide long-term supports. During development of an employment plan, VRS counselors and other service team members help consumers to select supported employment services that meet their needs. They identify which services will be provided by VRS, as well as the source of long-term supports in the community. VRS provides time-limited supports for up to 24 months, but an employment plan may be amended if additional time is needed to achieve job stability. The primary funding resources for long-term supports in the community following VRS case closure are county case managers, the state Extended Employment Program, DHS Medicaid-waiver funded services, and the Social Security Administration's Impairment-Related Work Expense exclusions and Ticket to Work funding for persons on SSI and/or SSDI.

(2) State-funded VRS Extended Employment Program

Minnesota's Extended Employment Program, administered by VRS, provides ongoing employment support services for individuals to maintain and advance in employment. The program is funded by a state appropriation of $15.825 million a year. The direct services are delivered by a network of 27 VRS Community Partners under performance-based contracts with VRS. These collaborations contribute significantly to the quality, scope, and effectiveness of the state's supported employment efforts. Minnesota General uses services provided through this program to youth with the most significant disabilities for state match purposes.

(3) Individuals with Serious Mental Illness and Individuals who are Deaf or Hard-of-Hearing

Minnesota VRS has been a leader in implementing the Evidence Based Practice of Supported Employment for persons with serious and persistent mental illness known as Individual Placement and Support (IPS). IPS receives $2.555 million in dedicated state funding, which is used for grants to local partnerships of mental health programs and employment providers (Community Rehabilitation Programs). These funds provide ongoing supports to persons with serious mental illness who are receiving community mental health services. Minnesota's programs utilize the IPS fidelity scale (2008) to guide program development and implementation as well as program evaluation and outcome measurement. Another appropriation provides up to $1,000,000 annually to provide long-term supported employment services for persons who are deaf, deaf blind or hard-of-hearing.

G. COORDINATION WITH EMPLOYERS

1. VR SERVICES; AND

Excellence in job placement and retention services is fundamental to more fully living into DEED's vision statement of "a healthy economy, where all Minnesotans have or are on a path to meaningful employment and a family sustaining wage, and employers are able to fill their 'in

demand' jobs." Coordination with employers is also key to VRS' priority to embrace employers as key customers resulting in increased employment outcomes.

VRS has developed three strategic priorities and measures related to coordination with employers.

(A) Priority 1: Implement and refine a VR client talent pool structural framework within the electronic case management system. The talent pool will be developed to gather and tap information to facilitate matching VRS clients to employment opportunities.

Metric

Secure approval and resources to develop the client talent pool structural framework as part of a larger rewrite of the case management system.

Minnesota's electronic case management system has capacity to identify talent pool. VRS staff input key talent pool identification data which greatly enhances the ability for Placement staff to identify pools of candidates based on employer needs. VRS staff will benefit from training to correctly utilize the talent pool refinement tools available in WF1.

(B) Priority 2: Develop and implement low-risk Hiring and Retention Options designed to increase employment outcomes and workforce diversity.

Metric:

Track the VRS client participation and employment outcomes in low risk hiring and retention options on a quarterly basis. Options include On-the-Job Training, Job Try Outs, Internships, Connect 700 program and Schedule A hiring.

DEED-VRS updated the process, policies guidance and definitions for an array of low risk hiring and retention options which are referred to as On-the-Job Work & Training Options in Policy and Guidance Manuals. This information, along with the Connect 700 hiring initiative was shared with Community Rehabilitation Partners through statewide training to ensure consistency of understanding and application. VRS developed a series of new marketing materials for use by VRS and community partner providers to promote these programs with businesses (Internship, On-the-Job Training and Job Tryout brochures).

Metric:

Create and deliver training to help employers identify, develop and sustain natural supports for employees with disabilities in the workplace.

(C) Priority 3: Provide support to Minnesota businesses to help recruit, hire and retain qualified individuals with disabilities.

Metric:

1. VRS will lead and convene Business Engagement Networks (BEN's) focused on meeting the needs of business by providing a talent pool of candidates that can meet the needs of business utilizing a Single Point of Contact (SPOC) coordinated approach with VRS, Community Rehabilitation Providers, and Special Education Work Coordinators.

WIOA Common Performance Measure 6 (effectiveness in serving employers) will be developed and addressed in an annual report. Following is a report of progress on the revised priorities: Minnesota VRS supported BEN's throughout the state to provide a Single Point of Contact (SPOC) to meet the needs of business and to enhance the skills of placement professionals. In 2018, VRS pivoted to be more inclusive of Community Partners as well as school district Work Coordinators and Business Partners who want to help connect the talent pool of people with disabilities to meet needs of business. BEN's continue to reflect the needs of business

representing the local areas of Minnesota including urban, metro and greater (rural) areas of the state as well as provide joint training to maintain qualified staff. BEN's also share job leads and plan events that connect job seekers to Business. Placement 101 is a two-day training focused on Placement and Retention Services for Professionals serving VRS clients. VRS partners with the Minnesota Rehabilitation Association's (MRA) Job Placement and Development (JPD) staff who provide most of the training of Placement 101. VRS works closely with JPD staff to periodically update Placement 101 Training.

2. **Disability Inclusion Bite-Sized Learning Modules** are newly created resource for employers that takes a topic and breaks it into short modules that can be presented in about 20 minutes. Each module features a video, the PowerPoint presentation used in the video and a takeaway card to reinforce learning and provide links to additional resources. There are 5 current modules on DEED's CareerForce website on the following topics:

- Module 1: Defining Disability and the Americans with Disabilities Act
- Module 2: Recognizing and Implementing a Request for Reasonable Accommodations
- Module 3 – Self ID: Building a More Inclusive Culture
- Module 4: Inclusive Communication
- Module 5 – Mental Health Matters: Let's Talk

2. TRANSITION SERVICES, INCLUDING PRE-EMPLOYMENT TRANSITION SERVICES, FOR STUDENTS AND YOUTH WITH DISABILITIES.

The need for Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) is assessed for all eligible students, age 14 through age 21, whom VRS serves. From there, the needed Pre-ETS are added to the employment plan and delivered either through one-on-one counseling sessions with the VRS counselor, the student's school, an internal VRS placement coordinator, or funds can be authorized to have them delivered via community rehabilitation programs, centers for independent living, etc. VRS staff work with local school districts to discuss what employment and career preparation services are already available to students and where gaps are that VRS might be able to fill with Pre-ETS services. VRS offers Pre-ETS statewide to students who are "potentially eligible" for VRS. There is at least one Pre-ETS Rehabilitation Representative assigned to each of VRS' 23 teams. Their role is to provide outreach and Pre-ETS to potentially eligible students in all schools within their team's geographic area. Once a student submits a signed application for Pre-Employment Transition Services, the Pre-ETS Representative meets with the student to assess their needs for Pre-ETS. From there, needed Pre-ETS are provided directly by the Pre-ETS Representative or through a DEED-VRS contracted provider.

Additionally, VRS works with schools and contracted providers across the state to identify career exploration and competitive integrated employment work experiences and opportunities to provide transition services, including pre-employment transition services, for students and youth with disabilities. This work is organized through regional Business Engagement Networks (BENs). BENs consist of VRS staff, contracted provider staff, and LEA School to Work Coordinators who work collaboratively to coordinate outreach and services to businesses on behalf of the students and youth with disabilities.

H. INTERAGENCY COOPERATION

1. THE STATE MEDICAID PLAN UNDER TITLE XIX OF THE SOCIAL SECURITY ACT;

The State Medicaid plan under Title XIX of the Social Security Act; Medical Assistance, the state's Medicaid program, is administered by the DHS Disability Services Division (DHS-DSD).

Vocational Rehabilitation Services (VRS) and State Services for the Blind (SSB) collaborate closely with DHS in the provision of services for individuals who are on home and community-based waivers.

In September 2019, DHS-DSD, VRS, and SSB signed a Memorandum of Understanding. The terms of the MOU are specific to individuals on a Medicaid waiver who are interested in competitive, integrated employment. Employment First and Person-Centered principles form the basis of the shared vision for how DEED-VRS/SSB and the Medicaid agency agree to provide employment services for people with disabilities in a coordinated manner. The purpose of the MOU and interagency cooperation is to align systems so that common customers – those who receive home and community-based service disability waivers and vocational rehabilitation services from VRS or SSB – can get seamless and timely supports to make informed choices and meet their competitive integrated employment goals. Implementation of the MOU agreements began July 1, 2021. DEED-VRS/SSB and the Medicaid agency developed communication, stakeholder involvement, training and resources prior to launch to ensure understanding of the responsibilities for each party supporting the person on a Medicaid waiver.

Under the MOU, the following coordination of services occurs:

Payment of Services

DEED-VRS/SSB is the primary payer for job-related services (services supporting job development, placement and employment stability) for common customers. Once employment stability is established, DHS-DSD will continue to pay for long-term supports to maintain employment for customers of all ages. DHS-DSD will also pay for services that assist people in making informed choices and developing informed employment goals.

Interagency Planning and Policy Development

DHS-DSD and VRS/SSB will use strategic planning, troubleshooting, consultation and technical assistance to ensure successful implementation of this agreement. Key areas include goal setting, systems development, coordination of services, quality assurance, data and stakeholder involvement. We will:

- Meet as an interagency steering committee to provide MOU oversight, set goals, review program services and financing options, identify promising practices and resolve disputes
- Support program liaisons from VRS/SSB and DHS-DSD to coordinate joint efforts in communication, quality assurance, training, and coordination of services, policies and procedures
- Create work groups as needed to provide advice and share expertise regarding practice enhancements
- Hold periodic staff meetings across agencies to ensure coordinated communication and address policy issues
- Establish an advisory committee that includes stakeholders from VRS/SSB, DHS-DSD, lead agency, and providers of both vocational rehabilitation services and waiver services to discuss progress and challenges with the MOU
- Jointly meet with stakeholders to collect feedback and identify areas for improvement
- Understand employment outcomes in our respective programs and develop a shared understanding of outcome measures and reporting procedures

- Promote the use of evidence-based practices and/or promising approaches to create a more closely aligned employment service system, increase quality and gather shared data on employment outcomes
- Identify common customers and practices that support positive employment outcomes

Eligibility, Referrals, and Customer Flow

DEED-VRS/SSB and DHS will continue to implement and refine the processes and practices developed under the Engage, Plan, Find, Keep framework. This includes promoting regional and local collaboration, E1MN training curriculum, and the tools and resources to support this work on the Disability HUB work toolkit.

Service Provider Networks

DEED-VRS/SSB and DHS will continue to work together to increase our statewide, shared network of employment service providers to improve access, support seamless transitions, and expand individuals' choices to high quality employment services. As part of this work, we agree to:

- Evaluate strategies for a common employment service provider pool. We will continue to explore options for creating a shared job search service provider pool to support seamless service delivery and prevent unnecessary interruptions as people move between supports funded by VRS/SSB and supports funded by DHS-DSD.
- Encourage dual enrollment of employment service providers. While DHS and DEED will continue to maintain separate employment service provider licensure/accreditation standards, we will make it easier for providers to understand our respective standards and develop strategies to provide ongoing communication and technical assistance to those interested in enrolling.
- Align and streamline process and efforts. We will explore opportunities to better align and streamline each agency's business processes and requirements to create consistency and efficiencies for dually enrolled employment service providers.
- Coordinate communications and training. We will coordinate service provider communications and training to maintain consistent messaging and increase understanding of each agency's respective system and the shared customer flow outlined in this agreement.
- Measure and promote provider performance. We will explore methods to assess and provide information on service provider performance to people with disabilities and their families to support informed selection of service providers.
- Develop new providers. We will analyze data, set goals and collaborate on the development of employment service providers in underserved populations and areas of the state.

2. THE STATE AGENCY RESPONSIBLE FOR PROVIDING SERVICES FOR INDIVIDUALS WITH DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES; AND

The primary Minnesota agency responsible for services for individuals with disabilities is the Department of Human Services (DHS). In Minnesota, the Governor's Council on Developmental Disabilities serves to advocate for all persons with developmental disabilities by carrying out activities in major areas of emphasis.

Minnesota's Olmstead Plan supports freedom of choice and provides a framework and a series of key activities that must be achieved to ensure Minnesotans with disabilities have opportunities to live, learn, work, and enjoy life in the most integrated setting desired by the person. Former Governor Mark Dayton appointed an Olmstead Subcabinet to develop and implement this plan. The Subcabinet consists of representatives of the MnSIC agencies listed above, the Housing Finance Agency, the Department of Transportation, the ombudsman for mental health and developmental disabilities, and the executive director of the Governor's Council on Developmental Disabilities.

VRS is involved in the following joint projects with the above agencies:

Minnesota Customized Employment Training:

Customized Employment (CE) is an evidence-based alternative for helping people with significant disabilities to become successfully employed. At the foundation of CE is Discovery, which is a process for uncovering a person's strengths, interests and the conditions under which they will be successful in employment. DEED-VRS and DHS-Minnesota State Operated Community Services developed an Association of Community Rehabilitation Educator (ACRE) certified Customized Employment curriculum and training. It also includes mentoring supports to DEED, Community Rehabilitation Partner and School District staff to reach competent, practitioner level delivery of Customized Employment Services for persons requiring it that is sustainable, ongoing and cost effective for the state disability employment system. This training is offered multiple times each year.

SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) Employment and Training:

The Departments of Human Services and Employment and Economic Development are currently studying opportunities to blend SNAP funds with other anti-poverty funding to help move more people out of poverty.

3. THE STATE AGENCY RESPONSIBLE FOR PROVIDING MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES.

The Minnesota Department of Human Services (DHS) is responsible for coordinating mental health services for adults and youth.

Minnesota's Mental Health system is a state mandated, county operated system. The State Mental Health Authority is responsible for ensuring that Minnesota's 87 counties, the local mental health authority, provide an array of community mental health services including: Basic clinical services, community services and supports, hospitalization and residential treatment. Funding for Minnesota's mental health system comes from health care insurance, including Medicaid, private insurance and MinnesotaCare, as well as county local tax levy funds, state mental health funds and Federal Block grant funds.

Minnesota's Mental Health and Drug and Alcohol Divisions merged to provide a combined state administration for adult and children's mental health and alcohol and drug abuse. The emphasis is on moving to integrated care approaches.

The Minnesota VRS program has a long history of innovative collaboration with the State Mental Health Authority. This includes VR representation on the State Mental Health Planning Council and the newly formed State Behavioral Advisory Council.

The two agencies have also collaborated to implement, sustain and expand the evidence-based practice of supported employment, Individual Placement and Support (IPS). Starting with 4 local partnerships between mental health and employment providers in 2006, the IPS provider network in Minnesota, funded in part with state appropriations dedicated to IPS, has expanded to 29 IPS programs (partnerships between mental health agencies and employment services

agencies) in 47 of Minnesota's 87 counties. Minnesota VR and Mental Health agencies are partners in the National IPS Learning Community.

I. COMPREHENSIVE SYSTEM OF PERSONNEL DEVELOPMENT; DATA SYSTEM ON PERSONNEL AND PERSONNEL DEVELOPMENT

1. SYSTEM ON PERSONNEL AND PERSONNEL DEVELOPMENT

A. QUALIFIED PERSONNEL NEEDS

I. THE NUMBER OF PERSONNEL WHO ARE EMPLOYED BY THE STATE AGENCY IN THE PROVISION OF VR SERVICES IN RELATION TO THE NUMBER OF INDIVIDUALS SERVED, BROKEN DOWN BY PERSONNEL CATEGORY;

In Program Year 2019, VRS served 15,012 consumers and ended the year with an active caseload of 9,679 individuals. In Program Year 2020, we served 13,074 consumers, ending the year with an active caseload of 8,985; an average case load for counselors is 62. The metro region has 125 field positions, the northern region has 94 field positions, and the southern region has 86 field positions.

II. THE NUMBER OF PERSONNEL CURRENTLY NEEDED BY THE STATE AGENCY TO PROVIDE VR SERVICES, BROKEN DOWN BY PERSONNEL CATEGORY; AND

The Vocational Rehabilitation Services leadership team consists of a director, executive assistant, and eleven managers. In 2022, two additional deputy director positions will be added.

Direct supervision of field staff is provided by rehabilitation area managers and supervisors. Rehabilitation specialists and other administrative specialists support the work of both administrative and field staff by providing technical assistance, training, and consultation.

Direct service to VR customers is provided by rehabilitation counselors, augmented by rehabilitation representatives, Pre-ETS rehabilitation representatives, job placement coordinators, community liaison representatives, and Occupational Communication Specialists (sign language interpreters); vocational rehabilitation technicians and clerical staff provide support to both field and administrative offices.

III. PROJECTIONS OF THE NUMBER OF PERSONNEL, BROKEN DOWN BY PERSONNEL CATEGORY, WHO WILL BE NEEDED BY THE STATE AGENCY TO PROVIDE VR SERVICES IN 5 YEARS BASED ON PROJECTIONS OF THE NUMBER OF INDIVIDUALS TO BE SERVED, INCLUDING INDIVIDUALS WITH SIGNIFICANT DISABILITIES, THE NUMBER OF PERSONNEL EXPECTED TO RETIRE OR LEAVE THE FIELD, AND OTHER RELEVANT FACTORS.

VRS had 13 retirements in calendar year 2020. There were 6 voluntary resignations. Between 2022 and 2026, 27% of VRS staff, 13.87% of counselors and 18% of managers and supervisors will be eligible to retire

VRS program director/managers (Admin)

- Total filled positions: 10
- Current vacancies: 3
- Projected vacancies over the next 5 years: 3

Rehabilitation Area Managers/supervisors (field)

- Total filled positions: 24
- Current vacancies: 3
- Projected vacancies over the next 5 years: 6

Rehabilitation Specialists

- Total filled positions: 26
- Current vacancies: 4
- Projected vacancies over the next 5 years: 3
- Rehabilitation Counselors
- Total filled positions: 155
- Current vacancies: 18
- Projected vacancies over the next 5 years:42

Rehabilitation Representatives

- Total filled positions: 48
- Current vacancies: 18
- Projected vacancies over the next 5 years: 8

Job Placement/Business Services

- Total filled positions: 25
- Current vacancies: 11
- Projected vacancies over the next 5 years:14

Vocational Rehabilitation Technicians

- Total filled positions: 62
- Current vacancies: 8
- Projected vacancies over the next 5 years: 32

Clerical Support

- Total filled positions: 9
- Current vacancies: 3
- Projected vacancies over the next 5 years: 7

Other Admin/Field

- Total filled positions:9
- Current vacancies: 6
- Projected vacancies over the next 5 years: 5

TOTALS

- Total filled positions: 368
- Current vacancies: 74
- Projected vacancies over the next 5 years: 120

B. PERSONNEL DEVELOPMENT

I. A LIST OF THE INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION IN THE STATE THAT ARE PREPARING VR PROFESSIONALS, BY TYPE OF PROGRAM;

Two area graduate programs award master's degrees that prepare individuals to work as vocational rehabilitation counselors:

- St. Cloud State University
- University of Wisconsin – Stout

VRS maintains a collegial relationship with these programs, recruiting for internships and filling counselor positions from among graduates. The section below displays current enrollment and the number of rehabilitation counseling graduates available through these programs.

II. THE NUMBER OF STUDENTS ENROLLED AT EACH OF THOSE INSTITUTIONS, BROKEN DOWN BY TYPE OF PROGRAM; AND

St. Cloud State University

Students enrolled: 41

Employees sponsored by agency and/or RSA: 5

Graduates sponsored by agency and/or RSA: 9

Graduates from the previous year: 12

University of Wisconsin - Stout

Students enrolled: 61

Employees sponsored by agency and/or RSA: 3

Graduates sponsored by agency and/or RSA: 7

Graduates from the previous year: 26

III. THE NUMBER OF STUDENTS WHO GRADUATED DURING THE PRIOR YEAR FROM EACH OF THOSE INSTITUTIONS WITH CERTIFICATION OR LICENSURE, OR WITH THE CREDENTIALS FOR CERTIFICATION OR LICENSURE, BROKEN DOWN BY THE PERSONNEL CATEGORY FOR WHICH THEY HAVE RECEIVED, OR HAVE THE CREDENTIALS TO RECEIVE, CERTIFICATION OR LICENSURE.

Seven graduates from University of Wisconsin-Stout received master's degrees in Rehabilitation Counseling. Five graduates from St. Cloud State received master's degrees in Rehabilitation Counseling and seven received master's degrees in Rehabilitation and Addiction Counseling.

2. PLAN FOR RECRUITMENT, PREPARATION AND RETENTION OF QUALIFIED PERSONNEL

Internships: Internships commonly lead to permanent counseling positions. The staff development specialist devotes approximately 5% time as the point of contact for managers, professors, interns, supervising counselors, and Human Resources to coordinate intern placement and supervision, and for counselor recruitment. Other activities include presentations to students and informing university personnel of counselor vacancies.

VRS' staff development specialist is an active member of graduate counseling advisory committees at the University of Wisconsin - Stout and St. Cloud State University and communicates regularly with counseling program directors.

Tuition Support: VRS provides tuition support for staff pursuing graduate degrees in rehabilitation counseling. Employees in the St. Cloud program and UW - Stout online program also had access to RSA stipends to assist with some tuition costs.

Minnesota post retirement option: The post retirement option, which permits a state retiree to work up to half time without losing insurance or retirement benefits, is a component of VRS retention and succession planning strategies.

Organizational Vitality: As a key strategy for staff retention, VRS pays close attention to organizational vitality and staff morale. VRS works to maintain a high level of employee engagement through statewide staff communication about the vision, mission, values, strategic goals and agency achievements, and a robust training and development program.

DEED most recently completed an Employee Engagement survey in fall 2020. Survey response rate for VRS employees was 91%. Findings indicate strong employee engagement on the key indicators measured. For example, 90% of VRS employees agreed that they look forward to coming to work each day, 97% agreed that they understand how their role contributes to the mission of VRS, and 98% agreed that they are continually learning in their current role. Staff also provided suggestions for specific changes within DEED that would increase job satisfaction; response themes included more opportunities for advancement, continued flexibility in services delivery options (i.e. teleworking), and support and guidance for new managers. DEED plans to repeat the survey annually as a measure of employee engagement and as a tool to identify needed improvements in organizational effectiveness

Media advertisement: VRS posts its vacancies at the State of Minnesota personnel openings website.

Counselors and other staff are recruited and hired under Minnesota's competitive civil service system, including affirmative action to recruit and hire individuals with disabilities and members of the state's diverse cultural and ethnic populations. Voluntary disclosure of ethnic and cultural status provides the following PY 2020 data: 10% of VRS employees identify themselves as American Indian/Alaska Native, Asian, Black/African American or Hispanic/Latino, 85% identify themselves as White, and 5% are non-specified or undisclosed. At present, 22% of VRS employees voluntarily disclose a disability.

Dedicated staff in the metro area offer vocational rehabilitation services to refugees who recently immigrated to Minnesota from countries such as Somalia, Ethiopia, Jamaica, Turkey, Congo, Guyana, Iraq, Nigeria, Egypt, Pakistan, Sudan and Eritrea. The New Americans staff consists of a lead rehabilitation counselor and two community liaison representatives. They are themselves refugees from East African countries. Each member of the New Americans staff is multi-lingual and provides intensive supports from application through employment closure to the VRS consumers they serve.

VRS is working on increasing vocational rehabilitation services to the Twin Cities American Indian community. This work is led by a counselor who is a White Earth Anishinaabe Band Member. This counselor, who has extensive knowledge in providing services to both youth and adults with disabilities, will enhance on- going learning and service provision not only with American Indian youth and adults but American Indian programs focused on training, career development and employment. This counselor also provides ongoing consultation with VRS teams, VRS staff and co-counseling as needed with American Indian participants and those interested in applying for vocational rehabilitation services.

Coordination with professional associations: VRS staff serve on the board of the Minnesota Rehabilitation Association (MRA) and serve on MRA conference planning committees. A significant number of staff attend MRA conferences each year. VRS encourages staff membership in professional associations, and many serve as officers and work on association committees.

3. PERSONNEL STANDARDS

A. STANDARDS THAT ARE CONSISTENT WITH ANY NATIONAL OR STATE-APPROVED OR -RECOGNIZED CERTIFICATION, LICENSING, REGISTRATION, OR OTHER COMPARABLE REQUIREMENTS THAT APPLY TO THE PROFESSION OR DISCIPLINE IN WHICH SUCH PERSONNEL ARE PROVIDING VR SERVICES; AND

Vocational rehabilitation counselors and other professional staff are hired through competitive examination under the Minnesota civil service system. Qualifications for counselors are based on both educational preparation and professional work experience. The academic degree standard for Rehabilitation Counselors is the master's degree in Rehabilitation Counseling or a master's degree in a closely related field and evidence of completion of a graduate level course in counseling theories/techniques.

B. THE ESTABLISHMENT AND MAINTENANCE OF EDUCATION AND EXPERIENCE REQUIREMENTS, IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 101(A)(7)(B)(II) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT, TO ENSURE THAT THE PERSONNEL HAVE A 21ST CENTURY UNDERSTANDING OF THE EVOLVING LABOR FORCE AND THE NEEDS OF INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES.

Rehabilitation Counselors

- Master's degree in Rehabilitation Counseling; or
- A degree in a closely related field with evidence of completion of graduate level coursework in counseling theory/techniques.

Rehabilitation Representative

- Bachelor's degree in rehabilitation counseling or in a related social services field; or
- Bachelor's degree in any field, plus two years of experience providing employment related services for persons with disabilities.

Placement Coordinator

- One year of professional experience in which the primary focus was the provision of vocational services to persons with disabilities; or
- Master's degree in behavioral science, counseling, vocational evaluation, job placement, vocational rehabilitation, or a closely related degree; or
- Three years of paraprofessional experience in which the primary focus was the provision of vocational services to persons with disabilities. A Bachelor's degree substitutes for half of the experience requirement.

Vocational Rehabilitation Technician

- A minimum of one year of experience in an organization whose mission includes the provision of services to persons who are injured or disabled so that an understanding and sensitivity toward people with disabilities has been obtained
- Customer service skills sufficient to perform intake, assist with forms, and to develop positive relationships with the consumers
- Keyboarding skills sufficient to create documents and complete data entry, and
- English sufficient to interview consumers and employers, present job-seeking skills training, and to draft correspondence or complete forms.

4. STAFF DEVELOPMENT

A. A SYSTEM OF STAFF DEVELOPMENT FOR PROFESSIONALS AND PARAPROFESSIONALS WITHIN THE DESIGNATED STATE UNIT, PARTICULARLY WITH RESPECT TO ASSESSMENT, VOCATIONAL COUNSELING, JOB PLACEMENT, AND REHABILITATION TECHNOLOGY, INCLUDING TRAINING IMPLEMENTED IN COORDINATION WITH ENTITIES CARRYING OUT STATE PROGRAMS UNDER SECTION 4 OF THE ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY ACT OF 1998; AND

The staff development and quality assurance director is a member of the VRS leadership team, and one of her direct reports is responsible for the Comprehensive System of Personnel Development. The staff development team coordinates training, develops training programs to meet identified needs, and coordinates internships.

Staff development and training needs are assessed through interviews with field staff, reports from area managers, regional directors, recommendations from staff groups and committees, and consultations with the leadership team. Case review yields training needs information. Staff Development and field managers meet regularly, as does the Policy Learning Team, to develop and guide staff development activity.

The comprehensive staff training and development plan describes core training curriculum for staff, identifies competencies required of each VRS position along with training strategies and resource information for each competency, and identifies specialized competencies for serving transition age youth. Annual performance reviews between supervisor and employee include a review of training and development needs of the employee.

2022 Training Plan

Required training for new employees includes: VRS New Employee Orientation, Person Centered Foundations, Data Practices, VRS Data Security, Mandated Reporting, Ethics, VRS Process in MN, Appeals, Violence and Behavior Policy, New Counselor Training (with a mentor), Motivational Interviewing Introduction, Transition 101 (for Transition Counselors), Vocational Assessment Services (VAS) Interpretation, Psychometrist Training for VAS, Mental Health First Aid, Case Documentation, Various Policy trainings, Introduction to WF1 (Case Management and Reports Portal), VRS Purchasing Training, DB101 (Disability Benefits), Labor Market Resources and Updates, Creative Job Search, and Pre-ETS Modules. Our Purchasing staff also are required to participate in specific State and DEED Procurement Training and a Diversity and Inclusion training. Our training will have multiple levels and types of instruction; including but not limited to asynchronous modules, live training sessions, and mentorship.

Other L&D Training (in addition to those above)

- Employee Onboarding (training provided through first 3-6 months of employment)
- Person Centered Practices Refresher
- Basics of Assistive Technology
- Autism 101
- MI Managers Training
- Customized Employment
- Pre-ETS Flexibilities
- Professional and Technical (P/T) Contract Providers Pre-ETS Webinar
- Regional Pre-ETS Rep and RAM Meeting/Training
- Statewide All Transition Staff Meetings/Training
- VirtualJobShadow.com

- MCIS
- eTrac
- Charting the LifeCourse
- Psychiatric Disabilities eLearning
- Placement and Retention Services
- CareerScope
- Caseload Management
- Understanding Evaluation Summary Reports
- D-RAAN
- Employment Capacity Building
- The VR Process
- Disability and culturally specific education at all state virtual meetings (topics vary)

Policy

- Closures and Exits
- Informed Choice
- Initial Interview
- In-home Services
- Data Practices 2.0
- Eligibility
- E1MN and the VR Role
- Work and Benefits
- Quality Assurance case review training and feedback: upcoming team and statewide trainings include Eligibility, Priority for Services, Assessment of VR Needs, Informed Choice, Employment Plan, etc.

B. PROCEDURES FOR THE ACQUISITION AND DISSEMINATION OF SIGNIFICANT KNOWLEDGE FROM RESEARCH AND OTHER SOURCES TO DESIGNATED STATE UNIT PROFESSIONALS AND PARAPROFESSIONALS.

- Autism 101 training is planned on mental health diagnosis, what strengths and limitations individuals might demonstrate, behavioral aspects of autism and strategies for addressing the needs of individuals with autism.
- Assistive Technology - the basics of principles and practice is being developed by a work group lead by an Assistive Technology Specialist. Person-Centered Practices - strengthen field leaders and staff ability to use Person– Centered practices. Understand and embed person-centeredness into all policy, guidance and training. Draw out values-based work and instill a culture of continuous improvement to our services. Psychiatric Disabilities eLearning - continue to develop eLearning courses specific to VR, mental health, and Individual Placement and Support (IPS) services, and navigating the Minnesota Mental Health system.

- Ethics – All staff training rooted in the CRCC and VRS codes of ethics to help staff define ethical situations, use ethical decision-making models, and defining professional boundaries.
- Pre-ETS – training new employees and offer refreshers to existing staff around what is Pre-ETS, time charging and expense reporting, process for serving students, purchasing Pre-ETS, and purchasing for work experiences. As updates occur, continued training is offered both internally and externally.
- VRS Policy and Guidance – The Policy Learning Team is focused on increasing appropriate application and compliance with VRS policy and guidance through ongoing development and implementation of effective learning strategies, tools and dissemination. The team membership is made up staff who hold various roles throughout the agency and serve different areas of the state, bringing their diverse perspectives to training. The training is brought to the field first through leadership and managers, then cascades out to field staff. Quality Assurance work connects to these training topics and is a part of the strategic learning loop, at times following up with additional training.
- New Learning Management System – includes 65 VR trainings, including "Intersecting Identities, Power, Privilege, and Implications for VR", "Working with Recent Immigrants", "Ethical Thinking" and "Trauma Informed Care", to name a few.

5. PERSONNEL TO ADDRESS INDIVIDUAL COMMUNICATION NEEDS

VRS ensures that personnel and methods are available so that staff may communicate with individuals in a preferred language or other means of communication. Substantial numbers of VRS consumers use languages other than English, including Cambodian, Lao, Vietnamese, Somali, Spanish, and American Sign Language. Translation of forms, information brochures and the ready availability of purchased interpreter services or a multilingual staff member ensures effective communication statewide.

Deaf and Hard of Hearing services are provided by highly qualified VRS staff including one State Coordinator for Deaf Services and 19 staff who are conversationally fluent in American Sign Language. To be exact, we have three VRS managers/supervisors, eight counselors, two placement specialists, two VR technicians, a Rehabilitation Representative, an Office and Administrative Specialist, and two Occupational Communication Specialists (who are also certified sign language interpreters). Counselors and staff are using a variety of video options such as Zoom, MS Teams, videophones, FaceTime and texting to communicate with people and providers who use our services. Staff can use video remote interpreting by requesting them through interpreter referral agencies on the state master contract and then incorporating their services virtually through the participant's chosen platform. Counselors are also using videophones, FaceTime, Microsoft Lync and texting to communicate with people and providers who use our services.

6. COORDINATION OF PERSONNEL DEVELOPMENT UNDER THE INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES EDUCATION ACT

As required by WIOA, VRS has a memorandum of understanding with the Minnesota Department of Education (MDE). The MOU ensures that training, consultation and technical assistance is available to VRS and local education agencies in providing transition and pre-employment transition services to youth and students with disabilities

J. STATEWIDE ASSESSMENT

1. PROVIDE AN ASSESSMENT OF THE REHABILITATION NEEDS OF INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES RESIDING WITHIN THE STATE, PARTICULARLY THE VR SERVICES NEEDS OF THOSE:

A. WITH THE MOST SIGNIFICANT DISABILITIES, INCLUDING THEIR NEED FOR SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES;

The most recent Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment (CSNA) was completed in 2021, with ongoing input and review from the SRC. The information below is based on that assessment.

The American Community Survey estimates that 292,131 non-institutionalized Minnesotans ages 18-64, or 8.6%% of the state's working-age population, has a disability. Males are slightly more likely to have a disability than females (11.1% versus 10.5%). Cognitive (4.5%), ambulatory (3.1%) and self-care (3.1%) disabilities are the three most common types of disability.

In Minnesota, according to the Department of Human Services (DHS) Employment First dashboard, 60% of individuals with a Developmental Disability Medicaid waiver have earned income but only 28% of those are working in competitive integrated employment (FFY19). A recent survey, also by DHS, indicates that 25% of adults with a developmental disability wish that they were working or volunteering more hours.

The DHS Employment First dashboard indicates that for people with a CADI waiver or receiving specific mental health services, few have earned income (28%-30%) but they are more likely to be in competitive integrated employment (52%-65%).

The availability of long-term supports continues to be an issue, especially supported employment services for individuals with serious mental illness, traumatic brain injury, autism spectrum disorder and deaf/hard of hearing. In addition to traditional long-term supports, the SRC identified a complex system of access to benefits information that could be improved to be more person-centered as well as a need for increased access to information concerning benefits, in particular the underutilized benefit, Medical Assistance for Employed Persons with Disabilities (MA-EPD).

B. WHO ARE MINORITIES;

Data shows that Black and American Indian Minnesotans experience disability at around twice that of other cultural/ethnic groups. The employment rate for Black non-Hispanic working-age adults with a disability in Minnesota was 31.8%, compared to 51.2% for white adults with a disability.

Within VRS, participants who are from a community of color are more likely to exit for the reason of "Unable to Locate or Contact." Participants who are Indigenous/American Indian have the lowest monthly earnings at exit and have a shorter average time of participation in VR services. We also see racial disparities in job retention among individuals receiving job placement services.

VRS is actively discussing outreach, intake and community provider services to people of color and indigenous people to assure equal access to the benefits of VR services.

C. WHO HAVE BEEN UNSERVED OR UNDERSERVED BY THE VR PROGRAM;

In Minnesota, an increasing number of participants are under the age of 25. As a component of this age demographic shift, an increasing number of VR participants are young men with autism. In addition, approximately 2,000 potentially eligible students receive pre-ETS services. As the transition age population increases, Minnesota strives to balance these needs with the different needs of a declining number of adults with disabilities. Over the past seven years, Minnesota

had a waiting list as established under the Order of Selection and served only individuals with the most significant disabilities. As of fall 2020, individuals who have disabilities that meet criteria for categories 2 and 3 are now eligible for services without a waiting list.

Minnesota looks to engage individuals in these categories who are interested in career advancement.

D. WHO HAVE BEEN SERVED THROUGH OTHER COMPONENTS OF THE STATEWIDE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM; AND

People with disabilities are served in all components of the workforce development system, both as universal customers and in eligibility-based programs. In Minnesota, universal customers are served by CareerForce.

The Governor's Workforce Development Board has established a Disability Equity Committee to address any disparities for individuals with disabilities in training and employment, with an emphasis on people on the VRS Waiting List.

In 2019, one significant gap identified was that our CareerForce partners did not understand or had a lack of knowledge about working with people with disabilities. VR did some training on disabilities and developed a training for workforce development staff at the national level. The training was provided to all CareerForce staff in Minnesota.

We have not yet developed a standardized referral process from CareerForce to VRS.

E. WHO ARE YOUTH WITH DISABILITIES AND STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES, INCLUDING, AS APPROPRIATE, THEIR NEED FOR PRE-EMPLOYMENT TRANSITION SERVICES OR OTHER TRANSITION SERVICES.

The most recent data from MDE (2021) indicates that 41,424 students age 14-21 (the age for transition services in Minnesota) received special education services and at least 9,492 students had a 504 plan. Schools are not required to report 504 plan information, so the actual number is likely much higher.

Students and transition-age youth with disabilities are of primary focus in the most recent CSNA, largely due to the large and growing number of youth being served as VR participants as well as potentially eligible students. We find that fewer potentially eligible students received work-based learning services as well as a need for more students to receive post-secondary counseling and self-advocacy services.

The need for Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) is assessed for all students, age 14 through age 21, that VRS serves. From there, the needed Pre-ETS are added to the employment plan (for students eligible for VR) and delivered either through one-on-one counseling sessions with the VRS counselor, the student's school, an internal VRS placement coordinator, or funds can be authorized to have them delivered via community rehabilitation programs, centers for independent living, etc. VRS staff discuss with local school districts how Pre-ETS are already available to students and where gaps are that VRS might be able to fill.

Pre-ETS Service Category	Potentially Eligible	Participants	Totals
Instruction in Self-Advocacy	25%	22%	23%
Job Exploration Counseling	45%	54%	51%
Post Secondary	27%	27%	27%

Pre-ETS Service Category	Potentially Eligible	Participants	Totals
Counseling			
Work-Based Learning	36%	58%	51%
Workplace Readiness Training	46%	43%	44%
Total All Students	1,384	2,940	4,324

Data collection improvements may include exploring more efficient collection of transcripts, grade reports and diplomas to meet federal requirements for common performance.

2. IDENTIFY THE NEED TO ESTABLISH, DEVELOP, OR IMPROVE COMMUNITY REHABILITATION PROGRAMS WITHIN THE STATE; AND

Close to a hundred community providers provided placement services to VRS participants over the past three program years. Those providers served between one and 361 participants, with a median of 20 participants per provider. About half of those placement services result in a successful employment closure. An identified need is concern over lack of providers and the demand for highly trained and skilled Community Rehabilitation Provider staff across the state to provide job placement services and work with employers. This also includes job coaches who can provide necessary supports to help individuals learn their job. There is growing concern over lack of providers and options for services particularly in greater Minnesota and this leading to delays in someone's ability to move forward with their job search. Additionally, the impacts of the on-going pandemic are limiting VRS and Community Rehabilitation Providers ability to meet with people in-person when needed to provide the full array of placement services. Technology and virtual platform options to support people in their job search will be needed moving forward.

3. INCLUDE AN ASSESSMENT OF THE NEEDS OF INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES FOR TRANSITION CAREER SERVICES AND PRE-EMPLOYMENT TRANSITION SERVICES, AND THE EXTENT TO WHICH SUCH SERVICES ARE COORDINATED WITH TRANSITION SERVICES PROVIDED UNDER THE INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES EDUCATION ACT

MDE, several local school districts, the Title 1 Youth programs, and VRS are currently assessing how to provide cost effective coordinated transition career services and pre-employment transition services. The pilot activities are described in the section on youth with disabilities (g.2.).

K. ANNUAL ESTIMATES

1. THE NUMBER OF INDIVIDUALS IN THE STATE WHO ARE ELIGIBLE FOR SERVICES

There are approximately 398,730 Minnesotans between the ages of 18 and 64 with one or more long-lasting disabilities (2020 American Community survey summary tables).

2. THE NUMBER OF ELIGIBLE INDIVIDUALS WHO WILL RECEIVE SERVICES UNDER:

A. THE VR PROGRAM;

Vocational Rehabilitation Services (VRS) anticipates serving about 13,650 individuals in FFY2022 and 13,955 individuals in FFY2023 under Titles I and VI of the Rehabilitation Act, all of

whom will be individuals with either a significant disability or a most significant disability under Minnesota's administrative rule for vocational rehabilitation.

B. THE SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM; AND

The 210 individuals who VRS expects to serve Title VI, Supported Employment Services Program, are included in the 13,955 individuals that VRS expects to serve through Title I because individuals usually receive services from both Title I and Title VI. The approximate cost of purchased services for these individuals will be $246,000. All persons receiving supported employment services will have three or more serious functional limitations (priority category one) and approximately half of the individuals will be youth with the most significant disabilities.

C. EACH PRIORITY CATEGORY, IF UNDER AN ORDER OF SELECTION.

In FFY 2023, it is estimated that about 12,300 persons with serious limitations in three or more functional areas (priority category one) will be served at an approximate case service cost of $14.8 million; about 1,200 persons will be served who have serious limitations in two functional areas (priority category two) at an approximate case service cost of approximately $1.1 million; about 450 persons will be served who have a serious limitation in one functional area (priority category three) at an approximate case service cost of $382,500, and; about 5 persons in priority category four will be served at an approximate case service cost of $125.

3. THE NUMBER OF INDIVIDUALS WHO ARE ELIGIBLE FOR VR SERVICES, BUT ARE NOT RECEIVING SUCH SERVICES DUE TO AN ORDER OF SELECTION; AND

As of December 20, 2021, the total waiting list under the current order of selection is 1 person. Vocational Rehabilitation Services has four categories under the order of selection. Category One (three or more substantial functional limitations) is currently open. Category Two (two substantial functional limitations) is open. Category Three (one functional limitation) is open, and Category Four (no identified substantial functional limitations) has a waiting list of 1 person. In November 2020, categories Two and Three were opened after offering services to individuals on the previous waiting list.

4. THE COST OF SERVICES FOR THE NUMBER OF INDIVIDUALS ESTIMATED TO BE ELIGIBLE FOR SERVICES. IF UNDER AN ORDER OF SELECTION, IDENTIFY THE COST OF SERVICES FOR EACH PRIORITY CATEGORY.

In FFY 2023, approximately 1,695 individuals will obtain an integrated competitive outcome that is approved by the U.S. Secretary of Education. All of these will be individuals with significant or most significant disabilities.

Priority Category One: Open

- Estimated Funds: $14,760,000
- Estimated Number to be Served: 12,300
- Average Cost of Services: $1,200

Priority Category Two: Open

- Estimated Funds: $1,080,000
- Estimated Number to be Served: 1,200
- Average Cost of Services: $900

Priority Category Three: Open

- Estimated Funds: $382,500
- Estimated Number to be Served: 450
- Average Cost of Services: $850

Priority Category Four: Closed

- Estimated Funds: $125
- Estimated Number to be Served: 5
- Average Cost of Services: $25

Totals

- Estimated Funds: $16,222,625
- Estimated Number to be Served: 13,955
- Average Cost of Services: $1,162.50

L. STATE GOALS AND PRIORITIES

1. IDENTIFY IF THE GOALS AND PRIORITIES WERE JOINTLY DEVELOPED AND AGREED TO BY THE STATE VR AGENCY AND THE STATE REHABILITATION COUNCIL, IF THE STATE HAS A COUNCIL, AND JOINTLY AGREED TO ANY REVISIONS

VRS and the State Rehabilitation Council have jointly developed the following Goals and Priorities to promote the continuous improvement of the VR program.

2. IDENTIFY THE GOALS AND PRIORITIES IN CARRYING OUT THE VR AND SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT PROGRAMS

(A) GOAL 1. Provide quality services to youth and adults with disabilities for exploration, development, and advancement in careers

Objectives:

1. Quality pre-employment transition services are provided to potentially eligible students

Key Results:

- Pre-ETS Representative data reports demonstrate that outreach is provided to every school district/charter school in Minnesota
- Students and families are satisfied with the services they receive
- Baseline is established and annual goals are established and met for numbers of students served

2. Annual goals for numbers of students served are established Quality VR Services are provided to eligible participants

Key Results:

- Compliance standards are established/defined via case reviews
- Participants are satisfied with the services they receive
- Baseline is established and annual goals set for post-secondary education/training and obtainment of measurable skills gains

- A system for measuring career advancement is established and annual goals are established and met
- Goals are established and met for statewide employment outcomes and job retention

3. Quality services are provided to participants of state appropriated programs (State Extended Employment program, Individual Placement and Supports grants, Centers for Independent Living grants, Deaf and Hard of Hearing grants)

Key Results:

- Satisfaction criteria are established, and annual goals are established and met

(B) Goal 2. Strengthen business engagement

Objectives:

1. Connect VRS participants to competitive integrated employment

Key Results:

- Develop and utilize tools to be able to search VRS's talent pool to efficiently connect VRS's job seekers to job opportunities
- Build new employer relationships and prioritize nurturing long-standing employer relationships statewide. Leverage Business Engagement Networks and opportunities to assist businesses with increased hiring needs.
- Increased competitive integrated employment outcomes

2. Connect students with disabilities to work experiences

Key Results:

- A mechanism for tracking work-based experiences is established and baseline data is collected.
- Develop and facilitate a disability employment collaborative to meet the needs of businesses

Key Results:

- Competitive work-based learning opportunities for students with disabilities
- Increased awareness about the benefits of hiring people with disabilities

(C) Goal 3. Build a healthy organization in order to achieve our mission

Objectives:

1. Fiscal stability

Key Results:

- Reduction in purchasing violations (MS16)
- Fiscal dashboards created and monitored to make decisions
- Full 15% of Federal award is spent on Pre-ETS
- Actual spending reasonably tracks budgeted amounts

2. Employee Engagement

Key Results:

- Staff burden is reduced through technology development
- Staff are trained in conflict resolution

3. Build collaboration within VRS and across DEED

Key Results:

- A project management tool (Monday.com) is used to track and report progress on projects to enable collaboration between units

4. Build human resource capital

Key Results:

- Plan developed to expand recruitment of qualified staff
- Reduction in staff turnover
- Counselors have effective and professional counseling skills
- Counselors are proficient in aspects of disabilities for frequently served populations

(D) Goal 4. Strengthen collaboration through partner engagement

Objectives:

1. Coordinate and align services

Key Results:

- Map of providers and services
- Referral and funding decision tree (who should pay for the service)

2. Timely and relevant communication and training

Key Results:

- Fewer contract related inquiries and issues
- More resources (FAQs, etc.) available to partners
- Partners are trained in delivering Pre-Employment Transition Services and report satisfaction

3. Engage State Rehabilitation Council for input and feedback

Key Result:

- Input and feedback provided to VRS leadership after each meeting for dissemination to VRS staff as needed.
- VRS regularly reports back to the SRC on how the council's feedback is utilized

3. ENSURE THAT THE GOALS AND PRIORITIES ARE BASED ON AN ANALYSIS OF THE FOLLOWING AREAS:

A. THE MOST RECENT COMPREHENSIVE STATEWIDE ASSESSMENT, INCLUDING ANY UPDATES;

The goals and priorities are based on an analysis of the comprehensive statewide needs assessment (CSNA) completed prior to the development of the 2020 Combined State Plan (2017), feedback from community partners, and public forums. A CSNA was completed in October 2021. VRS plans to update its strategic goals and priorities in the upcoming year.

B. THE STATE'S PERFORMANCE UNDER THE PERFORMANCE ACCOUNTABILITY MEASURES OF SECTION 116 OF WIOA; AND

Vocational Rehabilitation Services continues to review and revise goals to align with the updated performance accountability measures of Section 116 of WIOA. VRS updated the goals and priorities in early 2020 and will continue to refine annually.

C. OTHER AVAILABLE INFORMATION ON THE OPERATION AND EFFECTIVENESS OF THE VR PROGRAM, INCLUDING ANY REPORTS RECEIVED FROM THE STATE REHABILITATION COUNCIL AND FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FROM MONITORING ACTIVITIES CONDUCTED UNDER SECTION 107.

VRS and the State Rehabilitation Council considered Goals and Priories established by other public VR agencies, and input from the State Council on Disability and people with disabilities.

M. ORDER OF SELECTION

1. WHETHER THE DESIGNATED STATE UNIT WILL IMPLEMENT AND ORDER OF SELECTION. IF SO, DESCRIBE:

A. THE ORDER TO BE FOLLOWED IN SELECTING ELIGIBLE INDIVIDUALS TO BE PROVIDED VR SERVICES

Eligibility for VR Services

A person is eligible for vocational rehabilitation services from the general VR agency when they have a physical or mental impairment that constitutes or results in a substantial impediment to employment, and they require vocational rehabilitation services to prepare for, secure, retain, or regain employment.

Qualifications for VR Services

A person is qualified for vocational rehabilitation services from the General VR agency when they are eligible and found to have serious functional limitations due to a severe impairment and wish to obtain, retain, or regain employment.

Service Priority Categories

Persons are served according to their priority category. When priority categories must be closed, lower priority categories are closed before higher categories. Persons leave their waiting list according to the priority of their category and their date of application for VR services.

- Priority Category One (first priority for service) includes all individuals with a most significant disability, that is, persons whose condition results in serious limitations in three or more functional areas.
- Priority Category Two (second priority for service) includes all individuals with a significant disability that results in serious functional limitations in two functional areas.
- Priority Category Three (third priority for service) includes all individuals with a significant disability that results in a serious functional limitation in one functional area.
- Priority Category Four (fourth priority for service) includes all other eligible customers. These customers have a disability that makes them eligible for services, but they do not

have a serious limitation in a functional area. This category has essentially been closed since 1993.

Waiting List

When annual program resources are insufficient to serve qualified new applicants and to serve all current customers through the end of the fiscal year, a priority category may be closed. New applicants who qualify in a closed category are then placed on a statewide waiting list for that category. Closing a category slows the rate of increase in the number of persons being served. It conserves resources so that obligations to persons who are already being served may continue to be met.

Functional Areas

Serious limitations in life skills in one or more of the following areas, as defined:

- Communication: the ability to effectively give and receive information through words or concepts, such as reading, writing, speaking, listening, sign language, or other adaptive methods
- Interpersonal skills: the ability to establish and maintain personal, family, and community relationships as it affects, or is likely to affect, job performance and security.
- Mobility: the physical and psychological ability to move about from place to place inside and outside the home, including travel to and from usual destinations in the community for activities of daily living, training, or work.
- Self-care: the skills needed to manage self or living environment, such as eating, toileting, grooming, dressing, money management, and management of special health or safety needs, including medication management, as they affect an individual's ability to participate in training or work—related activities.
- Self-direction: the ability to independently plan, initiate, organize, or carry out goal-directed activities or solve problems related to working.
- Work skills:
    - the ability to do specific tasks required to carry out job functions; and
    - the capacity to benefit from training in how to perform tasks required to carry out job functions.
- Work tolerance: the capacity or endurance to effectively and efficiently perform jobs requiring various levels of physical demands, psychological demands, or both.

Serious Limitation

A serious limitation in a functional area means that, due to a severe physical or mental impairment, the individual's functional capacities in the specific area are restricted to the degree that they require services or accommodations not typically made for other individuals in order to prepare for, enter, engage in, or retain employment. Accommodations are defined as special working conditions, job re-engineering, rehabilitation technology, or substantial support and/or supervision.

List of Physical or Mental Disabilities

Physical or mental disabilities resulting from amputation, arthritis, autism, blindness, burn injury, cancer, cerebral palsy, cystic fibrosis, deafness, head injury, heart disease, hemiplegia, hemophilia, respiratory or pulmonary dysfunction, intellectual disabilities, mental illness, multiple sclerosis, muscular dystrophy, musculoskeletal disorders, neurological disorders

including stroke and epilepsy, paraplegia, quadriplegia, and other spinal cord conditions, sickle cell anemia, specific learning disability, and end-stage renal disease, or another disability or combination of disabilities determined on the basis of an assessment for determining eligibility and priority for services to cause comparable serious functional limitation.

B. THE JUSTIFICATION FOR THE ORDER

Minnesota Vocational Rehabilitation Services implemented an Order of Selection in 1993, setting forth who will be served first when the program cannot serve all eligible individuals. Determination of eligibility and qualification for service is based on the applicable Minnesota administrative rule and the Minnesota Vocational Rehabilitation Policy and Procedure Manual.

Annual State and Federal resources allocated for Minnesota's Vocational Rehabilitation Services program continue to not be sufficient to serve all Minnesotans who are eligible for services.

Conclusions regarding capacity of the Minnesota vocational rehabilitation program in any given year are based on:

- An analysis of resources available for annual operation of the vocational rehabilitation program,
- expenditures required to implement employment plans approved prior to commencement of the fiscal year,
- the anticipated costs for determining eligibility and qualification for service of new applicants during the fiscal year,
- the anticipated costs of implementing approved vocational rehabilitation plans for new applicants during the fiscal year, and
- reasonable and necessary costs related to administration of the vocational rehabilitation services program.

Program expenditures for several years prior to PY 2020 exceeded annual program resources, requiring the agency to use carryover funds from previous years to meet all financial obligations. This required the agency to implement several budget reduction measures, including the closing of Priority Categories Two and Three (which have been closed since October 14, 2013). Priority Category Four (individuals who have a disability that makes them eligible for service but do not have a serious limitation in a functional area) has been closed since 2000. That situation began to change in FFY 2020, owing to a combination of stable revenue and reduced spending, caused in large measure by the pandemic closures and a significant decline in new VR referrals. This budget stabilization was sufficiently durable to allow for the reopening of Priority Categories Two and Three at that time. As of December 20, 2021, there was one individual on the waiting list in Priority Category Four and none in any other Priority Categories. We have effectively eliminated the waiting list and are working to increase the number of individuals who apply who meet criteria for Priority Categories Two and Three.

C. THE SERVICE AND OUTCOME GOALS

In FFY2023, under the order of selection currently in effect, approximately 13,955 individuals will be served. Approximately 1,695 individuals will achieve employment outcomes in FFY2023.

D. TIME WITHIN WHICH THESE GOALS MAY BE ACHIEVED FOR INDIVIDUALS IN EACH PRIORITY CATEGORY WITHIN THE ORDER; AND

Category 1

- Number of individuals to be served: 12,300

- Estimated number of individuals who will exit with employment: 1,500
- Estimated number of individuals who will exit without employment: 1,988
- Estimated time within which goals may be achieved: 26 months
- Cost of Services: $$14,760,000

Category 2

- Number of individuals to be served: 1,200
- Estimated number of individuals who will exit with employment: 150
- Estimated number of individuals who will exit without employment: 200
- Time within which goals are to be achieved: 24 months
- Cost of services: $1,080,000

Category 3

- Number of individuals to be served: 450
- Estimated number of individuals who will exit with employment: 44
- Estimated number of individuals who will exit without employment: 56
- Time within which goals are to be achieved: 24 months
- Cost of services: $382,500

Category 4

- Number of individuals to be served: 5
- Estimated number of individuals who will exit with employment: 1
- Estimated number of individuals who will exit without employment: 1
- Time within which goals are to be achieved: 26 months
- Cost of services: $125

E. HOW INDIVIDUALS WITH THE MOST SIGNIFICANT DISABILITIES ARE SELECTED FOR SERVICES BEFORE ALL OTHER INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES

Service Priority: The order of selection establishes service priority based on the number of functional areas in which a person has significant limitations to employment. Persons with limitations in more functional areas are deemed to have more significant disability. It is intended by the order of selection that persons with the most significant disabilities will be served first when all persons who are eligible cannot be served.

2. IF THE DESIGNATED STATE UNIT HAS ELECTED TO SERVE ELIGIBLE INDIVIDUALS, REGARDLESS OF ANY ESTABLISHED ORDER OF SELECTION, WHO REQUIRE SPECIFIC SERVICES OR EQUIPMENT TO MAINTAIN EMPLOYMENT

Vocational Rehabilitation Services has elected to not exempt individuals who require specific services or equipment to maintain employment from the Order of Selection.

N. GOALS AND PLANS FOR DISTRIBUTION OF TITLE VI FUNDS

1. SPECIFY THE STATE'S GOALS AND PRIORITIES FOR FUNDS RECEIVED UNDER SECTION 603 OF THE REHABILITATION ACT FOR THE PROVISION OF SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES

(A) Estimate of the number of persons to be served

During Program Year 2021, about 2,560 individuals will be served with Title VI, Part B funds supplemented by Title I funds. Under the administrative rule that sets forth Minnesota's priority-for-service categories, all persons receiving supported employment have three or more serious functional limitations.

(B) The contribution of state funding

Title VI B funds are used to provide supports after placement and before closure. Minnesota receives a state appropriation match for federal VR funding, which includes match for Title VI B funds.

Additionally, the state legislature provides appropriations for three other programs that provide extended employment supports. The state-funded Extended Employment (EE) program that provides ongoing employment supports using state funding of $15.825 million annually that flows to community rehabilitation programs. More than 80 percent of this state funding provides extended services for persons in competitive employment with supports. The Minnesota Extended Employment program serves all disability groups. An additional state appropriation of $2,555,000 is dedicated to extended supported employment services for persons with serious mental illness since it has been historically difficult to obtain ongoing support services for this population. Another appropriation provides $1,000,000 annually to provide long-term supported employment services for persons who are deaf, deaf blind or hard-of-hearing.

(C) System complexity and limited capacity

Funding for supported employment, within which Title VI Part B funds play a relatively small part, is governed by myriad federal and state laws and rules covering many categories of services. For example, a network of private, not-for-profit organizations, licensed by the Minnesota Department of Human Services Disability Services Division, provides day training and habilitation services that may include supported employment. People with mental illness may receive work-related support through the State Comprehensive Mental Health Act. In these instances, each county determines the level of service that will be provided.

Title VI B supported employment funds are distributed on a fee-for-service basis under fee schedules developed with service providers. VRS collaborates with the Departments of Education and Human Services and county and local service providers to facilitate access to other funding and service resources. During development of a vocational rehabilitation employment plan, the vocational rehabilitation participant and the service team design a supported employment framework that best meets the participant's needs. Planning for eventual long-term supports in the community is a crucial part of planning during VRS' time-limited period of service

(D) Strategic goal for effective partnerships

Under the designated state unit's strategic goal for effective partnerships, VRS seeks to expand its collaboration with other employment and disability services system partners to better coordinate and align services and assist business partners in building inclusive workplaces and developing best practices for recruitment and retention for individuals with disabilities requiring workplace supports.

2. DESCRIBE THE ACTIVITIES TO BE CONDUCTED, WITH FUNDS RESERVED PURSUANT TO SECTION 603(D), FOR YOUTH WITH THE MOST SIGNIFICANT DISABILITIES, INCLUDING:

A. THE PROVISION OF EXTENDED SERVICES FOR A PERIOD NOT TO EXCEED 4 YEARS; AND

"Extended services" are ongoing support services that assist individuals with a most significant disability, including youth, to maintain supported employment. These services could include customized employment or other appropriate services based on the needs of an eligible individual, as specified in the Supported Employment Plan. The services may be provided by a private nonprofit organization, an employer, or any other appropriate resource. Extended services can be provided after an individual has made the transition from time-limited support from Vocational Rehabilitation Services. They may be offered for up to four years, or until a youth reaches age 25 and no longer meets the definition of a youth with a disability, whichever occurs first. Vocational Rehabilitation Services must not provide extended services to an individual unless they are a youth with a most significant disability.

Extended services can be provided by any appropriate qualified resource, including natural supports but must be funded by a source other than Vocational Rehabilitation Services funds except in limited circumstances where VRS funds are necessary to fill a funding gap for extended services required by a youth with a most significant disability to maintain competitive integrated employment. For example, a funding gap can occur when a youth with a most significant disability is in the process of applying for waivered services through the DHS to cover costs for extended services and there are no county funds available to fill the gap. In this circumstance, VRS can provide funding for the extended services to fill the "gap" while the application for waivered services is in process. In this example, VRS funding for extended services must end when waivered services funding is in place, when the person turns 25 or when VRS has funded extended services for four years, whichever occurs first.

B. HOW THE STATE WILL LEVERAGE OTHER PUBLIC AND PRIVATE FUNDS TO INCREASE RESOURCES FOR EXTENDED SERVICES AND EXPANDED SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES FOR YOUTH WITH THE MOST SIGNIFICANT DISABILITIES.

VRS has promulgated changes to the State rule governing the Extended Employment program, ending employment supports to individuals in non-integrated and sub-minimum wage jobs, capping employment supports to individuals in other non-integrated employment and prioritizing this state funding for employment supports to individuals in competitive, integrated employment.

O. STATE'S STRATEGIES

1. THE METHODS TO BE USED TO EXPAND AND IMPROVE SERVICES TO INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES

Innovation and Expansion activities are developed in response to needs identified in the Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment, with a focus on ensuring equal access to services regardless of specific disability, impediment to employment, economic status, public assistance status, race, national origin, gender, sexual orientation or age.

This activity specifically addresses program access, and adherence to the employment non-discrimination principles requirements of Section 427 of the General Education Provisions Act. VRS seeks partnerships with other public and private entities to increase access to vocational rehabilitation services and other employment services.

The State Rehabilitation Council plays a crucial role in identifying the needs of citizens with disabilities. The council conducts 10 meetings annually to carry out its consultative and participative roles in the work of Vocational Rehabilitation Services. In 2021, the council participated in discussions about updating the comprehensive needs assessment, engaged in strategic planning, reviewed the policies and practices that guide the delivery of VRS services, and assisted in identifying program evaluation needs.

In Program Year 2020, VRS utilized $450,000 in funding for innovation and expansion activities. This includes funding for the State Rehabilitation Council, salaries for rehabilitation specialists focused on service innovation and program evaluation.

(A) The Olmstead Plan

The employment section of the Olmstead Plan, approved by the U.S. District Court on September 29, 2015, establishes two goals: 1) Increase the employment rate for people with disabilities so that it is comparable to the employment rate of people without disabilities, and 2) increase the earnings of people with disabilities so that it is comparable to people without disabilities.

There are two specific strategies that VRS played or will play an active role in:

- Provide technical assistance to non-integrated employment programs to design new business models that lead to competitive employment in the most integrated setting; and
- Provide information about effective employment strategies, such as supported and customized employment, that make competitive employment possible for individuals with complex and significant disabilities.

VRS continues to clarify policy to ensure that all vocational rehabilitation services are provided in the most integrated setting appropriate for the person.

(B) Customized Employment

Customized Employment (CE) is an evidenced-based alternative for helping people with significant disabilities to become successfully employed. At the foundation of CE is Discovery, which is a process for uncovering a person's strengths, interests and the conditions under which they will be successful in employment. DEED-VRS and DHS-Minnesota State Operated Community Services developed an Association of Community Rehabilitation Educator (ACRE) certified Customized Employment curriculum and training. It also includes mentoring supports to DEED, Community Rehabilitation Partner and School District staff to reach competent, practitioner level delivery of Customized Employment Services for persons requiring it that is sustainable, ongoing and cost effective for the state disability employment system. This training is offered multiple times each year. MN CE training is in demand as people on Medicaid waivers express a desire to work in competitive, integrated employment. MN CE is also in demand because of the significant staff turnover occurring with community rehabilitation providers.

(C) Pre-Employment Transition Services

Since WIOA Pre-ETS implementation, VRS has been developing capacity to serve and support Pre-ETS potentially eligible and eligible students and ensure that Pre-ETS are available statewide. VRS is in the process of developing its Pre-ETS Strategic Plan that will set the vision, strategies and action steps to ensure Pre-ETS availability of high quality Pre-ETS availability throughout the state.

VRS also made a commitment to hire one Pre-ETS Representative per VRS Team to support Pre-ETS potentially eligible students statewide. Pre-ETS representatives work with LEAs to identify Pre-ETS potentially eligible students and connect them to Pre-ETS services. Pre-ETS services are very often provided by community rehabilitation providers. Unfortunately, there are areas of the state where Pre-ETS services are not offered by community rehabilitation providers. Additionally, in greater Minnesota, the service area of one Rehabilitation Representative covers hundreds of miles with an unreasonable number of schools to be served. As a result, VRS is hiring additional Pre-ETS Rehabilitation Representatives to close the gap and ensure Pre-ETS availability.

(D) Marketing

VRS has not had a waiting list since late 2019. VRS has seen a significant reduction in applications from adults with disabilities. VRS plans to develop marketing to adults with disabilities and encourage those with one, two or more functional limitations.

VRS intends to renew marketing strategies to encourage underserved, under-represented BIPOC Minnesotans with disabilities to apply for VRS services. In recent years, for example, Minnesota has become home to a large and growing population of immigrants and refugees whose language spoken at home is other than English. American Community Survey data show increasing language access needs among individuals with limited English proficiency in the following languages: Amharic, Arabic, Hmong, Karen, Lao, Oromo, Russian, Somali, Spanish, and Vietnamese. Accordingly, VRS has expanded its information and marketing efforts to include materials in translation in each of those 10 languages and continues to explore opportunities to expand those efforts as necessary.

(E) Increasing Employment Networks

VRS will continue hosting quarterly meetings with existing and prospective Employment Networks to promote Partnership Plus job retention services following VRS/SSB case closure, provide important updates about SSA's Ticket to Work. The benefit to increasing the number of Employment Networks (ENs) in Minnesota is that it will create more access for long term employment supports for SSA recipients who are not on a Medicaid Waiver and aren't served by an Extended Employment (EE) provider. Coordination will continue with Minnesota's Social Security Liaison, Department of Human Services, Disability Hub, Minnesota's WIIPA (Goodwill's Work Incentives Connection). This level of collaboration between VR, the WIIPA SSA and DHS is unprecedented in Minnesota.

2. HOW A BROAD RANGE OF ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY SERVICES AND DEVICES WILL BE PROVIDED TO INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES AT EACH STAGE OF THE REHABILITATION PROCESS AND ON A STATEWIDE BASIS

A rehabilitation technology specialist provides onsite assistive technology assistance to staff and consumers. He also coordinates with MDE to promote inclusion of assistive technology in transition plans. The specialist is supported by three regional liaisons and a local liaison on each VR team. Placement coordinators assist employers in using rehabilitation technology to resolve employment barriers. The VRS website has an assistive technology page with links to nationally recognized websites. VRS coordinates closely with the STAR Program which operates an equipment loan program that allows consumers to try the assistive technology for 30 days before VRS purchases the equipment.

VRS has also identified a need for a statewide Pre-ETS assistive technology lending library and is developing a plan to partner with STAR (System of Technology to Achieve Results) and plans to develop an assistive technology lending library to Pre-ETS students. The goal is to make assistive technology available and easily accessible to Pre-ETS students across the state. The coordination required to identify students in need of assistive technology, provide training to the student, their family and school staff and ensure receipt and return of assistive technology is a significant undertaking. Planning began in 2021 and a pilot project is planned to demonstrate the Pre-ETS assistive technology lending library regionally to ensure feasibility. VRS is partnering with STAR Program, MDE and DHS to ensure there is no overlap of similar programs.

3. THE OUTREACH PROCEDURES THAT WILL BE USED TO IDENTIFY AND SERVE INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES WHO ARE MINORITIES, INCLUDING THOSE WITH THE MOST SIGNIFICANT DISABILITIES, AS WELL AS THOSE WHO HAVE BEEN UNSERVED OR UNDERSERVED BY THE VR PROGRAM

VRS continues to expand services to people of color and indigenous people. The New Americans VRS office in St. Paul employs multi-lingual staff of East African descent to provide outreach and

services to recent immigrants, primarily from Somalia, who are not fluent in English. Other VRS offices hire bilingual staff as opportunities arise.

The current estimate is that 5.4 percent of the Minnesota adult population, or at least 203,540 adults, have serious mental illness. VRS collaborates with the DHS Adult Mental Health Division and with community partners to build supports and services for persons with serious mental illness (SMI), who in PY2020 comprised 27.5 % of the VR caseload and 30.4% of employment outcomes. Individual Placement and Support (IPS) is the evidenced based practice of supported employment for persons with serious mental illness. IPS helps people in community mental health treatment services to become part of the competitive labor market. Research indicates that IPS is nearly three times more effective than other vocational approaches in helping people with mental illness to work competitively. Research also shows that people who obtain competitive employment through IPS have increased income, improved self-esteem, improved quality of life and reduced symptoms. Approximately half of the people who enroll in IPS become steady workers and remain competitively employed a decade later.

VRS receives state funding through a competitive grant program for Deaf and Hard of Hearing employment services. These funds flow to two organizations that provide extended services to individuals who are deaf and hard of hearing, as well as employment services to individuals in transition.

About 38 percent of VRS applicants receive SSA benefits. VRS worked closely with DHS to develop a Benefits Coaching Training and certification which focuses on providing essential, accurate information to VRS clients receiving SSI/SSDI benefits so they can make informed choices about their employment goals. DEED-VRS philosophy is deeply rooted in Employment First and that work will almost always financially benefit the person receiving SSA benefits AND that offering benefits coaching or planning prior to employment plan development as well as during the course of the individual's time working with VRS can result in individuals charting a course to get off of SSA benefits and earn a family sustaining wage.

SSA, VRS and State Services for the Blind have attended periodic meetings of the Employment Networks. In addition to providing in-service training, the meetings provide an opportunity to learn more about the services offered by each Employment Network to assist consumers make informed choices when selecting a vendor for employment services and/or on-going job retention services. The current focus of this group is to expand the use of Ticket to Work funding to provide ongoing job retention supports, to promote the use of PASS Plans, and to ensure the continuation of benefits planning services as people transition from VRS services to job retention services.

4. THE METHODS TO BE USED TO IMPROVE AND EXPAND VR SERVICES FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES, INCLUDING THE COORDINATION OF SERVICES DESIGNED TO FACILITATE THE TRANSITION OF SUCH STUDENTS FROM SCHOOL TO POSTSECONDARY LIFE (INCLUDING THE RECEIPT OF VR SERVICES, POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT, AND PRE-EMPLOYMENT TRANSITION SERVICES)

VRS has a counselor assigned to each high school in the state to provide outreach and services to students who are eligible for the program. During the 2019-20 school year VRS changed its model for providing outreach and services to students who are potentially eligible from having contracted community agencies to now having internal Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) Rehabilitation Representatives who are assigned to each high school to ensure that Pre-ETS are available statewide. Counselors and Pre-ETS Representatives go into schools together to explain the two types of services available. Both counselors and Pre-ETS Representatives authorize for VR and/or Pre-ETS to be provided to students by agencies that contract with VRS, as needed.

Strategies to improve and expand services include the following:

- VRS will be monitoring the successes and challenges of the new Pre-ETS Representatives in order to provide enhancements as needed. Monthly meetings with the Pre-ETS Representatives and their managers will assist in sharing best practices and keeping a pulse on how things are progressing.
- VRS collaborates with MDE and DHS on a Minnesota Olmstead Plan strategy called the Employment Capacity Building Cohort (ECBC). There are a total of 30 school districts along with their local VRS and county partners participating in the 2021-2022 School year. One goal is to improve competitive integrated employment outcomes for students with Developmental Cognitive Disabilities who are between the ages of 19-21. School districts can select one of three strategies aimed at improving outcomes for all students with disabilities:
- Quality transition planning within the Individualized Education Program (IEP) process
- Embedding Customized Employment strategies into schools
- Improving interagency business engagement strategies
- The Minnesota State Interagency Council (MnSIC) Interagency Person-Centered IEP pilot project focuses on coordinating the VRS employment plan and other interagency service providers' plans with the IEP in three school districts. A fidelity model is being tested with the hope to also expand this initiative to other communities in the coming years.
- COVID has had a significant impact on VRS staff ability to connect with students. LEA staff, including Special Education Teachers have been short staffed, teaching students in person and remote learning. VRS staff have been responsive to school challenges, coordinating directly with teachers, offering Pre-ETS remote or in-person classes depending on school district visitor guidance. VRS staff also coordinate with students and their families outside of school hours to meet and provide and/or coordinate Pre-ETS, VR Counseling and Guidance.

5. IF APPLICABLE, PLANS FOR ESTABLISHING, DEVELOPING, OR IMPROVING COMMUNITY REHABILITATION PROGRAMS WITHIN THE STATE

Program access to CRPs is monitored by reviewing compliance with CARF policies on program access, and by continuously monitoring the geographical coverage provided by the network of 165 CRPs. VRS has an active CRP Advisory Committee to assist in achievement of common goals. The Advisory Committee is also engaged in defining CRP quality measures that will support VRS' goals and priorities.

DEED-VRS and DHS-MSOCS provide Minnesota Customized Employment. DEED-VRS & DHS-MSOCS have been offering Customized Employment training. Utilizing "The Essential Elements of Customized Employment" as its foundation, the MN-CE curriculum provides a framework of training and mentoring support offering students the opportunity to become competent practitioners of Customized Employment services following the conclusion of the MN-CE training. Additionally, the training provides clear, consistent information about CE to auditors, typically CE referral sources such as VRS Counselors, county case managers or families. The training is person centered, consistent, and continuously available throughout the state. VRS' plans to continue offering MN CE to help transform the disability employment system that supports rt individuals with significant disabilities plan for a future that includes competitive, integrated employment. MNCE curriculum is nationally accredited through the Association of Community Rehabilitation Educators (ACRE).

Students: VRS continues to be a leader in Minnesota in promoting competitive, integrated employment for students with disabilities. Given the new role of providing pre-employment

transition services to students, Minnesota has partnered on the state level with the Minnesota Department of Education and at the local level with local school districts to provide more students with access to the tools needed to be successful in competitive, integrated employment.

Community Partners: VRS continues to provide resources to community partners to improve their ability to provide supported employment services to students and individuals who may not have considered competitive, integrated employment in the past. Providing services and supports to these individuals requires new and innovative approaches. Minnesota VRS continues to seek out and share those new and innovative approaches.

6. STRATEGIES TO IMPROVE THE PERFORMANCE OF THE STATE WITH RESPECT TO THE PERFORMANCE ACCOUNTABILITY MEASURES UNDER SECTION 116 OF WIOA

Performance, five-year trends, and specific strategies utilized to improve the agency's performance in meeting the evaluation standards and performance indicators, are included in Section (P).

7. STRATEGIES FOR ASSISTING OTHER COMPONENTS OF THE STATEWIDE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM IN ASSISTING INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES

CareerForce locations serve a significant number of people with disabilities beyond the customers served by VRS and SSB. However, the CareerForce locations need to articulate and better disseminate information about their program access. VRS provides consultation to the CareerForce Disability Employment Initiative (DEI) federal grant to serve youth in transition and adults. The Governor's Workforce Development Board has established a committee to explore how the CareerForce locations can best serve individuals with disabilities.

8. HOW THE AGENCY'S STRATEGIES WILL BE USED TO:

A. ACHIEVE GOALS AND PRIORITIES BY THE STATE, CONSISTENT WITH THE COMPREHENSIVE NEEDS ASSESSMENT;

Need for long-term supports:

DEED-VRS is actively working with the Medicaid Agency on ensuring that individuals on waivers receive long-term employment supports paid via the waiver. The Minnesota VR & Medicaid Waiver interagency work plan will make very clear to DEED-VRS staff, Lead Agency staff (Counties) and Community Rehabilitation Partners (Providers) that individuals on Medicaid Waivers get long-term supports and is funded via the Medicaid waiver. For individuals who do not have waivers, Extended Employment services are available to employees with disabilities with three functional limitations or more. Additionally, DEED-VRS will develop updated Supported Employment Training for staff to ensure that there is understanding regarding long-term employment funding supports. The training will make clear that if the VRS client requires long-term employment supports and they are unavailable, DEED-VRS will not proceed with writing an employment plan.

Need for active outreach to people of color and indigenous people to assure equal access

Specific activities currently planned and already underway include:

- The New Americans Project: a team based in St. Paul consisting of multi-lingual immigrant staff whose mission is to provide employment related VR services to recent immigrants and refugees with disabilities. This project continues to grow and expand its reach every year since its inception in 2007.

- Creation of a new statewide American Indian Liaison position in 2020 specifically to do outreach and address the VR needs of Minnesota's large American Indian population – a population that has been historically underserved by VRS.
- Make all VRS informational materials (both in print and online) available in multiple languages to reach the growing population of Minnesotans with disabilities who use languages other than English.

Reaching underserved populations

Individuals 65 and older:

VRS has seen a significant increase in the number of individuals 65 and older who are applying for and receiving VR services. There is no need to do additional outreach at this time.

Ex-offenders:

VRS has an Ex-Offender expert who serves as a single point of contact for VRS staff. He provides Ex-Offender Training on varying relevant topics to VRS teams, Business Engagement Networks, and to Community Rehabilitation Providers in the metro and greater Minnesota. Proposed activities to expand awareness of DEED-VRS services to Ex-Offenders could include the following:

- Transition Coalition: Sponsored by Department of Corrections, this coalition meets on a monthly basis regionally (Metro, South, West and North) to share resources, training and create opportunities for ex-offenders transitioning from prison to the community.
- Partner with "New Leaf" Career Force Presentations (Luis Brown Pena) to introduce DEED- VRS services for individuals accessing New Leaf training.

Serving individuals served through other components of the statewide workforce development system

Serving Youth:

VRS is working to ensure that Pre-ETS are available statewide to students who are "potentially eligible" for services. VRS has a counselor and at least one Rehabilitation Representative high school in the state to provide outreach and services to students who are eligible for the program. Counselors and Pre-ETS Representatives partner together to explain the two types of services available. Both counselors and Pre-ETS Representatives authorize for VR and/or Pre-ETS services to be provided to students by agencies that contract with VRS, as needed.

B. SUPPORT INNOVATION AND EXPANSION ACTIVITIES; AND

Individual Placement and Supports: Minnesota has a state-funded appropriation which provides for Individual Placement and Support (IPS) programs for persons with serious and persistent mental illness. VRS and the DHS Mental Health Division collaborate on IPS projects to promote innovation in service delivery, including supported employment services, for this population.

Virtual and Remote Services: VRS has begun to explore virtual and remote ways of interacting and providing services to VR participants outside of the traditional office setting. Online platforms for virtual meetings, social media platforms, and protocols for after-hours and non-office meetings are being developed, tested, and employed with promising results.

C. OVERCOME IDENTIFIED BARRIERS RELATING TO EQUITABLE ACCESS TO AND PARTICIPATION OF INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES IN THE STATE VR SERVICES PROGRAM AND THE STATE SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES PROGRAM.

As a division within the Minnesota designated state agency, the Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED), VRS adheres to the DSA's equity goals. One of DEED's department-wide objectives in its strategic plan is to "reduce the disparities faced by populations with barriers to employment." To get there, DEED has created annual equity goals for every program area across DEED, focused on reducing disparities based on 1) race, 2) ability level, or 3) geography.

As the DSU, VRS has the following as its primary objective: Broaden the representation among applicants to VRS to ensure underrepresented Minnesotans with disabilities have access to VR services.

Specific activities currently planned and already underway include:

- The New Americans Project: a team based in St. Paul consisting of multi-lingual immigrant staff whose mission is to provide employment-related VR services to recent immigrants and refugees with disabilities. This project continues to grow and expand its reach every year since its inception in 2007.
- Continued support of a statewide American Indian Liaison position in 2020 specifically to do outreach and address the VR needs of Minnesota's large American Indian population – a population that has been historically underserved by VRS.
- Make all VRS informational materials (both in print and online) available in multiple languages to reach the growing population of Minnesotans with disabilities who use languages other than English.

P. EVALUATION AND REPORTS OF PROGRESS: VR AND SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT GOALS

1. AN EVALUATION OF THE EXTENT TO WHICH THE VR PROGRAM GOALS DESCRIBED IN THE APPROVED VR SERVICES PORTION OF THE UNIFIED OR COMBINED STATE PLAN FOR THE MOST RECENTLY COMPLETED PROGRAM YEAR WERE ACHIEVED. THE EVALUATION MUST:

A. IDENTIFY THE STRATEGIES THAT CONTRIBUTED TO THE ACHIEVEMENT OF THE GOALS

The State Rehabilitation Council and VRS are committed to a disciplined process for making decisions that shape and guide VRS as an organization. Consumers, stakeholders and VRS staff contributed insights over many months to the planning process, resulting in the five goals. A strategic planning process is never finished. Changing consumer needs, as reflected by the Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment, program evaluation and ever-changing social, legal and economic circumstances, prompts an annual review of the goals and progress measures.

GOAL 1. PROVIDE QUALITY SERVICES TO YOUTH AND ADULTS WITH DISABILITIES FOR EXPLORATION, DEVELOPMENT AND ADVANCEMENT IN CAREERS

Objectives:

1. Quality pre-employment transition services are provided to potentially eligible students

Key Results:

- Pre-ETS Representative data reports demonstrate that outreach is provided to every school district/charter school in Minnesota
- Students and families are satisfied with the services they receive
- Baseline is established and annual goals are established and met for numbers of students served

Evaluation of if Objective Was Achieved and Strategies that Contributed to the Achievement of the Objective:

- In February 2022 VRS will complete a Transition and Pre-ETS strategic plan (that includes services for students who are both potentially eligible and eligible for VR) which will address 5 areas:
    - Streamline, strengthen and share VRS-school coordination process
    - Strengthen relationships with community partners, increase choice of and access to services
    - Increase focus on evaluating outcomes and performance measurement
    - Bring person-centered, equity-informed approach to serving students
    - Build VRS Pre-ETS/Transition staff development

Measures for tracking progress for each of these 5 strategies will be established and tracked over time.

2. Annual goals for numbers of students served are established.

Key Results:

- Compliance standards are established/defined via case reviews
- Participants are satisfied with the services they receive
- Baseline is established and annual goals set for post-secondary education/training and obtainment of measurable skills gains
- A system for measuring career advancement is established and annual goals are established and met
- Goals are established and met for statewide employment outcomes and job retention

Evaluation of if Objective Was Achieved and Strategies that Contributed to the Achievement of the Objective

- A new Quality Assurance Case Review process was launched in 2020. It includes dedicated Quality Assurance staff and is sustainable, consistent, transparent, timely, and developmental. This process incorporates established and defined compliance and quality standards.
- A survey of participants regarding their preferences for in-person services and barriers to remote services has been designed and planned for spring 2022.
- Minnesota VRS and SSB worked with RSA to establish a negotiated level of performance for the measurable skills gain rate for PY2020 (30%) and PY2021 (31%). In PY2020, Minnesota exceeded the negotiated level of performance (48.7%).
- Minnesota VRS and SSB will meet with RSA in spring of 2023 to establish negotiated levels of performance for statewide employment and job retention outcomes. VRS currently monitors performance on these common performance measures.

3. Quality services are provided to participants of state appropriated programs (State Extended Employment program, Individual Placement and Supports grants, Centers for Independent Living grants, Deaf and Hard of Hearing grants)

Key Results:

- Satisfaction criteria are established and annual goals are established and met

Evaluation of if Objective Was Achieved and Strategies that Contributed to the Achievement of the Objective

- This objective is in progress. VRS is working to develop quality measures and evaluation of the services provided by these programs.

GOAL 2. STRENGTHEN BUSINESS ENGAGEMENT

Objectives:

1. Connect VRS participants to competitive integrated employment

Key Results:

- Increased competitive integrated employment outcomes

Evaluation of if Objective Was Achieved and Strategies that Contributed to the Achievement of the Objective

- The numbers of participants the VR program served and the percentage of participants who achieved employment are down in large part due to the pandemic. All placements in Minnesota are competitive, integrated employment.

2. Connect students with disabilities to work experiences

Key Results:

- A mechanism for tracking work-based experiences is established and baseline data is collected.

Evaluation of if Objective Was Achieved and Strategies that Contributed to the Achievement of the Objective

- As noted above, VRS will complete a Transition and Pre-ETS strategic plan in February 2022. Tracking work-based learning experiences will be a part of the measurement of that plan.

3. Develop and facilitate a disability employment collaborative to meet the needs of businesses

Key Results:

- Competitive work-based learning opportunities for students with disabilities
- Increased awareness about the benefits of hiring people with disabilities

Evaluation of if Objective Was Achieved and Strategies that Contributed to the Achievement of the Objective

- Business Engagement Networks and MaxAbility
- A Metro Pre-ETS Community of Practice has been established and will be expanded statewide in 2022. This initiative brings together VRS and community partner staff to create a seamless system of services and supports for students with disabilities. The goals include:
    - Gain a better understanding of Pre-ETS
    - Share ideas, best practices, strategies and resources
    - Build and strengthen relationships and communication

    - Improve processes and resources
    - Plan strategically together and measure success

- Disability Inclusion Bite-Sized Learning Modules are a newly created resource for employers that takes a topic and breaks it into short modules that can be presented in about 20 minutes. Each module features a video, the PowerPoint presentation used in the video and a takeaway card to reinforce learning and provide links to additional resources. There are 5 current modules on DEED's CareerForce website on the following topics:
    - Module 1: Defining Disability and the Americans with Disabilities Act
    - Module 2: Recognizing and Implementing a Request for Reasonable Accommodations
    - Module 3 – Self ID: Building a More Inclusive Culture
    - Module 4: Inclusive Communication
    - Module 5 – Mental Health Matters: Let's Talk
- Each year, VRS leads a National Disability Employment Awareness Month (NDEAM) event. The event is geared towards business. VRS and SSB continue to develop long term, mutually beneficial relationships with business and the NDEAM event is one of the ways we build that relationship. The 2021 NDEAM event provided the Disability Inclusion Bite Sized Learning Modules for Business as well as "Windmills Training" by two nationally renowned business owners and disability inclusion experts.

GOAL 3. BUILD A HEALTHY ORGANIZATION IN ORDER TO ACHIEVE OUR MISSION

Objectives:

1. Fiscal stability

Key Results:

- Reduction in purchasing violations (MS16)
- Fiscal dashboards created and monitored to make decisions
- Full 15% of Federal award is spent on Pre-ETS
- Actual spending reasonably tracks budgeted amounts

Evaluation of if Objective Was Achieved and Strategies that Contributed to the Achievement of the Objective

- Reduction of MS 16A violations
    - Training and resources for service providers and VRS staff.
    - VRS contracts staff works with service providers who incur violations to find solutions.
    - Identified specific situations or scenarios that result in violations and developed actions to address each situation.
- Meeting pre-employment transition services (pre-ets) spending mandate
    - MN General approved initial hiring of twenty-four rehabilitation representatives focused solely on pre-ets services. Additional hiring approval has now increased

the pre-ets full time employee count to approximately three dozen staff as of January 1, 2022. Approval has been granted to add more pre-ets staff in calendar year 2022.

  - Added pre-ets services to existing professional/technical contracts with community partners.
  - Implemented professional/technical contracts with three organizations to provide work based learning licensure endorsement training for special education teachers.
  - Implemented an interagency agreement to develop a youth in transition communications system.
  - Regularly track the budgeted versus actual pre-ets spending to determine whether spending is on track to meet the required goal.

- Procedures and controls used to ensure that actual spending aligns with budgeted amounts
  - Spending categories are broken down in a logical manner by account codes in the state accounting system.
  - During the operating budget load process, VRS consults with the DSA's business analyst for analysis of spending projections by appropriation and for each account code.
  - Utilize available technology in developing budgets and tracking expenditures, such as OBIEE salary projections.
  - Review, assess, and plan for potential special or non-recurring charges, such as information technology personnel costs needed for system upgrades.
  - Automatically incorporate rent increases of 3% annually as part of the budget process.
  - Monthly monitoring of actual to budgeted amounts for each account code.

2. Employee Engagement

Key Results:

- Staff burden is reduced through technology development
- Staff are trained in conflict resolution

Evaluation of if Objective Was Achieved and Strategies that Contributed to the Achievement of the Objective

- Objective achieved.
  - A mobile app for the case management system was developed.
  - Equipped all staff with technology so they could effectively work remotely due to the COVID workplace restrictions:
  - Upgraded older workstations and transitioned all staff from a desktop to a laptop for better portability,
  - Provided VPN access to all staff which provides a secure access for sharing and accessing files and private data,

- Through MS Teams, implemented software strategies to support virtual meetings with staff, colleagues, and participants,
- Through MS Teams, implemented collaboration and information sharing sites and subsites where staff can have immediate access to information sharing or collaboration on issues,
- Migrated all state issued cell phones into a secured environment on the State's Information Technology Network,
- Upgraded older cell phone devices that were nearing incompatibility with the network and security software,
- Migration of SharePoint site and subsites, all content management, tools, workflows, and staff resources,
- Implementation of DocuSign to allow and facilitate electronic signature for participant applications and supporting documents
- Developed a technology support site for useful tips and tricks and training opportunities for technology needs
- Motivational Interviewing and Ethics training are each offered two times a year and include conflict resolution strategies. This is an area of continued need and additional training in conflict resolution, de-escalation strategies, and counseling are being explored.

3. Build collaboration within VRS and across DEED

Key Results:

- A project management tool (Monday.com) is used to track and report progress on projects to enable collaboration between units

Evaluation of if Objective Was Achieved and Strategies that Contributed to the Achievement of the Objective

- Objective was achieved.
- VRS proactively sought opportunities to collaborate within units of VRS as well as across DEED divisions.
- Monday.com was not deployed as Microsoft Teams has been an excellent collaboration tool.

4. Build human resource capital

Key Results:

- Plan developed to expand recruitment of qualified staff
- Reduction in staff turnover
- Counselors have effective and professional counseling skills
- Counselors are proficient in aspects of disabilities for frequently served populations

Evaluation of if Objective Was Achieved and Strategies that Contributed to the Achievement of the Objective

- The DSA is in the process of hiring additional HR positions dedicated to recruiting and filling VRS positions.

- Internships: MNVRS will now start offering paid internships. These internships are advertised in the state careers website, but will also be advertised on Handshake. Our staff development team also reaches out directly to universities that offer Masters programs in Rehabilitation Counseling to promote internship postings in an effort to pull in more applications from across the nation.
- Onboarding: Many statistics show that employees who are inducted to their new job in a structured way, have higher job satisfaction and far lower turnover rates. In addition to formal training, our onboarding includes on-the-job learning of new VRS employees by their local manager and designated peer mentor. Managers and peer mentors play an important role in orienting new employees to organizational and team culture, to other staff, to local community resources, as well as to the technical and procedural aspects of the work. MN VRS continues to enhance the onboarding process. In addition, MN VRS is currently creating a structured way to offer additional career development opportunities for staff to develop their skills and grow in their role. The goal is to create an agency structure for career development, which can be further individualized at the local level to meet the unique needs of each employee. Managers and employees can develop an Individual Development Plan, which is updated every year.
- Introduction to Motivational Interviewing: MN VRS offers a 14-hour course on Motivational Interviewing, which is required new employees. This training builds basic counseling skills. MNVRS is also interested in creating more counseling skills courses for new counselors and seasoned counselors alike.
- Elective Training Opportunities: MNVRS encourages all employees to attend elective training the enhances their professional development and growth, which could include training on specific disabilities.
- Proficiency in aspects of disabilities for frequently served populations: The following courses are regular offerings within the agency and community: Mental Health, Autism, Intellectual Disabilities, and Learning Disabilities. In addition, VRS has disability specific subject matter experts for internal staff consultation and training.

GOAL 4. STRENGTHEN COLLABORATION THROUGH PARTNER ENGAGEMENT

Objectives:

1. Coordinate and align services

Key Results:

- Map of providers and services
- Referral and funding decision tree (who should pay for the service)

Evaluation of if Objective Was Achieved and Strategies that Contributed to the Achievement of the Objective

- Objective was achieved.
- VRS staff have access to a list of VRS Community Partners whereby they can filter providers by region and services
- provided so as to provide better informed choice to individuals.
- VRS collaborated with Minnesota Department of Human Services to develop a list of VRS Community Partners that are also 245D licensed to provide Home and Community Based Services for employment.

- VRS collaborated with Minnesota Department of Human Services and the Minnesota Department of Education to sequence funding (who should pay for what services, when) between Medicaid Waiver funding, school funding through IDEA, and VR program services.

2. Timely and relevant communication and training

Key Results:

- Fewer contract related inquiries and issues
- More resources (FAQs, etc.) available to partners
- Partners are trained in delivering Pre-Employment Transition Services and report satisfaction

Evaluation of if Objective Was Achieved and Strategies that Contributed to the Achievement of the Objective

- Objective was achieved.
- VRS internal tracking of contracted related inquiries and issues shows a reduction.
- VRS created a VRS Community Partner Guide with resources and published online: https://mn.gov/deed/job-seekers/disabilities/partners/guide/
- VRS holds bi-monthly VRS Community Partner + VRS Staff Forums for additional collaboration and training.
- VRS provided many trainings to both Community Partners and VRS staff throughout the last year.
- VRS created and deployed Pre-ETS resources for Community Partners including training, resources, guides: https://mn.gov/deed/job-seekers/disabilities/youth/pre-ets/contractor/

3. Engage State Rehabilitation Council for input and feedback

Key Results:

- Input and feedback provided to VRS leadership after each meeting for dissemination to VRS staff as needed.
- VRS regularly reports back to the SRC on how the council's feedback is utilized

Evaluation of if Objective Was Achieved and Strategies that Contributed to the Achievement of the Objective

- As noted in section (a), key members of VRS senior leadership attend SRC meetings regularly to receive input/feedback and present updates. Specialists and field staff are also invited periodically to provide information.

B. DESCRIBE THE FACTORS THAT IMPEDED THE ACHIEVEMENT OF THE GOALS AND PRIORITIES

Significant progress was made on most of the goals and priorities from the most recently approved State Plan.

The COVID pandemic has had multifaceted impacts on the Minnesota Vocational Rehabilitation program. Some individuals have been hesitant or unable to seek employment due to the health risks associated with employment. Consequently, the number of individuals served is down

significantly. In addition, the Community Partners that the VR program works with to provide employment services for individuals – the 165 small businesses and non-profit organizations located throughout the state – are struggling to attract and retain staff. Staffing shortages at such service providers were well documented before the pandemic and have been severely exacerbated due to the pandemic. Community Partner service providers are in crisis mode trying to employ enough staff to provide the employment services to the individuals this program serves.

2. AN EVALUATION OF THE EXTENT TO WHICH THE SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM GOALS DESCRIBED IN THE SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SUPPLEMENT FOR THE MOST RECENT PROGRAM YEAR WERE ACHIEVED. THE EVALUATION MUST:

A. IDENTIFY THE STRATEGIES THAT CONTRIBUTED TO THE ACHIEVEMENT OF THE GOALS

Goal: Under the designated state unit's strategic goal for effective partnerships, VRS will continue to facilitate a statewide planning collaboration to better understand Minnesota's supported employment needs, revise the VRS-EE State Rule to shift more state dollars to

integrated competitive supported employment work sites, address current service capacity and gaps, particularly those related to the development needs of community rehabilitation programs, the needs of transition-age youths, and the needs of underserved populations

VRS and DHS continue to work collaboratively to sequence VR, Extended Employment, Medicaid waiver and County dollars to serve more people in in need of long-term supports.

The Memorandum of Understanding developed between VRS and the Medicaid agency made clear that LEAs and VRS are responsible for providing services while students are still in school.

Minnesota revised the rule that governs the Extended Employment program in Minnesota to prioritize providing supports to individuals working in competitive, integrated employment. The primary strategy used to make this successful was to engage stakeholders in developing the transition to the new model. An advisory committee including individuals representing DEED, Community Rehabilitation Providers (CRPs), advocacy organizations for individuals with disabilities, DHS, and counties was established to identify and consider policy issues and opportunities impacting individuals who receive EE services and EE providers.

VRS has provided clear revised guidance and policy, along with training, so counselors can utilize the option to provide extended services to youth, per requirements under 363.4(2).

VRS has provided clear revised guidance and policy, along with training, so counselors can utilize the option to provide extended services to youth, per requirements under 363.4(2).

B. DESCRIBE THE FACTORS THAT IMPEDED THE ACHIEVEMENT OF THE GOALS AND PRIORITIES

There were challenges at the state level in trying to carry out conflicting Federal regulations between VR and the Medicaid agency. Changes in agency leadership also contributed to loss of momentum and focus.

Beginning more than 20 years ago, Minnesota built an ecosystem of day treatment and habilitation (DT&H) centers, which use sub-minimum wage as their business model. Very few of these agencies have transformed, resulting in a great deal of resistance from providers and family members in the transition from sub-minimum wage environments to competitive integrated employment.

3. THE VR PROGRAM'S PERFORMANCE ON THE PERFORMANCE ACCOUNTABILITY INDICATORS UNDER SECTION 116 OF WIOA

The following performance accountability factors are based on Program Year 2020 and are based on analysis of the quarterly RSA-911 files submitted to RSA.

- The percentage of program participants who are in unsubsidized employment during the second quarter after exit from the program: 51.2%
- The percentage of program participants who are in unsubsidized employment during the fourth quarter after exit from the program: 48.7%
- The median earnings of program participants who are in unsubsidized employment during the second quarter after exit from the program: Quarterly median earnings was $3,116.
- The percentage of program participants who obtain a recognized postsecondary credential, or a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent, during participation in or within 1 year after exit from the program: 27.4%
- 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 credential or employment: 48.7%
- The indicators of effectiveness in serving employers: VRS reports to our Title I and III partners who are responsible for the joint report on Effectiveness Serving Employers to USDOL. Joint state measures include "Retention with the Same Employer" and "Employer Penetration Rate".

4. HOW THE FUNDS RESERVED FOR INNOVATION AND EXPANSION (I&E) ACTIVITIES WERE UTILIZED

In Program Year 2020, VRS utilized $450,000 in funding for innovation and expansion activities to improve and increase services to historically underserved populations with the most severe disabilities. These activities represent program response to identified need.

(A) Minnesota Customized Employment

DEED-VRS & DHS-MSOCS have been offering Customized Employment training since 2019. Utilizing "The Essential Elements of Customized Employment" as its foundation, the MN-CE curriculum provides a framework of training and mentoring support offering students the opportunity to become competent practitioners of Customized Employment services following the conclusion of the MN-CE training. Additionally, the training provides clear, consistent information about CE to auditors, typically CE referral sources such as VRS Counselors, county case managers or families. The training is person centered, consistent, and continuously available throughout the state. VRS plans to continue offering MN CE to help transform the disability employment system that supports individuals with significant disabilities plan for a future that includes competitive, integrated employment. MN- CE curriculum is nationally accredited through the Association of Community Rehabilitation Educators (ACRE).

(B) Persons with Mental Illness

Collaborative activity at state and local levels between VRS, DHS Mental Health Division, and community partners continues to build supports and services for persons with serious mental illness (SMI). Innovative projects developed with dedicated state funds are increasing the quality of services and outcomes for this population in urban and rural Minnesota.

(C) SSDI and SSI Beneficiaries

Ticket-to-Work Program Income funding is used to supplement Supported Employment funding or to provide continued job retention services beyond the 90 days VRS typically provides.

(D) Rehabilitation Technology

Rehabilitation technology, also referred to as assistive technology, enhances employment outcomes, leading to better employment outcomes including higher paying jobs. VRS continues to provide training and coaching to increase the use of rehabilitation technology by both experienced and new staff. Implementation of the VR Rehabilitation Technology Services Plan has involved widespread staff participation, brought focus to rehabilitation technology activity, and honored the work of VR program counselors serving as a technology liaison to their own VR teams.

(E) Minorities with Most Significant Disabilities

State demographic data indicates Minnesota's populations of people of color are growing at a much higher rate than the white, non-Hispanic population. Minnesota has the largest Somali refugee population in the United States. The New Americans office in St. Paul specializes in addressing the needs of Somali and other East African immigrants who lack fluency in English. Since its inception in 2007, the New Americans Project has served over 240 participants.

Q. QUALITY, SCOPE, AND EXTENT OF SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES

1. THE QUALITY, SCOPE, AND EXTENT OF SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES TO BE PROVIDED TO INDIVIDUALS WITH THE MOST SIGNIFICANT DISABILITIES, INCLUDING YOUTH WITH THE MOST SIGNIFICANT DISABILITIES

Supported employment services promote the integration of people with the most significant disabilities into the Minnesota workplace. The use of funds from Title VI Part B of the Rehabilitation Act initially allowed for expansion of supported employment services and outcomes. Vocational Rehabilitation Services (VRS) continues to work cooperatively with consumers, family members, advocates, employers, service providers and State, county, and local agencies to improve and expand the use of supported employment services statewide.

The state's major challenge regarding supported employment is one of consumer access to extended ongoing supports when they are needed. Agency structures and funding systems for extended support are governed by myriad federal and State laws and rules, each governing a specific piece of the categorical funding available to people with disabilities.

The agency's coordination of vocational rehabilitation services with its extended employment services contributes significantly to the quality, scope, and effectiveness of the State's overall Supported Employment efforts. When developing a customer's employment plan, the consumer and VR counselor identify the time-limited services to be provided by VRS, the expected ongoing supports needed, and the source of those supports. This may include natural supports. VRS is a partner in several state level agreements that facilitate provision of these services.

(A) Vocational Rehabilitation Supported Employment

Minnesota's FFY2021 award for Title VI, Part B Supported Employment was $246,000. VRS uses all federal funds authorized under Title VI, Part B in addition to Title I funds to purchase services for supported employment for individuals on a fee for service basis. Approximately 2,750 vocational rehabilitation consumers were served in PY 2018 with both Title I and Title VI, Part B funds. Local Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors purchase needed services for those consumers with a vocational goal that requires ongoing supports. Supported employment expenditures are administered and tracked separately in accordance with federal requirements.

(B) Minnesota's Medicaid Agency

DEED-VRS/SSB entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the DHS Disability Services Division (DHS-DSD) as of September 23, 2019. As part of the MOU, DHS-DSD is the primary payer for ongoing supports to maintain employment.

As highlighted in the MOU, DEED & DHS agreed to work together to align systems so that common customers who receive home and community-based service (HCBS) disability waivers and vocational rehabilitation services (VRS) from DEED-VRS or SSB get seamless and timely supports to make informed choices and meet competitive integrated employment goals." DEED & DHS developed a work plan that guided our work for MOU implementation which occurred in July 2021. Prior to July 2021, DEED VRS & DHS utilized DHS' Home and Community Based Services (HCBS) Waiver for Employment Services Interim Guidance.

The lead agency can authorize employment support services for people on a waiver who need ongoing supports to maintain employment."

(C) Minnesota's Extended Employment Program

Minnesota has a unique state-only funding appropriation to providing ongoing employment supports to individuals with disabilities called the Extended Employment program. VRS, through this state-funded Extended Employment program, provides ongoing work supports to approximately 3,500 individuals. Many of these individuals received time-limited vocational rehabilitation services prior to entering supported employment.

(D) Minnesota's Funding for Individual Placement and Support Projects

Minnesota also has a separate state-only funding appropriation which provides for Individual Placement and Support programs for persons with serious and persistent mental illness. VRS and the DHS Mental Health Division collaborate on Individual Placement and Support (IPS) projects to promote innovation in service delivery, including supported employment services, for this population. The projects are designed to provide functional assessment, individualized career planning, job skill acquisition, job placement, job development, and non-time-limited supports necessary to maintain and advance in employment. All recipients of grants under these projects are required to demonstrate collaboration with counties, the local community support program, VRS, and providers of employment services such as CRPs, regional treatment centers, and community mental health centers.

2. THE TIMING OF TRANSITION TO EXTENDED SERVICES

The timing of the transition to extended services is highly individualized based on the needs of the person. The need for extended services is usually identified during the assessment of VR needs, and the consumer makes an informed choice of vendor for long term supports as a part of Individualized Plan for Employment development. However, the need can be identified at any point in time, and the plan can be amended. The consumer will frequently select the same vendor to serve as their placement provider and extended services provider to reduce the stress of changing providers.

Transition from time limited supported employment services to extended services occurs when the individual:

- has completed time limited supported employment services on the individual plan for employment;
- has made substantial progress toward meeting the hours per week work goal established in the Supported Employment Plan; and
- is stable on the job.

Employment Stability

A person's stability in employment is an individualized determination made by the VR counselor with input from the individual. In general, employment stability occurs when the employee is satisfied with the job, the employer is satisfied with the employee and the employment supports are adequate to ensure employment stability.

Employment Stability should be based on the following factors:

- The individual has reached a satisfactory level of work performance.
- The person has made substantial progress toward working the number of hours per week specified in the Supported Employment Plan. If the individual's employment is stable but the person is working substantially fewer hours per week than the goal established on the Employment Plan, the Plan can be amended and the outcome can be considered suitable, provided the counselor and individual agree. The transition to extended services should occur when all aspects of the individual's placement indicate that the competitive integrated employment situation is secure.
- The employment supports are adequate to ensure employment stability.

The vocational rehabilitation counselor and the extended services provider should review the employment situation at least every thirty days to ensure the supports are adequate and progress toward stable employment is being achieved.

As needed, VR can continue supports for a period of up to 24 months for individuals with the most significant disabilities eligible for supported employment services, and extended services may be funded for youth with the most significant disabilities for a period of up to four years or until the youth turns 25 years old following the provision of supported employment services (34 C.F.R. § 361.5(c)(18) and 34 C.F.R. § 363.4(a)(2)). If the person becomes ready for job promotion VR may re-engage to provide additional training to ensure the person's success in their career- laddering efforts.

VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION (COMBINED OR GENERAL) CERTIFICATIONS

1. THE (ENTER THE NAME OF DESIGNATED STATE AGENCY OR DESIGNATED STATE UNIT, AS APPROPRIATE,) IS AUTHORIZED TO SUBMIT THE VR SERVICES PORTION OF THE UNIFIED OR COMBINED STATE PLAN UNDER TITLE I OF THE REHABILITATION ACT OF 1973 (REHABILITATION ACT), AS AMENDED BY WIOA[14], AND ITS SUPPLEMENT UNDER TITLE VI OF THE REHABILITATION ACT[15];

ENTER THE NAME OF DESIGNATED STATE AGENCY OR DESIGNATED STATE UNIT, AS APPROPRIATE

Department of Employment and Economic Development, DEED

2. AS A CONDITION FOR THE RECEIPT OF FEDERAL FUNDS UNDER TITLE I OF THE REHABILITATION ACT FOR THE PROVISION OF VR SERVICES, THE (ENTER THE NAME OF DESIGNATED STATE AGENCY)[16] AGREES TO OPERATE AND ADMINISTER THE STATE VR SERVICES PROGRAM IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE VR SERVICES PORTION OF THE UNIFIED OR COMBINED STATE PLAN[17] , THE REHABILITATION ACT, AND ALL APPLICABLE REGULATIONS[18] , POLICIES, AND PROCEDURES ESTABLISHED BY THE SECRETARY OF EDUCATION. FUNDS MADE AVAILABLE UNDER SECTION 111 OF THE REHABILITATION ACT ARE USED SOLELY FOR THE PROVISION OF VR SERVICES AND THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE VR SERVICES PORTION OF THE UNIFIED OR COMBINED STATE PLAN;

ENTER THE NAME OF DESIGNATED STATE AGENCY

Vocational Rehabilitation Services (VRS)

3. AS A CONDITION FOR THE RECEIPT OF FEDERAL FUNDS UNDER TITLE VI OF THE REHABILITATION ACT FOR SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES, THE DESIGNATED STATE AGENCY AGREES TO OPERATE AND ADMINISTER THE STATE SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES PROGRAM IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE SUPPLEMENT TO THE VR SERVICES PORTION OF THE UNIFIED OR COMBINED STATE PLAN[19] , THE REHABILITATION ACT, AND ALL APPLICABLE REGULATIONS[20] , POLICIES, AND PROCEDURES ESTABLISHED BY THE SECRETARY OF EDUCATION. FUNDS MADE AVAILABLE UNDER TITLE VI ARE USED SOLELY FOR THE PROVISION OF SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES AND THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE SUPPLEMENT TO THE VR SERVICES PORTION OF THE UNIFIED OR COMBINED STATE PLAN;

4. THE DESIGNATED STATE AGENCY AND/OR THE DESIGNATED STATE UNIT HAS THE AUTHORITY UNDER STATE LAW TO PERFORM THE FUNCTIONS OF THE STATE REGARDING THE VR SERVICES PORTION OF THE UNIFIED OR COMBINED STATE PLAN AND ITS SUPPLEMENT;

5. THE STATE LEGALLY MAY CARRY OUT EACH PROVISION OF THE VR SERVICES PORTION OF THE UNIFIED OR COMBINED STATE PLAN AND ITS SUPPLEMENT.

6. ALL PROVISIONS OF THE VR SERVICES PORTION OF THE UNIFIED OR COMBINED STATE PLAN AND ITS SUPPLEMENT ARE CONSISTENT WITH STATE LAW.

7. THE (ENTER THE NAME OF AUTHORIZED REPRESENTATIVE BELOW) HAS THE AUTHORITY UNDER STATE LAW TO RECEIVE, HOLD, AND DISBURSE FEDERAL FUNDS MADE AVAILABLE UNDER THE VR SERVICES PORTION OF THE UNIFIED OR COMBINED STATE PLAN AND ITS SUPPLEMENT;

ENTER THE NAME OF AUTHORIZED REPRESENTATIVE BELOW

Dee Torgerson

8. THE (ENTER THE TITLE OF AUTHORIZED REPRESENTATIVE BELOW) HAS THE AUTHORITY TO SUBMIT THE VR SERVICES PORTION OF THE UNIFIED OR COMBINED STATE PLAN AND THE SUPPLEMENT FOR SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES;

ENTER THE TITLE OF AUTHORIZED REPRESENTATIVE BELOW

Director, Vocational Rehabilitation Services

9. THE AGENCY THAT SUBMITS THE VR SERVICES PORTION OF THE UNIFIED OR COMBINED STATE PLAN AND ITS SUPPLEMENT HAS ADOPTED OR OTHERWISE FORMALLY APPROVED THE PLAN AND ITS SUPPLEMENT.

FOOTNOTES

CERTIFICATION SIGNATURE

Signatory information	TEST
Name of Signatory	Dee Torgerson
Title of Signatory	Director, Vocational Rehabilitation Services
Date Signed	3/10/2022

ASSURANCES

The State Plan must include	Include

The State Plan must include	Include
1. Public Comment on Policies and Procedures: The designated State agency assures it will comply with all statutory and regulatory requirements for public participation in the VR Services Portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan, as required by section 101(a)(16)(A) of the Rehabilitation Act.	
2. Submission of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and Its Supplement: The designated State unit assures it will comply with all requirements pertaining to the submission and revisions of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement for the State Supported Employment Services program, as required by sections 101(a)(1), (22), (23), and 606(a) of the Rehabilitation Act; section 102 of WIOA in the case of the submission of a unified plan; section 103 of WIOA in the case of a submission of a Combined State Plan; 34 CFR 76.140.	
3. The designated State agency or designated State unit, as appropriate, assures it will comply with the requirements related to:Administration of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan:	
3.a. The establishment of the designated State agency and designated State unit, as required by section 101(a)(2) of the Rehabilitation Act	
3.b. The establishment of either a State independent commission or State Rehabilitation Council, as required by section 101(a)(21) of the Rehabilitation Act. The designated State agency or designated State unit, as applicable (A or B must be selected):	
3.b.(A) “is an independent State commission” (Yes/No)	No
3.b.(B) “has established a State Rehabilitation Council” (Yes/No)	Yes
3.c. Consultations regarding the administration of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan, in accordance with section 101(a)(16)(B) of the Rehabilitation Act	
3.d. The financial participation by the State, or if the State so elects, by the State and local agencies, to provide the amount of the non-Federal share of the cost of carrying out the VR program in	

The State Plan must include	Include
accordance with section 101(a)(3)	
3.e. The local administration of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan, in accordance with section 101(a)(2)(A) of the Rehabilitation Act. Select yes or no, as appropriate, to identify if the designated State agency allows for the local administration of VR funds (Yes/No)	No
3.f. The shared funding and administration of joint programs, in accordance with section 101(a)(2)(A)(ii) of the Rehabilitation Act. Select yes or no, as appropriate, to identify if the designated State agency allows for the shared funding and administration of joint programs (Yes/No)	No
3.g. Statewideness and waivers of statewideness requirements, as set forth in section 101(a)(4) of the Rehabilitation Act. Is the designated State agency requesting or maintaining a waiver of statewideness for one or more services provided under the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan? (Yes/No) See Section 2 of this VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan	No
3.h. The descriptions for cooperation, collaboration, and coordination, as required by sections 101(a)(11) and (24)(B); and 606(b) of the Rehabilitation Act	
3.i. All required methods of administration, as required by section 101(a)(6) of the Rehabilitation Act	
3.j. The requirements for the comprehensive system of personnel development, as set forth in section 101(a)(7) of the Rehabilitation Act	
3.k. The compilation and submission to the Commissioner of statewide assessments, estimates, State goals and priorities, strategies, and progress reports, as appropriate, and as required by sections 101(a)(15), 105(c)(2), and 606(b)(8) of the Rehabilitation Act	
3.l. The reservation and use of a portion of the funds allotted to the State under section 110 of the Rehabilitation Act for the development and implementation of innovative approaches to expand and improve the provision of VR services to individuals with disabilities, particularly individuals with the most significant disabilities	

The State Plan must include	Include
3.m. The submission of reports as required by section 101(a)(10) of the Rehabilitation Act	
4. Administration of the Provision of VR Services: The designated State agency, or designated State unit, as appropriate, assures that it will:	
4.a. Comply with all requirements regarding information and referral services in accordance with sections 101(a)(5)(D) and (20) of the Rehabilitation Act	
4.b. Impose no duration of residence requirement as part of determining an individual's eligibility for VR services or that excludes from services under the plan any individual who is present in the State in accordance with section 101(a)(12) of the Rehabilitation Act	
4.c. Provide the full range of services listed in section 103(a) of the Rehabilitation Act as appropriate, to all eligible individuals with disabilities in the State who apply for services in accordance with section 101(a)(5) of the Rehabilitation Act? (Yes/No)	No
4.d. Determine whether comparable services and benefits are available to the individual in accordance with section 101(a)(8) of the Rehabilitation Act	
4.e. Comply with requirements regarding the provisions of informed choice for all applicants and eligible individuals in accordance with section 102(d) of the Rehabilitation Act	
4.f. Comply with requirements regarding the provisions of informed choice for all applicants and eligible individuals in accordance with section 102(d) of the Rehabilitation Act	
4.g. Provide vocational rehabilitation services to American Indians who are individuals with disabilities residing in the State, in accordance with section 101(a)(13) of the Rehabilitation Act	
4.h. Comply with the requirements for the conduct of semiannual or annual reviews, as appropriate, for individuals employed either in an extended employment setting in a community rehabilitation program or any other employment under section 14(c) of the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938, as required by section 101(a)(14)of the	

The State Plan must include	Include
Rehabilitation Act	
4.i. Meet the requirements in sections 101(a)(17) and 103(b)(2) of the Rehabilitation Act if the State elects to construct, under special circumstances, facilities for community rehabilitation programs	
4.j. With respect to students with disabilities, the State,	
4.j.i. Has developed and will implement,	
4.j.i.I. Strategies to address the needs identified in the assessments; and	
4.j.i.II. Strategies to achieve the goals and priorities identified by the State, to improve and expand vocational rehabilitation services for students with disabilities on a statewide basis; and	
4.j.ii. Has developed and will implement strategies to provide pre-employment transition services (sections 101(a)(15) and 101(a)(25))	
5. Program Administration for the Supported Employment Title VI Supplement:	
5.a. The designated State unit assures that it will include in the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan all information required by section 606 of the Rehabilitation Act	
5.b. The designated State agency assures that it will submit reports in such form and in accordance with such procedures as the Commissioner may require and collects the information required by section 101(a)(10) of the Rehabilitation Act separately for individuals receiving supported employment services under title I and individuals receiving supported employment services under title VI of the Rehabilitation Act	
5.c. The designated state unit will coordinate activities with any other State agency that is functioning as an employment network under the Ticket to Work and Self-Sufficiency program under Section 1148 of the Social Security Act	
6. Financial Administration of the Supported Employment Program:	
6.a. The designated State agency assures that it will expend no more than 2.5 percent of the State's allotment under title VI for administrative costs of carrying out this program; and, the designated	

The State Plan must include	Include
State agency or agencies will provide, directly or indirectly through public or private entities, non-Federal contributions in an amount that is not less than 10 percent of the costs of carrying out supported employment services provided to youth with the most significant disabilities with the funds reserved for such purpose under section 603(d) of the Rehabilitation Act, in accordance with section 606(b)(7)(G) and (H) of the Rehabilitation Act	
6.b. The designated State agency assures that it will use funds made available under title VI of the Rehabilitation Act only to provide supported employment services to individuals with the most significant disabilities, including extended services to youth with the most significant disabilities, who are eligible to receive such services; and, that such funds are used only to supplement and not supplant the funds provided under Title I of the Rehabilitation Act, when providing supported employment services specified in the individualized plan for employment, in accordance with section 606(b)(7)(A) and (D), of the Rehabilitation Act	
7. Provision of Supported Employment Services:	Yes
7.a. The Designated State Agency Assures That it Will Provide Supported Employment Services as Defined in Section 7(39) of the Rehabilitation Act	
7.b. The designated State agency assures that:	
7.b.i. The comprehensive assessment of individuals with significant disabilities conducted under section 102(b)(1) of the Rehabilitation Act and funded under title I of the Rehabilitation Act includes consideration of supported employment as an appropriate employment outcome, in accordance with the requirements of section 606(b)(7)(B) of the Rehabilitation Act	
7.b.ii. An individualized plan for employment that meets the requirements of section 102(b) of the Rehabilitation Act, which is developed and updated with title I funds, in accordance with sections 102(b)(3)(F) and 606(b)(6)(C) and (E) of the Rehabilitation Act	

VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION PROGRAM PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Performance Indicators	PY 2022 Expected Level	PY 2022 Negotiated Level	PY 2023 Expected Level	PY 2023 Negotiated Level

Performance Indicators	PY 2022 Expected Level	PY 2022 Negotiated Level	PY 2023 Expected Level	PY 2023 Negotiated Level
Employment (Second Quarter After Exit)	43.0%	51.5%	48.0%	52.0%
Employment (Fourth Quarter After Exit)	40.0%	49.6%	40.0%	50.1%
Median Earnings (Second Quarter After Exit)	$3,300	$3,411	$3,350	$3,513
Credential Attainment Rate	31.0%	31.0%	33.0%	33.0%
Measurable Skill Gains	45.0%	50.3%	46.0%	51.8%
Effectiveness in Serving Employers	Not Applicable [1]	Not Applicable [1]	Not Applicable [1]	Not Applicable [1]

1

"Effectiveness in Serving Employers" is still being developed and this data will not be entered in the 2022 State Plan modifications.

PROGRAM-SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS FOR VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION (BLIND)

A. INPUT OF STATE REHABILITATION COUNCIL

1. INPUT PROVIDED BY THE STATE REHABILITATION COUNCIL, INCLUDING INPUT AND RECOMMENDATIONS ON THE VR SERVICES PORTION OF THE UNIFIED OR COMBINED STATE PLAN, RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE COUNCIL'S REPORT, THE REVIEW AND ANALYSIS OF CONSUMER SATISFACTION, AND OTHER COUNCIL REPORTS THAT MAY HAVE BEEN DEVELOPED AS PART OF THE COUNCIL'S FUNCTIONS;

Input of State Rehabilitation Council Section a

This section was presented to the SRC-B on February 3, 2022 and was unanimously approved.

SSB Response: SSB agree with the SRC-B.

Request for Waiver of Statewideness Section b

This section was presented to the SRC-B on February 3, 2022 and was unanimously approved.

SSB Response: SSB agrees with the SRC-B.

Cooperative Agreements with Agencies Not Carrying Out Activities Under the Statewide Workforce Development System Section c

This section was presented to the SRC-B on February 3, 2022 and was unanimously approved.

SSB Response: SSB agrees with the SRC-B.

Coordination with Education Officials Section d

This section was presented to the SRC-B on February 3, 2022 and was unanimously approved.

SSB Response: SSB agrees with the SRC-B.

Cooperative Agreements with Private Nonprofit Organizations Section E

This section was presented to the SRC-B on February 3, 2022 and was unanimously approved.

SSB Response: SSB agrees with the SRC-B.

Arrangements and Cooperative Agreements for the Provision of Supported Employment Section f

This section was presented to the SRC-B on February 3, 2022 and was unanimously approved.

SSB Response: SSB agrees with the SRC-B.

Coordination with Employers Section g

This section was presented to the SRC-B on February 3, 2022 and was unanimously approved.

SSB Response: SSB agrees with the SRC-B.

Interagency Cooperation Section h

This section was presented to the SRC-B on February, 2022 and was unanimously approved.

SSB Response: SSB agrees with the SRC-B.

Comprehensive System of Personnel Development; Data System on Personnel and Personnel Development Section i

This section was updated and presented to the SRC-B on February 3, 2022 and was unanimously approved.

SSB Response: SSB agrees with the SRC-B.

Statewide Assessment j

The Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment Taskforce met in 2021 to conduct the needs assessment. The CSNA was presented to the Council at the February 3, 2022 meeting and was unanimously approved.

SSB Response: SSB agrees with the SRC-B.

Annual Estimates Section k

The updated annual estimates was presented to the council on February 3, 2022 and was unanimously approved.

SSB Response: SSB agrees with the SRC-B.

State Goals and Priorities Section l

The SRC-B has a standing "Customer Satisfaction and Goals & Priorities Committee" which reviews and makes recommendations regarding customer satisfaction, goals and priorities, and VR effectiveness. The committee reports quarterly to the full SRC-B. In preparing the strategies for the goals and priorities, the SRC-B committees submitted their recommendations to SSB. In 2021, SSB and the Customer Satisfaction and Goals & Priorities Committee reviewed the recommendations from the committees and jointly the developed goals and priorities for program year 2022. They were presented to the SRC-B at the February 3, 2022 meeting and received a unanimous vote of approval.

SSB Response: SSB agrees with the SRC-B.

Order Of Selection Section m

The section was presented to the SRC-B at the February 3, 2022 meeting and was unanimously approved

SSB Response: SSB agrees with the SRC-B.

Goals and Plan for Distribution of Title VI Funds Section n

This section was presented to the SRC-B on February 3, 2022 and was unanimously approved.

SSB Response: SSB agrees with the SRC-B.

Strategies for Goals Section o

The SRC-B has a standing "Customer Satisfaction and Goals & Priorities Committee" which reviews and makes recommendations regarding customer satisfaction, goals and priorities, and VR effectiveness. The committee reports quarterly to the full SRC-B. In preparing the strategies for the goals and priorities, the SRC-B committees submitted their recommendations to SSB. In 2021 the Customer Satisfaction and Goals & Priorities Committee reviewed the recommendations from the committees and developed goals and priorities for FFY 2022. They were presented to the SRC-B at the February 3, 2022 meeting and received a unanimous vote of approval.

SSB Response: SSB agrees with the SRC-B.

Evaluation and Report of Progress: VR and Supported Employment Goals Section p

The SRC-B has a standing "Customer Satisfaction and Goals & Priorities Committee" which reviews and makes recommendations regarding customer satisfaction, goals and priorities, and VR effectiveness. The committee reports quarterly to the full SRC-B. The VR Effectiveness Report was presented to the SRC-B and approved unanimously on January 6, 2022.There was no additional input or recommendations. The Goals and Priorities for 2022-2023 were presented to the SRC-B and approved unanimously on February 3, 2022.

SSB Response: SSB agrees with the SRC-B.

Quality, Scope, and Extent of Supported Employment Services Section q

This section was presented to the SRC-B on February 3, 2022 and was unanimously approved.

SSB Response: SSB agrees with the SRC-B.

The frequency of conducting of the customer satisfaction survey (CSS) was changed in 2017 from quarterly to annually. The survey for PY 2021, conducted near the end of the program year, covers customers served during the period from January through July 2021. The survey includes only six months of data because the reliability of responses collected from experiences more than six months in the past decreases. The survey is conducted in electronic format and lower than normal response rates were experienced.

Summary	PY2021
Q1: How satisfied are you with the time it usually	83%

Summary	PY2021
took to get your answer?	
Q2: Satisfied that counselor (staff) understood customer's needs	77%
Q3: Satisfied that customer given enough info to make good choices on employment plan	75%
Q4: Satisfied that customer had an active role in decisions about services	84%
Q5: Satisfied that services helped plan for/maintain employment	72%
Q11: Overall satisfaction with services provided	76%
Q12: Extent to which services have met expectations	71%
Q13: Comparison with "ideal" set of services	72%

SSB's results on the Customer Satisfaction Survey are also computed by the Minnesota Department of Economic Development utilizing the Minnesota Customer Satisfaction Index (MnCSI). Simply put, this index summarizes overall satisfaction with services by applying a formula to the responses for Questions 11, 12, and 13 on the survey. Using the MnCSI makes it possible to compare the customer satisfaction ratings of SSB with those of other agencies in Minnesota and with industry in general

Customers Served	Oct 16-Sept 17	Mar 18-Aug 18**	Feb 19-July 19**	Jan 20-July 20**	Jan 21-Jun 21**
Average MnCSI Scores	75.6	73.5	63.9	69.2	68.9
N size	238	260	134	114	144

***Prior to March 2018 survey was done quarterly via telephone. As of March 2018, the survey was done annually online.*

The committee continued to track the questions about assistive technology that began to be asked on the survey in the year ending 2015:

Responses	2015 4 Quarters	2016 4 Quarters	2017 4 Quarters	2018 Mar-Aug	Feb-Jul 19	Jan-Jun 21
Yes	72%	66%	65%	66%	69%	64%
No	25%	31%	31%	31%	25%	30%
Unsure	3%	3%	4%	3%	6%	5%
DK/Refused	<1%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
N Size	233	216	238	281	189	174%
Responses	2015 4 Quarters	2016 4 Quarters	2017 4 Quarters	2018 Mar-Aug	Feb-Jul 19	Jan-Jun 21

Responses	2015 4 Quarters	2016 4 Quarters	2017 4 Quarters	2018 Mar-Aug	Feb-Jul 19	Jan-Jun 21
Very Prepared	46%	37%	60%	55%	50%	50%
Somewhat Prepared	37%	42%	32%	35%	37%	36%
Not Very Well Prepared	12%	8%	5%	6%	7%	8%
Not At All Prepared	4%	11%	3%	2%	5%	6%
DK/Refused	1%	2%	1%	2%	2%	2%
N Size	161	142	154	184	106	109%
Responses	2015 4 Quarters	2016 4 Quarters	2017 4 Quarters	2018 Mar-Aug	Feb-Jul 19	Jan-Jun 21
Very Useful	75%	76%	75%	70%	67%	69%
Somewhat Useful	22%	16%	20%	21%	22%	26%
Not Very Useful	1%	2%	1%	3%	5%	1%
Not At All Useful	2%	4%	1%	2%	1%	3%
DK/Refused	1%	1%	2%	4%	5%	2%
N Size	161	142	154	184	129	109%

In 2020, SSB added the following three new questions measure satisfaction with changes in service provision due to COVID:

Q8a. Please describe the primary method in how you interacted with SSB to receive your services.

Q8b. How satisfied are you with the non-traditional method you used with SSB to receive your services

Q8c. Please explain how the process of meeting in a non-traditional way (e.g., Phone, Email, Online meeting, Other) went for you in receiving your services from SSB.

The members of the committee read the verbatim comments elicited by the following two survey questions to determine if trends or issues specific to SSB were apparent. No significant trends were identified from this data.

Q9. In your opinion, what is/was the most important part of the services you received from SSB?

Q10.If you could change one thing about the services you received, what would you change?

SSB and the SRC-B designed a customer survey to measure the satisfaction of Adjustment to Blindness (ATB) training participants with training completed through SSB ATB vendors. Customers are chosen to be surveyed from 30 to 90 days after they have completed ATB training or when their case is closed with SSB, whichever is earlier. Like the CSS, this survey has gone to an annual online survey. The Vendor Outcomes and Measures Committee of the SRC-B

reviewed the report and presented it to the SRC-B. SSB and the SRC-B agree to review the survey instruments and protocols for improvements.

2. THE DESIGNATED STATE UNIT'S RESPONSE TO THE COUNCIL'S INPUT AND RECOMMENDATIONS; AND

All VR sections of the Combined State Plan were updated and presented to the Council on either January 6, 2022, or February 3, 2022. They were all unanimously approved and agreed upon by the Council and SSB. The SRC-B and SSB agree that the satisfaction surveys and method of administration need to be reviewed for improvements. SSB values the Councils' input and works collaboratively in carrying out the mission of SSB to facilitate the achievement of vocational and personal independence by Minnesotans who are blind, visually impaired or DeafBlind.

3. THE DESIGNATED STATE UNIT'S EXPLANATIONS FOR REJECTING ANY OF THE COUNCIL'S INPUT OR RECOMMENDATIONS.

All VR sections of the Combined State Plan were updated and presented to the Council on either January 6, 2022, or February 3, 2022. They were all unanimously approved and agreed upon by the Council and SSB. The SRC-B has approved all reports jointly developed with SSB including the Annual Report, Customer Satisfaction Survey Report, and Adjustment To Blindness Customer Satisfaction Survey. There has been no input or recommendations from the SRC-B rejected by SSB.

B. REQUEST FOR WAIVER OF STATEWIDENESS

1. A LOCAL PUBLIC AGENCY WILL PROVIDE THE NON-FEDERAL SHARE OF COSTS ASSOCIATED WITH THE SERVICES TO BE PROVIDED IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE WAIVER REQUEST;

This agency has not requested a waiver of statewideness.

2. THE DESIGNATED STATE UNIT WILL APPROVE EACH PROPOSED SERVICE BEFORE IT IS PUT INTO EFFECT; AND

This agency has not requested a waiver of statewideness.

3. REQUIREMENTS OF THE VR SERVICES PORTION OF THE UNIFIED OR COMBINED STATE PLAN WILL APPLY TO THE SERVICES APPROVED UNDER THE WAIVER.

This agency has not requested a waiver of statewideness.

C. COOPERATIVE AGREEMENTS WITH AGENCIES NOT CARRYING OUT ACTIVITIES UNDER THE STATEWIDE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM

1. FEDERAL, STATE, AND LOCAL AGENCIES AND PROGRAMS;

SSB continues to work in collaboration with the other designated state unit in Minnesota, Vocational Rehabilitation Services (VRS), and has arrangements for providing reciprocal referral services between SSB and VRS.

SSB has developed and implemented a formal cooperative agreement with representatives of the higher education system in the State: the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities (MNSCU) System. SSB also has formal interagency agreements with the American Indian VR programs in the State.

SSB has established working relationships with programs which provide services to minority populations such as the New Americans Program (a program within VRS) and the Hmong American Partnership (HAP) in the Minneapolis/St. Paul area.

SSB has a Memorandum of Understanding with the Minnesota Department of Human Services, which is our state Medicaid program. This MOU outlines a framework for providing employment services to individuals who are receiving home and community-based services and vocational rehabilitation services. This is a new framework that we are calling E1MN, or Employment First Minnesota.

2. STATE PROGRAMS CARRIED OUT UNDER SECTION 4 OF THE ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY ACT OF 1998;

A System of Technology to Achieve Results (STAR) is located within the Minnesota Department of Administration. STAR's mission is to help all Minnesotans with disabilities gain access to and acquire the assistive technology they need to live, learn, work and play. The Minnesota STAR Program is federally funded by the Department of Health and Human Services, Administration For Community Living in accordance with the Assistive Technology Act of 1998, as amended (P.L. 108-364). SSB has a cooperative agreement with STAR effective February 2017, and we are in the process of reviewing and updating this agreement.

3. PROGRAMS CARRIED OUT BY THE UNDER SECRETARY FOR RURAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE;

SSB does not have a formal interagency agreement with the programs carried out by the Department of Agriculture's undersecretary for rural development, nor does it have formal agreements with other federal or State agencies, except as noted below. All qualified VR counselors have been provided a description of the programs provided by the USDA Minnesota Rural Development Offices and are able to access these services as needed.

4. NON-EDUCATIONAL AGENCIES SERVING OUT-OF-SCHOOL YOUTH; AND

SSB does not have any cooperative agreements with agencies serving out-of-school youth.

5. STATE USE CONTRACTING PROGRAMS.

SSB uses a Master Contract system managed by The Materials Management Division of the MN Administrative Department. Master contracts are used with all Community Rehabilitation Programs that SSB purchases Rehabilitation Services from. State of MN Statute Chapter 16 guides SSB's procurement policies and procedures.

There are approximately 45 contracts with Adjustment To Blindness (ATB) and employment related service providers in effect. There are 3 Comprehensive ATB training centers in MN that SSB contracts with to provide customer training. Additionally, SSB has contracts with 2 of these facilities to provide ATB training to SSB staff as required by State Statute.

The contracts for SSB customer ATB and employment related services are on a 5-year cycle (July 1, 2017 – June 30, 2022) and can be amended as needed.

By Minnesota State Rule, SSB is allowed to use other state contracts and we use established contracts between Vocational Rehabilitation Services (VRS) and contracted vendors. This is especially utilized in rural Minnesota where SSB has fewer vendors available. When SSB uses a VRS contract, we follow the terms of the VRS contract.

SSB staff in local field offices continuously monitor the products and services that are purchased for SSB customers. SSB staff also does comprehensive on-site and virtual monitoring that

includes programmatic and financial reviews. Monitoring reviews may occur periodically or as needed however; ATB contractors must be monitored every three years.

D. COORDINATION WITH EDUCATION OFFICIALS

1. THE DESIGNATED STATE UNIT'S PLANS, POLICIES, AND PROCEDURES FOR COORDINATION WITH EDUCATION OFFICIALS TO FACILITATE THE TRANSITION OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES FROM SCHOOL TO THE RECEIPT OF VR SERVICES, INCLUDING PRE-EMPLOYMENT TRANSITION SERVICES, AS WELL AS PROCEDURES FOR THE TIMELY DEVELOPMENT AND APPROVAL OF INDIVIDUALIZED PLANS FOR EMPLOYMENT FOR THE STUDENTS

Vocational Rehabilitation Services (VRS), State Services for the Blind (SSB), and the Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) have had an agreement since 2016 to achieve better coordination between schools and VR services and creating a bridge from the school to VRS or SSB prior to school exit. The intent of the agreement is to:

1. Provide consultation and technical assistance to Local Education Agencies (LEA)s in planning for the transition of students with disabilities from school to post school activities including post-secondary education, training, competitive integrated employment and independent living.

2. Provide secondary transition planning by personnel of DEED's VRS and SSB alongside secondary special education and career and college readiness staff through the delivery of pre-employment transition services and vocational rehabilitation services under the Rehabilitation Act and transition services under the IDEA.

3. Define the roles and responsibilities, including financial responsibilities, of each agency, including provisions for pre-employment transition services, vocational rehabilitation services and IDEA transition services.

4. Designate procedures for outreach to and identification of students with disabilities who are in need of pre-employment transition services and/ or vocational rehabilitation services. Outreach to students should occur as early as grade nine.

5. Outline services and documentation requirements set forth in section 511 of the Rehabilitation Act, as added by the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), with regard to youth with disabilities who are seeking subminimum wage employment.

6. Provide assurance that neither the SEA nor the LEA will enter into an arrangement with an entity holding a special wage certificate under section 14(c) of the Fair Labor Standards Act for the purpose of operating a program under which a youth with a disability is engaged in work at a subminimum wage.

Coordinated Services for Youth in Special Education

Minnesota law mandates a coordinated system of services for youth, birth to 21, who are involved in special education. The Minnesota System for Interagency Collaboration (MnSIC) was formed to develop and implement this system. VRS is represented on MnSIC and VRS staff participate on subcommittees that develop service strategies for students and recommendations for governance and coordination of state and local collaborative efforts. Community Transition Interagency Committee (CTIC) Approximately 70 local CTICs promote statewide interagency coordination to remove system barriers and expand community services. CTICs include parents, students, advocacy groups, local businesses, county government, post—secondary education, vocational education, community education, corrections, SSA health care, and other local service providers. SSB staff serve on CTICs, thereby helping to improve and expand vocational services that result in employment outcomes. SSB counselors serve all public, private, and charter high schools in Minnesota. They are active participants on transition planning teams so that each VR eligible student with a disability can access VR services and

establish a written VR plan before leaving school. Outreach efforts include working with school nurses, guidance counselors, case managers, principals, social workers, 504 personnel, community agencies and work experience coordinators to identify students with disabilities who are not in special education programs. For SSB, connecting with students through teachers of the blind and visually impaired is a primary way to ensure that we are serving students. A referral of all potentially eligible students is sought as soon as possible so that employment services can begin well before the student leaves school.

Interagency Agreement to Purchase used Assistive Technology Devices

When a child with a disability transitions into a work environment or postsecondary program, VRS or SSB may purchase any assistive technology device that the child's former school district purchased on the child's behalf.

2. INFORMATION ON THE FORMAL INTERAGENCY AGREEMENT WITH THE STATE EDUCATIONAL AGENCY WITH RESPECT TO:

A. CONSULTATION AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE TO ASSIST EDUCATIONAL AGENCIES IN PLANNING FOR THE TRANSITION OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES FROM SCHOOL TO POST-SCHOOL ACTIVITIES, INCLUDING VR SERVICES;

DEED's VRS and SSB and MDE's Special Education and Career and College Success Divisions will work together to ensure that consultation and technical assistance, which could include video conferences and conference calls, is provided to Local Education Agencies (LEA) staff in planning for the transition of students with disabilities to post-school activities. This includes implementing a structure for ensuring pre-employment transition services and vocational rehabilitation services are made available statewide for those who need these services.

DEED's VRS and SSB and MDE's Special Education and Career and College Success Divisions will collaborate and promote transition to adult services through participation in existing councils, committees, and other workgroups within respective agencies.

DEED's VRS and SSB will ensure that a counselor(s) is assigned to each school district and charter school in the state who will provide consultation and technical assistance to LEA staff on an as-needed basis related to the transition of students with disabilities from school to post-school activities.

MDE's Special Education and Career and College Success Divisions in consultation with DEED's VRS and SSB will develop training and communication tools for the LEA staff regarding WIOA and how it intersects with IDEA and the schools

B. TRANSITION PLANNING BY PERSONNEL OF THE DESIGNATED STATE AGENCY AND EDUCATIONAL AGENCY THAT FACILITATES THE DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THEIR INDIVIDUALIZED EDUCATION PROGRAMS;

DEED's VRS and SSB and MDE's Special Education and Career and College Success staff will provide technical assistance and consultation regarding these five required pre-employment transition services made available to students with disabilities who need them in grade nine through age 21 statewide:

- Job exploration counseling to assist students with disabilities in understanding their work related strengths and interests and what career possibilities there are;
- Work-based learning experiences, which may include in-school or after school opportunities, or experience outside the traditional school setting (including internships), that is provided in an integrated environment in the community to the maximum extent possible;

- Counseling on opportunities for enrollment in comprehensive transition or postsecondary educational programs at institutions of higher education;
- Workplace readiness training to develop social skills and independent living; and
- Instruction in self-advocacy (including instruction in person-centered practices), which may include peer mentoring (including peer mentoring from individuals with disabilities working in competitive integrated employment).

DEED's VRS and SSB counselors will attend meetings for the development of Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) when invited. Counselors will use the IEPs with students to assist in developing the individualized plans for employment (IPE).

DEED's VRS and SSB and MDE's Special Education and Career and College Success Divisions agree to share responsibility for ensuring that schools are aware of and how to use the tools to support students with disabilities to receive current information about their strengths, interests and preferences in order to make informed choices about competitive integrated employment prior to leaving school.

DEED's VRS and SSB and MDE's Special Education and Career and College Success Divisions agree to share responsibility for ensuring that schools which serve students with disabilities receive information about the benefits of providing career information.

C. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES, INCLUDING FINANCIAL RESPONSIBILITIES, OF EACH AGENCY, INCLUDING PROVISIONS FOR DETERMINING STATE LEAD AGENCIES AND QUALIFIED PERSONNEL RESPONSIBLE FOR TRANSITION SERVICES;

DEED's VRS and SSB assist students with disabilities in making informed choices to prepare for, obtain, maintain, advance in, or regain competitive integrated employment. Services include the provision of pre-employment transition services for students who are eligible or potentially eligible for VR services. They also include assessing an individual's VR needs, developing and implementing an Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE), and assisting in the achievement of the employment goals for the individuals that have applied for VR services, have been found eligible and are in an open priority category.

MDE's Special Education Division is responsible for ensuring that local education agencies provide special education and related services as documented in students' Individualized Education Plan (IEP).

DEED's VRS and SSB and MDE's Special Education and Career and College Success Division are responsible for coordination necessary to satisfy documentation requirements set forth in WIOA and 34 CFR 397.10 (b)(i) and (ii) with regard to students and youth with disabilities who are seeking subminimum wage employment.

DEED's VRS and SSB and MDE's Special Education and Career and College Success Divisions are financially responsible for the services they provide under their own laws and rules. Nothing will be construed to reduce the obligation under IDEA of a local educational agency or any other agency to provide or pay for any transition services that are also considered special education or related services and that are necessary for ensuring a free appropriate public education to children with disabilities within Minnesota. For non-VR transition students (potentially eligible students with disabilities) who do not want to apply for services but express interest in any of the Pre-Employment Transition Services available from SSB, SSB will provide those services as long as the individual meets the definition of a student with a disability. SSB currently has seven non-VR transition students participating in Pre-Employment Transition Services. All SSB hosted and sponsored transition events are marketed towards both VR and non-VR transition students. SSB has developed a case management system that will have better tracking abilities for non-VR transition students.

DEED's VRS and SSB and MDE's Special Education and Career and College Success Divisions are responsible to ensure that neither the LEA nor VR agencies may shift the burden for providing a service, for which it otherwise would be responsible, to the other entity. Decisions related to which entity will be responsible for providing transition, pre-employment transition services or vocational rehabilitation services that can be considered both a special education and a VR service will be made at the state and local level as part of the collaboration between the VR agencies, State Education Agencies (SEA), and LEAs.

Considerations in making funding decisions could include:

- The purpose of the service: Is it related to outcomes for employment or education?
- Which agency customarily provides the service?
- Is the student eligible for transition services under the IDEA and/ or pre-employment transition services or vocational rehabilitation services under the Rehabilitation Act

D. PROCEDURES FOR OUTREACH TO AND IDENTIFICATION OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES WHO NEED TRANSITION SERVICES.

DEED's VRS and SSB and MDE's Special Education and Career and College Success Divisions will work together to develop outreach tools related to competitive integrated employment for students with disabilities, parents or representatives of students with disabilities, school personnel, and other community agencies. Materials will include a description of the purpose of the VR programs, application procedures, eligibility requirements, priority for services, and scope of services that may be provided to eligible individuals.

DEED's VRS and SSB and MDE's Special Education and Career and College Success will work together with LEAs to ensure that outreach and identification of students in need of/ who could benefit from pre-employment transition services takes place statewide.

In order to provide information to students and their families/ guardians about pre-employment transition services and/or vocational rehabilitation services, DEED's VRS and SSB will be allowed to receive "directory information" from LEAs. In accordance with Minnesota (M.S. 13.32) and federal (20 U.S.C.A. 1232g (5)(A)) laws, "directory information" is defined, in part, as the student's name, address, telephone listing, and date of birth.

DEED's VRS and SSB and MDE's Special Education and Career and College Success will work together with LEAs to ensure outreach to:

- Students receiving special education services under IDEA;
- Students receiving accommodations under section 504;
- Students receiving school psychological, health, nursing, or social work services;
- Other students who have disabilities as defined in Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, but who do not receive IDEA services nor have a 504 plan.

DEED's VRS and SSB will provide outreach to the following school staff to identify students in need of pre-employment transition services and/ or vocational rehabilitation services: teachers/case managers, work coordinators, guidance counselors, school nurses, 504 coordinators, school social workers, alternative learning center staff, principals, school mental health coordinators, and school psychologists.

E. COOPERATIVE AGREEMENTS WITH PRIVATE NONPROFIT ORGANIZATIONS

SSB holds master contracts with three full—time Community Rehabilitation Providers (CRPs) which focus on providing adjustment to blindness training and employment related services, as well as other services to blind, visually impaired, and DeafBlind customers. SSB discusses with providers during the development of master contracts the scope of services, programs and rates. After review by SSB staff, the Director of SSB approves all service costs charged by CRPs. As necessary, SSB staff answers questions and discusses any issues with each CRP. SSB has developed and implemented a comprehensive vendor monitoring system which utilizes SharePoint software for the overall management of the process. Vendors are reviewed in person on a three year cycle with reviews taking place throughout the year. Feedback to date has been positive from the vendors and is helping to create a better channel for communication and feedback about services delivered. SSB put a hold on monitoring activities in 2019 so we could devote our resources to preparing for our Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) monitoring visit and developing the first MN Combined State Plan. After these activities were complete, the COVID-19 Pandemic made monitoring visits impossible. Services were interrupted during shutdowns and many providers were operating virtually or with varying protocols. We plan to resume in person and/or virtual monitoring visits in the fall of 2022.

As required by statute, SSB contracts with CRPs to provide the minimum of six weeks intensive training under sleep shades from an adjustment to blindness center for Rehabilitation Counselors.

Contracts have also been developed with CRPs to provide transition programs to students. Services are meant to augment work done by school districts with activities on evenings and weekends. Additionally, SSB has implemented "Community Partner Forums" twice per year as an opportunity to provide updates about agency happenings, discuss trends in findings from monitoring visits and provide training on pertinent topics such as data practices, navigating the state system for job placement and Customized Employment. Since October 2015, SSB has contracted with two Adjustment To Blindness training centers to provide transition programs to students meant to augment work done by school districts with activities on evenings and weekends. In October of 2019, a third provider has begun offering their full/part time comprehensive Adjustment To Blindness training program modified with a transition curriculum.

In October of 2021, SSB adopted the terminology of "Community Partner" to refer to our vendors or contracted providers. This change is consistent with Vocational Rehabilitation Services (VRS) and sets a more inclusive tone with the organizations we are contracting with.

F. ARRANGEMENTS AND COOPERATIVE AGREEMENTS FOR THE PROVISION OF SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES

Describe the designated State agency's efforts to identify and make arrangements, including entering into cooperative agreements, with other State agencies and other appropriate entities in order to provide supported employment services and extended employment services, as applicable, to individuals with the most significant disabilities, including youth with the most significant disabilities.

SSB provides supported employment services to individuals with most significant disabilities, including youth with most significant disabilities. Arrangements and Cooperative Agreements for the Provision of Supported Employment Services for customers that require other types of training/services from community—based rehabilitation programs, including supported employment program services. State Services for the Blind (SSB) utilizes community rehabilitation programs (CRPs) that have master contracts versus operating agreements with the general rehabilitation Designated State Unit, Vocational Rehabilitation Services (VRS) or with SSB. All Master Contracts were amended beginning in March 2019. To make the contracts consistent with WIOA, cancellation fees were removed, the conflict of interest requirements were changed to meet Federal Uniform Guidance 2 CFR 200, and other required clauses were

added to conform to state contracting procedures. Services to all supported employment program customers including youth have and will continue to be provided under fee-for-service contracts with CRPs. SSB's relationship with these CRPs is governed by master contracts with either SSB or VRS for the specific services required. The master contracts describe the services offered by the CRP and the agreed upon cost of each service. Information about each CRP is provided to each customer so that they can make an informed choice in the selection of their service provider. Extended services are secured via individual agreements with non-VR organizations, including a number of agreements with an array of counties in Minnesota.

As part of our new Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Minnesota Department of Human Services, the state Medicaid program, we now have a new framework to provide services to individuals who are receiving home and community-based services and vocational rehabilitation services. As part of that MOU, we are expanding the number of service providers that are both 245(d) licensed and have a master contract with SSB or VRS. The MOU establishes a model we refer to as E1MN, or Employment First Minnesota. Employment supports for people with disabilities span multiple state agencies, which can be complicated for all involved. E1MN coordinates and brings service together to help the system make more sense. The full framework is located at https://disabilityhubmn.org/for-professionals/work/e1mn-partnership/.

G. COORDINATION WITH EMPLOYERS

1. VR SERVICES; AND

SSB works with employers to identify employment and career exploration opportunities in competitive and integrated settings. SSB has four employment specialists who work with employers to identify their needs and match them with qualified candidates. Additional services provided to employers include education on the importance of a diverse work force, worksite analysis, training on disability employment related topics, identifying improvements that improve inclusive hiring practices, providing information and referrals to other title partners, and job retention services for employees with a vision loss.

SSB employment specialists routinely attend and develop networking events to promote disability awareness and sensitivity training as well as provide resources and technical assistance to potential employers in Minnesota and nationwide. SSB staff have given presentations to multiple State of Minnesota agency leaders on the advantages of hiring people who are blind, visually impaired, and DeafBlind to national companies like HealthPartners, Medtronic, and 3M. SSB has provided business services related to recruiting, onboarding, and retaining individuals with disabilities to Ecolab, Traveler's Insurance, Hy-Vee Supermarket Company, and others. SSB educates employers about how to recruit, onboard, and retain qualified candidates by providing training on creating and maintaining an inclusive and disability friendly workplace, which can include courtesy services like worksite assessments, connecting to resources, and technical assistance through free, on-site accessibility testing of employer computer systems and data bases in addition to information accessibility support. These business relationships further support and enhance the exchange of labor market information to assist in the development of individual plans for employment and self-employment decision making.

SSB actively participates and provides leadership and guidance to local and national groups devoted to connecting employers to qualified individuals with disabilities in cooperation with other DEED entities and title partners related directly to services to businesses. This is done through the Council of State Administrators of Vocational Rehabilitation (CSAVR)/National Employment Team (NET), Statewide Business Engagement Networks, Chambers of Commerce, national self-employment networking groups, and Disability:IN. In return, the state provides advance communication of employment opportunities, improved communications about the State's employment processes, assistance with mock interviews, and training to improve

candidate performance in the hiring process. Various partners participate in career fairs, community outreach events, job information sessions, training sessions, resource sharing, and more. SSB staff routinely partner with other State of Minnesota agencies to provide training and modules for employers statewide. This includes partnering with the Department of Labor's Apprenticeship Office, America's Job Center, and other title partners. SSB staff participated in the development of online virtual learning modules available to all employers statewide on Minnesota's America's Job Center labor exchange website, titled Bite Sized Learning Modules. These modules are specific to employers and were developed following a period of input from Minnesota businesses.

The National Employment Team (NET) through CSAVR is comprised of one point of contact for each of the 78 rehabilitation programs nationwide. The sole purpose of this team is to connect with employers on a national level including private employers and federal partners. Through the NET, SSB can connect with approximately two to four new employers monthly and receives correspondence and job leads from approximately another dozen employers each month. Each year SSB has customers hired by employers through the NET connections. SSB also frequently acts as the subject matter expert and resource for other state programs that connect directly to employers across Minnesota. SSB utilizes the relationships with these business partners to supplement the efficiency of contracted Community Rehabilitation Providers, giving more than six one-on-one presentations with employers last year.

To ensure successful collaboration, SSB staff have been involved in co-leading a workgroup on a departmentwide development of recommendations that allow business services staff across all business lines and titles to work together closer.

2. TRANSITION SERVICES, INCLUDING PRE-EMPLOYMENT TRANSITION SERVICES, FOR STUDENTS AND YOUTH WITH DISABILITIES.

The transition team at State Services for the Blind is comprised of VR counselors specializing in transition, a Transition Coordinator, a Work Opportunities Navigator specifically serving students and youth, an assistive technologist, support staff, and a unit supervisor.

SSB has implemented a model for transition called BRIDGE to Success that is implemented with all eligible and potentially eligible transition students. Within BRIDGE (as defined below), activities are embedded that connect students with mentors in career exploration, internships, work readiness training, and work-based learning experiences Each of the core areas in BRIDGE highlights an essential component that teenagers need in order to succeed after high school:

•Basic Skills

•Role Models

•Initiative

•Discovery

•Goal Setting

•Experiences.

Through SSB, teens can explore each of these core components and cross the BRIDGE into the future of work, study, and living independently. Activities that SSB is providing in coordination with employers are outlined below using the BRIDGE framework:

Basic Skills

Students receive assistance to learn how to write a resume, interview, and other basic job seeking skills. The Work Opportunities Navigator provides more extensive one-on-one job seeking skills training to transition students statewide. Students participate in mock interviews

where they interview with outside employers. They obtain feedback from those employers that helps them improve their skills.

Role Models

SSB has facilitated several programs that showcase role models to students. In summer SSB offers work-based learning experiences to Peer Educators, who plan and facilitate some of the summer programs. The Peer Educators offer their experience and insight as role models to the younger students. SSB also created a gardening pilot, which offered students the opportunity to learn from adults who are blind gardeners. SSB is also part of a multi-state program with Delaware, Kentucky, and Michigan. Each state hosted a meeting in which a blind role model shared their journeys, highlighting the importance of advocacy and learning adaptive techniques. The Spectacle (SSB's quarterly transition newsletter) highlights a different working professional every quarter.

Initiative

The Summer Transition Program (a program for students that is hosted by SSB and the Department of Education) has a component where students create and present their elevator speech for employers. Additionally, for the first time, SSB hosted a virtual "Open Mic Night" which allowed students to share their talents related to storytelling, music, comedy, and art. This program fostered initiative by helping students to step out of their comfort zone and show off their strengths and talents.

Discovery

A big piece of the BRIDGE model is having students learn more about their skills and assets. This includes career exploration. Students participate in the Work Opportunity Navigator's "Press Start" program. This program walks students through informational interviews, labor market information, budgeting, and lifestyle choices.

Goal Setting

All transition students are expected to have an Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE) that aligns with their Individualized Education Program (IEP). The job goal is one that is projected for the student. Work and career exploration must be part of the IPE.

Experiences

Every single student is encouraged to have a work experience or volunteer experience prior to graduation. Community Rehab Providers (CRPs) have added student work experiences to their contracts with SSB to help us meet our goal of every student having a work experience. CRPs and SSB's employment staff have developed relationships with employers that will allow students to work for them. As part of the Summer Transition Program (STP), all students will participate in a two-to-four-week work experience in a variety of areas developed by SSB's Work Opportunities Navigator. All these students will participate in a mock interview and have a resume complete by an employment specialist. Additionally, all students will have a technology evaluation completed during STP. SSB has become an employer with three paid student worker positions at the agency. The Senior Services unit has employed student workers, the Business Enterprise Program (BEP) had one paid student worker position with a BEP operator, and a front desk reception intern was hired in the main office.

The Work Opportunities Navigator, Transition Coordinator, and Counselors compile a list of summer internship opportunities for students, and then do targeted outreach to students who qualify for the internship programs. SSB Staff lets students know about the opportunities as well as assist with applications.

Project Search is an internship program for students finishing their last year of high school. Instead of going to school they go to three, 10-week internship rotations with a business in the hopes that a job is offered after the 3rd rotation. This is a non-paid program, and all students are in an integrated competitive employment situation. The Project Search Leadership team is a group of state directors that oversees school districts requests to start a Project Search program. SSB reviews their proposal and determine if it would be a good site to incorporate the program. There are over 250 Project Search sites around the world. There are five active sites in MN, including Medtronic, Children's Hospital and Clinics, and Hennepin County Medical Center in Minneapolis, Avera Hospital in Marshall, and Fairview Lakes Medical Center in Wyoming, MN. A total of five visually impaired customers have taken part, one of which was hired/ employed part-time at Minneapolis Children's Hospital.

SSB is an active representative on Project Search. SSB is an active representative on the Placement Partnerships and the National Employment Team (NET). We tap into businesses within the Placement Partnerships in order to establish student work opportunities.

H. INTERAGENCY COOPERATION

1. THE STATE MEDICAID PLAN UNDER TITLE XIX OF THE SOCIAL SECURITY ACT;

The State Medicaid plan under Title XIX of the Social Security Act; Medical Assistance, the state's Medicaid program, is administered by the Minnesota Department of Human Services Disability Services Division (DHS-DSD). Vocational Rehabilitation Services (VRS) and State Services for the Blind (SSB) collaborate closely with DHS in the provision of services for individuals who are on home and community based waivers.

In September 2019, DHS-DSD, VRS, and SSB signed a Memorandum of Understanding. The terms of the MOU are specific to individuals on a waiver who want to pursue competitive, integrated employment. Employment First and Person-Centered principles form the basis of the shared vision for how our agencies can provide employment services for people with disabilities in a coordinated manner. The goal is to align systems so that common customers – those who receive home and community-based service disability waivers and vocational rehabilitation services from VRS or SSB – can get seamless and timely supports to make informed choices and meet their competitive integrated employment goals. The full implementation of the MOU is planned for January 2021 to allow time for communication, stakeholder involvement, and training.

Under the MOU, the following coordination of services occurs:

Payment of Services

DEED-VRS/SSB is the primary payer for job-related services (services supporting job development, placement and employment stability) for common customers. DHS-DSD may fund services offered by VRS/SSB only when DHS-DSD documents that those services are not available through VRS/SSB. Once employment stability is established, DHS-DSD will continue to pay for long-term supports to maintain employment for customers of all ages. DHS-DSD will also pay for services that assist people in making informed choices and developing informed employment goals.

Interagency Planning and Policy Development

DHS-DSD and VRS/SSB will use strategic planning, troubleshooting, consultation and technical assistance to ensure successful implementation of this agreement. Key areas include goal setting, systems development, coordination of services, quality assurance and stakeholder involvement.

Implementation of this new framework was effective July 1, 2021.

We have already accomplished the following

- Established an interagency steering committee to provide MOU oversight, set goals, review program services and financing options, identify promising practices, and resolve disputes
- Identified program liaisons from VRS/SSB and DHS-DSD to coordinate joint efforts in communication, quality assurance, training, and coordination of services, policies, and procedures
- Created work groups as needed to provide advice and share expertise regarding practice enhancements
- Held periodic staff meetings across agencies to ensure coordinated communication and address policy issues
- Established and concluded an advisory committee that includes stakeholders from VRS/SSB, DHS-DSD, lead agency, and providers of both vocational rehabilitation services and waiver services to discuss progress and challenges with the MOU
- Jointly met with stakeholders to collect feedback and identify areas for improvement
- Formed an understanding of the employment outcomes in our respective programs and developed a shared understanding of outcome measures and reporting procedures
- Promoted the use of evidence-based practices and/or promising approaches to create a more closely aligned employment service system, increase quality and gather shared data on employment outcomes
- Identified common customers and practices that support positive employment outcomes
- Provided extensive statewide training to vocational rehabilitation, education, and human services staff

Eligibility, Referrals, and Customer Flow

We now have a shared understanding of when and how eligibility will be determined by each agency and we continue to communicate eligibility requirements to stakeholders. This includes community rehabilitation partners, lead agency staff, waiver employment service providers, VRS/SSB staff, DHS-DSD staff, and the people served by our programs and their families.

We developed a shared referral process and provided clear instructions for referrals between programs when 1) a person indicates an interest to explore competitive, integrated employment through Minnesota's Career Counseling Information and Referral Conversation in accordance with the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA – 511 process), 2) a person receiving HCBS waiver services decides to pursue competitive, integrated employment and 3) when a person receiving vocational rehabilitation services achieves stable employment and needs supports to maintain employment.

We defined a benefits planning model, determined how and when the model will be embedded into provided services, developed and coordinated training, and coordinated implementation through designated agency staff and a community of practice.

We developed and trained on extensive guidance on how and when services may be provided as people move between programs and funding sources and when dual services are allowed. We agreed that people may receive VRS/SSB and waiver services at the same time as long as those services are needed and not duplicative.

Service Provider Networks

We continue to work together to increase our statewide, shared network of employment service providers to improve access, support seamless transitions, and expand individuals' choices to high quality employment services. As part of this work, we agreed to:

- Evaluate strategies for a common employment service provider pool. We developed a dashboard that allows us to share our job search service provider pool to support seamless service delivery and prevent unnecessary interruptions as people move between supports funded by VRS/SSB and supports funded by DHS-DSD.
- We have encouraged and provided training on dual enrollment of employment service providers. While DHS and DEED will continue to maintain separate employment service provider licensure/accreditation standards, we continue to identify and implement ways to make it easier for providers to understand our respective standards, and we have developed strategies to provide ongoing communication and technical assistance to those interested in enrolling.
- Aligned and streamlined process and efforts. We have aligned and streamlined each agency's business processes and requirements to create consistency and efficiencies for dually enrolled employment service providers.
- Coordinated communications and training. We coordinated service provider communications and training to maintain consistent messaging and increase understanding of each agency's respective system and the shared customer flow outlined in this agreement.
- We are still working on measuring and promoting provider performance. We continue to explore methods to assess and provide information on service provider performance to people with disabilities and their families to support informed selection of service providers.
- We are still actively developing new providers. We will analyze data, set goals and collaborate on the development of employment service providers in underserved populations and areas of the state.

2. THE STATE AGENCY RESPONSIBLE FOR PROVIDING SERVICES FOR INDIVIDUALS WITH DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES; AND

The primary agency responsible for services for adults with disabilities is the Minnesota Department of Human Services. We share a common set of values and principles:

• Employment first. The values and guiding principles found in Minnesota's Employment First Policy will serve as the foundation for our work.

• Person centeredness. We will embed person-centered principles in our work to help people move toward meaningful work that builds on their unique interests, strengths and talents.

• Collaboration. We will build coordinated and consistent communication, training and support.

• Simplicity. We will develop a system that is easier to understand, implement and navigate.

• Continuous improvement. We will engage with stakeholders, leverage promising practices, and use data to adapt efforts and improve outcomes.

• Resource efficiency. We will use resources efficiently and within the bounds of federal guidelines and regulations.

The Minnesota State Interagency Committee (MnSIC) has the responsibility to develop and implement a coordinated, multidisciplinary service system for children and youth with disabilities ages three to 21. The Committee brings together the Minnesota Departments of Education, Employment and Economic Development, Commerce, Corrections, Health, Human Rights, and Human Services to develop needed policy change to reduce duplication of local effort and to improve local response to the needs of children and families by developing a coordinated, multidisciplinary service system.

Minnesota's Olmstead Plan supports freedom of choice and provides a framework and a series of key activities that must be achieved to ensure Minnesotans with disabilities have the opportunity to live, learn, work and enjoy life in the most integrated setting desired by the person. Governor Mark Dayton appointed an Olmstead Subcabinet to develop and implement this plan. The Subcabinet consists of representatives of the MnSIC agencies listed above, the Housing Finance Agency, the Department of Transportation, the ombudsman for mental health and developmental disabilities, and the Executive Director of the Governor's Council on Developmental Disabilities.

3. THE STATE AGENCY RESPONSIBLE FOR PROVIDING MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES.

The primary agency responsible for services for adults with disabilities is the Minnesota Department of Human Services. The Minnesota State Interagency Committee (MnSIC) has the responsibility to develop and implement a coordinated, multidisciplinary service system for children and youth with disabilities ages three to twenty one. The Committee brings together the Minnesota Departments of Education, Employment and Economic Development, Commerce, Corrections, Health, Human Rights, and Human Services to develop needed policy change to reduce duplication of local effort and to improve local response to the needs of children and families by developing a coordinated, multidisciplinary service system.

Minnesota's Olmstead Plan supports freedom of choice and provides a framework and a series of key activities that must be achieved to ensure Minnesotans with disabilities have the opportunity to live, learn, work and enjoy life in the most integrated setting desired by the person. Governor Mark Dayton appointed an Olmstead Subcabinet to develop and implement this plan. The Subcabinet consists of representatives of the MnSIC agencies listed above, the Housing Finance Agency, the Department of Transportation, the ombudsman for mental health and developmental disabilities, and the Executive Director of the Governor's Council on Developmental Disabilities.

I. COMPREHENSIVE SYSTEM OF PERSONNEL DEVELOPMENT; DATA SYSTEM ON PERSONNEL AND PERSONNEL DEVELOPMENT

1. SYSTEM ON PERSONNEL AND PERSONNEL DEVELOPMENT

A. QUALIFIED PERSONNEL NEEDS

I. THE NUMBER OF PERSONNEL WHO ARE EMPLOYED BY THE STATE AGENCY IN THE PROVISION OF VR SERVICES IN RELATION TO THE NUMBER OF INDIVIDUALS SERVED, BROKEN DOWN BY PERSONNEL CATEGORY;

Minnesota State Services for the Blind (SSB) takes a coordinated approach in utilizing policies and procedures to develop activities that maintain a comprehensive system of personnel development. This approach ensures there are staff as needed throughout the state and that all staff have access to ongoing development opportunities. SSB's intent is to provide the highest quality services to SSB customers who are blind, visually impaired or DeafBlind.

This comprehensive system of personnel development consists of:

- An annual review and analysis of data on current staffing and future needs, as well as a review of each vacancy when it occurs;
- Policies and actions related to recruitment, preparation, and retention of qualified staff;
- Personnel standards in accordance with the Rehabilitation Act; and
- Personnel development including methods to assess individual and organizational staff training needs and the provision of in-service training.

SSB maintains data on the number of employees in each personnel category for all of its programs. This data is reviewed on an annual basis and each position is reviewed when a vacancy occurs to determine whether a change in personnel category or services is necessary to meet the current needs of SSB customers. Personnel levels are also reviewed annually when the VR program budget is developed.

SSB's WorkForce Development Unit (WDU), the VR field unit, is made up of the following positions (excluding those assigned to the Randolph-Sheppard Program):

- 16 positions are currently earmarked for qualified VR counselors, three of whom focus on Pre-ETS. It is the intention of SSB to fill all counselor positions.
- 2 Pre-ETS Opportunity Navigator
- 1 Pre-ETS Coordinator
- 1 Quality Assurance Specialist
- 4 Employment Specialists
- 5 Supervisors
- 1 Data Analyst
- 1 Trainer
- 1 Blind Rehabilitation Teacher
- 1 General Support Person
- 2 Payers
- 4 Assistive Technology Specialists, one of whom focuses on Pre-ETS
- 2 Directors
- 10 Vocational Rehabilitation Technicians

II. THE NUMBER OF PERSONNEL CURRENTLY NEEDED BY THE STATE AGENCY TO PROVIDE VR SERVICES, BROKEN DOWN BY PERSONNEL CATEGORY; AND

SSB has continued to adjust its staffing complement to better handle the work necessary to meet this area. An additional counselor and ½ FTE vocational rehabilitation technician have been hired to transition specific caseloads.

The Transition Core made up of the Pre-ETS counselors, a general case counselor, an adult placement specialist, the Work Opportunity Navigator, the Coordinator, a supervisor, the Pre-ETS vocational rehabilitation technicians, the rehabilitation teacher, and an assistive technology specialist, continue to plan and coordinate Pre-ETS statewide.

To achieve the best employment outcomes possible, the WDU uses a team model. Teams are composed of a counselor, a vocational rehabilitation technician, an assistive technology specialist, a placement specialist, a supervisor, and the Work Opportunity Navigator and Transition Coordinator as needed. This approach establishes relationships between the customer and team members from the beginning of case services, thereby expanding the understanding of customer needs for both the placement and technology staff and increasing the odds for a successful employment outcome. WDU regularly assess the effectiveness of this model and looks for ways to improve its function.

SSB has an orientation process for all people potentially interested in SSB services to increase their awareness of what services are available and what expectations may be associated with some of the services, especially with the VR program, so they can make an informed choice about whether to apply for or otherwise engage in SSB services. This helps increase the level of active participation by participants and decreases the dropout rate.

III. PROJECTIONS OF THE NUMBER OF PERSONNEL, BROKEN DOWN BY PERSONNEL CATEGORY, WHO WILL BE NEEDED BY THE STATE AGENCY TO PROVIDE VR SERVICES IN 5 YEARS BASED ON PROJECTIONS OF THE NUMBER OF INDIVIDUALS TO BE SERVED, INCLUDING INDIVIDUALS WITH SIGNIFICANT DISABILITIES, THE NUMBER OF PERSONNEL EXPECTED TO RETIRE OR LEAVE THE FIELD, AND OTHER RELEVANT FACTORS.

SSB has projected the number of new staff needed over the next five years to include 1 State Director, 1 Field Operations Supervisor IV, 5 Qualified VR Counselors, 1 Placement Staff, 3 VR Technicians, 1 Support Staff, and 2 Central Office Administration Staff.

Data on the rate of blindness, visual impairments, and DeafBlindness indicators suggest the potential population of customers served will increase due to aging workers remaining in the workforce. SSB has a dedicated outreach staff member who is increasing marketing to potential customer groups through presentations and electronic information. SSB is working on revamping its structure to meet the increased needs over the next five years. An aging workforce is a factor in the estimated 14 positions turning over in the next five years.

As all public rehabilitation programs have experienced since the implementation of WIOA, we too have found it increasingly difficult to recruit and hire qualified rehabilitation counselors.

We are using several different strategies that include expanding the pool of possible counselor candidates by opening hiring to people with master's degrees in closely related professions; searching nationally for candidates; and being flexible about where Greater Minnesota staff are located now that teleworking is an accepted model and practice and not dependent upon a physical office location.

B. PERSONNEL DEVELOPMENT

I. A LIST OF THE INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION IN THE STATE THAT ARE PREPARING VR PROFESSIONALS, BY TYPE OF PROGRAM;

Minnesota has one credentialed graduate program in vocational rehabilitation counseling in addition to the University of Wisconsin Stout. The St. Cloud State University (SCSU) program continues and Wisconsin Stout will only be offering virtual courses going forward. SSB management maintains contact as needed with the Directors of the Vocational Rehabilitation Counseling graduate programs through direct one-on-one conversations. Graduates from these programs have the necessary credentials to qualify for national certification. Graduates meet the Minnesota standard for a qualified rehabilitation counselor.

II. THE NUMBER OF STUDENTS ENROLLED AT EACH OF THOSE INSTITUTIONS, BROKEN DOWN BY TYPE OF PROGRAM; AND

St. Cloud State University has 10 rehabilitation counseling students in their second year and five in their first year. In addition, St. Cloud has a master level rehabilitation and addition counseling program with nine students in their second year and 11 in their first year. These program graduates would be fully able to meet the standards for vocation rehabilitation counselor positions.

The University of Wisconsin -Stout currently has 67 students at different phases in their graduate rehabilitation counselling program. This program is instituted virtually and so is able to draw students from across the country. In fall 2020 there were two graduates; Spring 2021, 20 graduates; and Summer 2021, four graduates.

III. THE NUMBER OF STUDENTS WHO GRADUATED DURING THE PRIOR YEAR FROM EACH OF THOSE INSTITUTIONS WITH CERTIFICATION OR LICENSURE, OR WITH THE CREDENTIALS FOR CERTIFICATION OR LICENSURE, BROKEN DOWN BY THE PERSONNEL CATEGORY FOR WHICH THEY HAVE RECEIVED, OR HAVE THE CREDENTIALS TO RECEIVE, CERTIFICATION OR LICENSURE.

In the prior year St. Cloud State University graduated 8 students and University of Wisconsin at Stout graduated 2 in Fall 2020, 20 in Spring 2021, and 4 in Summer 2021.

All graduates have the necessary credentials to qualify for national certification. All graduates meet the Minnesota standard for a qualified rehabilitation counselor. This represents a small pool of qualified counselors to meet staffing. Given the shrinking pool of qualified applicants in Minnesota and nationally, it has become more difficult to recruit new personnel.

2. PLAN FOR RECRUITMENT, PREPARATION AND RETENTION OF QUALIFIED PERSONNEL

SSB annually reviews and updates its plan to address current and projected needs for qualified personnel. This review looks at overall staffing patterns, expected customer demand and overall needs of the unit. SSB employs three main strategies for the recruitment and retention of qualified personnel.

1. Recruitment-As well as the more traditional forms of advertising for vacant positions, SSB utilizes social media and national search groups to help with attracting qualified candidates. The local universities help with promoting openings and getting viable candidates. We have also expanded academic resource connections to include Western Michigan University.

2. Use of Internships-SSB offers paid internship opportunities to select students enrolled in master's level rehabilitation counselor education programs in Minnesota and throughout the nation. Use of internships continues to be one way to attract individuals, including those from minority backgrounds and individuals with significant disabilities, to enroll in rehabilitation counselor education programs, have a positive experience with the public VR program, and increase the probability of their future employment in the public system.

3. Workplace Culture/Employer of choice-SSB and our department strive to have a vibrant workplace culture and to being an employer of choice to help retain employees. From the point of onboarding employees to throughout their career SSB makes efforts to be inclusive, interactive and to utilize each employee's strengths to the fullest. SSB offers many internal and external training opportunities that are attractive to counselors wanting to maintain their Certified Rehabilitation Counselor (CRC) credentials. This includes six weeks of adjustment to blindness training and one week of low vision training which gives a unique opportunity at full immersion into the blind visually impaired, and DeafBlind customer population.

3. PERSONNEL STANDARDS

A. STANDARDS THAT ARE CONSISTENT WITH ANY NATIONAL OR STATE-APPROVED OR -RECOGNIZED CERTIFICATION, LICENSING, REGISTRATION, OR OTHER COMPARABLE

REQUIREMENTS THAT APPLY TO THE PROFESSION OR DISCIPLINE IN WHICH SUCH PERSONNEL ARE PROVIDING VR SERVICES; AND

Policies and procedures are in place relating to the establishment and maintenance of standards to ensure personnel needed by SSB are appropriately and adequately prepared and trained. Such policies and procedures, including negotiated labor agreements with exclusive bargaining representatives, also cover the selection, retention, development, and termination of staff employed by SSB, and includes requirements of State law concerning the classification of SSB positions by Minnesota Management and Budget.

The academic degree standard for a vocational rehabilitation counselor at SSB is the Master's degree in rehabilitation counseling or a closely related field, with graduate-level coursework in each of the following: theories and techniques of counseling; medical/psycho-social aspects of disability; assessment; and occupational information or job placement.

SSB works closely with its Human Resources to ensure only those individuals who have earned a Master's degree in rehabilitation counseling, or a closely related field, qualify for placement on eligible lists for rehabilitation counselor. Therefore, all counselors fully meet the position standard and SSB does not have any expenditures for staff training to obtain a graduate degree in rehabilitation counseling. SSB does not anticipate any factors that would adversely affect the ability to hire qualified staff.

B. THE ESTABLISHMENT AND MAINTENANCE OF EDUCATION AND EXPERIENCE REQUIREMENTS, IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 101(A)(7)(B)(II) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT, TO ENSURE THAT THE PERSONNEL HAVE A 21ST CENTURY UNDERSTANDING OF THE EVOLVING LABOR FORCE AND THE NEEDS OF INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES.

New employees come to SSB with a variety of knowledge, skills and abilities. Nearly all need SSB to provide them with additional information and training to ensure they have the tools and resources to do their job. Minnesotans expect SSB to be “experts” in the field of blindness. We are the one public organization providing such services. Therefore, SSB has an obligation to train staff on the essential aspects of blindness, visual impairment, and DeafBlindness. To meet that expectation, SSB has a comprehensive training program consisting of:

• Introduction to Blindness and Visual Impairment —PHASE I. Responsibilities of SSB staff do vary, but there are minimum requirements for all positions and are part of this course which is required of all new employees.

• Introduction to Blindness and Visual Impairment —PHASE II. “Under the blindfold” and with simulators are training activities which will be required of some new staff as determined by SSB management.

• Continuing Education in Blindness and Visual Impairment —PHASE III. Training consists of specialized and ongoing training related to blindness and vision loss and will be required of staff as determined by SSB management.

SSB ensures that personnel have an understanding of the evolving labor force. Minnesota’s Labor Market Information Office within the Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED) collects employment, wage and industry information from throughout the state, then analyzes it to provide information employers and others can use to make decisions and plan for the future. SSB uses the Labor Market Information Office to provide labor market training to its personnel. DEED’s Commissioner includes labor market information in his weekly updates. Other opportunities exist for staff to participate in such as area or city specific Business Engagement Networks or other specialized trainings.

4. STAFF DEVELOPMENT

A. A SYSTEM OF STAFF DEVELOPMENT FOR PROFESSIONALS AND PARAPROFESSIONALS WITHIN THE DESIGNATED STATE UNIT, PARTICULARLY WITH RESPECT TO ASSESSMENT, VOCATIONAL COUNSELING, JOB PLACEMENT, AND REHABILITATION TECHNOLOGY, INCLUDING TRAINING IMPLEMENTED IN COORDINATION WITH ENTITIES CARRYING OUT STATE PROGRAMS UNDER SECTION 4 OF THE ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY ACT OF 1998; AND

All WDU staff members new to SSB receive Introduction to Blindness —Phase 1 and Phase 2 training on the essential aspects of blindness and visual impairment within three months of hire. Minnesota statutory language requires all Rehabilitation Counselors to successfully complete a minimum of 6 weeks of intensive training under sleep shades from an adjustment to blindness center. The 6 weeks of training provides classes in all curriculum areas of the training centers. The curriculum includes training in; Communication Skills including Braille and Assistive Technology Instruction, Travel Training, Independent Living Skills, including techniques of daily living and adaptive leisure instruction, Facilitated Structured Group Discussion on topics centering on the impact of blindness on employment, independent living and social interactions, and Other Optional Training Activities which include achieving a personal goal agreed upon by the participant, their SSB supervisor, and staff of the approved vendor. An example of the specific curriculum includes:

1. **Communication Skills.**
    a. Fully understanding the importance and use of grade I and II Braille.
    b. Reading and writing the Grade I Braille alphabet and numbers using a slate and stylus, and complete an introduction to the alphabet with the Perkins Brailler.
    c. Using speech output and magnification computer programs and devices, such as JAWS for Windows and ZoomText.
    d. Identifying the positives and negatives of various technology packages, what each does, and the functions they carry out, including operating systems, screen readers, magnification, and mobile technology.
    e. Identifying and using the Radio Talking Book and National Library Service play back equipment.
2. **Travel Training.**
    a. Understanding the importance and use of the long white cane.
    b. Traveling without assistance using the long white cane in familiar areas, including crossing controlled and uncontrolled intersections.
    c. Using public bus and train transit.
3. **Independent Living Skills.**
    a. Independently place telephone calls.
    b. Using measurement tools and hand and power tools to construct a simple wooden item.
    c. Cleaning techniques which can include sweeping, cleaning furniture, vacuuming, etc.
    d. Telling time using non-sighted techniques (e.g., Braille watch, talking watch).
    e. Identifying coins and bills and using a check writing guide.
    f. Techniques for maintenance of household items.

g. Managing one's wardrobe including coordinating items, identifying and sorting clothing, maintenance and cleanliness.

h. Organizing kitchen cupboards and drawers to safely find and identify various cooking ingredients, supplies and utensils.

i. Prepare meals using basic kitchen tools (e.g., microwave, electric mixer, etc.) and essential food preparation and cooking techniques.

4. **Facilitated Structured Group Discussion.**

a. Participating in discussions with other students and staff on topics centering on blindness and its impact on employment, independent living, and social interactions.

5. **Other Optional Training Activities.**

1. Achieving a personal goal agreed upon by the participant, their SSB supervisor, and staff of the approved vendor.

SSB and WDU specific staff also go through six weeks of onboarding after they come back from sleep shade training. Onboarding consists of a multitude of reading, watching presentations, attending meetings, completing blindness and low-vision specific trainings online, competing activities and passing quizzes. This includes meetings and completing activities with their Employment Specialist, and Rehabilitation Technologist and being a part of shadowing sessions to learn about how their Assistive Technology Specialists works with customers. The new employee learns about not only vocational rehabilitation in terms of its history through a comprehensive training curriculum called CIT-VR, but also SSB specific policies and procedures through activities, quizzes, and case study. The case study allows them to use their knowledge of the policies and procedures and implement that with a new system many are unfamiliar with WorkForce 1 (WF1) when they first come to work at SSB. This includes reviewing eye reports, uploading documents to the system, writing case notes, calculating Customer Financial Participation (CFP), completing vendor referrals, and more. New employees are also asked to meet with their team and read and analyze corresponding policy chapters for each individual on their team to understand how their team works, the responsibilities of those on the teams members, and what individual customers may need from the team at any given time for any customer. In addition to this, we send a diverse set of training catalogs filled with external and internal training opportunities in a newsletter format weekly to current staff so they can keep up to date on happenings at SSB and also Certified Rehabilitation Counselor (CRC) certifications if they so require. Staff may request, for development purposes, additional or more advanced training activities that will be considered on a case-by-case basis and that reflect organizational needs and resources.

B. PROCEDURES FOR THE ACQUISITION AND DISSEMINATION OF SIGNIFICANT KNOWLEDGE FROM RESEARCH AND OTHER SOURCES TO DESIGNATED STATE UNIT PROFESSIONALS AND PARAPROFESSIONALS.

In collaboration with other offices of the Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED), SSB utilizes a collaborative model when looking at employee performance and creates a dialogue between supervisor and staff. Together, they create goals for the upcoming year and put plans into place that will help the individual reach those goals. A final component is completing a review of any essential professional and employment-related training that is either desired by the employee or required by the employer. Ongoing in-service training offerings give employees a wide variety of options for enhancing and improving skills.

Training – In 2021 the WDU created a full-time staff training position to develop accessible online training curriculum to ensure staff understand and apply federal and state policies, agency expectations and standards, and strategic goals and initiatives. The trainer is modifying existing curriculum to meet the needs for on-boarding new staff, addressing ongoing training and development needs of staff requiring remedial or corrective training, and facilitation of unit wide training sessions on a regular basis. The trainer is utilizing SharePoint and other electronic methods for sharing on-going information and opportunities for staff development through other available resources. We expect this outcome will result in stronger foundational competencies for new staff and overall higher levels of consistency and application of program requirements and service provision.

SSB has begun collaborating with Vocational Rehabilitation Services (VRS) to provide training to staff and Community Partners to ensure staff are aware of best practices in the VR and blindness education fields. Agency combined trainings on the new E1MN initiate and E1PBA was an example of this new higher level of collaboration with VRS.

SSB collaborates with technology vendors who provide demonstrations to staff on new products and devices. SSB Assistive Technology Specialist are encouraged to attend Assistive Technology conferences so they may stay current on the latest technology available in the field and share that knowledge with other SSB staff. Additionally, SSB has a Technology Resource Lab that is kept up to date with current technology so that customers and staff can have hands on experience with it.

SSB is also very fortunate to have a library within our Department of Employment of Economic Development (DEED). Specialized library services provide SSB and VRS with a weekly *DEED Library Alert* which is a service to inform staff of news, research and developments of interest. The following is an example of the most recent version.

The essentials of customized employment: Results from a national survey of employment providers April 25, 2022 – Rehabilitation Counseling Bulletin "… The objective of this study was to ask rehabilitation providers who implement these services to describe the current status of CE service delivery …" https://bit.ly/3kDd2Du (use with VPN) or request from library
2. **Special Olympics USA games coming to Twin Cities in 2026** May 6, 2022 – *Star Tribune* "The event is expected to draw 4,000 athletes and 75,000 fans …" AP News covers this at https://bit.ly/3wg6JMG .

The essentials of customized employment: Results from a national survey of employment providers April 25, 2022 – Rehabilitation Counseling Bulletin "… The objective of this study was to ask rehabilitation providers who implement these services to describe the current status of CE service delivery …" https://bit.ly/3kDd2Du (use with VPN) or request from library

http://strib.mn/3sqvW4M

or request from

library

3. Postsecondary transition experiences of young women who are deaf and hard of hearing in Saudi Arabia

May 3, 2022 – *Career Development and Transition for Exceptional Individuals*

"… themes reflected a wide range of transition experiences among students who were [deaf and hard of hearing] …"

https://bit.ly/3wfYnUc (use with VPN) or request from library

4. **Evaluation of an employment intervention for veterans transitioning from the military: A randomized controlled trial.**

May 2022 –

Journal of Nervous & Mental Disease

"… National Career Coach Program participants were significantly more likely to work, had significantly greater earnings, and reported significantly greater improvements in physical and mental health compared with participants assigned to Local Community Resources …"

The essentials of customized employment: Results from a national survey of employment providers April 25, 2022 – Rehabilitation Counseling Bulletin "… The objective of this study was to ask rehabilitation providers who implement these services to describe the current status of CE service delivery …" https://bit.ly/3kDd2Du (use with VPN) or request from library

Abstract at

https://bit.ly/3FC6peo

; request article from

library

5. **Microsoft expands its range of accessible accessories**

May 11, 2022 –

Wall Street Journal

"A customizable adaptive mouse and button system aims to help people with limited mobility operate devices as quickly as everyone else …"

https://bit.ly/3FOQedI

(ProQuest) or request from

library

6. **Return to work factors and vocational rehabilitation interventions for long-term,**

The essentials of customized employment: Results from a national survey of employment providers April 25, 2022 – Rehabilitation Counseling Bulletin "… The objective of this study was to ask rehabilitation providers who implement these services to describe the current status of CE service delivery …" https://bit.ly/3kDd2Du (use with VPN) or request from library

partially disabled workers: A modified Delphi study among vocational rehabilitation professionals

May 2, 2022 –

BMC Public Health

"… Consensus was reached among the expert panel that many factors that are important for the RTW of short-term disabled workers are also important for the RTW of long-term partially disabled workers and that a substantial number of these factors could effectively be targeted using VR interventions …"

https://bit.ly/3yCI5aC

or request from

library

7. **Where to next? Experiences of adults with intellectual disability after they complete a university program**

April 26, 2022 –

Journal of Applied Research in Intellectual Disabilities

"… This study investigated the experiences of adults with intellectual disability after they completed an inclusive higher education university program in Australia …"

The essentials of customized employment: Results from a national survey of employment providers April 25, 2022 – Rehabilitation Counseling Bulletin "… The objective of this study was to ask rehabilitation providers who implement these services to describe the current status of CE service delivery …" https://bit.ly/3kDd2Du (use with VPN) or request from library

Abstract at

https://bit.ly/3MiAeTB

; request article from

library

8. **Employment preferences of individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities: An evaluation of gender and age differences**

May 2022 –

Journal of Applied Research in Intellectual Disabilities

"… Results suggested that many individuals with intellectual or developmental disabilities want jobs. Our study identified gender differences in vocational interests and motivation for employment. There were no significant differences between age groups …"

Abstract at

https://bit.ly/3sxwu8M

; request article from

library

The essentials of customized employment: Results from a national survey of employment providers April 25, 2022 – Rehabilitation Counseling Bulletin "… The objective of this study was to ask rehabilitation providers who implement these services to describe the current status of CE service delivery …" https://bit.ly/3kDd2Du (use with VPN) or request from library

9. **Unmet needs and problems related to employment and working as reported by survivors with metastatic breast cancer**

2022 –

Supportive Care in Cancer

"… We sought to characterize the work status, importance of work, and work-related information needs for women living with [metastatic breast cancer] …"

Abstract at

https://bit.ly/3L79dRz

; request article from

library

10. **Understanding the vocational functioning of autistic employees: The role of disability and mental health**

May 2022 –

Disability Rehabilitation

"… Clinicians and vocational support programs addressing modifiable factors may need to

The essentials of customized employment: Results from a national survey of employment providers April 25, 2022 – Rehabilitation Counseling Bulletin "… The objective of this study was to ask rehabilitation providers who implement these services to describe the current status of CE service delivery …" https://bit.ly/3kDd2Du (use with VPN) or request from library

focus on addressing mental health comorbidities, specifically depression rather than anxiety, or core features of autism to improve vocational outcomes for autistic people …"

Abstract at

https://bit.ly/3l9ReiR

; request article from

library

11. **The link between health and working longer: Disparities in work capacity**

May 2022 – National Bureau of Economic Research

"… today's middle-aged white Americans have lower work capacity than those now at retirement age, suggesting rising rates of work disability as these cohorts age …"

https://bit.ly/38uAm3C

or request from

library

The essentials of customized employment: Results from a national survey of employment providers April 25, 2022 – Rehabilitation Counseling Bulletin "… The objective of this study was to ask rehabilitation providers who implement these services to describe the current status of CE service delivery …" https://bit.ly/3kDd2Du (use with VPN) or request from library

12. **Paula Goldberg, Minnesota advocate for kids with disabilities, dies at 79**

May 16, 2022 –

MPR

"… Goldberg was executive director of PACER Center, a Twin Cities-based organization she co-founded in 1977 to help parents of children with disabilities connect with each other …"

https://bit.ly/3wwrTVH

13. **People with long COVID-19 struggle to work**

May 14, 2022 –

New York Times

"… [Clare] Banaszewski is one of at least 7 million people in the United States, by one estimate, who are unable to work full time or who have had to scale back their work because of long COVID-19, which is defined as when COVID-19 symptoms persist weeks, months or even years after the initial onset of an infection …"

The essentials of customized employment: Results from a national survey of employment providers April 25, 2022 – Rehabilitation Counseling Bulletin "… The objective of this study was to ask rehabilitation providers who implement these services to describe the current status of CE service delivery …" https://bit.ly/3kDd2Du (use with VPN) or request from library
https://nyti.ms/3wt6RHD *or* *https://bit.ly/38xGfx5* *(ProQuest) or request from* *library*
Please contact the library to request information and research assistance. Let us know what topics interest you, and we'll include that coverage in future DEED Library Alerts. Learn of other alerts and access alert archives at https://mn365.sharepoint.com/sites/DEED-Library/SitePages/Library-Alerts.aspx.
https://mn365.sharepoint.com/sites/DEED-Library

5. PERSONNEL TO ADDRESS INDIVIDUAL COMMUNICATION NEEDS

SSB assures that all materials are available to staff in the desired format. Print material is made available to staff in braille and other alternate formats. SSB is fortunate to have Braille services onsite and can produce high quality Braille in short timeframes. Minnesota is also fortunate to have several spoken and written language and American Sign Language interpreter services available who contract with the State for use with non-English speaking individuals and/or DeafBlind individuals.

6. COORDINATION OF PERSONNEL DEVELOPMENT UNDER THE INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES EDUCATION ACT

As appropriate, describe the procedures and activities to coordinate the designated State unit's comprehensive system of personnel development with personnel development under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.

- Counselors may be asked to make presentations at staff meetings in areas of their expertise which included DeafBlind best practices, person centered services, motivational interviewing, and transition best practices.
- SSB placement, assistive technology, and counseling staff work with other Minnesota state departments on the hiring and integration into their workplaces of blind, visually impaired, and DeafBlind individuals as part of achieving Minnesota Governor's executive order for increasing the number of employees with disabilities in the state government workforce.
- SSB staff provided training to educators on the Employment 1st Minnesota (E1MN) initiative, which activate interagency collaboration for student success.
- SSB staff participated in monthly trainings for educators through Minnesota Access Center Office Hours, sponsored by Minnesota Department of Education. Sessions for

educators to learn about different topics began with a presentation and the second half were informal break out rooms.

J. STATEWIDE ASSESSMENT

1. PROVIDE AN ASSESSMENT OF THE REHABILITATION NEEDS OF INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES RESIDING WITHIN THE STATE, PARTICULARLY THE VR SERVICES NEEDS OF THOSE:

A. WITH THE MOST SIGNIFICANT DISABILITIES, INCLUDING THEIR NEED FOR SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES;

The Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment (CSNA) was conducted jointly with the State Rehabilitation Council for the Blind (SRC-B). SSB has elected to complete a statewide assessment every two years and the most recent assessment was conducted in the fall of PY 21 in preparation for state plan 22-23. SSB is committed to contracting with an outside agency to assist us with conducting a CSNA for the 2024-2025 State Plan.

Supported Employment services are provided to SSB customers as needed. In PY2020, there were 25 customers with Supported Employment (SE) plans and in PY2021, there were 33 customers in SE. With regards to youth, SSB is committed to providing all transition students work experiences with or without support employment services.

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B. WHO ARE MINORITIES;

Although the population of Minnesota is 83.8% white, it is quite ethnically diverse. According to the most recent American Community Survey, individuals who are Black/African American represent 7.0% of the state population, compared with 20.45% of SSB participants accepted for service. Individuals who are Hispanic/Latino represent 5.6% of the state population, and 6.23% of SSB participants accepted for service. American Indians represent 1.4% of the state population, and 1.44% of SSB participants accepted for service. Asians represent 5.2% of the state population, and 5.91% of SSB participants accepted for service. Research suggests blacks and American Indians experience disability at a higher rate than other cultural/ethnic groups. SSB needs to continue active outreach to people of color and indigenous people to assure equal access to the benefits of SSB services.

The rate of population growth, as well as age and gender distributions, are very close to the national average. Minnesota's population growth is expected to increase in diversity with the populations of color and Hispanic origin increasing faster than the white population. In addition to the increase in Hispanics, Minnesota has also seen an increase in immigration of Somalis,

Vietnamese, and Hmong. Very fast growth is expected for African Americans, Latinos and Asians in particular, stemming from foreign migration.

(All data from 2020 Population Estimates, U.S. Census Bureau)

For reasons beyond the scope of this report, these groups experience higher unemployment, lower average income, and less education. Members of these groups who are blind, visually impaired, or deafblind face additional challenges which do fall into the scope of this report. In order to receive the services that are needed to help them reach their full potential as blind people, they must deal with agencies of the government when they may already come with a negative governmental experience. They must understand information about services and what is expected of them even though this information is written in a language that is new to them. Finally, even with the best efforts of everyone involved, cultural differences can be a barrier to rehabilitation. In many of these cultures, especially in Hmong, an individual with a disability is taken care of by the family and not expected to work. Therefore, we may face multiple barriers when working with customers from minority groups. These are barriers that we have previously identified as an area of need and they continue to remain an issue.

Fortunately, Minnesota State Services for the Blind, and other service providers in Minnesota have been aware of the existence of these barriers for some time now. A number of concentrated efforts have been made by State Services for the Blind over the past few years to reach blind persons in minority groups. While the COVID-19 Pandemic severely limited outreach efforts, activities with underserved Minnesota communities conducted virtually included:

- Networking with MN state employees who serve as liaisons or provide services to tribal communities. (Including Department of Health and Human Services, Department of Health, and Department of Employment and Economic Development.)
- Virtual presentation to staff from 3 Hennepin and Ramsey County organizations who serve tribal members living in urban areas.
- Phone outreach to Somali Social Service organization.
- Phone outreach to staff of senior residence serving Hmong seniors.
- Participation in LGBT seniors working group, bringing together service providers from various agencies and organizations.
- Work with DEED Innovation Lab project to create better first-point-of-contact for non-English speakers.
- Produced the first Somali language accessible digital book, to better serve Somali community.
- Worked with the American Indian Resource Center at Bemidji State to produce the first accessible digital book in the Anishinaabe language.
- Worked with the poet laureate of MN to produce accessible digital version of a poetry collection including titles in the Dakota language.
- Networked with Hennepin County Library staff on promoting our services to non-English speakers who use the library system.
- Met with the Karen Community liaison with the Ramsey County library to promote our services.
- Met with Hmong authors in a project to produce accessible digital audio of Hmong titles.

A Minority Outreach committee of the SRC-B has been in existence for some time and has played an active advisory role in the developments of some of these efforts. Due to the COVID-19 Pandemic the committee's outreach activities have been dramatically reduced.

A Community Rehabilitation Program providing Adjustment To Blindness (ATB) Training has developed programs tailored to meet the needs of this population as well. Blind, Incorporated has worked for more than a decade to help those for whom English is new to learn the English Language while starting on the road to success as a blind person. SSB had hoped that other ATB providers could develop programs like Blind, Inc. but that has not occurred. SSB will need to determine if it is feasible to assist an ATB provider to develop this type of program. There are not enough of these specialized programs available publicly to serve all of the potential customers who might benefit from them. However, these customers often hesitate to seek assistance from a government agency. Therefore, efforts need to be increased even more to reach customers in this category to efficiently use any increased capacity that SSB might help to create. these individuals. These efforts are discussed in more detail later in the document.

C. WHO HAVE BEEN UNSERVED OR UNDERSERVED BY THE VR PROGRAM;

The two groups that have emerged in this analysis that have been unserved or underserved include DeafBlind individuals and immigrants who are Blind or DeafBlind needing to learn English and Braille.

Minnesota has a relatively large population of DeafBlind individuals and is well known for its excellent services. According to the most current (2013) ACS Public Use Microdata Sample, the total population of Minnesotans with vision and hearing difficulties is 29,849. SSB currently serves 35 DeafBlind individuals.

According to DeafBlind Services Minnesota LLC (DBSM), some of the barriers and gaps in services for DeafBlind customers include:

1. Mental health for customers- when you're adjusting to change in hearing or vision and there aren't very good mental health services available that can be a problem.
2. Funding for support groups- for an individual adjusting to a change in hearing or vision or DeafBlindness and dealing with isolation, support groups can be very important but the interpreting is expensive for these support groups.
3. More trainers who can directly communicate with customers- SSB does have a few contractors who can provide ATB training and job-related services using American Sign Language (ASL) and a few who are have ASL skills but still use an interpreter with customers. It is best though if a trainer can connect directly with the customer and not have to go through an interpreter as things can get lost in translation. It would be beneficial to have more contracted trainers who can communicate with customers in ASL.
4. Need more services in rural areas. The majority of service providers are in the Twin Cities metro area and it can be difficult to finder providers in greater Minnesota. In some cases, for example Support Service Providers may need to work as job coaches.
5. Self-advocacy- helping DeafBlind people learn how to do things for themselves so they do not need to be dependent on staff.
6. Lack of peer-to-peer training/mentoring opportunities.
7. Isolation- Lack of community inclusion/volunteer opportunities.
8. Insufficient skills- Including computer and reading contracted braille at a fast enough pace to maintain productivity.

9. Need more services that aren't directly connected to employment. When a person is getting Workforce Development Unit services, they don't always get the support/ATB training they need to learn how to do things independently (learning bus system, learning how to get around in new house) and people may need more training as their hearing/vision changes.

10. Unable to get an accurate child count of children. The unduplicated child count that SSB receives from the Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) only includes those with a primary a disability of blindness or DeafBlindness. It is anticipated that we could be missing some children who may be coded as having some other disability as their primary and blindness or DeafBlindness as their secondary disability. If the count were able to include primary and secondary reported disabilities, the unduplicated MDE count may be more accurate. Unfortunately, to change the way the count is done would require changes in legislature which is unlikely to happen.

Provided by DeafBlind Services Minnesota, LLC (DBSM)

In 2021, the Minnesota Commission for the Deaf, DeafBlind, and Hard of Hearing (MNCDHH) partnered with Wilder Research to crease a data-informed strategic plan, with the goal of better supporting children and youth with combined hearing and vision loss in Minnesota. Throughout the project, Wilder Research worked with an advisory group of 27 DeafBlind adults, parents of DeafBlind children and youth, and professionals who serve DeafBlind children, youth, and their families. Over 40 in-depth interviews were conducted with DeafBlind young adults, parents of DeafBlind children and youth and professionals who serve these children.

The creation of a one-stop shop that centralized DeafBlind services, resources, support, and information was the overwhelming suggestion from advisory members and interviewees on methods for better supporting DeafBlind children and youth in Minnesota. Although this one-stop shop idea was poignant for many interviewees and advisory group members, after further conversation, the group advised against building an entirely new approach or otherwise adding anything more to the system of DeafBlind services. Advisory group members suggested other options and both along with interviewees offered some specific functions that a network of DeafBlind service providers might fulfill including:

- Promote coordinated services and the sharing of information among service providers
- Help children who have combined hearing and vision loss and their families coordinate services
- Provide education about DeafBlindness to parents and providers
- Offer social connection and emotional support DeafBlind children and youth and their families
- Prepare DeafBlind youth for the transition to community-based services at age 21

The report *Supporting Deafblind Children and Youth in Minnesota: A Data-Informed Strategic Plan* by Ryan Evans, MA, Wilder Research in its entirety can be found here: ..\Combined State Plan 2022\SupportingDeafBlindChildrenAndYouth_FullReport_6-21.pdf

SSB continues working to increase the number of providers who serve DeafBlind individuals and can communicate directly. We are exploring options that we can use to entice providers such as incentives contingent on additional factors or higher rates of payment.

We anticipate completing a contract with Helen Keller National Center in 2022 for Adjustment To Blindness (ATB) training, Job-Related services, and Pre-ETS services.

ELL/Braille

Minnesota has opened its doors to hundreds of thousands of immigrants seeking refuge from their home countries. Many have come with visual impairments including DeafBlindness. Many more need to learn English as a first step of integration which could eventually lead to employment and self-sufficiency.

SSB serves an increasing number of Minnesota's immigrants that come with both the need for learning English and vocational rehabilitation services specific to their blindness or DeafBlindness. The latter requires specialized ELL teaching materials and teachers who know how to provide ELL lessons with visual impairment, hard of hearing, or deafblind skills or are at least willing to try. Our ELL clients come from Somalia, Pakistan, Burma, Vietnam, Mexico, other countries of Africa, Middle Eastern, and South American countries. Although our ELL customers come from a large range of countries and cultures, they require adaptive daily independent living skills such as braille, adaptive computer skills, low-vision devices, and adaptive software.

As SSB's ELL population grows we have continued struggling to find public resources to provide these unique ELL services. Minnesota has a robust Adult Basic Education (ABE) program that includes ELL classes level 0 -7. However, in the metro Twin Cities area there is only one Minnesota ABE center that has one ELL class.

Minneapolis' Southside's ABE ELL class has only been able to accept 16 students with disability accommodation needs including blind, visually impaired, and deafblind students who all must test at an ELL level of 2 or more. They have no beginner (levels 0 and 1) ELL classes for those who are blind, visually impaired, or deafblind.

As of the previous CSNA in 2020, there were 4 students enrolled in ELL classes at Minneapolis' Southside ABE and 20 blind, visually impaired, or DeafBlind students on the waitlist which is generally 7 months to 1 year depending on when students leave the program. Students may leave either because they complete ELL, obtain GED, or leave for other reasons such as illness, family issues, no childcare, employment, etc. However, often blind, and visually impaired students are great attenders and keep coming to school until they finish their educational goal. It can take students many years to complete English as a Second Language classes. For some students who have never had an education in their country, it can take 6 to 7 years or it could take less depending on what degree of education they previously received. Students who start GED classes usually finish within 2-4 years.

Maintaining direct and open communication between SSB and Southside ABE continues to be a challenge. The overall lack of communication makes it difficult to attain current program information, such as: the number of students enrolled or waitlisted, number of instructors, degree of accessibility accommodations being inquired of and met, and number of successful and unsuccessful ELL GED and accommodative needs GED testers. SSB will continue to place an emphasis on developing a cooperative dialogue between itself and Southside ABE as well as any additional ELL GED and accommodative needs GED testing centers which may open in the future.

There is a perpetual waitlist of these students needing ELL classes. A review of our customers shows we have 5 individuals statewide needing ELL services who are not able to access services due to there not being enough providers who can accommodate our blind, visually impaired, and DeafBlind customers. There were 4 customers indicated as potentially needing this service in the future. One counselor indicated they have a customer who is currently receiving ELL classes but their vision loss is not adequately being accommodated.

Southside ABE ELL students has only one staff who was hired to handle all the accommodation needs of these ELL students enrolled in class. This staff is responsible for making all the braille material for any of the students needing this accommodation, large print, set-up CCTVs, and making sure students can connect their adaptive software to the center's internet, Wi-Fi, etc.

The Minneapolis Adult Education Program provides adapted learning material (Braille, tactile graphics, enlargements, hands on material, models, 3D objects, manipulatives, enlarged print keyboards and calculators, talking calculators, some teachers provide audio recordings of reading passages) and devices (CCTVs, dome magnifiers, large screen monitors, slate and stylus, colored cover sheets to minimize glare). Blind, visually impaired, and deafblind students receive 100%-time extension on unit tests, quizzes, CASAS or TABE tests, pencil/paper test vs. computer test, private room, breaks, and volunteer readers/recorders. Students receive learning material in electronic version, which is JAWS accessible. In addition to all of the above, blind and visually impaired students receive extra time to respond to class discussions; information that is being presented on a whiteboard is spoken aloud as it is being written; pictures and diagrams are clearly described; preferential seating; material printed on colored paper to reduce glare; unfinished classwork can be finished home and turned in the next day; Blind, visually impaired, and deafblind students receive extra attention from floating volunteers, if they are available.

Some of the barriers these students face include not having sufficient computer skills, not being able to read braille at a faster pace and not being able to read contracted braille which is a prerequisite for GED classes. Students often lack independence and rely on teachers too much. Classes are large and teachers cannot assist blind and visually impaired students at all times. Additionally, many of their students cannot be served by SSB because of their immigration status.

SSB ELL students often need to learn and know braille. This is a skill acquired while learning levels 0 and 1 of ELL. Currently only 1 Minnesota Adjustment To Blindness (ATB) center (Blind, Inc.) provides early beginner ELL classes along with braille a basic adaptive computer skills. There is only 1 ELL instructor who can only teach 10 to 12 students at any given time. Their ELL is an extensive program due to the nature of teaching these ATB skills while teaching non-English speaking students adaptive daily living skills necessary to move onto an ABE ELL center.

There are 2 other ATB centers in Minnesota but neither have instructors who can provide ELL classes for any blind, visually impaired, and deafblind students. According to these ATB centers, it would cost them to add this service to their ATB program. They would be required to research and apply for grant funding for adding ELL classes, and only if there are funding sources for these types of services.

Minnesota only has one Minnesota ABE center that provides ELL class for blind, visually impaired, and deafblind students with only 1 dedicated staff to provide all the accommodation needs to these students. Students travel from other cities to attend that program and as the waitlist grows, so does the need for more ELL programs for this population of customers. At the end of 2018 SSB could utilize 3 to 5 ELL programs that were willing and/or able to accommodate SSB's customers. However, before the end of 2019 two non-profit ELL programs closed down due to lack of funding and/or resources. Another one determined they could only handle 2 students as they are new to teaching blind students. They closed their enrollment to other blind students due to not knowing nor understanding the accommodation needs for these students. They also rely on community volunteers to teach ELL classes which includes those classes for blind students. These volunteers would need to be trained to teach blind students, learn how to use/provide accommodation materials, equipment, and set up special one-on-one lessons with blind students.

Minnesota's ELL centers/programs are very limited, under-funded, and in need to receive resources to learn, set-up, and provide accommodation, needs, and services to Minnesota's growing blind, visually impaired, and deafblind customers in need of ELL programs that can provide them the disability accommodations they need to be successful. The unique dual needs of learning ATB skills (adaptive way to access print) while learning levels 0 and 1 ELL skills is missing from 2 out of the 3 ATB centers offered in Minnesota. The need is great for students to continue learning adaptive daily skills while learning ELL skills. Blind, visually impaired, and

deafblind customers in vocational rehabilitation services are proving to be an underserved population.

Another area of need in the future will be that of senior citizens. According to a Humphrey Institute report commissioned by State Services for the Blind, one in five Minnesotans will be senior citizens by the year 2030. Men and women reaching the age of 65 can expect to live to ages 81 and 84 respectively. The frequency of vision problems increases dramatically among persons of this age. It is estimated that 12% of those between the ages of 65 and 74 will experience significant vision loss, much higher than is experienced by younger people. While services to this population do not currently belong to vocational rehabilitation, longer life expectancy and the financial advantages to delaying the beginning of Social Security retirement benefits will almost certainly mean that there will be more seniors looking to remain employed or seek jobs after experiencing vision loss in the near future. The results of this trend will be a new category of persons seeking services through the Vocational Rehabilitation system. How to best serve this future group of VR customers' needs to begin soon.

D. WHO HAVE BEEN SERVED THROUGH OTHER COMPONENTS OF THE STATEWIDE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM; AND

Services through the local CareerForce Locations (CFL), formerly known as "Workforce Centers", are available to individuals with disabilities throughout Minnesota. CFLs offer classes, workshops, and pre-employment services. SSB does have a presence in 10 of 49 CFLs with 10 SSB Workforce Development Unit (WDU) staff officed in CFLs and no plans to make changes. A small percentage of those individuals who utilize the CFLs are blind, visually impaired, or DeafBlind. A SSB recent analysis of referrals from CareerForce Centers since Program Year 2019 revealed only four referrals.

SSB works with the CFL directors and Title III partners to keep Career Force staff trained in the etiquette and tips in working with blind, visually impaired, and DeafBlind individuals. Additionally, SSB assistive technologists assist in inventory and auditing of accessible computer systems in all CFLs.

Despite these efforts, individuals frequently do not feel comfortable utilizing the CFLs and choose to work with SSB directly. Staff at local CFL often do not have the training or skills to with the accessible computer systems. SSB staff are recognized as more knowledgeable in the area of blindness and accessible technology.

E. WHO ARE YOUTH WITH DISABILITIES AND STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES, INCLUDING, AS APPROPRIATE, THEIR NEED FOR PRE-EMPLOYMENT TRANSITION SERVICES OR OTHER TRANSITION SERVICES.

An important and unique group of possible customers for State Services are students and youth with disabilities. This category includes students between the ages of fourteen and twenty-one years of age, and youth through age twenty-four. We have identified three gaps that need to be filled; these gaps were identified in previous needs assessments and still are ongoing needs.

1. students being unprepared for post-secondary training
2. spending the 15% set aside
3. services for students who have multiple challenges

As is generally the case, identifying gaps does not imply that nothing is currently being done in these areas. The intent here is, rather, to indicate that the need for more attention is a priority.

SSB has maintained a very strong and innovative Pre-ETS program.

SSB is in the process of expanding its Pre-ETS staff. We are planning to hire a Pre-ETS Manager to manage the Pre-ETS budget, contracts, policy, and supervise Pre-ETS staff. We are also adding

a second Work Opportunities Navigator to be located in Greater Minnesota. These 2 new staff will add to our compliment of 1 Pre-ETS Coordinator, 1 Work Opportunities Navigator, 3 dedicated Pre-ETS counselors in the metro area, and 1 dedicated Pre-ETS Accessible Technology Technician. We also have 1 employment Specialist who specialized in working DeafBlind Pre-ETS students and our counselors in greater Minnesota carry combined caseloads with adults and Pre-ETS students.

SSB also plans to begin expanding Pre-ETS services with our Community Providers and clarifying services for the 2022 contracts. The plan is to engage our Community Providers in order to increase the amount of Pre-ETS services and service providers available to our customers. Especially with service providers who can assist with providing Pre-ETS work opportunities. SSB will soon begin working on Request For Proposal (RFPs) for paid community partners to provide paid work-based learning experiences to Pre-ETS students.

SSB is interested in a possible contract with Wilderness Inquiry and is in the beginning stages of exploring the options related to self-advocacy.

In April of 2020, 5 peer educators were hired to create, design, and facilitate summer Pre-ETS programming. Those programs were delivered in July 2020 as 4 (3 week) programs on the topics of self-advocacy, college readiness, disability identity, sight loss and resilience. The peer educators facilitated all the virtual programs. There was one program in August on interacting with your sighted peers.

In the summer of 2021, 4 peer educators were hired along with 1 marketing and outreach associate and 1 student literacy associate. The peer educators again created, designed, and facilitated summer Pre-ETS programming which included:

- Movie Night
- Presentations
    - Confidently College Ready
    - Social Media Savvy
    - The Confident Self-Advocate
- Confidence through the Arts program
- Exhibition Night

The student literacy associate worked with the SSB Rehabilitation Instructor and helped to develop and run a student Braille club, worked in the NFB Bell program, and tutored an elementary student in Braille. SSB plans to continue the tradition of hiring peer educators over the summer as student work experiences.

Ever year new programs like the Level Up program in 2020 are created. This program met virtually once a week for 8 weeks teaching self-advocacy through music, movie, and pop culture. In the Fall of 2021, SSB hosted a monthly series called “Bring You’re A Game” that connects Alexa games to job and work skills. For example, we connected “The Price is Right” to budgeting and money management.

SSB has contracted with The Blind & Socially Savvy group to provide presentations to our Pre-ETS students on the general subject of being blind and socially savvy, being emotional savvy, and being virtually savvy. The Blind & Socially Savvy group was able to adapt their presentations virtually when it was no longer feasible to meet in person due to Covid-19. The last presentation from the group was during the Summer Transition Program (STP) in the summer of 2021. SSB’s contract has expired and the group is no longer in business so it is not possible to continue with this service.

The Elevate Your State collaboration between Michigan, Delaware, Kentucky, and Minnesota began as a Pre-ETS initiative between states to focus on peers and self-advocacy. The group began in September of 2020 and met each quarter hosted by a state who procured a speaker. The group closed out in June 2021 at the end of the school year and a new group began in September 2021 at the beginning of the next school year. Sessions focus on self-advocacy and make sure that the voices of students are heard about what they need so the programming can be rooted in student needs.

A contract with Envision for the all-virtual College Success Program (formerly offered through Learning Ally) has been executed for services. The all-virtual College Success Program offers a holistic support system that utilize the knowledge and experience of experts in the blindness field as well as blind or visually impaired college graduates to help guide students as they transition from high school to college and employment. That support system includes:

- Resources – Robust, carefully crafted and designed to address situations encountered by blind or visually impaired college students.
- Mentorship – Mentors, that are recent college graduates who are blind or visually impaired themselves, help their mentees navigate college experiences and a job hunt that is unique to them and provide them with as much or as little support as they'd like.
- Meetups – Held virtually, these Meetups are opportunities for students to connect with their peers to talk about issues, ask questions, network, make connections, and more.
- Audiobook Solution – College Success Program membership includes access to Learning Ally's Audiobook Solution with over 80,000 human-read audiobooks.

Looking forward, SSB is hoping to contract with the Sky's The Limit program by David De Notaris. This program offers workshops in college readiness, workplace readiness, and self-advocacy. We are considering if it would be better to wait until the summer of 2022 and hold the training in person.

Another gap is the challenge of spending the 15% set-aside. SSB continues to identify, develop, and implement creative effective approaches of spending this money. We have developed some very innovative programs but with the relatively small number of Pre-ETS students it is a struggle to spend all the dollars.

To accurately outline and address solutions for the concerns highlighted above, SSB continues to develop a yearly Pre-Employment Transition Services Blueprint using the framework put into place by WIOA. The Pre-Employment Transition Services Blueprint outlines SSB's plans to address the five required activities and nine authorized activities as required by WIOA.

SSB has a Transition Core Group to better address the increasing needs of transition aged youth and students. This is an internal, multi-disciplinary group that focuses solely on the provision of pre-employment transition services. That team is comprised of the following staff complement:

• Director

• Deputy Director of Program Services

• Workforce Development Unit Supervisor, who specializes in pre-employment transition services

• Pre-Employment Transition Services Coordinator, who is responsible for the statewide coordination of services provided under the BRIDGE to Success framework

• Pre-Employment Transition Services Rehabilitation Counselors, who have a caseload of only students with disabilities who are receiving pre-employment transition services

• Pre-Employment Transition Services Assistive Technologist, who is responsible for the assistive technology assessments and recommendations for all students statewide

• DeafBlind Rehabilitation Counselor, who provides consultation on pre-employment transition services for DeafBlind students

• Greater Minnesota Rehabilitation Counselor and Vocational Rehabilitation Technician, who provide consultation on pre-employment transition services for students living in rural Minnesota

SSB is in the process of adding a new position to the Transition Core Group and a second Pre-ETS Work Opportunities Navigator once it receives HR approval. The new Pre-ETS Manager will manage the Pre-ETS budget, contracts, policy, and supervise Pre-ETS staff.

To track and organize the plethora of activities the Transition Core Group has implemented or is involved in, a calendar of events and activities is maintained for the year.

Additionally, SSB has created transition programs to provide student work experiences and programming to augment work done by school districts by offering activities for students in the evening and/or on weekends. The goal of the program is to provide more opportunities for Minnesota students who are blind, visually impaired, or DeafBlind to enhance their skills and readiness for post-secondary work and training.

The third gap in services is for those students who have multiple challenges. Those students might not initially be referred to SSB since their primary disability might create more barriers than vision loss. Once they are connected with SSB, the programs might not fit their individual needs. Because our expertise is in the area of blindness rather than other disabilities, we need to seek partners who can augment the programs with supports for those students. SSB has entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the State Medicaid Program (Department of Human Services-Disability Services Division) which will assist individuals who are receiving waiver services and vocational rehabilitation services to have seamless referrals and service transitions. The MOU has been implemented as of July 1, 2021. Although SSB receives very few referrals through this new system, staff have been trained and the program has been successfully implemented.

In summary, there are three gaps that are related to students and youth with disabilities. They are reaching more students, dealing with the challenges of allocating and effectively spending 15% of federal dollars, and better serving students with multiple challenges. We know that Minnesota State Services for the Blind is already aware of these gaps and are working on addressing them. We continue to work to gain a better understanding of these efforts in the next cycle of this process. Finally, it has become apparent that DeafBlind customers of transition age are often very isolated. According to the "Unduplicated Child Count" available from the Minnesota Department of Education, there were 44 transition-aged students primarily identified as DeafBlind identified in 2018. 29 in 2017, 26 in 2015, and 32 in 2013. The total number of transition-aged students who were identified as visually impaired or DeafBlind in 2019 was 194. 154 in 2017, in 2015 was 158, and in 2013 was 137. Over the past four years, the percentage of DeafBlind transition-aged students was consistently between 20% and 25%. This is a small enough number, that when distributed throughout the state, would indicate that these students would most likely not be in contact with one another. The DeafBlind Committee is working on the development of a mentoring program to provide contact with adults who can serve as role models and suggest ways of handling social and educational challenges. It seems likely that this might be an area into which some of the newly required 15% of federal dollars that must be used for transition customers could be directed.

2. IDENTIFY THE NEED TO ESTABLISH, DEVELOP, OR IMPROVE COMMUNITY REHABILITATION PROGRAMS WITHIN THE STATE; AND

The availability of Community Rehabilitation Programs (CRPs) varies by service and location within the state. There are currently 44 total CRPs that SSB contracts with to provide to Adjustment To Blindness (ATB) and Job-Related services. Three of those CRPs are facilities that offer comprehensive ATB training with an optional residential component.

State Rule allows SSB to utilize the Master Contracts Vocational Rehabilitation Services (VRS) have developed with CRPs as well. This allows SSB more vendors to choose from which is especially needed in greater Minnesota where SSB and VRS has fewer contractors. ATB contractors in rural Minnesota are becoming more difficult to access for reasons such as; retirement, limited hours/evenings, and weekends only, injury, or quit for other reasons.

SSB has recently decided to adopt language "Community Partners" consistent with VRS when referring to contractors or vendors. This represents a large change for SSB and will take time to implement both in attitude and in written documents.

With the greater emphasis being placed now on transition aged youth, the need for more transition programs has been identified. Contracts have also been developed with CRPs to provide transition programs to students. Services are meant to augment work done by school districts with activities on evenings and weekends. Since October 2015, SSB has contracted with two Adjustment To Blindness training centers to provide transition programs to students meant to augment work done by school districts with activities on evenings and weekends. Since October 2019, a third CRP has begun offering their full/part time comprehensive Adjustment To Blindness training program modified with a transition curriculum. Transition programs are reviewed annually to ensure that they continue to meet the needs of the students and adjust accordingly.

SSB plans to begin expanding Pre-ETS services with our Community Providers and clarifying services for the 2022 contracts. The plan is to engage our Community Providers in order to increase the amount of Pre-ETS services and service providers available to our customers. Especially with service providers who can assist with providing Pre-ETS work opportunities. SSB will soon begin working on Request For Proposal (RFPs) for paid community partners to provide paid work-based learning experiences to Pre-ETS students.

SSB is experiencing a reduction in the amount of Orientation and Mobility instructors available. We have had a couple retire and one leave us for employment in another state. Although we have an incoming contract, there is not enough potential new community partners to meet our needs. SSB will need to recruit new potential community partners and will be looking at ways to offer incentives.

SSB has been working to increase service providers that can provide services to our DeafBlind customers. We are currently developing a contract with the Helen Keller National Center for ATB and Job-Related services and are exploring the possibility of a contract for TactileASL instruction.

3. INCLUDE AN ASSESSMENT OF THE NEEDS OF INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES FOR TRANSITION CAREER SERVICES AND PRE-EMPLOYMENT TRANSITION SERVICES, AND THE EXTENT TO WHICH SUCH SERVICES ARE COORDINATED WITH TRANSITION SERVICES PROVIDED UNDER THE INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES EDUCATION ACT

Through surveys, conversations with students and their families, conversations with our community partners, and program evaluations, we have been able to compile the various needs

of individuals with disabilities as it relates to Pre-ETS and Transition. In addition, we have looked at existing data to determine if we are reaching all potentially eligible students.

SSB currently serves 158 out of the identified 185 blind, visually impaired and DeafBlind students by the Minnesota Department of Education and continues to work towards reaching all identified students. This number only includes those students whose primary disability is blindness or DeafBlindness. Additionally, we serve some Pre-ETS students enrolled in post-secondary options. Based on our current numbers (from our data management system WorkForce1) we estimate there to be 41 additional students, for a total of 226 students. Our data is reviewed quarterly to make adjustments as needed.

The number of Blind and Visually Impaired Youth aged 14-21 who have received English Language Learner Services through the Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) are:

- 2018: 21
- 2019: 24
- 2020: 23
- 2021: 22

We send outreach materials to identified potentially eligible students in hopes they will engage with SSB. The Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with MDE allows MDE to provide SSB with student directory information, which includes:

- The student's name
- Address
- Telephone listing
- Date of birth

We then reach out to those districts for the directory information (as permitted by the MOU) and target those families whose contact information we received.

Other outreach efforts include weekly posts in the mailing lists for the teachers for the blind and visually impaired (TBVI), presentations at a number of TBVI community of practices events and our transition newsletter "*The Spectacle*" goes out widely as well.

SSB has created transition programs to provide student work experiences and programming to augment work done by school districts by offering activities for students in the evening and/or on weekends. The goal of the program is to provide more opportunities for Minnesota students who are blind, visually impaired, or DeafBlind to enhance their skills and readiness for post-secondary work and training. The program continues to expand and find new and innovative ways to provide services these services.

SSB's Transition Coordinator sits on the Site Council for the Minnesota State Academy for the Blind as well as the MDE Blind/Visually Impaired Advisory Committee. Additionally, the coordinator provides training and education to Minnesota Teachers of the Blind and Visually Impaired on SSB services and how those services can supplement students Individualized Education Program (IEP) goals. SSB has a close relationship with the Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) Specialist for the Blind and Visually Impaired. The specialist is a former member of the State Rehabilitation Council for the Blind (SRC-B) and serves on its Transition Committee as well as the Needs Assessment Taskforce. The SRC-B bylaws requires a member from MDE to sit on the council.

SSB and MDE are continually involved in one unique summer program focused on transition. The Summer Transition Program (STP) serves as many as 24 high school juniors and/or seniors each summer. It is a 24/7 independent living skills experience held at St. Thomas University in St. Paul, Minnesota, and is designed to provide alternative skills training and career exploration activities for participating students. Staff members assist students with transition goals that may include informational interviews, job shadowing, and mentoring. This gives students a first-hand experience in the world of work. While living in the dorms at St. Thomas, students also participate in a variety of independent living activities with specific mobility, self-care, meal planning and preparation, communication, leadership, and related goals. SSB placement staff assist during the experience with career assessment, resume writing, and interviewing skills. In the summer of 2020, the STP program was not held due to the COVID-19 Pandemic. A condensed program was held in the summer of 2021 on a virtual basis. The STP will be returning to returning to an in-person session for the summer of 2022 and for the foreseeable future.

We are offering more virtual activities. Our counselors and work opportunities navigator are meeting with students individually through phone, Zoom, or FaceTime options. In this way students are still doing informational interviews, going on virtual college visits, and crafting resumes. SSB enjoys a good working relationship with MDE and continually seeks ways to strengthen our connection with the schools to provide pre-employment transition services to students and youth with disabilities.

K. ANNUAL ESTIMATES

1. THE NUMBER OF INDIVIDUALS IN THE STATE WHO ARE ELIGIBLE FOR SERVICES

According to the 2020 U.S. Census Bureau's three-year American Community survey, Minnesota has an estimated 78,000 citizens between the ages of 14 and 65 years who have visual difficulties.

2. THE NUMBER OF ELIGIBLE INDIVIDUALS WHO WILL RECEIVE SERVICES UNDER:

A. THE VR PROGRAM;

Minnesota State Services for the Blind estimates that 1,100 individuals will be served through SSB Title I and Title IV combined in FFY 2023 as well as in FFY 2024.

B. THE SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM; AND

SSB estimates that 15 individuals will be served under the Supported Employment Program in FFY23 and 15 will be served in FFY24.

C. EACH PRIORITY CATEGORY, IF UNDER AN ORDER OF SELECTION.

Minnesota State Services for the Blind implemented an order of selection October 1, 2015, however we are serving all individuals in all categories.

It is estimated that in FFY23 the number of individuals served in Category 1 will be 300, Category 2 will be 550, Category 3 will be 150, and those in Category 4 will be 100.

We also serve people in job retention who are given a priority category, however as stated above all categories are open.

3. THE NUMBER OF INDIVIDUALS WHO ARE ELIGIBLE FOR VR SERVICES, BUT ARE NOT RECEIVING SUCH SERVICES DUE TO AN ORDER OF SELECTION; AND

While we are on an Order of Selection, all categories are open, so we do not have anyone on a waiting list.

4. THE COST OF SERVICES FOR THE NUMBER OF INDIVIDUALS ESTIMATED TO BE ELIGIBLE FOR SERVICES. IF UNDER AN ORDER OF SELECTION, IDENTIFY THE COST OF SERVICES FOR EACH PRIORITY CATEGORY.

The average cost to serve an individual in Category 1 is $8,333. The average cost to serve an individual in Category 2 is $1,454. The average cost to serve an individual in Category 3 is $3,500. The average cost to serve an individual in Category 4 is $200.

SSB expects to spend a total of $3,844,600 to serve all individuals in all categories for FFY 2023 for both Title I and VI combined. The 1,100 individuals that SSB expects to serve in FFY23 includes both Title I and Title VI.

L. STATE GOALS AND PRIORITIES

1. IDENTIFY IF THE GOALS AND PRIORITIES WERE JOINTLY DEVELOPED AND AGREED TO BY THE STATE VR AGENCY AND THE STATE REHABILITATION COUNCIL, IF THE STATE HAS A COUNCIL, AND JOINTLY AGREED TO ANY REVISIONS

This section outlines the strategies that will assist State Services for the Blind's (SSB) vocational rehabilitation program to achieve the goals and priorities for the vocational rehabilitation program. The FY2022-2023 goals and priorities were jointly developed and were formally agreed to by SSB and the State Rehabilitation Council for the Blind (SRC-B) at the meeting on February 3, 2022.

2. IDENTIFY THE GOALS AND PRIORITIES IN CARRYING OUT THE VR AND SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT PROGRAMS

1. <u>Priority: Competitive Integrated Employment</u>

Strategies:

A. Implement a model for coordinating employer services with DEED Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) partners, including:

- Title I- Adult/Dislocated Worker; Youth
- Title III- Job Seeker Services
- Title IV- Vocational Rehabilitation Services
- SSB is working with DEED partners and stakeholders to develop a Client Relationship Management tool. Currently partners are determining the cost to use Minnesota IT for consulting and services and what funding they can commit. Once this is finalized the planning process will begin by identifying partner business and customer needs and how to assemble these into a cohesive product.
- Monitor the Employer One Stop online virtual hub representing all partners and available services and determine any modifications and adjustments needed to ensure its effectiveness.
- Monitor the E1MN section of the Disability HUB website for DEED outreach and marketing and determine any modifications and adjustments needed to ensure its effectiveness.

B. Implement ongoing training, tracking, and oversight of Measurable Skills Gains (MSG) and credential attainment of students to reach negotiated targets.

- Monitor staff tracking of their customers and input of appropriate documentation by in depth review of staff input of customers MSG's and credentials between enrollment and disenrollment.
- Ensure accuracy in reporting and validity of the MSGs and credentials claimed.
- Train staff as needed regarding data fixes necessary for these measures.

C. In coordination with the Advisory Task Force on State Employment and Retention of Employees with Disabilities, develop and implement methods for the hiring and retention of blind, visually impaired, and deafblind customers into state government including using Connect 700 and Supported Worker programs.

- Monitor the recommendation document submitted by the Advisory Taskforce to the Legislative subcommittee. Recommendations included items and proposed statutory changes that will specifically support the hiring and retention of blind, visually impaired, and DeafBlind customers, including:
- A requirement for all technology and digital content to be accessible and provided in a timely manner;
- Job posting language to be nondiscriminatory (including not requiring a driver's license when one is not actually needed);
- Hiring managers are made aware of the state Accommodation Fund;
- Reasonable accommodations are provided to allow full participation;
- State Services for the Blind and Vocational Rehabilitation Services must be consulted when it comes to any updates or changes to the Connect 700 policy;
- Training of staff on inclusive environments, digital accessibility standards, and the Americans with Disabilities Act.

State Services for the Blind will continue to work with Minnesota Management and Budget to ensure these recommendations are carried out.

2. Priority: Internal Controls and Quality Assurance

Strategies:

A. Enhance the case review process to allow for real time results that can be put in SharePoint and allow for trends and patterns that can shape training and accountability and policy process.

- Case reviews will be conducted by the Quality Assurance specialist.

B. Create a data dashboard to allow for real-time reporting of performance and demographics.

- We will be continuing the work on developing the data dashboard by reviewing existing tools that may be available to meet this need compared to building our own. The expectation is to have completed this project well within the year.

3. Priority: Under-Represented Populations

Strategies:

- Increase minority applicants for vocational rehabilitation services who otherwise would not have applied because of statewide outreach with the minority communities.

- Use applicant data on race, ethnicity, gender, and religion to measure against closure rates to determine if there are trends in unsuccessful closures among a particular protected class.
- Once measurements are established, an action plan will be developed to identify what gaps exist and how to reduce them.

4. Priority: Transition and Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS)

Strategies:

A. Develop a longitudinal study on all youth (ages 25 and younger) case closures. Identify factors that contribute to successful or unsuccessful outcomes.

- The Transition Subcommittee of the SRC-B has requested the data on case closures specifically for student and youth 25 and under with successful and unsuccessful closures.
- When the data is received, the Transition Subcommittee will evaluate to identify factors that contribute to successful or unsuccessful outcomes.
- Based on the factors we will begin to develop strategies to address how better to ensure successful outcomes.

5. Priority: Staff Training and Development

Strategies:

A. Provide a comprehensive and structured training curriculum for new employee onboarding and ongoing staff training by the designated trainer.

- The designated trainer is developing the comprehensive and structured training curriculum for new employee onboarding and ongoing staff training. Expected outcomes are:
    - On boarding and training packages specific to each role that make up the Workforce Development Unit (WDU)
    - An annual training and development schedule for the WDU as a whole and for specific unit roles and functions
    - Acquiring data about training effectiveness and adjusting as needed

B. Increase the level of awareness of the importance of timely communication with customers in response to customer comments on the Customer Satisfaction Survey (CSS)

- The Customer Outcomes and Goals & Priorities Committee, together with SSB staff, will monitor the frequency of comments on subsequent surveys.
- SSB staff will investigate other internal controls that could be useful in identifying any communication timeliness problems.

3. ENSURE THAT THE GOALS AND PRIORITIES ARE BASED ON AN ANALYSIS OF THE FOLLOWING AREAS:

A. THE MOST RECENT COMPREHENSIVE STATEWIDE ASSESSMENT, INCLUDING ANY UPDATES;

The CSNA was completed in FFY2020 and updated in FFY2022. As identified in the CSNA employment outcomes have been ongoing priority for SSB. Various attempts have been made to address this situation with some level of success. SSB has been an active proponent of the Connect 700 program as a method to bring blind, visually impaired, and DeafBlind individuals into employment with state government. By continue to work with Minnesota Management and Budget to ensure that recommendations submitted by the Advisory Taskforce to the Legislative subcommittee we are working to improve employment outcomes.

With the implementation of WIOA, SSB has focused tremendous efforts around Pre-ETS programming. Developing a longitudinal study on all youth case closures will help to identify factors that contribute to successful/unsuccessful closures and developing strategies to ensure success. An analysis of the needs of blind, visually impaired, and DeafBlind persons who are members of minority groups was completed in the CSNA. The numbers and diversity of these groups has changed significantly over the past twenty-five years and continues to change. Members of these groups who are blind face additional challenges. In order to receive the services that are needed to help them reach their full potential as blind people, they must deal with agencies of a government they may not trust. They must understand information about services and what is expected of them even though this information is written in a language that is new to them. Even with the best efforts, cultural differences can be a barrier to rehabilitation. There are compounded challenges faced by customers who in addition to blindness, are hard of hearing or deaf. Three gaps were outlined including staff training, communication, and dealing with isolation experienced by transition aged DeafBlind customers. The ongoing disparity of people with disabilities remains abysmal especially in the area of employment. Part of SSB's overall mission is to promote the increased placement of blind, visually impaired, and DeafBlind individuals.

B. THE STATE'S PERFORMANCE UNDER THE PERFORMANCE ACCOUNTABILITY MEASURES OF SECTION 116 OF WIOA; AND

The goals and priorities include a specific strategy on measurable skill gains and credential attainment. While SSB has exceeded the negotiated measure for measurable skill gain, we continue to strive for the highest level of MSG attainment as possible. In addition, credential attainment will be a newly negotiated performance measure, and this is of particular interest and focus for the agency.

In addition, many of the other goals and priorities support our performance under the performance accountability system. Our priority around competitive integrated employment includes strategies that will support the retention of people with disabilities in employment, as well as supports our piloted employer services measures. Our strategy around building a data dashboard will help us better track in real time the progress we are making in not only meeting but exceeding our performance goals.

C. OTHER AVAILABLE INFORMATION ON THE OPERATION AND EFFECTIVENESS OF THE VR PROGRAM, INCLUDING ANY REPORTS RECEIVED FROM THE STATE REHABILITATION COUNCIL AND FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FROM MONITORING ACTIVITIES CONDUCTED UNDER SECTION 107.

The Office of the Legislative Auditor (OLA), Financial Audit Division, conducted a review of SSB in 2019. This audit focused specifically on Communication Center services – revenue from braille and audio services, donations, and payroll expenditures. One finding was that SSB did not have legal compliance to deposit donation monies through the St. Paul Foundation rather than the state treasury. This finding was shared with the SRCB and SSB worked to make a legislative change so that SSB donation monies can legally be deposited through the St. Paul Foundation. The OLA has not conducted a single audit on SSB's vocational rehabilitation program for the past 2 years however follow up was done with DEED's Administrative and Financial Services (AFS) division on progress made on a previous audit.

SSB continues to work on its corrective plan as result of FFY2019 RSA monitoring visit.

M. ORDER OF SELECTION

1. WHETHER THE DESIGNATED STATE UNIT WILL IMPLEMENT AND ORDER OF SELECTION. IF SO, DESCRIBE:

A. THE ORDER TO BE FOLLOWED IN SELECTING ELIGIBLE INDIVIDUALS TO BE PROVIDED VR SERVICES

An assessment for determining assignment to a priority of services category shall be conducted with each individual determined eligible for vocational rehabilitation services. This assessment shall be based, to the degree possible, on data used to determine eligibility. To the extent necessary, additional information required for this assessment will be secured. Selection and placement in a priority category is based upon the severity of the eligible individual's disability and the functional limitations, and is not based upon the type of disability, geographical area in which the individual lives, projected type of vocational outcome, age, sex, race, color, creed, religion, or national origin of the individual.

Each eligible individual will be assigned to one of the following priority of services categories:

Category 1: Individual with a most significant disability

An eligible individual who:

Has a severe physical or mental impairment that results in serious limitations in terms of an employment outcome in five or more of the following functional areas: mobility, communication, self-care, self-direction, work skills, interpersonal skills or work tolerance;

Is expected to require multiple VR services over an extended period of time; and

Has a significant disability" under section 7(21) of the Rehabilitation Act. and meets the definition contained in "List of physical or mental disabilities."

Category 2: Individual with a more significant disability

An eligible individual who:

Has a significant physical or mental impairment that results in serious limitations in terms of an employment outcome in three or four of the following functional areas: Mobility, communication, self-care, self-direction, work skills, interpersonal skills, or work tolerance; and

Is expected to require multiple VR services over an extended period of time; and

Meets the definition contained in "List of physical or mental disabilities."

Category 3: Individual with a significant disability

Who has a severe physical or mental impairment that seriously limits one or two functional capacities (such as mobility, communication, self-care, self-direction, interpersonal skills, work tolerance, or work skills) in terms of an employment outcome;

Whose vocational rehabilitation can be expected to require multiple vocational rehabilitation services over an extended period of time; and

Who has one or more physical or mental disabilities resulting from amputation, arthritis, autism, blindness, burn injury, cancer, cerebral palsy, cystic fibrosis, deafness, head injury, heart disease, hemiplegia, hemophilia, respiratory or pulmonary dysfunction, mental illness, multiple sclerosis, muscular dystrophy, musculo-skeletal disorders, neurological disorders (including stroke and epilepsy), spinal cord conditions (including paraplegia and quadriplegia), sickle cell anemia, intellectual disability, specific learning disability, end-stage renal disease, or another

disability or combination of disabilities determined on the basis of an assessment for determining eligibility and vocational rehabilitation needs to cause comparable substantial functional limitation.

Category 4: Individual meets the definition of an individual with a disability and/or individual who is blind. This means an individual -

Who has a physical or mental impairment;

Whose impairment constitutes or results in a substantial impediment to employment; and

Who can benefit in terms of an employment outcome from the provision of vocational rehabilitation services.

For individuals who are blind means a person who is blind within the meaning of applicable Minnesota State law:

Central visual acuity of 20/60 or less in the better eye with best correction;

The absence of at least one full quadrant of binocular visual field; or

A physical condition or progressive loss of visual ability that will more likely than not result in legal blindness.

B. THE JUSTIFICATION FOR THE ORDER

In FFY 2015, Minnesota State Services for the Blind (SSB), in consultation with the State Rehabilitation Council for the Blind (SRC-B), determined it cannot serve all individuals who are determined eligible for services. Effective October 1, 2015, SSB closed categories 3 and 4. SSB is exercising its discretion under section 101(a)(5)(D) of the Rehabilitation Act, as amended by WIOA, to serve eligible individuals, whether or not they are receiving vocational rehabilitation services, who require services and equipment to maintain employment. In September 2019, SSB opened all categories, which was possible due to the strategies we put in place.

SSB, in conjunction with the SRC-B, has implemented several strategies to reduce the need for order of selection. These strategies include:

- Increased supervisor oversight of authorizations and expenditures
- Time limited, monthly authorizations
- Monthly budget monitoring reports shared with all vocational rehabilitation staff
- 45 days to invoice requirement added to vendor contracts
- Adjusted staffing complement to ensure it matches the needs of the agency
- Strict policy adherence, including use of customer financial participation and fee schedules
- Increased monitoring of Ticket to Work recipients via a designated TTW specialist

SSB continues to operate on an order of selection; however, as a result of those strategies, we have been able to open and keep open all categories. While SSB has increased dollars to serve individuals, frequent staff turnover has become a concern. Regardless, SSB has removed all individuals from the waiting list and continues to serve all individuals.

SSB has been able to hire more staff, stabilizing our personnel structure, even though we are under a hiring freeze. Additionally, applications have been down by 60%. We will continue to evaluate budget and personnel capacity on a quarterly basis and continue evaluating new

applications on a monthly basis. SSB expects to remain on Order of Selection with all categories remaining open.

We estimate that given the above implemented strategies remain consistent, SSB will be able to remain on order of selection in PY2022 and 2023. We will be re-evaluating the need for even having order of selection through these next program years. With the pandemic, it is hard to predict what the future will hold, so we are not yet comfortable ending order of selection.

C. THE SERVICE AND OUTCOME GOALS

For FFY 23, SSB has the following estimates for individuals served, expenditures, estimated successful and unsuccessful closures:

- Individuals in Category 1: 300; Expenditures: $2,500,000; Successful Closures: 40; Unsuccessful Closures: 55
- Individuals in Category 2: 550; Expenditures: $800,000; Successful Closures: 20; Unsuccessful Closures 35
- Individuals in Category 3: 150; Expenditures: $525,000; Successful Closures: 20; Unsuccessful Closures: 10
- Individuals in Category 4: 100; Expenditures: $20,000: Successful Closures: 5; Unsuccessful Closures: 2

For FFY 24, SSB has the following estimates for individuals served, expenditures, estimated successful and unsuccessful closures:

- Individuals in Category 1: 300; Expenditures: $2,750,000; Successful Closures: 45; Unsuccessful Closures: 55
- Individuals in Category 2: 550; Expenditures: $815,000; Successful Closures: 25; Unsuccessful Closures 35
- Individuals in Category 3: 150; Expenditures: $575,000; Successful Closures: 25; Unsuccessful Closures: 10
- Individuals in Category 4: 100; Expenditures: $40,000: Successful Closures: 5; Unsuccessful Closures: 2

D. TIME WITHIN WHICH THESE GOALS MAY BE ACHIEVED FOR INDIVIDUALS IN EACH PRIORITY CATEGORY WITHIN THE ORDER; AND

It is expected that the goal of 85 successful closures from individuals in all priority categories will be met by the end of FFY22 and 100 for FFY23.

For FFY23:

Category 1: 40 successful closures

Category 2: 20 successful closures

Category 3: 20 successful closures

Category 4: 5 successful closures

For FFY24:

Category 1: 45 successful closures

Category 2: 25 successful closures

Category 3: 25 successful closures

Category 4: 5 successful closures

E. HOW INDIVIDUALS WITH THE MOST SIGNIFICANT DISABILITIES ARE SELECTED FOR SERVICES BEFORE ALL OTHER INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES

Each eligible individual will be assigned to one of the priority of services categories. If we were to resume a waiting list, the SSB Director will notify SSB staff in writing when finances allow staff to begin serving wait listed customers. Customers with the most significant disabilities are to be served first based on application date. Once all customers who have a most significant disability are served first, then the next category can be served.

2. IF THE DESIGNATED STATE UNIT HAS ELECTED TO SERVE ELIGIBLE INDIVIDUALS, REGARDLESS OF ANY ESTABLISHED ORDER OF SELECTION, WHO REQUIRE SPECIFIC SERVICES OR EQUIPMENT TO MAINTAIN EMPLOYMENT

SSB elects to serve individuals who require job retention services to maintain employment outside of the order of selection for services.

N. GOALS AND PLANS FOR DISTRIBUTION OF TITLE VI FUNDS

1. SPECIFY THE STATE'S GOALS AND PRIORITIES FOR FUNDS RECEIVED UNDER SECTION 603 OF THE REHABILITATION ACT FOR THE PROVISION OF SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES

Minnesota State Services for the Blind's (SSB) goal and plan for Title VI funds, is to use them on an individualized, fee-for-service basis to purchase needed supported employment services for individuals with most significant disabilities to assist them in achieving competitive integrated employment with supports. All funds authorized under Title VI less a maximum of 2.5% set-aside for administrative expenses, are distributed and authorized by VR counselors to purchase needed services for individuals with most significant disabilities under a supported employment plan. SSB reserves 50 percent of Title VI funds to provide supported employment services and extended services to youth with most significant disabilities. Once SSB meets the 50 percent expenditure requirement on youth supported employment, SSB begins spending funds on supported employment services for adults.

SSB understands that the VR agency may act as the extended services provider to youth with most significant disabilities until the youth turns 25 or receives 4 years of extended services from the VR agency, whichever occurs first. SSB does not act as the direct extended services provider to individuals who are not youth with most significant disabilities. SSB provides 10 percent State Match for Title VI-B funds as required in 34 C.F.R. 363.23.(a)(2)(i). The money is administered and tracked, in accordance with federal requirements, through SSB's electronic tracking system. SSB has updated it's policies and procedures to reflect the 2.5% set aside requirement and comply with the regulations in 34 C.F.R. 363.51 (b).

SSB purchases needed services from community rehabilitation programs. Purchases are governed by operating agreements with either SSB or the General VR agency for the specific services required. SSB expends Title VI funds, only after the individual with a most significant disability has started employment (e.g., after job placement). Prior to job placement, only Title I funds are expended on VR services.

SSB has set a specific, measurable goal for supported employment. This goal is set by considering the number of individuals in a supported employment plan currently within

counselor caseloads; where the individuals are in the process of completing their rehabilitation plan; when they are expected to be ready for employment; and the ongoing services available.

2. DESCRIBE THE ACTIVITIES TO BE CONDUCTED, WITH FUNDS RESERVED PURSUANT TO SECTION 603(D), FOR YOUTH WITH THE MOST SIGNIFICANT DISABILITIES, INCLUDING:

A. THE PROVISION OF EXTENDED SERVICES FOR A PERIOD NOT TO EXCEED 4 YEARS; AND

There are two supported employment youth populations within SSB: youth who were already determined by SSB or the Department of Education to be competitively employable in an integrated setting who will/may require extended services, and youth where in the past, sheltered workshops, enclaves, and other non-competitive, segregated settings would have been identified as possible options. Both groups requires a supported employment plan. For youth who are already identified as supported employment candidates, the plan identifies the extended services required and who would be providing extended services. Collaboration with extended service providers occurs, and a negotiation happens with who picks up the cost and when. With four years allowed for the VR agency to provide extended services, this allows time for the families to get set up with waiver programs and natural supports. The extended services activities that are provided by SSB (and subsequently the extended service provider when it becomes available) under the supported employment plan include:

• Customized employment, including job carving, employer negotiation

• Social skills training

• Job coaching

• Development of natural supports on the job

• Follow up services

• Ongoing assistive technology assessment and evaluation

• Ongoing adjustment to blindness training and other skills training

SSB collaborates with the Department of Education, Vocational Rehabilitation Services, and the Department of Human Services on the Youth Competitive Integrated Employment Interagency Group to better assist youth in gaining competitive integrated supported employment, when in the past they would have gone into sheltered work situations. With WIOA and the Olmstead Plan, there will be an increase in the number of youth with severe disabilities who will require extended services. Previously, these youth may have immediately entered sub-minimum wage settings after graduation. SSB believes that all individuals have the right to try competitive integrated work if that is what the individual chooses.

B. HOW THE STATE WILL LEVERAGE OTHER PUBLIC AND PRIVATE FUNDS TO INCREASE RESOURCES FOR EXTENDED SERVICES AND EXPANDED SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES FOR YOUTH WITH THE MOST SIGNIFICANT DISABILITIES.

As part of Minnesota's Olmstead plan, SSB serves on an interagency panel that is committed to increasing competitive integrated employment outcomes for individuals with the most significant disabilities. The panel looks at ways funding can be blended and braided to ensure that more people with disabilities can achieve the vocational life they want. This work will benefit all individuals including youth with the most significant disabilities. SSB partners with MDE to coordinate work experience opportunities for students with disabilities. One strategy is co-sponsoring the Summer Transition Program to provide students with work experiences, skill building in alternative techniques of blindness, independent living skills, assistive technology, braille, and mobility.

O. STATE'S STRATEGIES

1. THE METHODS TO BE USED TO EXPAND AND IMPROVE SERVICES TO INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES

There are 5 specific areas that SSB is targeting to expand and improve services to individuals with disabilities. They are:

Competitive Integrated Employment. Methods used will include:

- Implement a model for coordinating employer services with DEED Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) partners, including :
    - Title I- Adult/Dislocated Worker; Youth
    - Title III- Job Seeker Services
    - Title IV- Vocational Rehabilitation Services
    - SSB is working with DEED partners and stakeholders to develop a Client Relationship Management tool. Currently partners are determining the cost to use Minnesota IT for consulting and services and what funding they can commit. Once this is finalized the planning process will begin by identifying partner business and customer needs and how to assemble these into a cohesive product.
    - Monitor the Employer One Stop online virtual hub representing all partners and available services and determine any modifications and adjustments needed to ensure its effectiveness.
    - Monitor the E1MN section of the Disability HUB website for DEED outreach and marketing and determine any modifications and adjustments needed to ensure its effectiveness.
- Implement ongoing training, tracking, and oversight of Measurable Skills Gains (MSG) and credential attainment of students to reach negotiated targets.
- Monitor staff tracking of their customers and input of appropriate documentation by in depth review of staff input of customers MSG's and credentials between enrollment and disenrollment.
- Ensure accuracy in reporting and validity of the MSGs and credentials claimed.
- Train staff as needed regarding data fixes necessary for these measures.
- In coordination with the Advisory Task Force on State Employment and Retention of Employees with Disabilities, develop and implement methods for the hiring and retention of blind, visually impaired, and deafblind customers into state government including using Connect 700 and Supported Worker programs.
    - Monitor the recommendation document submitted by the Advisory Taskforce to the Legislative subcommittee. Recommendations included items and proposed statutory changes that will specifically support the hiring and retention of blind, visually impaired, and DeafBlind customers, including:
    - A requirement for all technology and digital content to be accessible and provided in a timely manner;
    - Job posting language to be nondiscriminatory (including not requiring a driver's license when one is not actually needed);
    - Hiring managers are made aware of the state Accommodation Fund;

    - Reasonable accommodations are provided to allow full participation;
    - State Services for the Blind and Vocational Rehabilitation Services must be consulted when it comes to any updates or changes to the Connect 700 policy;
    - Training of staff on inclusive environments, digital accessibility standards, and the Americans with Disabilities Act.

State Services for the Blind will continue to work with Minnesota Management and Budget to ensure these recommendations are carried out.

Internal Controls and Quality Assurance. Methods used will include:

- Enhance the case review process to allow for real time results that can be put in SharePoint and allow for trends and patterns that can shape training and accountability and policy process.
    - Case reviews will be conduced by the Quality Assurance Specialist.
- Create a data dashboard to allow for real-time reporting of performance and demographics.
    - We will be continuing the work on developing the data dashboard by reviewing existing tools that may be available to meet this need compared to building our own. The expectation is to have completed this project well within the year.

Under-Represented Populations. Methods used will include:

- Increase minority applicants for vocational rehabilitation services who otherwise would not have applied because of statewide outreach with the minority communities.
    - Use applicant data on race, ethnicity, gender, and religion to measure against closure rates to determine if there are trends in unsuccessful closures among a particular protected class.
    - Once measurements are established, an action plan will be developed to identify what gaps exist and how to reduce them.

Transition and Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS). Methods used will include:

- Develop a longitudinal study on all youth (ages 25 and younger) case closures. Identify factors that contribute to successful or unsuccessful outcomes.
    - The Transition Subcommittee of the SRC-B has requested the data on case closures specifically for student and youth 25 and under with successful and unsuccessful closures.
    - When the data is received, the Transition Subcommittee will evaluate to identify factors that contribute to successful or unsuccessful outcomes.
    - Based on the factors we will begin to develop strategies to address how better to ensure successful outcomes.

Staff Training and Development. Methods will include:

- Provide a comprehensive and structured training curriculum for new employee onboarding and ongoing staff training by the designated trainer.
    - The designated trainer is developing the comprehensive and structured training curriculum for new employee onboarding and ongoing staff training. Expected outcomes are:

        - On boarding and training packages specific to each role that make up the Workforce Development Unit (WDU)
        - An annual training and development schedule for the WDU as a whole and for specific unit roles and functions
        - Acquiring data about training effectiveness and adjusting as needed
- Increase the level of awareness of the importance of timely communication with customers in response to customer comments on the Customer Satisfaction Survey (CSS)
    - The Customer Outcomes and Goals & Priorities Committee, together with SSB staff, will monitor the frequency of comments on subsequent surveys.
    - SSB staff will investigate other internal controls that could be useful in identifying any communication timeliness problems.

2. HOW A BROAD RANGE OF ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY SERVICES AND DEVICES WILL BE PROVIDED TO INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES AT EACH STAGE OF THE REHABILITATION PROCESS AND ON A STATEWIDE BASIS

SSB's Assistive Technology (AT) Team is comprise of four assistive technologists who provide statewide services at each stage of the rehabilitation process. The general overview of the services they provide include:

• Provide on and off-site assistive technology assessments and recommendations to SSB customers, rehabilitation counselors, employers and other interested parties

• Provide technical expertise and follow-up assistance to employers so that effective and compatible applications technology and assistive technologies are utilized on the job

• Serve as resource to customers, counselors, employers, partners, and other interested parties in utilizing and adapting information systems and designing and developing assistive technology solutions for blind, visually impaired, and DeafBlind individuals

• Participate in SSB's Team Model process and follow customers throughout their services, providing customized assessment and recommendations for equipment purchase to the counselor to be written into their Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE)

The technologists at SSB provide a broad range of comprehensive assistive technology services and devices. This include:

• A technologist dedicated to serving SSB customers that are transition students ages 14-21 and their families across Minnesota, engaging in the following:

• Technology assessments for all transition age students

• Participation on SSB's Transition Committee

• Technology demos of SSB's resource room for universities and transition events

• Work with vision teachers and schools on assistive technology to assist students

• Collaboration with SSB's Transition Coordinators

• A technologist dedicated to serving as the Resource Center Coordinator with duties that include:

• Scheduling workstations for training, demonstrations to the public, or regular use

• Regular maintenance on all the Resource Center technology and also coordinate incoming speakers presenting on technology and assistive topics to SSB Staff, assistive technology trainers and customers

• Work with vendors to provide demo and loaned technology to our SSB Resource Center, which is available for customers to borrow from SSB

• Technologists who are dedicated to providing short-term AT training for SSB customers

• Writing training tests for evaluating and certifying contracted AT trainers

• Keeping current on newest AT software and hardware such as the EBot, LVI, Braille Edge, VarioUltra, Brailliant, etc. and latest computer operating systems and software such as Windows 10, Microsoft Office 2016, Apple software updates for Mac, iPhone and iPad, etc.

• Keeping current on latest techniques for evaluating websites, etc. for accessibility

• Completing job site assessments for customers

• Beta test existing and new technology

• Collaborate with MN Management and Budget and VR in an effort to provide greater accessibility to our state employment application system for individuals with disabilities.

• Provide statewide consultation services to ensure appropriate access to current state employees.

3. THE OUTREACH PROCEDURES THAT WILL BE USED TO IDENTIFY AND SERVE INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES WHO ARE MINORITIES, INCLUDING THOSE WITH THE MOST SIGNIFICANT DISABILITIES, AS WELL AS THOSE WHO HAVE BEEN UNSERVED OR UNDERSERVED BY THE VR PROGRAM

Explore and implement options for non-English speakers when initially contacting SSB. (Work with department on developing strategies.) Provide information and resources to specific interpreters in order to have "go-to" interpreters who can provide accurate and complete translation about our services. Ensure that Non-English Language participants can effectively engage in and achieve their goals in either VR or IL program services. Provide training to vendors to improve employment outcomes for DeafBlind customers. Provide Diversity, Equity and Inclusion training to community partners to improve the employment outcomes for customers from underserved communities. Participate in activities to increase awareness of our services among the following communities: African-American, East African, Hmong, Karen, Latino, Native American, Russian, and Somali. Continue the slow and critical work of trust-building within underserved communities.

4. THE METHODS TO BE USED TO IMPROVE AND EXPAND VR SERVICES FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES, INCLUDING THE COORDINATION OF SERVICES DESIGNED TO FACILITATE THE TRANSITION OF SUCH STUDENTS FROM SCHOOL TO POSTSECONDARY LIFE (INCLUDING THE RECEIPT OF VR SERVICES, POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT, AND PRE-EMPLOYMENT TRANSITION SERVICES)

Upon the implementation of WIOA, SSB put into a play a Transition Core team that designed a plan to improve and expand VR services for students with disabilities. The program model for service delivery that SSB utilizes is called BRIDGE to Employment. It is designed to help students develop the skills and experiences they need to gain successful employment after high school. BRIDGE functions as the following acronym, which guides the services and programs we provide:

B Basic Skills-these include skills outside of academics that are necessary for students who are blind, low vision, or DeafBlind. Specifically it includes knowledge of assistive technology, non-visual literacy, independent living, and orientation and mobility.

R Role Models-student need adult mentors who are employed so that they can learn the skills and techniques needed to be successful.

I Initiative developing-initiative includes problem-solving skills, confidence, and growth mindset.

D Discovery-In addition to exploring careers, students need to explore items related to other life experiences. College visits and job shadowing are two examples of helping students discover what follows high school.

G Goal setting-students work with teachers and others to develop goals with their IEP teams, and they also work with rehabilitation counselors to develop their IPE's.

E Experiences-students gain pre-employment experiences through volunteering or other paid work options.

A BLUEPRINT

SSB uses a blueprint for delivery of Pre-ETS. The blueprint outlines activities in each of the required and authorized areas. Updated annually, the blueprint is adapted to meet the needs of the students and changing regulations.

FIND THE STUDENTS

SSB has put considerable effort into finding and serving all blind, visually impaired, and DeafBlind students. In FFY 2020, SSB estimates having served 120-130 students of the 229 identified in the unduplicated child count by the Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) master reporting count. Additionally, SSB served an estimated 40 Pre-ETS students in post-secondary programs. In FFY 2021, SSB estimates having served 140-150 of the 226 identified students MDE's unduplicated child count. Additionally, SSB served an estimated 45 Pre-ETS students in a post-secondary program.

SSB has a data sharing agreement with MDE per our Memorandum of Understanding that allows us to get directory information so we can target students and their families. Those families are contacted by transition staff to learn about the services and programs provided by SSB.

The Transition Coordinator reaches out to homeschool organizations, private and charter schools throughout the state in order to find the students we are not currently serving. SSB staff members also outreach by presenting at conferences which are attended by teachers, parents, and potentially eligible students.

PROVIDE OPPORTUNITIES

SSB has several strategies around building opportunities for students to improve skills and gain experience/exposure to what is possible. We believe "you don't know what you don't know." Prior to WIOA, SSB noted trends of students' unpreparedness for life after high school. Students were having to stop post-secondary education to get the skills needed to successfully enter a career or schooling. SSB believed that high schools were providing more alternative techniques of blindness training (ATB) than they actually were. We saw this as an opportunity to provide ATB training for students outside of school. We developed a request for proposal for the

purpose of developing programs that could provide year-round Pre-ETS. A Duluth and Metro provider were awarded contracts. Students state-wide are participating in these programs.

Another strategy is developing and facilitating summer activities for students to improve all manner of skills. SSB co-sponsors a Summer Transition Program (STP) with the Minnesota Department of Education. In FFY 2019 there were thirteen students. Prior to the covid-19 pandemic, students lived on a local college campus, learned about transportation, travel, independent living, careers, braille, and ended the two weeks with a summer job experience. In 2020 and 2021, this program was held virtually. Students engaged in workplace readiness training, and job exploration counselling skills. STP will continue in person or virtually (as needed) in summer of 2022. Other providers also offer summer programs lasting from one to eight weeks which focus on improving similar skills. SSB expects providers to include a work experience in their programming.

To foster career exploration, SSB's Work Opportunities Navigator guides students in individualized services. Students participate in the Work Opportunity Navigator's "Press Start" program. This program walks students through informational interviews, labor market information, budgeting, and lifestyle choices

The Work Opportunities Navigator, Transition Coordinator, and Counselors compile a list of summer internship opportunities for students, and then do targeted outreach to students who qualify for the internship programs. SSB Staff lets students know about the opportunities as well as assist in application.

5. IF APPLICABLE, PLANS FOR ESTABLISHING, DEVELOPING, OR IMPROVING COMMUNITY REHABILITATION PROGRAMS WITHIN THE STATE

There are two community rehabilitation programs who provide center-based Adjustment To Blindness Training that have developed year round transition programs for youth with disabilities. A third center provides curriculum geared for transition students for their full/part time ATB training program. At the completion of the years' programming, reviews are conducted to investigate any needed expansion of the programs. SSB remains in close contact with the directors of these three community rehabilitation programs (CRP) and strives to meet monthly with the directors of each of them. In 2021, SSB has formalized the Vendor Forums it holds twice a year to a quarterly system with a formal agenda after working with a consultant. We have also adopted the same language Vocational Rehabilitation Services uses to call our contractors Community Partners which is more inclusive and consistent. The number of contractors providing Pre-ETS services has become a focus for SSB, especially those that can assist with work experiences. We will be pursuing this section of providers by starting with a special forum to explain Pre-ETS services and encourage them to add these services to their contracts.

6. STRATEGIES TO IMPROVE THE PERFORMANCE OF THE STATE WITH RESPECT TO THE PERFORMANCE ACCOUNTABILITY MEASURES UNDER SECTION 116 OF WIOA

Since 2018, SSB has been working to create a team dedicated to the monitoring, management, and improvement of our performance measures. Members of the team include a Director of Policy and Program Administration who oversees the team, a Data Analyst, a Quality Assurance Specialist, and a Staff Trainer.

This team works hard to monitor all aspects of the Workforce Development Unit's performance, including regular targeted reviews of our Measurable Skills Gains and Credential Attainment performance. These reviews ensure that all necessary documents are accounted for and all claimed Measurable Skills Gains (MSG) and Credentials are valid.

Regular training on MSGs and Credentials have been and continue to be conducted for the WDU staff responsible for claiming these outcomes. The targeted reviews result in messaging to staff

regarding issues with enrollment/disenrollment, claimed or unclaimed MSGs or Credentials. Those staff are then responsible for making corrections in the system to ensure validity and accuracy.

We have made significant improvements to our case management system that have allowed us to better input accurate data, track our enrollments and ensure proper documentation is in place for our performance measures. We continue to identify ways to simplify our system to make it easier for staff to input data.

In 2021, we began using YesLMS and will be identifying any trainings around performance measures that might be included in our subscription or added to the system and require staff to participate in those trainings annually.

For our employment retention measures, we continue to encourage our staff, customers, partners, and vendors to focus on long-term, sustainable careers and career pathways over simply finding any job. We plan to implement incentives for employment vendors who help our customers find employment with more hours, higher wages, and benefits. We are involved with our partners in looking at our data around family sustaining wages so we can work to improve our outcomes for our customers.

7. STRATEGIES FOR ASSISTING OTHER COMPONENTS OF THE STATEWIDE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM IN ASSISTING INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES

SSB provides outreach to the Workforce development system through a quarterly Minnesota Association of Workforce Boards (MAWB) forum, which includes one-stop partners, CareerForce/Wagner-Peyser, Veterans, Adult/Dislocated Worker, Youth, and Vocational Rehabilitation. SSB presents updates on our services and programs at each forum, and we host one each year. In addition, we meet separately with the directors of the respective programs mentioned above to plan our forums and have leadership-level conversations.

On a more individualized basis, SSB assists with ensuring that the computer systems are accessible with up-to-date software and staff are trained to not automatically refer individuals to SSB.

Our State is in the process of procuring a new job bank platform. We used Minnesota Works, which was inaccessible. There are plans to form a Steering Committee on the new job bank, and SSB will be a member of that committee to help ensure accessibility of the platform for all.

8. HOW THE AGENCY'S STRATEGIES WILL BE USED TO:

A. ACHIEVE GOALS AND PRIORITIES BY THE STATE, CONSISTENT WITH THE COMPREHENSIVE NEEDS ASSESSMENT;

SSB will use the agency's strategies to achieve the goals and priorities which are based on WIOA requirements, especially Pre-ETS, the Comprehensive Needs Assessment (CSNA), and SSB's participation in Minnesota's Olmstead plan which promotes integrated living and working environments. The agency's strategies to achieve the goals and priorities are discussed in detail in Section L State Goals and Priorities. Furthermore, those areas identified as gaps in services in the CSNA are addressed in the Goals and Priorities. Specifically we have a focus in reaching underserved communities, which based on our data, there is a gap in services.

B. SUPPORT INNOVATION AND EXPANSION ACTIVITIES; AND

SSB and the SRCB cannot do the all the work ourselves. The strategies and priorities outlined include many partnerships and the development of new programs and new vendors. Coordination with WIOA partners and outreach and expansion of services to underrepresented communities are examples of our commitment to innovation and expansion activities.

C. OVERCOME IDENTIFIED BARRIERS RELATING TO EQUITABLE ACCESS TO AND PARTICIPATION OF INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES IN THE STATE VR SERVICES PROGRAM AND THE STATE SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES PROGRAM.

SSB uses an intake process has been designed to provide accurate and consistent information about all of SSB's services and better equip customers with the ability to understand information about services so they can make informed decisions. The intent is to promote an increased focus on the customer's needs and to better engage customers with the VR process from the start of services. There is one point of contact beginning at referral, to group orientation, and through individualized one on one intakes. This point of contact is also engaged in our minority outreach committee and so understands how to better engage and serve a dynamic customer population. This new process is streamlined and systematized but accommodates the unique needs of our customers resulting in better access to information and participation in the VR program. In addition, we have extra focus on outreach to underrepresented communities to encourage them to consider applying for VR services.

P. EVALUATION AND REPORTS OF PROGRESS: VR AND SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT GOALS

1. AN EVALUATION OF THE EXTENT TO WHICH THE VR PROGRAM GOALS DESCRIBED IN THE APPROVED VR SERVICES PORTION OF THE UNIFIED OR COMBINED STATE PLAN FOR THE MOST RECENTLY COMPLETED PROGRAM YEAR WERE ACHIEVED. THE EVALUATION MUST:

A. IDENTIFY THE STRATEGIES THAT CONTRIBUTED TO THE ACHIEVEMENT OF THE GOALS

The Goals, Priorities, and Strategies for FFY 2020 include five main priorities: Competitive Integrated Employment, Internal Controls and Quality Assurance, Under-Represented Populations, Transition and Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS), and Staff Training and Development.

The strategies for the first priority included; Evaluating the best methods of providing informed choice options when working with you considering nonintegrated or subminimum wage employment, working towards implementation of the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the Department of Human Services (DHS)-Disability Services Division (DSD) and the Department of Employment Economic Development (DEED)-VRS/SSB, implementing a model for coordinating employer services with DEED Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) partners, including Titles I, III and IV partners, implement ongoing training, tracking, and oversight of measurable skills gains (MSG) and credential attainment in order to reach negotiated targets, and in coordination with the Advisory Task Force on State Employment and Retention of Employees with Disabilities, develop and implement methods for the hiring and retention of blind, visually impaired, and DeafBlind customers into state government including using Connect 700 and Supported Workers programs.

1. Evaluate the best methods of providing informed choice options when working with your considering nonintegrated or subminimum wage employment. Instead of evaluating practices around informed choice, we determined that walking youth through the steps for seeking subminimum wage employment was of greater value. The reasoning for this decision was based on the continued confusion and misunderstanding on the part of students, families, educational personnel, and other stakeholders of the still new WIOA criteria for this area.

2. Work towards implementation of the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the Department of Human Services (DHS)-Disability Services Division (DSD) and the Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED)-VRS/SSB. SSB staff were collaboratively involved in the planning and implementing of the MOU. SSB staff participated in weekly subcommittee meetings with VRS and DHS for many months in preparation for the implementation. The Provider Integration subcommittee worked on encouraging 245D providers to be VRS contractors, and VRS contractors to become

245D certified. They created informational flyers and held several trainings of which SSB had a part in. SSB staff also involved with VRS in creating their E1PBA. These collaborations with VRS have led to a new working relationship with VRS at unprecedented levels.

3. Implement a model for coordinating employer services with DEED Workforce Innovation and Opportunity ACT (WIOA) partners including:
    a. Title I- Adult/Dislocated Worker; Youth
    b. Title III- Job Seeker Services
    c. Title IV- Vocational Rehabilitation Services

Work on this strategy continues with some successes so far: 1. SSB has been working with DEED partners and stakeholders to develop a Client Relationship Management tool. Currently partners are determining the cost to use Minnesota IT for consulting and services and what funding they can commit. 2. An Employer One Stop is an online virtual hub representing all partners and available services. 3. E1MN is a site for DEED outreach and marketing, recently online also.

4. Implement ongoing training, tracking, and oversight of measurable skills gains and credential attainment in order to reach negotiated targets. SSB has made changes and updates to our case management system to better help staff keep track of their students and input the appropriate documentations. There have also been in depth reviews of enrollments/dis-enrollments, MSGs and credentials to ensure accuracy in reporting and validity of the MSGs and credentials claimed. Messaging continues to go out, as needed, around data fixes needed in and around these measures.

In coordination with the Advisory Task Force on State Employment and Retention of Employees with Disabilities, develop and implement methods for the hiring and retention of blind, visually impaired, and deafblind customers into state government including using Connect 700 and Supported Worker programs. The Director of State Services for the Blind served on an Advisory Taskforce on State Employment and Retention of Employees with Disabilities. As a result, a recommendation document was submitted to the Legislative subcommittee. Recommendations included items and proposed statutory changes that will specifically support the hiring and retention of blind, visually impaired, and DeafBlind customers, including:

- A requirement for all technology and digital content to be accessible and provided in a timely manner;
- Job posting language to be nondiscriminatory (including not requiring a driver's license when one is not actually needed);
- Hiring managers are made aware of the state Accommodation Fund;
- Reasonable accommodations are provided to allow full participation;
- State Services for the Blind and Vocational Rehabilitation Services must be consulted when it comes to any updates or changes to the Connect 700 policy;
- Training of staff on inclusive environments, digital accessibility standards, and the Americans with Disabilities Act.

State Services for the Blind continues to work with Minnesota Management and Budget to ensure those recommendations are carried out. Progress has been made, and we have seen an increase in the number of Connect 700 applicants, many whom go on to their pre-probationary 700 hour experience and then are hired on permanently.

Results Summary. This first priority was mostly realized in FFY2021. Four out of five strategies were met although three are still continuing. The fifth strategy was changed when it was realized that it did not appropriately address the issue.

Second priority: Internal Controls and Quality Assurance

1. Enhance the case review process to allow for real time results that can be put in SharePoint and allow for trends and patterns that can shape training and accountability and policy process. We are in the process of working with WorkForce1 to create a new case review tool within the Case Management System. This is still in the beginning stages, so we won't be able to provide real time results or identify trends for training, accountability and policy until that tool has been developed.

2. Create a data dashboard to allow for real-time reporting of performance and demographics. We are in the beginning phase of creating several data dashboards for real-time reporting. We are gathering ideas for the different data points and dashboards that will be useful to our staff, including a report that is like the RSA Quarterly Dashboards we receive each quarter. We will be compiling our wants and needs, developing dashboards in-house, and potentially contracting out to create the remaining dashboards.

Results Summary These two strategies were not met but SSB is currently working towards their completion.

Third Priority: Under-Represented Populations

1. Increase minority applicants for vocational rehabilitation services who otherwise would not have applied as a result of statewide outreach with the minority communities. SSB has not been able to increase minority applicants. Statewide outreach efforts have been greatly hampered by Covid-19 and the loss of our staff member with community connections. This continues to be an area of struggle for SSB.

2. In coordination with partners and providers imbed exposure to work as part of ELL programming. Exposure to work as part of ELL programming was imbedded into services provided by Blind, Inc. Currently, they are they are the only partner providing that programming.

3. Research and develop avenues to bolster vendors to provide services to deafblind job seekers. SSB is in discussions with Helen Keller National Center do develop a contract to include employment services, Pre-ETS, Adjustment To Blindness, ProTactile, and other services to deafblind job seekers. Additionally, we are in discussions with another provider to develop a contract for ProTactile training.

Results Summary SSB has not met this priority. We have not been able to increase minority applicant for vocational rehabilitation services. Our second strategy was met however more partners are needed with this exposure to work imbedded as part of their programming. The third strategy was not met though we are current making progress towards this outcome.

Fourth Priority: Transition and Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS)

1. Identify new and innovative Pre-ETS around financial, social, and language literacy. SSB has completed this strategy despite the impacts of Covid-19 and the inability to hold in person gatherings. Examples of Pre-ETS around financial, social, and language literacy include:

Peer Educator Programming in the Summer of 2020 included a series of workshops led by the Peer Educators. Topics included:

- Seeing Success in Self Advocacy

- College Readiness
- Complexity of Identity
- Sight Loss and Resilience

In the summer of 2021, the "Chill & Chat" monthly zoom meets allowed for students to socialize and the Summer Transition Program (STP) in 2020 and 2021 both had "Blind & Socially Savvy" as part of the curriculum.

Peer Educator Programming in the Summer of 2021 included:

- A student Braille Club
- Movie Night
- Presentations
    - Confidently College Ready
    - Social Media Savvy
    - The Confident Self-Advocate
- Confidence through the Arts program
- Exhibition Night

In the Fall of 2021, SSB hosted a monthly series called “Bring Your A Game” that connects Alexa games to job and work skills. For example, we connected “The Price is Right” to budgeting and money management.

We are excited to host a monthly series that For example, on November 2 we connected “The Price is Right” to budgeting and money management.

2. Develop a longitudinal study on all youth (ages 24 and younger) case closures. Identify factors that contribute to successful or unsuccessful outcomes. This strategy has not yet been completed. The Transition Subcommittee of the SRC-B has requested the data on case closures but has not yet received it. The committee specifically asked for student and youth 25 and under, with successful and unsuccessful closures. When the data is received, they will evaluate to identify factors that contribute to successful or unsuccessful outcomes.

Results Summary This priority has not been met. Despite the impact of Covid-19 SSB has complete the first strategy. Our second strategy has not yet been completed but is currently in progress.

Fifth Priority: Staff Training and Development

1. Identify the resources to hire a designated trainer to provide a comprehensive and structured training curriculum for new employee onboarding and ongoing staff training. A designated trainer has been hired and is developing the comprehensive and structured training curriculum for new employee onboarding and ongoing staff training. We anticipate seeing results during the next year.

Results Summary A designated trainer has been hired and is developing the comprehensive and structured training curriculum. This strategy has been met although SSB continues to see staff training and development as a priority.

B. DESCRIBE THE FACTORS THAT IMPEDED THE ACHIEVEMENT OF THE GOALS AND PRIORITIES

SSB was not able to meet the priority of competitive integrated employment. Four out of five strategies were met although three are still continuing. The fifth strategy was changed when it was realized that it did not appropriately address the issue. We finished PY 2020 with 62 successful closures.

SSB has not met the priority on internal controls and quality assurance. The first strategy around the case review process modifications is in progress. We had staff turnover due to promotions within the policy and program administration team, which resulted in us delaying the ability to modify the case review. We met the second strategy.

SSB has not met our priority of under-represented populations. We have not been able to increase minority applicants for vocational rehabilitation services primarily due to the impact COVID had to our overall applications in general. Our second strategy was met; however, more partners are needed with this exposure to work imbedded as part of their programming. The third strategy was not met though we are currently making progress towards this outcome.

SSB has not met its priority on transition and Pre-ETS. We have exceeded expectations in our strategy to identify new and innovative Pre-ETS around financial, social, and language literacy despite the impact of Covid-19. Our second strategy to develop a longitudinal study on all youth case closures and identify factors that contribute to successful/unsuccessful closures has not yet been completed but is currently in process. We first need to develop our VR data dashboard, and we will be incorporating elements that can help us look longitudinally at our Pre-ETS and their impact.

Although we met our priority in staff training and development and were able to hire a designated trainer to provide a comprehensive and structured training curriculum, the process took an extended period of time. This was due to a state hiring freeze and reposting to find the appropriate candidates. In addition, we implement the YesLMS learning management system; however, the process took 18 months due to delays from the DSA. Now that the trainer is hired and the learning management system is in place, our training and onboarding is taking off.

2. AN EVALUATION OF THE EXTENT TO WHICH THE SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM GOALS DESCRIBED IN THE SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SUPPLEMENT FOR THE MOST RECENT PROGRAM YEAR WERE ACHIEVED. THE EVALUATION MUST:

A. IDENTIFY THE STRATEGIES THAT CONTRIBUTED TO THE ACHIEVEMENT OF THE GOALS

The major strategy that contributed to the achievement of the goals was the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding with the Department of Human Services and the subsequent work that went into implementing E1MN. E1MN is the model of providing efficient, timely, and seamless services to individuals who are on a Home and Community Based Waiver and are also receiving vocational rehabilitation services. E1MN provided training, tools, and resources to all levels of staff to help support individuals seeking and entering into supported employment.

B. DESCRIBE THE FACTORS THAT IMPEDED THE ACHIEVEMENT OF THE GOALS AND PRIORITIES

The biggest impediment to the ongoing success of E1MN is the significant lack of job coaches and other support professionals. COVID and low pay has resulted in a huge turnover in these professions. We have had to delay people in starting their new jobs because we could not find a job coach to assist. While we have a few internal staff who can help, it is not enough.

The second impediment still continues to be the logistics of arranging long-term supports, including identifying the funding sources. E1MN has gone a long way in helping reduce this, but there are still misunderstandings out there that only continued training and time can resolve.

Determining on-going supports, particularly those requiring funding, can be the make or break for some situations. It can be very time consuming to arrange supports and funding. We have seen some jobs that have not been possible to successfully close because of a lack of on-going funding.

3. THE VR PROGRAM'S PERFORMANCE ON THE PERFORMANCE ACCOUNTABILITY INDICATORS UNDER SECTION 116 OF WIOA

The Program Year 2020 data is available for SSB's common performance measures. The data includes employment retention in second quarter, median earnings in second quarter, and measurable skill gain.

Performance Indicator	**2019**	**2020**
Employment Rate Quarter 2	50%	37%
Median Wage Quarter 2	$4,603.36	$4,895.67
Employment Rate Quarter 4	49%	37%
Median Wage Quarter 4	$5,399.38	$6,129.70
Measurable Skills Gain Rate	57%	48%

4. HOW THE FUNDS RESERVED FOR INNOVATION AND EXPANSION (I&E) ACTIVITIES WERE UTILIZED

SSB used Title I funds for innovation and expansion in support of the State Rehabilitation Council for the Blind (SRC-B) meetings, for meetings of the Council committees and task forces, and in support of member travel to national rehabilitation meetings. The SRC-B expenditures for FFY2020 were projected at $35,730 and the actual expenditures were $20,646.38. The SRC-B expenditures for FFY2021 were projected at $35,730 and the actual expenditures to date are $20,009.90. Due to the COVID-19 Pandemic, Council meetings are held virtually which has reduced expenditures by eliminating the need for food and travel expenses. SSB resources for support of the Statewide Independent Living Council come from Title VII rather than Title I funds. SSB will continue to use Title I funds for innovation and expansion in support of the SRC-B's resource plan of $35,730 for FFY 2022 and FFY 2023.

Q. QUALITY, SCOPE, AND EXTENT OF SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES

1. THE QUALITY, SCOPE, AND EXTENT OF SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES TO BE PROVIDED TO INDIVIDUALS WITH THE MOST SIGNIFICANT DISABILITIES, INCLUDING YOUTH WITH THE MOST SIGNIFICANT DISABILITIES

Supported employment services promoting the integration of people with the most severe disabilities into employment in Minnesota have become increasingly available. The scope and quality of supported employment services have improved as more entities become aware of the benefits of ongoing employment supports for individuals with the most significant disabilities. The recent implementation of E1MN has provided a more seamless system between waiver and vocational rehabilitation. However, the demand for supported employment exceeds the capacity of systems in Minnesota to provide the necessary extended ongoing employment supports. In addition to the goals for Title VI Part B described in Section N, SSB will continue to engage in capacity building and technical assistance efforts with other state agencies and community service providers. For example, SSB is currently identifying solutions to increase the availability of job coaches. One thing we are immediately implementing is an increase to the rates we pay providers.

SSB provides up to 24 months of supported employment services, beginning after job placement, to allow the youth to attain job stabilization, prior to the transition to extended services. SSB may provide more than 24 months of supported employment services if the need for additional time is identified in the IPE. SSB reserves 50 percent of Title VI funds to provide supported employment services and extended services to youth with most significant disabilities. SSB may act as the direct extended services provider to a youth with a most significant disability until the youth reaches age 25 or receives 4 years of extended services through the VR agency, whichever occurs first. SSB then arranges for another extended services provider to continue delivering extended services to youth. SSB does not fund or directly provide extended services to individuals who are not youth with most significant disabilities.

2. THE TIMING OF TRANSITION TO EXTENDED SERVICES

When vocational rehabilitation services are completed, a customer transitions to extended services. That transition occurs when the individual achieves the goals set out in their supported employment IPE, when they reach stability on the job, and when a service provider agrees to begin providing the needed ongoing employment supports. In most cases, the transition from vocational rehabilitation services to extended services occurs within three months. In Minnesota, the sources of ongoing support primarily include the counties, community rehabilitation programs or other private non—profit organizations.

SSB provides up to 24 months of supported employment services after job placement, unless additional time is needed for the individual to achieve job stabilization and transition to extended services.

SSB may directly provide extended services to youth with most significant disabilities for up to four years, or until the youth reaches age 25, whichever occurs first. SSB does not provide extended services to individuals who are not youth with disabilities.

VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION (BLIND) CERTIFICATIONS

1. THE (ENTER THE NAME OF DESIGNATED STATE AGENCY OR DESIGNATED STATE UNIT, AS APPROPRIATE,) IS AUTHORIZED TO SUBMIT THE VR SERVICES PORTION OF THE UNIFIED OR COMBINED STATE PLAN UNDER TITLE I OF THE REHABILITATION ACT OF 1973 (REHABILITATION ACT), AS AMENDED BY WIOA[14], AND ITS SUPPLEMENT UNDER TITLE VI OF THE REHABILITATION ACT[15];

ENTER THE NAME OF DESIGNATED STATE AGENCY OR DESIGNATED STATE UNIT, AS APPROPRIATE

Department of Employment and Economic Development, DEED

2. AS A CONDITION FOR THE RECEIPT OF FEDERAL FUNDS UNDER TITLE I OF THE REHABILITATION ACT FOR THE PROVISION OF VR SERVICES, THE (ENTER THE NAME OF DESIGNATED STATE AGENCY)[16] AGREES TO OPERATE AND ADMINISTER THE STATE VR SERVICES PROGRAM IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE VR SERVICES PORTION OF THE UNIFIED OR COMBINED STATE PLAN[17] , THE REHABILITATION ACT, AND ALL APPLICABLE REGULATIONS[18] , POLICIES, AND PROCEDURES ESTABLISHED BY THE SECRETARY OF EDUCATION. FUNDS MADE AVAILABLE UNDER SECTION 111 OF THE REHABILITATION ACT ARE USED SOLELY FOR THE PROVISION OF VR SERVICES AND THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE VR SERVICES PORTION OF THE UNIFIED OR COMBINED STATE PLAN;

ENTER THE NAME OF DESIGNATED STATE AGENCY

State Services for the Blind, SSB

3. AS A CONDITION FOR THE RECEIPT OF FEDERAL FUNDS UNDER TITLE VI OF THE REHABILITATION ACT FOR SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES, THE DESIGNATED STATE

AGENCY AGREES TO OPERATE AND ADMINISTER THE STATE SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES PROGRAM IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE SUPPLEMENT TO THE VR SERVICES PORTION OF THE UNIFIED OR COMBINED STATE PLAN[19] , THE REHABILITATION ACT, AND ALL APPLICABLE REGULATIONS[20] , POLICIES, AND PROCEDURES ESTABLISHED BY THE SECRETARY OF EDUCATION. FUNDS MADE AVAILABLE UNDER TITLE VI ARE USED SOLELY FOR THE PROVISION OF SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES AND THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE SUPPLEMENT TO THE VR SERVICES PORTION OF THE UNIFIED OR COMBINED STATE PLAN;

4. THE DESIGNATED STATE AGENCY AND/OR THE DESIGNATED STATE UNIT HAS THE AUTHORITY UNDER STATE LAW TO PERFORM THE FUNCTIONS OF THE STATE REGARDING THE VR SERVICES PORTION OF THE UNIFIED OR COMBINED STATE PLAN AND ITS SUPPLEMENT;

5. THE STATE LEGALLY MAY CARRY OUT EACH PROVISION OF THE VR SERVICES PORTION OF THE UNIFIED OR COMBINED STATE PLAN AND ITS SUPPLEMENT.

6. ALL PROVISIONS OF THE VR SERVICES PORTION OF THE UNIFIED OR COMBINED STATE PLAN AND ITS SUPPLEMENT ARE CONSISTENT WITH STATE LAW.

7. THE (ENTER THE NAME OF AUTHORIZED REPRESENTATIVE BELOW) HAS THE AUTHORITY UNDER STATE LAW TO RECEIVE, HOLD, AND DISBURSE FEDERAL FUNDS MADE AVAILABLE UNDER THE VR SERVICES PORTION OF THE UNIFIED OR COMBINED STATE PLAN AND ITS SUPPLEMENT;

ENTER THE NAME OF AUTHORIZED REPRESENTATIVE BELOW

Natasha Jerde

8. THE (ENTER THE TITLE OF AUTHORIZED REPRESENTATIVE BELOW) HAS THE AUTHORITY TO SUBMIT THE VR SERVICES PORTION OF THE UNIFIED OR COMBINED STATE PLAN AND THE SUPPLEMENT FOR SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES;

ENTER THE TITLE OF AUTHORIZED REPRESENTATIVE BELOW

Director State Services for the Blind

9. THE AGENCY THAT SUBMITS THE VR SERVICES PORTION OF THE UNIFIED OR COMBINED STATE PLAN AND ITS SUPPLEMENT HAS ADOPTED OR OTHERWISE FORMALLY APPROVED THE PLAN AND ITS SUPPLEMENT.

FOOTNOTES

CERTIFICATION SIGNATURE

Signatory information	Enter Signatory information in this column
Name of Signatory	Natasha N. Jerde
Title of Signatory	Director, State Services for the Blind
Date Signed	3/15/2022

ASSURANCES

The State Plan must include	Include
1. Public Comment on Policies and Procedures: The designated State agency assures it will comply	

The State Plan must include	Include
with all statutory and regulatory requirements for public participation in the VR Services Portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan, as required by section 101(a)(16)(A) of the Rehabilitation Act.	
2. Submission of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and Its Supplement: The designated State unit assures it will comply with all requirements pertaining to the submission and revisions of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement for the State Supported Employment Services program, as required by sections 101(a)(1), (22), (23), and 606(a) of the Rehabilitation Act; section 102 of WIOA in the case of the submission of a unified plan; section 103 of WIOA in the case of a submission of a Combined State Plan; 34 CFR 76.140.	
3. The designated State agency or designated State unit, as appropriate, assures it will comply with the requirements related to:Administration of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan:	
3.a. The establishment of the designated State agency and designated State unit, as required by section 101(a)(2) of the Rehabilitation Act	
3.b. The establishment of either a State independent commission or State Rehabilitation Council, as required by section 101(a)(21) of the Rehabilitation Act. The designated State agency or designated State unit, as applicable (A or B must be selected):	
3.b.(A) “is an independent State commission” (Yes/No)	No
3.b.(B) “has established a State Rehabilitation Council” (Yes/No)	Yes
3.c. Consultations regarding the administration of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan, in accordance with section 101(a)(16)(B) of the Rehabilitation Act	
3.d. The financial participation by the State, or if the State so elects, by the State and local agencies, to provide the amount of the non-Federal share of the cost of carrying out the VR program in accordance with section 101(a)(3)	

The State Plan must include	Include
3.e. The local administration of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan, in accordance with section 101(a)(2)(A) of the Rehabilitation Act. Select yes or no, as appropriate, to identify if the designated State agency allows for the local administration of VR funds (Yes/No)	No
3.f. The shared funding and administration of joint programs, in accordance with section 101(a)(2)(A)(ii) of the Rehabilitation Act. Select yes or no, as appropriate, to identify if the designated State agency allows for the shared funding and administration of joint programs (Yes/No)	No
3.g. Statewideness and waivers of statewideness requirements, as set forth in section 101(a)(4) of the Rehabilitation Act. Is the designated State agency requesting or maintaining a waiver of statewideness for one or more services provided under the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan? (Yes/No) See Section 2 of this VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan	No
3.h. The descriptions for cooperation, collaboration, and coordination, as required by sections 101(a)(11) and (24)(B); and 606(b) of the Rehabilitation Act	
3.i. All required methods of administration, as required by section 101(a)(6) of the Rehabilitation Act	
3.j. The requirements for the comprehensive system of personnel development, as set forth in section 101(a)(7) of the Rehabilitation Act	
3.k. The compilation and submission to the Commissioner of statewide assessments, estimates, State goals and priorities, strategies, and progress reports, as appropriate, and as required by sections 101(a)(15), 105(c)(2), and 606(b)(8) of the Rehabilitation Act	
3.l. The reservation and use of a portion of the funds allotted to the State under section 110 of the Rehabilitation Act for the development and implementation of innovative approaches to expand and improve the provision of VR services to individuals with disabilities, particularly individuals with the most significant disabilities	
3.m. The submission of reports as required by	

The State Plan must include	Include
section 101(a)(10) of the Rehabilitation Act	
4. Administration of the Provision of VR Services: The designated State agency, or designated State unit, as appropriate, assures that it will:	
4.a. Comply with all requirements regarding information and referral services in accordance with sections 101(a)(5)(D) and (20) of the Rehabilitation Act	
4.b. Impose no duration of residence requirement as part of determining an individual's eligibility for VR services or that excludes from services under the plan any individual who is present in the State in accordance with section 101(a)(12) of the Rehabilitation Act	
4.c. Provide the full range of services listed in section 103(a) of the Rehabilitation Act as appropriate, to all eligible individuals with disabilities in the State who apply for services in accordance with section 101(a)(5) of the Rehabilitation Act? (Yes/No)	No
4.d. Determine whether comparable services and benefits are available to the individual in accordance with section 101(a)(8) of the Rehabilitation Act	
4.e. Comply with requirements regarding the provisions of informed choice for all applicants and eligible individuals in accordance with section 102(d) of the Rehabilitation Act	
4.f. Comply with requirements regarding the provisions of informed choice for all applicants and eligible individuals in accordance with section 102(d) of the Rehabilitation Act	
4.g. Provide vocational rehabilitation services to American Indians who are individuals with disabilities residing in the State, in accordance with section 101(a)(13) of the Rehabilitation Act	
4.h. Comply with the requirements for the conduct of semiannual or annual reviews, as appropriate, for individuals employed either in an extended employment setting in a community rehabilitation program or any other employment under section 14(c) of the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938, as required by section 101(a)(14)of the Rehabilitation Act	

The State Plan must include	Include
4.i. Meet the requirements in sections 101(a)(17) and 103(b)(2) of the Rehabilitation Act if the State elects to construct, under special circumstances, facilities for community rehabilitation programs	
4.j. With respect to students with disabilities, the State,	
4.j.i. Has developed and will implement,	
4.j.i.I. Strategies to address the needs identified in the assessments; and	
4.j.i.II. Strategies to achieve the goals and priorities identified by the State, to improve and expand vocational rehabilitation services for students with disabilities on a statewide basis; and	
4.j.ii. Has developed and will implement strategies to provide pre-employment transition services (sections 101(a)(15) and 101(a)(25))	
5. Program Administration for the Supported Employment Title VI Supplement:	
5.a. The designated State unit assures that it will include in the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan all information required by section 606 of the Rehabilitation Act	
5.b. The designated State agency assures that it will submit reports in such form and in accordance with such procedures as the Commissioner may require and collects the information required by section 101(a)(10) of the Rehabilitation Act separately for individuals receiving supported employment services under title I and individuals receiving supported employment services under title VI of the Rehabilitation Act	
5.c. The designated state unit will coordinate activities with any other State agency that is functioning as an employment network under the Ticket to Work and Self-Sufficiency program under Section 1148 of the Social Security Act	
6. Financial Administration of the Supported Employment Program:	
6.a. The designated State agency assures that it will expend no more than 2.5 percent of the State's allotment under title VI for administrative costs of carrying out this program; and, the designated State agency or agencies will provide, directly or	

The State Plan must include	Include
indirectly through public or private entities, non-Federal contributions in an amount that is not less than 10 percent of the costs of carrying out supported employment services provided to youth with the most significant disabilities with the funds reserved for such purpose under section 603(d) of the Rehabilitation Act, in accordance with section 606(b)(7)(G) and (H) of the Rehabilitation Act	
6.b. The designated State agency assures that it will use funds made available under title VI of the Rehabilitation Act only to provide supported employment services to individuals with the most significant disabilities, including extended services to youth with the most significant disabilities, who are eligible to receive such services; and, that such funds are used only to supplement and not supplant the funds provided under Title I of the Rehabilitation Act, when providing supported employment services specified in the individualized plan for employment, in accordance with section 606(b)(7)(A) and (D), of the Rehabilitation Act	
7. Provision of Supported Employment Services:	Yes
7.a. The Designated State Agency Assures That it Will Provide Supported Employment Services as Defined in Section 7(39) of the Rehabilitation Act	
7.b. The designated State agency assures that:	
7.b.i. The comprehensive assessment of individuals with significant disabilities conducted under section 102(b)(1) of the Rehabilitation Act and funded under title I of the Rehabilitation Act includes consideration of supported employment as an appropriate employment outcome, in accordance with the requirements of section 606(b)(7)(B) of the Rehabilitation Act	
7.b.ii. An individualized plan for employment that meets the requirements of section 102(b) of the Rehabilitation Act, which is developed and updated with title I funds, in accordance with sections 102(b)(3)(F) and 606(b)(6)(C) and (E) of the Rehabilitation Act	

VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION PROGRAM PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Performance Indicators	PY 2022 Expected Level	PY 2022 Negotiated Level	PY 2023 Expected Level	PY 2023 Negotiated Level

Performance Indicators	PY 2022 Expected Level	PY 2022 Negotiated Level	PY 2023 Expected Level	PY 2023 Negotiated Level
Employment (Second Quarter After Exit)	43.0%	51.5%	48.0%	52.0%
Employment (Fourth Quarter After Exit)	40.0%	49.6%	40.0%	50.1%
Median Earnings (Second Quarter After Exit)	$3,300	$3,411	$3,350	$3,513
Credential Attainment Rate	31.0%	31.0%	33.0%	33.0%
Measurable Skill Gains	45.0%	50.3%	46.0%	51.8%
Effectiveness in Serving Employers	Not Applicable [1]	Not Applicable [1]	Not Applicable [1]	Not Applicable [1]

1

"Effectiveness in Serving Employers" is still being developed and this data will not be entered in the 2022 State Plan modifications.

VII. PROGRAM-SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS FOR COMBINED STATE PLAN PARTNER PROGRAMS

CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS AUTHORIZED UNDER THE THE CARL D. PERKINS CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION ACT OF 2006, AS AMENDED BY THE STRENGTHENING CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION FOR THE 21ST CENTURY ACT (PERKINS V) (TITLE 20, UNITED STATES CODE (20 U.S.C. 2301 ET SEQ.))

A. PLAN DEVELOPMENT AND CONSULTATION

https://minnstate.edu/system/cte/Strengthening-CTE/index.html .

A. Plan Development and Consultations

1.

As the eligible agency for the administration of Career and Technical Education in the state, Minnesota State Colleges and Universities, or Minnesota State, works closely in partnership with the Minnesota Department of Education's Career and College Success Division and local consortia to administer Perkins V throughout the state. Local consortia consist of participating school districts and state colleges located within 26 distinct geographic areas encompassing the entire state. The three co-dependent partners collaborate to ensure the successful development of the state plan. Because of this partnership of three, career and technical education initiatives have historically been proactive in aligning activities between secondary and postsecondary CTE programs, promoting student success and seamless transitions from secondary to postsecondary educational opportunities. As an example of this alignment, Minnesota has a program of study rubric that promotes concurrent enrollment, articulation agreements, and demonstrated authentic work experiences between school districts and community

colleges/technical colleges and community employers. Additionally, extensive professional development has been provided under Perkins IV and will be continued to support secondary and postsecondary partnerships, in particular for the development and continuous improvement of programs and Programs of Study, the recruitment and retention of educational professionals, and equity of access and services for every student.

One of the biggest challenges for Minnesota in the development of the 4-year Perkins V plan is providing the right timing and balance between the needs and requirements of the state and the needs of local consortia. To achieve that balance, Minnesota's Perkins V plan development and consultation is the result of a combination of state and local efforts. The primary components of the plan development consisted of an extensive collaboration among the state staff, secondary and postsecondary, business and industry, and community partners. Structurally, the work began with a facilitated broad-based planning group to set the vision, mission, principles, and identify five strategic work groups: Advancing CTE, Career-connected Learning, Integrated Network, Equity and Inclusion, and Knowledgeable Experts. All of the plan development and the strategic workgroups involved state executive leadership work, consultation with our consortia leaders, public meetings, and incorporation of local input.

While consultations occurred at the state level with interested community representatives, advisory groups, superintendents, postsecondary academic administrators, teachers and faculty, the governor's office through the educational liaison, the Tribal Nation Education Council, and business groups, both engagement and consultation also occurred at the regional and local level through the consortia completion of the comprehensive local needs assessment work. Again, frameworks, critical questions, continuous improvement rubrics, equity plans- required components of the Perkins V plan- were developed at the state level, with consultation and customization at the local level to address local students, community and workforce needs. To facilitate the consultation process, Minnesota began its Perkins V work with the development of that comprehensive local needs assessment.

The Advancing CTE strategic work group was charged with developing frameworks for the comprehensive local needs assessment (CLNA) and was also responsible for accountability, outreach, and for promoting the CTE story through awareness and communication. The Career Connected Learning group reviewed and revised the state's career pathways projects with a priority on development of shared standards and definitions of program quality and the integration of work-based learning. The career preparation aspects of career connected learning also fell into the work of the group. The integrated network group was intended to provide more intentionality in our relationships with the multiple federal, state, and local networks necessary for successful CTE work. Equity and Inclusion, an integral part of the work of all the strategic work groups, focused on service partnerships, providing resources, and data management. The Knowledgeable Experts group oversees the critical professional development and technical assistance role of the Act. Teacher licensure preparation programs and minimum qualifications, the mentor/mentee project, consortia leadership, and responding to local requests are the tasks of this group.

Much research, stakeholder input and development went into the creation of Minnesota's Comprehensive Local Needs Assessment (CLNA) Guide and Framework. We view this needs assessment as one of the most significant lever for change introduced with Perkins V. Literally, the CLNA changes the dynamics and habits of Perkins IV with the requirement to base budget development on its outcomes. Aligning business priorities has always been an essential component of the Perkins work with an increasing need to make that connection through the comprehensive local needs assessment. The Comprehensive Local Needs Assessment Guide and Framework are available at https://minnstate.edu/system/cte/Strengthening-CTE/index.html .

Through day-long workshops, webinars, face-to-face meetings and virtual mentoring, professional development has been occurring since October of 2018 to prepare local consortia leaders and work-groups for the relevancy of, and work required, to complete the CLNA. The

CLNA Guide provides Minnesota Perkins Consortia Leaders with context on how to conduct the CLNA and translates language of the law into concrete, actionable steps for conducting a rigorous needs assessment that meets the Strengthening Career and Technical Education for the 21st Century Act requirements. When the CLNA is complete, a consortium will have findings that provides an accurate picture of local CTE programs and learners. It creates an incredible opportunity to:

better help students achieve career success,

- align Perkins budgets with priorities and ensure that programs are aligned with and validated by local/regional workforce needs and economic priorities,
- ensure that consortium programs are serving all learners equitably and to focus resources toward programs that lead to high-skill, high-wage, or in-demand occupations while addressing disparities or gaps in performance,
- build on other process improvement efforts such as ESSA, WIOA, World's Best Workforce and others, and
- provide a structured way to engage key stakeholders regularly around the quality and impact of consortium CTE programs and systems.

Ultimately, the local needs assessment process is about helping applicants make a formal shift from merely collecting and reporting information to using information strategically to drive decisions about consortium CTE programs that help create success for students, employers, and the community. The graphic below emphasizes the link from the CLNA to the actions developed at the local level to address opportunities and challenges. The actions, drawn from the CLNA there are reflected in the budget request of the applicant.

To mentor consortia in the implementation of the CLNA, Minnesota adopted a six-step process. Those six steps are to prepare, explore, assess, prioritize, communicate and evaluate. It is the intention of the Perkins state executive team to provide structure and processes so that local consortia can complete their work efficiently and effectively. The gathering of the stakeholder groups and the prioritization of local or regional work will come from these local efforts. From the CLNA data gathering and analysis, consortia will formulate actions to address gaps or enhance successes. Resources needed to implement those actions are the basis for the development of the local budget request.

After submission of the first round of the 2-year CLNA, May 1, 2020, the planning team will solicit input for needed changes in process, professional development and implementation of the CLNA in anticipation of the 2022 assessment.

The information obtained from both the CLNA and the full set of consortia applications includes the reflection of local consultations. This information will be reviewed by the state leadership team. Final strategies and actions for the work of the state will be finalized using feedback from that submission. With this information, final directions will be given to the Strategic Work Groups: Advancing CTE, Career Connected Learning, Integrated Network, Equity and Inclusion, and Knowledgeable Experts. The information will also inform state leadership regarding professional development and technical assistance needs.

The current cycle of having local applications submitted May 1 is problematic as the state leadership team needs to use the CLNA and application information to inform details of the state-level work plan. As the state plan, submitted with WIOA, is due in March, the opportunity

to use local insights is limited. Future plans include moving the submission date for the 2-year local application to February 1.

2.

Minnesota has structured its implementation of federal Perkins funding through a three pronged model: Minnesota State Colleges and Universities, Minnesota Department of Education, and the local consortia. This model of governance and distribution of funds has provided a tradition of alignment of secondary and postsecondary partners that will continue with the *Strengthening Career and Technical Education for the 21st Century Act* (Perkins V). Minnesota State Colleges and Universities, the eligible agency, will continue to oversee the administration and implementation of the state's Perkins grant with our Minnesota Department of Education partners. Through the Perkins V 4-year state plan, state staff have an opportunity to exercise a variety of leadership levers to advance Minnesota's vision for Career Technical Education (CTE). Those levers include the changes in the fiscal split secondary to postsecondary; increasing the incentive for innovation through the increase in reserve funding and the utilization of data-driven decisions through the CLNA process.

The major responsibility for postsecondary career and technical education resides with the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities (Minnesota State) Workforce Division of Academic and Student Affairs (ASA). The work is done in partnership with other ASA units, specifically, research, educational innovations, and student affairs. These ASA units support CTE work for such initiatives as early college opportunities, program approvals and transfer, data research and reporting, accessibility services, faculty credentialing, and financial aid--all essential for the success of our learners. The CTE unit also works closely with the Equity and Inclusion division of Minnesota State, especially in the execution of the federal OCR requirements and overall professional development committed to support, protect, and encourage inclusive opportunities through the system.

In a parallel manner, the Minnesota Department of Education, Career and College Success Division houses the work of Career and Technical Education for secondary education. The CTE unit advances educational initiatives in collaboration with other Divisions including Indian Education, School Support, Academic Standards and Instructional Effectiveness, Research and Assessment, Equity and Achievement, Early Learning and State Library Services. Initiatives have included: Farm to Table Culinary Curriculum; CTE Safety Protocol development; collaboration with PELSB to implement the Tiered Licensing System; CTE Levy technical support for school districts; CTE curriculum framework development for all CTE program areas; Integration of quality program assessment measures in school district Program Approval processes; and data research reporting and analysis support for local school districts. The CTE Unit also participates as part of the Minnesota Department of Education Academic Success Team that is a team comprised of curriculum and instruction, school support, assessment, and other agency divisions.

Minnesota received approximately $18 million in FY 2019-20. Minnesota State is the fiscal agent for the grant and, as such, utilizes 5% of the allocation for Administration.

Using Perkins V funding levers to help drive meaningful change, Minnesota's Perkins V plan demonstrates that the consortia model empowers equal partnerships to make joint decisions to collaboratively plan and implement CTE programs and services. The Perkins V state plan will reflect changes in the funding distribution model as follows:

1) Distribution of the 85% of the state allocation provided to the local consortia applicants:

Basic Revenue (decreased from 90% in Perkins IV): 85% (of the 85%) will be distributed utilizing the current formula process

Reserve Revenue (increased from 10% in Perkins IV): 15% (of the 85%) will be distributed between rural and high numbers of CTE concentrators

Secondary/postsecondary split: 50:50 in all calculations, basic and reserve

2) State Leadership: the secondary/postsecondary split of state leadership funds will be distributed as 42% secondary and 58 % postsecondary.

State Institutions and Nontraditional will continue to be part of the leadership funds allocated to postsecondary. Minnesota State also will continue to fund major state-wide work such as the annual conferences, communication and software supporting the local applications with that higher percentage of leadership funds.

While planning teams and Perkins state leadership researched and considered utilizing the RFP process to distribute the 15% reserve funding to provide potentially larger investments feedback gathered was not supportive of that change at this time. We will continue to work to review the feasibility of this potential change. The perception is that larger consortia would be at an advantage over smaller, rural consortia in an RFP process has polarized the discussion. Therefore, the state will continue the formula distribution model at this time. Any changes in the current distribution of funds formula will be submitted as part of a future revision to the Perkins V State Plan.

No comments, concerns, or objections were submitted relating to the amount and uses of any funds proposed to be reserved for adult career and technical education, postsecondary career and technical education, and secondary career and technical education after consultation with the State agencies identified in section 122(e)(1)(A)-(C) of the Act.

3.

Opportunities for public comment in person and in writing were provided through face-to-face meetings and webpages with questions, state documents, and provisions to allow individuals to provide written comments. Multiple public meetings were held at various times and locations to provide a wide range of opportunities for individuals to attend. A neutral contractor was hired to facilitate the public hearings to avoid any perception of control of the discussion by state leadership. Comments were collected and routed to the state leadership team for actions. Direct comments were provided to state leadership through email correspondence. These were sent to the facilitator for inclusion in the feedback report.

Notifications of public hearings and the webpage address for input, including the performance indicators, were provided electronically to the following:

Adult Basic Education

Association of School District Homeless Liaisons

Business and Industry Groups:

- Minnesota Precision Manufacturing Association
- Minnesota Hospital Organization
- Minnesota Construction
- Hospitality Minnesota

- Minnesota High Tech Association
- Minnesota Bankers Association

General Public through Facebook, twitter (www.minnstate.edu/CTEHearing)

Minnesota Business Professionals of America (BPA) board

Minnesota Centers of Excellence: distribution to industry partners through the centers

Minnesota Chambers of Commerce

Minnesota Distributive Education Club (DECA)

Minnesota Governor's Office

Minnesota State Academic and Student Affairs personnel including:

- Administrators
- Faculty Development
- Academic Advisors
- Accessibility Coordinators
- PSEO and concurrent enrollment directors
- Veterans
- Students

Minnesota State Board of Trustees

Minnesota Superintendents

Perkins consortium Leaders and coordinators

Professional Associations: MnACTE, MACTA

Secondary Teacher List by MDE specialists

SkillsUSA MN Board

Special Education Directors

Student Organization Advisors

Variety of community organizations and foundations

WIOA Partners:

- Department of Labor
- Department of Employment and Economic Development
- Department of Human Services
- Department of Corrections
- Adult Basic Education

In addition, the front banner of the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities webpage highlighted the public hearing and provided a space for general and specific comments.

The text provided is the following:

Minnesota State and Minnesota Department of Education invite you and the members of the community to attend and participate in public hearings to discuss the changes to the *Strengthening Career and Technical Education for the 21st Century Act* (Perkins V). The focus of Perkins V is the alignment of systems and program improvement (Section 122:(a)(3) State Plan requirement of The Act).

We are seeking your input on:

- proposed state determined performance levels,
- the alignment of programs of study to industry needs,
- financial distribution of funds
- increasing student access to high-quality education, and
- supporting the full continuum of offerings from career exploration through preparations to meet the changing needs of learners and employers.

Public Comment and Hearing Update
Thank you for participating in these public hearing sessions. We are still accepting general comments and feedback on performance levels through Nov. 30, 2019.
Submit general comments
Submit comments on performance levels

During the public meetings, Minnesota State Staff provided an overview of the Perkins V plan and a neutral facilitator solicited feedback through a series of questions. Responses to the questions and an overview of discussion points have been collected in report form.

In addition to the series of public comment meetings, state staff met with Minnesota Tribal Nations Education Committee (TNEC) whose mission is to "strengthen, protect, and advance the overall education experiences and opportunities for all tribal (American Indian) students, families, and communities of Minnesota." The notes of that discussion are included in the comment report attached. At the recommendation of that group, Tribal Nation contacts were cross-walked to current Perkins consortia so that Perkins leaders, in their CLNA work, would be inclusive of the Tribal Nation leadership.

Stakeholder engagement for accountability factors occurred in a parallel but separate process, coming together in the public hearings and the posting of the full 4-year plan.

Secondary

Secondary and postsecondary accountability involves a collaboration between two agencies; each with its own data systems and internal processes. Therefore, transition planning for secondary accountability required a dual decision-making process. The process for identifying and defining secondary performance indicators occurred in two phases.

Phase one included an extensive information gathering process as well as documenting feedback from internal state staff. The purpose was to thoughtfully compile information and identify meaningful and specific questions to pose to stakeholders during phase two. State CTE specialists attended five two-hour long in-person meetings in which they reviewed data files, policy documents, and ESSA requirements in addition to considering existing data collection system and other available data sources. Staff considered all information and materials they

reviewed through the lens of our state's recently updated mission and vision for Career and Technical Education as well as the following questions.

Does this data and information:

1) advance our statewide goals for CTE?

2) support *all* of our CTE students and approved programs?

3) support the needs of our Business and Industry partners as well as local communities?

4) align with the Perkins V legislation?

5) align with other existing state legislation?

Products from the phase one internal secondary CTE state staff meetings included a refined list of key decision-points, discussion questions to pose to the advisory group, and a list of materials and resources that would assist in building stakeholder capacity.

Phase 2 involved sharing the previously identified information with secondary stakeholders in order to collect and compile their recommendations. Representatives from each of the following categories were invited to participate in the "Perkins V Secondary Accountability: Technical Advising Committee": secondary consortia leaders, postsecondary partners, local CTE policy and advocacy groups, school counselors, work-based learning coordinators, high school teachers, principals, and superintendents from rural, suburban, and large metro districts, business and industry leaders from each sector of the CTE Career wheel, Workforce Center staff, and Tribal leaders. During spring 2019, approximately thirty advisory group members engaged in three four-hour in-person meetings. All resources and materials were made available within a secure site so stakeholders could access the information at any point. During the facilitated in-person meetings, advisory group members discussed data sources, reviewed simulated historical data, and considered policy and legislative documents in small groups. Advisory group members were asked to consider all information through the lens of the questions listed above as well as the following questions – are all performance indicators definitions/measures: valid, reliable, meaningful, and possess a high degree of integrity and transparency? Equitable across all student groups? Following each meeting, stakeholders were encouraged to discuss options and implications with their constituents and gather additional feedback that would ultimately inform their recommendations to the state.

Stakeholder recommendations for specific performance indicator definitions were collected using an online survey tool, recommendations for the CTE Concentrator definition and program quality measures were collected using paper and pencil so that stakeholders' full thoughts and ideas could be documented. There were clear recommendations to the state regarding performance indicator definitions, updated CTE Concentrator definition, and the program quality indicator that was preferred.

Subsequent to the roll out of the full scope of the Perkins accountability system and performance level methodology, through listening to consortia leadership and conduction further analysis, recommendations made by the original work group came under review. Group members, district leaders, local partners and state leadership staff probed the implications of each potential program quality indicator. Further discussion and questions, data, and state level priorities were analyzed. These discussions resulted in MDE leadership carefully reviewing initial recommendations and making changes to the indicators. Original members of the stakeholder advisory group as well as all secondary consortia leaders were invited to provide feedback on whether the state should move forward with the previously recommended optional "Other" indicator or if other solutions should be considered at the state level. Additional comments and feedback were gathered regarding the optional program quality performance indicator via a survey tool. Results of that feedback survey prompted MDE

leadership to make changes based on the deeper research. The new indicators were posted and the comment period extended to meet the 60-day requirements.

Postsecondary

In developing postsecondary operational definitions and identifying data sources for participants, concentrators, and each indicator, the state created an accountability workgroup consisting of state research staff for secondary and postsecondary, the State Director of Career Technical Education, and the Interim Associate System Director of Career Technical Education. The workgroup met as needed, generally at least once a month, to provide updates regarding ongoing work, brainstorm solutions to issues that arose, and clarify any questions around process and timelines. Members of the workgroup then consulted with regional partners and determined our operational definitions and data sources were substantively similar. Consortia coordinators were given the opportunity to review and comment on legislative definitions and proposed operational definitions at the MACTA meeting in April (2019). Throughout May and June, as work on revising operational definitions, identifying data sources, and developing datasets progressed, key consortia coordinators and institutional research staff were engaged in phone calls and online meetings to provide feedback. In July, at a meeting of all consortia coordinators, the final draft of definitions and data sources used to develop the accountability datasets was presented and discussed. Finally, consortia coordinators and institutional research staff were presented with the final details regarding the accountability indicators in September.

State Determined Performance Levels (Secondary and Postsecondary)

In developing state determined performance levels, in addition to the regular workgroup meetings, we consulted with regional partners in June and August and determined our methodology for establishing performance levels is relatively similar. We also consulted with DEED throughout June specifically to better understand the statistical adjustment model used for the WIOA Performance Accountability System and discuss how it might apply to Perkins accountability indictors. An online meeting was held in September with consortia coordinators and institutional research staff where questions and feedback were discussed. In October, the state determined performance levels were presented at regional public hearings and published on the Minnesota State website, with a form that allows the public to submit comments. The state determined performance levels, with revision from the public comment, were presented at a meeting with all consortia coordinators in November.

Sensitive to the lack of public input, Minnesota also leveraged existing meetings and communications to solicit unstructured input such as:

CTE Consortia Leadership meeting

Governor's Policy Advisor

Governor’s Workforce Development Board meeting

Local Program Advisory Committee meetings

Governor’s Workforce Development Board meeting

State CTE staff planning meetings

Manufacturing Cluster meetings

Minnesota Centers of Excellence meetings

Minnesota State Academic and Students Affairs webinars, conferences, unit meetings

One-on-one outreach

Regional and local Comprehensive Local Needs group meetings

Regional Superintendents meetings

State CTE staff planning meetings,

WIOA State plan partnership meeting

Though multiple dates, times, and methodologies for input were presented, the State received few comments or suggestions. A neutral third party who also provided a summary overview of this consultation work collected. Three separate documents are available for review: Minnesota Perkins V, EXECUTIVE SUMMARY, Public Comment Report; Minnesota Perkins V Secondary & Post-Secondary Indicator Report Summary; and Complete Discussion Notes. These documents are posted here: https://www.minnstate.edu/system/cte/Strengthening-CTE/index.html. The conversation with the Tribal Nation Education Council did not follow the questions used in the public hearing but rather became a more general conversation about better communication and alignment with career and technical education initiatives.

B. PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION AND IMPLEMENTATION

State's Vision for Education and Workforce Development

The State of Minnesota continues to support workforce development activities through the collaborative work led by the Governor's Workforce Development Board (GWDB), the Minnesota Workforce Council Association (MWCA) and the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED) through the unified public workforce system under the name CareerForce. In addition, specific grants through the Minnesota Department of Labor and Industry (DLI) and the Office of Higher Education support career pathways, teacher recruitment, and students directly. Both Minnesota State and the Minnesota Department of Education are also partners in this work. Below are examples of the most recent major activities.

1. CareerForce: In a collaborative effort led by the GWDB, MWCA, and DEED, a unified public workforce system is being created under the name CareerForce to unify Minnesota's workforce development services at the almost 50 CareerForce locations (formerly WorkForce Centers) around the state and the online labor exchange, career services and resources. CareerForceMN.com features innovative career planning tools, workforce development resources, and customized labor market information for career seekers, businesses, and workforce staff and partners. The site supports the CareerForce mission to facilitate thriving career solutions for individuals, employers, communities and Minnesota, promoting equitable access to prosperity for all. With a CareerForce MN account, users can set career goals; like, save, and share content; and initiate CareerForce Connections.
2. Governor's Workforce Development Board: GWDB heard the call to action in response to the current workforce shortage and submitted the following recommendations:

- Prioritize funding in the 20-21 budget that reduces economic disparities and economic inequalities based on race, disability, disconnected youth or gender.

- Continue funding from the Minnesota State Legislature to support individuals with the most significant disabilities who are eligible for services through Vocational Rehabilitation Services at DEED.
- Align state education and skills training investments with the vision, goals and strategies of the GWDB's and Minnesota's Strategic Plan and the local and regional workforce development systems' plans for the federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) to ensure Minnesota remains a national leader in employment, skills training, education and economic growth.
- Promote adult career pathways and career advancement strategies. Apprenticeships are a proven and affordable earn-while-you-learn skills training model leading to stable jobs, career advancement, and family sustaining wages and benefits. Apprenticeships help bridge racial, ethnic, gender and disability equity gaps within a growing span of industry sectors and in-demand occupations. Apprenticeship programs provide employers with skilled, credentialed and experienced workers.
- Reskill and upskill incumbent workers to meet industry demands for new skills, higher overall skills levels, and advanced skills to prepare the workforce for technological advancements.

3. Workforce Development Scholarships: In the 2018-2019 academic year, nearly 400 Workforce Development Scholarships of $2,500 were awarded to students entering Minnesota State colleges as part of a pilot program funded by a $1 million appropriation from the Minnesota Legislature during the 2017 session. The scholarships were made available to new students entering associate degree, diploma, or certificate programs in high-demand sectors of Minnesota's economy at any of the 30 Minnesota State community and technical colleges. The qualifying programs included advanced manufacturing, agriculture, health care, and information technology. The scholarships covered approximately half the cost of tuition and fees for the required credits.

To serve future students, legislation that came out of the 2019 legislative session substantially expands the $1 million pilot program by making $2 million available for FY2020 and a total of $6 million for FY2021. With the additional funding, the number of available scholarships will increase to an estimated 668 in FY2020. The legislation also expanded the program to include two additional programs of study: early childhood education and transportation. In addition, the seven Minnesota State universities will be eligible to award scholarships for FY2021 to students who received scholarships from a Minnesota State college and transfer into a corresponding bachelor's program.

Referring to the workforce scholarships, Devinder Malhotra, chancellor of Minnesota State Colleges and Universities stated, "As I have traveled around the state, a theme that I consistently hear from employers is that Minnesota is facing a critical shortage of workers with the skills needed for high-demand occupations. Workforce Development Scholarships have proven to be an effective tool for attracting students into these fields and helping them find a path toward a satisfying and well-paying career. We are grateful to the Legislature and the Governor for this opportunity, and we look forward to awarding these scholarships to help meet Minnesota's workforce needs."

4. Continued support of the DEED Training Grant Programs: The Minnesota Jobs Skills Partnership (MJSP) provides short-term training for long-term employment and offsets training-related expenses. Grants include the Partnership Program, which provides up to $400,000 to educational institutions that partner with businesses to develop job training or retraining for existing employees, and the Job Training Incentive Program which provides up to $200,000 to new or expanding businesses (https://mn.gov/deed/business/financing-business/training-grant/).

5. Dual Training Grant: In support of the implementation of the Minnesota Dual-Training Pipeline administered by the MN Department of Labor and Industry (DLI), the 2015 Minnesota Legislature established the Dual Training Grant administered by the MN Office of Higher Education (OHE). The Dual Training Grant (Minnesota Statutes 136A.246) is a funding source that generates collaborative and strategic educational solutions between employers and related-instruction providers across Minnesota. It pairs on-the-job training with related instruction to generate a comprehensive platform for learning. Employers, or organizations of employers, may apply for grants to reimburse expenses related to instruction toward attaining an industry-recognized degree, certificate, or credential for their employees.

6. Concurrent Enrollment Grant Program: The Office of Higher Education administers the Concurrent Enrollment Grant Program for development of new concurrent enrollment courses and expansion of existing concurrent programs. Concurrent enrollment courses are college courses taught in high school by qualified high school teachers during the regular school day and offered through a partnership between a high school and a college or university.

The grant program was established by the 2015 Minnesota Legislature. The 2019 higher education omnibus bill provided $225,000 each year of the 2020-2021 biennium to support development of new concurrent enrollment courses in career and technical education. It also provided $115,000 each year for the expansion of existing concurrent enrollment programs by postsecondary institutions currently offering a concurrent enrollment course.

7. Get Ready Program: Get Ready helps students from low-income backgrounds, indigenous communities, and communities of color realize their aspirations through education and career advancement. Get Ready operates in middle and high schools across multiple districts in Minnesota. Get Ready is funded primarily by the U.S. Department of Education through a federal GEAR UP grant (Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs). The Program is administered by the Minnesota Office of Higher Education. The federal GEAR UP program has two objectives: 1) student graduation from high school, and 2) student transition into college (includes all types of postsecondary institutions) upon high school graduation. For more information about Get Ready, please visit: www.GetReady.state.mn.us

b. Describe the State's strategic vision and set of goals for preparing an educated and skilled workforce (including special populations) and for meeting the skilled workforce needs of employers, including in existing and emerging in-demand industry sectors and occupations as identified by the State, and how the State's career and technical education programs will help to meet these goals. (Section 122(d)(2) of Perkins V)

Preparing people for career and life success and meeting the skilled workforce needs of the state requires a close connection among the entities that recruit, support, educate, train, and develop youth and adults. It means ensuring that all individuals possess the knowledge and skills to enter the workforce and have options for strengthening these capabilities over the course of their careers. This preparation and support requires a network of educators, employers, and service providers to make up a local, regional, and state-wide network.

Formulated as part of the transition year's work, Minnesota developed specific statements to guide the Perkins V work. The vision, mission and principles that were developed are in alignment with the State's WIOA strategic vision, goals, and strategies. This underscores the partnership between the state agencies who are partners in this workforce development space.

Below are the vision, mission, principles and strategic directions for the Minnesota Perkins plan.

Our Vision: Advancing career and technical education empowers every learner to realize a rewarding career.

Our Mission: Quality career and technical education ensures every learner has equitable access to career-connected learning through a network of knowledgeable partners.

Our Principles: We are committed to ensuring:

- An equity lens for all decision-making
- Inclusion of all stakeholders
- Being bold, innovative, and focused on continuous improvement
- Responsiveness to the evolving labor marketThe five strategic directions developed by Minnesota State, Minnesota Department of Education and the full planning team were validated by stakeholder groups and will direct the work of the Perkins V plan.
  These Work Groups have designed and implemented the frameworks, structure and guidance for the initial submission of the state 4-year plan as well as preparing and supporting the local applicants. Based on the input from the initial local 2-year applications, the work groups will customize their workplan to meet the challenges and needs of the local consortia. The Strategic Directions are the following:
  Advancing Career and Technical Education
- Comprehensive Needs Assessment
- Accountability
- Outreach
- Awareness and Communication

- Career Pathways
  - Programs of Study
- Career Preparation
  - Work-based Learning

- Business and Industry
- State and federal programs; state agencies
- Educational Partners
- Consortia/Minnesota State/Minnesota Department of Education

- Service Partnerships
- providing resources
- Data/data management

- Professional development/technical assistance
- Licensure Preparation Programs

- Mentor/mentee relationships
- Consortia leadership

Minnesota is focused on increasing student success by:

- Providing high quality programs of study connected to high-skill, high-wage, in-demand careers
- Increasing the focus on service to special populations including the use of statewide Perkins leadership funds and an expansion of community partnerships
- Requiring data-informed decision making regarding local programs, services and spending
- Supporting local innovation and program of study improvement through increased reserve funding
- Providing focus and support to recruiting, training, and retaining educational professionals

Preparing students for post-high school graduation opportunities has long been the priority of school districts across the nation; however, the past few decades have generally aimed at "college for all," with the assumption that "college" means a four-year degree. Our reality is now driven by global economic needs and the challenge to meet domestic and global workforce demands for jobs that require a combination of academic knowledge and technical skills. Of the careers requiring some type of education, a significant number of them are now requiring a two-year technical degree and/or credential or certification. Additionally, occupations need a workforce of life-long learners to keep abreast with technology and career area knowledge changes. Current trends are breaking down the silos in which education and workforce sectors often operate, thus leading the Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) to strengthen support to schools and districts in creating the World's Best Workforce (WBWF).

MDE has identified the skills and accountability measures of the WBWF, Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), and Career and Technical Education (CTE) and crafted a new vision for career and college readiness with due emphasis on career readiness domains and competencies. This vision has guided the development of the Minnesota Career and College Readiness Resource Guide for schools, students and stakeholders to use to support student learning in this area.

Embracing a well-rounded view of education is needed to drive educational and workforce goals and policies. Taking many perspectives into consideration, along with stakeholder feedback, MDE developed a holistic vision of career and college readiness:

A sufficiently prepared student is one who has the knowledge, skills, mindset, and experiences in the academic, workplace, and personal/social domains to keep learning and, beyond secondary school, to successfully navigate toward and adapt to an economically viable career.

For the purposes of preparing an educated and skilled workforce, including special populations, and for meeting the skilled workforce needs of employers, including both existing and emerging in-demand industry sectors and occupations as identified by the State, the CCR Resource is one resource to guide schools and districts through holistic school or district program planning decisions. It can be used either as a systematic guide, or as individual pieces which best fit with the current phase of planning or improvement efforts. Four domains and competencies represent Minnesota's vision of career and college readiness: Employability Skills, Mindsets and Social Awareness, Career Development and Transitional Knowledge.

MDE is committed to establishing coherence between Perkins, the state CTE Vision, the state CCR Vision, WBWF, and ESSA. For example, one can view the "big picture" of all students being

prepared for education, training, and careers and where the secondary Perkins performance indicators fit within the identified CCR Resource career readiness indicators are measured in the secondary system. All of the measures are grounded in the commitment and subsequent measures of equity access, participation, representation, and outcomes for all students.

In summary, MDE recruits and prepares students in CTE through a progression of education opportunities for students, teachers, and support staff. Minnesota State continues that progression through the goals of Perkins V including providing support of the CLNA in the development of local or regional strategies to develop workforce solutions; support the recruitment, preparation, retention and training of educational professionals; provide incentives for innovation and improvement of POS. These provisions and support are aligned with the recognition that rural consortia and consortia with high numbers of CTE students may need additional support to meet the state determined performance indicators and provide equity of access for the students.

c. Describe the State's strategy for any joint planning, alignment, coordination and leveraging of funds between the State's career and technical education programs and programs of study with the State's workforce development system, to achieve the strategic vision and goals described in section 122(d)(2) of Perkins V, including core programs defined in section 3 of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (29) U.S.C. 3102) and the elements related to system alignment under section 102(b)(B) of such Act (29 U,.S.C. 3112(b)(B)); and for programs carried out under this title with other Federal programs, which may include programs funded under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 and the Higher Education Act of 1965. (Section 122(d)(3) of Perkins V)

As a partner of Minnesota's Combined State WIOA plan, CTE is actively engaged in workforce development planning, coordination and alignment activities with leadership from both Minnesota State and MDE serving on the Governor's Workforce Development Board (GWDB). The board has a responsibility to advise the Governor on Minnesota's workforce system and represents key leaders from business, education, labor, community-based organizations, and government. The GWDB has statutory responsibility under the federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), which provides leadership on opportunities and key workforce strategies for the state. The Board provides a venue for workforce stakeholders building on a shared vision and mission. The GWDB is mandated and funded by the federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) and further defined by Minn. Stat., Sect. 116L.665.

In addition, state staff serves on the career pathways, equity, and inclusion work groups. At the regional and local levels, there is cross planning, alignment and coordination with Perkins leaderships serving on workforce boards and regional workforce personnel serving on the Perkins leadership teams. These relationships are essential to effective and authentic work in the completion of the comprehensive local needs assessments. As a strong local-control state, that local or regional work will be essential in achieving the core programs and elements related to system alignment described in Perkins V and WIOA.

MDE's Office of Adult Education oversees services to learners who have left the education system without graduating from high school. Many Minnesota two-year colleges have been selected as providers for adult education programs, providing services that include supports to help learners transition into CTE programs upon attainment of their GED. It is anticipated that Adult Education completers are likely to continue with their postsecondary education in CTE programs available at postsecondary institutions.

Perkins V reinforces Minnesota State and MDE's shared common efforts when it comes to engaging with the State's Workforce Board (GWDB) and other partners to prepare learners to successfully transition to employment or postsecondary opportunities. . The Perkins V initiative along with other partners, including industry associations and business collations such as

chambers of commerce and Minnesota State's Centers of Excellence, engage business and industry for work-based learning opportunities, participate in and expand sector partnership efforts championed by business and industry, assist with the design of career pathways, and support collaboration with business and industry to increase opportunities for industry recognized credentials. The shared interests and overlapping goals between CTE, ESSA ensure responsibility for secondary student success is shared between the two federally funded programs. Additionally, Perkins V and WIOA share the goal of recognized postsecondary credential attainment for learners.

d. Describe how the eligible agency will use State leadership funds made available under section 112(a)(2) of Perkins V for each of the purposes under section 124(s)of the Act.

Minnesota will use leadership funds to support professional development and provide technical assistance aligned with the CLNA of local applications. Continuing best practice from prior CTE work and incorporating the Perkins V general authority, state leadership activities will include the required uses of funds of the Act.

Supporting preparation for non-traditional fields in current and emerging professions, programs for special populations, and other activities that expose students, including special populations, to high-skill, high-wage, and in-demand occupations will continue. Support will be offered in the form of professional development, technical assistance specific to consortia needs, and awarding incentive grants to eligible recipients with promising practice for addressing the success of our non-traditional and special populations students.

Building on the recent activities with juvenile justice facilities and our history working with correctional institutions, leadership funds will be used to support individuals in state institutions including juvenile justice facilities and correctional institutions. The award for the distribution of these funds will continue to be implemented through the request for proposal (RFP) process. Recipients will be encouraged to share promising practices at the CTE Work! state-wide conference.

Funds will be used for professional development and to recruit, prepare and retain career and technical education teachers, faculty, specialized instructional support personnel, or paraprofessionals. Initiatives will be conducted at the state-wide level through focused efforts to build additional venues for teachers to meet the CTE and work-based learning licensure and certification requirements. Perkins V leadership funds will also support other state and federal grant programs specifically designed to bring solutions to the critical challenge of meeting the state's needs for qualified CTE professionals. Minnesota State's Perkins team has been researching, incentivizing, and providing recommendations to meet the demand for CTE teachers. The current report *CTE Teacher Education Initiatives* https://minnstate.edu/system/cte/professionaldevelopment/documents/MN_CTE_Teacher_Prep_Report-March2020.pdf. documents the state of our CTE teacher supply and demand equation and provides recommendations for initiatives moving forward. This work will require Perkins V leadership funds as well as state and local resources to make both a short-term and long-term impact on our teacher shortage. Minnesota aspires to replicate a full plan such as the national TEACH AG program.

Technical assistance will be provided as eligible recipients request and/or state staff predict the need in the implementation of Perkins V plans. The delivery of technical assistance will continue to be delivered virtually or with a physical site-visit as requested by consortia. As appropriate, the team of secondary and postsecondary state staff will respond to requests. Technical assistance needs will also be determined as the first round of local applications with CLNA are reviewed. High risk applications or challenges noted in multiple applications will trigger the needs for state support.

In addition, leadership funds will support staff time and resources to:

1. Provide templates, rubrics and technical assistance for the development or refinement of State Recognized POS
2. Support the development of frameworks, career exploration materials, guidance, and advisement activities for CTE
3. Facilitate work-based learning experience guides, models and training
4. Promote the integration of academic standards, relevant technical knowledge and skills, and employability skills
5. Provide programming and support to increase the ability of teachers, faculty and specialized instructional support personnel to stay current with industry standards and earn industry-recognized credentials as appropriate
6. Support state staff to establish or participate in existing statewide industry partnerships among local educational agencies, institution of higher education, adult education provides, Native Tribes and Tribal organizations, employers and community organizations.

Minnesota's Perkins V Plan will build on the solid foundation of development and review processes implemented through Perkins IV. Minnesota established a collaborative system focused on the assessment of technical skills in the State's high school and college Career and Technical Education programs. The current system is organized into 26 local consortia. The consortia model brings together secondary teachers and postsecondary faculty and staff along with business and industry partners, to guide the development, implementation, and continuous improvement of programs of study. At its implementation, this collaborative system put in place technical skills assessments (TSA) as a measure of program quality and a tool for teachers/faculty to improve curricula. The TSA has evolved into a benchmark for the individual student and has directed attention to industry recognized credentials and postsecondary credentials in general. Perkins V is an opportunity for our collaborative system to continue ensuring open communication lines between secondary and postsecondary institutions, as well as balancing the labor market needs of the community, region or State.

The diversity of Minnesota's economy is a success story. Analysis of current economic growth points to strengths across a number of sectors—from national competitiveness in agriculture and manufacturing to impressive growth in healthcare and professional business services. Minnesota's resilient economy provides momentum for continued support of career and technical education programs including programs of study in all 16 career clusters. The framework for this continued work includes:

- Marketing
- Business, Management and Administration
- Hospitality and Tourism
- Finance
- Agriculture, Food, and Natural Resources
- Arts, Audio/Video Technology, and Communication
- Information Technology

- Transportation, Distribution, and Logistics
- Architecture and construction
- Manufacturing
- Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics
- Health Science
- Education and Training
- Human Services
- Government and Public Administration
- Law, Public Safety, Corrections and Security.

Comprehensive local needs assessment will assist the local consortium in the prioritization and validation of the economic cluster and related programs of study that meet local or regional needs. These plans will be based on data-driven decisions made with their local and regional partners.

Minnesota has defined a Program of Study (POS) as a coordinated, non-duplicative sequence of academic and technical content at the secondary and postsecondary levels that:

- incorporates challenging State academic standards,
- includes both academic and technical knowledge and skills that are aligned with State-approved frameworks including employability skills,
- is aligned with local and regional needs of current and emerging occupations,
- progresses in specificity (beginning with all aspects of an industry or career cluster) and leads to more occupation-specific instruction,
- has multiple entry and exit points that incorporates credentialing, and
- culminates in the attainment of a recognized postsecondary credential.

The development and distribution of the career and college readiness guides, along with professional development resources provided by the state, is worthy of attention. In Minnesota, career and college readiness has been elevated as an educational support and vital component of programs of study. In March 2016, the Office of Career and College Success, in collaboration with the Regional Educational Laboratory (REL) Midwest and the Midwest Comprehensive Center (MWCC), brought together a group of stakeholders to articulate what career and college readiness means for Minnesota students.

Support for the development and implementation of programs of study at the local consortia level is provided through state-approved frameworks, career and college readiness resources, work-based learning guides, and intentional professional development with teacher, faculty and Perkins leadership. In addition, individual technical assistance is provided through state staff of Minnesota State and Minnesota Department of Education. Building on the considerable work of Perkins IV in which each program of study was reviewed by teachers and faculty for competencies and appropriate technical skill assessment on a rotational basis, work will now have closer alignment with the timing of the secondary programs review scheduled by MDE. The first of this new continuous review process is set to begin January of 2020.

b. Describe the process and criteria to be used for approving locally developed programs of study or career pathways (see Text Box 3 for the statutory definition of career

pathways under section 3(8) of Perkins V), including how such programs address State workforce development and education needs and the criteria to assess the extent to which the local application under section 132 will—

i. promote continuous improvement in academic achievement and technical skill attainment;

ii. expand access to career and technical education for special populations; and iii. support the inclusion of employability skills in programs of study and career pathways. (Section 122(d)(4)(B) of Perkins V)

Minnesota's school districts and the two-year colleges of Minnesota State were self-formed into Perkins consortia under Perkins IV to promote collaborative planning and implementation of Career and Technical education programs within their regions. Benefits of the consortia model include bringing all stakeholders together in a given region to ensure all voices are heard as decision are made to determine which programs of study would best address the workforce needs of the communities.

In identifying initial membership in the State's Perkins consortia, Career and Technical Education leaders were asked to consider the following for their region of the state:

- Career and Technical Education program improvement
- Anticipated Programs of Study
- Dual and concurrent enrollment opportunities
- Collaborative history and culture
- High school to college matriculation patterns
- Geographic proximity
- Continuation of effective collaborative activities that promote high school to college transition
- A decision-making model that would equitably and effectively address Career and Technical Education programming.

For the past several years under Perkins IV the consortia structure has worked well in Minnesota, but as circumstances change over time due to economic, population-related, or other reasons, consortia structure needs to be re-examined to ensure consortia are achieving the goals they were formed to meet. As such, State leaders are requesting that Perkins consortia in Minnesota take a critical look at whether their current configurations best meet the career and technical education needs of students in these regions. This process will be on-going throughout the next four years as Perkins consortia research and plan governance changes to meet State guidelines for size, scope, and quality of programs going forward into Perkins V. As the state implements the Strengthening Career and Technical Education in the 21st Century Act(Perkins V) the consortia model will continue to be the system of delivery for quality Career and Technical education including addressing State workforce development needs and education goals and assessing quality programs of study.

In the planning year, Minnesota formed five strategic direction work groups to guide our transition to Perkin V: Advancing CTE, Career-Connected Learning, Integrated Network, Equity and Inclusion, and Knowledgeable Experts. The purpose of the Career-Connected Learning Work Group is to provide recommendations and decisions that re-set/guide the state in career pathway development from career exploration to employment. Career Connected Learning provides context to core academics through integrated, applied and experiential learning with an exposure to Career and Technical Education and a balanced secondary and postsecondary

experience. One of the goals of the group included the development of a checklist and two rubrics that define the minimum criteria for State-recognized programs of study, the second to identify strengths or potential opportunities in their State-recognized Programs of Study, and the third to provide measures for continuous improvement for all programs of study. The minimum criteria rubric advances and refines the previous Rigorous Program of Study checklist that Minnesota implemented in 2012, the MDE program approval guidelines, and the quality standards from the research of national organizations including Advance CTE.

The elements of the rubric (available at https://minnstate.edu/system/cte/Strengthening-CTE/index.html) to meet the minimum standard for a State-recognized CTE program of study include the following:

1. **Course standards accurately align to the academic, technical, and employability skills learners must master for entry and success in a given career pathway:** Content standards, frameworks and competencies that define what students are expected to know and be able to do to enter and advance in college and/or careers comprise the foundation of a POS.

2. **Program of Study incorporates active involvement from an integrated network of partners:** Ongoing relationships among education, business, and diverse community stakeholders bolster POS design, implementation, evaluation and maintenance.

3. **Secondary program(s) meets MDE program approval requirements and incorporates courses that lead to postsecondary credits/credentials:** Secondary programs have appropriately-licensed teachers, advisory committees, develop and ensure access to equitable student leadership opportunities, and provide career exploration activities leading to postsecondary credits/credentials.

4. **Postsecondary academic program meets Minnesota State board policy and Higher Learning Commission requirements:** A cohesive arrangement of college-level credit courses and experiences, designed to accomplish predetermined objectives, lead to the awarding of a degree, diploma, or certificate.

5. **Materials, Equipment and Resources:** Facilities, equipment, technology and materials used in the program of study reflect current workplace, industry and/or occupational standards and practices for installation, use, maintenance, and safety.

6. **Incorporates authentic work experiences at the secondary and/or postsecondary level that are valued by industry:** POS engages students in authentic work-based learning experiences that demonstrate progressive occupational learning aligned to industry workforce needs.

7. **Program of Study development, improvement and advocacy are supported by findings from a comprehensive local needs assessment:** Systems and strategies for gathering, analyzing, and disseminating needs assessment data are effective for guiding the improvement of POS, and available in plain language to enhance use by stakeholders for POS advocacy.

A consortium will have a minimum requirement of six programs of study by the submission of their second 2-year local application. The process includes program approvals at the secondary level (Minnesota Department of Education program approval and 5-year program review) and the postsecondary level (initial program by Minnesota State system office and then local program review according to their accreditation standards). The consortia's POS will be submitted and reviewed on an annual basis as part of the application for funds. The continuous improvement efforts of the local consortia will be documented through the use of the POS Continuous Improvement rubric which is now in final draft.

Postsecondary

The Minnesota State program approval policy:

Board of Trustee Policy 3.36 Academic Programs Part 5.

Academic Program Approval. Approval of the chancellor is required for new academic programs, changes to existing academic programs, suspension of academic programs, and closure of academic programs at system colleges and universities.

An approved academic program shall include curricular requirements for earning an academic award, such as credits in general education, a major and/or minor, and all prerequisite courses. The chancellor shall maintain the academic program inventory and annually report to the Board of Trustees on the status of the inventory. The annual report to the Board will include data and analysis of programs measured against program goals established by the Chancellor. The goals will be based on aligning program offerings to workforce needs statewide, regionally and locally in collaboration with the Department of Employment and Economic Development and the Governor's Workforce Development Council (GWDC), and including data from the State Demographer. Only academic programs approved by the chancellor as recorded in the academic program inventory may be offered by system colleges and universities.

(Retrieved from https://www.minnstate.edu/board/policy/336.html)

Secondary

Minnesota Department of Education Program Approval

Districts, Cooperatives, and Charter Schools submit a Program Approval Form to the Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) if they are:

- Applying for a new program.
- Making updates to an existing program.
- Perkins consortia region that is up for five-year renewal.

The programs and courses listed within a district's Program Approval Database are the programs and courses that will be reported to MDE in the P-file (Perkins data submission). Retrieved from (https://education.mn.gov/MDE/dse/cte/progApp/) All programs receive review conducted by the Minnesota Department of Education on a five-year cycle.

B.2.b (ii) expand access to career and technical education for special populations;

While economic indicators for the Minnesota are headed in a very positive direction, a number of other indicators highlight the educational and employment disparities that continue to persist. As the disaggregated unemployment data is analyzed, it documents that unemployment and poverty rates for communities of color continue to increase. This research shows that people with disabilities experience over twice the rate of unemployment as those without a disability. The State's WIOA plan states, "Youth are becoming increasingly disconnected from education and the labor market. Minnesota's future economic prosperity requires a workforce development system that provides greater employment opportunities for those experiencing barriers to employment and meets the skill needs of employers."

The Perkins V strategies to meet the challenges of our special populations will come from the analysis at the local or regional level derived from the CLNA. Local consortia are required to document and evaluate how their intentional activities will expand access to Career and Technical Education (CTE) for special populations as identified in the comprehensive local needs assessment. The State will continue to provide professional development to consortia including understanding the expansion of special populations as defined by the Strengthening

Career and Technical Education for the 21 Century Act, consortia data review and analysis, applicable national research projects, and recommendations for interventions.

A component of providing *access for all* to programs is the Office of Civil Rights compliance requirements. Minnesota has demonstrated a long-standing commitment to equity and ensuring that members of special populations are provided equal access to programs. Each year the Minnesota State conducts a minimum of four Office of Civil Rights (OCR) compliance reviews. The major purposes of the OCR Compliance Review are to ensure that community colleges are providing equal access to CTE through vigorous enforcement of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, Section 504 of the Vocational Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and Title II of The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). In addition to conducting a minimum of four local OCR On-Site Compliance Reviews each year, Minnesota State provides ongoing technical assistance to community college staff members on equal access.

The Minnesota Department of Education is required to submit to the United States Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights (OCR), a Biennial Civil Rights Compliance Report. It is MDE's responsibility to conduct comprehensive on-site reviews of school districts to address issues of discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex and disability in vocational education programs. The strategies that have been undertaken under Perkins IV will continue under Perkins V. Specialists with the Compliance and Assistance Division within the Minnesota Department of Education will review Minnesota school districts on a cyclic time frame.

B.2.b. iii. support the inclusion of employability skills in programs of study and career pathways.

Employability skills are increasingly a component of curriculum and instruction in all career and technical programs, and are addressed and validated through the inclusion of work-based learning (WBL) experiences within programs of study and career pathways and all aspects of MDE's Career and College Readiness work.

Work-based learning provides students the opportunity to become engaged with occupations, employers and career pathways. There is a significant importance for both secondary and post-secondary students to participate in work-based learning opportunities. The experience gives students a first-hand look into prospective or chosen careers as well as experience in developing employability skills. Students have the opportunities to participate in career exploration to full emersion either in or outside of the traditional school setting. This is rich experience for students and helps guide them to well-suited career choices. The state supports the local consortium's implementation for work-based learning in the programs of study. One of the minimum requirements for State-recognized Program of Study recognition by the state is the inclusion of a work-based learning opportunity for students. The state supports work-based learning at the consortium level by providing funding to the consortium to both develop and improve these opportunities for students, professional development, and technical assistance.

Opportunities to build career awareness, explore careers, and develop employability, critical thinking and problem solving skills are provided through work-based learning experiences. Local consortium have a range of WBL strategies to include in programs of study, including instructor-led experiences such as simulation, portfolio development, and capstones or employer-aligned WBL such as internships, project work, or field experience. WBL is an instructional strategy within the experiential learning continuum wheel (p. 6, A Reference Guide to Minnesota Work-Based Learning Programs, http://education.state.mn.us/MDE/dse/cte/tl/wbl/) which involves an appropriately licensed teacher (through the Minnesota Professional Educator Licensing and Standards Board (PELSB), formerly the Board of Teaching) who closely supervises the worksite activities, convenes an

advisory committee, and is responsible for the required Training Plan, Training Agreement, safety training, seminar class, evaluation of competencies and recordkeeping.

The work-based learning experience is to be connected to career pathway CTE classes and the career technical student organizations (when available) of the career pathway, including, but not exclusively, the work-based learning career seminar. Training Plans for a particular work experience detail the scope and sequence of occupational competencies and employability skills for entering an occupation or postsecondary education. If a student completes multiple work experiences, the training plan should include a progression of acquisition of higher-level competencies. Each student participating in an employer-aligned work-based learning opportunity must have a training plan prepared by the work-based learning coordinator and the employer, with competencies identified by the team. These identified competencies must match proposed deliverables/outcomes specified in a vendor contract for an identified employment opportunity. Training plans are required to be kept on file at the local school district and be available for review upon request.

This array of opportunities provides Minnesota students with the strategies to become career ready. Students with disabilities have opportunities to participate in work-based learning, however, there may be times when students with disabilities will require specially-designed instruction to meet their educational needs. If an IEP team determines that need, accessing Minnesota's CTE for Students with a Disability may be an appropriate service. The WBL experience provides students with opportunities to build career awareness, explore careers, employability skills, and develop critical thinking and problem-solving skills.

Minnesota has codified employability skills within its definition of career and college readiness. Career and college readiness is defined by Minnesota Statutes, section 120B.30, as:

"For purposes of statewide accountability, 'career and college ready' means a high school graduate has the knowledge, skills, and competencies to successfully pursue a career pathway, including postsecondary credit leading to a degree, diploma, certificate, or industry-recognized credential and employment. Students who are career and college ready are able to successfully complete credit-bearing coursework at a two- or four-year college or university or other credit bearing postsecondary program without need for remediation."

B.2.c.i. Availability of Career Pathways Information

At the state level, career pathway inventories are available through MN Programs of Study (http://www.mnprogramsofstudy.org/mnpos//). Currently information on college credit options, career exploration resources and the full listing of programs of study by high school, career or pathway or college are available. The pathways can also be sorted by consortium name. However, as the system makes changes to its own software platforms and the new State-recognized Programs of Study checklist is implemented the State is researching new options to transition our delivery of this information in more user friendly, compliant and diverse language platforms. Local consortia have print and website information available to students, parents, teacher and faculty.

B.2.c.ii. Career Pathway Multiple Entry and Exit Points

The State is committed to providing support to local consortia and partners and to build career pathways that demonstrate the opportunity for multiple entry and exit points. The availability of multiple entry and exit points provides the opportunity for students to enter a career pathway at various stages in their educational experience. The State does not have the authority to mandate to colleges or high schools the structure of the programs and the creation of degree options. However, the State does collectively encourage programs to structure the credential attainment in a stackable format. This allows students to enter and stop-out at various life points without losing previously obtained experience as well as provide opportunities for students to gain both experience in the industry and educational experiences. This includes the

ability of singular institutions to offer only portions of a program because of limited physical or human resources. The state encourages collaboration and partnerships between educational institutions to provide credential attainment in a variety of ways and encourages institutions to honor transfers, articulations, dual enrollment agreements, and award credits for prior learning experiences, or competency-based education.

Some circumstances are beyond the control of the Career and Technical Education units and are governed by other regulatory agencies such as Regional Accreditation (HLC), State Statute, or Board of Trustee Policy. Programs of study provide students with opportunities to stack their credentials and earn credits for prior educational or work experiences. Programs are developed for people to gain professional development and/or leadership responsibilities in a chosen career pathway. This may be a degree completion or preparation for completion of an industry recognized credential or re-certification. Institutions are developing programs that have smaller parsed courses that allows for students to enroll in courses (or parts) that are needed to complete credentials without having to "re-enroll" and participating in programs that are not needed because of experience or educational completions.

The state will review all the State-recognized Programs of Study and career pathways and provide supports for technical assistance to programs to re-design so that various entry and exit points exists. The creation of the Continuous Improvement Rubric for "program quality" is aligned with Minnesota State, MDE, and the program approval process for schools to self-evaluate the quality of their programs and programs of study in their school district's (not a state evaluation tool). One of the metrics in this tool is to review the multiple entry and exit points. There are many efforts throughout Minnesota State to enhance the entry and exit points in career pathways for various populations such as Veterans and ex-offenders.

Minnesota has required consortia formation between secondary and postsecondary for several years. This obligates partners to collaborate on the development of a joint local Perkins application. This application details how each consortium will use funds to develop, coordinate, and implement CTE programs and programs of study. This requirement by the state has been a successful tool in having eligible recipients work together to leverage resources. Efforts to coordinate and improve State-recognized Programs of Study will include consortia collaboration with secondary, post-secondary, adult basic education (ABE), and workforce agencies.

The state supports application and plan development by monitoring and providing feedback on each local plan. In addition, the annual CTEWorks! Conference starts with a preconference designed to support local consortia coordinators. It gives coordinators a time to network and share learning. This work was highlighted partly because of the alignment of the career pathways definition in WIOA and Perkins V. Future conferences could include sessions on fiscal collaboration with other revenue streams.

The alignment of definitions has provided an opportunity to merge work around multiple entry and exit points. For instance, State-recognized Programs of Study are designed to move students through secondary and postsecondary courses in a particular industry. Although this is a good model it limits access for adult learners, dislocated workers, and others. The only entry point they have is postsecondary and, unfortunately, too many of them end up in development education instead postsecondary coursework. To address this issue, system leadership in ABE and CTE have been regularly meeting this past year to consider a new strategy with Adult Basic Education to create professional development that guides CTE and ABE instructors in creating scaffolded pathway coursework that clearly delineates entry and exit points.

B.2.c.iii. Labor Market Data

Each consortia is required to conduct local and regional needs assessment throughout the state on a biennial basis. The state will utilize the data collected from local and regional needs

assessment to influence conversation at regional levels. This will provide some of data required to make informed decisions about State-recognized Programs of Study. The State also has several resources to align State-recognized Programs of Study to local and regional labor market data. State staff will develop a process for conducting an analysis of consortium programs of study. This analysis will help consortia to determine which programs of study are offered throughout their region. Perkins state leadership will conduct professional development for the consortia leaders and provide technical assistance to utilize a variety of labor market data resources to triangulate data both quantitative and qualitative to analyze what programs are vital to the region. The State anticipates that manufacturing and health care will have a strong presence as needed industries in all needs assessment and will show as in-demand careers in labor market data information. The state may not have the capacity in every institution to develop career pathways in these industries, but can support the partnerships and collaboration between institutions that may not be able to develop program. Once the information is available, consortium leadership will determine how to support the programs that are deemed high-wage, high-skill, or in-demand and how to align programs to meet the needs of the local needs assessment. There are many resources and collaborations occurring throughout the state to address occupations that are deemed high-wage, high-skill, or in-demand.

Funding sources may be directed to consortia to examine and implement the use of current technology, equipment, or training aids that align directly to local, regional, state, and national standards within the economy. Consortia applications will document how they have determined what these needs are and how they came to these conclusions with the support of advisory committees. Programs that do not meet the local needs assessment or the definitions of size, scope and quality may need to seek other sources of funds for equipment or materials to maintain programs.

B.2.c.iv. Equal Access to Approved CTE Programs

The State will continue to ensure equal access to approved career and technical education for all students with evidence-based practices that have proven to be successful in the state. Several consortia have demonstrated the ability to provide education and activities to populations that have barriers to access. Access to Career Technical Education for Students with a disability (ACTE-SPED) aid is available for contracted services and special equipment to enable students to access CTE courses. Information will continue to be disseminated to consortia so that they can continue to access this aid. The state will collaborate with consortium leaders to identify best practices for educational program delivery to diverse populations across large geographic boundaries. This will include guidance for small institutions with limited economic means for delivering needed career and technical education programs because of factors that are beyond the State's ability to control.

The availability of resources can be scarce in extremely rural regions. In addition, the diversity of career and technical programs offered in the consortia is vastly different. One of the elements of the local needs assessment reviews the issues of access to special populations. This will provide regional data for the consortia to determine strategies on closing the gap associated with access and opportunities for students in special populations.

During the transition year, the State conducted research to identify tools such as NAPE's Equity gap analysis tool that will assist in the identification of gaps or present barriers for special populations' access to career and technical education. Gap analysis will allow the state to determine a strategic approach to reducing or eliminating barriers to career and technical educational programming. The state will continue to provide incentive funding for consortia to improve access and opportunity to special populations and to those that have been able to improve and maintain proving career and technical programming and related activities.

The State will encourage local consortia to establish stronger working relationships with community-based organizations and adult basic education to expand career and technical opportunities to underserved populations as defined in the law. The state will continue to support consortia efforts to expand career and technical education offerings beyond the traditional school building. This includes distance delivery of education through various modalities and utilization of industry supported facilities to eliminate one of the physical barriers. It is evident that many of the barriers to access are caused by the lack of career and technical education teacher licensure or credentialing opportunities. Multiple initiative are in place to address the CTE teacher shortage.

The state will continue to support the availability of brokered career pathways to provide more experiences that are educational for students. The State will also continue to fund support services for students with a variety of needs and provide opportunities for students of all abilities to participate in career and technical education wherever practical and applicable. Professional development needs for educators will be considered to aid in the development of curriculum and programs to meet the needs of learners of all ability levels.

B.2.c.v. Local Workforce Development Boards

Local workforce development boards participate in all CTE work in Minnesota and the extent of the involvement is very locally controlled. At minimum, workforce development board members participate in the CLNA. The DEED regional labor market analysts and career pathway counselors are active participants in this work. The Career Pathways Tool (https://mn.gov/deed/data/data-tools/career-pathways-tool/) developed and hosted by the Minnesota Employment and Economic Development is utilized to connect educational programming with labor market data to help align educational outcomes with the employment opportunities. The interactive tool provides access to state-wide or regional exploration of career field and cluster employment projections, the education demand in these occupations, and wage data. The professional development focused on the use of this tool is part of the Perkins V webinar series hosted by Minnesota State. Local and regional relationships exist between the regional career pathway specialists to assist in providing information for educational programming and career advisement for our learners.

In the majority of the consortia, these personnel also participate in career and technical education advisory boards. Workforce center personnel are also part of the local Perkins governance teams in many consortia. The flip-side is also true. Many of our consortia leaders serve on their regional or local workforce development boards.

Minnesota State and Minnesota Department of Education have separate processes for developing and approving career and technical education programs and each State agency has the authority to approve or deny the application based on a variety of criteria. This process does not discriminate between career and technical education or general education programs. The state currently requires consortia to possess six State-recognized Programs of Study. The state does not dictate or mandate that certain consortia offer certain programs. The consortia determine which pathways are best suited to meet the needs of the students and are available regionally. Secondary and postsecondary approval requires the engagement of a local advisory committee in the ongoing delivery of CTE programs. The State has developed and is updating resources for the programs to utilize the creation of local advisory committees. There are also requirements that the program has occupational data demands to support the creation of postsecondary career pathways. Once programs are completed and approved, the program is required to participate in a program review process. State-recognized Programs of Study are reviewed annually to ensure all the required components exist. The State also strongly encourages the participation in State career pathway collaborative meetings where secondary teachers, postsecondary faculty, and industry experts develop, edit, and approve competencies and assessments to validate the skills needed for entering graduates.

The State will review continue to review processes to improve the performance in the areas of career pathway development, program of study development, and local workforce board and education collaboration and partnership. In addition to these mentioned strategies, consortium throughout the State will be conducting local needs assessments and evaluating the findings. This process will influence the decisions to add, improve, modify, or delete career pathways and/or state approved programs of study. It will also influence postsecondary program modification through involvement of established workforce boards.

As part of the development of a Continuous Improvement rubric, one metric includes evaluating the level of engagement by local workforce boards. The metric will evaluate industry and workforce board involvement in the establishment and modifications of career pathways to meet local needs assessments and the needs of the local workforce development boards.

B.2.c.vi. All Aspects of Industry

The State places a strong emphasis on the incorporation of work-based learning, mentoring, internships, and simulated work environments into career pathways as part of State-recognized Programs of Study. Many consortia have developed strong collaborations or partnership with business and industries to provide experiential learning opportunities for students. Consortia are currently developing opportunities for students to engage with business and industry on a variety of levels from exploration to employment in various stages of their education. Secondary and post-secondary partners have developed partnerships to take courses in shared spaces with access to all instructors including industry experts. This also includes providing opportunities for teachers and faculty to participate in externships to learn more about relevant industry skills to be teaching students.

One of the metrics the State has examined is the incorporation of work-based learning for students as a program quality indicator. This may include simulated work environments such as health care simulation laboratories or other simulated businesses. The State will begin to investigate the impact of requiring that all identified State-recognized Programs of Study (which includes both the secondary and postsecondary levels) provide the opportunity for some form of work-based learning for students including youth apprenticeships, internships, co-operative experiences, clinical and practicum experiences, entrepreneurships, work simulations, or other forms work-based learning. In addition, every State-recognized Programs of Study already includes career exploration, preparation, and guidance provided by both educators and industry professionals. Several of the consortia are using Perkins funding to provide opportunities for rigorous, long-term, and sustained career exploration with hands-on experiences that are relevant and current in the industry. Continuing to provide technical support and professional development for these types of work-based learning opportunities will be ongoing with the implementation of Perkins V. In addition, the state will explore partnerships with the Minnesota Department of Labor and Industry to provide secondary schools with collaborative guidance about school-based businesses to ensure that experiences meet requirements of WIOA, Olmstead and other labor laws.

The state will provide technical assistance, evidence-based practice, and resources on proven strategies for local school districts and colleges to implement more and create new work-based learning experiences for students. This metric will become one of the scoring sections in determining program quality.

B.2.c.vii. Improvements in Gaps of Performance

The state will continue to link CTE coursework to hands-on relevant work-based learning experiences, including efforts to develop a scaffolded framework of employability skills development as part of the work experience seminar. The state will provide open educational resources development with the Minnesota Partnership for Collaborative Curriculum (MPCC), with input from a team of CTE teachers from various career fields, which can be used as a

course or as modules within other courses. The enhanced connection to work-based learning and development of employability skills has the potential to increase student retention, engagement, graduation rates and academic performance.

During the Perkins V full implementation, consortium will continue to be encouraged to strengthen intentional connections to regional workforce development centers within consortia and local school districts to identify workforce skill training needs for all students/workers including special population students. Programs of study will be reviewed for their responsiveness to local needs assessments and delivered with fidelity to address workforce and workplace needs. The state, in consultation with grants from ADVANCE CTE, is piloting a workshop on moving beyond "having data" to analyzing root causes and recommending interventions to actually influence change. The pilot is scheduled to review data from two consortia. Revisions to process will be made with all consortia invited in early summer to bring teams to work on their own intervention plan to address gaps of performance.

B.2.d. Dual enrollment

Minnesota has been increasing postsecondary opportunities for students through multiple approaches and offers dual enrollment opportunities for students under the Postsecondary Education Options (PSEO) Act, which includes postsecondary courses taught at the college and/or at the high school through Concurrent Enrollment. By participating in these dual enrollment options, high school students complete both high school graduation requirements and college requirements that allow for greater flexibility when they enter the postsecondary setting full-time. Students may benefit from cost-savings and shorter time-to-credential. State law and consortium regional articulation agreements support planning and funding early college opportunities and ease the transition from secondary to postsecondary.

Eligibility for secondary students to access PSEO on a college campus has expanded over the years to include participation in postsecondary CTE programs for 10th, 11th and 12th grade students. Transcripts at the secondary and postsecondary level document course completion. Tuition, fees, and books for PSEO students who earn dual credit are paid by the Minnesota Department of Education to the colleges and universities in which PSEO students are enrolled. The state also provides support to pay the cost of transportation for low income students attending college courses on a postsecondary campus. In addition to financial provisions to support access to college course-taking opportunities for students, policy holds both institutional partners accountable for offering support services to students both prior to and during enrollment in the PSEO program.

The Minnesota Department of Education developed a Postsecondary Enrollment Options Reference Guide, updated August 2019, which provides definitions of postsecondary options, eligibility of students, and participation requirements including students with Individualized Education Programs (IEP). The guide also includes information for students, parents, districts and postsecondary intuitions. The Minnesota Automated Reporting Student System (MARSS) collects enrollment and demographic student data using a unique student identification system. The system allows MDE to track student enrollment and postsecondary enrollment option participations.

Minnesota's Concurrent Enrollment partnerships offer thousands of Minnesota students' access to rigorous college courses at their local high school. Research shows that high school students who participate in accelerated learning options, such as concurrent enrollment, benefit greatly from:

- Exposure to high expectations.
- Participation in challenging courses.
- The momentum gained by earning college credits while still in high school.

Minnesota's Concurrent Enrollment program has one of the most extensive policy structures in the country to support high school instructors teaching college courses. Secondary and postsecondary institutions are required to sign a concurrent enrollment agreement that provides for the following assurances: determination of qualifications and responsibilities of high school instructors; postsecondary supports for instructors, resources needed to support teaching and learning; regular communication and professional development between postsecondary faculty and high school instructors; and approval of high school instructors to teach college courses by the college or university partner.

Partnerships developed between university and college faculty and high school teachers provide learning and training opportunities that may not otherwise exist.
Additionally, concurrent enrollment students stay at the high school instead of leaving to attend classes at a university. This allows the student to continue their learning within their high school community and eliminates the barrier that transportation that might be experienced if the student needs to travel to the local college. Finally, through participation in concurrent enrollment, high schools establish themselves as education leaders by setting high standards, providing outstanding offerings, and preparing students for the 21st century.

All thirty-one of the two-year colleges in the Minnesota State system participate in dual enrollment and offer these opportunities to high school students. In 2018, over 41,000 high school students gained college credit via dual enrollment, and participation in dual enrollment has grown by 44% over the past five years. This statistic is inclusive of career and technical educational coursework.

Professional development is an essential part of successful dual enrollment activities. The Minnesota State system office provides a variety of professional development opportunities for both internal staff and external partners specific to dual enrollment opportunities and requirements. Monthly webinars are held for concurrent enrollment directors for our 33 concurrent enrollment programs to share best practices, provide policy guidance, and share information relevant to effective program implementation.

Due to state legislation requiring all concurrent enrollment programs to receive NACEP accreditation, we provide annual workshops in collaboration with NACEP. NACEP is the national accreditor of concurrent enrollment programs and provides rigorous programs standards to support high quality programming. These workshops provide opportunities to learn more about the standards, how to implement them, and how to prepare a strong portfolio for accreditation. Minnesota State also held its first concurrent enrollment summit in the fall of 2018 bringing secondary and postsecondary partners together from across the state to learn about effective and equitable programming practices and build a community of practice statewide.

For programming where high school students take college courses on the college campus (PSEO), quarterly webinars are held to share practices and hold an annual convening of program coordinators to engage in professional development around the specific program needs of this model. Technical assistance is provided as specialized support for PSEO programming with students enrolled in the state approved alternative high schools as well.

For all the success of dual enrollment in all of its iterations, two major challenges persist:

1. The barriers created by the misalignment of secondary teacher licensure requirements and postsecondary minimum qualifications in the same or similar content areas
2. The recruitment and support of nonwhite students into dual enrollment opportunities.

B.2.e. Stakeholder Involvement

The stakeholders described in Section 122(d)(12) of Perkins V were involved in this work through a variety of methodologies. Every opportunity to present the opportunities that

changes in the Perkins act presented were capitalized upon. Examples included state staff presentation as part of the agenda for Minnesota's Centers of Excellence, webinars and conference of the Minnesota State Equity and Academic and Student Affairs divisions, Minnesota State's Board of Trustees, and Governor's Workforce Development Board, surveys to parents and students, attendance at the Tribal Nations Education Council, counselor conferences, program advisory meetings, and direct presentations to the regional or local Perkins planning committees. In addition, formal public provided another opportunity for stakeholder engagement. This engagement continues, very actively, as local consortia are in the process of executing their CLNA work. At the local level, consortia will involve all stakeholder groups in the planning, development, implementation and evaluation of the CTE programs and services.

In compliance with section 134(b) of Perkins V the local application has been developed. https://minnstate.edu/system/cte/Strengthening-CTE/index.html

The planning doc also has all the narrative questions and posted on our site here in WORD doc:

https://www.minnstate.edu/system/cte/perkins-local-application/documents/FY21-22-Perkins-Application-Planning-Doc-Narrative-Questions-Only.docx

For the implementation of this Perkins V plan, Minnesota has reviewed its criteria for defining consortia using the lens of size, scope and quality in addition to the minimum requirement of one public secondary district and one public 2-year Minnesota State institution. The consortium's configuration moving forward will need to meet the criteria below by the 2022 submission of a CLNA:

- Minimum of one school district plus one postsecondary Minnesota State College
- Minimum of 6 State-recognized Programs of Study
    - Of these 6 POS, a minimum of 4 career fields must be represented
    - All components of 3 of the 4 POS by career filed must be provided within the consortium
- Greater than 1000 CTE participants at the secondary level
- Greater than 1800 FYE at the postsecondary level.
- The definitions and headcount used for participants and FYE are based on 2018 academic numbers. This was the most recent data as Perkins V went into effect July of 2019.

At the local use of funds level, Minnesota defines size, scope and quality as documented below. However, the State is reviewing and potentially revising these components as we collect information from the comprehensive needs assessments and our formal consultations.

Minnesota defines size, scope and quality at the program level as documented below. However, the State will continue to review and potentially revise these components as we collect information from the comprehensive needs assessments.

Size

- Parameters/resources that affect whether the program can adequately address student-learning outcomes. This includes:
    - Number of students within a program
    - Number of instructors/staff involved with the program
    - Number of courses within a program
    - Available resources for the program (space, equipment, supplies)

Scope

- Programs of study are part of or working toward inclusion within a clearly defined career pathway with multiple entry and exit points. (The goal of 6 State Recognized programs of study offered with in a consortium will be a component of the full Perkins V plan.)
- Programs of study are aligned with local workforce needs and skills.
- Postsecondary programs connect with secondary career and technical education via articulation agreements and/or dual credit, etc.
- Programs develop not only specific work-based skills, but also broadly applicable employability skills**Quality**
- A program must meet two out of the following three criteria: the program develops (1) high skilled individuals, (2) individuals who are competitive for high wage jobs, and (3) individuals who are trained for in-demand occupations.
    - High skilled: programs that result in industry-recognized certificates, credentials, or degrees,
    - High wage: High wage is anything that is above the median wage for all occupations ($41,749 based on 2018 data from Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development)
    - In demand: occupations that are identified in the Occupation in Demand index (https://careerwise.minnstate.edu/jobs/hotCareers?re=R01000) and/or through local needs assessment.
- A program or activity must work toward closing student equity gaps in access and completion (e.g., reducing barriers to students, implementing guided pathways, providing recruitment).
- A program must work toward effectively using data to inform and improve student learning.
- Approved programs meet the requirements of MDE or Minnesota State policies and rules
- Implementation of a continuous program improvement process approved in the local application
- Activities must support or be collaborations with POS Waivers to uses of funds that do not meet the size, scope, and quality criteria at the consortia or local level will be handled on an individual basis at the time of the local application review or as consortia make requests to change their original submissions.

B.3.a. Meeting the Needs of Special Populations

Equity is different from equality. Although equality demands that everyone is treated the same, equity recognizes the unique identity of a student that is too often impacted by racism, bigotry, or bias. Equity corrects these realities through conversations, actions, and distribution or redistribution of resources based on individual and group needs to eliminate structures and barriers to ensure equitable outcomes. By eliminating systemic barriers and biases, well-implemented Career and College Readiness (CCR) programs improve outcomes for underserved students and benefit everyone. Commitments to equity provide the framework for school- and district-level actions that will result in greater access, participation, representation, and attainment of CCR skills for all students.

Applying specifically to Perkins funded activities, all local consortia applications are reviewed by the Minnesota State System Office and Minnesota Department of Education staff to ensure that discrimination against members of special populations in learning, student recruitment and support services, and physical accessibility is not apparent in written goals, objectives, strategies or policies. It is an expectation that each local consortium will identify how the needs of special populations of students will be met to ensure that each learner can be successful and experience the same rigorous career and technical education programs leading to high skill, high wage or in-demand occupations.

The work of Perkins V will continue to have an emphasis on developing strategies that focus not just on prioritizing student recruitment but put in place approaches and support that ensure learner success within CTE programs such as:

- Sharing practices for supporting students in special populations, especially disabilities, English language learners, homeless and non-traditional CTE programs.Outreach through campuses and community-industry partnerships, for example, will be utilized to educate local consortia and support communities of practice to address equity in CTE programs.
- Provide technical assistance to address barriers for access and participation in CTE programs by utilizing partnerships from local and national sources to examine equity challenges, priorities, and research.
- Provide professional development to educators and faculty on effective tools and strategies for supporting learners and ensure equity and access to effective support services, without regard to race, color, national origin, gender or (dis)ability. Utilize OCR compliance and campus diversity officers among other local and national resources to provide effective strategies and assessment of programming and services to learners.
- Provide incentives to support the expansion of the opportunities for learners in diverse geographic communities and to explore and experience CTE in flexible environments, such as but not limited to online learning and community-based CTE programming. Identify and utilize opportunities for innovation and partnership grants to support local initiatives and scale promising practices.
- Extend outreach to include more community and industry input on meaningful and quality CTE opportunities and experiential learning. Provided opportunities for funding through RFP grant process to support these efforts and scale practices.

ii. will not be discriminated against on the basis of status as a member of a special population

Under Perkins V Minnesota will continue the adherence to the Office of Civil Rights guidelines and requirements. OCR Guidelines require each state agency receiving federal financial

assistance that offers or administers vocational education programs to develop and implement a program to monitor compliance to Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. Compliance to the law will include review of institution's documents and publications containing Title VI, Title IX, and Section 504 policy statement(s) of nondiscrimination; language or media used in public notifications other than English if necessary; and statement(s) or write-up(s) used to notify public of nondiscrimination in career and technical opportunities including date(s) issued.

Minnesota State has adopted the general philosophy that this compliance program be perceived and projected as an opportunity to put students first and to improve the learning environment through activities that allows the system to examine the status of existing conditions, identify problems that exist, plan and implement correction and/or improvement and provide the changes as opportunity for improvement across the full Minnesota State system.

In addressing our secondary student population, the Minnesota Department of Education Civil Rights Compliance Review program is designed to ensure that all groups and populations have an equal opportunity to access their education:

- Review data and records, interview staff and students, administer a survey, and examine facilities for accessibility.
- Prepare a Letter of Findings, detailing areas that are out of compliance, and assist with the development of a Voluntary Compliance Plan that outlines what will be done to come into compliance.
- Assist with completing the items on a voluntary compliance plan, including providing technical assistance and sample policies and procedures.

Secondary

The Minnesota Department of Education is required to submit to the United States Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights (OCR), a Biennial Civil Rights Compliance Report. It is MDE's responsibility to conduct comprehensive on-site reviews of school districts to address issues of discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex and disability in vocational education programs. The strategies that have been undertaken under Perkins IV will continue under Perkins V. Specialists with the Compliance and Assistance Division within the Minnesota Department of Education will review Minnesota school districts on a cyclic time frame.

Postsecondary

Minnesota State has demonstrated a long-standing commitment to equity and ensuring that members of special populations are provided equal access to programs. Each year the Minnesota State conducts a minimum of four Office of Civil Rights (OCR) compliance reviews. The major purposes of the OCR Compliance Review are to ensure that community colleges are providing equal access to CTE through vigorous enforcement of civil rights in compliance with the requirements of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, Section 504 of the Vocational Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and Title II of The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). In addition to conducting a minimum of four local OCR On-Site Compliance Reviews each year, Minnesota State provides ongoing technical assistance to community college staff members on equal access.

Both the Minnesota Department of Education and Minnesota State provide professional development to staff and Perkins consortia leadership as well as teachers and faculty. The Office of Equity and Inclusion and the Office of General Counsel also provides professional

development such as the September 19, 2019 workshop Disability Accommodations: Students and Employees (https://www.minnstate.edu/system/ogc/docs/webinars/)

The Minnesota State Board of Trustee Policy 1B1 addresses Equal Opportunity and Nondiscrimination in Employment and Education. Individual campuses are also required to apply the Minnesota State Board of Trustee Policy or implement a local policy providing not less than the system criteria.

Minnesota State Board of Trustee Policy 1B1

Part 1. Policy Statement.

Subpart A. Equal opportunity for students and employees. Minnesota State Colleges and Universities has an enduring commitment to enhancing Minnesota's quality of life by developing and fostering understanding and appreciation of a free and diverse society and providing equal opportunity for all its students and employees. To help effectuate these goals, Minnesota State Colleges and Universities is committed to a policy of equal opportunity and nondiscrimination in employment and education.

Meeting the Needs of Special Populations

MDE's Equity Statement follows: Educational equity is the condition of justice, fairness and inclusion in our systems of education so that all students have access to the opportunities to learn and develop to their fullest potentials. The pursuit of educational equity recognizes the historical conditions and barriers that have prevented opportunity and success in learning for students based on their races, incomes, and other social conditions. Eliminating those structural and institutional barriers to educational opportunities requires systemic change that allows for distribution of resources, information and other support depending on the student's situation to ensure an equitable outcome.

Minnesota State has this goal: "By 2030, Minnesota State will eliminate education equity gaps at every Minnesota State college and university."

Under the umbrella of these statements and goals, multiple initiatives are in place to address disparities or gaps in performance. For example, within the Minnesota Department of Education there is in an effort to better align CTE work and ESSA initiatives. We anticipate supporting and collaborate with state specialists and educators in our special education division, homeless student liaison staff, as well as our English learner division all of whom have a strong start toward reducing and eliminating gaps in performance.

iii Programs to help special pop's meet or exceed state levels of performance for high skill, high wage, in-demand sectors or occupations [Sec. 113]

One of the strategies in place to help special populations meet or exceed state levels of performance involves proving awareness of and recruitment into programs of high skills, high wage, or in-demand sectors or occupations. Minnesota has developed, supported, and encouraged the use of electronic career guidance tools for raising awareness of career options. Examples of guidance tools for learners to explore and build individual career plans include Minnesota Career Information System (MCIS), TalentNeuron Recruit and CareerWise.

Examples of data tools to provide research and additional useful information about career options available, including non-traditional careers, and career options for ex-offenders, are listed below:

1. Career profile integration example:
   (New: job counts, top employers, top skills, top certifications, and links to job postings)

http://careerwise.minnstate.edu/careers/careerDetail?id=6&oc=132011&title=Accountants%20and%20Auditors

2. Industry profile integration example:
   (New: top employers, links to job postings)
   http://careerwise.minnstate.edu/careers/industryDetail?in=221&title=Utilities

3. Integrated job search tool:
   (New: job postings and multiple options to filter data)
   http://careerwise.minnstate.edu/jobs/jobSearchResults

4. Career Information Site tailored to better meet the needs of students in Special Education. https://portal.mncis.intocareers.org/media/2044/2019-mcis-subscription-fees-for-sped.pdf

5. Tools and insights into career clusters through the lens of employer demandhttp://www.realtimetalent.org/research/cte-pathways/

In summary, efforts to address equity in CTE will focus on four pillars that are guided by federal requirements:

- Professional development programs (**capacity and competency**)
- Address equal access to activities under this Act (**existing programs**)
- Programs that help special populations meet or exceed state performance (**interventions and innovation**)
- Non-discrimination (**compliance**)

To provide actions in support of these four pillars, the Minnesota Perkins team is committed to providing the following:

1.

   a. Professional Development for faculty, teachers, counselors and staff to address disparities including underrepresentation in nontraditional career programs. Further professional development on the impact of poverty and implicit bias on classroom teaching practices, student engagement and advising. Education Innovation Faculty development can also serve as a source for delivering equity training.

   b. Technical Assistance to local consortia to support equity assessment of programs of study, supports for special populations and campus or school environment. The Minnesota State Office of Equity and Diversity can serve as one of many resources for technical assistance, along with other identified organizations such as NAPE, MDRC and NTACT.

   c. Community and Employer Engagement to broaden outreach to community-education-employer partnerships (and communications) about the opportunities and value of CTE for career development and work preparation.

   d. System approaches to support shared best practices among diverse geographic regions of state on strategies and delivery methods proven effective in expanding the educational experiences and nontraditional career options for special populations. Use of incentivized support to replicate or scale proven practices. Community organizations, workforce centers and state agencies will be invited via RFP process and state register notification to apply for funding to support corrections and disabilities services.

e. Compliance and Non-discrimination: New partners, both internal and external, such as OCR compliance officers will be engaged to identify and develop system strategies and technical assistance needed for addressing disparities or equity related performance gaps.

f. Provide incentive and capacity-building funding to support innovation for initiatives that increase the success of special populations. Metrics and measurements related to support requires the disaggregation of Perkins data regarding performance on core indicators and the support for the redistribution of funds to support equity. iv. Provide appropriate accommodations; and integrated settings that support competitive, integrated employment. (Section 122(d)(9) of Perkins V)

Equal opportunity to enter CTE programs, services, and activities requires equal access for learners with special needs as compared to the general student population. Such provisions are reviewed for compliance throughout all required accountability indicators. Specific strategies to address learner accommodations include auxiliary or related aids and services, modified instructional equipment, and modified or adapted course offerings. Accommodations are provided for persons with disabilities in regular or special needs occupational programs. Accommodation services are publicized and use is actively encouraged by teachers, faculty and staff. Students with IEPs are assessed for career interests and abilities. The IEP reflects [career] education and training leading to the outcome of competitive, integrated employment (ACTE-SPEDS, MN Department of Education)

v. will be provided instruction and work-based learning opportunities in integrated settings that support competitive integrated employment. (Section 122(d)(9) of Perkins V)

Work-based learning (WBL) provides appropriate accommodations for students of various ability levels. All students, regardless of abilities, must have impactful experiences. WBL experiences provide:

- Guidance to schools and employers on perceptions of quality WBL and value to all student populations
    - WBL experiences and activities that offer high quality content and curriculum, including a range of levels from exploration (experiential learning) to work experience, career preparation and instruction that is "stackable" and explores all aspects of a targeted industry or occupation.
    - WBL that has quality content and learning experiences as an integral part of CTE, supporting meaningful career development.

At the secondary level, appropriate accommodations and support for a competitive, integrated work environment for students with disabilities are undergirded by Minnesota's Olmstead Plan. Named after a United States Supreme Court decision the, Olmstead Plan is a statewide comprehensive plan to provide people with disabilities opportunities to live, learn, work, and enjoy life in integrated settings. The plan calls out multiple education related goals, including those listed below, that in order to be achieved, require the support of Career and Technical Education at the secondary level:

- By June 30, 2020, the number of students with developmental cognitive disabilities, ages 19-21 that enter into competitive integrated employment will be 763
- By June 30, 2020 the percent of students with disabilities who have enrolled in an integrated postsecondary education setting within one year of leaving high school will increase to 36% (from baseline of 31%).To that end, secondary career and technical

education programs will provide appropriate accommodations and support for a competitive, integrated work environment through a variety of strategies targeted specifically at work-based learning programs. These strategies will increase the quality of programs, enhance educator expertise, and capitalize on partnerships with other state agencies. High Quality Work-based Learning ProgramsEvery five years, school districts will engage in a formal program approval process for work-based learning programs specifically designed for students with disabilities. The program approval process, as outlined by administrative rule, identifies the minimum requirements needed to ensure all students engage in a well-designed work experience aligned to their interests and skills. Once a school district's program is approved, the district may access additional state funding to modify curriculum and purchase special equipment for students with disabilities enrolled in the work-based learning program. Educator ExpertiseThe Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) will provide direct technical assistance to teachers who work with students with disabilities to ensure work-based learning programs are well-designed to align with students' interests and skills. Additionally, MDE will coordinate an annual professional development conference for work-based learning coordinators with programming related to competitive, integrated work environments. Partnerships

Minnesota Department of Education staff will continue to work closely with colleagues in Vocational Rehabilitation Services, Special Education Transition Services, and the Department of Labor to ensure each agency, when possible, uses similar language and processes when working with school districts to provide high quality work-based learning experiences for students with disabilities and to eliminate barriers that prevent school districts from offering these programs.

Preparing Teachers and Faculty

The need for recruitment and preparation of CTE teachers is critical in Minnesota. State leadership funds will support over-arching programs and professional development as outlined below. Local consortium will have additional goals and strategies based on their CLNA. State staff will assist with the professional development and provide technical assistance as needed and appropriate. This work is also supported by state legislation in policy and funding as truly, multiple resources are needed to approach this challenge.

Shortage of Licensed CTE Teachers

The 2019 Biennial Minnesota Teacher Supply and Demand report prepared for the Minnesota Professional Educator Licensing Standards Board (PELSB) by Wilder Research (retrieved from: https://mn.gov/pelsb/assets/2019%20Supply%20and%20Demand%20Report_tcm1113-370206.pdf) found that Minnesota school districts are facing a shortage of licensed teachers across grade levels and in most disciplines. Licensure areas with a high percentage of teachers on special permission (out of their licensure area or without a standard teaching license) include Career and Technical Education fields, world languages, special education, and STEM. The report also noted that the percentage of teachers of color remains stagnant with the percentage of students of color continues to grow in Minnesota.

Of specific concern to CTE, the Teacher Supply and Demand report states that four CTE licensure areas currently do not have board-approved licensure programs. Another four CTE licensure areas currently have only one board-approved licensure program; however, that program is not approved to provide an initial teaching license. Only three licensure areas have

more than one option for candidates to obtain a license and there is only one option for obtaining work-based learning as a stand-alone certification.

Minnesota CTE will support the recruitment and preparation of educators by employing data from consortia Comprehensive Local Needs Assessments and national and state research to assess options for addressing current and future needs. In addition, it will support the growth and development of experiential learning for prospective CTE teachers. Emerging solutions include for-credit and non-credit teacher education programs using traditional and alternative approaches. Continuous consultation with education and training providers as well as agencies and stakeholders directing all aspects of CTE teacher licensure will be critical to the success of this work. The Knowledgeable Experts Strategic CTE Work Group is tasked with facilitating and supporting initiatives to accomplish Recruitment & Retention of Teachers & Faculty.

The Knowledgeable Experts strategic group develops, implements, and analyzes professional development priorities designed to advance Career and Technical Education in Minnesota as part of the state's four-year plan for the Strengthening Career and Technical Education for the 21st Century Act. "Knowledgeable Experts" refers to the community of career and technical education stakeholders who would benefit from professional development and resources related to all aspects of career pathways and Perkins administration. The work of this group includes keeping the multiple initiatives aligned, making connections with other state and national initiatives, and providing focus so that the work becomes actionable.

Recruitment and retention of CTE educators is one of three priority areas for the Knowledgeable Experts group and is the focus of a specific Work Group. The Recruitment & Retention of Teachers & Faculty in CTE Work Group provides professional development to support the recruitment and retention of CTE teachers and faculty in secondary and postsecondary institutions. Due to the great need for educators of color in Minnesota, special emphasis is placed on recruiting and retaining these individuals. This 15-20-member group first met in the fall of 2019 and is scheduled to meet every other month for the rest of fiscal year 2020. Goals for the group will be confirmed in early 2020.

Expected priorities to be addressed 2020-2024 by the Work Group include:

- Professional development resources for newly-hired college technical program faculty
- Initiatives supporting perspective CTE teachers of color as they pursue licensure
- Cultural competency learning for secondary and postsecondary educators
- Assessing pathways for non-licensed educators (paraprofessionals) to pursue CTE licensure
- Providing resources and connections for CTeacher Prep 2030.

Measurements will be determined as the Work Group recommends the specific projects and action items related to these priorities.

CTEacher Prep 2030

Minnesota State Colleges and Universities (Minnesota State) and the Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) are actively pursuing solutions to meet the state's needs with the development of the CTEacher Prep 2030 program. The vision of this initiative is to address the Career and Technical teacher shortage by creating a multi-pronged approach for candidates to complete credentialing requirements and enter, or continue to be part of, the educational system's workforce.

Three components of teacher preparation need to be met with innovative and collaborative strategies: Standard Effective Practices (SEP), Career and Technical Education Core (CTE Core),

and Work Based Learning Teacher Coordinator Training (WBL). By 2024, Minnesota CTE will be supporting the development and administration of multiple online and in-person programs offering these courses.

The most current documentation of CTE Teacher Shortage Initiatives and recommendations may be accessed at: : https://minnstate.edu/system/cte/professionaldevelopment/documents/MN_CTE_Teacher_Prep_Report-March2020.pdf. In addition to developing flexible programs and access to the necessary components for CTE teacher candidates to meet Minnesota Professional Educator Licensing and Standards Board (PELSB) approval, recruitment and retention initiatives are part of the state's work. CTEacher Prep 2030 proposes to accomplish the following:

1. Support "grow your own" and alternative initiatives that encourage non-CTE licensed educators to pursue and obtain CTE licensure.
2. Support experiential learning programs such as the Teacher Cadet program currently in place.
3. Identify career and technical academic routes for prospective CTE teachers to earn teacher education degrees across Minnesota State campuses.
4. Establish partnerships for delivery of Standards of Effective Practice (SEP) in Teacher Education in multiple formats.
5. Build a universal work-based learning academic component for all CTE teachers.
6. Create or identify institutional support for recruitment, hiring, and training of CTE teaches.
7. Develop new and support existing systems of assessing CTE skills of potential CTE teachers through portfolio, internship, or demonstrated skill set attainment.
8. Create a statewide system of support through instructional coaching and/or with veteran CTE Instructors on Special Assignment.
9. Support Minnesota Associations of Career Technical Educators (MnACTE) in initiatives to serve as coaches or mentors to non-licensed CTE teachers preparing portfolios for PELSB approval.
10. Continue support of the teacher education sequence (TES) required for postsecondary CTE faculty. Research the opportunity to have this sequence serve secondary teachers.

The intent of CTEacher Prep 2030 is to create a collaborative approach to confront the career and technical needs of Minnesota by linking institutional resources. This collaborative approach supports alternative approaches to credentialing, conventional paths to academic degrees at our universities, and must provide flexibility for innovation for stakeholders and across institutions. The specific examples of initiatives below all fall under the umbrella structure of CTeacher Prep 2030 and will be under the overall auspices of the Knowledgeable Expert Strategic workgroup.

More details of some of the major components of this work are provided below.

Increasing Diversity in Minnesota's Educator Workforce

Through multiple state grants, the Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) is working on an endeavor to increase and diversify the educator workforce with the support of the governor's office. MDE's Career and College Success Division is focusing on Career and Technical Education teachers, especially those in their first four years of teaching. The four elements of MDE's plan are: Explore, Become, Grow, and Thrive.

Specific goals and activities for the "Increase and Diversify the Educator Workforce" initiative will be determined in alignment with CLNA results and the overall needs of the state.

New CTE Teacher Initiative

Perkins V will continue to support the New CTE Teacher Initiative, which focuses on the "become" and "grow" elements of MDE's Increase and Diversify the Educator Workforce initiative. Designed to help teachers gain the knowledge and resources they need to be successful in the secondary CTE classroom, this initiative has already served more than 100 CTE educators. While open to any CTE teacher, the program is ideal for new or first-time CTE teachers because it provides opportunities to support and improve teacher confidence and collaboration. Resources and support for the year-long program include ongoing professional development in webinars, in-person meetings, book recommendations, monthly newsletters, breakout sessions at CTE conferences, and a two-day summer conference. The New CTE Teacher Initiative goal is for a 15% increase in CTE-licensed teachers in the next four years.

Teacher Cadet Training

As part of the recruitment strategies for CTE teachers, the Teacher Cadet program focuses on recruiting high school students from ethnically diverse populations, students on free and reduced lunch, students first in their families to attend college, and male students interested in working with young children. The Teacher Cadet program addresses the teacher shortage problem in Minnesota and the United States by providing experiential learning for prospective students who might later pursue their CTE teacher license. The program also utilizes partnerships among MDE and Minnesota colleges to close the opportunity gap for the Cadets by providing mentoring, financial-aid resources or loan forgiveness programs if concurrent enrollment options are available, and help in transitioning successfully from the Cadet program to postsecondary options. The program directs students to college wrap-around support services available to help students successfully transition to postsecondary offerings.

State Leadership funds will be used to support the full spectrum of educational personnel including special education teachers, faculty, school principals, and administrators at secondary and postsecondary levels, specialized instructional support personnel, and paraprofessionals. The delivery methodologies be consistent with the our professional development framework including webinars, the state-wide conference, and alignment (or insertion) into existing opportunities such as the NTEC meetings, superintendents conferences, monthly student and academic affairs officers ZOOM meeting for Minnesota State colleges and universities.

Specifically regarding education for students with disabilities, at the secondary level, appropriate accommodations and support for a competitive, integrated work environment for students with disabilities are undergirded by Minnesota's Olmstead Plan. Named after a United States Supreme Court decision the, Olmstead Plan is a statewide comprehensive plan to provide people with disabilities opportunities to live, learn, work, and enjoy life in integrated settings. The plan calls out multiple education related goals, including those listed below, that in order to be achieved, require the support of Career and Technical Education at the secondary level:

-
    - By June 30, 2020, the number of students with developmental cognitive disabilities, ages 19-21 that enter into competitive integrated employment will be 763

- By June 30, 2020 the percent of students with disabilities who have enrolled in an integrated postsecondary education setting within one year of leaving high school will increase to 36% (from baseline of 31%). To that end, secondary career and technical education programs will provide appropriate accommodations and support for a competitive, integrated work environment through a variety of strategies targeted specifically at work-based learning programs. These strategies will increase the quality of programs, enhance educator expertise, and capitalize on partnerships with other state agencies.

Minnesota has many efforts in place or in concept stage to meet the projected needs for career and technical education teachers. The Knowledgeable Expert strategic work group in the process of taking an inventory of both national and state initiatives so that we can, with focus, bring solutions to our work. This work needs to include recruitment and retention of teachers. A 2018 survey of 796 CTE teachers conducted by the Student Research Foundation found that 37% of them plan to leave the teaching profession within the next five years. This work group has much to do!

C. FISCAL RESPONSIBILITY

C. **Fiscal Responsibility**

Academic achievement

Continuing Minnesota's consortium model, eligible recipients must offer Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs that include rigorous, coherent CTE content aligned with challenging academic standards. All approved State-recognized program of study much include opportunities for both academic and technical skill attainment, which, ideally are integrated. The newly implemented State-recognized Program of Study rubric includes the requirement that "course standards accurately align to the academic, technical, and employability skills learners must master for entry and success in a given career pathway." This articulates that the foundation of a program of study is the academic skills student must have to enter and advance in career and/or college.

Academic skills as the foundation of a program of study is further emphasized in the Minnesota Department of Education's recent work on Career and College Readiness (CCR). In March, 2016, MDE, in collaboration with the Regional Educational Laboratory (REL) Midwest and the Midwest Comprehensive Center (MSCC), brought together a group of stakeholders to articulate what career and college readiness means for Minnesota students. Minnesota's vision of CCR is that a well-rounded view of education is needed to drive educational and workforce goals and policies. Taking many perspectives into consideration through stakeholder feedback, the Minnesota CCR Work Group developed a holistic vision of career and college readiness:

"A sufficiently prepared student is one who has the knowledge, skills, mindset, and experiences in the academic, workplace, and personal/social domains to keep learning and, beyond secondary school, to successfully navigate toward and adapt to an economically viable career."

Clearly, academic skills are at the very foundation of career and college readiness. CCR resources developed by MDE and distributed to secondary districts provide a comprehensive set of guidance, strategies, and tools for engaging districts and schools in equity-oriented CCR program planning and a continuous improvement process.

Skill Attainment

Historically, reporting of technical skills assessment has been part of an intentional review process in Minnesota for more than a decade. The technical skill assessment project began with a pilot group of five programs of study completing a comprehensive review of foundational and academic knowledge, skills, and technical competencies needed to gain employment in selected

careers. Through this collaborative process, secondary teachers, postsecondary faculty, business/industry experts validated the appropriate competencies, and technical skill assessments that would support these competencies. Minnesota continued completion of this process of bringing the secondary and postsecondary teaching staff together with their business and industry partners twice to analyze each of the 72 career pathways. The review process continued to update and validate competencies and the identification of assessments with over 600 secondary teachers and 500 post-secondary faculty along with business and industry representatives participating. The TSA reports were an essential component of the Perkins IV work.

In the implementation of Perkins V, skill attainment remains a priority of the work. However, due to stakeholder engagement and feedback along with the review by state leaders of the challenges to completing and reports TSA as had been done in the past, Minnesota has chosen not to have TSA as a program quality element that will be reported as a program quality indicator. The documentation of skill attainment will continue to be an element required for designation as a State-recognized Program of Study, the documentation of skill attainment will continue as an element of program review at secondary and postsecondary institutions.

All State-recognized POS have a pathway leading to a recognized postsecondary credential. The definition of recognized postsecondary credential utilized is the WIOA definition. Under WIOA the term ''recognized postsecondary credential'' means a credential consisting of an industry-recognized certificate or certification, a certificate of completion of an apprenticeship, a license recognized by the State involved or Federal Government, or an associate or baccalaureate degree.

In addition, Minnesota will validate the definitions of program quality and determine baseline data for CTE concentrators in academic year 2019-2020. The complete accountability system, secondary and postsecondary, will monitor academic performance and completion rates including CTE subpopulations. Professional development and technical assistance will be provided to assist consortia in developing and implementing continuous improvement plans.

The State-recognized Programs of Study requires that the secondary component of the POS includes an MDE approved CTE program and the postsecondary component of the POS includes a Minnesota State approved program.

To have an approved program requires that local district to meet the MDE program requirements which includes both the academic and technical knowledge and skill components. In a similar fashion, a postsecondary approved diploma or associate degree award consists of both general education and technical courses. The program approval process for both has elements of interaction with business and industry through the requirement of program advisory committees.

Local Needs Assessment **(Section 122(d)(5) of Perkins V)**

As part of a local application, submitted on May 1, 2020, local consortium must include a comprehensive local needs assessment (CLNA) as per Perkins V requirements to be an eligible recipient of funds. All elements documented in ACT will be required: student performance, sufficient size, scope, and quality; progress toward programs and programs of study, recruitment, retention and training of CTE professionals, and equity of access. The state's definition of size, scope, and quality, and alignment to labor market include parameters for identification of high-skilled, high-wage, and in-demand. Both Minnesota's Comprehensive Local Needs Assessment Guide and the Framework provide guidance to ensuring that local economic and education needs are taken into consideration. State leadership will review the applications and have a dialogue with applicants to ensure section 122 is observed. On an on-going basis, the monitoring process conducted with the individual consortium will review the

evidence that the CLNA collected data, and implemented actions that took local economic and education needs into consideration.

Our Advancing CTE Strategic Direction group has been reviewing research, consulting with other states and gleaning promising practices from the states experience with WIOA and ESSA needs assessments to formulate a CLNA form and guide to increase the consortia's success in gathering, analyzing, and implementing actions from the CLNA. Professional development regarding the form, guide and process have occurred July 31, 2019; November4, 2019; through multiple webinars and utilizing face-to-face technical assistance.

The joint secondary and postsecondary applications submitted by consortia must provide performance targets and strategies for continuous improvement of academic achievement and technical skill attainment linked to comprehensive local needs assessment.

2. Describe how funds received by the eligible agency through the allotment made under section 111 of the Act will be distributed

a. among career and technical education at the secondary level, or career and technical education at the postsecondary and adult level, or both, including how such distribution will most effectively provide students with the skills needed to succeed in the work place; and

State Administration: 5%

Administration allocation is spent on activities related to developing the State Plan; reviewing applications, monitoring consortia; compliance oversight; supporting fiscal and data systems required to implement Perkins V.

State Leadership Activities: 10%

Leadership funds ar split between Minnesota Department of Education 42% and Minnesota State 58%. A minimum of 0.1% of leadership funds will be used for recruitment of special populations. From the postsecondary 58%, $50,000 will be used for state institutions and $50,000 used for preparation for nontraditional career fields.

Distribution to Local Education Agencies (Consortia): 85%

In Minnesota, funds received by the eligible agency under section 111 will be allocated to local consortia according to the following allotments and calculations. These distribution methods are expected to provide the resources needed for student success in the workplace throughout the state including the increase in reserve funds to incentivize innovation and quality of POS. The reserve fund calculation will be split, by formula, to target both rural areas and applications serving high numbers of CTE students.

Basic: Eighty-five percent of the funds received by the state will be distributed to local applicants through basic and reserve funding allocations will be allocated under Section 131. The basic grant funds awarded are calculated by formula with the split of distribution to secondary programs 50% of the 85% and postsecondary 50% of the 85%. This change from 42:58 to an equal percentage split of funding is based on an agreement between the Minnesota Department of Education and the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities and represents a change that will be reflected in the July 1, 2020 allocation to consortia. The 50:50 split represents a philosophical commitment by leadership to support equal opportunity and economic empowerment for both partners in the consortium. Neither secondary nor postsecondary is a "lesser than" or "greater than" at the governance table.

Reserve: Fifteen percent distributed to secondary programs (50%) and postsecondary (50%) as reserve funding. These funds take into consideration "rural" and high numbers by adding the square mileage of the consortia as part of the calculations. Allocation amounts to the whole

consortium are based on 50% sum of the area for member district in the consortium area if/as consortium have greater than 50 square miles of area served.

b. among any consortia that may be formed among secondary schools and eligible institutions, and how funds will be distributed among the members of the consortia, including the rationale for such distribution and how it will most effectively provide students with the skills needed to succeed in the workplace. (Section 122(d)(8) of Perkins V)

While consortia will submit a single application and receive an overall award, the calculations for the consortium will be based on:

<u>Local Consortium Formula Allocation amounts:</u>

Secondary formula:

- Most recent U. S. Census data for the population by school district of individuals aged 5-17
- Most recent U. S. Census data for the population by school district of individuals aged 5-17 in households of poverty
- Description (70% District population 5-17 in poverty/state population 5-17 in poverty times the total secondary formula amount) plus 30% district population 5-17/state population 5-17 times the total secondary formula amount for the state from the OCTAE allocation-50% is calculated for each district. The secondary consortium formula=the sum of the amounts calculated for each district member of the consortium.

Postsecondary formula:

- Most recent data for CTE Postsecondary Pell Recipients
- Description (Pell recipients in the college in Perkins eligible programs/ Pell recipients in the state in Perkins eligible programs times the total postsecondary formula amount for the state from the OCTAE allocation-50% is calculated for each college. The postsecondary consortium formula=the sum of the amounts calculated for each college member of the consortium.

<u>Local Consortium Reserve Allocation amounts:</u>

Reserve: As per the Minnesota State CTE Plan, allocations amounts to the whole consortium are based on 50% sum of the area for member districts in the consortium/area for all districts in the state; 37.5% on the sum of secondary participants for member districts in the consortium/total secondary CTE participants in the state and 12.5% on the sum of postsecondary participants for member districts in the consortium/total CTE postsecondary participants in the state based on the following data:

- School district area to account for certain district consolidations
- Most recent data for CTE Secondary Participants
- Most recent data on Perkins CTE Participants

For all calculations, the year representing "most recent" will be consist across all formula.

3. For the upcoming year, ***provide the specific dollar allocations made available by the eligible agency for career and technical education programs and programs of study under section 131(a)-(e) of the Act and describe how these allocations are distributed to local educational agencies, areas career and technical education schools and educational service agencies within the State. (Section 131(g) of Perkins V).***

Based on the state's receipt of Perkins V dollars July 1, 2019, the allocation for postsecondary CTE programs and services in the next allocation is $7,953,475.50. The postsecondary allocation is calculated based on Section 132 and Section 112 of the Act.

Based on the state's receipt of Perkins V dollars July 1, 2019, the allocation for secondary CTE programs and services in the next allocation is $7,953,475.50. The secondary allocation is calculated based on Section 132 and Section 112 of the Act.

Allocations are distributed to eligible consortia consisting of both secondary and postsecondary partners and dependent upon an approved application. The applications are reviewed by state staff and must include the CLNA, POS, required narrative of activities, and the proposed budget.

Each consortium determines a fiscal agent to manage distribution for the secondary partners and a second fiscal agent to manage distribution for the postsecondary partners. The members of the consortium jointly determine the process for prioritizing activities that are reasonable, necessary, and allocable based on the CLNA. Members of a consortium reach agreement upon the mutually beneficial programs and services that Perkins funds will support, describe the purposes and programs in their joint application, and include evidence of assessment and continued improvement.

The chart below relies on the last fiscal information from the federal award and the last-year student data. It is a projected consortia breakdown of budgets for planning purposes only.

Estimated (FFY20) PERKINS V BUDGET AWARD 2020-2021

			October 1, 2020 Allocation		
A	Title 1 Assistance to States		18,714,060.00		
B	Title 11 (Tech Prep) Allocation		-		
C	Total Award	A + B	18,714,060.00		
D	**26 Consortia (85% of total award)**	0.85 * C		15,906,951.00	
E	Basic Grant (85% of the 85%)	0.85 * D			13,520,908.35
F	*Secondary Programs 50%*	0.50 * E			6,760,454.18
G	*Postsecondary Programs 50%*	0.50 * E			6,760,454.18
H	Reserve (15% of the 85%)	0.15 * D			2,386,042.65
I	*Secondary Programs 50%*	0.50 * H			1,193,021.33
J	*Postsecondary Programs 50%*	0.50 * H			1,193,021.33
K	**State Leadership (up to 10%)**	0.10 * C		1,871,406.00	
L	*Secondary Programs 42%*	0.42 * K			785,990.52
M	*Postsecondary Programs 58%*	0.58 * K			1,085,415.48
N	*State Institutions, max of 1% of total award*				50,000.00
O	*Non Traditional Training, must spend $60K - $150K*				60,000.00
P	State Leadership Initiatives	M - N - O			975,415.48
Q	**State Administration (5%)**	0.05 * C		935,703.00	
R	Fiscal Agent responsibility--Post-Secondary (5% of 5%)	0.05 * Q			46,785.15
S	*Remainder to be split*	Q - R			888,917.85
T	*Postsecondary (50%)*	0.50 * S			444,458.93
U	*Secondary (50%)*	0.50 * S			444,458.93
	Total Award	D + K + Q		18,714,060.00	

4. Provide the specific dollar allocations made available by the eligible agency for career and technical education programs and programs of study under section 132(a) of the Act and describe how these allocations are distributed to eligible institutions and consortia of eligible institutions within the State.

Based on the state's receipt of Perkins V dollars July 1, 2019, the allocation for postsecondary CTE programs and services in the next allocation is $7,953,475.50. The postsecondary allocation is calculated based on Section 132 and Section 112 of the Act.

Based on the state's receipt of Perkins V dollars July 1, 2019, the allocation for secondary CTE programs and services in the next allocation is $7,953,475.50. The secondary allocation is calculated based on Section 132 and Section 112 of the Act.

Specific distribution formulas are found in C.2.b. The final distribution to the individual consortia will also be dependent upon the local applications received and approved. Each consortium determines a fiscal agent to manage distribution for the secondary partners and a second fiscal agent to manage distribution for the postsecondary partners. The members of the consortium jointly determine the process for prioritizing activities that are reasonable, necessary, and allocable based on the CLNA. Members of a consortium reach agreement upon the mutually beneficial programs and services that Perkins funds will support, describe the purposes and programs in their joint application, and include evidence of assessment and continued improvement.

Planning budgets for the consortia are presented in the chart below:

DO NOT UPDATE	Projected 2020-2021 Perkins Distribution - Basic and Reserve				
Consortium	Secondary Basic	Secondary Reserve	Post-Secondary Basic	Post-Secondary Reserve	Consortia Total
Carlton County	44,516.78	17,962.01	89,816.64	17,962.01	170,257.44
Central Lakes	242,011.86	60,533.96	162,222.02	60,533.96	525,301.80
Dakota County	172,191.80	22,850.58	185,153.93	22,850.58	403,046.89
East Range	83,126.14	53,356.14	102,131.93	53,356.14	291,970.35
Great River	414,217.73	56,693.47	224,860.11	56,693.47	752,464.78
Hennepin West	592,669.56	64,758.63	875,446.86	64,758.63	1,597,633.68
Hibbing-Chisholm	36,305.58	6,012.08	76,015.03	6,012.08	124,344.77
Itasca	68,566.32	36,146.01	64,973.74	36,146.01	205,832.08
Lake Superior	140,864.63	46,779.77	239,086.38	46,779.77	473,510.55
Lakes Country	226,958.32	71,073.98	388,356.13	71,073.98	757,462.41
Mid-Minnesota	173,160.23	46,265.24	234,415.07	46,265.24	500,105.78
Minneapolis	725,144.33	21,286.79	548,667.16	21,286.79	1,316,385.07
Minnesota West	264,185.42	95,531.32	138,440.78	95,531.32	593,688.84
North Country	165,114.88	59,022.46	89,179.65	59,022.46	372,339.45
Northeast Metro	620,379.05	66,562.37	551,215.15	66,562.37	1,304,718.94
Oak Land	365,454.61	62,226.43	427,849.97	62,226.43	917,757.44
Pine Technical	64,663.54	16,787.07	99,159.27	16,787.07	197,396.95
Pine to Prairie/Northland	156,427.68	95,973.46	210,421.50	95,973.46	558,796.10
Riverland	142,949.83	23,911.93	122,091.18	23,911.93	312,864.87
Rochester-ZED	196,690.22	28,608.48	357,143.25	28,608.48	611,050.43
Runestone	59,247.64	20,045.55	124,639.17	20,045.55	223,977.91
South Central	282,786.37	54,999.25	190,249.91	54,999.25	583,034.78
South Metro	265,766.41	26,952.23	152,667.06	26,952.23	472,337.93
Southeast Minnesota	163,010.10	40,715.35	121,878.85	40,715.35	366,319.65
Southwest Metro	379,137.53	54,043.21	389,417.79	54,043.21	876,641.74
St. Paul	714,907.62	43,923.54	594,955.65	43,923.55	1,397,710.36
Full Award Totals	6,760,454.18	1,193,021.31	6,760,454.18	1,193,021.32	15,906,950.99

5. ***Describe how the eligible agency will adjust the data used to make the allocations to reflect any changes in school district boundaries that may have occurred since the population and/or enrollment data was collected, and include local education agencies***

without geographical boundaries, such as charter schools and secondary schools funded by the Bureau of Indian Education. (Section 131(a)(3) of Perkins V).

When a school district changes boundaries, splits or merges, Minnesota revises formula populations as soon as the new population information is available. The process for a district or college changing to a new consortium is outlined in the Operational Handbook (available at https://minnstate.edu/system/cte/Strengthening-CTE/index.html). Minnesota State partners with MDE to obtain any population data changes if school district boundaries change. Charter schools with approved CTE programs or secondary schools funded by the Bureau of Indian Education are incorporated into consortia.

6. ***If the eligible agency will submit an application for a waiver to the secondary allocation formula described in section 131(a)— a. include a proposal for such an alternative formula; and b. describe how the waiver demonstrates that a proposed alternative formula more effectively targets funds on the basis of poverty (as defined by the Office of Management and Budget and revised annually in accordance with section 673(2) of the Community Services Block Grant Act (42 U.S.C. 9902(2)) to local educational agencies with the State. (Section 131(b) of Perkins V). Also indicate if this is a waiver request for which you received approval under the prior Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act of 2006 (Perkins IV).***

Minnesota will not be submitting a waiver to the secondary allocation formula.

7.If the eligible agency will submit an application for a waiver to the postsecondary allocation formula described in section 132(a)— a. include a proposal for such an alternative formula; and b. describe how the formula does not result in a distribution of funds to the eligible institutions or consortia with the State that have the highest numbers of economically disadvantaged individuals and that an alternative formula will result in such a distribution. (Section 132(b) of Perkins V). Also indicate if this is a waiver request for which you received approval under the prior Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act of 2006 (Perkins IV).

Minnesota will not be submitting a waiver to the postsecondary allocation formula.

8. ***Provide the State's fiscal effort per student, or aggregate expenditures for the State, that will establish the baseline for the Secretary's annual determination on whether the State has maintained its fiscal effort, and indicate whether the baseline is a continuing level or new level. If the baseline is new, please provide the fiscal effort per student, or aggregate expenditures for the State, for the preceding fiscal year. (Section 211(b)(1)(D) of Perkins V).***

Using aggregate numbers of state support for CTE, which is calculated by excluding tuition revenue and allocating indirect expenses, the maintenance of effort for 2019 is equal to $124,944,120.00. The state does not split out a specific career and technical education allocation so we do rely on calculations to arrive at the maintenance of effort.

D. ACCOUNTABILITY FOR RESULTS

D. Accountability for Results

During May 2019, the Perkins V Secondary Accountability: Technical Advising Committee convened for three in-person meetings to discuss key questions and decision points around the updated legislation. This stakeholder group represented a select group of diverse secondary stakeholders from a variety of perspectives. Options for performance indicators and data

sources were shared with the advisory group, who then discussed the issues and provided recommendations to MDE.

The advisory group also provided recommendations for future work such as improving Secondary, Postsecondary, and Business and Industry partnerships so that additional Industry Recognized Credentials could be identified and implemented. This would enhance the connection between Perkins V and WIOA and provide more 'Career Ready' opportunities for students.

Once the full scope of the accountability system and methodology for determining levels of performance were finalized the previous recommendations made by the stakeholder group were then further analyzed by state leadership. Based on data review, state level priorities and the additional feedback survey information collected from member of the original secondary stakeholder group as well as secondary consortium leaders, and in consultation with state leadership, it was determined that the optional Other program quality indicator (5S4) identified as the Technical Skill Attainment and/or Industry Recognized Credential should not be included in the secondary accountability system.

The final decision was to include (5S3) Program Quality: Work-Based Learning, definition as follows:

Numerator: Number of CTE Concentrators who successfully completed one or more work-based learning courses prior to graduation.

Denominator: Number of CTE Concentrators who graduated high school.

The full process for seeking input on accountability factors is also part of Section A. Plan Development and Consultation. The report of the feedback on performance indicators is available as Perkins V Public Hearing Reports: Feedback Minnesota Perkins V Program Indicators, https://www.minnstate.edu/system/cte/Strengthening-CTE/index.html. The written responses are part of that report. The narrative from Section A is repeated below.

Secondary

Secondary and postsecondary accountability involves a collaboration between two agencies; each with its own data systems and internal processes. Therefore, transition planning for secondary accountability required a dual decision-making process. The process for identifying and defining secondary performance indicators occurred in two phases.

Phase one included an extensive information gathering process as well as documenting feedback from internal state staff. The purpose was to thoughtfully compile information and identify meaningful and specific questions to pose to stakeholders during phase two. State CTE specialists attended five two-hour long in-person meetings in which they reviewed data files, policy documents, and ESSA requirements in addition to considering existing data collection system and other available data sources. Staff considered all information and materials they reviewed through the lens of our state's recently updated mission and vision for Career and Technical Education as well as the following questions.

Does this data and information:

1) advance our statewide goals for CTE?

2) support *all* of our CTE students and approved programs?

3) support the needs of our Business and Industry partners as well as local communities?

4) align with the Perkins V legislation?

5) align with other existing state legislation?

Products from the phase one internal secondary CTE state staff meetings included a refined list of key decision-points, discussion questions to pose to the advisory group, and a list of materials and resources that would assist in building stakeholder capacity.

Phase 2 involved sharing the previously identified information with secondary stakeholders in order to collect and compile their recommendations. Representatives from each of the following categories were invited to participate in the "Perkins V Secondary Accountability: Technical Advising Committee": secondary consortia leaders, postsecondary partners, local CTE policy and advocacy groups, school counselors, work-based learning coordinators, high school teachers, principals, and superintendents from rural, suburban, and large metro districts, business and industry leaders from each sector of the CTE Career wheel, Workforce Center staff, and Tribal leaders. During spring 2019, approximately thirty advisory group members engaged in three four-hour in-person meetings. All resources and materials were made available within a secure site so stakeholders could access the information at any point. During the facilitated in-person meetings, advisory group members discussed data sources, reviewed simulated historical data, and considered policy and legislative documents in small groups. Advisory group members were asked to consider all information through the lens of the questions listed above as well as the following questions – are all performance indicators definitions/measures: valid, reliable, meaningful, and possess a high degree of integrity and transparency? Equitable across all student groups? Following each meeting, stakeholders were encouraged to discuss options and implications with their constituents and gather additional feedback that would ultimately inform their recommendations to the state.

Stakeholder recommendations for specific performance indicator definitions were collected using an online survey tool, recommendations for the CTE Concentrator definition and program quality measures were collected using paper and pencil so that stakeholders' full thoughts and ideas could be documented. There were clear recommendations to the state regarding performance indicator definitions, updated CTE Concentrator definition, and the program quality indicator that was preferred.

Subsequent to the roll out of the full scope of the Perkins accountability system and performance level methodology, through listening to consortia leadership and conduction further analysis, recommendations made by the original work group came under review. Group members, district leaders, local partners and state leadership staff probed the implications of each potential program quality indicator. Further discussion and questions, data, and state level priorities were analyzed. These discussions resulted in MDE leadership carefully reviewing initial recommendations and making changes to the indicators. Original members of the stakeholder advisory group as well as all secondary consortia leaders were invited to provide feedback on whether the state should move forward with the previously recommended optional "Other" indicator or if other solutions should be considered at the state level. Additional comments and feedback were gathered regarding the optional program quality performance indicator via a survey tool. Results of that feedback survey prompted MDE leadership to make changes based on the deeper research. The new indicators were posted and the comment period extended to meet the 60-day requirements.

Postsecondary

In developing postsecondary operational definitions and identifying data sources for participants, concentrators, and each indicator, the state created an accountability workgroup consisting of state research staff for secondary and postsecondary, the State Director of Career Technical Education, and the Interim Associate System Director of Career Technical Education. The workgroup met as needed, generally at least once a month, to provide updates regarding ongoing work, brainstorm solutions to issues that arose, and clarify any questions around process and timelines. Members of the workgroup then consulted with regional partners and determined our operational definitions and data sources were substantively similar. Consortia coordinators were given the opportunity to review and comment on legislative definitions and proposed operational definitions at the MACTA meeting in April (2019). Throughout May and June, as work on revising operational definitions, identifying data sources, and developing datasets progressed, key consortia coordinators and institutional research staff were engaged in phone calls and online meetings to provide feedback. In July, at a meeting of all consortia coordinators, the final draft of definitions and data sources used to develop the accountability datasets was presented and discussed. Finally, consortia coordinators and institutional research staff were presented with the final details regarding the accountability indicators in September.

State Determined Performance Levels (Secondary and Postsecondary)

In developing state determined performance levels, in addition to the regular workgroup meetings, we consulted with regional partners in June and August and determined our methodology for establishing performance levels is relatively similar. We also consulted with DEED throughout June specifically to better understand the statistical adjustment model used for the WIOA Performance Accountability System and discuss how it might apply to Perkins accountability indictors. An online meeting was held in September with consortia coordinators and institutional research staff where questions and feedback were discussed. In October, the state determined performance levels were presented at regional public hearings and published on the Minnesota State website, with a form that allows the public to submit comments. The state determined performance levels, with revision from the public comment, were presented at a meeting with all consortia coordinators in November.

State. (Section 113(b)(3)(A)(i)(I) of Perkins V)

State Determined Performance Levels (SDPL) Form

State Name:Minnesota

Secondary

Column 1	Column 2	Column 3	Column 4	Column 5	Column 6
Indicators	**Baseline Level**	**FY2020**	**FY2021**	**FY2022**	**FY2023**
1S1: Graduation Rates (4-year)	*91.50%*	54.95%	54.99%	55.08%	55.26%
2S1: Academic Proficiency: Reading/Language Arts	*56.06%*	11.27%	11.33%	11.45%	11.68%

Column 1	Column 2	Column 3	Column 4	Column 5	Column 6
2S2: Academic Proficiency: Mathematics	*45.25%*	9.08%	9.11%	9.17%	9.29%
3S1: Post-Program Placement	*48.37%*	48.43%	48.49%	48.61%	48.84%
4S1: Nontraditional Program Concentration	*37.57%*	9.44%	9.49%	9.59%	9.79%
5S3: Program Quality: Work-Based Learning	*17.27%*	4.33%	4.34%	4.37%	4.41%

Postsecondary

Column 1	Column 2	Column 3	Column 4	Column 5	Column 6
Indicators	**Baseline Level**	**FY2020**	**FY2021**	**FY2022**	**FY2023**
1P1: Postsecondary Retention and Placement	*90.86%*	91.12%	81.98%	81.98%	81.98%
2P1: Earned Recognized Postsecondary Credential	*50.25%*	50.60%	45.58%	45.58%	45.58%
3P1: Nontraditional Program Enrollment	*13.89%*	14.00%	12.54%	12.54%	12.54%

3. Describe the procedure the eligible agency adopted for determining State determined levels of performance described in section 113 of Perkins V, which at a minimum shall include-

As part of the procedures for determining State determined levels of performance, describe the process that will be used to establish a baseline for those levels.

Multiple statistical approaches were reviewed for establishing state and local performance levels, including the statistical adjustment model used for the WIOA Performance Accountability System, trend extrapolation, and statistically significant increases using simulated historical data. After consultation with representatives from consortia, stakeholders, and regional partners, it was determined that the most appropriate approach for Minnesota was to set the proposed state performance level for each accountability indicator using a factor of the standard deviation of simulated historical data. This procedure allows for the determination of what level would constitute "meaningful progress" for each indicator, establishing statistically significant improvement relative to the baseline by the fourth year of the plan.

At both the secondary and postsecondary levels, simulated historical accountability datasets were created using specifications and definitions per the new Strengthening Career and Technical Education for the 21st Century Act. These data were used to set the baseline year (the

most recent year for which accountability results were available). Then, a conservative rate of growth (i.e., slower growth during first two years, followed by more aggressive growth the final two years) was applied to determine the annual performance levels. A conservative growth rate was adopted for the first two years in recognition that programs and strategies implemented under Perkins V would require some lead-time before the full impact on rates would be observed, but at the same time the methodology incorporates continuous improvement each year.

The same overall methodology was used to determine state performance levels for both secondary and postsecondary indicators, with the following exceptions:

- The number of historical years of data that are available varied by indicator, with some indicators having as few as two years of historical data available, but most indicators having five or six years of historical data; and
- The factor of the standard deviation used differed for some of the indicators.

Although using the standard deviation of simulated historical data was the best approach identified, we also recognize some caveats associated with the methodology. Those caveats, along with other external factors that could impact indicators and result in potential amendments to performance levels, are noted below:

- Simulated historical data for some indicators were limited to only two or three years due to substantial changes in the data over time or unavailability of historical data going back more than a couple of years. The factor of the standard deviation was adjusted to account for the limitation. However, once additional years of data are observed, there may be evidence that the standard deviation of the simulated historical data was substantially different (higher or lower) than what would have been derived with additional data points.
- We may find the methodology needs modification even for indicators where six years of simulated historical data were available. Statistically, even six observations is a small number and may yield an over- or under- estimate of average random variation. After the first two years, we may need to adjust the factor of standard deviations such that it more accurately reflects the observed random variance. Given we anticipate lower programmatic impact in the first two years of the plan due to the time it takes to realize change, we would use those data to reassess the random variance and request adjustments accordingly.
- This methodology presumes conservative growth in the first two years with more aggressive growth in the final two years of the plan. As such, we assumed a doubling of improvement each year of the plan. These presumptions were based on a logical understanding of the process implementing new initiatives, but the actual numeric weights for the annual change were an educated guess. As we move forward with data collection, differences in observed speed of improvement may necessitate performance level adjustments.
- This methodology presumes the make-up of students in the denominator (CTE concentrators) and economic conditions will remain relatively constant over the next four years. Any substantial changes to either of these things may necessitate an adjustment of performance levels.
- Changes in core elements driving an indicator, such as changes in Technical Skills Assessments (i.e., changes to the assessment itself or more or fewer assessments included in the measure), changes to MCAs, or changes in the employment market would likely impact performance levels.

- Other changes to data collection, data quality, or data availability could also substantiate requests to adjust performance levels.

Minnesota does meet the statutory requirements specified for the state determined performance levels. The performance levels are specified as percentages for each secondary and postsecondary core indicator and the levels require meaningful progress toward improving the performance of all CTE concentrators over the grant timeframe. The state performance levels were subject to the public comment process and responses to the comments are included in section D4.

Regarding the extent to which the state determined levels of performance advance the eligible agency's goals, as set forth in the State plan (3a) and how the SDLPs align with levels, goals and objectives of other federal and state laws, 1P1 is a similar, but broader measure of placement of program completers in WIOA. The Perkins V indicator includes both employment placement AND continuing postsecondary education and other parameters we are currently unable to capture – military, peace corps, advanced training, etc. Indicator 2P1 is a measure of completion as Minnesota has defined it, which aligns with WIOA completion measure and is related to state credential *attainment goals.*

2022 Revision to Question II D.3a: *Describe the procedure the eligible agency adopted for determining State determined levels of performance described in section 113 of Perkins V, which at a minimum shall include—*
a. a description of the process for public comment under section 113(b)(3)(B) of Perkins V as part of the development of the State determined levels of performance (see Text Box 7 for the statutory requirements for consultation on State determined performance levels under section 113(b)(3)(B) of Perkins V);

Narrative Revision: This revision includes updated information related to the proposed revisions to the postsecondary SDPL's for PY2021-22, PY2022-23, and PY2023-24, specifically a description of the process for public comment on the proposed revisions to the SDPL's.

In Spring 2022, Minnesota sought public comment on proposed revisions to State Determined Performance Levels (SDPLs) for all three postsecondary core performance indicators. A public comment page and collection form was posted on the CTE website (www.MinnState.edu/CTEPublicComment), with comments accepted March 8, 2022 through 11:59 pm April 6, 2022. All public comments received were collected via an online form and state staff responded to all comments in the SDPL revisions section of the state plan submission.

Emails were sent to multiple stakeholder groups and/or information was included in newsletters, etc. asking stakeholders for their input on the proposed revisions to the postsecondary core indicator state determined performance levels, along with providing details for how to provide that input and a link to the website to do so. There were also instances of informal sharing of the public comment opportunity by state staff at various in-person or webinar meetings that occurred over the month public comments were being accepted, but the exact dates or details of those events were not documented.

The public form asked responders to indicate what group(s) they identified with (Teacher, Faculty, Specialized instructional support personnel, Paraprofessional, School leader, Authorized public chartering agencies/charter school leaders, Employers, Labor organizations, Parents, Students, Indian tribes and Tribal organizations, Community organization or Other (please indicate)). The public was asked to respond to three primary questions:

- Do the proposed state performance levels meet the requirements of the law?
- Do the proposed state performance levels support the improvement of all CTE concentrators, including subgroups of students as specified in Section 1111(h)(1)(C)(ii)

of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 and special populations, as described in Section 3(48)?

- Do the proposed state performance levels support the needs of the local education and business community?)

Individuals providing comments were also asked to specify the indicator they were commenting on (if comments were specific to one indicator) by noting the core indicator number in their comments.

In addition to providing opportunity for public comment on the proposed revisions to the postsecondary SDPL's for PY2021-22, PY2022-23, and PY2023-24, Minnesota State research staff held webinars with two stakeholder groups (state consortium leaders and a subset of Institutional Research directors engaged in CTE reporting at their postsecondary institutions). In these webinars, Research staff presented more detailed information about the data reviewed to inform the decision to revise the state determined performance levels, information about changes made to the specific methodology used to make revisions, and the impact of those revisions to both the local eligible recipient and state performance levels. A recording and PDF of the information presented for one of the groups (Minnesota Consortium Leaders), which is a good example of the information presented to both groups, can be found on the Minnesota CTE Professional Development/Monthly Webinar site: https://www.minnstate.edu/system/cte/professionaldevelopment/monthly-webinars.html (see information for presentation on 3/10/2022 – Revisions to State-Determined Performance Levels).

Circumstances Impacting Minnesota's Ability to Meet Current State Determined Performance Levels

Governor Tim Walz signed Executive Order 20-01 in March 2020, declaring a peacetime emergency for Minnesota in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The pandemic continues to impact higher education in different ways across the state, including declines in postsecondary enrollment, fewer students completing their programs, sometimes due to barriers in completing the in-person requirements needed to obtain their degree (i.e., in-person classroom components that were delayed, inability to complete in-person internships or practicums, etc.), and challenges graduates experience in finding and keeping employment. Minnesota State believes the unanticipated and ongoing worldwide pandemic, combined with differing local and regional impacts this pandemic has had on enrollment and employment, will impact the state's ability to meet the SDPLs that were established prior to the onset of the pandemic.

Minnesota operates within a consortium structure, with each consortium (i.e., eligible local recipient) being comprised of one or more secondary partners and one or more postsecondary institutions. Minnesota's postsecondary Perkins V enrollment and accountability performance reporting, which includes participant and concentrator enrollment and performance reporting for the three postsecondary core performance indicators, are based on three-year cohorts. For example, for performance reporting for 2021, or the first performance reporting year of the Perkins V grant, Minnesota largely reported on the 2019-2021 cohort, which included students who entered a Minnesota State college in 2018-2019 academic year and were tracked through the next two academic years, for a total of three years. The exception to this is for the 1P1 (Postsecondary Replacement and Retention) indicator, which provides the employment or continuing education rates of CTE graduates six months following program completion. Reporting on 1P1 is lagged by one cohort to allow time to collect and report employment or education status six months following spring term completers in the last year of the cohort. This means 2021 reporting was based on CTE completers in the 2018-2020 cohort.

The postsecondary cohort model is important to note because ultimately this model slows the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on postsecondary performance metrics while also spreading

out the impact over a number of years since a portion of each cohort in the upcoming reporting years will be impacted by COVID-19 pandemic years, likely having the greatest impact on the cohort starting in the 2019-2020 academic year and going forward. This was evident in reviewing Minnesota's performance rates in Perkins V grant year one (2021), which were generally not impacted by the pandemic. However, in Perkins V grant year two, the state expects enrollment declines, higher unemployment rates and extended time to complete programs to begin to impact the performance metrics, especially for individual consortia, with the impact only increasing over the next couple of years.

In addition to reviewing data on enrollment in system colleges, first term retention rates of students entering colleges fall or spring terms, participant and concentrator enrollment trends in the state, including concentrator enrollment by cluster, program completion, and state and regional employment data, Minnesota CTE staff asked the 25 Perkins consortium leaders to submit rationale around any regional or institution specific conditions related to the pandemic that they believed will impact their ability to meet their original established performance levels. This provided additional insight to current and future issues they were monitoring in terms of their impact on their ability to meet established SDPLs.

Based on the data review and the information provided by consortia leaders, Minnesota determined there is a need to revise the state, and consequently, consortium performance levels for all three postsecondary indicators for Perkins V grant reporting years two through four. At the same time, Minnesota also is making a minor adjustment to SDPLs for grant years two through four to accommodate for the unexpected departure of a local eligible postsecondary recipient from the Perkins V Grant after the baseline program year.

The information provided below outlines the rationale and methodology applied for revising each of the three performance indicators. The goal of Minnesota State CTE staff was to revise the SDPLs to still be ambitious and hold the state accountable to meeting statewide CTE objectives, but to also revise them to be more realistic and achievable while acknowledging the impact the pandemic has had on postsecondary education and employment both in our state and across the country.

Proposed Revisions to State Determined Performance Levels

Based on the data reviewed for each core indicator, Minnesota approached the task of revising SDPLs similarly for each indicator. First, an adjustment was made to the SDPL for Perkins V grant year 1, which was used as the baseline to revise Perkins V grant years 2 through 4 SDPLs, to remove the consortium that unexpectedly left the Perkins V grant after the baseline year (2020). Then, for each of the three core indicators, Minnesota decreased the SDPL for grant year 2 to 90% of the 'adjusted' grant year 1 SDPL, further recommending that the State holds the SDPL at that level for the remaining grant years (3 and 4).

1P1 (Postsecondary Retention and Placement) In Minnesota, this indicator measures the percentage of CTE Concentrators who complete a CTE program/award during the cohort timeframe and are enrolled in postsecondary education or employed during the second quarter following their program completion. Minnesota currently does not have a data source to identify completers who are in advanced training, in military service, or in national or community service. In the state's review of unemployment rates, it was evident that, along with much of the country, Minnesota's unemployment rates increased significantly between March/April of 2020 and March/April of 2021, with some improvement in rates towards the later quarters of calendar year 2020 and into 2021. The review of postsecondary enrollment data, both within Minnesota and nationally, also showed decreasing enrollment at the start of the pandemic, with decreases being larger during the pandemic than they had generally been prior to that, at least at two-year colleges. In Minnesota, postsecondary enrollment has continued to decrease through present time at our colleges and universities. National enrollment numbers also show continuing decreases in enrollment. These two things combined with the fact that the

completers who are tracked for this indicator are spread across a three-year cohort timeframe and then tracked at a specific point in time following their program completion means that starting with the 2nd grant year (2022), a significant portion of the cohort the reporting is based on will be impacted by both increased unemployment rates and decreases in postsecondary enrollment. Grant years 3 and 4 will continue to be impacted, as those years will see the largest portion of the cohorts both completing their program and being measured for employment or continued education during the timeframe overlapping the pandemic.

2P1 (Earned Recognized Postsecondary Credential) In Minnesota, this indicator measures the percentage of CTE Concentrators in a cohort who complete a CTE program/award within the cohort timeframe. Minnesota State staff reviewed data on postsecondary retention rates for spring 2020 and fall 2020 entering cohorts of students in our two-year institutions. That data showed around a three percentage point drop in the first spring retention rate of fall entering students and less than a one percentage point drop in the first fall retention rate for spring entering students. Data on overall enrollment, CTE enrollment and postsecondary credentials/degrees awarded at system colleges were also reviewed, with declines seen in all those numbers over the last couple of years, with decreases in CTE awards slightly outpacing enrollment declines. This data review along with a review of trends in Minnesota's 2P1 performance rate and assessment of the progress 'active' cohorts are making towards meeting the SDPLs set for grant years 2 through 4 supports making a modest decrease to this SDPL.

3P1 (Nontraditional Program Enrollment) This indicator measures the percentage of all CTE concentrators in a cohort who are enrolled in nontraditional CTE programs that are of the nontraditional gender (i.e., of all the concentrators enrolled in Nursing programs, which are nontraditional for males, the percentage that are male; of all the concentrators enrolled in automotive technician programs, which are nontraditional for females, the percentage that are female, etc.). Historical performance data for this indicator was examined, along with concentrator enrollment trends by career clusters. While this data revealed that this is an indicator Minnesota has been performing well on and seen increases in performance over the last few years, there are signs of decreasing concentrator enrollment in some nontraditional program areas. That, combined with overall decreases in enrollment in CTE and the unknown impact the pandemic is having on continued persistence of nontraditional students in nontraditional programs also supports making a slight decrease to the SDPL for this indicator.

4. Provide a written response to the comments regarding State determined performance levels received during the public comment period pursuant to section 113(b)(3)(B) of Perkins V. (Section 113(b)(3)(B)(iii) of Perkins V). As part of the written response, include a description of any the changes made to the State determined performance levels as a result of stakeholder feedback.

The report of the feedback on performance indicators is available as Perkins V Public Hearing Reports: Feedback Minnesota Perkins V Program Indicators, https://www.minnstate.edu/system/cte/Strengthening-CTE/index.html. The written responses are part of that report.

5. Describe how the eligible agency will address disparities or gaps in performance as described in section 113(b)(3)(C)(ii)(II) of Perkins V in each of the plan years, and if no meaningful progress has been achieved prior to the third program year, a description of the additional actions the eligible agency will take to eliminate these disparities or gaps. (Section 122(d)(11) of Perkins V)

As part of the written response, and pursuant to the Report of the Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions (HELP), the eligible agency could indicate that it will analyze data on the core indicators of performance to identify gaps in performance, explain how they

will use evidence-based research to develop a plan to provide support and technical assistance to eligible recipients to address and close such gaps, and how they will implement this plan. The eligible agency is not required to submit a new State plan prior to the third program year in order to address this requirement.

The Strategic Work Group of Equity and Inclusion will assist consortia in addressing disparities or gaps in performance through professional develop opportunities, technical assistance and funding promising practices at the local level.

Minnesota Department of Education anticipates developing a suite of dynamic reports that will allow consortium leaders and district staff to quickly identify any gaps in performance that may exist between federally reported student groups. These reports will be updated annually in order to monitor trends in performance as well as progress toward closing any existing gaps. Webinars, group presentations, and individual assistance will be provided in order to ensure that secondary consortium leaders understand the measures used within the reports as well as how to interpret the information. The goal of providing this assistance is to ensure that consortium leaders are able to facilitate conversations with CTE teachers and district administrators so that meaningful gaps can be identified and are actionable.

Postsecondary

Minnesota State is in the process of developing a set of reports that will present gaps in performance between federally identified subgroups and special populations and all CTE concentrators, where data are available. Data will allow consortia leaders to monitor performance over time and determine if progress is being made or where new issues may be arising. Assistance will be provided to help analyze the data to know when gaps are meaningful and to understand when additional information is required to interpret what is happening in their consortia.

Initiatives

Both Minnesota State and the Minnesota Department of Education are committed to addressing disparities or gaps in performance of our students. MDE's Equity Statement follows:

Educational equity is the condition of justice, fairness and inclusion in our systems of education so that all students have access to the opportunities to learn and develop to their fullest potentials. The pursuit of educational equity recognizes the historical conditions and barriers that have prevented opportunity and success in learning for students based on their races, incomes, and other social conditions. Eliminating those structural and institutional barriers to educational opportunities requires systemic change that allows for distribution of resources, information and other support depending on the student's situation to ensure an equitable outcome.

Minnesota State has this goal: "By 2030, Minnesota State will eliminate education equity gaps at every Minnesota State college and university."

Under the umbrella of these statements and goals, multiple initiatives are in place to address disparities or gaps in performance. For example, within the Minnesota Department of Education there is in an effort to better align CTE work and ESSA initiatives. We anticipate supporting and collaborate with state specialists and educators in our special education division, homeless student liaison staff, as well as our English learner division all of whom have a strong start toward reducing and eliminating gaps in performance.

There is also state legislation annually requiring each district to identify any existing gaps in performance as well as to document strategies for closing those gaps. Secondary consortium leaders are able to access a summary of their districts' publically available World's Best

Workforce and Achievement and Integration plans in order to determine whether CTE students would benefit from additional support of existing district goals and strategies or whether more is needed in order to support CTE teachers and student more specifically. Finally, it is also anticipated that secondary staff would utilize and share forward any resources produced by Advance CTE, REL, or Midwest Comprehensive Center in support of continuous improvement for all CTE students.

With these overarching goals, and the principle of equity within our state's Perkins Plan, our work will align with and enhance the initial strategies for implementation including the following areas of focus:

- Disaggregation of student data metrics to inform equity work and develop mechanisms to share data and review.
- Convening statewide Equity Summits
- Providing consultative and communicative structures
- Incentivize innovations to enhance access, improve student engagement and support, mitigate policy barriers, and expand workforce diversity and strategic talent management.

The increase of the reserve allocation distributed to local consortia to 15% is one opportunity for financial support for this equity work. In addition, the state will continue to heavily invest leadership funds to support professional development and technical assistance at the state and local levels. Individual consortia interventions will rise from the CLNA. In addition, Minnesota is working with ADVANCE CTE and ACTE to pilot a program of root cause analysis – moving to actionable interventions specifically to assist our consortium in addressing disparity gaps.

TEMPORARY ASSISTANCE FOR NEEDY FAMILIES (TANF)

A. CONDUCT A PROGRAM DESIGNED TO SERVE ALL POLITICAL SUBDIVISIONS IN THE STATE (NOT NECESSARILY IN A UNIFORM MANNER) THAT PROVIDES ASSISTANCE TO NEEDY FAMILIES WITH (OR EXPECTING) CHILDREN AND PROVIDES PARENTS WITH JOB PREPARATION, WORK, AND SUPPORT SERVICES TO ENABLE THEM TO LEAVE THE PROGRAM, SPECIFICALLY CASH ASSISTANCE, AND BECOME SELF-SUFFICIENT (SECTION 402(A)(1)(A)(I) OF THE SOCIAL SECURITY ACT)

1. STATES THAT INCLUDE TANF IN THE COMBINED STATE PLAN MUST OUTLINE HOW THE STATE WILL MEET THE REQUIREMENTS OF SECTION 402 OF THE SOCIAL SECURITY ACT INCLUDING HOW IT WILL:

A. CONDUCT A PROGRAM DESIGNED TO SERVE ALL POLITICAL SUBDIVISIONS IN THE STATE (NOT NECESSARILY IN A UNIFORM MANNER) THAT PROVIDES ASSISTANCE TO NEEDY FAMILIES WITH (OR EXPECTING) CHILDREN AND PROVIDES PARENTS WITH JOB PREPARATION, WORK, AND SUPPORT SERVICES TO ENABLE THEM TO LEAVE THE PROGRAM, SPECIFICALLY CASH ASSISTANCE, AND BECOME SELF-SUFFICIENT (SECTION 402(A) (1) (A) (I) OF THE SOCIAL SECURITY ACT).

Minnesota Family Investment Program (MFIP)

The Minnesota Family Investment Program (MFIP), Minnesota's Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program, provides temporary (60 months or less) cash and food assistance to:

Families with children under age 18 (up to age 19 if in secondary education or vocational school full-time), and pregnant women with their spouses when financially eligible. The basis of

program eligibility for a pregnant woman is as follows: A pregnant woman who has no other eligible birth, adoptive, or step-children living with her is eligible for MFIP or DWP under the pregnant woman basis of eligibility if she meets all other financial and non-financial program requirements. In addition, if the pregnant woman and the acknowledged father live together but are not married, Minnesota uses only the woman's income and assets to determine eligibility and benefits. But, if the woman and the father live together and are married, the income and assets of both the mother and father is taken into consideration when determining eligibility and benefits. The father is also a mandatory unit member of the assistance unit per state law.

Adult relatives who live with the child and take responsibility for them when their parents cannot or will not. These include: Grandparents, aunts, uncles, cousins, sister or brother, half-sister or half-brother, step-sister or step-brother, niece or nephews, legal custodians/legal guardians, and even relative foster care provider who is receiving federal, state or local foster care payments and who meets program requirement. These adult relatives may receive assistance through MFIP for children in their care, and may choose to be on the MFIP grant or to apply for a child-only grant. When the non- parental caregiver receives assistance only for children, the income and assets of the relative caregivers are not considered and the case is not subject to the 60-month lifetime limit.

MFIP helps families work toward economic stability and greater self-sufficiency. MFIP provides help with child care costs, employment services, opportunities for education and training for workforce preparation, and a grant to supplement family income. MFIP encourages employment by providing work incentives, and promotes personal responsibility by expecting families to actively pursue employment.

Some of the family's earned income is disregarded before calculating the MFIP grant. The monthly disregard amount is $65 of earned income per wage earner plus 50 percent of the remaining earned income of the assistance unit. The remaining earnings are subtracted from the Family Wage Level grant standard, which is 10 percent higher than the standard allowed for families who receive only unearned income. For applicants, the Family Wage is the single standard used when determining MFIP eligibility regardless if the applicant has earnings or not.

Child care is a key component in Minnesota's strategy to help families leave and remain off public assistance. In Minnesota, the Child Care Assistance Program provides financial assistance to families to support access to child care that is affordable so that parents can work and/or attend school, and children are well cared for and ready for school.

Minnesota Family Investment Program families who participate in work activities such as work, job search, education, or social services activities that are approved in their employment plans are eligible to receive childcare assistance. In addition, Transition Year child care is available to eligible families for a full year after their MFIP case closes to help families move toward economic stability. MFIP child care and Transition Year child care assistance are fully forecasted in the state's budget.

The Basic Sliding Fee program is available for non-MFIP/DWP income-eligible families and is funded through a capped allocation. If a family finishes their Transition Year child care assistance and there is a waiting list in their county for the Basic Sliding Fee program, the Transition Year bridge program will continue to provide them child care assistance until they reach their turn for Basic Sliding Fee child care assistance.

Families receiving MFIP benefits and/or services are encouraged to apply for health care coverage at the same time they apply for MFIP. Families receiving cash assistance and those not receiving cash assistance can apply for the Medical Assistance program and the MinnesotaCare program (Minnesota's health care program for the uninsured).

Families who receive MFIP must cooperate with their local child support agency to establish and enforce their child support orders. In State Fiscal Year 2018, child support agencies

collected $573 million in child support. Through the child support pass-through, Minnesota counties collected and distributed to MFIP families $9 million in child support. Minnesota passes through 100 percent of the child support payments made to the families receiving MFIP. Child support payments are treated as unearned income when calculating MFIP eligibility and benefits. Up to $100 in child support payments for a family with one child, and up to $200 for a family with two or more children is excluded from unearned income budgets when calculating a household's income for benefit determination.

MFIP combines cash and food benefits per the provisions of a waiver from the United States Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Services. Families who are not eligible for MFIP can apply for the federal Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP).

Diversionary Work Program (DWP)

The Diversionary Work Program provides help to families in crisis who are new to public assistance by supporting them in their efforts to immediately obtain and retain employment. DWP may be provided to families in crisis for a maximum of four months once in a 12-month period. Families with children under age 18 (up to age 19 if in secondary or vocational school full-time), or pregnant women and their spouses are eligible for DWP if they have not received cash assistance in the previous 12 months.

Minnesota defines a caregiver as a person who provides care and support to a minor child. The unborn child of a pregnant woman falls under this definition. If the pregnant woman and the acknowledged father live together but are not married, Minnesota uses only the woman's income and assets to determine eligibility and benefits. But, if the woman and the father live together and are married, the income and assets of both the mother and father is taken into consideration when determining eligibility and benefits. The father is also a mandatory unit member of the assistance unit per state law.

Eligibility for DWP begins the date a signed application form is received by the county agency. State statute requires financial workers to hold the interview for an applicant who appears to be eligible for DWP within five working days of the receipt of the application. If it appears that child care is necessary to enable a parent to work or look for work, and the parent has not applied for child care, the application for child care assistance must be completed before the interview with the financial worker is completed.

As soon as possible, but no later than 10 working days before being notified by the county agency that the applicant is financially eligible for DWP, the employment services provider must meet with the applicant and develop an employment plan. The county agency must issue DWP benefits within one working day after receiving notice that an employment plan has been signed.

DWP supports families during a crisis situation and is not intended to meet recurrent needs. The short- term supports provided may include temporary help with rent, utilities or other housing costs and a personal allowance. Other supports for which families might be eligible are Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, health care and child care assistance. After four months of DWP, a family without a job or very low income may apply for MFIP. Families also may be eligible to continue Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, health care and child care assistance.

Families who receive DWP are required to cooperate with their local child support agency to establish and enforce their child support orders. Although families on DWP are required to cooperate with their child support agency, child support is not assigned to the state. All child support is passed through to the family. Up to $100 in child support payments for a family with

one child, and up to $200 for a family with two or more children is excluded from unearned income budgets when calculating a household's income for benefit determination.

DWP is a non-recurrent short-term benefit available for a maximum of four consecutive months. Because DWP benefits are meant to address the family's crisis and divert them from long-term assistance, receipt of DWP does not count against the 60-month TANF time limit.

B. REQUIRE A PARENT OR CARETAKER RECEIVING ASSISTANCE TO ENGAGE IN WORK (DEFINED BY THE STATE) ONCE THE STATE DETERMINES THE PARENT OR CARETAKER IS READY TO ENGAGE IN WORK, OR ONCE HE OR SHE HAS RECEIVED 24 MONTHS OF ASSISTANCE, WHICHEVER IS EARLIER, CONSISTENT WITH THE CHILD CARE EXCEPTION AT 407(E)(2) (SECTION 402(A)(1)(A)(II) OF THE SOCIAL SECURITY ACT)

B. REQUIRE A PARENT OR CARETAKER RECEIVING ASSISTANCE TO ENGAGE IN WORK (DEFINED BY THE STATE) ONCE THE STATE DETERMINES THE PARENT OR CARETAKER IS READY TO ENGAGE IN WORK, OR ONCE HE OR SHE HAS RECEIVED 24 MONTHS OF ASSISTANCE, WHICHEVER IS EARLIER, CONSISTENT WITH THE CHILD CARE EXCEPTION AT 407(E)(2) (SECTION 402(A)(1)(A)(II) OF THE SOCIAL SECURITY ACT).

Minnesota Family Investment Program (MFIP)

Caregivers must begin participating in work activities within 30 days of being determined eligible for MFIP. Counties have the option of requiring that work activities begin sooner.

MFIP uses a combination of work incentives and required work activities such as job search, short-term training or subsidized work. Sanctions enforce work activity requirements and include grant reductions, vendor payments of shelter costs from the grant, and even case closure (when there are seven occurrences of noncompliance). When a case is closed, the financial worker re-determines the family's continued eligibility for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program. MFIP must remain closed for a minimum of one full month when closed for sanction reasons. Before ending a family's assistance, because of sanction, the county agency must review the case to determine if the employment plan is still appropriate, and must attempt to meet with the participant face-to-face.

Minnesota does not sanction parents and relatives caring for children in their homes if they do not have access to childcare or transportation because that is considered good cause for incompliance with work requirements.

Diversionary Work Program (DWP)

The goal of the Diversionary Work Program is to provide short-term, necessary services and supports to families, which will lead to unsubsidized employment, increased economic stability, and reduced risk of those families needing longer term assistance under MFIP. All parents, including both parents in a two- parent family, are required to develop and sign an employment plan before the family is approved for DWP. Most parents must seek full-time work immediately when approved. Employment services can help the family identify and address issues that may prevent the parents from obtaining or retaining employment. DWP employment service providers help parents find work that fits with the employment plan. The employment plan may include limited training that can be completed in four or fewer months.

Minnesota stresses work as the means to address the family's ongoing needs and places a high priority on starting to work or increasing the number of hours a person is employed. That is why the child care application must be completed during the DWP interview process and why the applicant must develop an employment plan prior to receiving any cash benefits.

When a participant fails to comply with the DWP employment plan or with child support enforcement without good cause, the DWP case is closed. The family is not eligible for MFIP during the DWP disqualification period and the case remains closed unless the parent comes

into compliance within the four consecutive months of the DWP eligibility period. The disqualification of the family from DWP does not affect receipt of Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program or health care benefits.

Minnesota does not sanction parents and relatives caring for children in their homes if they do not have access to childcare or transportation because that is considered good cause for incompliance with work requirements.

C. ENSURE THAT PARENTS AND CARETAKERS RECEIVING ASSISTANCE ENGAGE IN WORK IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 407 (SECTION 402(A)(1)(A)(III) OF THE SOCIAL SECURITY ACT). CONSISTENT WITH THE REQUIRED STRATEGIC ELEMENTS DISCUSSED IN SECTION II (A)(2) HEREIN, PROVIDE A SPECIFIC ANALYSIS OF HOW THE STATE'S WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES ARE ADDRESSING EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING SERVICES FOR PARENTS OR CARETAKERS RECEIVING ASSISTANCE

C. ENSURE THAT PARENTS AND CARETAKERS RECEIVING ASSISTANCE ENGAGE IN WORK IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 407 (SECTION 402(A)(1)(A)(III) OF THE SOCIAL SECURITY ACT). CONSISTENT WITH THE REQUIRED STRATEGIC ELEMENTS DISCUSSED IN SECTION II (A)(2) HEREIN, PROVIDE A SPECIFIC ANALYSIS OF HOW THE STATE'S WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES ARE ADDRESSING EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING SERVICES FOR PARENTS OR CARETAKERS RECEIVING ASSISTANCE.

Minnesota Family Investment Program (MFIP)

Minnesota ensures that parents receiving assistance through MFIP engage in work activities through three mechanisms: requiring all adults receiving MFIP assistance to develop an individualized employment plan that identifies the activities the adult will participate in and that meets the hours required for participation (256J.561, subd.2); imposing sanctions if the participant does not comply with the work requirements (256J.46); and offering employment services to all adults receiving assistance.

Minnesota requires parents and caregivers to submit pay stubs and documentation verifying participation in work activities as detailed in the State's Work Verification Plan. DHS and DEED jointly operate MFIP employment and training services. DHS also releases regular management indicator reports to counties in order for the counties to track state-mandated performance measures for MFIP.

Child care assistance is available to all MFIP participants who engage in work activities in an approved employment plan.

Minor parents under the age of 18 who have not received a high school diploma or its equivalent are required to engage in appropriate educational programs and are provided with child care assistance and supportive services to enable successful participation. Parents, ages 18 and 19, can choose whether they want to complete their high school education or participate in work activities leading to employment. Whichever choice is made, child care assistance is available to enable the parents to participate in the chosen activity.

Bilingual employment and training services and work literacy language programs may be available for those lacking English proficiency, although the lack of proficiency in English is not necessarily presumed to be a barrier to employment. Interpreter services are provided when necessary.

Diversionary Work Program (DWP)

DWP stresses that work is the means for families to meet their ongoing needs and provides support services as needed to help participants in crisis obtain and retain employment. After establishing financial eligibility, participants must meet with an employment counselor and develop an employment plan in order to be found eligible to receive assistance through DWP.

Work activities available for participants include, but are not limited to: job search, job readiness assessment, job readiness assistance, job clubs, job counseling, job coaching, job skills training, work experience, subsidized employment, on-the-job training, job placement, educational programs and post-employment follow-up services. Education for DWP recipients is allowed, but the education program must be completed within the four-month DWP period or an education activity cannot be approved as part of the employment plan. Participants who do not comply with their employment plans have their cases closed.

D. TAKE SUCH REASONABLE STEPS AS THE STATE DEEMS NECESSARY TO RESTRICT THE USE AND DISCLOSURE OF INFORMATION ABOUT INDIVIDUALS AND FAMILIES RECEIVING ASSISTANCE UNDER THE PROGRAM ATTRIBUTABLE TO FUNDS PROVIDED BY THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT (SECTION 402(A)(1)(A)(IV) OF THE SOCIAL SECURITY ACT)

D. TAKE SUCH REASONABLE STEPS AS THE STATE DEEMS NECESSARY TO RESTRICT THE USE AND DISCLOSURE OF INFORMATION ABOUT INDIVIDUALS AND FAMILIES RECEIVING ASSISTANCE UNDER THE PROGRAM ATTRIBUTABLE TO FUNDS PROVIDED BY THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT (SECTION 402(A)(1)(A)(IV) OF THE SOCIAL SECURITY ACT).

Minnesota Family Investment Program, and Diversionary Work Program

Data on recipients is classified as private and may not be disclosed pursuant to Minnesota Statutes, Chapter 13. Access to Minnesota's eligibility computer system (MAXIS) is defined by a security role that is attached to a worker's ID, and access to information is defined and limited by worker job responsibilities. A personal logon ID cannot be issued until the worker completes a state-developed orientation course. The orientation includes a review of data privacy and ethics as they pertain to client information. All county, state and contracted agency staff working in the Minnesota Family Investment Program must complete annually two data privacy courses designed to increase compliance with data practices and security, and meet federal training requirements for all those with access to DHS information and networks. Mastery of these courses is now required prior to receiving access to DHS systems including the new eligibility system, MMIS, MAXIS and MEC2. In addition, printed reports distributed by the state are reviewed individually to ensure data provided to the requestor are appropriate for the recipient of the report.

E. ESTABLISH GOALS AND TAKE ACTION TO PREVENT AND REDUCE OUT-OF-WEDLOCK PREGNANCIES, WITH SPECIAL EMPHASIS ON TEENAGE PREGNANCIES (SECTION 402(A)(1)(A)(V) OF THE SOCIAL SECURITY ACT)

E. ESTABLISH GOALS AND TAKE ACTION TO PREVENT AND REDUCE OUT-OF-WEDLOCK PREGNANCIES, WITH SPECIAL EMPHASIS ON TEENAGE PREGNANCIES (SECTION 402(A)(1)(A)(V) OF THE SOCIAL SECURITY ACT).

Minnesota's female population ages 15 to 44 in 2018 was estimated at 1,074,005. Of the total resident births (67,348), 45,869 were to married women, 21,467 were to women who were not married, and 12 were unknown. Thus, the out-of-wedlock birth rate in Minnesota for 2018 was 20.0/1000 for women ages 15 to 44. The out-of-wedlock birth rate in Minnesota for 2017 was 20.6/1000, for 2016 was 21.3/1000, for 2015 was 21.3/1000, for 2014 it was 21.4/1000, and for 2013 it was 21.7/1000 women. The out-of-wedlock birth rate for Minnesota has remained relatively stable over the last several years with a slight trend downward. Minnesota still continues to face significant challenges in trying to lower its out-of-wedlock birth rate.

Minnesota has focused significant attention on reducing unintended pregnancies, particularly those occurring to teens and young adults who are less likely to be married or prepared to care for a child. While Minnesota's teen pregnancy rate compares well to national rates, it masks significant and persistent racial and ethnic disparities. African American and American Indian youth are three to four times more likely to have a child when they are a teen than is a white youth. In an effort to address these disparities, the Minnesota legislature provided the

Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) with $2 million annually in TANF funds that support non-profit and government agencies in reducing the disparities in teen pregnancy rates in Minnesota.

Minnesota Department of Health receives $999,106 annually in federal a Title V Abstinence Education Grant (AEGP) funding to support evidenced based efforts to delay sexual activity in youth. Minnesota's program is a coordinated countywide approach in St. Paul-Ramsey County, Hennepin County Watonwan County, Beltrami County and other rural and urban American Indian communities. The program has three components: direct service to youth in schools and community settings through Teen Outreach Program, Making a Difference, Project AIM and Live it! Curriculum; reaching out to parents in the community through It's That Easy: A Guide to Raising Sexually Healthy Children Parent Education Training; and the Making Authentic Connections Program, which trains parents and others in making authentic connections in relationships with youth.

Minnesota Department of Health also receives a federal Personal Responsibility Education Program (PREP) grant ($887,189 annually). The MN PREP sub-awardees serve male and female youth in the following target populations: the juvenile justice system; attending area learning centers (ALC); in or aging out of foster care; runaway and homeless; with HIV/AIDS; pregnant, mothers' and fathers' who are under 21 years of age; Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Queer/Questioning (LGBTQ); American Indians; youth experiencing racial and ethnic disparities; culturally underrepresented; out of school; at risk of being trafficked for commercial sexual exploitation; and residing in areas of high teen birth rates. The overarching goals of this program are to decrease teen pregnancies and STI rates among participating teens, focusing on ages 15-19, and to increase healthy youth behaviors and life-skills in teens 10-19 years of age. This is accomplished through the implementation of high quality, medically-accurate and evidence-based programs. It also assists high- risk adolescents to successfully transition from youth to adulthood by providing supplemental adult preparation topics such as adolescent development, heathy life skills, healthy relationships and financial literacy.

Efforts are also directed at increasing access to family planning services for individuals who are low- income and at high risk for unintended pregnancies. Minnesota's Family Planning Special Projects (FPSP) grant program is administered by MDH. Funded through the state Legislature, the current two-year grant cycle made available $12,706,000 (including $2,312,000 in TANF funding) to 27 community family planning clinics across the state. Grantees include one county-operated clinic and one university-operated clinic, ten local public health agencies, and fifteen non-profit organizations. In State Fiscal Year 2017, FPSP provided family planning counseling services to 34,682 women, 6,468 men, and 109 client who identified as Transgender or Gender Nonconforming who were low-income and at risk for unintended pregnancy. FPSP grantees provided 30,813 men and women and those identified as Transgender or Gender Nonconforming with a contraceptive method – 24 percent of whom were age 19 or younger. To assist individuals in accessing subsidized family planning services, Minnesota Department of Health also funds a 1-800 family planning hotline. In State Fiscal Year 2017, the hotline responded to 3,600 inquiries.

Federal Title X funds totaling $3.1 million comes to Minnesota through direct grants to Planned Parenthood of Minnesota, North Dakota and South Dakota, and Ramsey Public Health. Access to subsidized family planning services has also been increased through the Minnesota Family Planning Program. The Minnesota Family Planning Program (MFPP) increases access to family planning services for low-income Minnesotans and helps reduce the number of unintended pregnancies. The program is available to people who are not enrolled in Medical Assistance. In 2016, the program served more than 21,000 people, with a monthly average enrollment of about 12,000. Total spending for the program was just over $9 million. Federal Medicaid funding for most services is at a 90-percent matching rate. The MFPP was implemented beginning July 1, 2006, as a federal waiver demonstration project approved by the Centers for

Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS). The Affordable Care Act (ACA) established a new Medicaid eligibility group and the option for states to provide family planning services under the Medicaid State Plan. The 2014 Minnesota Legislature directed DHS to seek federal authority to operate the MFPP under the Minnesota Medicaid State Plan. Effective January 1, 2017, the MFPP became a Medicaid State Plan program.

Other state efforts supporting reducing unintended pregnancies include The Family Home Visiting Program administered by MDH. Approximately $8 million in federal TANF funds are directed to the Family Home Visiting Program. The Family Home Visiting program administered by MDH provides funding to all of Minnesota's local public health agencies and to nine of the 11 tribal governments to support home visiting services to families at or below 200 percent of poverty. The goal of the program is to prevent child abuse and neglect, reduce juvenile delinquency, promote positive parenting and resiliency in children and promote family health and economic self-sufficiency. The program has a strong focus on providing family supports that reduce the risk of teen pregnancies and working with pregnant or parenting teens to delay subsequent pregnancies.

These family home visiting efforts are augmented by receipt of approximately $9.2 million (FFY18) in federal Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting Program funds. Beginning in July 2019, a total of $18.7 million in Minnesota state funding will support implementation of the evidence based home visiting models such as Nurse Family Partnership, Healthy Families America and Family Spirit, Parents as Teachers and Family Connects.

F. CONDUCT A PROGRAM DESIGNED TO REACH STATE AND LOCAL LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICIALS, THE EDUCATION SYSTEM, AND RELEVANT COUNSELING SERVICES, THAT PROVIDES EDUCATION AND TRAINING ON THE PROBLEM OF STATUTORY RAPE SO THAT TEENAGE PREGNANCY PREVENTION PROGRAMS MAY BE EXPANDED TO INCLUDE MEN (SECTION 402(A)(1)(A)(VI) OF THE SOCIAL SECURITY ACT)

F. CONDUCT A PROGRAM DESIGNED TO REACH STATE AND LOCAL LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICIALS, THE EDUCATION SYSTEM, AND RELEVANT COUNSELING SERVICES, THAT PROVIDES EDUCATION AND TRAINING ON THE PROBLEM OF STATUTORY RAPE SO THAT TEENAGE PREGNANCY PREVENTION PROGRAMS MAY BE EXPANDED TO INCLUDE MEN (SECTION 402(A)(1)(A)(VI) OF THE SOCIAL SECURITY ACT).

The state of Minnesota considers sexual violence, including statutory rape, a public health problem. Sexual violence is defined as any of the following conditions: statutory rape, date/acquaintance rape, same-sex assault, child sexual abuse, incest, pornography, prostitution, sexual exploitation by professionals, stalking, sexual harassment, and any other sexual activity in which a person is forced, coerced or manipulated without her/his consent.

In order to address this problem, the state passed provisions that outline consequences for sexual violence including age of consent laws (for further details, see Minnesota Statute 609.342 at https://www.revisor.mn.gov/statutes/?id=609.342)

In addition, statewide partnerships approach sexual violence in a holistic manner that work towards the elimination of violent sexual behaviors including statutory rape.

These efforts are provided under the leadership of a statewide stakeholder workgroup involving the following organizations and grassroots advocacy entities:

- Minnesota Department of Health (MDH)
- Minnesota Department of Human Services (DHS)
- Department of Corrections (DOC)

- Representatives of county and local legal, health, law enforcement and abuse prevention organizations and workgroups
- MDE and representatives of local school districts
- Minnesota Coalition Against Sexual Assault
- The MN Men's Action Network (Alliance to Prevent Sexual and Domestic Violence)

These statewide public/private collaborative efforts support and fund annual conferences, periodic meetings, and ad hoc taskforces to shape the development of sexual violence prevention curriculum that is available and distributed to communities, youth, and professionals. To this end, a collaborative effort between MDH, Men As Peacemakers in Duluth and the Gender Violence Institute in Clearwater had been created to develop a network of men and male leaders involved in primary prevention practices. These efforts are currently coordinated by Minnesota Department of Health, the Bush Foundation and the Minnesota Department of Public Safety.

G. IMPLEMENT POLICIES AND PROCEDURES AS NECESSARY TO PREVENT ACCESS TO ASSISTANCE PROVIDED UNDER THE STATE PROGRAM FUNDED UNDER THIS PART THROUGH ANY ELECTRONIC FUND TRANSACTION IN AN AUTOMATED TELLER MACHINE OR POINT-OF-SALE DEVICE LOCATED IN A PLACE DESCRIBED IN SECTION 408(A)(12), INCLUDING A PLAN TO ENSURE THAT RECIPIENTS OF THE ASSISTANCE HAVE ADEQUATE ACCESS TO THEIR CASH ASSISTANCE (SECTION 402(A)(1)(A)(VII) OF THE SOCIAL SECURITY ACT)

G. IMPLEMENT POLICIES AND PROCEDURES AS NECESSARY TO PREVENT ACCESS TO ASSISTANCE PROVIDED UNDER THE STATE PROGRAM FUNDED UNDER THIS PART THROUGH ANY ELECTRONIC FUND TRANSACTION IN AN AUTOMATED TELLER MACHINE OR POINT-OF-SALE DEVICE LOCATED IN A PLACE DESCRIBED IN SECTION 408(A)(12), INCLUDING A PLAN TO ENSURE THAT RECIPIENTS OF THE ASSISTANCE HAVE ADEQUATE ACCESS TO THEIR CASH ASSISTANCE (SECTION 402(A)(1)(A)(VII) OF THE SOCIAL SECURITY ACT).

The State of Minnesota has taken several steps to ensure the requirements of Section 4004 of the Middle Class Tax Relief and Job Creation Act of 2012 are as follows:

Enforcing a complementary state law (MN Statute 256.987, Subdivision 2) which prohibits the purchase of tobacco products and liquor with any EBT transactions. Thus, EBT users are informed of their responsibilities and limitations with EBT card use. Furthermore, counties/tribes that deliver MFIP/TANF benefits and services are instructed to communicate to all program participants state expectations around EBT card use restrictions at both application and at recertification stages.

A search is done quarterly through the EBT Data Warehouse system, specifically narrowed to include search fields of retailer name and/or Point of Sale machine names, and location of retailers that clients should not be accessing their cash benefits at. The results are further reviewed to see if the cash withdrawal transactions are done at a retailer that has an assigned Food and Consumer Services (FCS) number that indicates they are a registered retailer with US Food and Nutrition Service (FNS). The results without a FCS number affiliated with the retailer/Point of Sale machine are submitted to Fidelity National Information Services, Inc. (FIS) to review further and block ongoing cash withdrawals if possible. The known locations are reviewed monthly to see if they have been successfully blocked for usage.

Ongoing monitoring occurs by generating quarterly reports. Prohibited retailers and POS machines are continuously identified and blocked as needed.

Findings of noncompliance at the retailer level are resolved by blocking the ability to conduct EBT transactions. At the participant level, findings of non-compliance are addressed through fraud investigations at the county level who have the ability to prosecute such an offense to

fraud and unlawful EBT use. The disqualification of the EBT cardholder from the program they were a participant can also occur.

To provide adequate access to TANF benefits, Minnesota's issuance policy provides that the monthly assistance payments or corrective payments be issued in the form of EBT or direct deposit to client checking or savings accounts at a bank or credit union, or warrants at their option. For benefits issued through EBT cards, the state contracts with Fidelity Information Services (FIS) to allow clients get access to their benefits through automated teller machines (ATM) and point-of-sale terminals (POS) at authorized locations in the state's 87 counties and tribal nations. Each ATM and POS machine is owned and operated by different financial institutions. FIS may on their business side work with grocers or retailers to provide POS machine. FIS makes sure that transactions are processing correctly and deals with customer service as they arise. For instance, providing replacement cards, helping clients to check balances, and to report any ATM error they may encounter. FIS also offers three ways for clients to contact them, online, via phone and an app that clients can download on their mobile phones. Furthermore, state staff can conduct monitoring by call monitoring on FIS customer service call, as well as get monthly reports from FIS on their customer service statistics. The state retains the authority to assess a financial penalty if need be. If a client is not receiving the correct amount from an ATM, the complaint first goes through the bank that owns the ATM, then FIS which will adjust benefits if it is found an ATM made an error. Clients are provided with four (4) free cash ATM/POS transactions each month provide adequate benefit access at little cost.

H. ENSURE THAT RECIPIENTS OF ASSISTANCE PROVIDED UNDER THE STATE PROGRAM FUNDED UNDER THIS PART HAVE THE ABILITY TO USE OR WITHDRAW ASSISTANCE WITH MINIMAL FEES OR CHARGES, INCLUDING AN OPPORTUNITY TO ACCESS ASSISTANCE WITH NO FEE OR CHARGES, AND ARE PROVIDED INFORMATION ON APPLICABLE FEES AND SURCHARGES THAT APPLY TO ELECTRONIC FUND TRANSACTIONS INVOLVING THE ASSISTANCE, AND THAT SUCH INFORMATION IS MADE PUBLICLY AVAILABLE (SECTION 402(A)(1)(A)(VIII) OF THE SOCIAL SECURITY ACT)

H. ENSURE THAT RECIPIENTS OF ASSISTANCE PROVIDED UNDER THE STATE PROGRAM FUNDED UNDER THIS PART HAVE THE ABILITY TO USE OR WITHDRAW ASSISTANCE WITH MINIMAL FEES OR CHARGES, INCLUDING AN OPPORTUNITY TO ACCESS ASSISTANCE WITH NO FEE OR CHARGES, AND ARE PROVIDED INFORMATION ON APPLICABLE FEES AND SURCHARGES THAT APPLY TO ELECTRONIC FUND TRANSACTIONS INVOLVING THE ASSISTANCE, AND THAT SUCH INFORMATION IS MADE PUBLICLY AVAILABLE (SECTION 402(A) (1) (A) (VIII) OF THE SOCIAL SECURITY ACT).

While there are client restrictions regarding EBT access and use of TANF benefits, Minnesota is required by federal law to ensure that applicants and recipients are provided adequate access to cash assistance with minimal or no fees or charges for withdrawal. Clients pay electronic fees similar to non-TANF clients. Clients get four free EBT cash withdrawals per month, and eFunds then charges $1 for subsequent cash withdrawals. This fee is not charged until the client's fifth cash withdrawal.

.Minnesota's EBT brochure includes a description of how EBT card fees work, and is made available in print and electronically (see this link for further information https://edocs.dhs.state.mn.us/lfserver/Public/DHS-3315A-ENG).

I. INDICATE WHETHER IT INTENDS TO TREAT FAMILIES MOVING FROM ANOTHER STATE DIFFERENTLY FROM OTHER FAMILIES UNDER THE PROGRAM, AND IF SO HOW (SECTION 402(A)(1)(B)(I) OF THE SOCIAL SECURITY ACT)

I. INDICATE WHETHER THE STATE INTENDS TO TREAT FAMILIES MOVING FROM ANOTHER STATE DIFFERENTLY FROM OTHER FAMILIES UNDER THE PROGRAM, AND IF SO HOW (SECTION 402(A) (1) (B) (I) OF THE SOCIAL SECURITY ACT)

To be eligible for MFIP or DWP, an assistance unit must have established residency in Minnesota. An assistance unit is considered to have established residency in Minnesota when a child or caregiver has resided in this state for at least 30 consecutive days with the intention of making the person's home here and not for any temporary purpose. A county must waive the 30-day residency requirement when unusual hardship would result from denial of assistance. Families that have move from other states to Minnesota, and who establish state residency, are treated the same as all the other MFIP participants.

J. INDICATE WHETHER IT INTENDS TO PROVIDE ASSISTANCE TO NON-CITIZENS, AND IF SO INCLUDE AN OVERVIEW OF THE ASSISTANCE (SECTION 402(A)(1)(B)(II) OF THE SOCIAL SECURITY ACT)

J. INDICATE WHETHER IT INTENDS TO PROVIDE ASSISTANCE TO NON-CITIZENS, AND IF SO INCLUDE AN OVERVIEW OF THE ASSISTANCE (SECTION 402(A) (1) (B) (II) OF THE SOCIAL SECURITY ACT).

Persons who are either United States citizens or qualified non-citizens are eligible for TANF benefits per the provisions of section 431 of the PRWORA, as amended (8 U.S.C. 1641), if they meet all other program eligibility criteria. Qualified non-citizens who entered the United States before Aug. 22, 1996 are considered to be eligible for federally funded cash assistance if they are Lawful Permanent Residents (LPRs); paroled for one year or more; victims of battery and/or cruelty; or conditional entrants prior to April 1, 1980. Qualified non-citizens who entered on or after Aug. 22, 1996 are considered to be ineligible for federally funded MFIP/DWP cash assistance for five years. The following non-citizens may be eligible for federal funding without considering the date of admission to the U.S. if they meet all other program requirements: refugees, asylees, veterans and persons on active duty in the U.S. Armed Forces, their spouses or unmarried dependent children, non-citizens whose deportation/removal is being withheld, Cuban or Haitian entrants and certain Amerasians.

All lawfully residing non-citizens who are not eligible for federal funding may be eligible for state funding if they meet other program eligibility requirements for state funded cash assistance. LPRs age 18 through 69 who are funded under state dollars and who have been in the country for four or more years must meet one of the following requirements to remain eligible: Enrollment in literacy, English as a second language or citizenship classes; applied for admission to such classes and on a waiting list; applied for a waiver from U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) of the English language or civics requirements of the citizenship test; submitted an application for citizenship to USCIS and waiting for a testing date or swearing-in ceremony; or have been denied citizenship due to failure to pass the test after two or more attempts or because of an inability to understand the rights and responsibilities of becoming a U.S. citizen as documented by the USCIS or the county agency.

K. SET FORTH OBJECTIVE CRITERIA FOR THE DELIVERY OF BENEFITS AND THE DETERMINATION OF ELIGIBILITY AND FOR FAIR AND EQUITABLE TREATMENT, INCLUDING AN EXPLANATION OF HOW IT WILL PROVIDE OPPORTUNITIES FOR RECIPIENTS WHO HAVE BEEN ADVERSELY AFFECTED TO BE HEARD IN A STATE ADMINISTRATIVE OR APPEAL PROCESS (SECTION 402(A)(1)(B)(III) OF THE SOCIAL SECURITY ACT)

K. SET FORTH OBJECTIVE CRITERIA FOR THE DELIVERY OF BENEFITS AND THE DETERMINATION OF ELIGIBILITY AND FOR FAIR AND EQUITABLE TREATMENT, INCLUDING AN EXPLANATION OF HOW IT WILL PROVIDE OPPORTUNITIES FOR RECIPIENTS WHO HAVE BEEN ADVERSELY AFFECTED TO BE HEARD IN A STATE ADMINISTRATIVE OR APPEAL PROCESS (SECTION 402(A)(1)(B)(III) OF THE SOCIAL SECURITY ACT).

Eligibility

An applicant for MFIP or for DWP must meet the eligibility requirements specified in Minnesota Statutes Sections 256J.01 through 256J.95 before receiving benefits and services. All

requirements under Section 408 of the Social Security Act, as amended by the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996, are included in Minnesota law.

Assistance is provided equitably to all program recipients in accordance with state and federal law. Neither MFIP nor DWP requires basis of eligibility tests, such as the previous Aid to Families with Dependent Children 100-hour rule requirement for two-parent families.

The asset limit for both programs is $10,000 for applicants and $10,000 for participants. One vehicle per assistance member age 16 or older is not counted towards the asset limit. Other assets that do not count towards the asset limit include personal goods and savings in a tax-free ABLE account, up to $14,000 per year. For MFIP and DWP, statewide payment standards are based on the number of eligible persons in the assistance unit.

Persons convicted of a drug offense committed after July 1, 1997 may receive cash assistance subject to the conditions set forth in Minnesota Statutes 256J.26.

Minnesota Family Investment Program (MFIP)

Time Limits

There is a 60-month lifetime limit for receiving MFIP assistance with exceptions in certain situations. Time limit exceptions apply to the months in which individuals are living in Indian country (as defined in Section 1151 of Title 18, U.S.C.) or a Native Alaskan Village where the not-employed rate is over 50 percent per the provisions under 45 CFR 264.1((b)(1)(ii)).

Under the MFIP program, some families are funded with segregated state funds and are exempt from the 60-month lifetime limit. Included are caregivers age 60 and over as well as minor caregivers under the age of 18 and caregivers 18 or 19 who are complying with education requirements. The months a person received cash assistance as part of the MFIP field trials are also exempted from the 60-month time limit. The MFIP field trials were implemented in in April 1994 in urban counties and four rural counties in Minnesota. Because that time predates the state TANF program, it is not included in the 60-month time limit count for the current MFIP program (Minnesota's TANF Program).

Hardship Extensions

Extensions of the 60-month time limit are possible if any of the following hardship conditions are met:

- The participant is suffering from an illness, injury or incapacity which has been certified by a qualified professional when the illness, injury or incapacity is expected to continue for more than 30 days, and severely limits the participant's ability to obtain or maintain suitable employment.
- The participant is a caregiver whose presence in the home is required because of an illness, injury or incapacity of another member in the assistance unit, a relative in the household, or a foster child in the household when the illness or incapacity and the need for a person to provide assistance in the home has been certified by a qualified professional and is expected to continue for more than 30 days.
- The participant is a caregiver with a child or an adult in the assistance unit who meets the disability or medical criteria for home care services or waivered services or meets the criteria for severe emotional disturbance under Minnesota statutes.
- The participant is a caregiver who is employed the number of hours required by DHS with a household income that does not exceed program standards.
- The participant is determined to be hard-to-employ because the individual belongs to any of the following groups:

- A person diagnosed by a qualified professional as a person with developmental disability or mental illness, and the condition severely limits the person's ability to obtain or maintain suitable employment.
- A person assessed by a vocational specialist or the county agency to be unemployable.
- A person assessed to have an IQ below 80 assessed by a vocational specialist or a county agency to be employable, but the condition severely limits the person's ability to obtain or maintain suitable employment.
- A person who is determined by a qualified professional to be Learning Disabled and the condition severely limits the person's ability to obtain or maintain suitable employment. The initial approval of a learning disability extension must have been or confirmed within the previous 12 months. Learning disabilities do not include learning problems that are primarily the result of visual, hearing or motor handicaps, mental retardation and emotional disturbance or due to environmental, cultural or economic disadvantage.
- A person assessed to have an IQ below 80 assessed by a vocational specialist or a county agency to be employable, but the condition severely limits the person's ability to obtain or maintain suitable employment.
- A person who is determined by a qualified professional to be Learning Disabled and the condition severely limits the person's ability to obtain or maintain suitable employment. The initial approval of a learning disability extension must have been or confirmed within the previous 12 months. Learning disabilities do not include learning problems that are primarily the result of visual, hearing or motor handicaps, mental retardation and emotional disturbance or due to environmental, cultural or economic disadvantage.

Appeals

Applicants and recipients of MFIP and DWP are notified in writing of their rights and the process to follow to secure a fair hearing. When an applicant is denied services, or a participant disagrees with a county or tribal agency decision, the applicant or participant may submit a request for a hearing to the county or tribal agency or directly to the DHS Appeals Office. State Human Services judges will conduct a hearing in person at the county office or by telephone. Decisions are issued by the commissioner within 90 days of the request for a hearing. Under certain conditions, a participant may continue to receive benefits pending an appeal decision. Reasonable expenses incurred by a recipient because of the appeal are reimbursed upon request (Minnesota Statute 256.045, Administrative and Judicial Review of Human Services Matters).

L. INDICATE WHETHER THE STATE INTENDS TO ASSIST INDIVIDUALS TO TRAIN FOR, SEEK, AND MAINTAIN EMPLOYMENT (SECTION 402(A)(1)(B)(V) OF THE SOCIAL SECURITY ACT)—

1. PROVIDING DIRECT CARE IN A LONG-TERM CARE FACILITY (AS SUCH TERMS ARE DEFINED UNDER SECTION 1397J OF THIS TITLE); OR

2. IN OTHER OCCUPATIONS RELATED TO ELDER CARE, HIGH-DEMAND OCCUPATIONS, OR OCCUPATIONS EXPECTED TO EXPERIENCE LABOR SHORTAGES AS, DETERMINED APPROPRIATE BY THE STATE FOR WHICH THE STATE IDENTIFIES AN UNMET NEED FOR SERVICE PERSONNEL, AND, IF SO, SHALL INCLUDE AN OVERVIEW OF SUCH ASSISTANCE.

INDICATE WHETHER THE STATE INTENDS TO ASSIST INDIVIDUALS TO TRAIN FOR, SEEK, AND MAINTAIN EMPLOYMENT (SECTION 402(A) (1) (B) (V) OF THE SOCIAL SECURITY ACT)—

(1) Providing direct care in a long-term care facility (as such terms are defined under section 1397j of this title); or

(2) In other occupations related to elder care, high-demand occupations, or occupations expected to experience labor shortages as, determined appropriate by the state for which the state identifies an unmet need for service personnel, and, if so, shall include an overview of such assistance.

Minnesota intends to assist individuals in training for seeking and maintaining employment in the elder workforce as a result of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act of 2010 (ACA). It uses its FastTRAC/Pathways to Prosperity Initiatives to create career pathways programs in high-demand career fields including the elder care workforce. This Initiative provides grants to collections of local partners to operate as part of the state's employment services system, and is available to low income families on public assistance to comply with their work requirements. At the end of the training, MFIP participants are considered to be work ready for the Universal Health Care classification that allows entry to the local long-term care facilities as Certified Nurse Assistants with a focus on elder care. While in the training, they are considered Adult Basic Education (ABE) students and part of the work activities focus on retention by reducing barriers to successful employment once the training is complete. More specifically, the Department is providing access through its annual MFIP Innovations Funds to fund Adult Career Pathways programs focusing on Universal HealthCare Worker in Older Adult Services Certificate training as a tool for integrating adult basic education, non-credit occupational training, and for-credit postsecondary degree and certificate programs, with credentials embedded into these pathways that "stack" toward degrees over time. The lead state agencies in the FastTRAC Adult Career Pathway Alliance include the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities, Minnesota Department of Education Adult Basic Education Office, and Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development. Other key state level collaborators include Minnesota Department of Human Services, Minnesota Department of Labor and Industry, the Office of Higher Education, Greater Twin Cities United Way, Minnesota Workforce Council Association, and the Governor's Workforce Development Council.

Per recent information provided by the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development, out of 1374 total participants, 450 had completed occupational skills training (PCA) and 140 and achieved licensure (CNA). 227 people were co-enrolled in Adult Career Pathways/MFIP. Based on this information, 17% of 450 would give an approximate number of 76 people in MFIP that have gotten their Personal Care Assistant credentials, and 24 TANF recipients attained CNA licensure.

M. PROVIDE FOR ALL MOE-FUNDED SERVICES THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION: THE NAME OF THE PROGRAM BENEFIT OR SERVICE, AND THE FINANCIAL ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA THAT FAMILIES MUST MEET IN ORDER TO RECEIVE THAT BENEFIT OR SERVICE. IN ADDITION, FOR TANF MOE-FUNDED SERVICES (CO-MINGLED OR SEGREGATED MOE) DESCRIBE THE PROGRAM BENEFIT PROVIDED TO ELIGIBLE FAMILIES (SSP SERVICES DO NOT HAVE TO INCLUDE A DESCRIPTION BUT THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES ENCOURAGES IT) (§263.2(B)(3) & §263.2(C) PREAMBLE PAGES 17826-7)

1. Name of Service Program:**Minnesota Family Investment Program (MFIP)**

2. Description of the Major Program Benefits, Services, and Activities:

[MN Statutes 256J.02 - 256J.74] Grants to Individuals - MFIP grants provide integrated cash and food assistance to families with children or to pregnant women while the caregiver works toward becoming self-sufficient. Caregivers are expected to participate in employment services requirements.

3. Purpose(s) of Benefit or Service Program:

MFIP grants provide basic assistance to eligible families. The combined cash and food benefit program also includes an earned income disregard factor that has been shown to encourage work.

4. Program Type: This program is operated under the TANF program.

5. Description of Work Activities: N/A this is not a separate State program.

6. Total State Expenditures for the Program for the Fiscal Year:**$80,283,482**

7. Total State MOE Expenditures under the Program for the Fiscal Year:**$27,475,947**

8. Total Number of Families serviced with MOE funds**:15,974**
   a. This last figure represents the average monthly total for the fiscal year.

9. Financial eligibility criteria for receiving MOE funded Program Benefits or Services:

Pregnant women or a caregiver with a child under age 18, or under age 19 if the child is in secondary education. The resource limit is $2,000 for applicants and $5,000 for participants. Income eligibility is with 115 percent of FPG adjusted for family size. Participants must be citizens or legal non-citizens.

10. Program Authorization: YES ☐ NO ☒

11. Total Program Expenditures in FY 1995: $0

12. Comments: Final approval of the initial waiver from the U.S. Department of Agriculture allowing the MFIP program to combine cash and food benefits was effective January 1, 1998. The waiver was most recently reauthorized in August 2017, effective through September 30, 2022.

1. Name of Service Program:**Employment and Training Services**

2. Description of the Major Program Benefits, Services, and Activities:

These grants are state funds provided to counties to pay for Employment Services for MFIP and DWP participants.

3. Purpose(s) of Benefit or Service Program:

Grants are given to counties to provide various services to MFIP and DWP recipients to assist them in becoming employed. The services include, but are not limited to – job search, job club, GED, employment related education, work literacy, case management, job retention, and job or skills update.

4. Program Type: This program is operated under the TANF program.

5. Description of Work Activities: N/A this is not a separate State program.

6. Total State Expenditures for the Program for the Fiscal Year:**$8,620,437**

7. Total State MOE Expenditures under the Program for the Fiscal Year:**$7,086,340**

8. Total Number of Families serviced with MOE funds:**8,755**
   a. This last figure represents the total served for the fiscal year.

9. Financial eligibility criteria for receiving MOE funded Program Benefits or Services:

To be eligible for the program, the recipient must be an adult or minor caregiver receiving an MFIP or a DWP grant.

10. Program Authorization: YES ☐ NO ☒

11. Total Program Expenditures in FY 1995: $0

12. Comments: This program was first authorized in the 1997 Legislative session and was repealed effective June 30, 2003. The program was replaced with the supportive services portion of the Consolidated Fund which provides only TANF-funded reimbursements in the final quarter of FFY 2003. The Diversionary Work program employment & training services became part of the Consolidated Fund July 1, 2004.

1. Name of Service Program:**MFIP/DWP Childcare Assistance**

2. Description of the Major Program Benefits, Services, and Activities:

[MN Statute 119B] The Child Care Assistance program helps caregivers receiving Minnesota Family Investment Program (MFIP) or Diversionary Work Program (DWP) benefits with child care costs while participating in authorized activities such as working, looking for work, or participating in other activities that are part of an employment service plan. In addition, a family who leaves MFIP or DWP may be eligible to receive Transition Year Child Care Assistance for up to 12 calendar months after leaving MFIP/DWP.

3. Purpose(s) of Benefit or Service Program:

The purpose of MFIP/DWP child care assistance is to help families with child care costs while they are participating in MFIP/DWP authorized activities, such as job search, employment, or training/education.

4. Program Type: This program is operated under the TANF program.

5. Description of Work Activities: N/A this is not a separate State program.

6. Total State Expenditures for the Program for the Fiscal Year:**$96,863,661**

7. Total State MOE Expenditures under the Program for the Fiscal Year:**$74,960,492**

8. Total Number of Families serviced with MOE funds:**4,05**
   a. This last figure represents the average monthly total for the fiscal year.

9. Financial eligibility criteria for receiving MOE funded Program Benefits or Services:

Child care though MFIP is available to families who have an approved job search support or employment plan under MN Statutes 256J.521 or meet the employment requirements under MN Statutes 119B.

10. Program Authorization: YES ☒ NO ☐

11. Total Program Expenditures in FY 1995: $0

12. Comments: None

1. Name of Service Program:**Basic Sliding Fee (BSF) Child Care Subsidy**

2. Description of the Major Program Benefits, Services, and Activities:

[MN Statutes 119B, 119A] The BSF program assists low-income working families who are not participating in MFIP or DWP with child care costs.

3. Purpose(s) of Benefit or Service Program:

The purpose of the BSF child care assistance is to help pay the child care costs while low-income non MFIP/DWP families work, look for work or attend educational programs.

4. Program Type: This program is operated under the TANF program.
5. Description of Work Activities: N/A this is not a separate State program.
6. Total State Expenditures for the Program for the Fiscal Year:**$54,652,533**
7. Total State MOE Expenditures under the Program for the Fiscal Year:**$42,294,300**
8. Total Number of Families serviced with MOE funds:**3,000**
   a. This last figure represents the average monthly total for the fiscal year.
9. Financial eligibility criteria for receiving MOE funded Program Benefits or Services:

Families may enter the BSF program if their income is less than or equal to 175% of the federal poverty guidelines, adjusted for family size. Families moving from Transition Year to BSF are considered to have met the income entry requirement in the first subprogram in which they participated. Families may receive child care assistance until their income reaches 250% of the federal poverty guidelines, adjusted for family size. Eligible families may receive BSF child care assistance for children under the age of 13 or, for children with a disability, under the age of 15. Parents must be working, looking for work, or in an authorized education/training activity.

10. Program Authorization: YES ☒ NO ☐
11. Total Program Expenditures in FY 1995: $0
12. Comments: None

1. Name of Service Program:**Head Start**
2. Description of the Major Program Benefits, Services, and Activities:

[MN Statutes 119A.50] Head Start is a federal and state funded child and family development program, helping low-income families become self-reliant while also helping prepare their children for school success.

3. Purpose(s) of Benefit or Service Program:

The purpose of the Head Start program is to provide comprehensive child development services to children, with a special focus on helping preschoolers develop the early reading and math skills required to be successful in school.

4. Program Type: This program is operated separate from the TANF program
5. Description of Work Activities: N/A
6. Total State Expenditures for the Program for the Fiscal Year:**$24,291,599**
7. Total State MOE Expenditures under the Program for the Fiscal Year:**$5,700,000**
8. Total Number of Families serviced with MOE funds:**535**
   a. This last figure represents the total served for the fiscal year.
9. Financial eligibility criteria for receiving MOE funded Program Benefits or Services:

Head Start eligibility requires that at least 90% of children enrolled be from low income families as defined by the federal poverty level. State funding to supplement the federal Head Start program is authorized under Minnesota Statute 119A.52.

10. Program Authorization: YES ☐ NO ☒
11. Total Program Expenditures in FY 1995: $11,500,000.00
12. Comments: None

1. Name of Service Program:**Minnesota Working Family Credit**
2. Description of the Major Program Benefits, Services, and Activities:

[MN Statute 290.0671] MN Working Family Credit. This program provides a tax benefit to eligible low-income families through a refundable income tax credit.

3. Purpose(s) of Benefit or Service Program:

The purpose of the program is to provide economic support to low-income families as well as to encourage employment among low-income parents.

4. Program Type: This program is operated under the TANF program.
5. Description of Work Activities: N/A this is not a separate State program.
6. Total State Expenditures for the Program for the Fiscal Year:**$231,376,305**
7. Total State MOE Expenditures under the Program for the Fiscal Year:**$111,738,431**
8. Total Number of Families serviced with MOE funds:**100,665**
   a. This last figure represents the average monthly total for the fiscal year.
9. Financial eligibility criteria for receiving MOE funded Program Benefits or Services:

A family that qualifies for the federal Earned Income Credit also qualifies for the MN Working Family Credit.

10. Program Authorization: YES ☐ NO ☒
11. Total Program Expenditures in FY 1995: $22,800,000.00
12. Comments: None

1. Name of Service Program:**Consolidated Fund – Emergency Needs**
2. Description of the Major Program Benefits, Services, and Activities:

Short-term, nonrecurring shelter and utility needs that are excluded from the definition of assistance under TANF, for families who meet the MFIP residency requirements.

3. Purpose(s) of Benefit or Service Program:

Grants provide short-term, basic help to eligible families who find themselves in a crisis or emergency situation.

4. Program Type: This program is operated under the TANF program.
5. Description of Work Activities: N/A this is not a separate State program.

6. Total State Expenditures for the Program for the Fiscal Year:**$180,415**
7. Total State MOE Expenditures under the Program for the Fiscal Year:**$180,415**
8. Total Number of Families serviced with MOE funds:**382**
   a. This last figure represents the total served for the fiscal year.
9. Financial eligibility criteria for receiving MOE funded Program Benefits or Services:

Families with a minor child, a pregnant woman, or a non-custodial parent of a minor child receiving assistance with an income below 200% of the federal poverty guideline for a family of the applicable size are eligible for services funded under the Consolidated Fund.

10. Program Authorization: YES ☒ NO ☐
11. Total Program Expenditures in FY 1995: $0
12. Comments: None

1. Name of Service Program:**State Administration**
2. Description of the Major Program Benefits, Services, and Activities:

The funds represent the state share of the administrative costs of running the MFIP program as allocated through the state's approved cost allocation plan.

3. Purpose(s) of Benefit or Service Program:

The purpose of state administration is to oversee county administration of the MFIP program to ensure that clients are served under federal and state guidelines.

4. Program Type: This program is operated under the TANF program.
5. Description of Work Activities: N/A this is not a separate State program.
6. Total State Expenditures for the Program for the Fiscal Year:**$818,072**
7. Total State MOE Expenditures under the Program for the Fiscal Year:**$818,072**
8. Total Number of Families serviced with MOE funds:**15,974**
   a. This last figure represents the average monthly total for the fiscal year.
9. Financial eligibility criteria for receiving MOE funded Program Benefits or Services:

State staff administers TANF program rules and regulations by supervising county administration of TANF funds.

10. Program Authorization: YES ☒ NO ☐
11. Total Program Expenditures in FY 1995: $0
12. Comments: None

1. Name of Service Program:**County Administration**
2. Description of the Major Program Benefits, Services, and Activities:

The funds represent the County share of the administrative costs of running the MFIP program as allocated through the state's federally approved cost allocation plan.

3. Purpose(s) of Benefit or Service Program:

The purpose of county administration is to provide eligibility determination, case maintenance, fraud control and prevention, and related administrative services.

4. Program Type: This program is operated under the TANF program.
5. Description of Work Activities: N/A this is not a separate State program.
6. Total State Expenditures for the Program for the Fiscal Year:**$16,161,422**
7. Total State MOE Expenditures under the Program for the Fiscal Year:**$16,161,422**
8. Total Number of Families serviced with MOE funds:**15,974**
   a. This last figure represents the average monthly total for the fiscal year.
9. Financial eligibility criteria for receiving MOE funded Program Benefits or Services:

County staff administers the TANF program rules and regulations under federal and state guidelines.

10. Program Authorization: YES ☒ NO ☐
11. Total Program Expenditures in FY 1995: $0
12. Comments: Effective July 1, 2003 this program is funded under the Consolidated Fund (this note not required on ACF-204).

1. Name of Service Program:**Credit for K-12 Education Expenses**
2. Description of the Major Program Benefits, Services, and Activities:

The Credit for K-12 Education Expenses [MN Statutes 290.0674] is a refundable tax credit which is equal to 75% of eligible education expenses for a qualifying child in kindergarten through grade 12.

3. Purpose(s) of Benefit or Service Program:

Eligible expenses include fees or tuition for instruction outside the regular school day or school year, such as tutoring and educational summer camps. Also eligible are costs required for the regular school day for textbooks, instructional materials, and transportation costs paid to others. Private school tuition does not qualify for the credit, although it does qualify for the subtraction. Eligible expenses also include personal computer hardware and educational software, limited to a maximum of $200 per family.

4. Program Type: This program is operated separate from the TANF program.
5. Description of Work Activities: N/A
6. Total State Expenditures for the Program for the Fiscal Year:**$8,144,906**
7. Total State MOE Expenditures under the Program for the Fiscal Year:**$6,659,829**
8. Total Number of Families serviced with MOE funds:**29,468**
   a. This last figure represents the average monthly total served for the fiscal year.

9. Financial eligibility criteria for receiving MOE funded Program Benefits or Services:

The maximum credit of $1,000 times the number of children in kindergarten through grade 12 is allowed to taxpayers with total household income of $33,500 or less. For taxpayers with one or two children, the maximum credit is phased out for household income between $33,500 and $37,500. For taxpayers with more than two children, the phase-out range for the maximum credit is increased by $2,000 for each additional child.

10. Program Authorization: YES ☐ NO ☒

11. Total Program Expenditures in FY 1995: $0

12. Comments: This refundable tax credit was not instituted until 1997.

TANF CERTIFICATIONS

The State Plan must include	Include
1. Operate a child support enforcement program under the State Plan approved under part D. (section 402(a)(2) of the Social Security Act);	Yes
2. Operate a foster care and adoption assistance program under the State Plan approved under part E, and that the State will take such actions as are necessary to ensure that children receiving assistance under such part are eligible for medical assistance under the State Plan under title XIX. (section 402(a)(3) of the Social Security Act);	Yes
3. Specify which State agency or agencies will administer and supervise the program referred to in paragraph (1) for the fiscal year, which shall include assurances that local governments and privatesector organizations (section 402(a)(4) of the Social SecurityAct)—	
3. (A) have been consulted regarding the plan and design of welfare services in the State so that services are provided in a manner appropriate to local populations; and	Yes
3. (B) have had at least 45 days to submit comments on the plan and the design of such services;	Yes
4. Provide each member of an Indian tribe, who is domiciled in the State and is not eligible for assistance under a tribal family assistance plan approved under section 412, with equitable access to assistance under the State program funded under this part attributable to funds provided by the Federal Government. (section 402(a)(5) of the Social Security Act);	Yes
5. Establish and enforce standards and procedures to ensure against program fraud and abuse,including standards and procedures	Yes

The State Plan must include	Include
concerning nepotism, conflicts of interest among individuals responsible for the administration and supervision of the State program, kickbacks, and the use of political patronage. (section 402(a)(6) of the Social Security Act);	
6. (optional) Establish and Enforcing standards and procedures to (section 402(a)(7) of the Social Security Act).—	
6.i. screen and identify individuals receiving assistance under this part with a history of domestic violence while maintaining the confidentiality of such individuals;	Yes
6.ii. refer such individuals to counseling and supportive services; and	Yes
6.iii. waive, pursuant to a determination of good cause, other program requirements such as time limits (for so long as necessary) for individuals receiving assistance, residency requirements, child support cooperation requirements, and family cap provisions, in cases where compliance with such requirements would make it more difficult for individuals receiving assistance under this part to escape domestic violence or unfairly penalize such individuals who are or have been victimized by such violence, or individuals who are at risk of further domestic violence.	Yes

EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING PROGRAMS UNDER THE SUPPLEMENTAL NUTRITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (PROGRAMS AUTHORIZED UNDER SECTION 6(D)(4) OF THE FOOD AND NUTRITION ACT OF 2008 (7 U.S.C. 2015(D)(4)))

A. GENERAL REQUIREMENTS [27]

1. THE NATURE OF THE E&T COMPONENTS THE STATE AGENCY PLANS TO OFFER AND THE REASONS FOR SUCH COMPONENTS, INCLUDING COST INFORMATION. THE METHODOLOGY FOR STATE AGENCY REIMBURSEMENT FOR EDUCATION COMPONENTS MUST BE SPECIFICALLY ADDRESSED. IF A STATE AGENCY PLANS TO OFFER SUPERVISED JOB SEARCH IN ACCORDANCE WITH PARAGRAPH (E)(2)(I) OF THIS SECTION, THE STATE AGENCY MUST ALSO INCLUDE IN THE E&T PLAN A SUMMARY OF THE STATE GUIDELINES IMPLEMENTING SUPERVISED JOB SEARCH. THIS SUMMARY OF THE STATE GUIDELINES, AT A MINIMUM, MUST DESCRIBE: THE CRITERIA USED BY THE STATE AGENCY TO APPROVE LOCATIONS FOR SUPERVISED JOB SEARCH, AN EXPLANATION OF WHY THOSE CRITERIA WERE CHOSEN, AND HOW THE SUPERVISED JOB SEARCH COMPONENT MEETS THE REQUIREMENTS TO DIRECTLY SUPERVISE THE ACTIVITIES OF PARTICIPANTS AND TRACK THE TIMING AND ACTIVITIES OF PARTICIPANTS;

The following is a list of activities provided under SNAP E&T. Current budgeting doesn't identify expenses by these categories.

Some areas of the state have a shortage of remedial education funds. In other areas, specialized programs have been established to service SNAP E&T populations. Even with state support, the influx of welfare reform has created a burden on resources and staff in some areas and in serving high-barrier populations thus any SNAP E&T funds are supplementing, not supplanting federal, state, or local funds. Minnesota only provides ABE SNAP E&T services to individuals over 21 years of age and the state SNAP E&T team reviews all ABE/GED programs individually to determine if they meet E&T requirements and will supplement, rather than supplant, existing state and federal funds.

Component	Definition
Supervised Job Search	A component in which the participant is primarily engaged in actively applying for work, building connections with prospective employers, and/or attending hiring events and other networking opportunities. Supervised job search activities must have a direct link to increasing the employment opportunities of individuals engaged in the activity. Participants may conduct these activities at any location appropriate to the activity, including, but not limited to their home, job sites, public facilities, or their SNAP E&T provider locations. However, participants must report activities and hours through sign-in sheets, e-mail records, phone, mobile app, or another state-approved method at least once per week. Providers must retain a record of dates and hours of job search activity as well as a summary of job search activities performed (including the date, time, activity type, positions applied for (if any), and any application barriers that may have arisen). Supervised Job Search focuses on searching for and applying for jobs with direct supervision.
Job Search Training	A component that strives to enhance the job search skills of participants by providing instruction and mentoring in job seeking techniques, increasing motivation and self-confidence for work, and understanding employer needs. Job search training activities are approvable if they directly enhance the employability of the participants. A direct link between the job search training activities and job-readiness must be established. The component may consist of employability assessments, job placement services, one-on-one case management to reduce employment barriers, application assistance, and training in aspects of the job search process including resume writing, interviewing, appropriate dress, social skills, and using job search technology. Job Search Training is not intended to be a long term activity.

Component	Definition
Workfare	A work component in which SNAP recipients perform work in a private or public non-profit agency as a condition of eligibility. In lieu of wages, workfare participants receive compensation in the form of their household's monthly benefit allotment. The primary goal of workfare is to improve employability and encourage individuals to move into regular employment while returning something of value to the community.
Work Experience	A work component designed to improve the employability of participants through actual work experience and to enable them to move into regular employment. Work experience assignments may not replace the employment of a regularly employed individual and they must provide the same benefits and working conditions provided to regularly employed individuals performing comparable work for comparable hours.
Work Experience	A work experience program is designed to improve the employability of household members through actual work experience or training, or both, and to enable individuals employed or trained under such programs to move promptly into regular public or private employment. Work experience is a planned, structured learning experience that takes place in a workplace for a limited period of time. Work experience may be paid or unpaid and may be arranged within the private for-profit sector, the non-profit sector, or the public sector. **Work Activity (WA)** – A component that provides an individual with an opportunity to acquire the general skills, knowledge, and work habits necessary to obtain employment in exchange for SNAP benefits. The purpose of work activity is to improve the employability of those who cannot find unsubsidized full time employment. A work activity can be arranged within the private for-profit sector, the non-profit sector, or the public sector. Work activity is a training program and should have, for example, things like a curriculum, clearly articulated outcome goals, intentional day-to-day activities that are designed to improve someone's skills and employability, and a planned start date and end date.

Component	Definition
	On-the-job Training (WBLOJT) – A work placement made through a contract with an employer or registered apprenticeship program sponsor in the public, private non-profit, or private sector. An OJT contract must be time-limited and wages are reimbursed at a set percentage by the organization to the employer for the length of the contract. OJT also carries the expectation that the participant will be hired by the employer in a permanent position when the contract ends. **Pre-Apprenticeship/Apprenticeship (WBLPA)** — A combination of on-the-job training and related instruction in which workers learn the practical and theoretical aspects of a skilled occupation. Pre-Apprenticeship programs provide individuals with the basic and technical skills necessary to enter an apprenticeship program and should be directly linked to an apprenticeship program **Internship (WBLI)** – A planned, structured learning experience that takes place in a workplace for a limited period of time. An internship must be a learning experience that applies knowledge gained in the classroom, and teaches skills or knowledge that can be transferred to other employment settings. An internship has a defined beginning and end, and a job description with desired qualifications. **Transitional Jobs (WBLTJ)** – A transitional job is one that provides a work experience for a limited period of time, that is wage-paid and subsidized, and is in the public, private, or non-profit sectors for those individuals with barriers to employment who are chronically unemployed or have inconsistent work history. These jobs are designed to enable an individual to establish a work history, demonstrate work success in an employee-employer relationship, and develop the skills that lead to unsubsidized employment.
Educational Programs	A component that improves basic skills or otherwise improves employability. Only educational components that establish a direct link to job-readiness will be approved, although programs that involve articulated career pathways or stackable credentials that ultimately lead to employment are encouraged and allowed. Allowable educational programs may include::

Component	Definition
	Basic/Foundational Skills Instruction (EPB)— Programs that offer academic instruction and education services below the post-secondary level that increase an individual's ability to read, write, and perform mathematics or other activities necessary for the attainment of a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent, transition to postsecondary education and training, and obtain employment. Such programs include Adult Basic Education (ABE), basic literacy, and high school equivalency (GED). Minnesota only allows reimbursement for ABE/GED services provided to participants aged 21 or over. These services must be substantially differentiated from those already provided by existing education programs currently being offered at no cost to the general public or must provide additional slots in existing programs that cannot be paid for with existing state funds. **Career/Technical Education Programs or Other Vocational Training (EPC)** — Organized activities at the post-secondary level that provide individuals with the academic and technical knowledge and skills necessary to prepare for further education and for careers in current or emerging employment sectors. Programs are primarily designed for those who are beyond the age of compulsory high school attendance. Ideally, such programs should be employer-driven and lead to industry-recognized certificates or credentials. Postsecondary training is limited to a 2-year associate degree level or lesser. English Language Acquisition (EPEL)—Designed to help English language learners achieve competence in reading, writing, speaking, and comprehension of the English language. **Integrated Education and Training (IET)/Bridge Programs (EPIE)** —Programs that provide adult education and literacy activities concurrently and contextually with workforce preparation activities and workforce training for a specific occupation or group of occupations for the purpose of educational and career advancement. **Work Readiness Training (EPWRT)** – Intensive programs that include skill assessment and educational remediation services that prepare individuals for the workforce. Work readiness skills may include both foundational cognitive skills such as reading for information, applied mathematics,

Component	Definition
	locating information, problem solving, and critical thinking and non-cognitive skills, or soft skills.
Self-Employment Training (SET)	A component that improves the employability of participants by providing training in setting up and operating a small business or other self–employment venture. Participants receive technical assistance in developing business plans and in creating financial marketing plans, and also learn how to access small business grants and other business support services.
Job Retention (JR)	Services may be provided to SNAP E&T participants who have secured employment after participating in another E&T component. Services must be offered for a minimum of 30 days and not more than 90 days even if the individual is no longer receiving SNAP. This component is meant to help participants who have secured employment achieve satisfactory performance, retain employment, or to increase earnings over time.
Other Activities	**Orientation:** The Employment Services Provider (ESP) must provide an orientation to the SNAP E&T program for all participants. Orientation can take many forms but must include an opportunity for individual to ask questions. **Employability Assessments:** Employability assessments are mandatory for all participants. ESPs must consider the following when preparing an assessment: the person's literacy; ability to communicate in the English language; educational and employment histories; occupational and employment assets; and barriers to employment. Assessments are completed in person with client input.

2. A DESCRIPTION OF THE CASE MANAGEMENT SERVICES AND MODELS, HOW PARTICIPANTS WILL BE REFERRED TO CASE MANAGEMENT, HOW THE PARTICIPANT'S CASE WILL BE MANAGED, WHO WILL PROVIDE CASE MANAGEMENT SERVICES, AND HOW THE SERVICE PROVIDERS WILL COORDINATE WITH E&T PROVIDERS, THE STATE AGENCY, AND OTHER COMMUNITY RESOURCES, AS APPROPRIATE. THE STATE PLAN SHOULD ALSO DISCUSS HOW THE STATE AGENCY WILL ENSURE E&T PARTICIPANTS ARE PROVIDED WITH TARGETED CASE MANAGEMENT SERVICES THROUGH AN EFFICIENT ADMINISTRATIVE PROCESS;

Minnesota requires that all SNAP E&T participants receive case management as part of their participation in SNAP E&T. Employment Services Providers (ESPs) are responsible for ensuring that participants receive case management services. including at least one of the following: employability and intake assessments, employment plans, barrier identification, progress monitoring, coordination with service providers, referral facilitation, and service application assistance. Providers are strongly encouraged to build and maintain relationships with a wide range of employment and social service providers in their area, and to offer referrals to those organizations if the need cannot be met from within. The ESP is still able to provide case management to assist participants in connecting to those referrals and managing their path to employment. As a result participants do not need a separate referral for case management and all services are coordinated with their SNAP E&T components by their SNAP E&T provider.

All case management activities are tracked in the participant's record and through monthly case notes in the state's case management system, Workforce One (WF1)

3. AN OPERATING BUDGET FOR THE FEDERAL FISCAL YEAR WITH AN ESTIMATE OF THE COST OF OPERATION FOR EACH FEDERAL FISCAL YEAR COVERED BY THE COMBINED PLAN. ANY STATE AGENCY THAT REQUESTS 50 PERCENT FEDERAL REIMBURSEMENT FOR STATE AGENCY E&T ADMINISTRATIVE COSTS, OTHER THAN FOR PARTICIPANT REIMBURSEMENTS, MUST INCLUDE IN ITS PLAN, OR AMENDMENTS TO ITS PLAN, AN ITEMIZED LIST OF ALL ACTIVITIES AND COSTS FOR WHICH THOSE FEDERAL FUNDS WILL BE CLAIMED, INCLUDING THE COSTS FOR CASE MANAGEMENT AND CASEWORK TO FACILITATE THE TRANSITION FROM ECONOMIC DEPENDENCY TO SELF-SUFFICIENCY THROUGH WORK. COSTS IN EXCESS OF THE FEDERAL GRANT WILL BE ALLOWED ONLY WITH THE PRIOR APPROVAL OF FNS AND MUST BE ADEQUATELY DOCUMENTED TO ASSURE THAT THEY ARE NECESSARY, REASONABLE AND PROPERLY ALLOCATED. A STATE MUST SUBMIT A PLAN AMENDMENT TO REQUEST BUDGET ADJUSTMENTS AT LEAST 30 DAYS PRIOR TO PLANNED IMPLEMENTATION;

SNAP E&T Operating Budget for FFY 2022

Expense Category	Non-Federal Share	Federal Share	Total
I. Direct Program and Admin Costs			
Salary/Wages (State agency only)		$327,547.00	$327,547.00
Fringe Benefits		$128,398.00	$128,398.00
Non-capital equipment		$25,000.00	$25,000.00
Materials		$5,000.00	$5,000.00
Travel		$10,000.00	$10,000.00
Building Space			
Equipment and other capital expenditures			
Subtotal - State agency costs only		$495,945.00	$495,945.00
Contractual Costs:	$3,144,710.50	$3,305,710.50	$6,450,421.00

Expense Category	Non-Federal Share	Federal Share	Total
County Administered Program Admin Cost	$762,797.00	$1,239,674.00	$2,002,471.00
Total Direct Program and Admin Costs	$3,907,507.50	$5,041,329.50	$8,948,837.00
II. Indirect Costs:			
Indirect Costs		$49,595.00	$49,595.00
III. In-kind contribution			
State in-kind contribution			
Total Administrative Costs	$3,907,507.50	$5,090,924.50	$8,998,432.00
IV. Participant Reimbursements			
Dependent Care (including costs from contracts/partners and county administered programs)	$42,000.00	$42,000.00	$84,000.00
Transportation & Other costs (including costs from contracts/partners and county administered programs)	$762,923.50	$762,923.50	$1,525,847.00
State Agency Cost for Dependent Care			
Total Participant Reimbursements	$804,923.50	$804,923.50	$1,609,847.00
V. Total Costs	$4,712,431.00	$5,895,848.00	$10,608,279.00

4. THE CATEGORIES AND TYPES OF INDIVIDUALS THE STATE AGENCY INTENDS TO EXEMPT FROM E&T PARTICIPATION, THE ESTIMATED PERCENTAGE OF WORK REGISTRANTS THE STATE AGENCY PLANS TO EXEMPT, AND THE FREQUENCY WITH WHICH THE STATE AGENCY PLANS TO REEVALUATE THE VALIDITY OF ITS EXEMPTIONS;

Item	Description	Amount or Percentage

Item	Description	Amount or Percentage
I.	Anticipated number of work registrants in the State during the Federal FY (unduplicated count):	114,000
II.	Estimated number of planned State option exemptions from E&T:	114,000
	List below planned State option exemption categories and the number of work registrants expected to be included in each during the Federal FY. 1. All work registrants	 1. 100%
III.	Percent of all work registrants exempt from E&T	100%
IV.	Anticipated number of E&T mandatory participants	0
V.	Anticipated number of voluntary E&T participants	3,292
VI.	Anticipated number of ABAWDs in the State during the Federal FY (excluding the ones residing in waivered area)	0
VII.	Anticipated number of ABAWDs in waived areas of the State during the Federal FY	49,700
VIII.	Anticipated number of ABAWDs to be exempted under the State's 15 percent ABAWD exemption allowance during the Federal FY	0
IX.	Number of potential at–risk ABAWDs expected in the State during the Federal FY (line VI–VIII)	N/A

5. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE POPULATION THE STATE AGENCY INTENDS TO PLACE IN E&T;

Based on estimates from FFY 2021 SNAP E&T participation, the state expects to annually place:

Characteristic	Characteristic Detail	Percentage	Total Number
Voluntary vs. Mandatory	Voluntary Participants	100%	3,292

Characteristic	Characteristic Detail	Percentage	Total Number
	Mandatory Participants	0%	0
Education	Received high school diploma or equivalency (HSE) prior to participation in E&T	87.08%	2867
	Did not receive HSE prior to participation	12.52%	412
	Unknown	0.4%	13
Race	White	43.07%	1418
	African American	33.85%	1114
	Native American	12.05%	397
	Asian	4.31%	142
Ethnicity	Hispanic or Latinx	6.93%	228
Speak English as a second language	Limited English Proficiency- Yes	8.61%	283
	Limited English Proficiency- No	91.39%	3008
Gender	Male	45.02%	1482
	Female	54.85%	1806
Age	Between 18-21	14.87%	489
	Between 22-39	68.1%	2,241
	Between 40-54	26.18%	861
	55 or older	9.15%	301
Disability Status	Yes, Employment Barrier	15.61%	514

6. THE ESTIMATED NUMBER OF VOLUNTEERS THE STATE AGENCY EXPECTS TO PLACE IN E&T;

Minnesota operates a voluntary SNAP E&T program and anticipates serving 3,292 volunteers in FFY 2022.

7. THE GEOGRAPHIC AREAS COVERED AND NOT COVERED BY THE E&T PLAN AND WHY, AND THE TYPE AND LOCATION OF SERVICES TO BE OFFERED;

Minnesota operates a voluntary SNAP E&T program and intends to offer services to all interested SNAP recipients who meet eligibility criteria. Some SNAP E&T services are available in most counties in Minnesota and the DHS SNAP E&T team is working actively to increase the number and range of SNAP E&T providers in the state particularly in rural counties. Where services are not available this is due to limitations of 100% funding and a lack of state-contracted providers. DHS is actively seeking ways to expand the breadth and depth of SNAP E&T state-wide. In FFY 22 and FFY 23 Minnesota will be engaging in a rapid cycle evaluation project with USDA and Mathematica focused on boosting rural participation. The state plan covers all areas of the state.

8. THE METHOD THE STATE AGENCY USES TO COUNT ALL WORK REGISTRANTS AS OF THE FIRST DAY OF THE NEW FISCAL YEAR;

Work registrant data is gathered from the DHS Data Warehouse using Structured Query Language (SQL) developed and approved by FNS regional and national staff. County eligibility workers use work registration codes when approving SNAP eligibility in MAXIS on the STAT/WREG panel, and ESPs use WF1 to record participant level data and activities. The MAXIS codes meet federal exemption code definitions in 7 CFR 273.7.

Completing the FNS-583 Report:

Line 1: Count of all work registrants whose case was active on September 30th at midnight. This number provides an accurate count of those on board on October 1st. It does not include new applications processed on this date.

Line 2: Count of distinct persons by minimum report month where the report month is greater than the start of the FFY.

Line 3: Count of distinct persons with ABAWD status enrolled in a qualifying component where "Report Month" is equal the 1st month of quarter, the 2nd month of the quarter and the 3rd month of quarter.

Line 4: Count of distinct persons with ABAWD status enrolled in a non-qualifying component and non-ABAWDs in any component, and ABAWDs not subject to the time limit in any activity.

Line 5: Distinct count of persons in each month of the quarter with ABAWD status of B for banked month.

Line 6: Count of distinct persons by component

Line 7: Distinct count of people in the activities table with a start date before the end of the FFY and end date after the first of the FFY, or no end date.

9. THE METHOD THE STATE AGENCY USES TO REPORT WORK REGISTRANT INFORMATION ON THE QUARTERLY FORM FNS–583;

DHS employs a state-wide data system (MAXIS) to generate work registrant reports at the state level. County income maintenance workers input information into MAXIS via an online system. All SNAP E&T providers use a shared data system (Workforce One) to report participation in SNAP E&T.

State data staff at DHS access work registrant data from both MAXIS and Workforce One through the DHS Data Warehouse using SQL developed and approved by FNS regional and national staff.

10. THE METHOD THE STATE AGENCY USES TO PREVENT WORK REGISTRANTS FROM BEING COUNTED TWICE WITHIN A FEDERAL FISCAL YEAR. IF THE STATE AGENCY UNIVERSALLY WORK REGISTERS ALL SNAP APPLICANTS, THIS METHOD MUST SPECIFY HOW THE STATE AGENCY EXCLUDES THOSE EXEMPT FROM WORK REGISTRATION UNDER 7 C.F.R. §273.7(B)(1). IF THE STATE AGENCY WORK REGISTERS NONEXEMPT PARTICIPANTS WHENEVER A NEW APPLICATION IS SUBMITTED, THIS METHOD MUST ALSO SPECIFY HOW THE STATE AGENCY EXCLUDES THOSE PARTICIPANTS WHO MAY HAVE ALREADY BEEN REGISTERED WITHIN THE PAST 12 MONTHS AS SPECIFIED UNDER 7 C.F.R. §273.7(A)(1)(I);

Numbers for each month are recorded separately. This ensures that numbers used in Line 1 of FNS-583 form are only used once during the federal fiscal year. Again, by programming MAXIS and Workforce One to calculate monthly reports using only SSNs, Minnesota is assured of an unduplicated count.

11. THE ORGANIZATIONAL RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE UNITS RESPONSIBLE FOR CERTIFICATION AND THE UNITS OPERATING THE E&T COMPONENTS, INCLUDING UNITS OF THE STATEWIDE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM, IF AVAILABLE. FNS IS SPECIFICALLY CONCERNED THAT THE LINES OF COMMUNICATION BE EFFICIENT AND THAT NONCOMPLIANCE BY THE PARTICIPANT BE REPORTED TO THE CERTIFICATION UNIT WITHIN 10 WORKING DAYS AFTER THE NONCOMPLIANCE OCCURS;

DHS is responsible for both SNAP certification and operation of SNAP E&T. DHS supports an interface which allows the eligibility system (MAXIS) to communicate information automatically to the employment services system, Workforce 1 (WF1). However, WF1 is unable to communicate information back to MAXIS. As a result, E&T providers must communicate directly with county and tribal eligibility staff.

SNAP E&T policy and practice requires that providers communicate with county eligibility staff as soon as possible, but no more than 10 days, after discovering information that might affect the participant's eligibility for benefits. This information includes communication upon meeting hourly participation requirements, securing employment, issuance of a provider determination, or another change in status that might affect benefits. DHS provides a standard form for reporting changes, but counties and E&T providers are encouraged to develop systems collaboratively to ensure that status changes are reported once known to the agency. Counties, tribes and SNAP E&T providers are responsible for ensuring that a communication plan is in place that will allow non-compliance to be accurately reported.

12. THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE STATE AGENCY AND OTHER ORGANIZATIONS IT PLANS TO COORDINATE WITH FOR THE PROVISION OF SERVICES, INCLUDING ORGANIZATIONS IN THE STATEWIDE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM, IF AVAILABLE. COPIES OF CONTRACTS MUST BE AVAILABLE FOR INSPECTION; THE STATE AGENCY MUST DOCUMENT HOW IT CONSULTED WITH THE STATE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD. IF THE STATE AGENCY CONSULTED WITH PRIVATE EMPLOYERS OR EMPLOYER ORGANIZATIONS IN LIEU OF THE STATE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD, IT MUST DOCUMENT THIS CONSULTATION AND EXPLAIN THE DETERMINATION THAT DOING SO WAS MORE EFFECTIVE OR EFFICIENT. THE STATE AGENCY MUST INCLUDE IN ITS E&T STATE PLAN A DESCRIPTION OF ANY OUTCOMES FROM THE CONSULTATION WITH THE STATE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD OR PRIVATE EMPLOYERS OR EMPLOYER ORGANIZATIONS. THE STATE AGENCY MUST ALSO ADDRESS IN THE E&T STATE PLAN THE EXTENT TO WHICH E&T ACTIVITIES WILL BE CARRIED OUT IN COORDINATION WITH THE ACTIVITIES UNDER TITLE I OF WIOA;

Minnesota's SNAP E&T program is overseen by the Department of Human Services in collaboration with DEED. The units operating E&T components include: 1) organizations and

tribes contracted with DHS 2) organizations contracted with DEED for limited funding match 3) organizations contracted with counties 4) county-operated workforce services.

Each organization plays a unique role in supporting the SNAP E&T program. DHS provides policy guidance, receives and distributes funds, provides connection to the SNAP eligibility system and ensures alignment with SNAP policy, and leads the statewide expansion of the program. DEED provides opportunities for on-ramps to contracting and provides connection and alignment to the statewide workforce system. Counties and tribes process direct referrals, receive and act on case-specific information received from E&T providers, provide referral and connection to SNAP E&T providers, and may directly sub-contract with additional organizations for expanded E&T services. SNAP E&T providers offer case management, training, education, and other assistance to individuals through referral or reverse referral, inform counties and tribes of case changes that may affect eligibility including provider determinations, and refer SNAP E&T participants to other social services and employment supports through coenrollment. Minnesota considers SNAP E&T providers part of the "welfare system" and providers are able to share information freely with SNAP eligibility units.

13. THE AVAILABILITY, IF APPROPRIATE, OF E&T PROGRAMS FOR INDIANS LIVING ON RESERVATIONS AFTER THE STATE AGENCY HAS CONSULTED IN GOOD FAITH WITH APPROPRIATE TRIBAL ORGANIZATIONS;

Minnesota DHS consults annually with Minnesota tribes and regularly conducts provider outreach with tribes, tribal member-serving organizations, and tribal colleges. In FFY 2021, DEED was contracted for SNAP E&T services with the Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe; however, no tribes are currently contracted for SNAP E&T for FFY 2022. Minnesota allocates 100% funds to tribes who administer SNAP on the same formula basis as those funds allocated to counties. Tribal consultation has identified two primary barriers to offering SNAP E&T directly through tribes 1) lack of non-federal funding for workforce services on tribal reservations and 2) complexity of program administration. Minnesota is committed to continuing to reduce these barriers in collaboration with interested tribes.

14. IF A CONCILIATION PROCESS IS PLANNED, THE PROCEDURES THAT WILL BE USED WHEN AN INDIVIDUAL FAILS TO COMPLY WITH AN E&T PROGRAM REQUIREMENT. INCLUDE THE LENGTH OF THE CONCILIATION PERIOD; AND

N/A

15. THE PAYMENT RATES FOR CHILD CARE ESTABLISHED IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE CHILD CARE AND DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT PROVISIONS OF 45 CFR 98.43, AND BASED ON LOCAL MARKET RATE SURVEYS.

Minnesota SNAP E&T policy allows childcare reimbursement in cases where the individual cannot qualify for existing childcare support programs, needs care before their childcare support application can be processed, or to cover a gap in existing childcare support funds.

16. THE COMBINED (FEDERAL/STATE) STATE AGENCY REIMBURSEMENT RATE FOR TRANSPORTATION COSTS AND OTHER EXPENSES REASONABLY NECESSARY AND DIRECTLY RELATED TO PARTICIPATION INCURRED BY E&T PARTICIPANTS. IF THE STATE AGENCY PROPOSES TO PROVIDE DIFFERENT REIMBURSEMENT AMOUNTS TO ACCOUNT FOR VARYING LEVELS OF EXPENSES, FOR INSTANCE FOR GREATER OR LESSER COSTS OF TRANSPORTATION IN DIFFERENT AREAS OF THE STATE, IT MUST INCLUDE THEM HERE.

All participants complete an employment plan. In working with participants, providers issue participant reimbursements on a case-by-case basis using SNAP E&T policy guidelines. These guidelines include a list of allowable reimbursements and providers are expected to demonstrate that costs are reasonable and necessary for participation in a SNAP E&T activity. Minnesota uses identical participant reimbursement guidance to that issued by FNS.

17. INFORMATION ABOUT EXPENSES THE STATE AGENCY PROPOSES TO REIMBURSE. FNS MUST BE AFFORDED THE OPPORTUNITY TO REVIEW AND COMMENT ON THE PROPOSED REIMBURSEMENTS BEFORE THEY ARE IMPLEMENTED.

At the provider's option, Minnesota makes available all participant reimbursements currently allowable by FNS. Additional reimbursements are reviewed by the state, in consultation with FNS, on a case-by-case basis.

18. FOR EACH COMPONENT THAT IS EXPECTED TO INCLUDE 100 OR MORE PARTICIPANTS, REPORTING MEASURES THAT THE STATE WILL COLLECT AND INCLUDE IN THE ANNUAL REPORT IN PARAGRAPH (C)(17) OF THIS SECTION. SUCH MEASURES MAY INCLUDE:

A. THE PERCENTAGE AND NUMBER OF PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS WHO RECEIVED E&T SERVICES AND ARE IN UNSUBSIDIZED EMPLOYMENT SUBSEQUENT TO THE RECEIPT OF THOSE SERVICES;

In addition to the federal reporting measures for SNAP E&T, in FFY 22 Minnesota plans to report:

Number and percentage of participants who engaged in Supervised Job Search who are employed in the 2nd quarter from exit.
Numerator: Number of participants who engaged in Supervised Job Search who are employed in the 2nd quarter from exit.
Denominator: Number of participants who engaged in Supervised Job search in the federal fiscal year and have exited.
Job Search Training (JST)

Number and percentage of participants who engaged in Job Search Training who are employed in the 2nd quarter from exit.
Numerator: Number of participants who engaged in Supervised Job Search Training who are employed in the 2nd quarter from exit
Denominator: Number of participants who engaged in Job Search Training in the federal fiscal year and have exited.

Number and percentage of participants who engaged in Educational Programs who are employed in the 2nd quarter from exit.
Numerator: Number of participants who engaged in Educational Program activities who are employed in the 2nd quarter from exit. Educational Programs include EPB - Basic Education and/or Foundational Skills Instruction, EPC - Career and/or Technical Education Programs or Other Vocational Training, EPEL - English Language Acquisition, EPIE - Integrated Education and Training (IET)/Bridge Programs, EPWRT - Work Readiness Training
Denominator: Number of participants who engaged in Educational Program activities in the reporting period and have exited.

B. THE PERCENTAGE AND NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS WHO OBTAIN A RECOGNIZED CREDENTIAL, A REGISTERED APPRENTICESHIP, OR A REGULAR SECONDARY SCHOOL DIPLOMA (OR ITS RECOGNIZED EQUIVALENT), WHILE PARTICIPATING IN, OR WITHIN 1 YEAR AFTER RECEIVING E&T SERVICES;

In FFY 22 Minnesota plans to report:

Number and percentage of participants who complete a work experience activity.
Numerator: Number of participants who completed a work experience activity during the federal fiscal year.
Work experience includes the following activities: Work activity (WA), WBLOJT - On-the-Job Training, WBLPA - Pre-Apprenticeship/Apprenticeship, WBLI – Internship, WBLTJ - Transitional Jobs. Denominator: Number of participants who participate in a work experience activity (this will include participants who complete and who do not complete a work activity in the federal fiscal year.

C. THE PERCENTAGE AND NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS WHO ARE IN AN EDUCATION OR TRAINING PROGRAM THAT IS INTENDED TO LEAD TO A RECOGNIZED CREDENTIAL, A REGISTERED APPRENTICESHIP AN ON-THE-JOB TRAINING PROGRAM, A REGULAR SECONDARY SCHOOL DIPLOMA (OR ITS RECOGNIZED EQUIVALENT), OR UNSUBSIDIZED EMPLOYMENT;

N/A

D. MEASURES DEVELOPED TO ASSESS THE SKILLS ACQUISITION OF E&T PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS THAT REFLECT THE GOALS OF THE SPECIFIC COMPONENTS INCLUDING THE PERCENTAGE AND NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS WHO ARE MEETING PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS OR ARE GAINING SKILLS LIKELY TO LEAD TO EMPLOYMENT; AND

In FFY 22, Minnesota plans to report on:

Number and percentage of participants who engaged in Job Retention who are employed in the 2nd quarter from exit.
Numerator: Number of participants in job retention who are employed in the 2nd quarter from exit.
Denominator: Number of participants in job retention in the reporting period.

E. OTHER INDICATORS APPROVED BY FNS IN THE E&T STATE PLAN.

In FFY 22 Minnesota plans to report on:

Number and percentage of participants who upon completion of an employability assessment or/and orientation activity enroll into to a federal component activity.
Numerator: Number of participants who completed an assessment/orientation activity and enroll in a federal component activity during the federal fiscal year. Federal component activities include: SJS, JST, W, SET, JR, EPB, EPC, EPEL, EPIE, EPWRT, WA, WBLOJT, WBLPA, WBLI and WBLTJ.
Denominator: Number of participants who complete an assessment or orientation activity.
Note: Participants who remain active/open in an assessment or orientation activity for over 90 days without further action will included in the denominator.

Number and percentage of participants who participate in employability assessment/orientation upon a referral generated from MAXIS to WF1.
Numerator: Number of participants referred to SNAP E&T from MAXIS to WF1 who subsequently started an assessment or orientation activity in the federal fiscal year.

Denominator: Number of participants referred to SNAP E&T through the automatic referral system, from MAXIS to WF1.

B. ABLE-BODIED ADULTS WITHOUT DEPENDENTS (ABAWD) [28]

1. ITS PLEDGE TO OFFER A QUALIFYING ACTIVITY TO ALL AT-RISK ABAWD APPLICANTS AND RECIPIENTS;

N/A

2. ESTIMATED COSTS OF FULFILLING ITS PLEDGE;

N/A

3. A DESCRIPTION OF MANAGEMENT CONTROLS IN PLACE TO MEET PLEDGE REQUIREMENTS;

N/A

4. A DISCUSSION OF ITS CAPACITY AND ABILITY TO SERVE AT-RISK ABAWDS;

N/A

5. INFORMATION ABOUT THE SIZE AND SPECIAL NEEDS OF ITS ABAWD POPULATION; AND

N/A

6. INFORMATION ABOUT THE EDUCATION, TRAINING, AND WORKFARE COMPONENTS IT WILL OFFER TO MEET THE ABAWD WORK REQUIREMENT

N/A

TRADE ADJUSTMENT ASSISTANCE (TAA)

Yes

JOBS FOR VETERANS' STATE GRANTS

A. HOW THE STATE INTENDS TO PROVIDE EMPLOYMENT, TRAINING AND JOB PLACEMENT SERVICES TO VETERANS AND ELIGIBLE PERSONS UNDER THE JVSG;

(OMB Control Number: 1225-0086)

The Jobs for Veterans' State Grants (JVSG) are mandatory, formula-based staffing grants to States (including DC, PR, VI and Guam). The JVSG is funded annually in accordance with a funding formula defined in the statute (38 U.S.C. 4102A (c) (2) (B) and regulation and operates on a fiscal year (not program year) basis, however, performance metrics are collected and reported quarterly on a Program Year basis (as with the ETA-9002 Series). Currently, VETS JVSG operates on a multi-year grant approval cycle modified and funded annually.

In accordance with 38 U.S.C. § 4102A(b)(5) and § 4102A(c), the Assistant Secretary for Veterans' Employment and Training (ASVET) makes grant funds available for use in each State to support Disabled Veterans' Outreach Program (DVOP) specialists and Local Veterans' Employment Representatives (LVER) staff. As a condition to receive funding, 38 U.S.C. § 4102A(c)(2) requires States to submit an application for a grant that contains a State Plan narrative, which includes:

A. HOW THE STATE INTENDS TO PROVIDE EMPLOYMENT, TRAINING AND JOB PLACEMENT SERVICES TO VETERANS AND ELIGIBLE PERSONS UNDER THE JVSG

The Jobs for Veterans State Grants (JVSG) provides federal funding, through a formula grant, to 54 State Workforce Agencies (SWAs) to hire dedicated staff to provide individualized career and training-related services to veterans and eligible persons with significant barriers to employment (SBEs), and helping employers fill their workforce needs with job-seeking veterans.

The JVSG funding supports the Disabled Veterans' Outreach Program (DVOP) specialist position, Local Veterans' Employment Representative (LVER) staff, and Consolidated Position staff.

DVOP and LVER staff are all housed in CareerForce locations they fulfill all responsibilities mandated by the grant programs.

The American Job Center (AJC) is branded as the CareerForce System in the state of Minnesota. CareerForce Locations throughout the state provide a full array of labor and employment services to veterans and their spouses. The CareerForce locations also provide many tools and resources to job seekers and employers, such as LMI, career guidance, talent pool, and other great tools.

Services for Minnesota Veterans may be accessed through a variety of systems and service providers in addition to the DVOPs and LVERs. Partner staff has been trained in providing services to Veterans via the National Veterans Training Institute (NVTI) online eLearning courses and instructor-led training and through a webinar produced by the Workforce Development Division at DEED. In addition, CareerForce partner staff attends NVTI as non-JVSG seats become available. An eligible veteran or eligible spouse is determined to have significant barriers to employment (SBE) if they attest to belonging to at least one of the criteria identified in VPL 03-14 (including change 2) and VPL 04-14. Minnesota has developed a standardized process for referring SBE Veterans to a DVOP (please see attached flowchart). This triage approach begins when a customer comes to the entry point at a CareerForce. All customers are asked if they ever served in the US Military/Armed Forces. If the answer is "yes", the Veteran is given a copy of our "Veterans Questionnaire" with instructions to complete it and return it to the CareerForce entry point. Non-JVSG staff review the form and complete an assessment of the questionnaire responses. Veterans who indicate a significant barrier to employment are referred to a DVOP if available, or to a "designated individualized career service provider" when no DVOP is available. Non-SBE Veterans are provided information on Priority of Service and screened for additional program eligibility by non-JVSG staff.

1. JOB AND JOB TRAINING INDIVIDUALIZED CAREER SERVICES,

Currently, Minnesota tracks services for veterans within two different systems. DVOP services to veterans with a significant barrier to employment are enrolled, tracked, and managed through our case management system, Workforce One. Specific services and resources will vary depending on CAREERFORCE partners and funding. Typically, services are delivered to SBE Veterans via a case management model by a DVOP. Based on need, these services may include resume review and assistance, mock interviewing practice including answers to difficult or challenging questions, assistance with social media strategies, and assistance with an internet job search. Job training/skill assessments are provided by partner staff, and in the case of training/educational needs, the VA CH31 program. Services provided to Veterans with no significant barrier to employment by partner staff and non-JVSG staff are recorded and tracked within Minnesotaworks.net., and also depend on resource availability. Along with other WIOA required titles, options are being considered to have a more unified data collection and management system to streamline systems and provide better reporting on services and outcomes.

1. EMPLOYMENT PLACEMENT SERVICES,

Minnesota tracks services, including placement services for veterans within two different systems. DVOP services to veterans with significant barriers to employment are entered, tracked, and managed through our case management system, WorkForce One. Services provided to veterans with no significant barriers to employment by partner staff and non—JVSG staff are recorded and tracked within Minnesotaworks.net. Activities, services, and performance are also tracked via State Performance Outcome Data reports. Veterans are encouraged to post their resumes on Minnesotaworks.net (among others) so employers can access them as they search for candidates. LVER staff constantly update their working list of SBE and CH31 Veterans seeking work so they can promote specific Vets as they meet with employers. LVERs also do much of their job development and promotion based on the Veterans on the DVOP caseload. LVER staff also plan, organize, promote, and facilitate local CareerForce "Business of the Day" events, and smaller local job fairs and hiring events. Along with other WIOA required titles, options are being considered to have a more unified data collection and management system to streamline systems and provide better reporting on services and outcomes. Specific services and resources will vary depending on CareerForce partners and funding.

1. JOB-DRIVEN TRAINING AND SUBSEQUENT PLACEMENT SERVICE PROGRAM FOR ELIGIBLE VETERANS AND ELIGIBLE PERSONS;

LVERs play a key role in the CareerForce system to enhance employer engagement. They have been trained to interpret Labor Market Information and to review this data with employers as they look to grow their CareerForce and develop current employees. Also, the LVER staff is familiar with programs such as Pathways to Prosperity (P2P) that help businesses "grow their own" high skilled staff. LVER staff is familiar with On Job Training (OJT) programs, apprenticeship programs, and Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC). Finally, LVERs educate employers on the opportunities the GI Bill and the "Minnesota GI Bill" can provide.

DVOP staff is assigned to provide case management and individualized career services to Veterans with significant barriers to employment in the following locations throughout the State of Minnesota: 1) All 47 CareerForce locations, 2) VA Vocational Rehab Center, Fort Snelling, 3) VA Medical Center, St Paul, 4) Various community libraries and post-secondary schools as available and necessary. LVER staff will be deployed in many of these same locations for employer outreach and education, and to facilitate networking and job search groups with employers and Veterans.

We also participate as an active partner in the Yellow Ribbon Reintegration program. As mentioned, this is a multi-phased program that includes a series of meetings and training events. Outreach, workshops, and assessments are all part of these events.

B. THE DUTIES ASSIGNED TO DVOP SPECIALISTS AND LVER STAFF BY THE STATE; SPECIFICALLY IMPLEMENTING DVOP AND LVER DUTIES OR ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES AS OUTLINED IN 38 U.S.C. § 4103A AND 4104. THESE DUTIES MUST BE CONSISTENT WITH CURRENT GUIDANCE;

B. The duties assigned to Disabled Veterans' Outreach Program (DVOP) specialists and Local Veterans' Employment Representative (LVER) staff by the state, specifically implementing DVOP and LVER duties or roles and responsibilities as outlined in 38U.S.C. 4103A and 4104.

These duties also must be consistent with current U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) guidance, including Veterans' Program Letter (VPL) 03-14; VPL 03-14, Change 1; and VPL 03-14, Change 2. Include a description of any consolidated DVOP/LVER positions.

The Disabled Veterans' Outreach Program (DVOP) specialists work directly with veterans and eligible persons who have significant barriers to employment, as identified in 38 U.S.C. 4103A (a)(1). The services provided by a DVOP specialist are referred to as individualized

career services but were once called intensive services. These services include, but are not limited to:

- Comprehensive assessment interviews
- Career guidance services
- Individual Employment Plans (IEPs)
- Staff-assisted job search activities
- Labor Market Information (LMI)
- Basic staff-assisted career services

Some other responsibilities that DVOP specialists have are case management, outreach services to veterans, and group job counseling, which differs from licensed counseling. A DVOP must establish a strong rapport and relationship with the veterans they serve, to provide them with the best services possible to help them reach their employment goals.

DVOP Core Responsibility 1 — Identify and facilitate individualized career services needed by Veterans with significant barriers to employment (SBE) so that they can be placed in suitable employment or a training program commensurate with their EDP/IDP. Tasks for this responsibility will include: 1) In cooperation with the U.S Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Veteran Readiness and Employment (VR&E) staff, identify Chapter 31 Veterans (CH31) who have completed or are participating in VR&E programs and need job search assistance. 2) Through the use of the new standardized "Veterans Questionnaire", identify and prioritize services to disabled and other veterans with an SBE.

3) Conduct assessments to determine employment barriers and services needed. 4) Develop a documented case management file in CareerForce One (WF1) for each veteran receiving individualized career services. 5) Develop an employability development plan for each case-managed veteran. 6) Refer veterans to appropriate supportive service providers. 7) Coordinate linkages with other employment and training providers and the VA to support Veterans in their job search activities. 8) Provide vocational guidance to eligible Veterans. 9) Refer Veterans to appropriate public and private sector jobs.

Core Responsibility 2 — Conduct outreach activities to identify and make contact with SBE Veterans who would benefit from or need individualized career services. Tasks for this responsibility will include:

1) Develop outreach programs in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs and DOL-VETS. 2) Participate in all Military reintegration events, DEED's annual Veterans Career Fair, and all other outreach events as assigned. 3) Conduct outreach activities with VR&E to market all services to Chapter 31 Veterans. 4) Conduct outreach activities to other organizations such as state Vocational Rehabilitation Providers, Homeless Veterans Reintegration Projects (HVRP), VA Hospitals and Veteran Centers, County Veteran Service Offices, homeless shelters, civic and community service organizations, other AJC/CAREERFORCE partners, and other sources as identified.

Core Responsibility 3 — Provide vocational guidance to eligible SBE Veterans who need assistance with vocational change or adjustment. Tasks for this responsibility will include:

1) Establish an Employment Development Plan (EDP) for all SBE Veterans requesting vocational guidance. 2) Provide vocational guidance using knowledge of labor market information and assessment tools. 3) Refer candidates to a qualified vocational counselor as necessary. 4) Assist Veterans in using electronic assessment and job search tools.

The DVOP works closely with other service providers in the community to provide career services to veterans with significant barriers to employment, as defined in VPL 03—14 (including change 2) and 04—14. These providers include but are not limited to Veterans Administration, CAREERFORCE partners, Community based services, Federal, State, county, and local programs, educational institutions, VA hospitals & Vet Centers, homeless programs and shelters, and Rehabilitation programs, and other service providers.

Local Veterans Employment Representatives (LVER) perform a wide range of duties on behalf of our veterans specifically related to outreach to the employer community and facilitation within the state's employment service delivery system. These duties are outlined in 38 U.S.C. 4104(b). LVERs must be assigned duties that promote the advantages of hiring veterans to employers, employer associations, and business groups. LVERs advocate for all veterans served by the American Job Centers (AJC) with business, industry, and other community-based organizations by participating in activities such as:

- Planning and participating in job and career fairs
- Conducting employer outreach
- In conjunction with employers, conducting job searches and workshops, and establishing job search groups
- Coordinating with unions, apprenticeship programs, and businesses or business organizations to promote and secure employment and training programs for veterans
- Informing federal contractors of the process to recruit qualified veterans
- Coordinating and participating in other business outreach efforts

LVERs are also responsible for "facilitating employment, training, and placement services furnished to veterans in a State under the applicable State employment service delivery systems" (38 U.S.C. 4104(b) (2)).

LVER STAFF POSITION PURPOSE

The LVER's principal duties are to:

- conduct outreach to employers in the area to assist veterans in gaining employment, including conducting seminars for employers and, in conjunction with employers, conducting job search workshops and establishing job search groups
- facilitate employment, training, and placement services furnished to veterans in Minnesota under the State employment service delivery systems.
- This position exists to provide services to local businesses that will enhance, support, and promote the employment of Veterans, particularly Veterans receiving individualized career services from a local DVOP.
- They will lead in the planning, development, direction, marketing, and delivery of employment services to Businesses, Veterans, and other eligible persons.
- The LVER will train, teach, and provide technical support to the state of Minnesota staff in the provision of Veteran employment services mandated by legislation and departmental guidelines.
- Clientele served by this position includes employers seeking qualified Veteran applicants or information on employer incentives and training programs, business and professional organizations, and other appropriate business contacts.

- Other LVER customers include community and Veteran organizations, educational facilities, local elected officials, and other State Departments, as well as other CareerForce staff and management that are either mandated by law or, are seeking assistance in providing priority of service to veterans in hiring and service delivery.

LVERs advocate for all veterans served by the CareerForce Center with business, industry, and other community—based organizations by participating in activities such as:

- Planning and participating in job and career fairs
- Conducting employer outreach
- In conjunction with employers, conducting job searches and workshops, and establishing job search groups;
- Coordinating with unions, apprenticeship programs, and businesses or business organizations to promote and secure employment and training programs for veterans;
- Informing Federal contractors of the process to recruit qualified veterans;
- Promoting credentialing and licensing opportunities for veterans, and
- Coordinating and participating with other business outreach efforts.

Core Responsibility 1 — Develop employer outreach activities to establish, maintain, and facilitate regular contact with employers to promote employment and training opportunities for the benefit of Veterans. Tasks for this responsibility will include: 1) Develop job opportunities for Veteran job seekers through outreach efforts with Minnesota employers: job development phone contacts, in-person employer visits, and participation in job fair activities on behalf of Veterans. 2) Communicate and coordinate with Business Services Representatives in the local AJC to facilitate and promote job opportunities for Veterans, especially those with significant barriers to employment. 3) Promote the "Veteran Friendly Employer" initiative to all businesses contacted. 4) Encourage employers to employ Veterans utilizing apprenticeships and OJT programs, State and Federal dislocated worker programs and GI Bill benefits. 5) Maintain current information on employment and training opportunities. 6) Monitor Federal Contractor Job Listings (FCJL) and Vet Central job orders for Veterans using the CAREERFORCE, or on the DVOP caseload. 7) Provide contacts and job leads to DVOPs.

Core Responsibility 2 — Advocate on behalf of Veterans seeking employment and training opportunities with business, industry, and community—based organizations. Tasks for this responsibility will include: 1) Contact community leaders, employers, labor unions, training programs, and Veterans organizations. 2) Promote Veterans' priority of service in employment and training programs. 3) Maintain current information on employment and training opportunities. 4) Plan and participate in job fairs to promote services to Veterans and encourage participating employers to become "Veteran Friendly Employers." 5) Promote licensing and certification assistance and training opportunities for Veterans using training providers and credentialing bodies. 6) Work with unions, apprenticeships programs, and the business community to promote employment, On Job Training (OJT), apprenticeships, and other available training opportunities to employ Veterans. 7) Establish and maintain contact with the National Guard, Reserve Family Readiness Groups, and Family Assistance Centers in the assigned area. Provide education and information regarding DEED Vets employment services, CareerForce locations, and Beyond the Yellow Ribbon events.

Core Responsibility 3 — Provide technical assistance, guidance, and leadwork to DVOPs, professional and support staff, and other CAREERFORCE staff engaged in the delivery of services to Veteran eligible. Tasks for this responsibility will include: 1) Plan, guide, and evaluate Veteran Program activities of CAREERFORCE staff to attain program goals and to ensure consistent application of program components by establishing and maintaining workflow/assignment requirements; monitoring and reporting program performance. 2) Train CareerForce staff and partners to enhance their knowledge of Veterans employment and training issues. 3) Provide technical advice and guidance to CAREERFORCE staff regarding procedural questions, or issues, to ensure that program services are administered with accuracy and uniformity by providing written and verbal interpretations of applicable federal laws and departmental policies and procedures. 4) Develop and implement a local Veterans employment service delivery plan, in conjunction with local management, Veterans Staff Supervisor, and Veterans State Director. Ensure community resources are utilized and eligible customers are served in accordance with federally mandated standards and delivery area objectives. 5) Analyze current delivery area operations and levels of program activity and recommend new or corrective action procedures to local management to enhance existing levels of performance. 6) Participate in the interviewing process with Veterans Program Management and local management in the selection of new DVOP/LVER staff to ensure qualified personnel is hired and the integrity of the various Veterans services programs is maintained.

Core Responsibility 4 — Provide capacity building for other service providers to ensure that Veterans and other eligible persons are provided the range of labor exchange services needed to meet their employment and training needs. Work with other CareerForce development providers to develop their capacity to recognize and respond to these needs. Tasks for this responsibility will include: 1) Train other staff and CAREERFORCE partners to enhance their knowledge of veterans' employment and training issues. 2) Organize and promote public events like Career Fairs that increase the visibility of Veterans. 3) Promote Veterans as a category of job seekers in the CareerForce development system that have highly marketable skills and experience.

Core Responsibility 5 — Manage and maintain adherence to POS, and DOL priorities for services to Veterans with an SBE, including labor exchange services.

Tasks for this responsibility will include: 1) Facilitate and maintain the provision of labor exchange services by local CAREERFORCE staff to Veterans including the identification of SBE Veterans, proper referral to a DVOP, or in the absence of the DVOP, to the individualized career services provider, and referral to vocational counseling, testing, job search assistance. 2) Provide job development and employer outreach on behalf of Veterans, with a focus on Veterans with an SBE being case managed by a local DVOP. 3) Coordinate or conduct job search assistance and networking workshops in conjunction with employers. 4) Provide Labor Market Information (LMI) to employers. 6) Work with DEED Veterans Chapter 31 Program Coordinator and Veterans Affairs (VA) regarding Chapter 31 clients. 7) Refer Veterans to the Department of Labor (DOL)/Veterans Employment and Training Service (VETS) partner as needed to assist with reemployment rights issues covered under the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act (USERRA) law. 8) Assist employers with special job accommodations for disabled Veterans. This position works closely with community leaders, Tasks for this responsibility will include: 1) Facilitate and maintain the provision of labor exchange services by local CAREERFORCE staff to Veterans including the identification of SBE Veterans, proper referral to a DVOP, or in the absence of the DVOP, to the individualized career services provider, and referral to vocational counseling, testing, job search assistance. 2) Provide job development and employer outreach on behalf of Veterans, with a focus on Veterans with an SBE being case managed by a local DVOP. 3) Coordinate or conduct job search assistance and networking workshops in conjunction with employers. 4) Provide Labor Market Information (LMI) to employers. 6) Work with DEED Veterans Chapter 31 Program Coordinator and Veterans Affairs (VA) regarding Chapter 31 clients. 7) Refer Veterans to the Department of Labor

(DOL)/Veterans Employment and Training Service (VETS) partner as needed to assist with reemployment rights issues covered under the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act (USERRA) law. 8) Assist employers with special job accommodations for disabled Veterans.

Tasks for this responsibility will include: 1) Facilitate and maintain the provision of labor exchange services by local CAREERFORCE staff to Veterans including the identification of SBE.

Veterans, proper referral to a DVOP, or in the absence of the DVOP, to the individualized career services provider, and referral to vocational counseling, testing, and job search assistance. 2) Provide job development and employer outreach on behalf of Veterans, with a focus on Veterans with an SBE being case managed by a local DVOP. 3) Coordinate or conduct job search assistance and networking workshops in conjunction with employers. 4) Provide Labor Market Information (LMI) to employers. 6) Work with DEED Veterans Chapter 31 Program Coordinator and Veterans Affairs (VA) regarding Chapter 31 clients. 7) Refer Veterans to the Department of Labor (DOL)/Veterans Employment and Training Service (VETS) partner as needed to assist with reemployment rights issues covered under the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act (USERRA) law. 8) Assist employers with special job accommodations for disabled Veterans.

This position works closely with community leaders, organizations, employers, labor unions, training programs, various institutions, Veterans organizations, Veterans Administration, Veterans Employment and Training Service (VETS), military units, and other governmental offices. In addition, the LVERs develop and maintain a relationship with management as the Veterans program lead worker and technical advisor. The LVERs work closely with CareerForce partners, supervisors, and committees in the development of CareerForce policies and procedures as they pertain to Veterans services. The LVER position relates to all CareerForce staff so that they are thoroughly informed about the Veterans Employment Program and are aware of their responsibility in ensuring that Veterans and eligible persons are provided the priority service to which they are entitled as specified by law. The LVERs implement the directives and mandates of management, evaluate the activities of other CareerForce staff, and coordinate efforts with other staff at the state office level.

C. THE MANNER IN WHICH DVOP SPECIALISTS AND LVER STAFF ARE INTEGRATED INTO THE STATE'S EMPLOYMENT SERVICE DELIVERY SYSTEM OR AMERICAN JOB CENTER;

C. THE MANNER IN WHICH DVOP SPECIALISTS AND LVER STAFF ARE INTEGRATED INTO THE STATE'S EMPLOYMENT SERVICE DELIVERY SYSTEM OR AMERICAN JOB CENTER

The State of Minnesota is committed to ensuring program integration and coordination of employment and training services through the MN CareerForce system. To improve and enhance the delivery of employment and training services for veterans, MN CareerForce offices are integrated with other WIOA program partners to create a unified MN CareerForce system. The CareerForce system is the primary source of information and services for Minnesota's job-seeking veterans. MN JVSG staff, which includes DVOP specialists and LVERs, work together to obtain employment, training, and related services for veterans through the WIOA partner programs, including Vocational Rehabilitation. DVOP specialists are stationed at CareerForce locations and cover all the locations in their region.

Integrating DVOPs and LVERs programs as a full partner in the CareerForce system is an ongoing process that includes regular staff meetings with system partners to share information on employment and training services available through MN. At staff meetings, program information is highlighted with emphasis on POS to veterans in a one-stop environment. The success of Minnesota's CareerForce system is predicated on partnerships that continuously strive to improve services to all job seekers and employers while ensuring veterans continue to receive excellent POS.

Local Veterans Employment Representatives (LVER) and Business Services team named Strategy Consultants collaborate consistently and effectively to conduct joint outreach events to numerous business organizations and employers throughout Minnesota to promote the hiring of veterans and to locate veterans in need of intensive services.

The following are activities demonstrate effective integration and collaboration between service providers, partners, DVOP specialists, and LVER staff to promote employment, training, and placement services for veterans.

- DVOPs and LVERs attend and participate in local CareerForce staff meetings which include WP staff, Adult programs, and other partners.
- All DVOP specialists work closely with the CareerForce locations and WIOA providers in their particular regions. When veteran referrals are made, DVOPs enroll veterans into the state's case management information system, WorkforceOne which is used by all partners in the CareerForce system and it is tracked and monitored using the same system.
- LVERs visit CareerForce locations in their region regularly to provide training and guidance on POS.
- LVERs train partner staff and service providers on Veteran resources and when to refer veterans to DVOP staff for individualized career services.
- LVERs contribute to local initiatives such as the "Meet and Greet" and "Employer of the Day" employer event. LVERs participate in recruiting and hiring fairs and other initiatives
- UI RESA staff refer UI applicants who are SBE veterans to DVOPs for employment services.
- DVOPs and LVERs are co-located with partner staff in the CareerForce locations throughout Minnesota.
- DVOP staff has been assigned as an Intensive Services Coordinator (ISC) at the VR&E location at Fort Snelling to coordinate Chapter 31 placement activity with field staff.
- DVOP/LVER staff are represented on all appropriate CareerForce work teams, workgroups, policy groups, or other appropriate CareerForce teams.

D. THE INCENTIVE AWARD PROGRAM IMPLEMENTED USING THE 1% GRANT ALLOCATION SET ASIDE FOR THIS PURPOSE, AS APPLICABLE;

D. THE INCENTIVE AWARD PROGRAM IMPLEMENTED USING THE 1% GRANT ALLOCATION SET ASIDE FOR THIS PURPOSE, AS APPLICABLE

The USDOL Veterans Employment and Training Service (VETS) provides up to 1% of the Jobs for Veterans' State Grant each year to be used as incentive awards to individuals, partners, teams, and CareerForce offices providing exemplary employment services to Veterans. These resources represent an important opportunity to highlight effective work practices, outstanding individual services to veterans, and team-based recognition for outstanding group services to veterans.

The expected outcomes for Minnesota's incentive award program are:

- To acknowledge superior performance and customer service for Veterans;
- To elevate the visibility and importance of Veterans services to CareerForce partners and staff;

- To generate a stronger sense of unity and collaboration between the Veteran's program and the state CareerForce system.
- Reward and recognize the provision of excellent "Priority of Service" and integration of services to Veterans and other eligible persons at the CareerForce locations

ENCOURAGING EXCELLENT SERVICE TO VETERANS - Offering awards provides encouragement and motivation to offer high-quality services to Veterans and offer flexible use of funds for recipients. Examples of selection criteria must show that winning nominations demonstrate a significant impact on Veterans and their job search. A wide range of exemplary employment and training services focused on Veterans will be considered.

TYPES OF AWARDS - Total funds available for the Jobs for Veteran's State Grant (JVSG) Performance Incentive Award Program are $27,186 based on one percent of the total grant monies designated for FFY22.

The incentive Awards funds will be disbursed as Cash awards to eligible and selected awardees per Title 38 U.S.C. § 4112. The funds' disbursement is administered by the State CareerForce Director, The Veterans Employment Programs Director, and the Veterans Employment Programs Field Operations Manager. Services, with input from local management. The incentive program award will be one percent of the initial grant allocation.

Minnesota will recognize individual recipients or CareerForce offices or teams based on the selection criteria outlined below.

Individual employee awardees are selected through a quarterly review committee process set up through DEED HR. Individual awards are in the amount of $1000.

CareerForce office/team awards are reviewed and selected by a review committee comprised of the federal USDOL-VETS State Director, the DEED CareerForce Director, The Veterans Employment Programs Director, and the Veterans Employment Programs Field Operations Manager. Currently, office/team awards are $3000 each.

SELECTION CRITERIA - Selection criteria for award recipients must be based on performance or activities during the fiscal year the award is given. Both objective and subjective data are to be considered in the selection of nominees. Nominees should be considered to have demonstrated outstanding outreach and/or service provision on behalf of Veterans who have significant barriers to employment, especially disabled Veterans, homeless Veterans, and incarcerated Veterans. Attitude, motivation, program improvement, positive feedback, and other indicators of outstanding performance may be given consideration above numerical data. The Minnesota Dept. of Employment & Economic Development will convene an awards committee and administer the awards.

Examples of selection criteria may be:

- Development of a program, for which the impact may not be directly measurable (e.g., a resume skills-building program, special programming for targeted Veteran groups, workshops that address significant barriers to employment);
- Outstanding cooperative case management (between DVOP & CareerForce partners); Ideas that are implemented to improve the service delivery system leading to Veteran living—wage and sustainable employment, improvement in outcome performance for Veterans, reduced time or cost, or that promote collaboration that improve services to Veterans;

- Outreach/community—relations efforts, to include employers, social service entities, and/or educators, etc.; or
- Exemplary efforts to assist SBE Veteran populations (homeless, undereducated or under-skilled, low income, disabled veterans, justice-involved veterans, etc.).

ELIGIBLE RECIPIENTS - Eligible recipients are defined as entities providing services to Veterans under the WIOA/Wagner—Peyser employment delivery system. The term "employment service delivery system" means a service delivery system at which or through which labor exchange services, including employment, training, and placement services, are offered in accordance with the Wagner—Peyser Act and employment delivery service programs as defined in P.L. 107—288, Section 4112 and P.L. 109—461. Examples of these recipients include:

- Disabled Veterans' Outreach Program (DVOP) specialists;
- Local Veterans' Employment Representative (LVER) staff;
- Consolidated DVOP/LVER staff;
- Individuals providing employment, training, and placement services to veterans under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), including labor exchanges funded by the Wagner-Peyser Act;
- An employment service team or office.

NOMINATION PROCESS AND TIMING OF AWARDS

- Nominations will be solicited through Minnesota local CareerForce development boards (LWDBs) and local CareerForce Offices.
- Nominations will reflect the accomplishments of the entity and include sufficient detail to adequately describe to the awards committee the improvements in services to Veterans made by the entity.
- Nomination descriptions should be no more than one page in length; however, supplemental performance data, testimonials, and other related information may be included as attachments.
- Nominations must be received 2 weeks in advance of the Awards Committee meeting date each quarter.
- Nominations will be reviewed by a panel consisting of the State Veteran's Program Director, a representative of the U.S. Department of Labor—Veterans' Employment and Training Service (USDOL—VETS), a representative from DEED HR, and a CareerForce Partner.
- No nomination committee member may be directly connected with any person or office being reviewed for these awards.
- Awards will be announced to the recipient(s) quarterly.
- Award funds must be obligated by the end of the federal fiscal year, September 30. An annual Incentive Award report will be included in the quarterly report due in mid—November. The report will detail all incentive awards made.

E. THE POPULATIONS OF ELIGIBLE VETERANS TO BE SERVED, INCLUDING ANY ADDITIONAL POPULATIONS DESIGNATED BY THE SECRETARY AS ELIGIBLE FOR SERVICES, AND ANY

ADDITIONAL POPULATIONS SPECIFICALLY TARGETED BY THE STATE WORKFORCE AGENCY FOR SERVICES FROM ONE-STOP DELIVERY SYSTEM PARTNERS (E.G., NATIVE AMERICAN VETERANS; VETERANS IN REMOTE RURAL COUNTIES OR PARISHES);

E. THE POPULATIONS OF ELIGIBLE VETERANS TO BE SERVED, INCLUDING ANY ADDITIONAL POPULATIONS DESIGNATED BY THE SECRETARY AS ELIGIBLE FOR SERVICES, AND ANY ADDITIONAL POPULATIONS SPECIFICALLY TARGETED BY THE STATE WORKFORCE AGENCY FOR SERVICES FROM ONE-STOP DELIVERY SYSTEM PARTNERS (E.G., NATIVE AMERICAN VETERANS; VETERANS IN REMOTE RURAL COUNTIES OR PARISHES)

Additional Veterans Outreach — JVSG grant staff also serves other populations of veterans in the State through Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs). Those populations included:

- National Guard and Reserve members returning from overseas deployment. In particular, Virtual Job Fair Technology and social media are being utilized to connect and assist this group with veterans' resource sites, services accessed while they are still overseas, and actual virtual job fairs when they return to this country. Minnesota also stages an annual Veterans Career Fair each July, which is "Hire a Veteran" month as proclaimed by the Governor.
- Service-connected disabled veterans, who are identified through various Veterans Service Organizations (VSO) such as Disabled American Veterans and VFWs, as well as outreach activities at Veteran Centers, Veterans Administration Medical Centers, and Community Based Outpatient Clinics.
- Recently separated veterans, who are identified at various reintegration events, job fairs, and partner referrals.
- Wounded and injured veterans, who are identified through the outreach activities of our DVOPS, local VSO's, and partner staff in our local CareerForce system.

Homeless Veterans

In partnership with the Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs (MDVA), Veterans Affairs (VA), and The Homeless Veterans Reintegration Program (HVRP), JVSG staff is given access Homeless Veterans Registry to track services for homeless veterans such as providing one-on-one employment assistance and supportive services to homeless veterans. These services may include resume and interviewing preparation, employment workshops, job clubs, job search assistance, and job referrals.

Per VPL 03-16, Minnesota JVSG also co-enrolls homeless veterans with HVRP through the case management system WorkforceOne.

Beyond the Yellow Ribbon

There are more than 300 Community-based "Beyond the Yellow Ribbon" organizations—DVOP and LVER staff participate in "Beyond the Yellow Ribbon" committees covering 63 National Guard Armory communities. DEED Veterans Employment Representatives are required partners in these organizations comprised of public and private resources designed to support all veterans in the community. Individuals with Disabilities

Native American Veterans

According to the most recent Census, Minnesota is ranked 13 in the number of Native Americans living in our state. Native American population in Minnesota numbers approximately 70,465 or 1.3% of the population. The population is expected to increase to over 72,000. 31% live on one of 11 different Reservations in Minnesota. Seven of these are in the northern part of

the state, with the remaining four located near Minneapolis/St. Paul, or southern Minnesota. In addition, 37% of the Native American population lives in the 9 counties metropolitan area. Unemployment among Native Americans is reported to be three-four times that of none—Indians. The UI rate for Native American Veterans is even higher.

Most of Minnesota's Tribal Reservations have poverty rates double that of the rest of the state. In addition, 93% of white students graduate high school, whereas only 64% of Native Americans graduate. This negatively impacts employment opportunities and future training plans.

In fact, among the Shakopee Mdewakanton tribe, the statistics are more unsettling. This is a Tribe located just southwest of a major metropolitan area, near resources and opportunity, but has had a little-focused effort for their Veteran population. Their high school graduation rate hovers close to 45.7%. Their unemployment rate is over 13%, compared to a Minneapolis/St. Paul's rate of around 3.7%. Per capita income is $27,119.

To bridge the gap in services to Native Veterans, the JVSG program hired two white Earth Native American Veterans staff LVER and DVOP in the metro area also hired Native American Veteran Project DVOP in Bemidji to serve the population on Red Lake, Leech Lake, and White Earth Reservations in the northern part of the state.

JVSG program has established a partnership with the White Earth Tribal County Veterans Services Officer (TVSO) to collocate DVOP staff in the White Earth reservation. This initiative is in line with an ongoing focus of being close to the communities we serve and demonstrating our commitment to making a difference in their lives.

Female Veterans

Female Veterans represent approximately 17% of returning National Guard and Reserve troops in Minnesota. Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs estimates there are almost 23,000 female Veterans in Minnesota. Of that number, about 8700 have served in the Persian Gulf, or OIF/OEF/OND. Minnesota currently employs 2 females consolidated DVOP/LVER, and 5 female DVOP staff, including one DVOP that works exclusively with women Veterans and recently conflict veterans special initiative. They are all engaged with local organizations that cater to women and women Veterans. As mentioned earlier, we work closely with our local HVRP grantee and our CareerForce partners to identify female Veterans seeking services.

Justice-Involved Veterans

We have a special initiative project that provides a specialized dedicated staff to work with Veterans being released from correctional facilities. The dual role DVOP/LVER staff is located at CareerForce in St. Paul and is certified as "Offender Employment Specialist", and "Offender CareerForce Development Specialist" through MN Dept. of Corrections.

In addition, the Minnesota Dept. of Employment and Economic Development has formalized a relationship with the Dept. of Corrections and provides job search help and counseling for offenders nearing their release date. We also participate in facility-sponsored events such as "Transition Fairs". DEED Vet staff attends and provides workshops on job seeking/keeping skills at these events, and connect with inmates about to be released.

Staff also sits on the steering committee of the Hennepin County, Anoka County, and Ramsey County Veterans Diversionary Court programs. As the first courts of their kind in Minnesota, they exist to provide an option for Veterans that have had had encounters with the criminal court system and to provide an alternative to prison. The staff works closely with the court on assessment, referral, and job placement.

Transitioning Servicemembers (Demobilizing/Recently Separated Veterans)

Minnesota's "Beyond the Yellow Ribbon" Reintegration Campaign is the backbone of post-deployment reintegration services. Minnesota DVOP and LVER staff have been a critical part of this process, which includes 5 different events for Service members and their families.

The process begins 3-4 months before deployment. "Family Readiness Academies" are designed to give families an opportunity to ask questions and provide information to Troops and their families on what to expect during the deployment. We provide resource information and referrals for assorted common issues faced by families, information on Veterans benefits, and employment information for spouses.

Approximately 30 to 60 days before Troops return home, a "Yellow Ribbon Community Event" is sponsored to help families understand and support their returning Soldiers. Business owners, educators, civic leaders, and law enforcement are called together for a briefing on what they can expect upon their Soldiers' return. We provide resource information, and answers to some difficult questions relating to their combat experience and how that may affect their lives.

DVOP and LVER staff continue to update and modify some of our material based on the type of unit returning, and the predominant skill set of those Troops. Twenty-six (26) Minnesota service providers send staff and materials to various locations as Troops return from overseas deployment for an Initial Reintegration Event. DVOP staff conduct group presentations to Soldiers and work one—on—one after these sessions to prepare resumes, practice interviewing skills, and assist with the job search strategy. We also provide information on unemployment insurance, Dislocated Worker programs, employment and reemployment, and educational opportunities. Following the initial reintegration events, follow—up events at 30/60/90 days are scheduled. Minnesota DVOP and LVER staff will continue to partner in these events and plan to provide similar services to all returning Veterans from all branches via similar events.

F. HOW THE STATE IMPLEMENTS AND MONITORS THE ADMINISTRATION OF PRIORITY OF SERVICE TO COVERED PERSONS;

F. HOW THE STATE IMPLEMENTS AND MONITORS THE ADMINISTRATION OF PRIORITY OF SERVICE TO COVERED PERSONS

The description of how the state implements and monitors priority of service to covered persons is included in the Common Elements of the WIOA State Plan.

G. HOW THE STATE PROVIDES OR INTENDS TO PROVIDE AND MEASURE, THROUGH BOTH THE DVOP AND AMERICAN JOB CENTER STAFF:

1. JOB AND JOB TRAINING INDIVIDUALIZED CAREER SERVICES,

G. HOW THE STATE PROVIDES OR INTENDS TO PROVIDE AND MEASURE, THROUGH BOTH THE DVOP AND AMERICAN JOB CENTER STAFF.

g.1. Job and job training individualized career services.

Per VPL 01-22, a response to this section is not required.

2. EMPLOYMENT PLACEMENT SERVICES, AND

g. 2. Employment placement services; and

Per VPL 01-22, a response to this section is not required.

3. JOB-DRIVEN TRAINING AND SUBSEQUENT PLACEMENT SERVICE PROGRAM FOR ELIGIBLE VETERANS AND ELIGIBLE PERSONS;

g. 3. Job-driven training and subsequent placement service program for eligible veterans and eligible persons.

Per VPL 01-22, a response to this section is not required.

H. THE HIRE DATE ALONG WITH MANDATORY TRAINING COMPLETION DATES FOR ALL DVOP SPECIALISTS AND LVER STAFF; AND

H. THE HIRE DATE ALONG WITH MANDATORY TRAINING COMPLETION DATES FOR ALL DVOP SPECIALISTS AND LVER STAFF

Per VPL 01-22, a response to this section is not required.

I. SUCH ADDITIONAL INFORMATION AS THE SECRETARY MAY REQUIRE.

i. Such additional information as the Secretary may require.

JVSG PERFORMANCE MEASURES:

Performance Indicator	PY22	PY23
Employment Rate – 2nd Quarter After Exit	60%	61%
Employment Rate – 4th Quarter After Exit	58%	59%
Median Earnings – 2nd Quarter After Exit	$9200	$9500

SENIOR COMMUNITY SERVICE EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM (SCSEP)

A. ECONOMIC PROJECTIONS AND IMPACT

1. DISCUSS LONG-TERM PROJECTIONS FOR JOBS IN INDUSTRIES AND OCCUPATIONS IN THE STATE THAT MAY PROVIDE EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES FOR OLDER WORKERS. (20 CFR 641.302(D)) (MAY ALTERNATIVELY BE DISCUSSED IN THE ECONOMIC ANALYSIS SECTION OF STRATEGIC PLAN.)

1. **DISCUSS LONG-TERM PROJECTIONS FOR JOBS IN INDUSTRIES AND OCCUPATIONS IN THE STATE THAT MAY PROVIDE EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES FOR OLDER WORKERS. (20 CFR 0641.302(D))(MAY ALTERNATIVELY BE DISCUSSED IN THE ECONOMIC ANALYSIS SECTION OF STRATEGIC PLAN.)**

The Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP) is a paid community service and work-based program for income eligible job seekers ages 55 and older. It provides service-based training at local nonprofit organizations and government agencies to prepare them for permanent, unsubsidized employment. Due to their experience, older workers (55 and older) have considerable skills and talents to offer the State economy. According to the Minnesota State Demographic Center, the workforce will expand significantly from an increase in the number of older workers 55+ (Table 1). Yet if older workers don't remain in the workforce and their talents aren't leveraged, the labor force will shrink over the next 5-10 years. Minnesota needs to build and retain the skills of aging workers in order to sustain economic growth.

Table 1. Minnesota Labor Force Projections, 2020-2030 Change Percent

	2020 Labor Force Projection	2030 Labor Force Projection	2020-2030 Change Numeric	2020-2030 Change Percent
55 to 64 years	560,791	489,812	-70,979	-13%
65 to 74 years	157,518	193,484	+35,966	+23%
75 years & over	24,211	34,278	+10,068	+42%

Source: Minnesota State Demographic Center

The Local Workforce Development Areas (LWDA), under the leadership of the Governor's Workforce Development Board, places a strong emphasis on identifying jobs in industries and occupations throughout the State that will likely provide employment opportunities for older workers. To ensure job readiness, it's vital that Minnesota DEED's SCSEP sub-grantees/operators (hereafter referred to as "providers") have access to current labor market information (LMI) that they can use to effectively assist program participants in developing realistic job goals and marketable skills sets.

SCSEP providers have access to in-service trainings through DEED's local regional labor analysts, featured publications, and online labor market tools such as: Occupational Employment Statistics Cost of Living Calculator, Occupations in Demand, Job Vacancy Survey, Career and Education Explorer, Graduate Employment Outcomes, MySkillsMyFuture, Match Jobs to Experience, O*Net OnLine, and CareerForceMN.com. These tools provide current information on the quarterly census of employment and wages, staffing patterns, employment statistics, local area unemployment statistics, comparisons (e.g. statewide and regional), business finder, and quarterly employment demographics.

Projected Occupations for Older Workers:

Table 2 lists the occupations that are expected to have the most job openings from 2020 to 2030, according to DEED's employment projections data. The following occupations are potentially very suitable for older workers; Office and Administrative Support, Food Preparation and Serving Related, Sales and Related, and Education, Training and Library. Other occupations that are projected to have an abundance of job openings that may be suitable for older workers include Personal Care and Service, Building and Grounds Cleaning and Maintenance; and Installation, Maintenance, and Repair as well as Community and Social Service.

To identify unsubsidized jobs and the required training within occupations projected to be in high demand for older workers, SCSEP providers review LMI data regularly and work with their participants to strategize plans on how to ensure eligibility for these positions. This section describes the unsubsidized jobs within occupations projected to be in high-demand, the types of skill training for these positions, and the approach that providers take to develop a preparation plan for participants.

Table 2. Long-Term Occupational Projections, Minnesota, 2020-2030

Title	Estimate Year Employment	Projected Year Employment	Percent Change	Total Change	Labor Force Exit Openings	Occupational Transfer Openings	Total Hires
Food Preparation and Serving Related	196,413	230,396	17.3	33,983	162,071	217,975	**414,029**
Office and Administrative Support	353,547	337,006	-4.7	-16,541	164,380	213,556	**361,395**
Sales and Related	272,390	265,840	-2.4	-6,550	137,391	213,165	**344,006**
Transportation and Material Moving	217,673	233,084	7.1	15,411	106,855	174,737	**297,003**
Healthcare Support	165,026	195,744	18.6	30,718	110,552	106,395	**247,665**
Production	205,773	205,003	-0.4	-770	76,945	146,522	**222,697**
Management Occupations	225,287	237,754	5.5	12,467	67,446	118,849	**198,762**
Business and Financial Operations	194,738	206,660	6.1	11,922	52,881	117,080	**181,883**
Education, Training, and Library	164,751	178,355	8.3	13,604	70,050	78,790	**162,444**
Personal Care and Service	85,350	97,909	14.7	12,559	57,296	71,279	**141,134**
Healthcare Practitioners and Technical	192,413	207,998	8.1	15,585	50,559	58,859	**125,003**

Building and Grounds Cleaning and Maintenance	88,554	93,911	6	5,357	52,792	66,026	**124,175**
Construction and Extraction	120,028	124,959	4.1	4,931	36,430	82,315	**123,676**
Installation, Maintenance, and Repair	105,222	109,437	4	4,215	33,714	68,391	**106,320**
Computer and Mathematical	103,199	115,793	12.2	12,594	22,665	54,036	**89,295**
Community and Social Service	65,252	72,662	11.4	7,410	23,361	44,718	**75,489**
Arts, Design, Entertainment, Sports, and Media	50,051	54,147	8.2	4,096	19,503	32,872	**56,471**
Protective Service Occupations	46,767	49,561	6	2,794	21,676	30,495	**54,965**
Architecture and Engineering	55,462	58,392	5.3	2,930	13,817	27,807	**44,554**
Life, Physical, and Social Science	28,259	30,029	6.3	1,770	5,840	20,047	**27,657**
Farming, Fishing, and Forestry	16,818	16,596	-1.3	-222	6,965	18,898	**25,641**
Legal	22,327	23,964	7.3	1,637	6,339	8,952	**16,928**
Total, All	**2,975,300**	**3,145,200**	**5.7**	**169,900**	**1,299,528**	**1,971,764**	**3,441,192**

Source: https://mn.gov/deed/data/data-tools/employment-outlook/

2. DISCUSS HOW THE LONG-TERM JOB PROJECTIONS DISCUSSED IN THE ECONOMIC ANALYSIS SECTION OF STRATEGIC PLAN RELATE TO THE TYPES OF UNSUBSIDIZED JOBS FOR WHICH SCSEP PARTICIPANTS WILL BE TRAINED AND THE TYPES OF SKILL TRAINING TO BE PROVIDED. (20 CFR 641.302(D))

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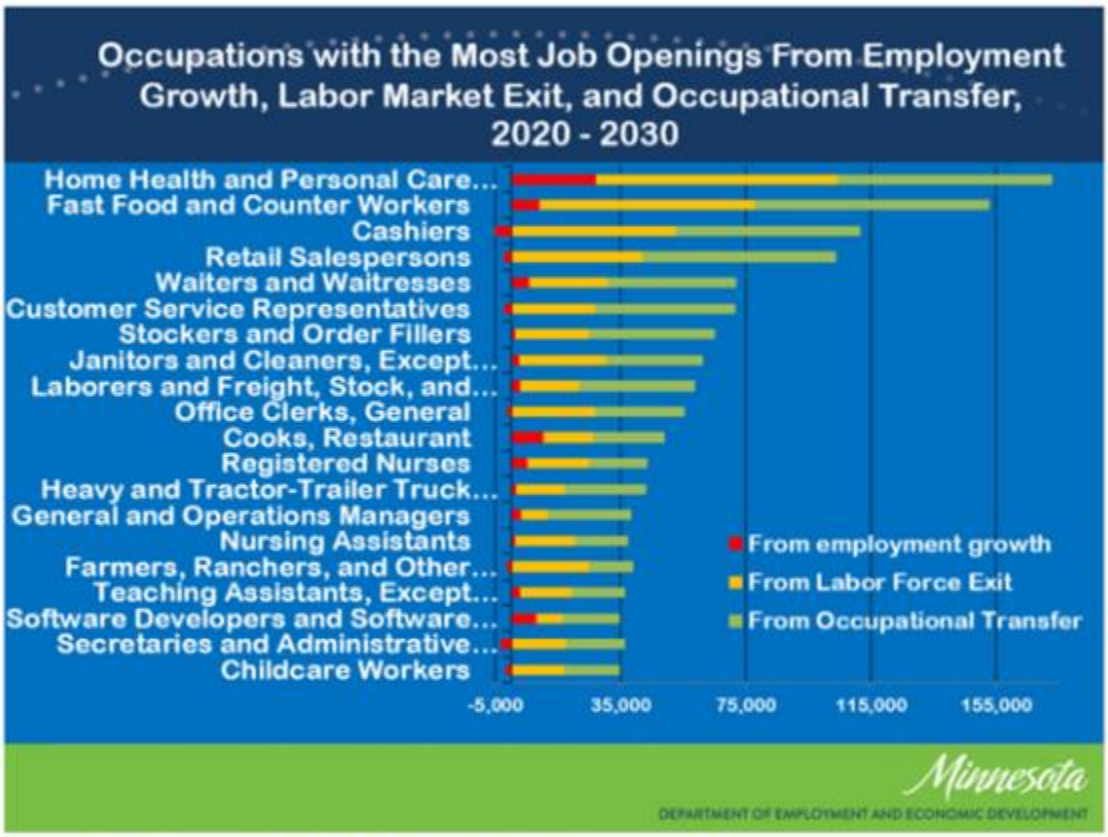
To identify unsubsidized jobs and the required training within occupations projected to be in high demand for older workers, SCSEP providers review LMI data regularly and work with their participants to strategize plans on how to ensure eligibility for these positions. This section describes the unsubsidized jobs within occupations projected to be in high-demand, the types of

skill training for these positions, and the approach that providers take to develop a preparation plan for participants.

Unsubsidized Jobs Suitable for SCSEP participants:

As listed in Table 2 in the previous section, the occupations projected to be in high demand between 2020-2030 include Office and Administrative Support, Food Preparation and Serving Related, Sales and Related, and Education, Training and Library. Unsubsidized jobs within these occupations are provided in Figure 1 below. They include Home Health and Personal Care, Fast Food and Counter workers, Cashiers, Retail Salespersons, Customer Services Representatives, Janitors and Cleaners, and Office Clerks. Other unsubsidized jobs that may be a good fit for SCSEP participants include Childcare Workers, Nursing and Teaching Assistants.

Figure 1:



Source: https://mn.gov/deed/data/data-tools/employment-outlook/

Skill Training for In-Demand Jobs:

To ensure participants are trained and well prepared to transition from subsidized to unsubsidized employment, SCSEP career counselors will continue to work diligently to identify online and local in-person training programs. Examples of unsubsidized jobs for SCSEP participants and the associated skill training are described below:

- Occupation: Office and Administration Support
- Jobs: Customer Service Representative, Office Clerk

To perform office and administrative support positions effectively, SCSEP participants complete specific training in technology programs and/or apprenticeships of a few months to a year to learn from experienced workers. The acquired skills from apprenticeships may include customer and personal service as well as proficiency in customer relationship management

(CRM) software, such as Austin Logistics CallTech, Blackbaud The Raiser's Edge, or Salesforce. Preparation may also include training in database user interface and query software, such as Microsoft Access or Oracle. A high school diploma or equivalent is usually required for office and administration support jobs.

- Occupation: Food Preparation and Serving Related
- Jobs: Cashiers, Waiters/Waitresses

Candidates are usually required to have at least a high school diploma or equivalent for food preparation and serving-related positions. Some previous work-related skill, knowledge, or experience is usually needed as well. On-the-job training in these occupations is typically anywhere from a few months to a year of working with experienced employees. Other preparation may include training in accounting or bookkeeping software, database user interface and query software such as ReliaSoft Prism, Microsoft Office, or handheld computer device software.

- Occupation: Sales and related
- Jobs: Retail Salespersons, Cashiers

As previous work-related skill, knowledge, or experience is usually needed for sales positions, SCSEP participants receive on-the-job training with experienced workers, typically lasting a few months to a year. A formal apprenticeship program may be completed for these occupations, particularly to receive skill training in sales and marketing, customer and personal service, persuasion, and negotiation. Preparation can also include training in database user interface and query software such as FileMaker Pro, gift registry software, or Microsoft Access; electronic mail software such as IBM Notes or Microsoft Outlook; or point of sale (POS) software such as iQmetrix RQ4 Retail Management System, or Plexis. A high school diploma or equivalent is typically required.

- Occupation: Personal Care and Service
- Jobs: Home Health Aides, Nursing Assistants

To prepare SCSEP participants for a position as a Home Health Aide, career counselors identify local employers who will provide training or an apprenticeship (typically under 2 years) with experienced staff to instruct on how to care for and assist others, and document and record information. Preparation typically also includes training in database user interface and query software such as Microsoft Access or Oracle; electronic mail software such as Microsoft Outlook; or medical software such as AIG OASIS. Home Health Aides usually have at least a high school diploma or equivalent.

The requirements for Nursing Assistants are typically a high school diploma or equivalent, and a post-secondary non-degree award such as a Certified Nursing Aide/Assistant (CNA). Training in accounting software such as Billing; electronic mail software such as Microsoft Outlook; and medical software such as Epic Systems may also be completed.

Source: https://www.onetonline.org/find/

SCSEP Approach to Skill Training:

SCSEP career counselors work with, and will continue to work with, participants to develop an Individual Employment Plan (IEP) after assessing their skills and abilities. Participants' interests and aptitudes are matched with high-demand jobs in the local labor market, and an appropriate host agency for a community service assignment (CSA) is identified. The IEP lists the steps needed to achieve the job readiness goals to ensure participants will exit to an unsubsidized position.

Identification of an appropriate host agency and CSA is an ongoing process. It requires providers to be aware of local community needs, agencies/organizations that can act as hosts, and the quality of the training that the participant will receive. Participants receive most of their training at their assigned host agency. Staff provide the training at no cost to the program. They deliver it through demonstration, hands-on practice, and instruction. Host agency staff may also register participants for local in-person and online workshops and seminars. Additionally, contracts (referred to as On-the-Job Experience (OJE) contracts) are used to further develop job-related goals and interests if needed.

If it aligns with the IEP, providers identify extra vocational training for participants, including classes on time management, communication and active listening, job-searching skills, and application and interviewing techniques. These trainings may be provided by a career development specialist, where available, or taught by SCSEP counselors. To increase the likelihood of unsubsidized job placement, counselors work closely with area employers, and sometimes job developers, to identify or even create openings that meet the needs of both participants and employers.

3. DISCUSS CURRENT AND PROJECTED EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES IN THE STATE (SUCH AS BY PROVIDING INFORMATION AVAILABLE UNDER §15 OF THE WAGNER-PEYSER ACT (29 U.S.C. 491-2) BY OCCUPATION), AND THE TYPES OF SKILLS POSSESSED BY ELIGIBLE INDIVIDUALS. (20 CFR 641.325(C))

3. DISCUSS CURRENT AND PROJECTED EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES IN THE STATE (SUCH AS BY PROVIDING INFORMATION AVAILABLE UNDER §15 OF THE WAGNER-PEYSER ACT (29 U.S.C. 491-2) BY OCCUPATION), AND THE TYPES OF SKILLS POSSESSED BY ELIGIBLE INDIVIDUALS. (20 CFR 641.325(C))

Skills Required for In-Demand Jobs:

As previously discussed, the projection data shows there will be several occupations with job openings suitable for SCSEP participants up through 2026 (Table 2 and Figure 1). DEED's Match Jobs to Experience data tool and O*NET OnLine provide the typical required education level and skill sets for in-demand jobs. The skills eligible candidates possess for a sample of jobs within the top occupations predicted to be in high demand are listed below (Table 3).

Table 3: Projected In-Demand Occupations, Jobs, and Skills for Eligible Candidates

Occupation	Unsubsidized Jobs	Education Level / Training	Skill Sets
Office and Administrative Support	• Customer Services Representatives • Office Clerks	• High school diploma or equivalent • Customer relationship management (CRM) software • Database user interface and query software • Enterprise	• CRM, ERP, and database user/query software proficiency • Clerical • Customer and Personal service • Communication and Active listening

Occupation	Unsubsidized Jobs	Education Level / Training	Skill Sets
		resource planning (ERP) software	• Critical thinking • Team collaboration
Combined Food Preparation and Serving	• Cashiers • Waiters/Waitresses	• High school diploma or equivalent • On-the-job training with experienced workers • Accounting / bookkeeping software • Database user interface and query software • Handheld computer device software	• Customer and Personal service • Administrative and Management • Accounting / bookkeeping • Database user/query proficiency • Time management • Communication and Active Listening • Team collaboration
Sales and Related	• Retail Salespersons • Cashiers	• High school diploma or equivalent • On-the-job training with experienced workers or formal apprenticeship • Database user interface and query software • Electronic mail software • Point of sale (POS) software	• Sales and Marketing • Database user/query proficiency • Customer and Personal service • Persuasion • Negotiation • Communication and Active Listening
Personal Care and Service	• Home Health Aides • Nursing Assistants	Home Health Aides:	• Medicine and Patient care • Customer and Personal Service

Occupation	Unsubsidized Jobs	Education Level / Training	Skill Sets
		• High school diploma or equivalent • On-the-job training or formal apprenticeship • Database user interface and query software • Electronic mail software • Medical software Nursing Assistant: • Postsecondary non-degree award, such as a CNA • Accounting / bookkeeping software • Electronic mail software • Medical software	• Monitoring • Public Safety and Security • Critical Thinking • Decision-making • Communication and Active Listening • Time Management

Sources: https://mn.gov/deed/data/data-tools/match-jobs-experience/; https://www.onetonline.org/find/

B. SERVICE DELIVERY AND COORDINATION

1. A DESCRIPTION OF ACTIONS TO COORDINATE SCSEP WITH OTHER PROGRAMS. THIS MAY ALTERNATIVELY BE DISCUSSED IN THE STATE STRATEGIES SECTION OF THE STRATEGIC PLAN, BUT REGARDLESS OF PLACEMENT IN DOCUMENT, MUST INCLUDE:

A. PLANNED ACTIONS TO COORDINATE ACTIVITIES OF SCSEP GRANTEES WITH WIOA TITLE I PROGRAMS, INCLUDING PLANS FOR USING THE WIOA ONE-STOP DELIVERY SYSTEM AND ITS PARTNERS TO SERVE INDIVIDUALS AGED 55 AND OLDER. (20 CFR 641.302(G), 641.325(E))

B. SERVICE DELIVERY AND COORDINATION

States must:

1. PROVIDE A DESCRIPTION OF ACTIONS TO COORDINATE SCSEP WITH OTHER PROGRAMS

This may alternatively be discussed in the State strategies section of the strategic plan, but regardless of placement in document, must include:

Through Minnesota's Combined State Plan, Minnesota SCSEP and the WIOA statewide offices that serve the older worker population will continue its partnership to ensure the maximum number of eligible individuals will have an opportunity to participate in SCSEP. To serve individuals 55 and older, the partnership will continue to implement the following activities and strategies:

- Refer potential participants to SCSEP and inform them of the training opportunities available through the program
- Encourage co-enrollment of SCSEP and WIOA programs to ensure participants receive adequate support services, and comprehensive training and employment services
- Coordinate and make referrals to other state and national providers
- Engage SCSEP providers in implementing WIOA and other workforce strategies
- Serve as board members (where applicable) for LWDAs.
- Promote joint sponsorship of job fairs and participation at the job fairs.
- Assist in developing strategic workforce plans
- Perform JobLink referrals
- Contact local businesses and employers to serve as potential host agencies
- Sponsor the co-development of job-readiness seminars.
- Utilize CareerForce to bring together members of senior communities through meetings, the development of resources (e.g. web resources, publications, and promotional materials) and forums (meetings and roundtables) to encourage collaboration and eliminate service gaps
- Develop SCSEP content for CareerForceMN.com that highlights the benefits of hiring older workers and supports the needs of older workers

CareerForce joins together providers of workforce development services to create the one-stop delivery system. The partnership brings together state, county, and private nonprofit workforce development services to provide a seamless and comprehensive system for job seekers and employers. As Minnesota's career development and talent matching resource, CareerForce connects individuals to opportunities by helping employers find the workers they need to grow and thrive. It continually works to enhance services to employees and employers, prioritizing equity at the center of everything it does. CareerForce is a business-led network of private, public and nonprofit partners throughout Minnesota committed to helping individuals start, advance or change their career; employers attract, develop and retain talent; and Minnesota thrive economically by continuing to build its world-class workforce. In person, on the phone and online, CareerForce provides tailored resources to help meet the needs of all Minnesota's career seekers and employers.

As part of the SCSEP State Plan, DEED will continue to promote coordination and collaboration between SCSEP and the WIOA one-stop system. SCSEP providers will continue to actively partner with CareerForce. Local collaborations vary by region, ranging from the placement of SCSEP employment and training staff at statewide CareerForce sites to co-sponsoring training and outreach events to assisting with outreach to more rural residents of the state. Providers will also continue to collaborate with CareerForce sites at job fairs and share job leads, as well as work together to engage the business community in initiatives that tap older workers.

B. PLANNED ACTIONS TO COORDINATE ACTIVITIES OF SCSEP GRANTEES WITH THE ACTIVITIES BEING CARRIED OUT IN THE STATE UNDER THE OTHER TITLES OF THE OLDER AMERICANS ACT (OAA). (20 CFR 641.302(H))

B. PLANNED ACTIONS TO COORDINATE ACTIVITIES OF SCSEP GRANTEES WITH THE ACTIVITIES TO BE CARRIED OUT IN THE STATE UNDER THE OTHER TITLES OF THE OAA. (20 CFR 641.302(H))

Minnesota will continue to cultivate partnerships with Area Agencies on Aging (AAA) and OAA funded service providers. Minnesota's AAAs are regional organizations that provide the services, support, and information for just about everything that older adults and their families could need. Minnesota has 7 AAAs across the state, which serve as connections to older Minnesotans and the community support they require (https://mn.gov/board-on-aging/about-us/area-agencies/).

These partnerships will continue to provide opportunities for cross referrals of eligible SCSEP participants and designation of aging network sites as host agencies. The partners assist SCSEP participants with support services such as transportation, respite, and case management services to boost their well-being and help them live independently in their home environment and the community. AAA partners also provide preventive health services such as disease-prevention and health-promotion services at senior centers or alternative sites. Services are designed to help older individuals prevent or manage their health conditions and promote healthier lifestyles. See section (F)(4) below for more information about joint activities of Minnesota SCSEP and statewide AAAs.

C. PLANNED ACTIONS TO COORDINATE SCSEP WITH OTHER PRIVATE AND PUBLIC ENTITIES AND PROGRAMS THAT PROVIDE SERVICES TO OLDER AMERICANS, SUCH AS COMMUNITY AND FAITH- BASED ORGANIZATIONS, TRANSPORTATION PROGRAMS, AND PROGRAMS FOR THOSE WITH SPECIAL NEEDS OR DISABILITIES. (20 CFR 641.302(I))

C. PLANNED ACTIONS TO COORDINATE SCSEP WITH OTHER PRIVATE AND PUBLIC ENTITIES AND PROGRAMS THAT PROVIDE SERVICES TO OLDER AMERICANS, SUCH AS COMMUNITY AND FAITH-BASED ORGANIZATIONS, TRANSPORTATION PROGRAMS, AND PROGRAMS FOR THOSE WITH SPECIAL NEEDS OR DISABILITIES. (20 CFR 641.302(I))

To assist job-seeking individuals and ensure they have access to transportation, housing, health, and other workforce development services, DEED will continue to foster partnerships with a variety of community-based organizations and referral sources.

Transportation Programs:

To overcome transportation challenges, DEED will continue to coordinate with the Department of Transportation, partner state agencies, AAAs, transit authorities and local transportation coordination programs, such as Ticket To Work and Transit Link, to ensure SCSEP providers have resources that support participants' ability to make it to work. On the state level, a top priority area of the Governor's Council for an Age-Friendly Minnesota is transportation (see section 2 below for more information about the Governor's Council). With the guidance of several national and state transportation experts such as the AARP, Road Safety Academy, National Highway, Transportation Safety Association, and University of North Carolina Highway Safety Research Center, communities will become more livable for older individuals by creating safer and more pedestrian-friendly/walkable environments, and improving access to public transportation.

Other activities and efforts to mitigate or overcome transportation challenges include providing participants with Metro passes, gas cards, and even making purchasing car parts to accommodate disabilities through local community-based support organizations. As an example, one provider purchased a remote car starter for a participant whose hands were so

arthritic she was using a spoon as leverage to turn the car keys. On days this didn't work or caused too much pain, she was unable to make it to her host agency. The remote starter enabled the participant to complete her CSA and with a perfect attendance record. Minnesota SCSEP will continue to identify transportation challenges for participants and work with local providers and resources to identify or develop solutions.

Community, Faith-Based, Volunteer Organizations and Programs for People with Disabilities:

To ensure priority to those most-in-need (MIN), such as disabled individuals, DEED will coordinate activities with community, faith-based, and volunteer organizations that provide tailored resources to meet their unique needs and preferences. Strong collaborations with community action partnerships (CAP) agencies, Chambers of Commerce, city offices, Bridges of Hope, Lutheran Social Services, public libraries, Salvation Army, homeless shelters, and county social service agencies exist and provide needed support to participants. Examples of other partner organizations include:

- Living At Home Network (focuses on helping seniors maintain good health)
- Faith Community Nurse Network of the Greater Twin Cities (combines professional nursing and spiritual care)
- Centers for Independent Living (assists people with vision loss, or other disabilities, function at home, work and in their communities)

At the state level, DEED will continue to participate in the Governor's Council for an Age-Friendly Minnesota which, as previously described, coordinates public- and private-sector age-friendly actions to promote healthy aging. Other collaborations with state agencies and initiatives include:

- Minnesota Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services Division (DHHSD)
- DEED Unemployment Insurance
- DEED State Services for the Blind (SSB)
- DEED Vocational Rehabilitation Services (VRS)

To highlight a few of these partnerships:

- SSB: Facilitates the achievement of vocational and personal independence by Minnesotans who are blind, visually impaired, or DeafBlind. SSB's Senior Services Aging Eyes partnership fosters successful partnerships with community senior-service organizations. In 2018, the SSB received the Minnesota State Innovation in Government Award, organized by the Humphrey Institute's Public and Nonprofit Leadership Center and the Bush Foundation, for an initiative that provides training and a kit of low vision aids and devices to community members who work with seniors. The kit enables partners to provide practical assistance to seniors in the early stages of vision loss. SSB has trained more than 400 service providers to recognize and provide simple services for seniors who are newly diagnosed with vision loss. Through these partnerships, 714 seniors were served in 2017.
- VRS: Provides employment services to anyone with disabilities age 14 and up (Table 4). SCSEP providers work closely with the VRS to document severe disability and frail MIN status. VRS staff is also working closely with a group of individuals who are 55 and older and seeking employment. While PY19 data for this age group isn't currently available, Table 4 below shows there was 71 percent change in disabled individuals 65 and older who sought VRS services from PY15 to PY18, a hopeful indicator that more and more

MIN individuals are accessing services that will help them find sustainable employment. DEED's VRS unit also has grant funds to support Independent Living services for persons of any age.

Table 4: Number of People with Disabilities Who Accessed VRS by Age

Age group	# served in PY13	# served in PY15	% change PY13 to PY15	# served in PY18	% change PY15 to PY18
Youth	7,466	7,906	5.90%	9,061	14.60%
14-18	5,095	5,371	5.40%	5,833	8.60%
19-21	1,658	1,812	9.30%	2,435	34.40%
22-24	713	723	1.40%	793	9.70%
Adult	7,986	7,827	-2.00%	7,090	-9.40%
25-64	7,928	7,734	-2.40%	6,931	-10.40%
65+	**58**	**93**	**60.30%**	**159**	**71.00%**
Total	15,452	15,733	1.80%	16,151	2.70%

DEED will continue to strengthen collaborations with community-based, faith-based, and volunteer programs as well as organizations that serve disabled individuals to ensure SCSEP providers and participants have easy access to needed resources.

D. PLANNED ACTIONS TO COORDINATE SCSEP WITH OTHER LABOR MARKET AND JOB TRAINING INITIATIVES. (20 CFR 641.302(J))

D. PLANNED ACTIONS TO COORDINATE SCSEP WITH OTHER LABOR MARKET AND JOB TRAINING INITIATIVES. (20 CFR 641.302(J))

SCSEP providers develop strategic partnerships with workforce strategy consultants, city councils, and economic-development (both municipal and private) to foster collaborations with host agencies for community service and training opportunities. Community colleges, community education providers, CareerForce locations, and retired professionals are also used for training.

Minnesota will continue to work with small businesses of the primary private sector to train SCSEP participants. Over the last decade, small businesses have generated 60 to 80 percent of net new jobs annually. In many areas, small businesses may be the only source of jobs for job seekers, particularly when those workers are low-income and elderly. Working with small businesses to provide customized training has proven to be a successful placement model; providers can replicate this model in new and current SCSEP areas.

E. ACTIONS TO ENSURE THAT SCSEP IS AN ACTIVE PARTNER IN THE ONE-STOP DELIVERY SYSTEM AND THE STEPS THE STATE WILL TAKE TO ENCOURAGE AND IMPROVE COORDINATION WITH THE ONE-STOP DELIVERY SYSTEM. (20 CFR 641.335)

E. ACTIONS THE STATE WILL TAKE TO ENSURE THAT SCSEP IS AN ACTIVE PARTNER IN THE ONE-STOP DELIVERY SYSTEM AND THE STEPS THE STATE WILL TAKE TO ENCOURAGE AND IMPROVE COORDINATION WITH THE ONE-STOP DELIVERY SYSTEM. (20 CFR 641.335)

As described above, SCSEP providers will continue to ensure the maximum number of eligible individuals will have an opportunity to participate in SCSEP by consistently using the WIOA One-Stop Delivery System in the recruitment and selection of eligible individuals and keeping community service opportunities with the CareerForce locations in Minnesota up-to-date.

Providers will also continue to co-enroll, as appropriate, older workers in SCSEP and WIOA Title I programs so they receive comprehensive training and employment services.

F. EFFORTS TO WORK WITH LOCAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OFFICES IN RURAL LOCATIONS.

F. EFFORTS THE STATE WILL MAKE TO WORK WITH LOCAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OFFICES IN RURAL LOCATIONS.

Going forward, DEED will continue to work with chambers of commerce, economic development offices and small business development centers across the state, especially in rural regions, to prepare older workers for in-demand jobs, support education and training needs and promote the benefits of older workers. The many resources, tools, and strategies described earlier will also support local business development efforts in rural areas.

2. THE STATE'S LONG-TERM STRATEGY FOR ENGAGING EMPLOYERS TO DEVELOP AND PROMOTE OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE PLACEMENT OF SCSEP PARTICIPANTS IN UNSUBSIDIZED EMPLOYMENT. (20 CFR 641.302(E)) (MAY ALTERNATIVELY BE DISCUSSED IN THE STATE STRATEGIES SECTION OF STRATEGIC PLAN.)

2. THE STATE'S LONG-TERM STRATEGY FOR ENGAGING EMPLOYERS TO DEVELOP AND PROMOTE OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE PLACEMENT OF SCSEP PARTICIPANTS IN UNSUBSIDIZED EMPLOYMENT. (20 CFR 641.302(E)) (ALTERNATELY, THE STATE MAY DISCUSS THIS IN THE STATE STRATEGIES SECTION OF STRATEGIC PLAN IF SUBMITTING A COMBINED PLAN.)

To develop and promote training and unsubsidized employment opportunities, Minnesota SCSEP will continue to implement the following strategies at a state and local level:

- Co-enroll SCSEP participants in WIOA programs and Pathways to Prosperity (P2P) training options. P2P is coordinated in partnership with local employers, SOAR Career Solutions, Adult Education, and Lake Superior College, and provides individuals the skills needed to compete for entry level employment in the healthcare or construction fields.
- Develop a referral relationship with employers
- Invite employers as guest speakers at SCSEP quarterly meetings
- Encourage participants to meet with selected employers through Business of The Day events, Job Fairs, hiring events and Job Club
- Meet with employers at Job Fairs to explain SCSEP and the benefits of hiring older workers
- Direct contact with employers on behalf of a specific participant through job development activities
- Ensure resumes entered into MinnesotaWorks.net are viewable by employers
- Partner with CareerForce and community partners for job placement activities
- Feature SCSEP during LWDB meetings
- Increase collaboration among DEED workforce strategy consultants and local employers to improve work retention of aging employees
- Train employers to effectively communicate the type of skills they need, in ways that do not hinder older applicants

- Provide DEED-sponsored workshops for employers on how to establish on-the-job training and focus on knowledge-transfer strategies
- Demonstrate how volunteer work at desirable organizations/companies helps aging job seekers connect with potential employers
- Encourage employers to network with schools that teach skills they need in their workforce
- Increase opportunities for aging workers to do small business development and become entrepreneurs
- Develop a strategy and model for success, including both paid and unpaid work

To promote and strengthen retention, DEED ensures that unsubsidized employment activities align with service delivery models via providers' close working relationships with employers and participants after placement. Retention strategies also include making sure initial placements meet participant and employer needs (i.e. employer expectations match participant skill levels, interests, and work ethics), conducting follow-up just after placement and periodically thereafter to ensure satisfaction among both participant and employer (i.e. employers are expected to provide a healthy and safe environment for participants), providing counseling when issues arise on the job, and offering support services when needed.

3. THE STATE'S LONG-TERM STRATEGY FOR SERVING MINORITY OLDER INDIVIDUALS UNDER SCSEP. (20 CFR 641.302 (C))

3. THE STATE'S LONG-TERM STRATEGY FOR SERVING MINORITIES UNDER SCSEP. (20 CFR 641.302(C))

Providers will use three primary channels to recruit minority populations:

- Hire and train outreach staff to identify and recruit. These staff will continue to work closely with community leaders, members of culturally-specific organizations, and certain state and national providers that have considerable experience in recruiting and providing services to low income minorities. For example, to recruit Native American participants, Minnesota state and national providers such as the National Indian Council on Aging (NICOA), Center for Workforce Inclusion (CWI), and Minnesota Chippewa Tribe (MCT), target recruitment efforts directly on Native American reservations located within the boundaries of their service areas. They also work closely with cultural brokers and interpreters to ensure job opportunities are spread across cultural, racial, gender, and geographic boundaries by providing translation services and program information translated into Spanish, Somali, Hmong, Vietnamese, Lao, Arabic, and Russian to CareerForce locations, and other appropriate agencies. When needed, they have access to a language line that contracts with qualified interpreters.
- Work with other WIOA programs, county public assistance departments, VRS departments, AAAs, and other community-based organizations to increase referrals. CareerForce locations throughout Minnesota also provide referrals.
- Disseminate program information via local and culturally-specific agencies and outlets that serve MIN populations, such as Native American reservation social service organizations; newsletter, radio, and television outlets (Insight News, Minnesota Spokesman Recorder, The Circle, Latino Midwest News, Asian American Press, JMOJ); grocery stores; public assistance case workers, public health workers; clergy; and rural neighborhood workers.

DEED, and its state and national providers, have a long history of successfully recruiting participants, partnering with host agencies, and providing workforce development services to these demographics. Providers also offer support services, such as transportation, medical services, free meals, wellness classes, legal aid, elder-abuse prevention, tax preparation, and socialization, to address barriers to employment.

Minnesota provides continuous technical assistance to providers to help them identify minority individuals. To evaluate the efforts of SCSEP providers to serve minorities, data is regularly reported by state and national providers in the SCSEP Performance and Results QPR System (SPARQ). Additionally, the DOL provides an annual report that summarizes an analysis of the data reported from state and national providers on their service to minorities.

4. A LIST OF COMMUNITY SERVICES THAT ARE NEEDED AND THE PLACES WHERE THESE SERVICES ARE MOST NEEDED. SPECIFICALLY, THE PLAN MUST ADDRESS THE NEEDS AND LOCATION OF THOSE INDIVIDUALS MOST IN NEED OF COMMUNITY SERVICES AND THE GROUPS WORKING TO MEET THEIR NEEDS. (20 CFR 641.330)

4. A LIST OF COMMUNITY SERVICES THAT ARE NEEDED AND THE PLACES WHERE THESE SERVICES ARE MOST NEEDED. SPECIFICALLY, THE PLAN MUST ADDRESS THE NEEDS AND LOCATION(S) OF THOSE INDIVIDUALS MOST IN NEED OF COMMUNITY SERVICES AND THE GROUPS WORKING TO MEET THEIR NEEDS. (20 CFR 641.330)

Using current LMI data on the unemployment rates for Minnesota, we're able to identify the SCSEP counties with unemployment rates above the state average (3.2% - 3.3%). As of October 2019, these counties included: Koochiching at 5.8 percent, Clearwater at 4.8 percent, Itasca at 4 percent, Aitkin at 3.9 percent, Red Lake, Pine, Hubbard at 3.5 percent, Wadena and Cass at 3.4 percent, and Mille Lacs, Lake of the Woods, Kanabec, and Carlton at 3.3 percent. For more detailed information, see Table 5 in section (c)(1) below.

The community or support services SCSEP participants, particularly MIN individuals, tend to access are often transportation support (gas cards or bus passes), and housing and food assistance. SCSEP participants also need professional clothing so they can dress appropriately for interviews, meetings, CSAs, and eventual employment. Partner agencies and organizations that provide needed support services to program participants include, but are not limited to:

- Ticket To Work
- Transit Link
- Fare For All
- Dress for Success
- Project for Pride in Living
- Community Action Partnership
- Senior Linkage Line
- Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)
- Area food shelves
- Chambers of Commerce
- Arrowhead Area Agency on Aging – Duluth, MN
- Central Minnesota Council on Aging – Sartell, MN
- Dancing Sky Area Agency on Aging – Warren, MN

- Metropolitan Area Agency on Aging – Arden Hills, MN
- Minnesota Indian Area Agency on Aging – Cass Lake, MN
- Minnesota River Area Agency on Aging – Mankato, MN
- Southeastern Minnesota AAA – Rochester, MN

5. THE STATE'S LONG-TERM STRATEGY TO IMPROVE SCSEP SERVICES, INCLUDING PLANNED LONG-TERM CHANGES TO THE DESIGN OF THE PROGRAM WITHIN THE STATE, AND PLANNED CHANGES IN THE USE OF SCSEP GRANTEES AND PROGRAM OPERATORS TO BETTER ACHIEVE THE GOALS OF THE PROGRAM. THIS MAY INCLUDE RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE DEPARTMENT AS APPROPRIATE. (20 CFR 641.302(K))

5. THE STATE'S LONG-TERM STRATEGY TO IMPROVE SCSEP SERVICES, INCLUDING PLANNED LONG-TERM CHANGES TO THE DESIGN OF THE PROGRAM WITHIN THE STATE, AND PLANNED CHANGES IN THE USE OF SCSEP GRANTEES AND PROGRAM OPERATORS TO BETTER ACHIEVE THE GOALS OF THE PROGRAM. THIS MAY INCLUDE RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE DEPARTMENT AS APPROPRIATE. (20 CFR 641.302(K))

Minnesota Governor Walz is committed to creating an age-friendly state. In December 2019, he signed Executive Order 19-38 to establish the Governor's Council on an Age-Friendly Minnesota (Governor's Council). The Order initiated Minnesota's path to becoming designated as an Age-Friendly State by the AARP Network of Age-Friendly States & Territories program. The Governor's Council will guide the development of a comprehensive assessment and action plan to coordinate work across state, local and tribal governments, non-profits, communities, businesses and others in support of aging adults in Minnesota. Representatives from state agencies and boards will participate on the Governor's Council and create strategic partnerships to develop and implement the actions plans. Participating state agencies and boards include:

- The Minnesota Board on Aging
- Department of Commerce
- Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED)
- Minnesota Department of Health (MDH)
- Minnesota Housing Finance Agency
- Department of Human Services (DHS)
- Minnesota Department of Transportation
- Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs
- Metropolitan Council

The Governor may appoint other members seeking representation from older adults, direct service caregivers, businesses, experts on aging, local governments, and tribal communities. Other parties may participate in a non-voting capacity.

Minnesota will make changes to the SCSEP in collaboration with the Governor's Council. With the priority areas guiding the work, DEED plans to actively partner with the agencies and boards listed above to create new or refine existing objectives and strategies to improve workforce delivery and support services for the state's older workers. This will include a focus on:

- Transportation to increase the availability of reliable ways of getting to and from work
- Housing to provide the needed support services to assist participants while searching for and completing training assignments
- Social Participation, and Respect and Social Inclusion to help mitigate the effects of social isolation and mental health issues among the senior population and, by doing so, improve the likelihood of obtaining and retaining employment
- Work and Civic Engagement to create opportunities for older workers to be actively engaged in community life and to work for pay or volunteer their skills
- Communication and Information to increase the availability of information through a variety of methods since not everyone is tech-savvy, and not everyone has a smartphone or home-based access to the internet
- Community and Health Services to ensure older workers can access the services they require to maintain or improve their health and wellbeing

To align with the priority areas listed above, DEED, along with the national and state SCSEP providers, will modify existing strategies and partnerships (as described in sections (b)(1)(A-C) above) and implement new strategies as needed. Alignment with the priority areas will improve services to MIN individuals and increase job placement and retention outcomes (as described in sections (2-4) above). Further, DEED will open the program to new providers who have a proven track record of providing effective workforce development services to older workers. This strategy will create the opportunity to introduce new experience and expertise that could also improve services to MIN individuals and increase job placement and retention outcomes.

The COVID-19 pandemic amplified the inequities in employment for older workers. Even before the pandemic, inherent inequities in the labor market disproportionately affected older workers with more of them involuntarily leaving their jobs and finding it difficult to start another job. These disparities are even more apparent in communities of color. The pandemic has also proven the importance of having clear policies that are flexible and responsive to the needs of the participants/economy. In collaboration with partners and DOL, MN DEED was able to implement measures such as the At-Home Training and Emergency Paid Sick Leave to ensure participants' safety, engagement and participation. Moving forward, the MN SCSEP will continue to implement the following strategies to improve services and increase participantion:

- Increase number of outreach staff who are hired and trained to identify/recruit minority participants
- Strengthen collaborations with other WIOA programs, county public assistance departments, Vocational Rehabilitation Service departments, Area Agencies on Aging, and other community-based organizations.
- Increase the identification of appropriate and necessary support for all participants, particularly minorities, to address barriers to unsubsidized employment.
- Increase access to reliable technology and connectivity
- Update/revise policies and procedures to ensure it reflects recent changes including priority of service to formerly incarcerated or on supervision from release from prison or jail within five years of the date of initial eligibility determination.
- Develop partnerships with correctional facilities and organizations supporting supporting formerly incarcerated individuals

6. THE STATE'S STRATEGY FOR CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT IN THE LEVEL OF PERFORMANCE FOR SCSEP PARTICIPANTS' ENTRY INTO UNSUBSIDIZED EMPLOYMENT, AND TO ACHIEVE, AT A MINIMUM, THE LEVELS SPECIFIED IN OAA SECTION 513(A)(2)(E)(II). (20 CFR 641.302(F))

6. THE STATE'S STRATEGY FOR CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT IN THE LEVEL OF PERFORMANCE FOR SCSEP PARTICIPANTS' ENTRY INTO UNSUBSIDIZED EMPLOYMENT, AND TO ACHIEVE, AT A MINIMUM, THE LEVELS SPECIFIED IN OAA SECTION 513(A)(2)(E)(II). (20 CFR 641.302(F))

Minnesota SCSEP has many strategies and a variety of services to increase the likelihood of placement into unsubsidized employment. DEED plans to address performance issues by developing a plan and establishing benchmarks for continuous improvement. Expanding on section 2 above, the following are possible strategies at the state and local levels to increase the number of participants placed in unsubsidized employment:

- Employer Engagement and Job Opportunities:
    - Promote SCSEP to the business community by developing jobs in high-growth industries with cold calling, emailing, and consultative marketing techniques to identify employer needs and respond with solutions, and highlighting the benefits of older workers
    - Target marketing based on participants' skills and job interests
    - Perform excellent customer service by responding to employers with timely, pre-screened referrals.
- Job Fairs create promising opportunities for local SCSEP providers to meet potential employers and promote SCSEP and the benefits of hiring and retaining older workers.
- Job Clubs assist participants in developing proactive job search strategies including employer targeting, networking, cold calling, resume writing, practice interviewing, voicemail etiquette, and active listening. Job clubs promote peer-to-peer support, collaborative job search practices, and encourages members to access the resources available through the local workforce system.
- Job Search Cooperatives meet on a regular basis to encourage cold calling. Members form a team and conduct marketing campaigns for fellow members. In the process of marketing other members, they improve their own job search skills.
- On the Job Experience (OJE) contracts detail the specific skills required to bridge the gap between employers' expectations and participants' skills. This approach tends to be more commonly used with small businesses. It's a very effective first step in developing relationships with employers through consultative marketing techniques.
- Statewide Strategies – DEED will:
    - Develop and implement surveys to providers and participants to capture feedback on the job development and placement process and experience. The surveys will specifically seek input on best practices for job readiness for in-demand jobs with high retention potential.
    - Increase the frequency of conference calls and in-person meetings with the statewide providers from semi-annually to quarterly.
    - Host biannual roundtables to create an opportunity for providers to come together and discuss common participant barriers and ways to mitigate or overcome them

- Increase awareness of SCSEP at the state and national level, and collaborate with providers to increase awareness at the local level. SCSEP isn't widely known among workforce development professionals, community service organizations, and eligible populations. Although SCSEP was recently added to the CareerForce website (CareerForceMN.com), which will increase its visibility, DEED will identify other partnerships with local senior centers and gerontology centers and experts to promote the program and develop unique strategies to communicate the benefits of hiring older workers.

After the program becomes more visible and more employers experience the benefits of hiring older workers, it's anticipated that the job placement target will be met or exceeded.

C. LOCATION AND POPULATION SERVED, INCLUDING EQUITABLE DISTRIBUTION

1. A DESCRIPTION OF THE LOCALITIES AND POPULATIONS FOR WHICH PROJECTS OF THE TYPE AUTHORIZED BY TITLE V ARE MOST NEEDED. (20 CFR 641.325 (D))

C. LOCATION AND POPULATION SERVED, INCLUDING EQUITABLE DISTRIBUTION

States must:

1. DESCRIBE THE LOCALITIES AND POPULATIONS FOR WHICH PROJECTS OF THE TYPE AUTHORIZED BY TITLE V ARE MOST NEEDED. (20 CFR 641.325 (D))

Using current LMI data, we're able to identify SCSEP counties with unemployment rates above the state average of 2.5 percent in 2022. As of March 2022, most counties had unemployment rates above 2.5. percent (Table 5).

Table 5: SCSEP Counties by Labor Force, Employment, Unemployment, and Unemployment Rate

MN County	Labor Force	Employment	Unemployment	Unemployment Rate
Aitkin County	7,336	6,955	381	5.20%
Anoka County	199,987	194,728	5,259	2.60%
Becker County	18,890	18,235	655	3.50%
Beltrami County	24,186	23,296	890	3.70%
Benton County	21,975	21,135	840	3.80%
Big Stone County	2,326	2,234	92	4%
Blue Earth County	40,666	39,746	920	2.30%
Brown County	13,470	13,032	438	3.30%
Carlton County	17,741	17,061	680	3.80%
Carver County	59,617	58,330	1,287	2.20%
Cass County	16,550	15,850	700	4.20%
Chippewa County	6,493	6,321	172	2.60%
Chisago County	30,167	29,131	1,036	3.40%
Clay County	36,916	36,023	893	2.40%

MN County	Labor Force	Employment	Unemployment	Unemployment Rate
Clearwater County	4,525	4,147	378	8.40%
Cook County	2,597	2,478	119	4.60%
Cottonwood County	6,670	6,520	150	2.20%
Crow Wing County	31,262	30,020	1,242	4%
Dakota County	243,826	238,092	5,734	2.40%
Dodge County	12,110	11,731	379	3.10%
Douglas County	20,827	20,256	571	2.70%
Faribault County	6,733	6,504	229	3.40%
Fillmore County	11,536	11,209	327	2.80%
Freeborn County	15,420	14,979	441	2.90%
Goodhue County	26,327	25,590	737	2.80%
Grant County	3,167	3,051	116	3.70%
Hennepin County	706,802	690,297	16,505	2.30%
Houston County	10,452	10,166	286	2.70%
Hubbard County	9,899	9,432	467	4.70%
Isanti County	21,958	21,124	834	3.80%
Itasca County	21,023	19,999	1,024	4.90%
Jackson County	5,353	5,215	138	2.60%
Kanabec County	9,180	8,609	571	6.20%
Kandiyohi County	22,629	21,860	769	3.40%
Kittson County	2,214	2,150	64	2.90%
Koochiching County	5,493	5,285	208	3.80%
Lac qui Parle County	3,335	3,225	110	3.30%
Lake County	5,142	4,993	149	2.90%
Lake of the Woods County	2,459	2,394	65	2.60%
Le Sueur County	16,068	15,382	686	4.30%
Lincoln County	2,890	2,776	114	3.90%

MN County	Labor Force	Employment	Unemployment	Unemployment Rate
Lyon County	14,172	13,771	401	2.80%
Mahnomen County	2,242	2,123	119	5.30%
Marshall County	5,257	4,983	274	5.20%
Martin County	9,332	9,066	266	2.90%
McLeod County	18,952	18,351	601	3.20%
Meeker County	13,141	12,678	463	3.50%
Mille Lacs County	12,851	12,156	695	5.40%
Morrison County	17,485	16,555	930	5.30%
Mower County	20,626	20,071	555	2.70%
Murray County	4,498	4,302	196	4.40%
Nicollet County	20,812	20,368	444	2.10%
Nobles County	11,192	10,941	251	2.20%
Norman County	3,221	3,089	132	4.10%
Olmsted County	92,436	90,422	2,014	2.20%
Otter Tail County	30,437	29,324	1,113	3.70%
Pennington County	8,766	8,419	347	4%
Pine County	14,223	13,460	763	5.40%
Pipestone County	4,320	4,174	146	3.40%
Polk County	16,143	15,608	535	3.30%
Pope County	6,245	6,071	174	2.80%
Ramsey County	286,628	279,286	7,342	2.60%
Red Lake County	2,176	2,084	92	4.20%
Redwood County	7,357	7,149	208	2.80%
Renville County	8,162	7,824	338	4.10%
Rice County	37,027	36,001	1,026	2.80%
Rock County	5,944	5,831	113	1.90%
Roseau County	7,934	7,740	194	2.40%
Saint Louis County	101,034	97,825	3,209	3.20%
Scott County	84,874	82,961	1,913	2.30%

MN County	Labor Force	Employment	Unemployment	Unemployment Rate
Sherburne County	53,663	51,977	1,686	3.10%
Sibley County	8,124	7,828	296	3.60%
Stearns County	90,795	88,204	2,591	2.90%
Steele County	19,556	18,994	562	2.90%
Stevens County	5,168	5,042	126	2.40%
Swift County	4,587	4,428	159	3.50%
Todd County	13,317	12,839	478	3.60%
Traverse County	1,630	1,576	54	3.30%
Wabasha County	12,284	11,935	349	2.80%
Wadena County	5,975	5,689	286	4.80%
Waseca County	8,561	8,236	325	3.80%
Washington County	145,804	142,558	3,246	2.20%
Watonwan County	6,458	6,283	175	2.70%
Wilkin County	3,311	3,232	79	2.40%
Winona County	27,749	27,128	621	2.20%
Wright County	77,082	74,948	2,134	2.80%
Yellow Medicine County	4,946	4,783	163	3.30%

DEED will work with SCSEP providers in these areas to strengthen strategies to increase employment opportunities. Current objectives and strategies include:

- Utilize the equitable distribution report provided on www.SCSEPed.org to monitor and track equitable distribution
- Recruit host agencies in underserved counties
- Conduct outreach to participants who have the greatest barriers to employment in underserved areas
- Enroll more participants in underserved areas and close enrollments in over-served areas
- Increase specialized training and job development activities in underserved areas
- Discuss the potential to move state program participants located in over-served areas to the national program
- Advertise within local community papers, utilizing TV PSA's, providing flyers, pamphlets, and other marketing tools that will aid in educating city/county government agencies

- Strengthen partnerships with agencies, employers, city/county officials, and community organizations that focus on community improvement and employment for older workers

With many seniors postponing retirement and seeking new work opportunities, it is critical to partner with all possible workforce participants to increase accessible and suitable positions.

2. LIST THE CITIES AND COUNTIES WHERE THE PROJECT WILL BE CONDUCTED. INCLUDE THE NUMBER OF SCSEP AUTHORIZED POSITIONS AND INDICATE WHERE THE POSITIONS CHANGED FROM THE PRIOR YEAR.

2. LIST THE CITIES AND COUNTIES WHERE THE SCSEP PROJECT WILL TAKE PLACE. INCLUDE THE NUMBER OF SCSEP AUTHORIZED POSITIONS AND INDICATE IF AND WHERE THE POSITIONS CHANGED FROM THE PRIOR YEAR.

Table 6: Minnesota SCSEP Providers, PY21 Authorized Positions, and County(s) Served

197 Total Authorized Positions – 87 Counties Statewide

MN SCSEP Providers – State and National	City	PY21 Authorized Positions	County(s) Served
State - Anoka County Job Training Center	Blaine	17 State	Anoka
State - Arrowhead Economic Opportunity Agency	Virginia	6 State	Itasca, Koochiching, Lake, St.Lous
State - City Of Duluth Workforce Development	Duluth	10 State	St. Louis
State – CWI	--	70 State	Becker, Beltrami, Benton, Big Stone, Carver, Cass, Chippewa, Clay, Clearwater, Crow Wing, Dakota, Douglas, Goodhue, Hennepin, Hubbard, Kandiyohi, Kittson, Lac Qui Parle, Lincoln, Lyon, Marshall, Morrison, Norman, Olmsted, Otter Tail, Pennington, Polk, Pope, Redwood, Renville, Rice, Roseau,

			Stearns, Swift, Todd, Wabasha, Wadena, Wilkin, Winona, Yellow Medicine.
State - InterCounty Community Council	Oklee	7 State	Clearwater, Lake of the Woods, Pennington, Polk, Red Lake, Roseau
State - Minnesota Chippewa Tribe	Cass Lake	5 State	Becker, Carlton, Cass, Cook, Itasca, Koochiching, Mahnomen, Mille Lacs, St. Louis
State - Minnesota Valley Action Council	Mankato	37 State	Blue Earth, Brown, Faribault, Martin, Nicollet, Watonwan
State - Rural Minnesota CEP, Inc.	Detroit Lakes	14 State	Becker, Beltrami, Cass, Clay, Clearwater, Crow Wing, Douglas, Grant, Hubbard, Lake of the Woods, Mahnomen, Morrison, Otter Tail, Pope, Stevens, Todd, Traverse, Wadena, Wilkin
State - Scott County Workforce Center	Shakopee	5 State	Scott
State - Southwestern Minnesota Opportunity Council	Worthington	21 State	Cottonwood, Jackson, Murray, Nobles, Pipestone, Rock
State - Washington County Workforce Center	Woodbury	5 State	Washington
National - CWI	--	189 National	Becker, Beltrami, Benton, Big Stone, Carver, Cass, Chippewa, Clay, Clearwater, Crow Wing, Dakota, Douglas, Goodhue, Hennepin, Hubbard, Kandiyohi, Kittson, Lac Qui Parle, Lincoln, Lyon, Marshall, Morrison, Norman, Olmsted, Otter Tail, Pennington, Polk, Pope, Redwood, Renville, Rice, Roseau, Stearns, Swift, Todd, Wabasha, Wadena, Wilkin, Winona, Yellow Medicine.
National - Center for Workforce Inclusion (CWI) – Anoka County Job Training Center	Blaine	25 National	Anoka
National - Center for Workforce Inclusion (CWI) – Arrowhead Economic Opportunity Agency	Virginia	42 National	Itasca, Koochiching, Lake, St. Louis
National - Center for Workforce Inclusion (CWI) – City Of Duluth Workforce Development	Duluth	27 National	St. Louis

National - Center for Workforce Inclusion (CWI) – East Side Neighborhood Service, Inc.	Minneapolis	174 National	Hennepin
National - Center for Workforce Inclusion (CWI) – Motivation Education & Training	New Caney, TX	286 National	Chisago, Dakota, Dodge, Fillmore, Freeborn, Goodhue, Houston, Isanti, Kanabec, Le Sueur, McLeod, Meeker, Mille Lacs, Mower, Olmsted, Pine, Ramsey, Rice, Sherburne, Sibley, Steele, Wabasha, Waseca, Washington, Winona, Wright.
National - National Indian Council on Aging	Albuquerque, NM	19 National	Hennepin, Ramsey, and St. Louis

3. DESCRIBE CURRENT SLOT IMBALANCES AND PROPOSED STEPS TO CORRECT INEQUITIES TO ACHIEVE EQUITABLE DISTRIBUTION.

3. DESCRIBE ANY CURRENT SLOT IMBALANCES AND PROPOSED STEPS TO CORRECT INEQUITIES TO ACHIEVE EQUITABLE DISTRIBUTION.

There are no current slot imbalances. If a SCSEP provider would like to change their number of slots, the State will work with them and the other providers to redistribute the slots as appropriate.

4. THE STATE'S LONG-TERM STRATEGY FOR ACHIEVING AN EQUITABLE DISTRIBUTION OF SCSEP POSITIONS WITHIN THE STATE THAT:

A. MOVES POSITIONS FROM OVER-SERVED TO UNDERSERVED LOCATIONS WITHIN THE STATE IN COMPLIANCE WITH 20 CFR 641.365.

4. EXPLAIN THE STATE'S LONG-TERM STRATEGY FOR ACHIEVING AN EQUITABLE DISTRIBUTION OF SCSEP POSITIONS WITHIN THE STATE THAT:

A. MOVES POSITIONS FROM OVER-SERVED TO UNDERSERVED LOCATIONS WITHIN THE STATE IN COMPLIANCE WITH 20 CFR 641.365.

The State continues to develop cooperative relationships among SCSEP providers and national sponsors. The State and national sponsors have made every effort to correct any equitable distribution slot imbalances.

Minnesota has strong relationships with the Title V national sponsors operating within the state, which includes Experience Works, SSAI, and NICOA. Regular calls are held to discuss mutual concerns, develop an equitable distribution plan, and take into consideration all factors that may impede the equitable distribution of slots.

Activities are also coordinated with the State Board on Aging, Job Service and WIOA administrators. In all cases, additional slots will be allocated to underserved counties of the State. By the same token, any slot reductions will come from over-served counties.

B. EQUITABLY SERVES RURAL AND URBAN AREAS.

B. EQUITABLY SERVES BOTH RURAL AND URBAN AREAS.

In general, rural areas have higher unemployment rates than other areas and competition for available jobs is more intense. Without up-to-date and in-demand skills, older job seekers are unlikely to find work. Further, trainings and support services cannot be fully provided by host agencies without cost from other community resources.

Minnesota will continue to ensure that rural and urban areas are served equitably by working closely with SCSEP providers, such as Experience Works, who are highly experienced in providing services to rural populations. Also, as previously described, Minnesota will expand training with the small businesses that are the primary private sector employers of SCSEP participants. Over the last decade, small businesses have generated 60 to 80 percent of net new jobs annually. In many areas, small businesses may be the only source of jobs for job seekers.

In addition, transportation is a major problem for many rural participants, particularly for those in rural areas who do not have cars. More support service dollars will expand staff ability to work with community partners to address this problem.

C. SERVES INDIVIDUALS AFFORDED PRIORITY FOR SERVICE UNDER 20 CFR 641.520. (20 CFR 641.302(A), 641.365, 641.520)

C. SERVES INDIVIDUALS AFFORDED PRIORITY FOR SERVICE UNDER 20 CFR 641.520. (20 CFR 641.302(A), 641.365, 641.520)

SCSEP provides priority of service to those most-in-need as provided at 20 CFR 641.520. These individuals:

- Are veterans (or eligible spouses of veterans) for purposes of §2a of the Jobs for Veterans Act, 39 U.S.C. 4215(a)
- Are age 65 or older
- Have a disability
- Have limited English proficiency
- Have low literacy skills
- Reside in a rural area
- Have low employment prospects
- Have failed to find employment after using services provided through the American Job Center delivery system
- Are homeless or at risk of homelessness, or
- Individuals who have been incarcerated within the last 5 years or are under supervision following the release from prison or jail within the last 5 years

To ensure an equitable distribution of slots that serve and support these individuals, Minnesota will continue to customize promotional and outreach campaigns that address their unique needs and preferences. DEED will use recruitment strategies that have proven to be effective such as hiring outreach staff to identify and recruit MIN individuals, work closely with WIOA and CAPs to increase referrals, and disseminate program information to local and culturally-specific agencies and outlets that serve MIN populations. Additionally, the development of partnerships with correctional facilities and organizations serving justice involved individuals will also be a key strategy. DEED will also continue to provide technical assistance to, collaborate with and evaluate the efforts of its providers. See section (b)(3) above for information about services to minority individuals under SCSEP.

5. THE RATIO OF ELIGIBLE INDIVIDUALS IN EACH SERVICE AREA TO THE TOTAL ELIGIBLE POPULATION IN THE STATE. (20 CFR 641.325(A))

5. PROVIDE THE RATIO OF ELIGIBLE INDIVIDUALS IN EACH SERVICE AREA TO THE TOTAL ELIGIBLE POPULATION IN THE STATE. (20 CFR 641.325(A))

The total number of Minnesotans 55 years of age and older is anticipated to increase by nearly 500,000 people between the 2018 American Community Survey (ACS) 5-year estimates and the 2040 population projections as supplied from the Minnesota State Demographic Center. As such, the population 55 years of age and older in Minnesota is projected to expand by 32 percent, or 2.5 times faster than total population growth in the state (13%). By 2040, approximately one-third of Minnesotans will be 55 years of age and older. By 2040, approximately one-fifth of Minnesotans will be 65 years of age and older.

According to the 2018 ACS 5-year estimates, 7.3 percent of Minnesotans 60 years of age and older live in poverty. This is equivalent to more than 83,600 people. 10.4 percent of the state's total female population live in poverty, equivalent to nearly 283,800 people. This was a higher share of the state's total male population living in poverty, 8.6 percent, which was equivalent to nearly 233,700 people.

Nationally, SCSEP is currently funded at a level to serve only .05 percent of the eligible population yet these trends underscore the importance of the SCSEP, the only federal training program that serves low-income older workers on the State of Minnesota's workforce menu of programs.

County	Ratio	Population 55+	Total Population
TOTAL	**28%**	**1,533,614**	**5,489,594**
Aitkin County, Minnesota	50%	7,946	15,834
Anoka County, Minnesota	27%	92,592	347,431
Becker County, Minnesota	35%	11,835	33,773
Beltrami County, Minnesota	27%	12,681	46,117
Benton County, Minnesota	25%	10,048	39,779
Big Stone County, Minnesota	42%	2,108	5,016
Blue Earth County, Minnesota	24%	16,071	66,322
Brown County, Minnesota	35%	8,868	25,211
Carlton County, Minnesota	31%	11,102	35,540
Carver County, Minnesota	24%	23,821	100,416
Cass County, Minnesota	42%	12,104	29,022

County	Ratio	Population 55+	Total Population
Chippewa County, Minnesota	35%	4,195	12,010
Chisago County, Minnesota	28%	15,536	54,727
Clay County, Minnesota	24%	14,912	62,801
Clearwater County, Minnesota	35%	3,059	8,812
Cook County, Minnesota	46%	2,445	5,311
Cottonwood County, Minnesota	37%	4,157	11,372
Crow Wing County, Minnesota	37%	23,317	63,855
Dakota County, Minnesota	27%	110,840	418,201
Dodge County, Minnesota	27%	5,551	20,582
Douglas County, Minnesota	37%	13,809	37,203
Faribault County, Minnesota	39%	5,374	13,896
Fillmore County, Minnesota	35%	7,325	20,888
Freeborn County, Minnesota	37%	11,202	30,526
Goodhue County, Minnesota	34%	15,653	46,217
Grant County, Minnesota	38%	2,285	5,938
Hennepin County, Minnesota	26%	320,491	1,235,478
Houston County, Minnesota	37%	6,884	18,663
Hubbard County, Minnesota	41%	8,579	20,862
Isanti County, Minnesota	29%	11,291	38,974
Itasca County, Minnesota	39%	17,481	45,203

County	Ratio	Population 55+	Total Population
Jackson County, Minnesota	36%	3,655	10,047
Kanabec County, Minnesota	36%	5,791	16,004
Kandiyohi County, Minnesota	32%	13,829	42,658
Kittson County, Minnesota	40%	1,739	4,337
Koochiching County, Minnesota	41%	5,240	12,644
Lac qui Parle County, Minnesota	44%	2,956	6,773
Lake County, Minnesota	43%	4,558	10,569
Lake of the Woods County, Minnesota	43%	1,620	3,809
Le Sueur County, Minnesota	31%	8,699	27,983
Lincoln County, Minnesota	39%	2,246	5,707
Lyon County, Minnesota	28%	7,143	25,839
McLeod County, Minnesota	31%	11,210	35,825
Mahnomen County, Minnesota	30%	1,663	5,506
Marshall County, Minnesota	36%	3,372	9,392
Martin County, Minnesota	38%	7,677	19,964
Meeker County, Minnesota	34%	7,873	23,079
Mille Lacs County, Minnesota	32%	8,160	25,728
Morrison County, Minnesota	34%	11,062	32,949
Mower County, Minnesota	31%	12,426	39,602
Murray County, Minnesota	41%	3,401	8,353

County	Ratio	Population 55+	Total Population
Nicollet County, Minnesota	28%	9,382	33,783
Nobles County, Minnesota	28%	6,196	21,839
Norman County, Minnesota	36%	2,372	6,559
Olmsted County, Minnesota	28%	42,325	153,065
Otter Tail County, Minnesota	39%	22,783	57,992
Pennington County, Minnesota	31%	4,403	14,184
Pine County, Minnesota	35%	10,295	29,129
Pipestone County, Minnesota	34%	3,137	9,185
Polk County, Minnesota	32%	9,985	31,591
Pope County, Minnesota	39%	4,329	10,980
Ramsey County, Minnesota	26%	140,942	541,493
Red Lake County, Minnesota	35%	1,408	4,008
Redwood County, Minnesota	35%	5,396	15,331
Renville County, Minnesota	36%	5,303	14,721
Rice County, Minnesota	27%	17,954	65,765
Rock County, Minnesota	33%	3,143	9,413
Roseau County, Minnesota	31%	4,799	15,462
St. Louis County, Minnesota	34%	67,035	200,080
Scott County, Minnesota	21%	30,728	143,372
Sherburne County, Minnesota	22%	20,738	93,231
Sibley County, Minnesota	32%	4,789	14,912
Stearns County,	26%	41,152	156,819

County	Ratio	Population 55+	Total Population
Minnesota			
Steele County, Minnesota	30%	11,006	36,676
Stevens County, Minnesota	29%	2,819	9,784
Swift County, Minnesota	36%	3,417	9,411
Todd County, Minnesota	36%	8,858	24,440
Traverse County, Minnesota	41%	1,360	3,337
Wabasha County, Minnesota	36%	7,715	21,500
Wadena County, Minnesota	35%	4,761	13,646
Waseca County, Minnesota	31%	5,802	18,809
Washington County, Minnesota	28%	69,936	253,317
Watonwan County, Minnesota	34%	3,729	10,973
Wilkin County, Minnesota	35%	2,238	6,343
Winona County, Minnesota	29%	14,719	50,847
Wright County, Minnesota	24%	31,225	132,745
Yellow Medicine County, Minnesota	35%	3,475	9,868

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2018 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

6. THE RELATIVE DISTRIBUTION OF ELIGIBLE INDIVIDUALS WHO:

A. RESIDE IN URBAN AND RURAL AREAS WITHIN THE STATE

6. PROVIDE THE RELATIVE DISTRIBUTION OF ELIGIBLE INDIVIDUALS WHO:

Provide the relative distribution of eligible individuals who:

A. RESIDE IN URBAN AND RURAL AREAS WITHIN THE STATE

The overall current distribution of urban and rural older workers is 65% and 35%, respectively. More detailed information is forthcoming.

B. HAVE THE GREATEST ECONOMIC NEED

B. HAVE THE GREATEST ECONOMIC NEED

According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Minnesota's overall poverty rate averaged about 3.2 percent in 2019. As discussed in section (c)(1) earlier, the SCSEP counties with unemployment rates above the state average included: Koochiching at 5.8 percent, Clearwater at 4.8 percent, Itasca at 4 percent, Aitkin at 3.9 percent, Red Lake, Pine, Hubbard at 3.5 percent, Wadena and Cass at 3.4 percent, and Mille Lacs, Lake of the Woods, Kanabec, and Carlton at 3.3 percent (Table 5).

Table 9 lists the state counties with unemployment rates above average and their ratio of eligibility to the total population. Every county with a high unemployment rate also has a potentially SCSEP-eligible population (based on the age criterion of 55+) of at least 31%. Cass, Hubbard, Koochiching, and Lake of the Woods have SCSEP-eligible populations of at least 40%; and 50% of Aitkin's total population is potentially eligible.

Section (c)(1) above provides a list of strategies that DEED will work collaboratively with its national and state providers to implement to increase employment opportunities in these counties.

Table 9: SCSEP-Eligible Minnesota Counties with High Unemployment Rates

MN County	Unemployment Rate	Ratio of Eligible Individuals (55 years +)
Aitkin County	3.90%	50%
Carlton County	3.30%	31%
Cass County	3.40%	42%
Clearwater County	4.80%	35%
Hubbard County	3.50%	41%
Itasca County	4%	39%
Kanabec County	3.30%	36%
Koochiching County	5.80%	41%
Lake of the Woods County	3.30%	43%
Mille Lacs County	3.30%	32%
Pine County	3.50%	35%
Red Lake County	3.50%	35%
Wadena County	3.40%	35%

C. ARE MINORITIES

C. ARE MINORITIES

The relative distribution of PY19 Minnesota SCSEP participants who are minorities is provided in Table 10 below.

Table 10: Relative Distribution of PY19 MN SCSEP Participants Who Are Minorities

	GROUP	YTD No.	YTD %

	GROUP	YTD No.	YTD %
Ethnicity	Hispanic, Latino or Spanish origin	1	0
Race	American Indian or Alaska Native	7	3
	Asian	1	0
	Black or African American	24	12
	Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	0	0
	White	168	82
	Two or More Races	5	2
	TOTAL	**206**	

To provide context, the breakdown of Minnesota's 55 and older population by minority group is provided in Table 11. This data was extracted from the latest ACS five-year estimates (2014 - 2018 estimates). The data was extracted from IPUMS.org for Minnesota.

Table 11: Minnesota's 55 and Older Population by Minority Group

	White alone, not Hispanic	Black alone, not Hispanic	Asian and Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander alone, not Hispanic	American Indian or Alaska Native alone, not Hispanic	Two or More Races	Hispanic or Latino, all races
55 to 64 years	91.9%	3.3%	2.5%	0.9%	0.8%	2.0%
65 to 74 years	93.8%	2.6%	2.0%	0.7%	0.7%	1.2%
75 years & over	96.2%	1.3%	1.4%	0.3%	0.5%	0.9%

D. ARE LIMITED ENGLISH PROFICIENT

D. ARE LIMITED ENGLISH PROFICIENT

See Table 13 for the relative distribution of PY19 MN SCSEP participants who are limited English Proficient (LEP).

The breakdown of Minnesota's population who are LEP is provided in Table 12. The English proficiency is defined as those who either speak only English or speak "very well". Any proficiency below "very well" is considered "limited".

Table 12: Minnesota's 55 and Older Population by LEP Status

	English Proficient	Limited

	English Proficient	Limited
55 to 64 years	3.4%	96.6%
65 to 74 years	3.0%	97.0%
75 years & over	2.7%	97.3%

E. HAVE THE GREATEST SOCIAL NEED. (20 CFR 641.325(B))

E. HAVE THE GREATEST SOCIAL NEED. (20 CFR 641.325(B))

The term ''greatest social need'' is defined by the OAA to mean the need caused by noneconomic factors, which include—(A) Physical and mental disabilities; (B) Language barriers; (C) Cultural, social, or geographical isolation, including isolation caused by racial or ethnic status, that— (i) restricts the ability of an individual to perform normal daily tasks; or (ii) threatens the capacity of the individual to live independently.

Table 13: Relative Distribution of PY19 MN SCSEP Participants With The Greatest Social Need

GROUP	YTD No.	YTD %
Family income at or below the poverty level	148	85
Individuals with disabilities	52	30
Individuals with limited English proficiency	9	5
Individuals with low literacy skills	11	6
Individuals residing in rural areas	95	54
Individuals with low employment prospects	157	90
Individuals who failed to find employment after using WIA Title I	12	7
Individuals age 75 and over at date of report	18	10
Individuals who are homeless or at risk of homelessness	68	39
Displaced homemakers	11	6
Veterans (or eligible spouse of veteran)	30	17
Post-9/11 era veterans	1	1
Individuals receiving public assistance	112	64
Individuals with severe disability	2	1
Individuals who are frail	2	1
Individuals old enough for but not receiving SS Title II	1	1
Individuals with severely limited employment prospects in areas of persistent unemployment	5	3
Individuals who are formerly incarcerated	0	0
TOTAL	734	

F. FORMERLY INCARCERATED INDIVIDUALS, AS DEFINED IN TEGL 17-20

Outreach to formerly incarcerated individuals

MN DEED will implement the following strategies to ensure effective outreach to formerly incarcerated individuals:

- Develop partnerships with correctional facilities, transition coalitions, Recovery Corps and organizations supporting justice involved individuals.
- Attend and share information at Transition Fairs across the state.
- Utilize Federal Bonding Program grant and ensure employers and providers are aware.

7. A DESCRIPTION OF THE STEPS TAKEN TO AVOID DISRUPTIONS TO THE GREATEST EXTENT POSSIBLE, WHEN POSITIONS ARE REDISTRIBUTED, AS PROVIDED IN 20 CFR 641.365; WHEN NEW CENSUS OR OTHER RELIABLE DATA BECOME AVAILABLE; OR WHEN THERE IS OVER-ENROLLMENT FOR ANY OTHER REASON. (20 CFR 641.325(I), 641.302(B))

A. DESCRIBE THE STEPS TAKEN TO AVOID DISRUPTIONS TO SERVICE FOR PARTICIPANTS TO THE GREATEST EXTENT POSSIBLE, WHEN POSITIONS ARE REDISTRIBUTED, AS PROVIDED IN 20 CFR 641.365; WHEN NEW CENSUS OR OTHER RELIABLE DATA BECOMES AVAILABLE; OR WHEN THERE IS OVER- ENROLLMENT FOR ANY OTHER REASON. (20 CFR 641.325(I), 641.302(B))

The national grants competition and performance standards create possibilities for authorized positions/slots to be redistributed. If slots are redistributed, every effort will be made to ensure a seamless transition to the new SCSEP provider. The transition of enrolled participants to unsubsidized employment will occur before their slot is moved to the new location, or participants will continue to work with their current SCSEP program until they're exited. As described in a previous section, slots will be reduced and recruitment activities will end in overenrolled areas, and increased in under-enrolled areas, which should also help mitigate disruption to individuals.

Additional information added to the Combined State Plan per TEGL 6-21:

As mentioned in the Economic Analysis and Demographics section of State Plan, the state's workforce is getting older as is the general population overall. As reported by DEED's Labor Market Information Office and the U.S. Census Bureau's Quarterly Workforce Indicators (QWI) data, the share of jobs held by workers aged 55 years and over in Minnesota has increased significantly over the past 25 years. In 1995, for example, about one-in-ten jobs in the state (10.6%) were held by workers 55 years of age and over. By 2005 this share increased to 15.1%, and by 2015 it increased further to 21.9%. In 2020, the share of total jobs held by workers aged 55 years and over was approaching one-in-four (23.8%). Broken down, this increase has been attributable to significant increases in the share of workers both 55 to 64 years of age and 65 years of age and over. Aging trends that nearly all employers will increasingly face. This is especially so as the state experiences ever-tightening labor market conditions during its recovery after the COVID-19 recession. Additional information regarding the state's tight labor market is provided in the LMI Economic Analysis and Demographics section.

As the state recovers from the pandemic, prioritizing and creating positive outcomes for individuals with significant barriers to employment will be critical to meeting the state's labor force needs. This will be especially important in Greater Minnesota, which has an older population than the Twin Cities, with 19.1 percent of the population aged 65 years and over, compared to 14.9 percent in the metro area. Greater Minnesota also has a lower percentage of people in their prime working years, as well as less racial diversity than the Twin Cities. While every region in the state saw an increase in the number of jobs held by people of color over the past 20 years, only about 12.5 percent of jobs in Greater Minnesota are held by people of color, compared to over 25 percent in the Twin Cities.

While workers 65 and older made up a relatively smaller share of Minnesota's total employment losses during the COVID-19 recession (7.5%), the age cohort did experience more significant respective loss (12.0%). By industry, employment losses for these workers were more significant in Educational Services, Retail Trade, Transportation & Warehousing,

Administrative & Support Services, and Other Services. Accommodation & Food Services; Arts, Entertainment, & Recreation; and Health Care & Social Assistance each lost a high number of workers age 65 and older during this period, but the percentage loss of older workers in these industries was similar to that for the total for all ages.

Projections show Minnesota will have nearly 225,000 workers aged 65 years and over by 2033, which would be the largest number and share of the workforce ever recorded. This assumes that labor force participation rates will remain the same as they are now, but participation rates may increase for older age groups, which may help provide some additional workers.

As such, DEED will be focused on increasing the pool and types of organizations across the state that will serve SCSEP participants. The Program will issue an RFP to bring on new/additional providers to partner with in Spring of 2022. Additionally, DEED will also be exploring options for state funding to expand the services provided to older workers in the state.

Flexible Service Delivery:

Minnesota DEED partners with 11 sub-grantees/providers to serve older workers eligible for SCSEP. While the pandemic has been an ongoing and unprecedented challenge for MN providers, program participants, and employers, the Program has prioritized flexibility in service delivery. To protect the health and safety of participants, the Program instituted at home training program and allowed participants to receive emergency paid sick leave (EPSL). As the state continued to open up, the Program moved away from EPSL and transitioned back to training. DEED made at-home-training program available for participants who were either uncomfortable returning to a host agency in person (due to health risk factors) or did not have an open host agency. At-home-training program included an online and pen and paper-training options. Additionally, the Program ensured that participants were able to be connected virtually by ensuring access to laptops, Wi-Fi and training on how to use the computer for basic communication. DEED will continue to provide flexibility in service delivery and encourage sub-grantees to explore innovative options to serve SCSEP participants.

Equity in Service Delivery

Minnesota strives to ensure that SCSEP opportunities are equitable across cultural, racial, gender, and geographic boundaries. Subgrantees will continue to make it a priority to recruit and select individuals from under-resourced populations. Subgrantees will use three (3) primary channels to recruit minority participants:

- Hire and train outreach staff who reflect the communities they serve to identify and recruit participants. These staff will continue to work closely with community leaders, members of culturally appropriate organizations, and certain state and national providers that have considerable experience in recruiting and providing services to low-income minorities. For example, to recruit Native American participants, Minnesota state and national providers such as the National Indian Council on Aging (NICOA), Senior Services of America, Inc (SSAI), Experience Works, and Minnesota Chippewa Tribe (MCT), tailor recruitment efforts for Native American reservations located within the boundaries of their service areas. They also work closely with cultural brokers and interpreters to ensure job opportunities are spread across cultural, racial, gender, and geographic boundaries by providing translation services and program information translated into Spanish, Somali, Hmong, Vietnamese, Lao, Arabic, Russian, etc. to CareerForce locations, and other relevant agencies. When needed, they have access to a language line that contract with qualified interpreters.

- Work with other WIOA programs, county public assistance, Vocational Rehabilitation Services, Area Agencies on Aging, and other community-based organizations to increase referrals. CareerForce locations throughout Minnesota also provide referrals.

- Disseminate program information via local and culturally specific agencies and outlets that serve MIN populations, such as Native American reservation social service organizations; newsletter, radio, and television outlets (Insight News, Minnesota Spokesman Recorder, The Circle, Latino Midwest News, Asian American Press, KMOJ); grocery stores; public assistance case workers, public health workers; clergy; and rural neighborhood workers.

PERFORMANCE INDICATOR APPENDIX

ALL WIOA CORE PROGRAMS

Performance Indicators	PY 2020 Expected Level	PY 2020 Negotiated Level	PY 2021 Expected Level	PY 2021 Negotiated Level
Effectiveness in Serving Employers	Not Applicable[1]	Not Applicable[1]	Not Applicable[1]	Not Applicable[1]

[1] *"Effectiveness in Serving Employers" is still being piloted and this data will not be entered for 2020 State Plans.*

ADDITIONAL INDICATORS OF PERFORMANCE

Additional Indicators of Performance