

March 31, 2017

Rick Roy

Director, Workforce System Coordination Division

Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development 332 Minnesota Street ∙ Suite E200

St. Paul, MN 55101

Dear Mr. Roy:

Attached is the Regional Plan modification (narrative updates are demonstrated in purple font color) and corresponding work plan from Central Minnesota Jobs and Training Services, Inc. (CMJTS) and Stearns-Benton Employment & Training Council (SBETC)— Regional Planning Area 3.

On August 9, 2016, Region 3 chief elected officials were informed that the proposed Region 3 Plan submitted by CMJTS and SBETC was not approved. Furthermore, on December 8, 2016, Commissioners Greene and Lenzmeier, representing Region 3, received follow-up communication to the August 9th letter and had subsequent conversations with DEED regarding the requirements for approving the Region 3 Plan. This communication refined comments in the August letter and highlighted necessary steps going forward. The December communication further reiterated key points for regional planning and technical assistance available to assist with the modification process. In response to the two communications, Region 3 took the following steps:

* December 2016 – February 2017: Leadership attended DEED weekly technical assistance and guidance calls regarding Region 3 Plan modification.
* February 3, 2017: An invitation was sent to WorkForce Center and community partners to attend a review and dialogue of the Regional Plan and be a part of the regional process to add information and outcomes for partner and community services in the region.
* February 14, 2017: WorkForce Center and community partners attended a regional planning meeting and provided input into the Region 3 Plan. Partners present included Wagner-Peyser Job Service, WIOA Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth programs, Adult Basic Education, and Vocational Rehabilitation Services.
* February 17, 2017: The Region 3 Plan modification draft was sent to Rick Roy for review. Suggestions were implemented by Region 3 that included use of the full narrative submitted previously with the modification language clearly noted in a new font color (purple). An Excel spreadsheet was attached providing levels of detail in an easy-to- reference format.
* February 24, 2017: Region 3 Plan modification draft was reviewed and approved by the Region 3 Leadership & Planning Board (R3LPB).
* March 10, 2017: The Region 3 Plan modification was approved by the SBETC and CMJTS workforce development boards.
* March 16, 2017: The R3LPB submitted the modified Region 3 Plan to Governor Dayton, DEED, and the Governor’s Workforce Development Board (due date: 3/31/17).

Thank you for your time and we look forward to hearing from you soon. Sincerely,

Region 3 Leadership & Planning Board

Heidi Peper, Chair, SBETC Workforce Development Board

Commissioner Richard Greene, Vice Chair, CMJTS Joint Powers Board, Workforce Development Board

# SECTION A: REGIONAL PLAN

Regional Leadership Approach

* 1. **Describe the selection process for the membership who will provide the leadership to oversee the development and coordination of the regional plan.**
		+ Stearns-Benton Employment & Training Council (SBETC) and Central Minnesota Jobs and Training Services, Inc. (CMJTS) chief elected officials and workforce development boards elected to create the **Region 3 Leadership and Planning Board (R3LPB)** to represent

Minnesota’s Workforce Development Region 3 and its 13-county planning region (Local Workforce Development Areas – LWDAs 5 and 17).

* + - The following R3LPB members were selected and approved by each local board to lead in the regional initiatives outlined in the Workforce Innovations and Opportunity Act of 2014 (WIOA), as follows:

Voting members (10)

CMJTS Joint Powers Board (JPB) Chair and Vice Chair

CMJTS Workforce Development Board (WDB) Chair and Vice Chair CMJTS Chief Executive Officer

SBETC Joint Powers Board (JPB) Chair and Vice Chair

SBETC Workforce Development Board (WDB) Chair and Vice Chair SBETC Executive Director

**Non-voting members (2)** CMJTS Development Manager SBETC Development Director

Note: CMJTS and SBETC executive assistants will prepare minutes and agendas

**Stakeholders** (listed in Section 2) will be invited to attend the R3LPB and its events to share data, Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats (SWOT) analysis, economic development information, and other relevant data to collectively make sound decisions for the 13-county region.

Stakeholders also include populations experiencing inequities in Region 3, and are identified to include those in the following social identity categories: veterans and eligible spouses, individuals with criminal history, women, LGBT, persons of color, immigrants, older workers, individuals with disabilities, youth, and high-need adults including low-income individuals and individuals who are basic-skills deficient.

* + - SBETC and CMJTS workforce development board members elected to keep the R3LPB membership small to ensure participation, commitment, collaboration, and success of a regional leadership-partnership approach.
		- A chair and vice chair will be elected to the R3LPB, one officer from each LWDA. The chair and vice chair will serve for one year from July 1 to June 30. Officers will be elected in June of each year.
* The LWDA directors and non-voting members will not serve as chair or vice chair. Only officers of the local boards and local elected officials will be allowed to serve as the chair or vice chair.
	1. Describe how the approach used will ensure that partner engagement includes diverse representation, specifically among populations experiencing barriers to employment.
		+ R3LPB, CMJTS, and SBETC staff will engage with community members to identify organizations representing targeted populations, through use of surveys, data collecting, conducting focus groups, and program outreach. This will ensure greater awareness of resources available to diverse populations, specifically among people experiencing barriers to education and employment opportunities in Planning Region 3.

Committees will be developed as a result, and stakeholder engagement will occur through sector-led activities planned through collaboration with partners.

* + - The **Disability Employment Initiative (DEI)** goal is to increase access to the Workforce Center System and programs for persons with disabilities. The best practices in case management through the use of integrated resource teams, guideposts for success in youth goal planning, and customized employment will be shared with other Rural Career Counseling Coordinators (RC3). The sharing of knowledge and resources with the broader system will create an effective referral process, ensure a close relationship between all partners, and increase services to more jobseekers. All LWDA 5 Staff will complete the Disability Resource Coordinator Level 1 Training by March 2018. This curriculum will be incorporated into new staff training. The goal is to have greater awareness and promote inclusiveness in the Workforce Center System. Outreach and sharing of these resources with organizations such as Goodwill, Functional Industries, RISE, Options, human service agencies, and other agencies serving people with disabilities will occur.
		- Regional Employment Networks include Functional Industries, Vocational Rehabilitation Services, RISE, Options, and CMJTS. Employment Networks help ticket holders (those 18- 64 years of age receiving Supplemental Security Income (SSI) or Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI)) become self-sufficient. Communication and referrals between Employment Networks will be ongoing. All partners provide or offer unique services and refer ticket holders to the appropriate service agency. The CMJTS Ticket Team, comprised of six employment specialists, will complete Level 2 Disability Resource Coordinator Training by March 2018. This curriculum focuses on developing integrated resource teams, blending and braiding funds/leveraging resources, identifying individual strengths, and customizing employment strategies. Regional employers will be educated about available ticket to work incentives. An *Ability Resource Fair*, a career fair serving individuals with diverse abilities and providing resources, will be held by June 2018.
		- The Leaving Incarceration Finding Employment (LIFE) Project, incorporating the 360° Career Success Skills modules, is tailored to address a person’s criminal background and help avoid recidivism. Currently, CMJTS is facilitating the LIFE Project in the Pine and Kanabec County jails and plans to expand these services to Isanti, McLeod, Meeker, Mille Lacs, and Wright counties by December 2017. Adult Basic Education (ABE) currently provides incarcerated adults with opportunities to acquire and improve the skills essential to becoming self-sufficient, productive employees, and effective family members. CMJTS and ABE will work together to deliver these services to maximize effectiveness by June 2018.
		- The Immigrant Employment Connection Group (IECG) is a collaboration of St. Cloud community businesses and organizations. The group’s focus is to better the St. Cloud community by working with the Somali population and address workforce development issues which improve the health and wellbeing of jobseekers and their families. To make the greatest impact, the group’s focus is on individuals within the Somali community who possess minimal skills and have multiple barriers to employment, including cultural and language barriers and transportation issues. The IECG is working with employers to help them overcome real or perceived hiring barriers. They are also helping jobseekers

to obtain employment. The IECG is creating meaningful connections between employers and jobseekers in Region 3. Committee members include Jama Alimad and Abdul Kulane, Central MN Community Empowerment; Abdiaziz Odirye, Grassroots Solutions; and Mohayadin Mohamed, Islamic Center of St. Cloud; Joan Berning and Kelly Gerads, Wagner-Peyser Job Service; Tammy Biery, SBETC; Gail Cruikshank, Greater St. Cloud Development Corporation; Don Hickman, Initiative Foundation; Jennifer Jimenez- Wheatley, RESOURCE Inc.; Daniel Larson, United Way of Central Minnesota; Lee Morgan, Morgan Family Foundation; Monica Segura, Catholic Charities; Elizabeth Valencia-Borgert, St. Cloud State University (SCSU); Kristin Yeager, CMJTS; and Lisa Zolin, Viking Coca-Cola. IECG’s first initiative was to host a job fair in spring 2015. This group took lessons learned to prepare employers and jobseekers before the second job fair held in September 2016, a collaborative effort with Job Service. Interpreters were made available to improve communication. In 2017, the IECG will work with Job Service to ensure interpreters are again available at their DEED-sponsored September job fair.

IECG will expand the number of job fairs and events that provide employer/jobseeker education and resources. The next IECG job fair is planned for November 2017.

* + - The Ridgewater College Multi-cultural Outreach Coordinator, Jehana Khan Schwandt, will serve as a liaison between workforce development, the college, and the community in Economic Development Region 6E. The goal is to identify populations experiencing inequities in education and employment, develop multi-cultural events and marketing/recruitment strategies to inform multi-cultural populations of resources available. Meetings began in January 2017 and will continue quarterly. Region 3 will duplicate this practice with all Minnesota State colleges in the region including St. Cloud Technical and Community College, St. Cloud State University, Anoka Ramsey Community College-Cambridge campus, and Pine Technical and Community College.
		- Region 3 will participate in the 8th Annual Willmar Area Cinco de Mayo Family Festival on May 20, 2017- the only event of its kind in our region. CMJTS will sponsor an event table to engage with diverse community members and provide resources. This family event draws more than 1,500 visitors to Willmar, one of the region’s more diverse communities. The festival will provide an opportunity to celebrate the area’s diverse culture. The event planning committee raises funds to host the event and provides scholarships to local students. From 2006 to 2016, this event has provided over $12,500 in student scholarships. This event will be used as a “touch-point” opportunity to meet with community members and obtain feedback and better marketing and outreach methods.
		- CMJTS business staff will develop a relationship with the Willmar Area Multicultural Business Center (WAM-BC), a resource for fostering the entrepreneurial spirit with the right resources to create independent businesses that will be a positive force for themselves, their families, and the community as a whole. In 2008, Willmar had more than 36 minority-owned businesses, including Persian, Somali, and Latino. This figure reflects the largest number of minority-owned businesses outside the Twin Cities Metro Area. Services offered by the WAM-BC include a business incubator program, technical assistance program, and micro-loan program.
		- Partner for Student Success (PFSS) unites central Minnesota parents, businesses, community organizations, and public school districts to support student success. The PFSS Board of Directors consists of 21 members from 19 partner organizations, and PFSS committees and working groups consist of more than 70 organizations from across the greater St. Cloud area. PFSS has a cradle-to-career approach, including a pre-K and elementary as well as college and career-ready work groups. The SBETC executive director sits on the college and career-readiness steering committee and co-chairs the experiential learning planning group. Participation at this level creates opportunities for Region 3 to expand education and employment services to youth and young adults. PFSS engages, aligns, and coordinates community resources to set goals, define priorities,

and close gaps; creates awareness and urgency around PFSS and student success within the community; advocates for financial support and resources around student success; and monitors and measures progress against the community goals and priorities.

* + - Several R3LPB events are scheduled in Planning Region 3 to engage and address issues and concerns of populations experiencing barriers to employment. They include:
1. March 30, 2016, *Hiring Immigrant Workforce 101:* A panel of employers experienced in hiring the immigrant population connect with community resources. This opportunity was developed to learn about best practices and provide a safe space to share and openly discuss with others the successes and challenges hiring and retaining the immigrant population.
2. April 27, 2016, Job Seeker Forum: This event will be held at the Great River Regional Library in St. Cloud, Minnesota. It will include a conversation with immigrant jobseekers about the challenges of finding and keeping a job while adjusting to the American workplace.
3. June 2016, Employer Discussion II: A follow-up discussion with employers will occur as a result of the March 30, 2016 event. Action steps will be identified and taken to support the vision and ensure the success of matching employers’ needs with the specific workforce needs of the immigrant population.
4. August 2016, Job Seeker Preparation: This event will prepare immigrant jobseekers for the upcoming Job and Career Fair scheduled to take place in October 2016.
5. October 2016, Job and Career Fair: This Job and Career Fair will be a culmination of the previous forum discussions (outlined above)—bridging the workforce needs of both jobseekers and employers.
6. NOTE: The aforementioned events are sponsored by SBETC in direct collaboration with the St. Cloud Area Immigrant Employment Connection Collaborative, chaired by Tammy Biery, SBETC executive director. **(See Attachment EE)**
7. April 8, 2016, *The Face of Your New Employee: Workplace Diversity:* Is sponsored by CMJTS WDB’s Community and Government Relations Committee

(CGR). The focus of this business summit will promote diversity in the workplace. Today’s workforce is changing to include people with disabilities, those changing careers, and immigrants. Key stakeholders will join representatives from across central Minnesota as they identify regional demographics by age group, diversity, disabilities, and retirement in the workplace. Attendees will hear from business professionals about challenges they face in filling positions, retaining employees, and changes or accommodations made in the work environment. Participants will leave the event with valuable information as they look at the “face of your new employee—workplace diversity.”

1. March 3, 2017, Cultural Training; April 28th Bill Blazer Presentation; June 30th Panel of Employers; September 2017, JOB SEEKER PREPARATION Preparing immigrant job seekers for the upcoming Job and Career Fair, St. Cloud Library; October/November 2017, JOB AND CAREER FAIR, A culmination of our discussions - bridging the workforce with businesses and employers, St. Cloud Workforce Center. Events will increase opportunity for “touch points” to engage diverse communities.
2. SBETC and CMJTS invited each other’s board members and staff to attend the aforementioned events on workplace diversity. This was the beginning of developing new joint initiatives going forward, inviting key stakeholders to work together to solve regional workforce concerns, and addressing community needs in Workforce Development Planning Region 3.
3. Over the two-year planning cycle, R3LPB will continue to invite key stakeholders to the board and its special events to discuss regional concerns, to ensure that partner engagement includes diverse populations, specifically populations experiencing barriers to employment, and collaboratively developing innovative solutions to address community concerns.
4. Describe how the local area boards will direct system alignment with the region through shared policies and practices.
	* A Region 3 Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) was created between LWDA 5 and LWDA 17. Both parties entered into this agreement with the understanding that the

LWDA boards would “maintain their local identities” and collaborate as the Region 3 Leadership & Planning Board (R3LPB), serving the 13-county region of Meeker, McLeod, Renville, Kandiyohi, Wright, Sherburne, Stearns, Benton, Mille Lacs, Isanti, Chisago, Pine, and Kanabec Counties. (See Attachment CC)

Furthermore, the MOU creates a R3LPB designed to provide oversight of the regional planning process and its strategies, review labor market and economic data, select two sectors for the region based on this data, explore opportunities to share resources and seek additional funding sources to better serve Region 3 employer and jobseeker needs, organize and create a regional vision that is employer-driven and proactive in creating solutions to their needs, and collaborate with WFC partners to establish a quality customer service delivery system responsive to both jobseekers and employers. The MOU also lays out a methodology, duration, and modification determinations, dispute resolution and other necessary provisions. The MOU is signed by all elected voting members of the R3LPB to solidify the partnership.

* + The R3LPB encourages both the SBETC and CMJTS WDBs to collaborate on competitive grants that serve Region 3 in the best interests of both jobseekers and employers. To date, LWDA 5 and 17 have partnered on the following competitive grants:
1. RC3 Grant: Central Minnesota Rural Career Counselor Grant, a $95,000 grant that assists the R3LPB in the sector initiative outlined in the grant. The two local workforce development areas 5 and 17 split the grant in half, each taking

$47,500, with SBETC serving as the fiscal agent. An *Agreement for the Provisions of SFY 16-17 RC3 Grant between SBETC and CMJTS* was developed to ensure a successful process for this new partnership. (SEE ATTACHMENT AA)

1. SBETC and CMJTS drafted a Fiscal Agent Agreement for the SFY16-17 **Rural Career Counseling Coordinator (RC3) Grant**, a state-funded program that will provide services, assess and compile information, make recommendations, and share best practices found in the 13-county central Minnesota Workforce Development Region 3. This agreement promises that SBETC and CMJTS will jointly implement the RC3 grant in accordance with the terms determined by DEED. SBETC is the fiscal agent for the grant and disburses funds to CMJTS.
2. H-1B TechHire Partnership Grant: This grant includes five LWDAs in Minnesota and Wisconsin. A request of $2,317,422.00 was submitted in March 2016. CMJTS is the lead entity for this grant submission. The grant timeline includes 48 months to serve a minimum of 330 participants ages 18 to 29. TechHire arms individuals with the skills they need through innovative approaches that rapidly train workers and connects them to well-paying, middle- and high-skilled, and high-growth jobs across a variety of H-1B industries, such as Information Technology (IT), healthcare, advanced manufacturing, financial services, and broadband, helping participants begin careers in H-1B occupations and industries, which are in-demand and/or high-growth in the area. Applicants will provide the following:
	1. Expand access to accelerated learning options that provide the fastest paths to good jobs, such as “boot camp” style programs, online options, and

competency-based programs, to provide individuals with the skills required for employment.

* 1. Improve likelihood that those populations complete training and enter employment, through specialized training strategies, support services, and other focused participant services that assist targeted populations in overcoming barriers, including networking and job search, active job development, transportation, mentoring, and financial counseling.
	2. Connect those who have received training or already have the skills required for employment, but are overlooked to employment, paid internships, or Registered Apprenticeship that allow them to get work experience and prove themselves to hiring employers.
	3. Demonstrate strong commitment to customer-centered design and excellence in customer experience, so that the programs and services reflect real need of employers and participants, through human-centered design methodology and other methods of design thinking.
	4. Ensure that innovations form the basis for broader change and sustainability over time and that a clear strategy exists for adapting to rapidly changing market needs after the initial period of the grant. The goal of both local areas is to build capacity by applying and receiving at least $2 million in competitive grants annually.
1. A $622,000 retail sector strategy and retail career pathway grant was received by CMJTS. This grant will expand services to those who want to enter retail careers and many of those jobs do not meet WIOA performance measures. CMJTS will share these best practices with SBETC and provide services to their interested customers.
2. Competitive grants are reviewed by both CMJTS and SBETC to determine the appropriateness of each opportunity and will pursue those that are viable.
	* Each WorkForce Center (WFC) location in Region 3 holds **staff meetings** regularly to identify and implement regional services including career, training, and/or follow-up services for jobseekers. These meetings allow for discussions leading to program alignment of goals. Staff meetings include WFC partners co-located at the WFC (e.g. SBETC, Job Service, Vocational Rehabilitation, Adult Basic Education, Public Assistance, Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP), and State Services for the Blind). A minimum of one annual meeting will be scheduled.
	* To date, the R3LPB has completed the following strategies:
3. Regional MOU**:** Developed and signed the R3LPB Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between SBETC and CMJTS WDB and governing boards
4. Regional Board membership: 10 voting members, 5 non-voting members (ATTACHMENT A)
5. Determined sectors: Healthcare and manufacturing were selected based on local labor market information on regional economies and key industry sectors in Region 3
6. Stakeholder engagement: Invitations were sent to key stakeholders in Region 3 to attend the R3LPB meeting and provide reports on labor market information and regional economy data for the selection of “shared industry sectors.” In addition, the regional board also reviewed Minnesota Association of Development Organizations (MADO) SWAT analysis data, MnSCU’s Regional Report and other professional data strategists’ reports to support the selection of two sectors. The following experts submitted data to the R3LPB to support the regional planning selection:
	1. Luke Greiner, DEED regional analyst, completed the Central Minnesota Economic Development Regions 6E, 7E, and 7W 2015 Regional Profile; 13-County Central Minnesota Economic Overview: Healthcare and Manufacturing Target Industries (this data identified these two sectors for Region 3)
	2. Dave Borgert, Community and Government Relations director; CentraCare Health
	3. Les Engel, Metallurgical engineer, Engel Metallurgical Ltd; President of Central Minnesota Manufacturing Association (CMMA)
	4. Dr. King Banaian, dean, School of Public Affairs at St. Cloud University; presentation on Region 3 economics
	5. Bob Voss, MADO – Minnesota Association of Development Organizations – to review Comprehensive Development Strategy for Greater Minnesota and review trend analysis and SMART Goals and SWOT analysis strategies for Central MN.
7. NEXT STEPS
	1. Employer Engagement Performance Measures: Once the US DOL and US DOE finalize the regulations of Employer Engagement, the R3LPB will schedule a Joint WDB meeting and invited key stakeholders (WFC partners) to review the regulations and develop a strategy to implement them
	2. Key Stakeholders Invited to The Table: During and after the data and economic statistics gathering is complete, key stakeholders are invited to the table for the following events: (following is in draft form)
		1. January, February, March, April, June, R3LPB meetings 2016
		2. March 2016: SBETC *Hiring Immigrant Workforce 101* event
		3. April 2016: *Immigrant Job Seeker Forum*
		4. June 2016: *Immigrant Employer Discussion II*
		5. August 2016: *Immigrant Job Seeker Preparation*
		6. October 2016: *Immigrant Job and Career Fair*
		7. April 2016: CMJTS *The Next Face of Your New Employee:*

*Workplace Diversity*

* + 1. June 2016: Joint R3LPB, CMJTS, and SBETC board meeting
		2. July 2016: Central Minnesota Manufacturing Association (CMMA) Event to meet with employers about manufacturing needs
		3. October 2016: Health Care Sector Urgency: finding solutions
		4. January, March, June, September, December R3LPB meetings over the next two years
		5. April 2017: Business Demands Soft Skills Training from the WFD System: Responding to this regional need
		6. October 2017
		7. April 2018: Central Minnesota Economics—Demographic shifts, economic changes, what should workforce development, education, and economic development be looking at for the next 3 years?
		8. October 2018: Health Care and Manufacturing Sector Summit— Dashboard: sharing best practices, reviewing successes and failures—what’s next?

Regional Strategies Planning: Strategic Analysis

1. Describe the condition of the regional workforce development system and cite the sources of data and analysis (SWOT analysis)

**The Minnesota Association of Development Organizations (MADO**) comprised of 10 Minnesota Regional Development Organizations (RDOs) whose purpose is to promote and create economic prosperity in Greater Minnesota, developed a SWOT analysis and SMART Goals for the region.

MADO accomplished their work through alignment of a strong network of RDOs, the communities they serve, and the federal and state agencies that share their commitments. Following is their report for the region.

* + Labor Force-Call to Action Report: Labor force participation is the proportion of people ages 16 and older who are either working or seeking work. Students, homemakers, retired individuals, and others not looking for work *do not count as participating in the labor force.*
	+ Greater Minnesota’s labor force peaked at 1,345,402 workers in 2010. While the prime labor force aged 25-54 is projected to decline by 1.4% statewide through 2025, Greater Minnesota’s prime labor force ages 25-54 is projected to decline by 5.2% during the same period. As greater Minnesota’s labor force is projected to shrink, increasing labor force participation will be important for economic growth.
	+ SMART Goal: Increase the labor force participation by 2% by 2021
	+ Labor Force Strategies:
1. Align education and workforce development to meet current and future skill needs of employers.
2. Expand the participation of mature workers to make up for the shortage of new workforce entrants.
3. Increase childcare options to assist parents in joining the workforce.
4. Advancing credit based apprentices, internships, and on the job training as a workforce development solution.
5. Advocate for public transportation to serve employers with workers based on their work schedules.
	* Education Attainment—Call to Action: As the size of Greater Minnesota’s workforce is projected to decline, increased worker skills will be critical to improving productivity and growing the economy. The percentage of Greater Minnesota’s population ages 25 and over who have earned a bachelor’s degree or higher is 28%, compared to 39% statewide.
	* SMART Goal:
6. Increase the number of residents (ages 18-64) that have completed postsecondary education or training with a particular focus on certifications, technical degrees, and apprenticeships relevant to employment in middle-skill, living wage occupations.
7. Increase the percentage of residents aged 35-44 with a bachelor’s degree or higher to 39% by 2025.
	* Education Attainment Strategies:
8. Build career technical education opportunities and improve career technical education for high school students interested in careers as skilled tradespeople.
9. Create local talent retention and attraction programs.
10. Embrace emerging populations through targeted education programs.
11. Create and sustain vibrant and healthy communities that attract and retain residents.
	* Economic resiliency is defined as an area’s ability to prevent, withstand, and quickly recover from major disruptions to its economic base. Economic resiliency is a key element to ensuring and preserving regional economic prosperity in Central Minnesota. An economy driven by innovation demands that the R3LPB create an approach that nurtures its talent and supports its local business development while creating communities that can support both. The R3LPB has outlined their intention for growing its 13-county region and its communities in this report.
	* In addition to the MADO report and DEED analyst reports, CMJTS and SBETC are collaborating with the four counties of Stearns, Benton, Sherburne, and Wright, which make up Economic Development Region 7W, to complete a **Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS)** report for this region, in order to apply for federal economic development funding for 7W. CMJTS will become the fiscal agent for this important initiative, write the CEDS grant and submit for federal approval. This action will complete the central region initiative to add these last four counties to the current MADO 10 Minnesota Regional Development Organizations strong network of RDO’s. Approval of the CEDS will begin a strong partnership between economic development and workforce development across Central Minnesota.
	* **Central Minnesota Quad Counties CEDS Steering Committee for Region 7W**. This work is a continuation of the work of the EDR 7W CEDS, which is a necessary document that allows the region to apply for federal grants for emergency disaster and federal economic development funding. Key players - economic development professionals for the four counties and cities in EDR 7W - are the primary conveners and advocates for this initiative. EDR 7E Commission Director, Robert Voss, had oversight of this project. Additional partners include: community/economic development coordinators, county administrators, county commissioners for 7W, workforce development professionals, private industry, school officials, and required partners under CEDS. The CMJTS CEO, representing workforce development, is currently vice-chair. The project is ongoing until the approval from the Economic Development Administration, after which a new board will be established under the rules of the CEDS guidelines.
	* **Wright County Economic Development Partnership (WCEDP).** The WCEDP mission is to create a healthy and diverse environment for existing, expanding, and new businesses, which in turn creates employment opportunities and enhances the overall economic vitality of the region. Local area businesses are the primary conveners and advocates for this initiative and the WCEDP Board Chair oversees the project. Wright County cities, municipalities, and infrastructure providers deliver funding through membership dues. Wright County also provides operational funding on an annual basis. Additional partners include: community/economic development coordinators, county commissioners for EDR 7W, small business development centers, workforce development professionals, private industry, educators, and city officials. The WCEDP is the primary point of contact for existing, start-up, expanding, and relocating businesses. The Partnership provides technical and financial assistance to businesses and communities within Wright County. The WCEDP provides monthly development and capacity-building seminars on various topics. Past topics include: Regional Economic Outlook by the Federal Reserve Bank, Marketing your Website by U of M Extension, Legislative Updates, A Site Selector’s View of Wright County, and more. The WCEDP also administers a revolving loan fund to provide business development assistance. The involved CMJTS workforce development coordinator is a seven-term board member and two-time board chair. Meetings are held monthly and work with this group will continue.
	* GPS 45:93 is a non-profit, regional economic development consortium in EDR 7E. It includes cities, counties, businesses, banks, chambers, utilities, K-12 and higher education, and community organizations concerned about the economy and workforce. The group collaborates to strengthen the economy by providing a regional approach to workforce development, business attraction, retention and expansion, and acts as a conduit for members to access resources and educational opportunities cost effectively.

The partnership believes “when one wins-all win.” The group meets monthly and is hosted at member locations throughout the region. The organization has a Board of Directors composed of representatives from the following: a member of the governing body for each participating city and county, post-secondary and K-12 education entities, DEED, and others which may include staff from each participating city and county, Mille Lacs Corporate Ventures, chambers of commerce, economic development entities, the Central Minnesota WDB, financial institutions, private industry, utilities, and

community-based organizations. Non-voting members include elected officials from the Minnesota Legislature, U.S. Congress, and the Initiative Foundation in Little Falls. The LWDA 5 seat is currently filled by a CMJTS staff member, who was elected vice president for 2016, and will become president in 2017. The outgoing GPS president is a WDB Youth Committee member. Five current or former WDB members participate in GPS 45:93. GPS has an active Workforce Committee that meets monthly. This committee supports and promotes regional workforce resources such as those offered through local WorkForce Centers and partners, as well as projects and initiatives such as Construct Tomorrow, non-traditional employment for women, and Trade Adjustment Assistance Community College and Career Training grants.

* + **CEDS Committee for EDR 7E**. Part of the work of the East Central Regional Development Commission (ECRDC) is to develop a CEDS plan, which serves as “an economic roadmap to diversify and strengthen regional economies.” The CEDS Committee is made up of a broad cross-section of public and private interests, and provides input, direction, implementation, and monitoring of the CEDS. The WDB is an advocate for the CEDS as it impacts workforce development and the labor market. As a partner, the WDB provides staff support and project guidance. The five year CEDS plan was submitted in December 2016 and will be updated annually. Several projects funded by the EDA through this work in recent years include Sandstone Medical Campus, Pine Technical and Community College Business Incubator, ECRDC Business Park Marketing, and Polaris Research and Development Facility, Wyoming, MN.
	+ **The Mid-Minnesota Development Commission (MMDC)** is the RDC for EDR 6E. It administers state and federal programs, coordinates multi-jurisdictional activities, and provides technical assistance to government, businesses, and local organizations to maintain or enhance the quality of life in Kandiyohi, McLeod, Meeker, and Renville Counties. CMJTS staff represent workforce development on the board of directors, advocating for and providing input for workforce development issues. Each of the four counties are represented by a county commissioner, a city representative, and a township representative. In addition, cities with populations over 10,000 are entitled a member, and two school board representatives are required. Other special interest members are chosen to meet the needs of the federal EDA requirements for Economic Development Commissions. The MMDC currently has 27 commission board member seats, including a CMJTS Workforce Development Coordinator (WDC), and meets five times a year. The CMJTS WDC is a member of the CEDS Committee and the Transit Committee.
	+ **Willmar Lakes Area Vision 2040. Strategy #2 Workgroup: Economic Diversity.** This group conducts strategic planning for the future of the Willmar Lakes Area (Willmar and Kandiyohi County). The overall plan outlines four goals and 21 strategies which align

with strategic plans that are underway, while others are new and address the region’s future as a center of excellence. Strategic Goal Two is to strengthen the region’s occupational diversity through a strategic mix of workforce training, economic measurement, enhanced career options, and support for entrepreneurs. This sub- committee developed a promotional video of manufacturing companies in Kandiyohi County and conducted a tour of businesses for Willmar High School teachers and students. Willmar has a high percentage of Latino- and Somali-owned businesses in its downtown area. For its next project, the committee is exploring ways to help small minority-owned businesses thrive and grow. CMJTS holds a seat in this subcommittee, representing workforce development. Key members include city and county elected officials and staff, Kandiyohi County and City of Willmar Economic Development Commission, the Willmar Lakes Area Chamber of Commerce, Ridgewater College, and the MinnWest Technology Campus.

* + The **Greater St. Cloud Development Corporation** (GSDC) is a private collaboration of approximately 250 regional business and community leaders within Benton, Sherburne, and Stearns counties in central Minnesota. The charge of the GSDC is to spearhead the economic development efforts of the greater St. Cloud region by identifying and unifying opportunities to engage community leaders, foster business growth, expand and nurture the area's talent base, and support the communities that make up the greater St. Cloud region.

Strategic Approach

1. **Describe how the region will use the labor market information and conduct outreach to business and industry to select the targeted sectors for developing career pathways for occupations in demand that provide family-sustaining wages. If sectors and occupations have been already selected, describe them with this response. Complete Attachment G-local WFD area key industries in regional economy**

**Healthcare and manufacturing** are the two targeted sectors chosen by the R3LPB for Region 3, based on the following demographic information supportive of these industries.

According to DEED’s [Cost of Living tool,](http://www.mn.gov/deed/data/data-tools/col/) the basic needs budget for an average Minnesota family (which consists of 2 adults and 1 child, with 1 full-time and 1 part-time worker) was $50,988 in 2015. The cost of living for a similar family in Central Minnesota was $49,884, which was the second highest in the state. (See Table 5)

|  |
| --- |
| **Table 5. Family Yearly Cost, Worker Hourly Wage, and Family Monthly Costs, 2015** |
| Region | Family Yearly Cost of Living | Hourly Wage Required | Monthly Costs |
| ChildCare | Food | HealthCare | Housing | Transportation | Other | Taxes |
| Central | $49,884 | $15.99 | $311 | $753 | $402 | $861 | $1,175 | $226 | $429 |
| Minnesota | $50,988 | $16.34 | $443 | $772 | $405 | $907 | $1,039 | $235 | $448 |
| *Source:* [*DEED Cost of Living tool*](http://www.mn.gov/deed/data/data-tools/col/) |

Both targeted industries; healthcare and social assistance, and manufacturing provide average hourly wages above the $15.99 per hour needed to sustain a normal family in Central Minnesota. The average hourly wage in manufacturing is $23 per hour and $19.35 per hour in healthcare and social assistance.

Within the targeted industries are numerous different occupations that vary greatly in terms of income potential.

In manufacturing, for instance, production occupations are by far the most numerous job type with a median wage of $16.61. In the healthcare and social assistance industry, the most common occupation is personal care aide, followed very closely by registered nurse. These two occupations have very different median wages with the personal care and service occupational group having a median hourly wage of only $10.86 while the healthcare practitioners and technical occupations providing a median hourly wage of more than $30 per hour. (See Table 6)

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| --- |
| **Table 6. Central Minnesota Occupational Employment Statistics, 1st Qtr. 2015** |
|  | **Central Minnesota** | **The State of Minnesota** |
|  | Median HourlyWage | Estimated RegionalEmployment | *Share of Total**Employment* | *Location Quotient* | Median HourlyWage | Estimated RegionalEmployment | *Share of Total**Employment* |
| Total, All Occupations | $16.66 | 263,270 | 100% | 1.0 | **$18.65** | **2,730,020** | ***100.0%*** |
| Office and Admin Support | $15.78 | 37,950 | 14.4% | 1.0 | $17.27 | 409,100 | 15.0% |
| Production | $16.02 | 31,390 | 11.9% | 1.5 | $16.61 | 217,830 | 8.0% |
| Sales and Related | $11.78 | 27,530 | 10.5% | 1.1 | $13.24 | 270,540 | 9.9% |
| Education, Training, and Library | $20.97 | 21,450 | 8.1% | 1.4 | $22.72 | 156,090 | 5.7% |
| Healthcare Practitioners & Technical | $30.40 | 15,910 | 6.0% | 1.0 | $31.54 | 160,390 | 5.9% |
| Personal Care and Service | $10.86 | 12,720 | 4.8% | 1.1 | $11.11 | 120,000 | 4.4% |
| Management | $38.85 | 11,980 | 4.6% | 0.7 | $47.47 | 165,730 | 6.1% |
| Food Preparation & Serving Related | $9.15 | 11,830 | 4.5% | 0.5 | $9.21 | 228,640 | 8.4% |
| Installation, Maintenance, & Repair | $20.53 | 11,520 | 4.4% | 1.3 | $21.52 | 94,310 | 3.5% |
| Construction & Extraction | $22.84 | 10,980 | 4.2% | 1.2 | $24.88 | 91,240 | 3.3% |
| Healthcare Support | $12.43 | 10,570 | 4.0% | 1.2 | $13.63 | 89,360 | 3.3% |
| Business & Financial Operations | $26.28 | 8,980 | 3.4% | 0.6 | $30.37 | 159,970 | 5.9% |
| Building & Grounds Cleaning | $12.52 | 8,490 | 3.2% | 1.1 | $12.03 | 81,560 | 3.0% |
| Community & Social Service | $20.07 | 4,840 | 1.8% | 1.0 | $20.51 | 49,210 | 1.8% |
| Architecture & Engineering | $29.72 | 3,700 | 1.4% | 0.8 | $34.76 | 50,980 | 1.9% |
| Computer & Mathematical | $29.22 | 3,630 | 1.4% | 0.4 | $37.96 | 91,560 | 3.4% |
| Arts, Entertainment, Sports, & Media | $17.81 | 2,560 | 1.0% | 0.7 | $21.82 | 36,430 | 1.3% |
| Life, Physical, & Social Science | $28.63 | 1,380 | 0.5% | 0.6 | $30.29 | 24,410 | 0.9% |
| Legal | $25.19 | 960 | 0.4% | 0.5 | $38.43 | 18,330 | 0.7% |
| Farming, Fishing, & Forestry | $15.47 | 380 | 0.1% | 1.1 | $14.41 | 3,570 | 0.1% |
| Protective Service | $22.95 | - | - | - | $19.43 | 43,660 | 1.6% |
| Transportation & Material Moving | $15.85 | - | - | - | $16.18 | 167,130 | 6.1% |
| *Source:* [*DEED Occupational Employment Statistics, Qtr. 1 2015*](http://www.mn.gov/deed/data/data-tools/oes/) |

Specific occupations within healthcare and social assistance are evaluated based on DEED’s Occupational Employment Statistics to ensure an adequate earnings potential.

The following is additional information gathered by the R3LPB to support the two chosen sectors:

* + There are 17,288 employer establishments in Region 3.

– <http://www.census.gov/quickfacts/table/PST045215/00>

* In central Minnesota, healthcare employs 14.7% (1,761) and manufacturing employs 5.1% of the workforce. Both sectors offer wages above the median starting wage in central MN, mentioned in this report.
* The healthcare (and social assistance) sector is the largest industry in Region 3. (Luke PPT) CentraCare Health in St. Cloud employs over 10,000 workers, of which 8,700 are in hospital settings, according to King Banaian, Dean, School of Public Affairs at St. Cloud State University. Altogether, central MN has 47,896 jobs in healthcare and social assistance.
* According to the job vacancy survey, there are currently 941 open positions in healthcare for Region 3, with a number of specific positions, which continue to go unfilled making this a pressing need.
* The Healthcare Alliance, a consortium of healthcare providers, education professionals, and supporting organizations, meets quarterly in Economic Development Region 7E to address needs for this sector. As key stakeholders, this group will be brought to the table for to provide their valuable input.
* Manufacturing is the second largest industry in central MN with 40,530 jobs. (Luke PPT, 1-8-

16) Food manufacturing is the largest employing industry subsector of Black or African Americans in central MN with 527 jobs or 7% of total employment. Hispanics or Latinos are found in much larger numbers in food manufacturing with 1,326 jobs or 17.7% of total employment. (Luke PPT, 1-8-16)

* Small businesses are often without a human resources department or even one person dedicated to human resources functions. These businesses have identified high-growth and in-demand occupations and have relied on CMJTS’ and SBETC’s expertise to provide skilled workers in the ever-changing manufacturing environment.
* Based on labor market information, **healthcare and manufacturing** are the two targeted sectors chosen by the R3LPB for Region 3. Aligning goals and working collaboratively, Planning Region 3 enhances and supports workforce development initiatives in these sectors. **Central Minnesota Manufacturing Association** (CMMA) membership extends to any manufacturer who wants to attend. DEED, CMJTS, and SBETC representatives regularly participate and provide input to CMMA meetings and activities. One goal of the association is to increase student interest in the manufacturing sector. CMMA will be the lead for Region 3 manufacturing summits in 2017 and 2018. Dates will be determined by CMMA and the R3LPB in May 2017.
* The **Central Minnesota Tour of Manufacturing** is offered annually in October. This gives individuals a chance to tour local manufacturers and learn about manufacturing career opportunities. It is business driven with assistance from partner agencies (LWDA, economic development, employer organizations) to organize, promote, and arrange transportation. In Willmar, the **Vision 2040-Economic Diversity Subcommittee/Manufacturing Day Task Force** consists of Kandiyohi County and City of Willmar Economic Development Commission (lead), representatives from CMJTS, City of Willmar Utilities and Willmar City Council, Ridgewater College, the Kandiyohi County CEO (Creating Entrepreneurial Opportunities) Program,

Willmar Public Schools, and local businesses has a goal to train students for the future workforce and focus communities on addressing local and regional workforce needs. The taskforce conducted a pilot program connecting Willmar High School students with local manufacturers. In August, 2016, teachers from the Willmar High School pre-toured manufacturing companies in Kandiyohi County. The purpose of the teachers-only tours was to encourage teachers to prepare their students for their tours, which were held in October, 2016. The pilot program received favorable evaluations and Willmar High School intends to continue the business tours in 2017. The committee is offering to share lessons learned and organizational structure of the tours with all high school districts in Kandiyohi County. In Hutchinson, the **Hutchinson Chamber of Commerce** and NuCrane Manufacturing, LLC, hosted an open house for chamber members at NuCrane in October, 2016. The Hutchinson Chamber regularly sponsors business tours and collaborates with **Made In McLeod**, a local manufacturing group whose purpose is to promote McLeod County manufacturing businesses. CMJTS participates in Made in McLeod.

* Career pathways for both manufacturing and healthcare are available. (See Attachment DD, career pathway flow charts)
* CMJTS employee workforce development coordinators (WDCs) who conduct outreach to businesses and provide them with workforce development resources. SBETC and CMJTS also use the DEED business service representatives in their areas to make meaningful connections with businesses. WDCs and DEED business services representatives meet regularly to coordinate business services and are required to report to the LWDBs on business contacts and needs.
* Region 3 will continue to access the consultation of Maher & Maher, a specialized change management and workforce development consulting firm. Maher & Maher has significant experience in sector-based workforce initiatives and has drafted a technical assistance proposal for Minnesota grounded in the state’s two overarching state plan goals:
	+ to reduce educational and employment disparities based on race or disability to provide greater opportunity for all Minnesotans; and
	+ to build employer-led industry sector partnerships focused on better understanding of the skills that employers need and to connect skilled workers to these opportunities.

Region 3 leadership staff completed an initial meeting with Maher & Maher on March 31, 2017. During this meeting an initial review of current sector strategies was achieved.

Consultation resulted in a list of specific sector strategy goals:

* + Participate in weekly (or as needed) technical assistance conference calls between SBETC and CMJTS leadership team members, and Maher & Maher, Mondays between the weeks of April 10th, 2017 and June 30, 2017
	+ Develop metrics and measure successful sector strategy results
	+ Provide a model for cross-funding sector partnership initiatives
	+ Advanced sector strategy training has been suggested for the LWDB 5 , LWDB 17, and the R3LPB
	+ Review of Region 3’s current career pathways model
	+ Provide program models for a cutting edge Registered Apprenticeship program
* **Healthcare and manufacturing are the two targeted sectors** chosen by the R3LPB for Region 3. Aligning goals and working collaboratively will ensure Planning Region 3 enhances the outcomes for jobseekers and employers. Recently the R3LPB, SBETC, and CMJTS coordinated a **Healthcare Sector Summit,** October 14, 2016. A panel discussion with representatives from large, medium, and small healthcare providers each presented their strengths, needs, and future outlook from their perspectives. Other healthcare providers and local elected officials in Region 3 attended the summit. Table discussions following the presentations resulted in regional actionable items. A second healthcare summit is planned for April 21, 2017. This event will be a continuation of the original Healthcare Sector Summit*.* The April event will include invitations to medical clinics and nursing homes in addition to hospitals, educators, legislators, workforce development professionals, economic development, and community members. Upon completion of both events a sector-led committee will be established with members chosen based upon interest level.
* The **Healthcare Alliance** is a partnership between K-12, higher education, healthcare providers, and the Workforce Center System striving to ensure there are qualified healthcare professionals to meet the future needs of East Central Minnesota and Western Wisconsin. The Healthcare Alliance is convened by Pine Technical and Community College, and includes Anoka Ramsey Community College, Bethel University, Adult Basic Education, K- 12 schools, HealthForce MN, public health, DEED, CMJTS, and local healthcare providers including health systems, hospitals, clinics, long-term care, and home care. This group has responded to multiple grant opportunities and has completed work and initiatives for federal grant projects. The Central Minnesota WDB supports this work through the input of CMJTS and DEED staff, regional statistical analysis, and partnership with grant-funded projects, as appropriate.
* CMJTS organizes and facilitates local human resource (HR) employer groups in Monticello and in Cambridge; SBETC does so in St. Cloud. Additionally, CMJTS participates in the DEED- hosted Willmar HR group. Region 3 will expand these networking groups to EDR 7E by April 2017. The focus of these groups will be for HR staff to readily share their needs, concerns, and successes with the group. As examples, a presentation on integrating the millennials into the workplace was held in Monticello and safety training and drug and alcohol testing policies was presented in Willmar, both at the request of these groups.
1. Describe how the make-up of the sector partnerships will be determined and the expertise and resources they bring to the partnership
	* The R3LPB will host several sector partnership events, bringing key stakeholders to the table in order to address healthcare and manufacturing sector needs, issues and concerns.
	* Key stakeholders will be identified as follows:
* Existing Region 3 sector partnerships in healthcare and manufacturing will be identified. For example, CentraCare Health is the largest provider of healthcare services in central Minnesota and Central Minnesota Manufacturing Association is made up of major manufacturers in the region. These “existing” sector partnerships have already been invited to the R3LPB and have presented their urgent needs to the board. In addition, the board will conduct a regional analysis or mapping of all other healthcare and manufacturing sector partners in the region and invite them to the table.
* R3LPB will also convene WFC WIOA Core partners, economic development, and education in the region to support these selected sectors.
* Key stakeholders may include, but not limited to the following:
	+ Adult Basic Education
	+ Community Action agencies
	+ Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education; MnSCU
	+ Vocational Rehabilitation Services
	+ Job Service; Business Services
	+ WIOA Title 1: Employment and Training Services
	+ Jobs for Veterans
	+ Community-based organizations
	+ Initiative Foundations
	+ City, state, and county officials, including social services organizations
	+ Labor and apprenticeship training organizations
	+ Economic development professionals
	+ Other stakeholders as needed
	+ High school superintendents, teachers; area ALCs
	+ Wright County Technical School
	+ Community leaders of immigrant populations and diverse populations
	+ Senior services organizations
	+ MFIP, TANF, and SNAP programs
	+ In EDR 7W a group of stakeholders in the healthcare sector established an initiative led by a CentraCare director, in St. Cloud. Meetings are held quarterly. This is an evolving project that partners with higher education to identify the number of workers in the healthcare career pathway.
	+ Central Minnesota Manufacturers Association (CMMA) is a successful membership-based organization which exists to enhance Region 3’s interrelated industries and to gain and hold a competitive advantage in today’s global marketplace. CMMA hosts monthly membership meetings, special events, and social gatherings. CMMA has 156 members with over 50% from manufacturing firms. January 2017 marked its 9th anniversary. CMMA consists of a healthy mix of new and sustaining members including a strong cross section of manufacturers, servicers, suppliers, and supporters. It has contributed more than $80,000 in grants, sponsorships, and scholarships since its inception. This support and investment in communities includes college scholarships, high school robotics, STEM education, events and expos, student field trips, youth apprenticeships, partnership with Wright Technical College, Tour of Manufacturing and more. CMMA has also started a foundation for future funding opportunities. The R3LPB will continue to provide staff support, demographic statistics, labor market information, and organizational development assistance.
	+ The **Retail Advisory Board** is a group of retail business owners and representatives who meet to discuss opportunities to change the perception of retail careers, to educate the public on the vast career opportunities available in the retail sector, and to support increased training opportunities along retail career pathways. Additional goals include increasing job entry and promotion in retail-related occupations and increasing the number of individuals receiving career success skills training, retail specific training, and National

Retail Federation Certifications. Four retail sector career fairs will be held by March 2018. Retail is currently the third largest employing sector in Region 3.

* + A roster of sector partnership members will be developed consisting of individuals who will represent the business partners, specific organizations representing targeted populations, and those providing pathway-specific services. Specific organizations representing targeted populations include Adult Basic Education, Minnesota State Colleges, Functional Industries, RISE, Vocational Rehabilitation Services, and others, as appropriate. This partnership will be business driven and create solutions that integrate education, workforce, and economic development resources across systems that provide businesses, individuals, and communities the opportunity to grow the state’s economy.
	+ Region 3 works directly with employers, private and public training providers, and union labor organizations to provide work-based training opportunities that meet the needs of business. The regional goal will be to continue work-based training initiatives through activities like on-the-job training (OJT), registered apprenticeship, work experience and transitional jobs, workforce protégé, and incumbent worker training program (IWTP). Work- based training methods are a proven and effective strategy that meets employers' workforce needs. By March 2018 the R3LPB will create and implement an employer database intended to collect data from interested parties to better match their needs with work-based training methods. The information collected will be used to connect educators and service providers to young people, career changers, and other job seekers in Region 3 who want to meet with employers to learn more about occupations in their specific area of career interest.
	+ The SBETC Executive Director attends quarterly meetings of the St. Cloud Area Executive Director/CEO networking group. Participation in this group allows community CEOs to engage in pertinent conversations specific to their management role. Topics relevant to workforce development include discussing current industry challenges, problem solving, and obtaining access to industry experts who have implemented best practices.
	+ Regional business team meetings are held with business staff including DEED business services representatives, Vocational Rehabilitation placement specialists, Adult Basic Education, higher education, regional development commissions, and workforce development and other area business services staff. Attendees share information on employer needs, training programs, upcoming events, and resources or services that address business needs.
	+ St. Cloud Business Services Team Meetings are held bi-monthly. Members include representatives from Vocational Rehabilitation Services, SBETC, Veteran Services, St. Cloud State University, St. Cloud Technical and Community College, GSDC, DEED, and K12/ABE. Regular written reports will be provided to LWDBs 5 and 17, a minimum of bi-monthly, to be reviewed during the LWDB meetings. Reports include business engagement within Region 3, sector services provided, and their results and outcomes.
	+ Employer seminars are hosted by DEED regionally to include such business topics as employment law, succession planning, drug testing, etc.
1. Describe how the partnerships will work toward developing and implementing a career pathway sector strategy during the two years of this plan. If sectors and occupations have not been selected, address the process for these decisions within this response.
	* Both healthcare and manufacturing have identified career pathways. The goal is to be a convener and strengthen existing relationships with local colleges to best meet the needs of the employers. Region 3 will solicit input from the customer as well as through the use of human-centered design processes and practices.
	* **Construct Tomorrow** is a hands-on construction trades learning event for high school students. The Construct Tomorrow team brings representatives from multiple trades to a site designated by a host organization. Trades trainers provide hands-on experiences for the students who work side-by-side with apprentices and journey-level workers to wire circuits, trowel cement, set tile, and more. Students complete an exit survey to gauge their level of interest in the trades. The Construct Tomorrow team endeavors to connect these students with more information and experiences to help create a pathway into apprenticeship. The Construct Tomorrow team is a collective of apprenticeship instructors, contractors, government representatives from labor and workforce development, and youth educators. The team collaborates with a local host and regional partners to provide the venue, coordinate logistics, school/student recruitment and reservations, and day-of-event facilitation. Six events are held annually across the state. Regional events are attended by SBETC and CMJTS RC3 staff, workforce development and youth staff, and union representatives. In 2016, events were held in Hinckley with approximately 385 students attending from 14 schools, and in St. Cloud with approximately 400 students attending. A March 2017 event is planned for Hinckley with the Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe hosting for the second year and CMJTS assisting as partner. A St. Cloud event is anticipated for fall 2017.
	* SBETC, in collaboration with St Cloud Technical High School, offers the Minnesota Youthbuild program. Youthbuilders receive hands-on training in construction and earn an OSHA 10 Certification. Once that certification is completed, the SBETC Career Planner works with the youth to complete Book 1 of the Career Connections curriculum, *One Trade, Many Careers for Pre-apprenticeship Programs.* Upon completion of the curriculum, youth are eligible to receive a Level 1 Certification presented to them by the Carpenters Union, Local 930 and the Career Connections Outreach Coordinator. This certification allows them to enter a trade apprenticeship program at an advanced level. The Youthbuild collaboration with the Carpenters Union started in the fall of 2016. Five Youthbuilders have achieved Level 1 certification.
	* Since 2015, CMJTS has partnered with Anoka-Ramsey Community College (ARCC) and the Steger Wilderness Center to provide young adults the opportunity to receive quality hands- on training in the field of stone masonry. Project participants receive forklift training and certification through the college and then travel to the Steger Wilderness Center near Ely, Minnesota. While there, they are given the opportunity to work alongside master stone masons and learn the basics of their craft. The work involves quarrying the stone and using both mortar and dry stone methods to construct retaining walls and stone facades on buildings. Participants enjoy a wilderness surrounding while at the Center. They sleep in tents, enjoy meals outdoors, and bathe in the lake during the four-week training. This unique setting, in conjunction with the expectations of the master stone masons, allows for

a deeper, uninterrupted focus on learning a skill while developing other career success skills including responsibility, self-motivation, collaboration, and safety. Upon completion of the training, participants receive continuing education credits from ARCC's Professional and Workforce Training Division. Each participant then works with their CMJTS employment specialist who helps them transition into longer-term training or employment. CMJTS is currently in the process of recruiting a cohort of young adults who will take part in the stone mason program in June 2017. In future years, CMJTS plans to add additional trades (e.g. carpentry). CMJTS is working to identify additional funders, such as trade unions or construction companies, who are willing to invest in this training model so that more youth may benefit, with the understanding that their own labor pool will be supported by qualified entry-level workers.

* + CMJTS has a current Pathways to Prosperity (P2P) grant, which provides a healthcare career pathway and manufacturing pathway. Development and implementation of career pathways will expand through review of data, research, and studies that focus on in-demand employment opportunities for Region 3 jobseekers. As a recent example, Somali residents in Willmar, Minnesota, are experiencing a workforce challenge due to a lack of childcare providers who understand the needs of the Muslim religion and culture. This is creating special hardships for working Muslim families. In response to this growing need, CMJTS and Glacial Lakes ABE in Region 3 have participated in recent conversations regarding developing a career pathway for childcare providers, which includes Muslin cultural awareness. The intent is CMJTS and Glacial Lakes ABE will include this new pathway in a future Pathways to Prosperity grant proposal. The “bridge” program built will connect participants to multiple training opportunities that also take into consideration participant educational functioning levels. This customer-centered program design to training and education will connect the necessary adult basic education, cultural awareness, occupational training, career and academic advising, and supportive services for participants to prepare for and obtain their childcare licensure.
	+ The **Higher Education/Career Advisor Project (HECAP)** is a pilot program that assists high school students in selecting a career of interest and a post-secondary path to prepare for that career. Services include career advising, providing labor market information (LMI), and preparation for career pathways. Region 3 will apply for additional funding July 1, 2017. HECAP helps to align student career goals with education along a career pathway.
	+ Entrepreneurship education seeks to prepare people, especially youth, to be responsible, enterprising individuals who become entrepreneurs or entrepreneurial thinkers and contribute to economic development and sustainable communities. The **CEO (creating entrepreneurial opportunities) in the Classroom** program is much more than a textbook course. Students are immersed in real life learning experiences with the opportunity to take risks, manage the results, and learn from the outcomes. Local businesses invest in this program currently offered at two sites in Region 3 - a consortium of students from Willmar High School, New London-Spicer, and Atwater-Cosmos-Grove City (ACGC) school districts in Kandiyohi County and at Wright Technical Center in Wright County. Students develop a business plan, including financing, and start their own businesses which are showcased to the public at the end of the school year. Students must apply for acceptance into the program.
	+ **Career Trek** is a 5-day, 20-hour program, offered on a monthly basis. It is designed to help participants identify strengths and skills, explore careers, and begin setting goals for employment. Tools that are used during this process include: Myers-Briggs Temperament Indicator, Compute-A-Match Online Career Assessment System, skills identification exercises, and a work values assessment. Exit evaluations will demonstrate if participants have a better understanding of their career profile, the career paths available to them, how to pursue them, and the value they have to offer employers. By June 2018 the goal will be to increase attendance through connections with community resource and referral networks. In addition, the Career Trek training consultant and an SBETC career planner are developing a version of Career Trek for clients with emerging English skills; plans are to offer the first session in the spring of 2017.
	+ Minnesota’s **Disability Employment Initiative** (MN DEI) is an innovative approach focused on helping people with disabilities transition to employment. MN DEI helps individuals with disabilities make successful transitions to college and careers by using the career pathways system, including **Pathways to Prosperity** (P2P) programs in Minnesota. The P2P approach provides educationally-underprepared adults the opportunity to succeed in career-specific training while also building basic academic skills. A career pathways approach includes the following components:
* career exploration and planning in high-demand occupations;
* integrated basic skills education, such as reading, writing, math, and language, with career-specific training;
* a focus on credential attainment and future employment; and
* wrap-around support services needed to reach education and career goals. The **DEI leadership team** connects on a monthly basis and includes the local disability resource coordinators, local LWDA management, and state leads from both DEED

Administration and Vocational Rehabilitation. Additional meetings are held to bring in other partners. Short-term goals include the completion of the DEI Career Pathway toolkit with partners by January 2018. DEI partners include Adult Basic Education (ABE) – St. Croix Education District, Central MN East, Metro North, Metro East, Glacial Lakes ABE; college partners – Pine Technical and Community College, Ridgewater College, Anoka Ramsey Community College, Anoka Technical College; and employers – Guardian Angels, Parkview Care Center, and Coborn’s, Inc. The DEI project will continue to expand employer partnerships.

* + Both CMJTS and SBETC use and plan to expand **work-based learning opportunities** as a viable training option. The following services will increase employer engagement and increase participant options:
* Customized training is training designed to meet the special skill requirements of an employer or a group of employers. It allows employers, with a training provider, to design a work-based skills curriculum that meets their specific needs. Upon successful completion of the "customized" training, the employer commits to hiring the trained individual(s) and commits to paying up to 50 percent of the training costs incurred. Training costs may include staff or instructor time, training materials, or tuition.
* Internship/Work Experience: The business provides a supervised work site for a designated length of time for a youth, entry-level adult, or transitioning senior.

CMJTS and SBETC serve as the employer of record, pays the participant’s wage, FICA, and Worker’s Compensation insurance cost.

* An enhanced Workforce Protégé program for youth exists where CMJTS remains the employer of record, however, the employer shares in the cost of youth wages and, more importantly, agrees to mentor an at-risk youth for a minimum of 15 minutes per week on the job.
	+ - On-the-Job Training (OJT): The business is reimbursed for the cost of training a new employee—up to 75% of the new employee's wage for the length of the contract. The employer provides the training and the employee does the learning. The new hire learns skills unique to the local business and industry.
		- Registered Apprenticeship is an employer-driven model that combines on-the-job learning with related classroom instruction that increases an apprentice’s skill level and wages. It is a proven solution for businesses to recruit, train, and retain highly skilled workers.
		- Incumbent Worker Training is a business-driven program designed to provide direct financial assistance to train current employees to avert a layoff and/or improve the economic competitiveness of regional businesses. The program is intended to offset a portion, via reimbursement, of the businesses’ costs to train and upgrade the skills of its incumbent workers.
		- Short-term training is geared toward quick/minor needs of the employee. Short- term training is utilized to quickly increase a skill set in a certain area. For example, most employers encourage employees to have a basic knowledge of Microsoft Office. If an employee does not have this basic knowledge, they may be sent to a short-term training that will increase their skill in this area. This allows for the employee to meet the basic criteria of many of the in-demand jobs that are available and gives them a jump start into their needed career pathway.
	+ The Central Minnesota Workforce Development Board and CMJTS developed a Business Resource Directory to help businesses find the information and resources they need to thrive in central Minnesota. Helping business grow in central Minnesota is a priority for the Central Minnesota Workforce Development Board. This directory includes federal, state, and local economic development, finance, education, workforce development, and government resources in central Minnesota. The Business Resource Directory is designed as a reference tool for a new business looking for start-up assistance, an established business looking for new resources, an economic development professional, a financing entity, a city or county administrator, an educator, or other person interested in helping business succeed. The directory is a “who’s who” in business resources. While no publication can list every resource for business, the directory is as inclusive as possible. The Business Resource Directory is located at [www.cmjts.org.](http://www.cmjts.org/)
	+ Region 3 will increase collaborative efforts between ABE and workforce development to provide integrated services to meet the educational and training needs of our communities. Examples of collaborative efforts include: ABE’s Basic Computer Classes at the WorkForce Center; SBETC’s youth career planning services at Hillside ABE; alignment of assessments;

ABE’s grant to facilitate TABE and CASAS training; and coordinated efforts for the Careers in Manufacturing and Production Project (CMAP).

* + **Minnesota Career Information System (MCIS)** is an internet-based system that combines a wealth of career, educational and labor market information into one comprehensive, easy- to-use exploration tool. With MCIS, students and clients can: learn about more than 520 occupations, develop a personal portfolio and personal learning plan, research colleges, universities, and career schools, find scholarships and financial aid, and improve job search skills and create a resume. ABE will provide training and guidance on how to complete the work coordination referral form. Adult Basic Education has current regional subscriptions to MCIS and the information is accessible to lower-level learners and English Language Learners. WFC partner staff can complete a work coordination referral form for customers to access this system through ABE.
	+ **Catholic Charities** in St. Cloud recently needed to reevaluate its Immigrant and Refugee Resources Programming. Specifically they needed to look at two neighborhoods: the **La Cruz Community Center** in St. Cloud and an after school program at **Bel Claire Estates** in Waite Park. Currently the population of La Cruz is 88% non-Caucasian and more than 50% of residents are recent immigrants (primarily from Africa). Budget constraints won't allow these programs to continue in 2017 and they anticipate ceasing operation. SBETC has participated in conversations regarding the process of re-imagining these programs. SBETC met with the Central MN Community Empowerment Organization to discuss how SBETC and the St. Cloud WorkForce Center could assist in keeping the programs running at La Cruz. SBETC applied for an Otto Bremer Grant in October, 2016, and had a site visit in December, 2016. If SBETC is awarded the grant, they will use funding to provide a bilingual career planner onsite at the La Cruz Community Center to support workforce-development related programming. This includes providing job search assistance, including helping individuals prepare a résumé, complete job applications, and learn interview skills and job retention strategies. A career planner would be hired and placed on site.
	+ CMJTS in collaboration with the Sherburne County Broadband Coalition and PCs for People program, was given the opportunity from the Blandin Foundation to distribute 50 free refurbished computers to Sherburne County individuals working with CMJTS and participating in their planned goals to achieve self-sufficiency. CMJTS distributed computers to low-income individuals who may not otherwise have one, decreasing the number of individuals without a computer in the home. CMJTS continues to work with Sherburne County on other broadband initiatives. Similarly, SBETC purchased updated computers for staff and distributed 10 refurbished computers to the Islamic Center in St. Cloud. The Islamic Center provides community engagement programs as well as educational programs for school-age children.
	+ Region 3 Titles I-IV partner staff will work to develop a policy for creating a **seamless referral process** between WFC partner programs that removes any duplication in the information customers provide to any one partner in the WFC system. An integrated referral system will encourage co-enrollment and coordination of services across partner programs. Co- enrollment of customers in more than one program can increase the probability that resources are available to support the customer on his or her career path. Referral to partner programs that can provide continued services for sustained customer success when one program service ends would be an added benefit to this process. This referral process will be included in the partner MOU as well.
	+ Region 3 WIOA partners completed the **Human Centered Design** training through Acumen in the fall of 2015. This process led to great ideas generated during a customer focus group. The Monticello WorkForce Center has since been updated to have a more welcoming environment with soft seating and a place for networking. The goal is to replicate this environment, as possible, in all Region 3 WorkForce Centers and affiliate offices. The human centered design process will continue to be used to ensure that the customer has a voice and that programming is meeting their needs and expectations.
1. Describe the process for identifying the characteristics, size, and scope of populations not fully benefiting from the economic recovery, experiencing factors such as high unemployment, lack of credentialed skills and other barriers to employment.

The post-recession population that is currently being served in the WorkForce Centers presents a different set of circumstances and needs as compared to pre-recession and recession clients. All available employees that are ready and able to work are employed. However, there continue to be unfilled positions and a labor shortage. Enrollees are presenting significant barriers that require more intensive services. Some of the barriers include diagnosed and undiagnosed mental health issues, diagnosed and undiagnosed disabilities, extreme debt, new to the country, language barriers, false impression of one’s abilities and inability to change or be flexible, lack of employability skills, lack of soft skills, lack of education, lack of experience, criminal background, racial disparities, etc. Barriers are identified through self-disclosure, formal assessments, discussions with career services staff and past work experience. Identification of size and scope will be accomplished by analyzing labor market data, information provided by community agencies, education providers, and employers and meeting with representatives from the different communities within the region.

The process of identifying segments of the population not fully engaged in the labor force or experiencing higher than normal rates of unemployment largely depends on data from the U.S. Census Bureau’s American Community Survey (ACS). Additional sources for trends and information about segments of the population under-represented in specific industries is found using the Current Population Survey, Quarterly Workforce Indicators, and the State Demographic Center.

Characteristics to be examined for specific population segments include labor force participation rate, unemployment rate, and actual number of participants for the selected demographic.

Table 4 in Attachment G2 provides many of these data and the starting point for further research.

* + **Asset mapping** has begun in Region 3 and will provide leaders with an inventory of key resources that can be incorporated into a development effort. A more comprehensive asset mapping initiative will provide a deeper understanding of the key networks and cultural attitudes that shape the regional economy, indicate “gap” areas that require further investment, and provide a baseline by which to judge future progress toward regional prosperity. Central Minnesota regional profile data will be shared with

stakeholders in the region (and at R3LPB events) and used in all decision making for the establishment of regional strategies that are both progressive and responsive to the needs of its communities.

* + The RC3’s asset **map of schools** will be completed by January 2018. Mapping includes world’s greatest workforce legislation plans for each school district within the region as well as collecting demographic data.
	+ Populations experiencing inequities in Region 3 have been identified and include those in the following social identity categories: veterans and eligible spouses, individuals with criminal history, women, LGBTQ, persons of color, immigrants, older workers, individuals with disabilities, youth, and adults with high needs, including low-income individuals and individuals who are basic-skills deficient. Region 3 will administer a community needs assessment to clients, partners, businesses, education facilities, local government, and community-based agencies in an effort to better understand who is impacted and to identify gaps in services for specific populations not fully benefiting from the economic recovery. Effective review of profile data will identify needs and feasibility of sector-based strategies developed.

Professional development regarding diversity for leadership teams, board members, and staff will provide Region 3 a valuable framework for understanding implicit bias, and what can be done to promote fairness and equity within programs, services, and hiring practices. A few examples of the diversity training Region 3 staff will participate in include:

* + Understanding White Privilege, January 18, 2017, College of St. Scholastica. CMJTS executive team members attended Understanding White Privilege, a workshop discussing white privilege in a way that sidesteps the blame and defensiveness that too often accompanies such discussions. Attendees left with additional clarity as to what white privilege is, how it is conferred, and what individuals can do to promote fairness and equity. This training will be promoted to employers for potential incumbent worker training in the region as well as training for Region 3 partner staff, employment specialists, and counselors working directly with stakeholders experiencing disparities in hiring and education.
	+ The Region 3 Leadership and Planning Board, CMJTS and SBETC Workforce Development Boards, CMJTS and SBETC Joint Powers Boards, and CMJTS and SBETC staff participated in a two-part series on February 10, 2017, and February 16, 2017. The completion of this training resulted in skills gained for planning and development of strategies to encourage stakeholder engagement appropriately. Region 3 will take concepts learned during these events and begin action planning for implementation of initiatives into the process of effectively engaging diverse communities. The experience with **Marnita’s Table** provided a practical, interactive and engaging equity toolkit through its model of

Intentional Social Interaction (“IZI”).

Mindstorm small-group discussions occurring during the Thursday, February 16th, Marnita’s Table event revealed a few key themes. According to Marnita’s assessment, the one highest- traction inquiry of the Mindstorm activity centered largely upon the need to decrease barriers to employment at every level and the importance of developing the strong positive community relationships and narratives (attitudes towards difference) required to authentically support a more diverse workforce environment. Nearly every group emphasized the importance of accessible, strategic communications throughout the recruitment, hiring, and retention processes. Several table participants shared the desire for a whole-community approach to

Providing welcoming, accessible, workforce development, including environment and processes, while considering the very real impacts of socioeconomic, religious and cultural differences and the necessity of dealing with such mundane prerequisites of employment as housing, transportation, language skills, access to the internet and in consideration of different ability statuses, educational backgrounds, spiritual practices, etc. Understanding that having workforces that are diverse and inclusive is critical, Region 3 will dedicate time and resources to board and staff training, across partners, to strengthen outcomes for jobseekers and employers.

* + **PANDA-Minnesota ABE Disability Specialist’s** mission is to provide Minnesota Adult Basic Education programs with disability support, knowledge and resources to increase academic opportunities for students. PANDA staff provide information, resources and teaching strategies for ABE programs statewide. This includes adaptive equipment, printed materials, videos, reference materials and resources for loan that enable ABE providers to learn about and better serve adults with disabilities. The purpose of this program is to assist English Language Learners (ELL) to:
* determine the root of learning difficulties,
* improve student academic progress in the classroom,
* provide instructional strategies, resources and assistive technology, and
* empower students to understand their learning strengths and challenges.

PANDA staff present professional development at local, regional, and state events. As part of Region 3’s goal to develop staff in areas of diversity, ABE will extend invitations to WFC staff to attend scheduled trainings.

* + **CLIMB Theatre Presents: Feeling History, African American Reach for Equality,** February 28, 2017, is an interactive performance that explores America’s history of racism and how it continues to shape the experience of Black Americans. Region 3 will take concepts learned during this event and begin action planning for implementation of initiatives into the process of effectively engaging diverse communities.
	+ For successful integration into today’s workforce, those with criminal records are in need of the skills, knowledge, and experience of professionals to assist them. ABE will provide WFC staff with training opportunities that place emphasis on preparing offenders for the workforce. Various topics related to the skills, strategies, and resources required to address offender employment specialization will be presented: assessment, job search strategy, identifying and managing barriers, applications, job retention, résumé development, interviewing, and successful job retention.

The Region 3 Marnita’s Table group discussions conveyed the importance of diverse and inclusive hiring at management and leadership levels as well as the involvement of diverse committees in the decision-making processes that determine hiring and other policies within an organization or department.

* + The Region 3 team will collaborate with the College of St. Scholastica’s Office of Diversity and Inclusion to provide resources and training opportunities for employers to access through use of incumbent worker training funds. The training offered, a 4-hour session on **Bias Reduced Hiring**, begins with material on privilege so that participants develop an understanding of unearned advantage and the various lens from which we

see and act. Introduction of the Discretionary Points mapping of the hiring process is then provided, and the session concludes with action planning for implementing this into the hiring process. The goal is to increase stakeholder (jobseeker and business) engagement and inclusiveness through the building of cross-racial competence at all levels. As a result, this will increase business competitiveness by addressing hiring gaps. Region 3 intends to engage employers and develop incumbent worker training goals currently and through June 2018.

* + Region 3 has many jobseekers and students residing in LWDA 5 and attend post- secondary education at Anoka Ramsey Community College (ARCC), Anoka Technical College (ATC). ARCC/ATC is committed to diversity and inclusion at all levels of the college through educational programming and cultural activities that foster domestic and global awareness within the college community. CMJTS staff will attend diversity training provided by Venoreen Browne-Boatswain, Director of Diversity & Multi- Culturist. The completion of this training will result in skills gained for planning and development of strategies to encourage stakeholder engagement of diverse populations appropriately.

Venoreen Browne-Boatswain will recommend trainers for Region 3 staff on the topics of “Implicit Bias”. Browne-Boatswain will also help to develop and host a regional diversity event for WFC staff educating about America and Muslim Culture, “Bridging the Gap:

America and Muslim Culture”.

1. Describe who will be included in the broad stakeholder engagement to address a targeted number of socio-economic issues faced by diverse populations.
	* R3LPB will engage both WDBs, WFC partners under WIOA, local community action agencies, Initiative Foundations, community CBOs, representatives of the targeted population and their advocacy organizations. Employers, economic developers, and educational entities will also be involved as stakeholders to address the socio-economic issues. Many of these stakeholders are identified in number 13 of this report.
	* CMJTS and SBETC will administer a **community needs assessment** to clients, partners, businesses, education facilities, local government, community agencies, and anyone in the community willing to complete and provide their input (survey is attached). The survey will be available in paper and an electronic version using survey monkey. Surveys were sent out during February 2017. Data will be compiled and reviewed in March 2017. Results will be shared with the local WDBs, the regional board, and posted on the CMJTS and SBETC websites. Identified needs will be reviewed for feasibility and solutions provided. Needs outside of the board’s wheelhouse would be referred appropriately to organizations better equipped to provide services. The regional board will schedule and host stakeholder meetings, using a human centered design approach to solutions.
	* **Community Action Agencies** provide local, state, federal, and private resources to help individuals and families who have low incomes. These agencies can be a great referral source for Region 3, identifying the targeted populations experiencing inequities in education and employment outcomes, and connecting individuals to workforce development services. A roster of our regional community action agency partner representatives will be developed and may include: TriCAP, St Cloud; Wright County

Community Action, Maple Lake; United Community Action Partnership, Willmar; Lakes & Pines Community Action Council, Mora.

* + By October, 2017, the Region 3 board will create a roster of **agency representatives for individuals with disabilities**. This roster will include representation from the following organizations, Vocational Rehabilitation Services, Options, Inc., Functional Industries, RISE, county social services, and others.
	+ CMJTS Workforce Development Coordinators (WDC) will develop a working relationship with **MN Extension Services-Southwest Region**. MN Extension Services strives to meet the educational needs of individuals with mental health issues or developmental disabilities, and continues efforts in responding to immigration issues and becoming more welcoming of immigrants. CMJTS WDC will meet with MN Extension Services by June 2017 in an effort to engage stakeholders effectively.
	+ Abdirahin Hussen is the Regional Manager for the **African Development Center (ADC).** He is primarily based out of Willmar, but also works with clients in Marshall and St. Cloud. CMJTS staff will establish a relationship with the ADC by September 2017 in order to promote engagement with the community and involvement in WFC programs. The goal is to have the ADC involved and engaged in regional planning.
1. Describe how this engagement will impact the development and implementation of the selected sector strategies during the first two years of this plan.
	* A minimum of two employer forums will be held each year.
	* Ideally focus groups of participants will be held, including stakeholders in the sector strategies to gather data.
	* Input from stakeholders may change how programs are being offered. Changes may include accessibility to programs and how recruitment is currently being done. Evaluation of overall program effectiveness will also be considered.
	* A recent survey completed through using Rural Career Counselor Coordinator (RC3) grant funds reported that several secondary schools would like assistance with career planning and identifying post-secondary options for their students. Possible options of career planning support to schools could include CMJTS/SBETC staff-assisted business tour arrangements or staff providing career planning workshops in the classroom. CMJTS/SBETC staff providing these services would promote the sector strategies and career pathways available. SBETC currently resides on the steering committee of Partners of Students Success.
	* As examples of **healthcare** initiatives, the R3LPB, SBETC, and CMJTS coordinated the Healthcare Sector Summit, October 14, 2016, held in Monticello. Presentations by representatives from CentraCare Health, Fairview Health Services, and Renville County Hospital & Clinics helped encourage table discussions to address the regional challenges and opportunities in the healthcare industry. The event included a regional view of local labor market information and a gap analysis. Table discussions began the process for finding

solutions to the hiring gaps in this sector. By September 2017, a committee will be formed comprised of attendees who expressed interest in continuing this discussion. A second Healthcare Summit will be held in St. Cloud and is scheduled for April 21, 2017. This summit will expand the healthcare discussion to providers of nursing homes, residential care facilities, and ambulatory services. CentraCare Health and the College of St. Scholastica are co-sponsors and agency leads for these Region 3 Healthcare Summit initiatives.

1. Based on the regional/local assessment of WFD system services, describe how strategies will be created to pursue a more responsive alignment of employment and training services, based on career pathways thinking.
	* Changing labor market trends and the desire to help jobseekers obtain meaningful and family-sustaining employment drives the R3LPB and Central Minnesota WDBs.
	* In Region 3, providing career pathway services to customers is standard practice. The concepts of connecting individuals to education, providing supportive services to students, providing career navigation, and assisting with placement and retention after credential attainment, etc., are components of all employment and training programs. WFC customers are directed to appropriate online resources to investigate career pathways, and given career guidance by resource area staff or, when enrolled, by employment specialists/employment counselors.
	* Alignment among core programs to implement career pathways exists in that a series of connected education and training opportunities are established. In addition, the appropriate core programs provide the support services that enable jobseekers to progress through the career pathways and successfully obtain employment in an in-demand sector. Career pathways training methods contribute to the broad goals of employment and training programs. The career pathways model provides individuals the best path to long-term career success with opportunities to build upon their skills, “stacking” credentials as they progress, resulting in satisfying local business needs for workers.
	* **Job Fairs and Business Expos** provide a venue for jobseekers to connect with employers, educational institutions, and other stakeholders. Targeted sector job fairs are smaller events held for a specific industry. A best practice is incorporating a panel discussion that provides LMI information for the region, highlights successful employees in a career pathway, and includes employers sharing details about careers. Job fairs are planned and held regionally through collaboration with other organizations or businesses. Coordination and sharing of resources, such as transportation to the job fair for specific populations is a best practice. Business services staff across agencies work together to promote events to both businesses and jobseekers. A recent example includes the regional Transportation Career Expo and Hiring Event held in December 2016 at the Monticello WFC. Transportation was provided from the St. Cloud WFC to the Monticello WFC for those interested in attending. In January 2017, the St. Cloud WFC hosted a job fair that featured companies involved in the construction trades. This event was featured in the Spark Initiative, published by St. Cloud Times. In June 2017, the St. Cloud Times will produce a booklet of all the trades covered over the last 10 months via the Spark Initiative and distribute it to juniors and seniors in local area high schools. Additional job fairs are planned monthly through June 2018. A sector approach to job fairs will be taken, led by employer engagement and regional labor market data. In addition, two retail sector job fairs were hosted by CMJTS, held in

Monticello (September 2016) and in Cambridge (November 2016). An additional retail sector job fair, a collaborative effort between DEED and CMJTS, is planned for Willmar in April 2017. The West Central Regional Business Expo and Job Fair is held twice a year, in March and September. CMJTS, DEED, Kandiyohi County Economic Development Commission, and Ridgewater College partner with a local radio station, KDJS, to host these job fairs. In Hutchinson, a Job and Career Fair is held twice a year, in April and October.

CMJTS, DEED, and Ridgewater College partner with a local radio station, KDUZ, to host these job fairs.

* + A collaborate group including Ridgewater College, Glacial Lakes ABE, and CMJTS will host up to two seminars in May 2017 for 100 current and prospective adult learners to increase awareness of services, programs, and career opportunities for successful transition into career and technical education programs leading to a career pathway. Attendees will complete an online career interest assessment and have the opportunity to meet with college instructors to learn more about the education programs available. Some classrooms will be open for touring, depending on the sector which include healthcare, manufacturing, business/retail, IT, auto mechanics, and agriculture. For example, a healthcare simulation lab is located on the Willmar campus and could be open for potential healthcare sector students to tour. A panel of service providers will initially outline career pathways and note resources and services available to adults who wish to continue their education. Each attendee will leave with a printout of their interest assessment. Career pathways graphics for each of the sectors will be available for each participant. This project is funded by a Carl

D. Perkins Career Technical Education grant from the U.S. Dept. of Education and the MN Department of Education.

* + SBETC is supporting the Perkins career pathways grants by partnering with St. Cloud Technical and Community College and DEED’s Business Services through sector specific career fairs and open houses to increase interest in the trades and industry areas through career pathways.
	+ Region 3 business services staff across agencies work as a team, identifying regional business assets, opportunities, and issues and collaborating with new or existing sector partnerships and initiatives that enhance business and workforce development. DEED business service team members, now known as the Regional Workforce Strategy Consultants, engage in and support implementation of the Region 3 plan through:
* Research and data-led regional service strategies development, including cooperative service delivery agreements as directed by the WorkForce Center partner Memorandum Of Understanding
* Development and implementation of sector initiatives including providing services to businesses through existing and new relationships
* Support of the regional performance measures negotiation and reporting, specifically for the WIOA Measure of Effectiveness in Serving Employers
* Identification of partner expertise, programs, and resources that connect jobseekers to employers
* Promotion of sector partnerships and career pathways to businesses and jobseekers