March 29, 2017

Commissioner Shawntera Hardy, MN Dept of Employment and Economic Development

Deputy Commissioner Jeremy Hanson Willis, MN Dept of Employment and Economic Development

Director Rick Roy, MN Dept of Employment and Economic Development

Dear Partners:

On behalf of the Greater Metropolitan Workforce Council (GMWC), I am pleased to submit the Regional Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Plan for Region #4. In the process of creating this plan, we have engaged more than 280 people across the region, from community-based organizations, to mandated partners, to Workforce Center staff and business leaders. More than 100 people participated in an event hosted by Marnita’s Table in February where we received helpful insights into the need for working with employers on creating accurate job descriptions that don’t require unrealistic credentials as well as inclusive hiring practices. We have also gained by hearing from partners such as the Good Jobs Pathways Initiative and a set of stakeholders convened by Greater MSP and MSPWin. We look forward to continuing to collaborate with these and other stakeholders throughout the implementation period. We see this plan not as a static document but as an evolving roadmap for regional collaboration at multiple levels, including governance, across the public, private and nonprofit sectors, and through implementation. Our vision is to provide all residents of the region opportunities to attain family supporting careers while meeting the needs of employers who fuel our economy. We believe this plan will accomplish this vision.

WIOA offers a tremendous new opportunity for transforming the way we serve our clients and presents a chance to define our vision for the region and to find new ways to work together toward our shared goals. We believe that the more people engage in the process and in building a commitment to this work, the better.

Our top priority is eliminating racial disparities in employment. While we recognize that multiple groups of individuals experience racial disparities and hiring bias, we focus here particularly on African Americans and American Indians, for whom the disparities are the greatest. We are not disregarding any other groups who experience disparities, but we acknowledge the extent of the problem for the particular communities with the deepest disparities in our region. Going forward we envision working closely with community-based organizations with expertise and experience serving these populations. We are also digging deeper into Labor Market Information data along-side new tools to help better understand the data beyond the large racial/ethnic categories to help us continue to refine strategies to best serve those who are in greatest need of assistance.

To guide and elevate our region’s public sector workforce development system, we are establishing a new governance structure that expands regional workforce leadership beyond the six Workforce Development Areas (WDA). This new Board will include local elected officials from each WDA, the chairs or designated business representative of the six WDAs as well as up to 13 representatives from other critical stakeholders.

This plan builds off successful existing local level sector partnerships, providing expertise to more employers and leveraging relationships across the business communities, higher education, trade associations, and other partners. Much of the sector work that has been occurring at the local level, including award-winning sector work in Anoka County in healthcare, highly successful construction initiatives in Ramsey County and the expanding Tech Hire program in Minneapolis, among others, is replicable and ready to be transformed beyond the borders of the local service level. We also recognize the need and opportunity to look at additional sectors of importance to our regional economy, including business services, the public sector and manufacturing. Our approach to sector partnerships is detailed in Attachment G which demonstrates how we selected key sectors (based on data) as well as how we are building on sector expertise developed at the local level to serve the region.

This regional plan does not stand alone, but rather should be considered in conjunction with each of the local plans of the 6 WDAs that comprise Region #4. Each local plan includes details of initiatives that are already under way, and demonstrates the breadth of activity undertaken by each WDA and the depth of the services they offer across the region. The local plans also exhibit how effective the WDAs are at leveraging WIOA and other dollars to produce effective outcomes for their customers. Each of these WDAs has a board that is employer-led and engages local elected officials, the business community, and others in their area, to provide guidance and leadership. Their input is reflected in this plan.

We are committed to leveraging this unique moment to advance our region’s economy and look forward to continuing to work with DEED to ensure prosperity for all of our citizens.

Thank you.

Cathy Weik, Chair, Greater Metropolitan Workforce Council

CC: Chair Beeth, Governors Workforce Development Board

Staff Director Ireland, Governors Workforce Development Board

Staff Director Bahr-Helgen, Minneapolis Employment and Training

Staff Director Brady, Ramsey County Workforce Solutions

Staff Director Crawford, Washington County Workforce Development

Staff Director Jacobs, Dakota-Scott Counties Workforce Services

Staff Director Swanson, Anoka County Job Training Center

Staff Director White, Hennepin-Carver Workforce Development Area

Regional Staff Director Mark Brinda, Minneapolis Employment and Training

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| **SECTION A: REGIONAL PLAN – REGIONAL PLAN APPROACH** |

**1. Describe the selection process for the membership who will provide the leadership to oversee the development and coordination of the regional plan.**

The Workforce Development Boards (WDBs) of the Twin Cities have a long history of working together at the regional level and have led the development and coordination of the regional plan through the Greater Metropolitan Workforce Council (GMWC). The GMWC is comprised of six local boards: Anoka, Dakota-Scott, Hennepin-Carver, Ramsey, and Washington Counties and the City of Minneapolis. The GMWC has operated with a governance structure reflecting its own internal leadership: Local Elected Officials, Business-led Board Chairs of each of the WDBs, with the local staff directors serving as day-to-day point people and as proxies for their Board Chairs. At its meeting March 10, 2017, the members of the GMWC voted unanimously to expand the board to include additional stakeholders in order to achieve the vision of the regional WIOA plan. The board resolution noted that the new board can include up to 25 members. The leadership table will include the following entities, however, number of reps beyond 6 LEO and 6 chairs or designated rep is still to be decided. An example could be: :

6 Local Elected Officials representing the six WDAs (**2 votes each**)

6 Chairs or designated business representative from each of the six WDAs (1 vote each)

3 representatives of business organizations or trade associations

4 individuals representing the voice of underserved job seekers

1 representative of regional economic development organization

1 representative of philanthropy engaged in workforce development

1 representative of Adult Basic Education in the metro

1 representative of metro MN State Colleges and Universities (MNSCU) institutions

1 representative of organized labor in the metro

**Total 24**

In addition, the GMWC agreed in principle that the new board would be implemented as follows:

* Individual WDAs will sign a new Memorandum of Understanding between WDAs, with expectation of a forthcoming Joint Powers Agreement to govern the collaborative effort.
* A process for board selection will be finalized by 7-1-17
* Selection of board members will be concluded by 9-30-17, and the newly constituted Board will be seated in the fourth quarter 2017
* Staff hired by and reporting to the board with sufficient stature to serve will be a key resource on regional workforce issues
* The regional governance board will re-brand and invest in communications staff/consultant to elevate the board’s work and position the board as the voice for workforce development for the region

**2. Describe how the selected organizations from the region will provide oversight to development and implementation of the regional plan. Complete Attachment A – Regional Oversight Committee.**

The regional workforce board will be a strong voice on workforce development for the metro, rooted in the local authority provided by federal law (WIOA). The board will meet at least four times annually.

The primary charge of the regional governance board is to identify strategic opportunities where the public sector workforce system can lead or support initiatives that meet the needs of dual customers -- business and job seekers.

The regional governance board will:

* Analyze and disseminate LMI, functioning as a credible source on labor market conditions in the region;
* Advocate for resources (both for the public sector workforce system and other systems like K-12, higher education, etc.) whose work directly impacts the ability of people to be successful in the labor market;
* Align strategies implemented at the local level for regional impact and advocate for investments to meet regional goals;
* Develop strategies where a regional approach is warranted (for example in targeted sectors);
* Address and help mitigate workforce system limitations and workplace issues for those experiencing economic and racial disparities, particularly for African Americans and American Indians;
* Ensure that businesses have access to a skilled workforce and a racially diverse candidate pool with the competencies needed to make them globally competitive; and,
* Align formal and informal partners to ensure workforce development, education and training resources achieve maximum benefit for individuals and businesses in the region.

The regional workforce board will have primary responsibility for fulfilling this two-year plan, and shaping regional planning beyond the time horizon provided here.

**3. Describe how the approach used will ensure that partner engagement includes diverse representation, specifically among populations experiencing barriers to employment.**

A key value of the new regional governing structure is to develop and implement strategies that deliver employment and advancement for people experiencing barriers to employment. To do so, the new structure will strengthen local WDB membership as well as ensuring that sector partnerships include diverse voices and include organizations with particular expertise serving diverse populations. Regional workforce leaders understand that this engagement is critical to success and that lines of communication must be significantly opened and improved.

Efforts at the local level will continue to inform the work, ensuring a two-way conversation about workforce development, and ensuring local solutions to local challenges. An example of the depth of this connection to community-based organizations is Anoka County’s work with the Department of Human Services to address racial and ethnic disparities for families served in the Minnesota Family Investment Program (those receiving TANF benefits). The goal is to service MFIP American Indian and African Americans who do not have a high school diploma or GED, who have a criminal record that is imposing barriers to employment or who lack post-secondary training or recognized a credential that aligns with the labor market. The Minneapolis Urban League is a contracted partner working side by side with Anoka County on this project and provides onsite services facilitating learning circles on a variety of soft and basic skill development. The project served 48 people in its first year.

Another example is Ramsey County’s leadership creating Everybody In!, its work with the Government Alliance on Race and Equity (GARE) which is a multi-agency initiative to address race and equity related issues, and its work with the Urban Institute through a federally funded program to identify what strategies are working within TANF to provide services through a racial equity lens for families. These are just a few examples of the committed efforts of all WDBs to produce better results for communities experiencing disparities.

GMWC shares a goal with community-based partners and other regional initiatives that are working to eliminate racial disparities in our region. Eliminating racial disparities for African Americans and American Indians, who experience the largest disparities in employment, is the top priority for the GMWC (See Table 1: Employment Characteristics).[[1]](#footnote-2)

We are all working towards the goal, but resources are not up to the task. With a strong, shared commitment, we see WIOA implementation as an excellent opportunity to gather adequate funding for the workforce development system -- a fundamental requirement to make partner ‘engagement’ most meaningful

Table 1: Employment Characteristics

To help guide this work we plan to establish customer groups in each WDA where both local job seekers and employers will gather to provide feedback on how the public sector workforce system can better serve them. Based on the experience of both the City of Minneapolis Employment & Training and Ramsey County Workforce Solutions’ “Listening Groups,” these customer groups will provide timely feedback and then will report back on what steps they have taken to address the feedback. Job seeker customers will be incentivized to participate in the groups in recognition of their time spent.

**4. Describe how performance negotiations will be managed among the local areas within the region.**

Staff members from each WDA have been identified and are working to develop performance goals. They are utilizing current data as well as best practices to identify regional need in employment and income, by race, geography, education level, etc. Sharing this data and analysis with other service providers, the negotiation panel will align services with populations in need, with particular attention to identifying specific regional goals for populations that have been historically underserved. Regional targets identified by the designated staff team will be endorsed by the regional leadership table and aligned with individual WDA goals. The group anticipates (pending fund availability) engaging a consultant to help develop a continuous improvement process for both public sector workforce staff as well as staff from other service providers to ensure that goals can be met and strengthened over time.

**7. Describe any cooperative service arrangements being planned for the region and how they will promote consistency within the regional workforce development area and with state policy.**

The Boards have outlined a number of shared services that will facilitate more efficient and effective ‘back office’ functions (labor market analysis, staff and board training, etc.) as well as a robust shared approach to career pathway development in a number of specific industry sectors and occupational clusters.

*Technology, Training and Protocols*

* Shared template for MOUs with service partners and shared criteria for recognizing affiliates
* Shared training material and protocol for local staff and partners including regular convening of frontline staff (counselors/navigators from workforce, higher ed., ABE). This training will also incorporate feedback from customer groups on how to improve the services provided.
* Region-wide technology access and upgrades
	+ Expansion of a shared contact management system (SalesForce or other) to further include local staff at multiple levels may strengthen service delivery significantly
	+ Consider a shared case management system in addition to Workforce One
* Analysis of staffing models from other states (Iowa in particular) where Wagner-Peyser staff remain state staff, but take specific direction from local leaders employed by other units of government.
* Agreement with Real Time Talent to utilize the Exchange for targeted sectors and staff training on how to work with employers to utilize the Exchange.
* Development of quick reference guide or toolkit for staff across higher education, workforce and ABE so they each have basic information on each system.

*Supporting Career Pathways*

* Convening metro-wide ‘sector panels’ in partnership with Chambers, MNSCU partners, higher education program advisory boards, and others. These panels will be business-led, and focused on the workforce needs within a particular industry or occupational cluster.
* Expanding use of Career 101 materials and training across the region and promote career pathways for individuals in targeted sectors.
* Utilizing detailed data From Real Time Talent on job openings within each sector requiring 0-2 years of experience and education at AA or less along with wage information for those jobs and certifications needed.
* Developing career pathways in the identified sectors and clusters, with Adult Basic Education, that contain clear integration opportunities.
* Working collectively with the metropolitan Carl Perkins consortium partners to identify appropriate Perkins-funded activities that support entry and advancement into the career identified pathways.
* Sharing services across “back office” functions and in support of career pathways will promote consistency across the region and alignment with state plans. However, the work at the regional level to align and connect can only be advanced with adequate resources and funding at the local level and throughout the region.

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| **SECTION B: REGIONAL STRATEGIC PLANNING** |

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

Currently there are approximately 132,000-194,000 unemployed or under-employed adults in the region. Nearly 85,000 of these unemployed or under-employed adults are people of color, and almost half of whom are African-American (42,000).

The public sector workforce system includes several core programs, one of which is WIOA. To provide context for this plan, WIOA funds a relatively small amount of workforce services in the metro. Total logins at metro Workforce Centers are just over 216,000 annually with about 20% of those being people of color. Some 52,000 people participate in workshops or utilize resource rooms at the Workforce Centers, about 40% of whom are people of color.

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| **TABLE 12: Metro WIOA Customers 2015** |  |
| WIOA Adults | 812 |
| WIOA Dislocated Workers | 1449 |
| WIOA Older Youth | 598 |
| WIOA Younger Youth | 798 |
| MN Dislocated Worker | 6669 |
| % of color | 18.7% |
| Customer Logins (duplicated) | 216,419 |
| CRS/Workshop unduplicated | 52,506  |
| CRS/Workshop customers of color | 40.8% |

As another point of reference, the Greater Twin Cities United Way tracks their grantees providing workforce services and reports the following:

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| **TABLE 13: Agency Reported (Annual Reports based on self-report)** |
| **Description** | **2014** | **2015** |
| Enrolled |  8,155  |  9,011  |
| Placed |  4,100  |  4,424  |
| Black/African American |  2,395  |  2,526  |
| African |  595  |  909  |
| Caucasian |  890  |  1,616  |
| American Indian |  94  |  202  |
| Latino, Latina |  196  |  383  |
| All Other Race/Ethnicity and Unknown |  200  |  611  |
| Asian/Asian American/Pacific Islander |  508  |  551  |
| Average Annual Earnings at Enrollment |  $5,984  |  $7,871  |
| Average Annual Earnings at Placement |  $21,298  |  $23,973  |
| Average Increase in Earnings |  $15,314  |  $16,102  |
| Below 100% FPG (at intake) |  3,066  |  4,931  |
| Between 100% and 200% FPG (at intake) |  786  | 871 |

*United Way data is based on a 9 county (7 core + Chisago and Isanti) service area. United Way funded programs target those living in or near poverty (at or below 200% of the Federal Poverty Guideline. There are 23 programs in the portfolio; all are non-profits with headquarters in Minneapolis or St. Paul and a portion of satellite service locations outside the core. 75% of participants gaining employment in 2014 were living in Minneapolis or St. Paul; 90% were in Hennepin or Ramsey counties.*

Other systems and entities provide additional workforce and training services in the region including MNSCU, ABE, and special projects funded by the state or local areas.

This context is important as we look at better aligning resources as it demonstrates both the limitations of focusing on WIOA alone as well as the opportunity to look more broadly at the need for services, especially by specific populations, and how services are delivered. A few highlights:

* The public workforce system’s “higher touch” services are reaching about one-third of the market of unemployed adults.
* Nonprofit/philanthropic partners may be reaching an additional one-third.
* In all cases, we know that placement and retention results for people of color (particularly African-Americans) lags.

A highly functioning regional plan should be able to deliver better results that improve placement and retention for people of color, people with disabilities, and others.

Additional detail on who is currently served by the system and other demographics and maps are available in Attachment J.

*Strengths:* As noted already, the regional economy is strong, and the regional workforce development system has strengths that reflect the diversity and variety within the regional economy. A primary strength, although sometimes viewed as a liability, is the existence of multiple entities (public and private) working toward the same goal of employment. In almost all cases, nonprofit and some private for-profit partners are working in conjunction with their local WDBs, and the local WDBs are cooperating on multiple levels.

A key strength of the coordinated approach is the extent to which certain WDBs have specializations in certain areas, and are looked to as leaders in certain sectors, spurred in part, by the perspectives of their own engaged local business leaders. Additionally, as most of our regional WDBs are county-based, they also have responsibility for, and can coordinate the delivery of, welfare Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) services and Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) along with implementation of WIOA.

Further, we note that in service to jobseekers, incumbent workers, and employers, there are many times when local service is not only appropriate, but *preferred.* While much of this plan outlines the many ways in which we will cooperatively serve jobseekers and employers throughout the metro region, we pause to note that our workforce services often serve independent local businesses and individual jobseekers who are looking for personalized, one-to-one service that reflects an understanding of their own neighborhoods and cities. While there are many who see the entire metropolitan region as their “backyard”, there is value to having independent localized services for those whose boundaries may end at the city limits, county line, or in some cases, an even smaller neighborhood.

*Weaknesses:* A primary weakness of the regional workforce development system is inadequate funding. The primary financial resources for all this work are federal workforce funds which are, broadly speaking, declining and often not within our direct line of influence. Lacking funding to serve clients within the system is a legitimate constraint on the ability of the system to address racial disparities in employment. Additionally, we find that our regional workforce system can be hampered by:

* Conflicting program requirements that limit the extent to which workforce development staff can leverage multiple resources to help an individual, and inadvertently discourage agencies from spending resources on people with multiple employment barriers.
* Program rules for TANF participants that create a disincentive for recipients to earn higher incomes. If they progress in their career and earn more, they will lose benefits that cannot be replaced at an incrementally higher wage.
* Access to Adult Basic Education (ABE) services to help individuals to master basic math and reading skills needed to obtain their GED. K-12 schools sometimes lack resources to offer GED classes for students up to age 21; and, when students pursue remedial education through MN State Colleges & Universities or other higher education institutions, it often cuts into student aid that could be used for more advanced training.
* Substantial funding that is made available within the workforce system by competitive grant processes sometimes undermines shared strategies that have been developed at the local and regional levels. We see this practice as a weakness that, if it is to continue, should be more carefully coordinated through regional and local Workforce Development Boards.

Finally, the regional workforce system now requires a longer and more expensive on-ramp for individuals than in years past. We find that individuals looking for work are beginning further back – they often lack the academic and social preparation necessary to move successfully into training and onto work. Much of this is structural – changes in the economy, incidences of incarceration, increases in housing and education debt. And, as our understanding of these structural deficits improves, we can craft systemic solutions *as we continue* serving individuals as effectively as we can, given the lack of adequate funding.

*Opportunities*: We see a number of opportunities on the horizon. First and most importantly, we are in a tightening labor market. It is, again, workforce development’s “time to shine.” As the labor market in the Twin Cities tightens, there is an opportunity to adjust and adapt services to serve the unemployed populations better, particularly people with disabilities, ex-offenders, youth, African-American men, and incumbent workers. These are all groups for which additional insights have been gained in recent years and we can use this labor market window to provide more and better services to advance their movement in the labor market. As race equity and disparities have taken center stage to the regional agenda, we are well-positioned to coordinate a racial disparities employment solution at the regional level. In order to produce outcomes at the individual level for employment equity for individuals, a system level approach is needed and this is the perfect opportunity to do so.

Within the last several years, we have developed a common, regional approach to messaging and branding from an economic development perspective. Now, we can do the same from a workforce perspective – helping employers see a large and complex labor market that the regional workforce system can help them successfully navigate. Many companies have a reach across the entire metro area, and interfacing with them could be done at the regional level. A coordinated approach would also help with public perception of the WDBs and their function and outcomes.

In most cases, our shared county-based delivery of TANF and SNAP services is integrated with WIOA delivery. We see opportunity to strengthen those connections and further leverage SNAP Employment & Training funds in the coming years.

*Threats*: There are three overarching threats that loom large. The first is that the cost of addressing the issues we face is significant. Within the region, we continue to face chronic unemployment by some, sustained underemployment and low-wage work faced by many others, and still, pockets of serious labor need in critical industry sectors and occupational clusters. The cost of addressing these issues is typically not within the expected range of acceptable WIOA per-participant training and placement costs. The system is consistently threatened by being under-resourced.

The second is that our region faces structural inequities by race that we are taking steps to address. Persistent and significant gaps in education, health, home ownership, wealth, and employment compound each other and conspire to make it difficult to reduce racial disparities in any one area without advancing structural solutions in multiple areas. The problems must be addressed with strategies not just for employment, but more broadly with strategies for education, health and social well-being as well. The Boards can play a significant and meaningful role in this regard, but of course, cannot act alone.

Finally, we must acknowledge the threat of the rapidly changing nature of work itself. Even as we negotiate training, placement, wage, and retention targets for WIOA, we are mindful that being “placed” in a “job” for a steady “wage” is increasingly not the norm in the current and emerging labor market in which temporary, gig, freelance, crew, and other forms of work are increasing in prevalence. The timeframe in which emerging jobs go from thought/conception to potential contract/hire is shorter, the training needed is sometimes more ambiguous and the work arrangements inevitably more complex. And, even more ‘traditional’ work in the trades, arts, education and transportation sectors sometimes now requires an entrepreneurial approach to being an independent contractor as well as a worker. This threat will not likely shift our approach to workforce development during the two-year window of this plan; however, it must be addressed in the coming years if we are going to remain a viable and useful resource in the labor market.

*Note on sources: much of the analysis in this section was gleaned from one-on-one interviews with WDB leaders, meetings with partners, and other stakeholders during the drafting of this plan (February 2016 – March 2017.*

**11. Describe the Regional Workforce Development Area’s vision for a skilled workforce**

All residents of the region will have more opportunities to attain family supporting careers, experience fewer barriers to employment and enjoy a high quality of life. Our priority is ensuring access to economic opportunity for people of color, immigrants, people with disabilities, and others whose talents, skills, and abilities are necessary to the continued economic vitality of our region.

Through effective partnerships and engaged stakeholders, the region will produce a skilled workforce that meets employers’ needs and contributes to a strong regional economy that provides prosperity for all.

As noted in earlier sections, regional leaders are striving to:

* Provide residents in the region an opportunity to enter the talent development pipeline and progress into economic self-sufficiency by:
* Providing opportunities for individuals to attain economic self-sufficiency through strategies that address skills gaps, housing and transportation barriers.
* Addressing and helping to mitigate workforce system limitations and workplace issues for those experiencing economic and racial disparities, particularly for African Americans and American Indians;
* Ensuring that businesses have access to a skilled workforce and talent pool of racially diverse employees that have the competencies needed to make them globally competitive; and,
* Aligning formal and informal partners to ensure workforce development, education and training resources achieve maximum benefit for individuals and businesses in the region.

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| **AREA 1: SECTOR PARTNERSHIPS** |

**12. 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 within this response. Complete Attachment G.**

The GMWC is committed to creating and sustaining high performing sector partnerships as defined by the National Fund for Workforce Solutions, including ensuring active employer leadership, a focus on outcomes for both customers, focusing on sectors where there is opportunity for people with low-skills to gain employment and advance through career pathways, and utilizing industry-recognized credentials.

Our work to date has sought to deepen sector expertise where it already exists and shape new sector efforts where needed. Four primary data sets were used to shape future pathways: state-level sector data already compiled by the GWDC, regional labor market analysis completed by DEED, Real Time Talent data showing openings in the metro region in our targeted sectors; and, the human intelligence from WDB staff, DEED Business Representatives, and community-based partners such as MSPWin and Greater MSP as well as a host of non-profit service providers. Six sectors have been identified and three are in active development. Three additional sectors will be activated later this year.

For each sector we have identified the proposed lead convener as well as sector manager. The lead convener is an organization or individual identified as a leader and spokesperson for the industry sector. The convener has responsibility, with assistance from the sector manager(s) to recruit and ensure continued engagement by critical partners, especially employers. The sector manager(s) is likely a person with expertise and experience working with public sector workforce programs and policies.

The manager(s) is initially envisioned to largely come from the local WDAs as detailed in Attachment G. This staff time is anticipated to be a contribution to the region from the individual WDAs for the remainder of 2017. As sector strategies are developed, additional funding to support the managers and lead conveners will be sought.

Initially, sector manager(s) will compile an inventory of existing funding directed to that sector today. This should include funds from public sources as well as funds directed to CBOs, MNSCU and other partners that support training for this sector. Additionally, each sector manager will identify how many WIOA participants from each WDA have been trained, placed, and retained in each sector and at what wage levels. This baseline data will help inform future sector strategies.

**13. Describe how the make-up of the sector partnerships will be determined and the expertise and resources they bring to the partnership.**

As noted earlier, sector partnerships established through this plan largely build off of existing tables/partnerships. We are using relationships and expertise developed over the past several years and will expand those tables to address metro-wide opportunities. Individual members of the GMWC have been nationally recognized for their sector partnerships. For example, In March 2015, President Obama named the Minneapolis area as one of 20 TechHire regions across the United States.  The mission of the MSP TechHire initiative, led by the City of Minneapolis, is to close the workforce skills gap in the high tech economy by building a path for diverse workers to access training, support, and tech jobs across the Greater Minneapolis Region.  As of April 2016, 318 participants (32% women and 24% minorities) have completed accelerated training programs, over 200 trainees have been placed in full-time tech jobs, and over 150 employers have engaged in the initiative.

Attachment G details the make-up of six sector partnerships. In many cases we are looking for the lead convener to be a credible and high level organization or individual with visibility in the industry. They will help recruit and engage business participation. Sector managers, most often staff from a WDA, will be responsible for engaging other partners including training providers, CBOs, ABE, etc.

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| **AREA 2 – STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT** |

**15. Describe the process for identifying the characteristics, size and scope of populations not fully benefitting from the economic recovery, experiencing factors such as high unemployment, lack of credentialed skills and other barriers to employment.**

The GMWC believes that the most effective strategies are grounded in good data. As described earlier in the sections describing the MSP regional economy and workforce, the region has significant demand for a skilled workforce. At the same time, a review of employment data confirms that several groups of individuals are not participating fully in the labor force and represent an “untapped resource.” These populations have not benefitted from the re-bounding national economy and include people of color (including immigrants), people with disabilities, youth and ex-offenders.

In reviewing the data, we also came to recognize that the location of service availability relative to populations in need is not always aligned. We intend to use this analysis in planning regional programs. We also will be sharing much of this data on a regular basis with CBO partners and other public programs serving specific populations and geographies as we develop career pathways. Attachment J provides examples of the maps we have created to begin this analysis.

Working with individuals and organizations with experience and expertise serving these specific populations is essential to success. We recognize the significant expertise represented by community-based organizations and other partners who are working on the ground to support, train, coach, and employ people who have not had access to opportunity in the past.

In addition to the highest priority of better outcomes for African Americans and American Indians, we also recognize other populations in need, such as ex-offenders. In November 2010 the Center for Economic and Policy Research released a study titled “Ex-offenders and the Labor Market,” which found that a felony conviction or imprisonment significantly reduces the ability of ex-offenders to find jobs, costing the U.S. economy an estimated $57 to $65 billion annually in lost economic output. The study focused on male offenders, since they constitute 90% of people convicted of felonies in the U.S. It is well known that ex-prisoners in general have a more difficult time finding jobs than people without a criminal history. Data for the Minneapolis-Saint Paul region is consistent with this study.

In addition to data, we value the on the ground perspective provided by community-based organizations and community members. The opportunity to learn more and enhance skills in working with diverse populations afforded by the Marnita’s Table consulting has been valuable. Going forward we envision more interactions with community based organizations representing under-served populations, especially the African American, American Indian and disability community. We look to strong community partners with a history of providing employment and training services to these communities to help the public sector system do better in terms of responding to need, creating welcoming places for services, and helping enhance cultural competency in our staff.

Working together with these partners, we will focus significant effort on strategies to address the barriers faced by these populations, align resources to deliver education and training that will help them develop and advance in careers, and ultimately fully enjoy the broad range of opportunities and high quality of life our region offers.

**19. Describe how the entities responsibility for participating in this process will be selected, including their expected roles and responsibilities.**

Entities engaged in this assessment and strategy development will initially be members of the GMWC and/or members of individual Workforce Development Area Boards. From there, we anticipate creating ‘sector panels’ that cross individual WDA lines, bringing expertise from across industries and/or occupational clusters – with a specific eye toward meeting workforce needs.

Industry lead sector partnerships will, however, include opportunities for community-based organizations to inform design of career pathway strategies and employment and training programs. Community-based organizations, in particular those serving the populations of greatest need (African American, American Indian and people with disabilities) will play a critical role in assessing and validating the data and identifying specific barriers that impact successful access and completion of employment, education and training services. Working jointly, we will develop strategies to reduce barriers and improve outcomes for these populations and ensure culturally-relevant career pathways programming is available.

**20. Describe how the outcomes will be determined in terms of employment and training services modeling career pathways thinking the end of the two year plan.**

By the end of the two-year plan, we will have worked on multiple career pathways in the identified industry sectors and occupational clusters. There will be a significant increase in enrollment into career pathways programs, a higher percentage of those completing career pathways programs, and a higher wage for those participants entering the workforce in targeted sectors.

Further, with partnerships among other public and philanthropic partners, we will have begun to identify steady (and sustainable sources of funding to grow those pathways and move individuals along them – with the ability to cover the kinds of preparation, training, and support costs that we know are necessary for individuals to succeed.

Finally, we will also have developed, with our business leaders, a running list of future training needs. Again, with strong business, education, and nonprofit service provider partnerships, we anticipate significantly shortening the “development time” to identify training and supports needed for specific pathways. Further, we hope to have secured sufficient formula funds through public sources so that the development of every pathway need not be awarded through lengthy and resource-intensive competitive grant processes.

1. The Minnesota Department of Human Services operational definition of a disparity as a gap greater than 5 percentage points between whites and the racial/ethnic group is our guide to defining our focus on African Americans and American Indians. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)