

**Regional and Local Plans**

Minnesota’s Workforce Development System under WIOA

Program Years 2016 & 2017

Submitted by

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| RWDA: | Southeast Minnesota Regional Development Area/6 |
| LWDA: | Local Workforce Development Areas #8 and #18 |

## Department of Employment and Economic Development

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

The Regional Oversight Committee has identified three regional priorities: 1) Higher education and community career pathways; 2) Career planning efforts in K-12 schools; 3) Outreach and support services to special populations, including veterans, older workers, offenders, persons with disabilities and minorities.

The two Executive Directors have the ultimate responsibility of guiding the work around these regional priorities. Current partnerships are being expanded to ensure that we are leveraging resources and minimizing duplication of services.

A Regional Career Pathways Coordinator (RC3) has been hired and is identifying and developing both formal and informal cooperative service opportunities across the region. Any agreements will be reviewed by the Regional Oversight Committee. In addition, the RC3 is creating an inventory of assets and gaps among regional career pathways. This RC3 is also charged with convening businesses and labor representatives to outline opportunities for developing adult career pathways in critical sectors throughout the region.

An additional .5 FTE Regional Youth Career Pathways Coordinator has also been hired to address specific youth initiatives and young adult career pathways across the region.

A Regional Career Pathways Report was created and shared with the WDB’s, the GWDC, and state legislators.

The SE MN WDB has established equity-based taskforce subcommittees and several initiatives to focus attention on the equity issues across our region.

Taskforce subcommittees include: Women in Non-Traditional Employment, Diversity and Inclusion, MaxAbility (which focuses on persons with disabilities), Salute

Southern MN (a veteran’s network), Youth, and Previously Incarcerated.

At the Winona WDB, board members are active in (but not limited to) several initiatives, including the Winona Development Achievement Center, Human Rights Commission, Winona Chamber of Commerce REACH Program (High School Youth Program), Project FINE, Occupational Rehabilitation Center, and Beyond the Yellow Ribbon.

Membership for the equity-based taskforces is made up of WDB members along with WDI staff, Winona WorkForce Center staff, and other community representatives.

Taskforce members are seated via the Management Committees of the WDB’s.

In March, 2017 the two SE MN WDBs provided coordinated outreach for a Marnita’s Table event. The goals and outcomes from this event fall into two primary arenas: employer education and engagement and intentional outreach.

One innovative idea resulting from the Marnita’s Table event which engages employers and also provides an opportunity for intentional outreach is the possibility of hosting a sector-based “speed dating” event for employers and job seekers.

Following the intentional social interaction model from Marnita’s Table, employers and job seekers would be given an opportunity to learn about each other and share information about their respective cultures. Employers will be able to provide insight into their specific work environments, while job seekers will be able to determine their level of interest in each organization. The ultimate goal for both job seekers and employers will be the intentional employment of diverse candidates.

Employer education and engagement may include: Best Places to Work, the process used to evaluate and identify Best Practices within employers across the region, which will be tailored to focus on the best diversity and inclusion practices; utilizing the Business Service Specialists and WDI Placement Specialists to provide information to employers about local training opportunities focused on topics such as: inclusive hiring practices, reviewing documented job requirements and postings to accurately reflect job duties, current labor market information, the business case for hiring a diverse workforce, implicit bias awareness, generational differences, and other relevant topics.

As organizations focused on continuous improvement, we will use a customer satisfaction interview process to listen to the voices of our customers in a very intentional manner. Capitalizing on the momentum of the Marnita’s Table event, we will expand outreach to include voices from across our diverse communities, not just the voices of our direct customers. Focus groups and community engagement across our wide partner network will help us collect this information and share it with the Equity Taskforces for action item definition and follow-up.

The WDA #8 is providing Equity Logic training to all staff in partnership with the Diversity Council of Rochester; as with all professional development opportunities, staff from either WDB are always welcome to attend.

1. Describe how performance negotiations will be managed among the local workforce development areas within the region.

Performance negotiations will be managed through the One-Stop Committees of the two Workforce Development Boards, who report to the Regional Oversight Committee. (See the attached Regional Memorandum of Understanding, Attachment I.)

Once One-Stop Operators have been selected via RFP by the WDBs, the One-Stop Operators will report performance outcomes to their WDBs and the joint Regional Oversight Committee.

1. Describe any additional goals being set by the regional leadership or individual local area boards.

See above (Q.3) for the goals set by the Regional Oversight Committee. Additional goals will be set as action plans are implemented at the local level.

In August, 2016, the two SE MN WDBs hosted a regional luncheon on diversity and inclusion. This intentional outreach effort brought together WDB staff and board members, community organizations and other interested parties. One result of this meeting was the reorganization of the SE MN WDBs into highly engaged equity- based taskforces. Taskforce members provide input, make connections, and engage in process improvement for the betterment of our diverse customers and community members.

WDB Equity Taskforces have driven the development of the following activities: MaxAbility Employment Taskforce Series, Re-Entrant Specialist Certification training, Salute Southern MN Employer Engagement Event.

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Employer education and engagement may include: Best Places to Work, the process we use to evaluate and identify Best Practices within employers across the region, which will be tailored to focus on best equity and inclusion practices; utilizing WDI Placement Specialists and Winona WorkForce Center staff to provide

information to employers about local training opportunities focused on topics such as: inclusive hiring practices, reviewing documented job requirements and postings to accurately reflect job duties, current labor market information, the business case for hiring a diverse workforce, implicit bias awareness, generational differences, and other relevant topics.

As an organization focused on continuous improvement, we currently use a customer satisfaction interview process to listen to the voices of our customers in a very intentional manner. Capitalizing on the momentum of the Marnita’s Table event, we will expand our outreach to include voices from across our diverse communities, not just the voices of our direct customers. Focus groups and community engagement across our wide partner network will help us collect this information and share it with the Equity Taskforces for action item definition and follow-up.

WDA #8 is providing Equity Logic training to all staff in partnership with the Diversity Council of Rochester; as with all professional development opportunities, staff from either WDB are always welcome to attend.

The Winona WDB is using the Twelve Commandments of WIOA as a guide to identifying additional efforts and goals. (Attachment J)

As a convening agent, the SE MN region brought together:

Equity grant applicants for increased collaboration, alignment of strategies, shared information and resources; a regional economic summit which included the Minneapolis Federal Reserve Chair and staff to educate WDB staff and employers on the regional economy; Career Pathways Certification Training for WDB staff and partners.

Biannually, the WDBs from Winona, Southeast Minnesota, South Central MN and Southwest MN come together for a day-long training. This year’s training focused on equity and inclusion. These training sessions focus on specific issues that the combined regions have identified, and draw some 120 staff members as well as State staff and content experts.

1. Describe how the local area boards will direct system alignment within the region through shared policies and practices.

We rely on each of the local boards to direct the work that impacts their specific region. Shared training and support policies and practices will be implemented by the two Executive Directors and local WDBs whenever it makes sense to do so. The Regional Oversight Committee will help guide these shared training and support policies and practices while providing oversight to their implementation and outcomes.

A cooperative agreement statement will be created between the two WDB’s, outlining the shared training and support policies and practices.

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

A Memorandum of Understanding defines the formal partnership structure and operation of the Regional Oversight Committee.

A Regional Career Pathways Coordinator (RC3) was jointly hired with shared resources and is identifying and developing both formal and informal cooperative service opportunities across the region. Any agreements will be reviewed by the Regional Oversight Committee. In addition, the RC3 is creating an inventory of assets and gaps among regional career pathways.

An additional .5 FTE Regional Youth Career Pathways Coordinator has also been assigned to address specific youth initiatives and young adult career pathways across the region.

A Regional Career Pathways Report was created and shared with the WDB’s, the GWDC, and state legislators.

The RC3 is also involved with new partnership development, focused on career pathways in healthcare, IT, construction, and public service for specific populations in coordination with partners including CLUES, Hennepin County, Common Cause, and Hispanic Contractors.

Multiple cooperative service arrangements exist across SE MN. Examples include: Bridges to Healthcare (Mayo Clinic, WDI, ABE, RCTC), Pathways grants (WDI, area Community Colleges, ABE, employers), CLUES partnership (WDI, ABE, CLUES, trade unions, employers), Journey to Growth (WDI, Rochester Area Chamber of Commerce), Aim2Win (tri-state collaboration including the WDBs of Winona, LaCrosse, WI, NE Iowa and SE MN), WDB and 7 Rivers Alliance, Rochester Area Math/Science Partnership (RAMSP), Rochester Gang Taskforce, Rochester Area Foundation, MnDOT, CEDA, Rochester Works! (Rochester Chamber of Commerce, WDI, community-based organizations), YouthPrize (Healthy Community Initiatives, WDI, ABE, regional high schools), the Mentor Program operated in Winona by the schools and local Chamber to place students in work study settings, Project FINE, Winona Port Authority, and the Winona Economic Development Authority (EDA), Winona Chamber of Commerce EDA, Winona State University Composites Engineering Board, Winona Area School District, Minnesota State College

Southeast, Winona County Veteran’s Service Officer and Disabled Veteran’s Service Officer.

Each of these cooperative service arrangements allows for regional strategies focused on shared information and resources, grant management, staff and customer training.

WDI is also exploring a shared staff position with the Rochester Area Chamber of Commerce. This position will focus on employer engagement and relationships as well as economic development throughout the region.

**REGIONAL STRATEGIC PLANNING**

*The strategic planning component of the Regional Plan addresses three elements: strategic analytics, strategic approach and strategic operations. The overarching theme is to engage regional stakeholders in the process of establishing the strategic plan and to ensure that decisions are data driven and that the data can be used to measure gains and identify needs for improvement.*

***Strategic Analytics****: The assessment of the regional workforce development area focuses on key conditions. These conditions are detailed in the following response needs.*

***Strategic Approach:*** *The core areas of the strategic design focus on priorities of the Governor and the system of service delivery.*

**Area 1 – Sector Partnerships**

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 within this response. Complete **Attachment G – Local Workforce Development Area Key Industries in Regional Economy.**

The Department Of Labor draws a distinction between sectoral strategies and Career

Pathways. **Sector Strategies** are regionally-based activities where you identify high growth areas (data), get multiple employers in focus groups to identify needs, get employers to refine/identify pertinent curricula, flesh out stackable credential options, and then bring together education/economic development/CBO's/Workforce providers to look at sustainability options. **Career Pathways** is the local action steps to implement the sector strategies. The steps they identified in building Career Pathways are:

1. Build industry partnerships at the local level 2. Identify Sector needs at the local level

3. Design Career Pathways program at the local level 4. Identify funding options at the local level

1. Align programs and services at the local level
2. Measure system change and performance outcomes at the local level - and then give that feedback to the Regional level.

This model fits well with the Sector Committee Structure and strategic work of the

WDB’s and aligns the Career Pathways work being done locally to implement the sector strategies of the boards.

The WDBs of WDAs #8 and #18 support the seven principles of high performing industry partnerships, including:

* + Develop and maintain employer leadership
  + Produce excellent outcomes for individuals and employers
  + Serve low-skill, low-wage individuals
  + Promote career advancement
  + Promote industry-recognized credentials
  + Communicate key information to stakeholders
  + Operate with knowledgeable staff

The WDBs of WDAs #8 and #18 have been built around key regional industry sectors and employer issues. Industry sector subcommittees include: Healthcare, Manufacturing, Services & Trades, and Emerging Technologies & Economic Development. Taskforce subcommittees (which focus on equity issues) include: Women in Non-Traditional Employment, Diversity & Inclusion, MaxAbility (focused on persons with disabilities), Salute Southern MN (Veteran's network), Youth, and Previously Incarcerated These subcommittees are all employer led.

The mission of the WDA #8 is to develop and advance the workforce of Southeast Minnesota. Our mission is at the heart of everything we do to impact positive outcomes for both job seekers and employers. We actively provide outreach to people from diverse populations and low-skilled (often hardest to serve) individuals, to ensure they are able to utilize the myriad of services available to them.

The mission of WDA #18 is to develop, support, and evaluate programs to prepare youth and adults with serious barriers to employment for entry into the labor force working in coordination with Winona County Employers.

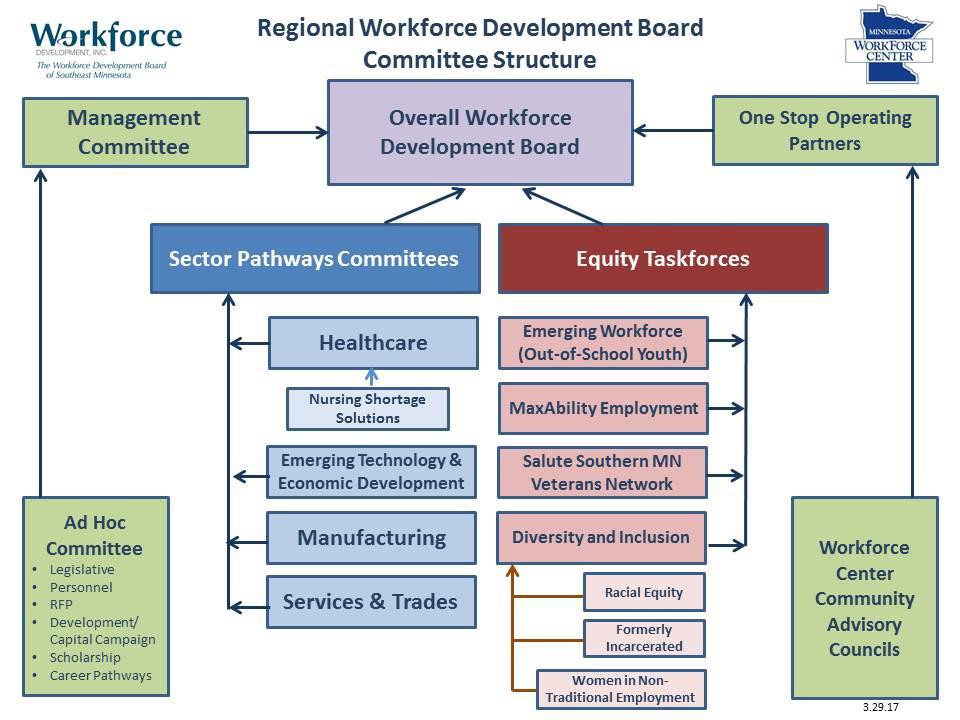
The Career Pathways subcommittee of WDA #8 focuses on convening partnerships as well as identifying and developing career pathway solutions for area in-demand occupations. Several of our staff members and area partners are now certified Career Pathways Leaders.

Regular communication with industry leaders (board members) ensures we are assisting our customers to pursue industry-recognized credentials.

WDB staff regularly requests and analyzes current Labor Market Information (LMI) from our regional DEED LMI analyst, who happens to be housed in Winona. The WDBs get monthly updates about the regional economy from staff “on the ground” as well as directly from board members. Regional Business Service Specialists and WDI Placement Specialists provide outreach to area businesses, and report information on economic activity at each WDB meeting. In addition to LMI, WDB staff uses Wanted Analytics and the State of Minnesota’s Career Profile tools to access the data needed to drive decision-making. This information and data is used as a foundation for planning and decision-making at all levels, to set priorities and direct activities, to align resources with the needs of our regional employers, and to give timely, relevant information to our job seekers. Bi-annually, this information and data is used to create a Targeted Training list.

LMI is analyzed to identify the demand occupations across the region. Once an initial list of these demand occupations has been created, it is shared with WDB members for their local employer insight within the Sector Subcommittees. Each subcommittee makes recommendations regarding changes to the initial list based on what they are seeing across our local economy. Any changes, (additions or deletions) are voted on by the full WDB. The final approved list is then shared with staff and board members. The Targeted Training list is used to ensure staff is aware of current demand occupations and can share that information with their job-seeking customers. The list is also used to direct and guide training funds to these demand occupations. The Targeted Training list also provides a framework for sector subcommittee recommendations toward training opportunities and career pathways that may need to be developed.

All of the Career Counselors within the SE MN region must have Global Career Development Facilitator (GCDF) training. All Career Counselors are required to have at least a Bachelor’s degree; many of our Career Counselors have Master’s degrees. All of our intake specialists have achieved State-sponsored training and certifications. Our extremely knowledgeable staff is dedicated to serving both our job seeking and employer customers.



1. Describe how the partnership(s) 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.

The Career Pathways Subcommittee and all of the Industry Sector Subcommittees of the WDBs of WDAs #8 and #18 will continue to identify and develop career pathways solutions for area in-demand occupations during the two years of this plan. One example of this work is the spin-off of a Nursing Shortage Solutions workgroup from the Healthcare Sector Subcommittee. The shortage of LPNs was identified as a regional issue, and an initial workgroup formed to identify possible solutions. The initial workgroup has expanded and taken regional LPN recruitment and nursing career pathway strategies as their primary focus in order to meet this regional need.

The successful Bridges to Healthcare collaboration helps regional employers meet their needs for a diverse workforce by providing education, training, and support to

diverse and low-income job seekers. Bridges partners include: WDI, ABE, RCTC and Mayo Clinic.

Another example from WDB #18 is the efforts toward a Basic Composite certificate program for the composite industry. The Winona Area Composites Consortium

recognized an issue with a large segment of the area’s potential workforce and together with MN State College SE Technical, conducted a survey of 24 key members of the composite industry. 87.5% of those surveyed felt there would be a benefit in creating a short, basic composites certificate program for those considering entering this field.

The following sector subcommittees are currently led by regional businesses: Healthcare (Mayo Clinic, Field Crest Care Center, Olmsted Medical Center, Ministry

Health/St. Elizabeth’s, Gunderson Clinic, Spring Valley Senior Living), Service & Trades (Benike Construction, Manpower, Kwik Trip, UA Local #6), Manufacturing

(Viracon, Mrs. Gerry’s, Domaille Engineering, Life Fitness, Alamco Wood Products, McNeilus Steel, Hormel, Jennie-O), Emerging Technologies (People’s Rural Electric Company, Union Prairie Bank, Henkel, Excel Energy, Mayo Clinic, IBM, Fastenal, Peerless, Mississippi Welders, PlastiCert).

Sector subcommittees are charged with promoting business retention strategies, searching out grant funding for career pathways and special projects, studying relevant labor market information, determining targeted jobs and training programs, and promoting equity strategies across the region.

We are also engaging Maher & Maher to continue to identify sector partnerships and business engagement strategies common to both WDAs #8 and #18.

**Area 2 – Stakeholder Engagement**

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.

Census data is compared to the customer enrollment and demographic data for our region. Incidents of specific demographic factors within the general population of the region are compared to those same factors within our customer base. That information is used to identify gaps in service, opportunities for outreach, and disparities.

Analysis of our currently enrolled customers helps us understand the characteristics and demographics of area populations who are not fully benefitting from the economic recovery. Our customer population, unfortunately, faces barriers of high unemployment or underemployment, lack of credentialed skills and many others.

One important recent change for the workforce of SE MN is increased diversity. From 2000 to 2013, several races, including Black or African American, Asian & Other Pacific Islander, Hispanic or Latino, and Two or More Races all showed at least double-digit percentage increases across the region. Unfortunately, many of these diverse populations struggle with higher than average unemployment, and lower than average educational attainment and labor force participation rates.

Source: “Our Labor Shortages are Here to Stay: Now What?” Steve Hine, LMI Office Research Director, October 29, 2015.

Our partnerships with County government, other service providers for diverse populations, corrections, and other community organizations provide us with additional data and information on the size and scope of other populations in need of assistance or services.

The Taskforce Subcommittee members are another source of valuable information about population changes and arising needs.

Local WDBs use all of this information and data to develop and implement strategies to address the gaps, opportunities and disparities.

Both WDBs are dedicated to increasing diversity among our staff to better represent the populations we serve. The goal of WDA #8 is to increase staff diversity to 20% by 2020. The partners in the region currently employ Outreach Specialists for the Karen, Somali and Latino populations, and people with disabilities in communities across the region.

1. Describe how this engagement will impact the development and implementation of the selected sector strategies during the first two years of this plan.

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| Current partner engagement, whether from the WDB membership or community partners, is driving the development and implementation of sector strategies and has been for some time. This work will continue for the next two years and beyond.  Customer engagement interviews are scheduled for Spring, 2017 across all SE MN offices as a means to gather direct customer feedback related to our services and programming. Feedback will be used to identify opportunities for improvement and highlight best practices across the region. | | |
|  | In March, 2017 the two SE MN WDBs provided coordinated outreach for a Marnita’s Table event. The goals and outcomes from this event fall into two primary arenas: |  |

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