

Regional and Local Plans

7/1/2024 – 6/30/2027

RWDA: Regional Workforce Development Area #1

LWDA: Northwest - LWDA#1

Regional Plan

SECTION A: REGIONAL VISION, GOALS AND STRATEGIES

- A.1. Describe the regional workforce development area's vision for a skilled workforce.

The vision of **Regional Workforce Development Area One**, which includes Local Workforce Development Area One and Two, in Northwest Minnesota, is a healthy economy where employer and employees alike are given the opportunity to thrive. Employees succeed with family sustaining employment and employers in successful prosperous business. Through sector partnerships our goal is to see all individuals through a lens of equity and inclusion and to promote business culture that thrives in the daily practices of acknowledgement of everyone's strengths.

- A.2. Describe the region's strategic alignment with the State's Vision, Goals and Strategies.

We are in alignment with the State's Vision, Goals, and Strategies for success. Sector partnerships have never been as important as they are within the 2024-2027 plan. The need to recognize the value that is gained through intentional collaboration within business, education, workforce, and economic development is crucial to success. Region One has long understood this need for alliance and has worked to establish a strong Regional Workforce Alliance group that brings employers, educators, local and state resources, and tribal entities to the table. Through funds awarded through the Drive for 5 competitive grant, we identified multiple employers that are committed to supporting individuals enrolled in workforce initiatives that will fill the need in the most high-demand occupations in the state. In the future it is our intention to build stronger alliances through the local regional workforce alliance that will initiate training through WIOA and State funds that support Inclusive workforce and increased knowledge across the workforce in emerging technology, labor market demands and resources for new Minnesotans.

- A.3. Describe best practices or area of strength of the region as it relates to the State's Vision, Goals and Strategies that should be considered for replication or scale across the state.

In alignment with DEED's mission of a healthy Minnesota economy for everyone, the Minnesota Indigenous Workforce Initiative should be developed and promoted statewide. Though it is a statewide initiative, the heaviest concentration of cohort members resides in the Northwest. Native communities are the poorest communities in our state, and the best way to provide families with an opportunity to break from

generational poverty is to provide native job seekers with meaningful work with equitable pay.

- A.4. Describe the strategy to work with the entities within your region to carry out the core programs to align resources available in the region to achieve the strategic vision and goals of the local area boards and the state.

The Community Workforce Inclusion Councils (CWIC) will continue to develop the Inclusive Workforce Employer (I-WE) designation program and support designees. However, the intent in 2024 is to bring the three regional CWIC groups into one more cohesive and effective unit. This will allow for greater opportunity to develop marketing and “aftercare” programs that will allow the I-WE designation to scale up in our region.

- A.5. Describe any additional goals being set by the regional leadership or individual local area boards.

The northwest region continues to recognize and adjust to demographic shifts, not only within the workforce, but also within our communities. As the birthplace of both the Inclusive Workforce Employer designation and the Minnesota Indigenous Workforce Initiative, northwest Minnesota will continue to address the changes that come with the new workforce.

This includes understanding workforce priorities that will be demanded of employers in the years to come. As such, Region 1 will promote and celebrate The Department of Labor and Commerce’s GOOD JOBS PRINCIPLES as standards of work in our region. Through data collected in a recent workforce survey completed February 2024 several priorities have been identified within our region as areas of concern that we will focus on over the next three years. Significant issues such as skills gaps, labor shortages, and shifting resources within our rural communities. These issues will be addressed through partnerships including the Regional Workforce Alliance, Local Workforce Boards, and community sector partnerships.

- A.6. Describe how the region is working together to prepare the workforce for state and federal investments in the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL), the Creating Helpful Incentives to Produce Semiconductors (CHIPS) and Science Act, and the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) (collectively referred to as Investing in America (IIA)).

Under the umbrella of the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, the NW region will continue to support education in advanced manufacturing and technology. We will support regional chip manufacturers and suppliers and will promote the practice of developing universal

job descriptions currently being developed and implemented by CHIPS partners in the Minneapolis/St. Paul metropolitan. By creating incentives for paying prevailing wages and utilizing qualified apprentices from registered apprenticeship programs in clean energy projects, Region 1 will support the Inflation Reduction Act. The Regional Workforce Alliance has prioritized increasing the use of apprenticeships and has engaged with the MN Department of Labor to expand on the use and share knowledge. The goal is to assist in filling well-paying union jobs and support proven pathways into the industry that allow workers to earn while they learn. Additionally, using WIOA funding job counselors will continue to highlight the benefits of careers within STEM pathways that will meet the needs of our future infrastructure demands.

SECTION B: REGIONAL OPERATIONS

- B.1. Provide a Strengths Weaknesses Opportunities Threats (SWOT) analysis of the regional workforce system.

Through a region-wide survey completed February 2024, followed by review and collaboration, the following concepts were identified at the March 2024 Regional Workforce Alliance Group as a method of planning for workforce initiatives and the following factors drew most attention.

Strengths: Proactive, strong sector partnerships. Employer Flexibility, Employers are taking action to improve workplace culture.

Weakness: Continued barriers within transportation, childcare and housing and technology in rural communities. Population changes that impact small rural communities that are changing the make-up of the small town. Continued disparity in attachment to labor force.

Opportunity: Support of Inclusive Workforce initiatives around equity and diversity. Structured guidance on Minnesota's Job Quality Principles for Employers, Emerging groups designed to assist employers such as the Reasonable Accommodations fund.

Threat: Aging population, workforce shortages, skills gaps, inflation, and corporate agriculture.

- B.2. Describe the selection process for the membership who will provide the leadership to oversee the development and coordination of the regional plan.

The Region 1 Workforce Development Boards (WDB) are largely composed of employers, we are well-positioned to help the local workforce system with employer linkages, apprise the CareerForce Center partners of local business trends, and bring innovative ideas to the system. Three of our members also serve on the Governor's Workforce

Development Board. The WDB members participate in Minnesota Association of Workforce Boards and the National Association of Workforce Boards Conferences.

- B.3. 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 Alliance (RWA) will assist in developing and implementing the plan that will focus on training and solutions within our workforce. The RWA meets quarterly to discuss up and coming initiatives that are facing employers, such as benefits, culture, recruitment, and Diversity, equity training.

- B.4. Describe how the approach used will ensure that partner engagement includes diverse representation, specifically among populations experiencing barriers to employment.

A regional approach supporting diversity has been the hallmark of past efforts within the WIOA Regional Plan. Elements of our past and future initiatives call for an increase in the awareness of diversity in the workforce in the 26-counties in Northwest Minnesota. While both LWDBs in the region have taken specific actions to address diversity, specific attention to diversity and the development of an action plan will continue, including steps to re-address and refresh previous actions. This plan has helped identify various sectors that make up local diversity and set forth a plan to address diversity on a region-wide approach.

- B.5. Describe how the local area boards will direct system alignment within the region through shared policies and practices.

The WDB sets the direction of the local workforce system and provides valuable input and feedback into the activities designed to meet the needs of employers and participants. They review performance measures and results, are active in environmental scanning, and enable us to structure program components, plan service levels and prioritize services to participants. The WDB also serves as oversight for the local workforce system and approves various measures, budgets and initiatives. All providers provide regular reports to the WDB on data, activities, and initiatives.

- B.6. 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.

All partners follow state policy regarding Memorandums of Understanding (MOU). Core partners use state policy as a guideline when negotiating commitment of resources that lead to the development of the MOU.

SECTION C: PROGRAM AND SERVICE DELIVERY

C.1. Describe the condition of the regional economy (cite the sources of data and analysis);

According to DEED's Regional Profile, updated September 2023. NORTHWEST MINNESOTA ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT REGIONS 1, 2, 4, 5 Covering the following counties: Becker, Beltrami, Cass, Clay, Clearwater, Crow Wing, Douglas, Grant, Hubbard, Kittson, Lake of the Woods, Mahnommen, Marshall, Morrison, Norman, Otter Tail, Pennington, Polk, Pope, Red Lake, Roseau, Stevens, Todd, Traverse, Wadena, and Wilkin

- **DEMOGRAPHICS**

Northwest Minnesota is a mostly rural, 26-county region located in the central and northwest areas of the state, bordering North Dakota and Canada. Covering four Economic Development Regions (EDRs), Northwest is the third largest of the six planning regions in the state, accounting for 10.2% of the state's total population. The area population increased by nearly 27,500 residents from 2010 to 2022, a 5.0% increase, compared to a 7.8% rise statewide. Half of the 26 counties in the Northwest planning region have grown in population since 2010, while the other 13 declined. Ten of the eleven counties in the region with less than 10,000 residents declined in population from 2010 to 2022. In contrast, the larger counties in the region have generally had more population growth. As part of the fast-growing Fargo-Moorhead Metropolitan Statistical Area, Clay County added 6,930 new residents, a 11.7% increase, making it the 8th fastest growing county (of 87) in the state. Crow Wing County, the largest county in the region with 67,948 people in 2022, was the 17th fastest growing in the state. Eight of the nine counties in the region with more than 30,000 residents saw population growth. Northwest Minnesota's population increase from 2020 to 2022 was driven by net migration – more people moving in than moving out. This handily overcame the natural decrease – more deaths than births. The bulk of the net migration was from other places in the U.S. (that is, “domestic”), with the remaining net gain from international migration.

- **LABOR FORCE**

According to data from DEED's Local Area Unemployment Statistics program, Northwest Minnesota had an average of just under 297,000 workers in 2021. Despite some ups and downs, the labor force generally increased from 2002 to 2020. The COVID-19 pandemic caused a sharp drop from 2020 to 2021 of 8,394

workers, or -2.7%. This was a similar but lesser drop than the -3.3% statewide labor force decline. Past declines in the Northwest's labor force began two to three years after the peak unemployment rates of the 2001 and 2008 recessions and had been more gradual. Northwest's labor force hit a peak in 2004 at 289,374 and continued down until 2007 resulting in a -0.5% decline. The next peak was 2010 at 297,986, dropping until 2013 resulting in a -0.9% decline. In contrast, after the 2020 recession the number of workers and the unemployment rate quickly dropped. In 2022, the labor force rapidly rebounded. However, with the large Baby Boomer population cohort in the Northwest, labor force growth going forward will be more constrained due to retirements. Averaging a net gain of 4,426 additional labor force participants per year between 1990 and 2000, employers were able to tap into a large and growing pool of talented workers. Although the regional labor force and economy continue to grow, the rate of labor force growth is slowing considerably, adding an average of only 740 workers per year from 2010 to 2020.

Applying current labor force participation rates to future population projections by age group creates labor force projections for the region. Despite Northwest Minnesota's 3.4% projected population increase, the regional labor force is expected to grow only 2.8% from 2025 to 2035. This is due to the aging Baby Boomers exiting the labor force. The largest decline is projected for the 55 to 64 age group, with a decrease in those aged 65 to 74 as well. Those aged 45 to 54 gain the most as Millennials move into that age group. Those aged 20 to 24 also increase, while those aged 75 & over have the fastest growth. The anticipated change in labor force age distribution may lead regional employers to adapt their management and hiring practices to attract employees from the growing age cohorts.

- **EMPLOYMENT CHARACTERISTICS**

With just over 63% of the population over 16 years of age in the labor force, Northwest had a much lower labor force participation rate than Minnesota's 69%. In addition, all but the youngest age group had lower labor force participation rates than those statewide, and the overall rate is lower because a higher percentage of the region's labor force is in the oldest age groups. Participation rates varied by race in Northwest, but also lagged state averages. American Indians were the only race that had a higher participation rate than the state. The participation rate of Hispanic or Latino residents were similar to statewide. Like statewide, the region's unemployment rates were higher than whites for every race and ethnicity group, except for Asians. In sum, unemployment rates were higher and participation rates lower among young workers, minorities, people with lower educational attainment, and workers with disabilities.

- **HOUSEHOLD WAGES**

Median household income was lower in Northwest Minnesota than statewide, \$62,128 compared to \$77,706. Northwest had the second lowest median household income of the 6 planning regions. Over 40% of households in the region had incomes below \$50,000 in 2021 compared to just 31.4% statewide. The share earning \$75,000 to \$99,000 was similar to statewide, but only 26.4% earned \$100,000 or more compared to 37.7% statewide. The median hourly wage for all occupations in Northwest Minnesota was \$21.67 in first quarter of 2023 (Table 9). As such, Northwest has the lowest median wage of Minnesota's six planning areas. Further, Northwest's median wage was \$2.58 below the state's median hourly wage. Compared to surrounding areas, Northwest's median hourly wage was \$1.04 per hour less than Central and \$0.90 less than Northeast. However, wages in The Northwest increased more than in these surrounding areas since last year.

- **ECONOMY**

According to DEED's Quarterly Census of Employment & Wages (QCEW) program, Northwest Minnesota was home to 18,086 business establishments providing 221,564 covered jobs in 2022, with a total payroll of nearly \$11 billion. That was about 7.8% of total employment in the state of Minnesota. Average annual wages were \$49,394 in the region, which was \$21,331 lower than the state's average annual wage.

With 38,260 jobs at 1,868 establishments, the Health Care and Social Assistance industry employs the most people in Northwest Minnesota, accounting for 17.3% of total jobs in the region. The share of Health Care and Social Assistance jobs dropped from 18.1% in 2020 as the pandemic and its aftereffects have been a challenge for worker recruitment and retention. The sector's 2019 to 2022 employment decline was driven by the loss of 1,293 jobs (-10.7%) in the Nursing & Residential Care Facilities subsector. Hospitals also lost jobs, down 520 (-4.2%), as did Ambulatory Health Care Services, down 176 (-2.1%). However, Social Assistance, the smallest of the four healthcare subsectors, gained 1,055 jobs (16.8%) from 2019 to 2022. The second largest industry in Northwest is Manufacturing, with 29,870 jobs or 13.5% of total jobs. Manufacturing increased employment from 2019 to 2022, with 392 (1.3%) more jobs than prior to the pandemic recession. In addition, average annual wages in manufacturing (\$61,349) were nearly \$12,000 higher than the overall regional average (\$49,394). Retail Trade is the third largest industry, with 12.6% of total employment, while the closely related Accommodation and Food Services industry was fifth largest with 9.3% of total employment. Combined, these industries offer more than one in every five (21.9%) jobs in the region, but annual wages are still relatively low in these service-providing industries. Other large industries in Northwest include Educational Services, Public Administration, Construction, and

Wholesale Trade which all have greater concentrations of employment in the region than statewide.

C.2. Describe the sectors or occupations of focus for region, including:

- a. How the region will use the labor market information and conduct outreach to business and industry to select the targeted sectors for developing sector partnerships for occupations in demand that provide family sustaining wages. If sectors and occupations have been already selected, describe them within this response.

Our WDB is comprised of a majority of private sector employers. RMCEP, NWPIC and CareerForce staff are involved in local boards, sector partnerships and Trade Associations, which create a catalyst for influence to foster workforce development initiatives. The WDB will sponsor listening sessions every two years at which we engage businesses in discussion with Labor Market analysts to provide accurate data about the sectors in demand in our region. Healthcare, Manufacturing, Agriculture, Trades and Transportation are the local key industry sectors identified in our Regional Plan. Career pathway partnerships will continue to strengthen our ability to increase the number of qualified applicants for those jobs in demand.

Additionally, staff host job fairs, including occupationally specific job fairs, diversity-focused job fairs and industry-specific job fairs. This year included the introduction of “Drive-In,” “Trunk,” and “Virtual” job fairs as well. Employers are invited on site when available through such activities as Job Clubs and “Employer of the Day” to discuss their needs and openings with job seekers. Providers work one-on-one with individual employers to develop job sites and OJT opportunities. Through the use of Incumbent Training projects more employers are receiving specific training on site supported by the local WDB that are sustaining employment and increasing the skill levels of employees in the region.

- b. Alignment to the five sectors of focus in Drive for 5, including which local area in the region is focused on each or any of the Drive for 5 sectors. Complete Attachment G – Local Workforce Development Area Key Industries in Regional Economy.

The NW Region supports and recognizes Equity, Innovation and Inclusion and is committed to the appreciation of differences, innovative approaches, and the importance of finding and retaining high paying jobs in fields of demand. Through the Drive for Five, industry sectors of technology, labor, the caring professions, and manufacturing will be supported through recent awarded grant funding. We will assist

in identifying training, eliminating barriers, and supporting industry recognized in-demand occupations in the four sectors listed above that lead to family-sustaining wages. We will build and enhance sector relationships with employers, educational institutions, and other training providers to identify those with the most need. We have identified Economic Development Regions through connections with the Regional Workforce Alliance, the local workforce board and employer connections established within previous WIOA and State Dislocated worker programing. Health Care sector job vacancies in the NW region are up 19% from 2021. Manufacturing accounts for 13.1% percent of total employment and employment grew by 1,867 jobs from 2020 to 2022 these openings require skilled laborers that the area is lacking. Finally, trade and technology related occupations are also in demand in NW MN.

- c. The make-up of the sector partnerships will be determined and the expertise and resources they bring to the partnership.

Sector partnerships are fluid within economic regions and communities; the relationships often match the prevailing industry needs. Partnerships often align with regional issues, characteristics and or community needs. Such as childcare barriers, in the Bemidi area there is an active sector partnership working towards improving childcare accessibility. In our western counties partnerships came together to align with programs focused on assisting with re-entry programs designed to improve the employment outcomes of individuals leaving incarceration.

- C.3. The demographic makeup of the labor force in those sectors as compared to the regional labor force, and how the region will work to close any identified gaps.

Employment by Race & Ethnicity, All Industries, Northwest Minnesota, 2002-2022

People of color held 10.9% of the jobs in the Northwest Minnesota Planning Region, according to data from the Quarterly Workforce Indicators program. In 2022, that equaled 23,906 jobs held by BIPOC workers, compared to 195,748 jobs held by workers who were White Alone. BIPOC workers held just 5.8% of total jobs in 2002, meaning their employment almost doubled (a 1.9-fold increase) over 20 years. Workers of color have filled an additional 12,503 jobs in the region since 2002, accounting for over 55% of the 22,696 new jobs added. With 8,713 jobs, Hispanic or Latino was the largest group of color in the region's economy, after increasing more than 175% (two-and-three-quarter-fold) since 2002.

American Indian or Alaska Native was the next largest group of color in the region's economy, with 5,719 jobs in 2022 and growing over 27%. However, American Indians had the largest pandemic declines, losing 14.1% of their jobs since the peak of 6,661 in 2019 due to a subdued casino employment rebound since the pandemic.

Jobs held by white workers declined by 2.9% from 2019 to 2022, while jobs held by BIPOC workers increased 1.5%. Jobs held by Hispanic or Latino workers increased the most at 921, and also the fastest at 12%.

Most industry sectors in Northwest Minnesota are non-diverse, but there are industries that rely more heavily on workers of color. Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting had 23% of jobs held by people of color, the largest share of any industry sector, and with a high representation of Hispanic or Latino workers filling 1,017 jobs. Arts, Entertainment and Recreation had 19% of jobs held by people of color, with 408 American Indians, reflecting casino employment. Likewise, the Public Administration workforce was 15.5% people of color with 1,411 American Indians, which reflects tribal government employment. The Accommodation and Food Services workforce was 16.1% people of color, with broad representation of racial and ethnic groups. In addition to employing the largest number of BIPOC people, Manufacturing also had an above average 14.1% share of people of color, with significant numbers from every group. Manufacturing also had the largest numbers of Hispanic or Latino, Asian, and Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander workers of any industry sector. The Food Manufacturing subsector is staffed by 26% Hispanic or Latino workers. While Health Care & Social Assistance had the second largest number of workers of color, its 10.7% share of BIPOC workers is slightly below average for all industries. However, the Nursing and Residential Care subsector has a larger than average 13.1% share of workers of color.

Through multiple competitive grants that have provided direct funds to work with populations at most risk NW MN has worked to improve outcomes.

- C.4. How the local board will make opportunities in these areas known to customers, including employers and job seekers, and how the local board will create, modify or expand responsive workforce development programs and initiatives.

Starting in 2018, under Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Regional Planning, a regional summit strategy was enacted in the 26-county region of Northwest Minnesota to bring a wide range of stakeholders together to discuss occupations in demand and the underlying conditions causing the shortages of available workers. The emphasis was on methodology to validate the data surrounding occupations in demand, and for workforce development professionals to become more aware of the specific challenges affecting business in each of the four EDRs in the Northwest Region. Keeping in mind that each EDR is distinctly unique, it was important to listen more than talk; therefore, the underlying design was to provide a business panel as well as a roundtable discussion at each summit for an uninhibited exchange of ideas. An emphasis of these

meetings has been on the efficacy of developing inclusive and equitable recruiting and retention strategies.

- C.5. Based on the regional/local assessment of workforce development system services, describe how strategies will be created to pursue a more responsive alignment of employment and training services.

Moving forward, it is our goal to connect with each EDR to re-fresh the “Core Team” of committed business and seek out new members to represent workforce and economic development professionals. The goal will be to engage on a monthly basis to discuss issues and to plan for actionable intents to help solve some of the most pressing issues. Specific workforce deliverables that have occurred in the past and need to be reviewed and maintained include “Infographics,” Inclusive Workforce Employer Designation,” and the “Employability Skills Certification” and the “National Career Readiness Certificate”.

- C.6. Describe how the entities responsible for participating in this process will be selected, including their expected roles and responsibilities.

Developing strategies to address in demand sectoral and occupational needs has been conducted under the purview of the two LWDBs in the Northwest Region for decades. These boards worked with the local Regional Labor Market Analyst to pioneer the process of identifying regional Occupations in Demand. Local business, education, labor, government and non-profit leaders meet in each EDR to use the statistics and personal knowledge to identify industry workforce needs and project occupations in demand.

- C.7. Describe how outcomes will be determined in terms of employment and training services.

Continuation of summits and regionally planned events are part of the ongoing plans for serving the needs of the region’s businesses. Many future activities have already been funded by the Minnesota Association of Workforce Boards (MAWB). The intent is to stay current with business needs and to be able to react in a timely manner for development and implementation of innovative ideas.

Local Workforce Development Area 1 WIOA 2024-2027 Local Plan

SECTION A: LOCAL BOARDS VISION, GOALS AND STRATEGIES

- A.1. Describe the local area board's strategic vision for preparing a skilled workforce and how it aligns with the State's Vision, Goals and Strategies.

The local board is working to more fully engage key stakeholders into the discussion of a building a revised local vision and mission statement for the seven-county area. In doing so, the goal will be to develop strategies alongside key community partners that will better connect community, government, business and education to implement the state's vision statement: a healthy economy where all Minnesotans have equitable access to a workforce development system in which partners across the state are working toward a collective goal of providing workforce development programs that are responsive to employer needs in in-demand occupations and lead to good jobs with family-sustaining wages.

The Northwest WDB has not engaged in a full strategic planning process for several years. The timing of this plan and changes in leadership at the local level make this issue ripe for the work of the local board over the next two years. It is anticipated that the local board will use the Governor's Workforce Development Board as a resource and as a "jumping off point" to establish local goals that align with the state's vision. As that process is developed and fleshed out at a local level, findings and comments will be filtered up to the state board for consideration.

The preliminary goal is to develop a process whereby our key stakeholders are engaged in a collective process designed to find solutions based on our strengths that help solve our unique challenges. Reaching this goal will require active engagement from our employers, educational institutions, and communities in a way that ensures we identify skills deficiencies, encourage collaboration and avoid duplication of efforts on activities related to workforce and economic development. Part of this work will also include efforts that coincide with the larger statewide effort to build brand awareness and support of the larger workforce development system.

As this process takes shape in the coming months, employers in Northwest Minnesota continue to express a high-need for skilled workers with strong soft skills. As such, aligning the work skills of job seekers with the needs of Northwest Minnesota employers remains a key priority for the Northwest WDB. In order to ensure the continued economic vitality of our region, we recognize that full workforce participation is essential, including those traditionally under represented and those with the most barriers to employment. The Northwest WDB will continue to work with core partners to ensure job seekers receive high

quality job search assistance, and career guidance, and that training opportunities are consumer-driven to lead to employment in in-demand occupations within the region.

The goals outlined in Minnesota's State Plan cannot be accomplished through the work of one agency, but need to be part of a multisystem effort. The local board acknowledges this and will continue to build relationships with key stakeholders within the region, including job seekers, employers, CareerForce Partners, institutions of higher education, and community-based organizations.

- A.2. Describe the local area board's goals for preparing an educated and skilled workforce, including youth, individuals with barriers to employment, and individuals underrepresented in the local labor force.

The main goal of the local board is for the local workforce development system to provide employers with the skilled workers that they need to succeed. Through development of extensive partnerships; the creation of innovative strategies, projects, and delivery systems; the strong administration of WIOA and State and grant programming; and working together with System and Community Partners, local workforce development system is able to provide services and programming that meet the needs of today's consumers and businesses, as well as strengthen our local economies.

Workforce development partners constantly work with employers, institutions of higher education, Adult Basic Education, and other partners to ensure we are able to leverage the strengths of each entity in order to provide our customers with the skills needed to meet the demands of employers and enter into career pathways in demand. Through review of Labor Market Information, and informal survey of our business members of the Workforce Development Board and site supervisors to keep abreast of local area economic and employment trends program providers are able to provide career planning and counseling services designed to meet the employment needs of this region.

- A.3. Describe how these goals relate to the performance accountability measures based on the primary indicators to support regional economic growth and economic self-sufficiency.

By striving to achieve the goals listed in A.2. we have developed strong partnerships with business, education and training providers. Through these partnerships and a client-centered service delivery model we have consistently met or exceeded our performance goals. We understand that the workforce environment we are in is fluid and work to stay on top of the workforce needs of the local area by constantly looking to improve our systems and relationships.

- A.4. Describe the strategy to work with the entities within your local workforce development area that carry out the core programs to align resources available to the local area to achieve the strategic vision and goals of the local area board and the state.

The strategic goals and vision of the local board will be developed over the course of the next two years. As those broad goals are created in collaboration with our core partners, we will look for improved methods of service delivery and implementation in our local area.

- A.5. Describe a best practice or area of strength of the local area as it relates to the State's Vision, Goals and Strategies that should be considered for replication or scale across the state.

The Inclusive Workforce designation is a hallmark of the work that has been occurring in NW MN that recognizes the value and purpose of employers recognizing the importance of differences. Through a combined effort the Regional Workforce Alliance has developed clear guidelines that have engaged employers in not just intent but action that is clearly seen and practiced.

- A.6. Describe the sectors or occupations of focus for the local area board, including:
- a. How those sectors compare to the sectors of focus within your workforce region;
Key industry sectors of focus for the local area are the same as the region:
 - Healthcare
 - Manufacturing
 - Agriculture
 - Transportation
 - Education (which is in addition to the regional focus)
 - b. The demographic makeup of the labor force in those sectors as compared to the local labor force, and how the local area will work to close any identified gaps;

Skilled occupations are predominately filled by the dominant culture in our local workforce development area. With our population and workforce growing primarily from new American and immigrant communities, the local board is focusing on filling the gap with exposing and training the new immigrants in the high demand, skilled occupations. Additionally, employers will be offered training opportunities to promote increased diversity in their workforce and create inclusive and welcoming environments.

- c. How the local board will make opportunities in these areas known to customers, including employers and job seekers, and how the local board will create, modify or expand responsive workforce development programs and initiatives.

Northwest utilizes a network of workforce development professionals including those that serve target populations to market services and career opportunities in the local area. We utilize websites, social media, videos, radio, brochures, posters, flyers, and newsletters. We participate in booths at job fairs, career fairs for students and resource fairs for the public. Printed materials are posted in a variety of places in the community that job seekers may visit including laundromats, community centers, libraries, events, food shelves, food distribution events. Another source of communication is word of mouth from program participants and employers that have utilized services. We target our marketing efforts to reach diverse populations through community leaders and organizations.

- A.7. Describe the process used by the local area board to provide opportunity for public comment, including comment by representatives from businesses and comment by representatives of labor organizations, and input into the development of the local plan, prior to submission of the plan.

Opportunity for Public Comment WIOA Unified Plan was provided as follows:

- Draft of Plan emailed to all Northwest Minnesota Joint Powers/Local Elected Official Board Members.
- Draft of Plan emailed to all Northwest Minnesota Workforce Development Board members.
- Approval of draft of plan by Northwest Minnesota Workforce Development Board.
- Approval of draft of plan by Northwest Minnesota Joint Powers/Local Elected Official Board.
- Opportunity for public comment posted on the www.nwpic.net website (official site of LWDB #1) for 30 days
- Legal Notice for Public Comment placed in Thief River Falls, Red Lake Falls, Crookston and Roseau newspapers.
- Following the posting period, Executive Committee of LWDB and CEOB Officers will take comments into consideration and revisions will be made prior to submitting the plan to DEED.
- The Chairs of both the Local Elected Official Board and the Northwest Minnesota Workforce Development Board have been charged with final

approval and signoff to meet submission deadline. Any input/comments received on the plan are documented for the record.

- A.8. Describe how the local area is working together to prepare the workforce for state and federal investments in the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL), the Creating Helpful Incentives to Produce Semiconductors (CHIPS) and Science Act, and the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) (collectively referred to as Investing in America (IIA)).

Our partnerships with DEED, the Northwest Regional Development Commission, and local economic development professionals will be key to understanding how the legislation impacts on our local area and the workforce needs that result from it. As we become aware of new projects, we will allocate resources and convene stakeholders to address any skilled labor shortages.

SECTION B: PROGRAM OPERATIONS

CareerForce Operations – Connection to Services

- B.1. Describe how local area boards will work with each other, core title providers and available data to designate at least one CareerForce Center per local workforce development area as comprehensive and make recommendations on recognizing affiliate and standalone partner sites.

In the Northwest Workforce Development Area, the local board has previously designated a single comprehensive CareerForce Center located in Thief River Falls. This location is centrally located in the seven county local area and the physical office is located on the Northland Community and Technical College campus.

Local staff at the comprehensive CareerForce Center in Thief River Falls includes the following core partners:

- Inter-County Community Council – Title I provider - WIOA Adult, DW, Youth, State DW and MYP.
- State of Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development/DEED
 - Job Service Staff/Wagner-Peyser
 - Contracted provider of MFIP/TANF and SNAP employment services for several local counties
 - Vocational Rehabilitation Services

Adult Basic Education also has one classroom co-located on the Northland college campus, but does not co-locate in the same office suite.

In addition to the one comprehensive site in Thief River Falls the board has also designated the CareerForce in Crookston and Roseau as affiliate sites.

The Crookston CareerForce houses the following local staff:

- Inter-County Community Council – Title I provider - WIOA Adult, DW, Youth, State DW and MYP.
- State of Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development/DEED
 - Job Service Staff/Wagner-Peyser
 - Contracted provider of MFIP/TANF and SNAP employment services for several local counties.
- Adult Basic Education

The Roseau CareerForce houses the following local staff:

- State of Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development/DEED
 - Contracted provider of MFIP/TANF and SNAP employment services for several local counties.

B.2. Describe the strategies to ensure proper connectivity and coordination among the physical sites within the local workforce development area.

The CareerForce Center Partners will collaborate to ensure all required and needed services are available to individuals and businesses and will work to ensure each CareerForce Location offers integrated services and have staff who work to ensure quality service delivery. Services provided by each Partner will depend on their respective eligibility requirements and may not include Universal Customers. To generate referrals, Partner staff provide individuals with information on the full array of applicable and appropriate program services available through all one-stop partners. Referrals are coordinated with Partners and delivered according to procedures set by the receiving Partner in accordance with data privacy requirements, and delivered in a manner that facilitates individual independent decision-making and informed choice.

All referrals and outcomes of referrals are documented and tracked through available data systems, including Minnesota Works, Workforce One, and agency-specific internal tracking mechanisms.

B.3. Describe the strategies to ensure proper connectivity and coordination among the service providers within the local workforce development area.

The Northwest Private Industry Council has recently amended our bylaws to include the addition of a one-stop committee. This committee has not yet begun its work, but it is anticipated that the members will collectively act to coordinate the work of the service providers within our local workforce development area. Members will also consider ways in which the core partners can best share information, and coordinate staffing levels to avoid the duplication of services. Members will review and consider state guidance on this issue and look to other workforce development areas for ideas on best practices.

Coordination and connectivity between service providers (such as the CareerForce Center and the DEED offices in Roseau, East Grand Forks and Crookston) is achieved through itinerant staff that travel between locations. Service providers are knowledgeable about ABE services in their areas, and are able to connect and refer clients to ABE classrooms in the communities within their workforce service areas.

- B.4. Describe other strategies that will be used to maximize services and access to services, such as non-traditional hours or using partner facilities.

LWDA 1 is a large area and we depend on using partner facilities and technology to meet our clients where they are. We provide services on an itinerant basis at local libraries, college campuses, K-12 facilities, and city centers. Our normal hours of operation are 8:00 AM to 4:30 PM but will meet with clients outside these hours by appointment if necessary. Staff also serve clients virtually through the use of technology via ZOOM, text message, or phone call.

- B.5. Describe the strategic approaches to ensure all elements of Career Services are available at service locations or online, including services for youth and individuals with barriers to employment or service access.

WIOA identifies specific areas of Career Services. The local board, either by staff or through contracts and MOUs with local partners, provides the following services to individuals who are adults or dislocated workers through the one-stop delivery system:

- Outreach,
- Intake and orientation
- Initial assessment
- Labor exchange services
- Eligibility for services
- Referrals to programs
- Performance and cost information

- Information on unemployment insurance
- Financial aid information
- Follow-up services

Regional planning efforts have emphasized the importance and desire for customers of the CareerForce Center and its partner agencies to create a service delivery system where there “no wrong front door.” The vision behind this goal is to eliminate barriers to accessing services.

- B.6. Describe how the local area board will facilitate access to services provided through the one-stop delivery system, including in remote areas, through the use of technology and other means.

CareerForce staff are well-versed in the use of technology for services and to ensure compliance with accessibility standards. We utilize assistive technology devices for persons with disabilities and have been certified as ADA compliant at all sites through DEED.

- B.7. Describe how the one-stop centers are implementing and transitioning to an integrated, technology-enabled intake and case management information system for programs carried out under WIOA and programs carried out by one-stop partners.

Staff at the one-stop center use Workforce One (WF1) as an integrated, technology-enabled intake and case management system. Some features include:

- A mobile app for VRS’ case management system was developed and released, available to staff and customers.
- Electronic signature functionality was built into the case management system.
- WF1 implemented the e-signature with AdobeSign for most common documents to give greater portability in obtaining signature from participants without having to print documents.

- B.8. Describe how supportive services, such as transportation and other needs, will be coordinated to better serve individuals with specific barriers to training, education and employment.

One of the benefits of having Inter-County Community Council as the provider of program services for our WIOA programs is the ability of staff to more easily blend other supportive services available in the area. Inter County Community

Council is a private, non-profit Community Action Organization that was established in 1965. Its mission is to provide services, assistance and other activities of sufficient scope and magnitude to give promise of progress toward the alleviation of poverty, its symptoms and its causes. ICCC is the contracted program provider for WIOA Adult, DW, State DW and WIOA Youth activities. In addition, ICCC assists families and individuals throughout our service area by offering a number of programs designed to help people meet their basic needs while supporting their movement toward greater economic self-sufficiency. These supportive services consist of:

- Family Service Department
- Food Shelf
- Energy Assistance
- Weatherization
- Housing
- Minnesota Youth Employment and Training program (direct grant recipient)
- Early Head Start and Head Start

ICCC's core service area includes Pennington, Red Lake, East Polk and Clearwater counties. ICCC works closely with the two other Community Action Organizations in our area (Northwest Community Action in Badger and Tri-Valley Community Action in Crookston) to help clients living in those service areas access these same supportive services.

CareerForce Operations - Accessibility

- B.9. Describe strategies that will be used to leverage technology for services and ensure compliance with accessibility standards.

CareerForce staff are well-versed in the use of technology for services and to ensure compliance with accessibility standards. We utilize assistive technology devices for persons with disabilities and have been certified as ADA compliant at all sites through DEED.

- B.10. Describe the replicated cooperative agreements (as defined in section 107(d)(11) of WIOA) between the local area board or other local entities described in section 101(a)(11)(B) of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (29 U.S.C. 721(a)(11)(B)) and the local office of a designated state agency or designated state unit administering programs carried out under title I of such Act (29 U.S.C. 720 et seq.) (other than section 112 or part C of that title (29 U.S.C. 732, 741) and subject to section 121(f)) in accordance with

section 101(a)(11) of such Act (29 U.S.C. 721(a)(11) with respect to efforts that will enhance the provision of services to individuals with disabilities and to other individuals, such as cross training of staff, technical assistance, use and sharing of information, cooperative efforts with employers, and other efforts at cooperation, collaboration, and coordination.

The local Workforce Development Board and Vocational Rehabilitation Services collaborate to enhance services to individuals with disabilities, individuals with other barriers to employment, and individuals living in poverty. To the extent possible, services are co-located in CareerForce offices to provide access to a wide variety of services. Each CareerForce location provides an orientation to services available to assist job-seekers make an informed decision on choice of service provider. Direct service staff participate in cross-training to ensure they understand the services offered by the various partners, and the eligibility criteria for each program.

Vocational Rehabilitation staff is available for consultation without the need for the person to apply for services. Typical topics include how and when to disclose a disability, effective use of assistive technology, Social Security work incentives, and benefits planning. There is currently a joint effort to provide joint financial planning and work incentives planning for individuals receiving Social Security Disability Insurance. Disability Benefits 101, a software program developed using Medicaid Infrastructure grant funding, is available to all partners to assist staff inform job-seekers about the impact earned income will have on federal and state benefits, including public health insurance.

The Workforce Development Board consults with Vocational Rehabilitation Services as they are developing initiatives such as incumbent worker training programs, customized training programs, career pathways initiatives, youth services, and other business services.

Local Workforce Development Boards sponsor local Job Fairs. Vocational Rehabilitation participates in the Job Fairs and other community events. The local partners also share job leads, and Vocational Rehabilitation may purchase placement services from the local Board as part of a performance-based funding agreement.

- B.11. Describe how entities within the one-stop delivery system will comply with section 188 of WIOA, if applicable, and applicable provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, regarding the physical and programmatic accessibility of facilities, programs and

services, technology and materials for individuals with disabilities including providing staff training and support for addressing the needs of individuals with disabilities.

All of the CareerForce offices in LWDA 1 have been certified as ADA compliant by DEED. ICCC and the ODEO of DEED have worked closely over several years to ensure ICCC is in compliance with section 188, and applicable provisions of the ADA of 1990 in terms of physical access, program access and training through policy.

CareerForce Operations – EEO Compliance

B.12. The local workforce development area and their partners are aware of the responsibilities of the Equal Opportunity Officer, including attending DEED sponsored EO Training?

Yes XXX

B.13. The local workforce development area is aware of and conducts annually a physical and program accessibility review.

Yes XXX

B.14. Does the local workforce development area have in place an agreed upon WIOA Discrimination complaint process per the [regulations](#)?

Yes XXX

B.15. Does the local workforce development area have in place an agreed upon WIOA Program Complaint Policy per the [regulations](#)?

Yes XXX

B.16. Does the local workforce development area have in place a [language access policy and plan](#)? Describe your local workforce development areas language access policy. If you do not have a policy in place, use the following link as a guide in creating your policy [Language Access Assessment and Planning Tool for Federally Conducted and Federally Assisted Programs \(lep.gov\)](#). This link on pages 9-15 includes sample assessments, questions and information on: 1) Understanding how LEP individuals interact with your agency; 2) Identification and assessment of LEP Communities; 3) Providing language assistance services; 4) Training of staff on policies and procedures; 5) Providing notice of language assistance services. Should you have questions pertaining to your LWDA's language access policy contact the Office of Diversity and Equal Opportunity at DEED.ODEO@state.mn.us

Yes XXX

The purpose of the WIOA LWDA #1 Language Access Policy is to provide guidance and establish procedures for ensuring that limited English proficient (LEP) customers are being provided meaningful access to program information, activities and services and are able to participate effectively regardless of their ability to speak, read, write or understand English. The policy outlines reasonable steps to ensure meaningful access, explains the process we use to identify LEP populations and need, the language assistance services available, and how that will be monitored.

- B.17. Describe the affirmative outreach strategies your local workforce development area will employ to recruit participants that are representative of the populations in your region. (You may also attach an outreach or engagement plan if one exists for your LWDA).

Local WDBs and service providers must take appropriate steps to ensure that they are providing equal access to their WIOA Title I programs and activities (29 CFR § 38.40). These steps should involve reasonable efforts to include members of the various groups protected by these regulations: persons of different sexes, various racial and ethnic/national origin groups, various religions, individuals with limited English proficiency, individuals with disabilities, and individuals in different age groups (29 CFR § 38.40).

Outreach efforts may include, but are not limited to:

- Promoting programs and activities in media outlets (including the Internet) that target protected groups;
- Sharing information about program offerings with schools and community-based organizations and service agencies that serve protected groups;
- and
- Consulting with appropriate community organizations about ways outreach to protected groups may be improved.

To meet the minimum requirements of affirmative outreach, the local WDB will:

- Review Census or other reliable information on an annual basis to determine the protected groups in the area who could potentially use WIOA Title I programs and activities;
- Make efforts to use One-Stop partner resources and consult with One-Stop partners about ways to improve outreach and service for protected groups;

- Ensure staff awareness of outreach efforts through training and orientation

CareerForce Partners

B.18. Describe the roles and resource contributions of the one-stop partners.

There are four main one-stop partners within LWDA 1. They make up a consortia that operate the One-Stop. They include and their primary roles are:

- DEED - Job Service
 - Provide career services to universal customers through Wagner Peyser
 - Make RESEA calls to unemployment insurance applicants
 - Provides contracted services for county SNAP and MFIP programs
- DEED – Vocational Rehabilitation Services
 - Provide services to (VRS eligible) customers with disabilities
- Adult Basic Education
 - Provide Adult literacy services
- Inter-County Community Council
 - Operate employment and training programs including, WIOA Adult, WIOA and State Dislocated Worker, WIOA Youth, and Minnesota Youth Programs.
 - Serve as the WIOA Administrative Entity for LWDA1

B.19. Describe how the local area board will ensure continuous improvement of eligible providers of services through the system.

The Northwest WDB is committed to providing staff development opportunities for program staff and the staff of contracted services providers. At this time, the following areas are targeted for staff training:

- Program Performance Measures
- WorkForce One
- Labor Market Information and Tools
- Social Media in Job Search
- Customer Service
- Career Pathways
- Rapid Response Process and Reporting Requirements
- Reintegration of ex-offenders

This is by no means an exhaustive list, and will be revisited as other training opportunities arise.

The WDB will continue to support training that can be done locally and will continue to encourage staff to attend quality statewide training and conferences.

- B.20. Describe the local workforce development area's processes to assure non-duplicative services and avoid duplicate administrative costs.

Through the use of clearly written Memorandums of Understanding, internal and external monitoring procedures and timely independent Audits.

- B.21. Describe how the Memorandum of Understanding will be or has been developed and used to ensure commitment of resources from service providers and required partners.

WIOA provides opportunities to explore new strategies and partnerships within the service providers and required partners. The local board, through the OSO, will facilitate and complete an MOU with core title providers and required partners, drawing on a template developed by DEED. Each new MOU shall contain provisions describing the following items:

- Services to be provided through the One-Stop delivery system, including the way the services will be coordinated and delivered;
- How the costs of services and the operating costs of the system will be funded, including funding through cash, non-cash or third party in-kind contributions, to provide a stable and equitable funding stream for ongoing One-Stop delivery system operations;
- Methods of referral of individuals between the OSO and the One-Stop partners for appropriate services and activities;
- Methods to ensure the needs of workers and youth, and individuals with barriers to employment, including individuals with disabilities, are addressed in the provision of necessary and appropriate access to services, including access to technology and materials, made available through the One-Stop delivery system;
- Duration of the MOU and the procedures for amending the MOU, and assurances that the MOU shall be reviewed not less than once every three years to ensure appropriate funding and delivery of services.

With many strong partnerships already in place, the local board, in conjunction with the OSO, will continue to create more and deeper opportunities for partnering. The MOU covers a set of broad commitments to ensure clear understanding and provides an opportunity, when applicable, for the county to contract for needed services that support the Local Plan, local programs and innovative opportunities that arise for our shared clients.

- B.22. Describe how local area boards will ensure state policies on infrastructure funding requirements are adhered to and the process for addressing any discrepancies or disagreements.

The local board follows the Infrastructure Funding Agreement (IFA) guidance and framework developed by DEED. This policy provides the guidance needed to offer optimum infrastructure to meet job seeker and business needs.

The local board, through the OSO, meets with all One-Stop partners to establish specific cash, noncash or third party in-kind contributions as part of the IFA negotiations. The local board will continue to work with DEED and its partners to discuss, negotiate and coordinate on infrastructure funding that follows the WIOA law and provides efficiency for addressing any discrepancies or disagreements.

The local board will also ensure that staff are informed and trained on infrastructure funding requirements and protocols for addressing discrepancies using guidance from DEED in partnership with MAWB. The WIB will rely on existing (or modified) MOUs and internal audit processes to address any serious compliance issues.

- B.23. Describe how local area boards, who contract out for provider services, will ensure that providers fully participate in infrastructure funding requirements and the alignment of service delivery within the local workforce development area 134(c)(3)(G) of WIOA.

The local board will inform and train contracted providers on infrastructure funding requirements and protocols for addressing discrepancies and disparities using guidance from DEED in partnership with MAWB. Service alignment issues will be addressed, as noted above, in the contracting process and in regular communications with partners during implementation. The local board will rely on existing (or modified) agreements and internal audit processes to address any serious compliance issues regarding infrastructure funding requirements.

- B.24. Describe the competitive process to be used to award the sub-grants and contracts in the local workforce development area for activities carried out under section 107(d)(16) WIOA.

The local board uses a competitive Request for Proposals process to solicit and award sub-contracts. The local board publishes a notice in each of the official newspapers in each county in the service area, on its website and shares the notice with its network of partners. Interested providers submit proposals for consideration of Adult and Dislocated Worker services to the board. A sub-committee of the local board reviews and scores the proposals, and then makes a recommendation to award the contracts to the organization that scored the highest.

- B.25. Describe and identify the entity responsible for the disbursement of grant funds described in section 107(d)(12)(B)(i)(III) of WIOA.

Pursuant to WIOA, and in order to assist in administration of the grant funds, the chief elected official or the Governor, where the Governor serve as the local grant recipient for a local area, may designate an entity to serve as a local grant subrecipient for such funds or as a local fiscal agent.

The current Memorandum of Understanding between the Local Elected Officials Board and Inter-County Community Council (ICCC) designate ICC as the as the grant recipient and administrative entity for activities under the Workforce Investment Act. This MOU is renewed every two years and that process is expected to be completed again on or before June 30, 2024.

Levels of Performance

- B.26. Describe how the local levels of performance negotiated with the Governor and chief elected official will be used to measure the performance of the local workforce development area and to be used by the local area board for measuring the performance of the local fiscal agent, eligible providers under subtitle B of WIOA and the One-stop delivery system.

The WIOA partners are required to provide a quarterly report to the LWDB reflecting negotiated performance levels and actual performance. Partner staff will keep the Board apprised of modifications. A comprehensive year-end report will be provided to the Board by each partner. LWDA 1 has achieved and exceeded the performance measures in the past. Should deficiencies be identified, the LWDB will work with appropriate provider in identifying corrective action and plan for improvement. In addition to performance measures, the board also conducts a thorough review, on an annual basis, of demographics, services, trends, training occupations and outcomes of service providers. DEED provides annual monitoring visits of core programs where case files are reviewed for compliance and quality of services.

- B.27. Describe the actions the local area board will take toward becoming or remaining a high-performing board, consistent with the factors developed by the state board.

Because the vast majority of our members do not have a long history of service on the Board, all members have participated in orientation process to ensure a common understanding of the WIOA titles, required governance responsibilities, required plans and legal documents. The purpose of this effort is to maintain a high level of understanding of the expectations in order to establish goals for the local area. Each Board member has been interviewed to determine their goals

and objectives for the board, but also to assess what further information or training or resources may be needed.

Our next step is to create Mission, Vision, and Goals for the Board. Both efforts are Staff will work with the providers to ensure they understand the policies, procedures, vision/mission of the state, region and local level. informed by internal historical documents as well as resources made available by the Governor's Workforce Development Board.

In addition, the Minnesota Association of Workforce Boards has always been committed to supporting local Workforce Development Boards' growth and strong performance. Our local area is deeply engaged with MAWB and regularly takes advantage of resources made available.

Staff will work with the providers to ensure they understand the policies, procedures, vision/mission of the state, region and local level.

Local Workforce Board Governance

B.28. Briefly describe the local area board's policy and timetable for filling vacancies, replacing/reappointing individuals whose terms have come to an end. Include in your description any plans to fill the terms that will be expiring as of June 30, 2024.

The WDB's policy is to refill any vacancy as quickly as possible. The filling of WDB vacancies is really a three part process; recruitment, county review, and appointment or reappointment of a candidate by the Chief Local Elected Official (CLEO) Board.

Recruitment is the most difficult part of the process and depends a great deal on the vacancy the board is looking to fill. It is sometimes difficult to find the type of person the board is seeking on short notice. The recruitment process involves utilization of County Boards of Commissions, WDB members, local elected officials, DEED Business Service Specialists, and NWPIC staff to contact potential applicants. The time frame for this process can vary and can last for some time. Once applicants are identified, the candidate's application is forwarded to the LEO Board for appointment. The LEO has the option of sending the nomination to the county board of residence if additional comments are sought. The Board of Directors of the Northwest Regional Development Commission, which serves as the LEO Board, meets every month.

B.29. Is your local area board currently in compliance with WIOA?

Yes _____

No __XXX__

If No, what steps will be taken to bring your local area board into compliance by June 30, 2024?

Staff are actively recruiting alongside recruitment efforts being made by workforce development board members. These efforts include outreach to local chambers, industry associations, economic developers, county boards and members of the WDB.

- B.16. Please include in Attachment B the composition of your board, including the sectors represented on the board, and to the extent practicable, the demographic makeup of your board.

SECTION C: PROGRAM AND SERVICE DELIVERY

Local Area Board Program and Service Delivery

- C.1. Describe how the local area board, working with the entities carrying out core programs will expand access to employment opportunities for eligible individuals, particularly eligible individuals with barriers to employment.

The local board and entities providing the core programs are all dedicated to expanding access to services and employment opportunities. Increasing program outcomes for individuals experiencing employment disparities or who have barriers to employment is a primary goal of WIOA services. Even though the current outreach system in LWDA 1 is extensive, it is recognized that there are opportunities to provide expanded focus on specific targeted populations and individuals facing structural barriers to education and employment. Standard outreach practices will continue to all populations with an enhanced effort to populations of people with barriers to employment based on language, culture, and individuals with disabilities.

To address this goal, ICCC staff individually identify and address barriers to access, including transportation, English skills, disabilities, and more. A review of current practices and resources in addressing the barriers will be done as well as working to implement new practices and resources where needed. Policies and procedures will also be reviewed. Other strategies to address access to services include engaging ethnic communities in the planning and implementation of services and training the board and staff in the cultures and traditions of participants. These strategies will also be used to address access for individuals with disabilities.

Through referral from DEED Vocational Rehabilitation Services ICCC is contracted to provide Pre- Employment Transition Services for VRS eligible individuals with disabilities.

To provide greater access to employment for all populations with barriers, ICCC provides customized job search assistance and facilitates on-the-job training and other work-based learning opportunities. These are proven practices that expand access to employment. Employer outreach and education on these opportunities is a focus area of staff. Staff meet regularly to coordinate employer outreach and relationship building resulting in more employment opportunities for program participants.

- C.2. Describe how the local area board, working with the entities carrying out core programs, will expand access to supportive services for eligible individuals, particularly eligible individuals with barriers to employment.

Our current local policy regarding supportive services is designed to address barriers to employment that many eligible individuals experience in our local area. Our current local policy reads, in relevant part, as follows:

All WIOA enrolled adults, dislocated workers, and youth are eligible for supportive services as defined in WIOA Section 3(59). Supportive services are provided to eligible WIOA participants when the supportive service will assist the participant in reaching his/her employment and training goals as laid out in their individual employment plan/individual service strategy (IEP/ISS).

Supportive services are not entitlements and must be supported by demonstration of financial need.

Supportive services may be provided to eligible WIOA participants who:

1. Are adults and dislocated workers enrolled in WIOA career or training services; WIOA funded youth participants; **AND**,
2. Are unable to obtain the supportive service through any other resource or program providing such services.

WIOA supportive services are LIMITED and must be coordinated with other community resources. In every instance of providing supportive services, caseworkers must ensure that no other resource exists or that the need is so urgent that referrals to other resources would delay the provision of support service and create a hardship to the participant.

- C.3. Describe how the local area board will facilitate the development of career pathways, co-enrollments (as appropriate) and activities that lead to industry recognized post-secondary credentials that are portable and stackable.

The Northwest Workforce Service Area acknowledges that for career pathways programs to be successful, they need to be part of a multi-system effort and not the responsibility of a single agency. As such administrative and program staff have worked toward establishing positive working relationships with other agencies that provide services to adult learners, such as DEED, local MnSCU institutions, community-based organizations and the Northwest Service Cooperative ABE.

While the inter-agency relationships needed for implementation exist, we have been very limited in our success of getting all of the necessary partners on the same page to pursue additional funding opportunities that would support those learners with the most barriers in meeting their educational and employment goals. The Northwest WIB and the Northwest Service Cooperative Adult Basic Education fully support the concept of career pathways and continue to advocate the importance of this type of programming with area partners. However, we do not believe that a successful, sustainable career pathways system can be developed in our region until all of the necessary partners fully support this type of system and are willing to invest the resources necessary for sustainability.

During the next year we will continue to focus on education and professional development with regard to Adult Career Pathways for ICCC staff, members of the WIB, and staff of partner agencies. We will also be conducting outreach with local area employers to determine training needs and encourage interest and participation in career pathway development.

- C.4. Describe and assess the type and availability of adult and dislocated worker employment and training activities in the local workforce development area.

Adult and dislocated worker employment and training activities as required under WIOA are available to the residents of all seven counties and based out of the CareerForce locations in LWDA #1. Services available include:

Basic Career Services

Basic career services are universally accessible and are available to all individuals seeking employment and training services and include:

- Eligibility determination
- Initial skill assessments
- Labor exchange services
- Outreach on programs and services
- Program referrals

Individualized Career Services

The provision of individualized career services must be based on the employment needs of the individual as determined jointly by the participant and the career counselor. Individualized Career Services include:

- Comprehensive and specialized assessments
- Development of an Individual Employment Plan (IEP)
- Group counseling
- Individual counseling
- Career planning
- Short-term pre-vocational services
- Internships and work experiences
- Workforce preparation/Work Readiness Services
- Financial literacy services
- Out-of-area job search

Follow-up Career Services

Follow-up services are provided for adults and dislocated workers who are placed in unsubsidized employment, for up to 12 months after the first day of employment.

Examples of appropriate follow-up services include:

- Counseling about the workplace,
- Peer support groups,
- Assistance with work-related problems that may arise,
- Information about additional educational opportunities,
- Referral to supportive services available in the community

Training Services

Training services include:

- Occupational skills training
- On-the-job training
- Incumbent worker training
- Programs that combine workplace training with related instruction, which may include cooperative education programs
- Private sector training

- Skill upgrading and retraining
- Entrepreneurial training
- Transitional Jobs (work experience)
- Job readiness training
- Customized training

Supportive Services

Supportive services are provided to WIOA Adult and/or Dislocated Worker program participants on a case-by-case basis and are based on individual need.

- C.5. Describe and assess the type and availability of youth workforce investment activities in the local workforce development area, including youth with disabilities, which description and assessment shall include an identification of successful models of such youth workforce development activities.

LWDA 1 Youth and Young Adult Programs and Services are provided by Inter-County Community Council (ICCC) and focus on an array of activities, so individuals are able to develop skills necessary to be productive employees and be self-sufficient.

Youth workforce investment activities include:

- Objective assessment
- Development of service strategies
- Activities leading to a secondary school diploma
- Preparation for post-secondary education and training
- Linkages between academic instruction and occupational education that leads to a credential
- Preparation for unsubsidized employment
- Effective connections to employers in demand occupations
- Program elements include: tutoring, alternative school services, paid and unpaid work experience, occupational skill training, education concurrently with workforce preparation activities, leadership development, supportive services, mentoring, comprehensive career guidance, follow-up services, financial literacy, entrepreneurial skill training, labor market information on demand occupations, and transition to post-secondary education and training

The focus of youth workforce investment activities is to ensure that youth have the basic skills, work readiness skills and occupational skills necessary to be successful in post-secondary education and training, and ultimately to obtain meaningful employment in demand occupations that pay livable wages along a career pathway. Best practices are noted below.

Youth are provided work experience opportunities through placement in entry level paid work experiences which provide them with an opportunity to learn basic skills and competencies for success in employment.

Work Experience:

- Provides an opportunity for youth to learn about and meet employer expectations while gaining transferable skills.
- Allows youth to try out different jobs to help determine what they like and dislike.
- Helps build work-readiness skills to prepare them for a future career.
- Provide youth exposure to work/careers that will improve their employment prospects.

A variety of work experience opportunities are available to ICCC youth program participants. Youth who excel in an entry level work experience are provided with opportunities to participate in an advanced placement with increased responsibility, with the potential of being hired by the employer upon completion of placement. ICCC youth programs are proactively working to establish an even greater number of work experience opportunities in the private sector, including those industries in our region which are high demand, high growth. To provide a variety of work experiences, a broad range of employment settings are utilized, not just those in high-demand occupations.

ICCC has a strong network of businesses and organizations willing to host paid youth interns (work experience participants) at their sites. Supervisors and participants receive an orientation, from the ICCC youth employment specialist. The orientation outlines the responsibilities and expectations of the youth intern, the worksite supervisor, and the employment specialist. Orientation also includes workplace safety, child labor restrictions (as appropriate), the Minnesota Right to Know Act, injury reporting, state and federal employment rules, confidentiality, and equal opportunity employment. A worksite evaluation measuring performance in the workplace is required to assess work readiness for the work readiness indicator. The most effective method of assessing work readiness is to have the worksite supervisor observe and evaluate performance on the worksite. The worksite supervisor is in the best position to assess the quality of a young person's work performance.

The worksite supervisor evaluates/rates the youth on the following categories of:

- Attendance/Punctuality (Dependability)
- Positive Attitude/Behaviors
- Interpersonal Skills (Communication, Relations)
- Decision Making/Stability

- Communication Skills – Written & Verbal
- Appearance

The rating tool is on the students' timecards and is evaluated bi-weekly in accordance with the pay periods. The evaluation is included on the timecard to promote a conversation about positive developments and needed improvements. Short-term goals for skills improvement are set and monitored by the youth employment specialist when workplace deficiencies or areas for improvement are identified. The employment specialist regularly visits the worksite to observe the participant, discuss progress and areas for skills enhancement, and provide encouragement and support. The youth employment specialists work with the worksite supervisors to address any issues that arise with the youth worker.

Homeless youth or runaways: ICCC is the service provider for the Family Homeless Prevention Assistance Program (FHPAP) and also Homeless youth up to age 21. The goal of these program is to stabilize families or individuals in their current housing unit or re-house without a day of homelessness. The program also assists families or individuals who are homeless find permanent housing and maintain that housing. FHPAP provides case management services and support services to assist with rent, other housing costs, transportation, or education expenses. Youth ages 14-21 are a priority group to receive these services. Youth offenders and at-risk of involvement with the juvenile justice system: In addition to the work readiness, basic skills (including high school diploma/GED) and occupational skills training that is assessed and addressed, we will pay particular attention to the barriers that youth face due to their adjudication. We may provide the youth a work experience or internship in their local community or connect them with opportunities in another community if there are reputation issues.

VRS also provides youth programming through the provision of Pre-Employment Transition Services to youth with disabilities. Throughout the State of Minnesota, we are committed to providing students with disabilities Pre-Employment Transition Services to meet their needs. VR transition services assist eligible youth to plan for and make the transition from secondary school to competitive integrated employment. Ultimately, VRS assists students in choosing a post high school employment goal and ensures that they receive the services needed to reach that goal. Each school is assigned a Counselor and a Pre-ETS Representative who work in collaboration with school staff to provide services to students with disabilities. Some of the ways that VR staff support the needs of students include, attending IEP meetings, providing group services and instruction to prepare for employment, arranging work experiences or job try

outs for students, and any activity that aligns with the Pre-ETS categories below that will meet the need of a student and fill in the gaps of what the school is unable to provide.

As a part of these efforts, any of the 5 Pre-ETS to students who are potentially eligible (served by Pre-ETS Representatives) and eligible for VR (served by VR counselors):

- Job exploration counseling
- Work-based learning experiences
- Counseling on opportunities for enrollment in comprehensive transition or postsecondary educational programs at institutions of higher education
- Workplace readiness training
- Instruction in self-advocacy

Both internal and external placement and Pre-ETS staff have many ways in which they work closely with employers to coordinate services. Many have developed relationships with employers in the community and know those who are willing and able to support students with disabilities. In cases where an employer relationship does not exist, they reach out to develop them. Furthermore, Business Engagement Networks (BENs) are another forum where placement and Pre-ETS providers come together as partners to share information about employer relationships in order to assist in job placements and Pre-ETS WBLEs.

- C.6. Describe how training services under chapter 3 of subtitle B of WIOA will be provided in accordance with section 134(c)(3)(G) of WIOA, including, if contracts for training services will be used, how the use of such contracts will be coordinated with the use of individual training accounts under that chapter and how the local area board will ensure informed customer choice in the selection of training programs, regardless of how the training services are to be provided.

Information on high-growth, high-wage regional occupations is available at the local CareerForce Center and DEED offices. Job seekers and program participants interested in pursuing classroom training are made aware of this Labor Market Information and encouraged to pursue these occupations. The WDA will continue to give priority for training in high-growth and high-wage occupations as long as the area employers continue to support this effort and as long as they hire participants who complete the desired training.

The local WDA will use WIOA and state funds for incumbent worker training if there is a local need that meets State and Federal guidelines regarding the use of WIOA Funds for Incumbent Worker Training. The local WDA has identified that there is a need for incumbent worker training. These needs do not always correlate with a potential or eminent layoff but frequently occur as employers grow their businesses, update equipment/technology, or seek to replace workers who are leaving the workforce. The Northwest WDB would certainly utilize funds and support any initiatives that would provide additional resources for businesses looking to update the skills of their current workforce.

The local WDA utilizes On-the-Job Training in the WIOA Adult, WIOA Dislocated Worker, State Dislocated Worker, and Out-of-School youth programs. We utilize On-the-Job Training as an alternative training option for individuals who are not interested in a traditional classroom training program. On-the Job Training can assist job seekers in getting back into the workforce more quickly and can also greatly benefit our local employers.

At this point there has been minimal interest expressed in apprenticeship programs from area job seekers. However, the Northwest WDB would certainly support apprenticeship training as a viable means of training for job seekers and program participants.

The WDB recognizes that ABE has been a strong and active partner in the local and regional workforce development system throughout LWDA #1. One of the three ABE consortia in the region has long been co-located on two college campuses, and down the hall from the region's only CareerForce Center. ABE administers CASAS and TABE assessments for dislocated workers throughout the region, co-enrolls and cross refers students to employment service programs, and provides basic literacy skills development, digital literacy training, and core literacy skills development through career pathways training partnerships across the region.

- C.7. Describe the plans and strategies for, and assurances concerning, maximizing coordination of service provided by the state employment service under Wagner-Peyser Act, and services provided in the local workforce development area through the one-stop delivery system, to improve service delivery and avoid duplication of services.

Strategies to coordinate services through the one-stop delivery system, improve service delivery and avoid duplication of services include:

- Wagner Peyser is a required core partner under WIOA and is co-located at all three CareerForce locations in the local workforce development

area and participates in the coordination of services, the Memorandum of Understanding and Infrastructure Funding Agreements.

- Wagner Peyser staff coordinates closely with CareerForce co-located partners to provide basic career services to universal customers. When appropriate referrals are made to eligibility-based programs/services of co-located partners (i.e. WIOA Adult, DW, Vocational Rehabilitation services, Veterans Services, etc.).
- Wagner Peyser staff assist the REA customer with creating an initial registration and enrolling in the Creative Job Search workshop. Creative Job Search is typically the first job finding/job placement service that is offered to UI applicants. The workshop consists of training on how to find a job that includes career planning, preparing for the job hunt, skills identification, resumes and cover letters, applications and references, social media, interviewing skills, and more. Services and workshops are also provided online or remotely.
- Wagner Peyser staff will follow up with REA participants who are not enrolled in a program to encourage and explain the advantages of an registration and resume in MinnesotaWorks, and that they are taking advantage of job placement services.
- Wagner Peyser staff are the staff who connect with local employers to list job opportunities on MinnesotaWorks. Wagner Peyser staff keep CareerForce partner staff informed of job opportunities in the area.
- Wagner Peyser manager are members on our workforce board and part of the OneStop Operator consortium to participate in the coordination of services at CareerForce locations.

Interagency Coordination

- C.8. Describe how the local workforce development system will work with entities carrying out core programs to align and support services with programs of study authorized under Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act.

ICCC has a professional relationship with the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education secondary and post-secondary providers. The primary training providers in our service area are institutions within the Minnesota State College and University System, each of which have programs of study authorized under the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act. We have developed and maintained strong relationships with our colleges over the years. In addition to this the Carl Perkins staff is a member of the LWDA 1 Youth committee and works with the youth committee to better leverage area resources in the provision of services.

- C.9. Describe how the local area board will coordinate education and workforce investment activities carried out under this title with relevant secondary and post-secondary education programs and activities to coordinate strategies, enhance services, and avoid duplication of services.

Workforce Board members and staff are strengthening connections between workforce, education, area businesses, job seekers, and other stakeholders; aligning regional resources; implementing sector strategies; and promoting career pathway opportunities within our local area.

Case managers assist participants in short and long-term career exploration that incorporates re-engagement into education, whether that is towards a high school diploma or its equivalent, or post-secondary degree, training, or certification. Employment counselors have relationships with area high schools, alternative schools, adult basic education centers, post-secondary institutions to assist participants in goal setting and planning potential career pathways.

For youth in particular, service providers will take participants on tours, assist them with applications, and help connect them to programs that support students with barriers entering post-secondary. Providers also support participants with case management services once they begin their classes. Staff help them with ancillary services as necessary, such as housing, transportation, childcare, and finding part time work to support them while they are in school.

- C.10. Describe how the local area board will coordinate education and workforce investment activities carried out under this title with public transportation and other appropriate supportive services.

Transportation issues remain a major barrier to many job seekers in our region. The distance and cost for job seekers to transport themselves long distances are additional challenges to worker recruitment and retention. This is exacerbated by the limited availability of public transportation in Northwest Minnesota. However, there have been some inroads made to provide public transportation in the Crookston and Thief River Falls areas for those persons commuting each day for employment.

Finding adequate child care and the cost of this service are other issues that are barriers for job seekers especially for those individuals living in rural areas or small communities. Finding child care for children less than a year old is extremely difficult in all parts of the region.

The availability of housing is an increasing issue for job seekers within the region. Housing shortages prevent the mobility of our local workforce and those wishing to move to the region. The lack of quality affordable housing is especially prevalent in the communities of Roseau, Warroad, and Thief River Falls, but also affects the surrounding communities as workers expand their housing search when they have exhausted their efforts to find housing in the community in which they want work. The lack of housing is directly related to transportation issues as many workers are required to travel long distances to reach their place of employment.

Job seekers are also looking for jobs that provide them with benefits, especially health care benefits. Many small employers or employers providing low wage employment do not offer health care benefits. This has become even more important due to rising health care costs throughout the nation.

- C.11. Describe how the local area board will coordinate workforce investment activities carried out under this title in the local workforce development area with the provision of adult education and literacy activities under title II, including a description of how the local area board will carry out, consistent with subparagraphs (A) and (B)(i) of section 107(d)(11) and section 232 of WIOA, and the review of local applications submitted under title II of WIOA.

ABE has been a strong and active partner in the local and regional workforce development system throughout LWDA 1. One of the three ABE consortia in the region has long been co-located on two college campuses, and down the hall from the region's only CareerForce Center. ABE administers CASAS and TABE assessments for dislocated workers throughout the region, co-enrolls and cross refers students to employment service programs, and provides basic literacy skills development, digital literacy training, and core literacy skills development through career pathways partnerships across the region.

While many of these career pathway programs are in their infancy, ABE is eager to continue this work more closely with the local area board to build upon the foundations that have been laid across the region. Once every five years, each ABE program in the state of Minnesota must provide a program narrative to the State Department of Education/Adult Basic Education. In the future, 5 year narratives will include provisions for local ABE programs to provide evidence that their programming aligns to the local and regional WIOA plans. These components may include evidence of a common referral process, alignment of assessments and assessment processes, co-location of services, collaborations of

programming, and evidence that ABE is included in the selection and design of key occupational sectors and pathways within the region.

Employer & Economic Development Engagement

- C.12. Describe how the local area board will ensure that eligible providers meet the employment needs of local employers, workers and job seekers.

Employers

Our local employers are in dire need of skilled and entry level workers with strong soft skills. Local businesses have for a significant amount of time recruited outside the local area for jobs that require certain levels of education or training. However, during the past several years our larger local employers, specifically in manufacturing, are increasingly recruiting outside of our region to fill even entry level positions. While commitment to the region remains strong, several of our larger manufacturers have been compelled to expand their operations to other communities outside of our region due to the lack of available workers locally.

The workforce shortage is not a problem limited to our large employers. Our larger local businesses offer competitive benefits and wages and are hiring on a consistent basis. This in turn creates hiring difficulties for smaller local businesses who perhaps cannot afford to offer similar hiring incentives. In recent years, an increasing number of local retail and food establishments have increased their starting wage above minimum wage as an effort to attract and retain workers in these entry level jobs.

Our local businesses have developed strong recruitment strategies and offer competitive wages and benefits however; they continue to have difficulty in getting new workers to move to the area because of the lack of available housing. This issue is especially prevalent in the communities of Thief River Falls, Roseau and Warroad, but effects many of the communities in our region to some degree. Businesses need quality, affordable housing options that will assist them in their efforts to recruit and retain their workers.

There is increasing concern and vocalization regarding workplace values (soft skills). Because of the current workforce shortage, most local businesses are willing to invest time and resources to train workers for entry level positions. However, for many employers, retention of workers has become an issue because a significant number of job seekers lack the “soft skills” needed to be successful in the workplace.

Retirement of workers age 55 and older continues to contribute to the local area workforce shortage. These retirements create challenges for employers because of the knowledge and experience that is lost when these individuals leave the workforce. Businesses need to develop succession planning strategies that will allow at least a portion of this knowledge to transfer to incoming workers. This problem is compounded further by the outward migration of youth from the local area leaving to pursue postsecondary educational opportunities. Many youth do not return to the area after they have completed their educational programs.

Workers

There is great need for incumbent worker training to grow the work skills of the worker on the job. As businesses and their equipment become more technically and mechanically advanced, workers will need continued training and updating of skills. The need for continued training also relates to defined career laddering within businesses that provide a worker with the opportunity to advance to other positions within a firm as the worker's skill level and experience grow. This is especially true for the small businesses that may lack the resources to provide a great deal of incumbent worker training. Many of the larger employers have been able to devote time and resources to develop internal training or to seek professional level training through outside resources.

Job seekers

Job seekers in the local area need and want good career planning information. They want to be provided with industry specific information about the qualifications needed to obtain high-demand, high-growth, and high-wage jobs with employers in the local area. Job seekers have also indicated the need for low cost, short term training that would allow them to enter the work place sooner or that would allow them to obtain better employment without spending two or more years in a formal training program. Many job seekers feel that they are in dead end jobs but find it difficult to move into something better because of their lack of experience or because of their lack of specific work skills.

Current job seekers need good "soft skills." Many employers have expressed that they are willing to invest the resources needed to train individuals with good "soft skills." There are quality jobs available but employers want to hire individuals who have good communication skills and a strong work ethic. Job seekers who do not have a good understanding of standard workplace expectations like timeliness, regular attendance, and workplace behavior are at a distinct disadvantage compared to job seekers who do understand these

expectations. Addressing the lack of “soft skills” in job seekers is not any easy task as behavioral norms are often established early in life.

Basic computer skills are becoming increasingly important for job seekers as businesses become more dependent on technology. Most jobs today require some level of interaction with computers or other types of technology, and many organizations are moving to online job applications. To address this issue, job seekers will need affordable training opportunities that will allow them to develop their computer knowledge and skills.

- C.13. Describe how the local area board will facilitate engagement of employers, including small employers, and employers in in-demand industry sectors and occupations, in workforce development programs.

Engagement of employers is critical to the success of the WIOA system in Northwest Minnesota. Methods of engagement will include, but not be limited to:

- Private sector members make up over 50% of the LWDB. The members represent key industries in the local and regional area including manufacturing, construction, financial services, and others.
- Employers participate in our regional planning sessions providing input on workforce issues and opportunities and identifying workforce priorities for the region.
- Our Workforce Strategy Consultant, Rehabilitation Services Employment Specialists, Wagner Peyser and Local Veterans’ Employment Representatives provide outreach to employers and assist with their hiring and retention needs.
- Employers provide work-based training for adults and dislocated workers through on-the-job training. In addition, employers provide job shadows, work experience and internships for youth.
- Employers participate in a number of job fairs held throughout the year that provides employment opportunities for job seekers.
- Providers also engage with employers through local Chambers of Commerce and other trainings, workshops or events designed for local employers.

With the skilled labor shortage, employers are very interested in attracting new employees and retaining current residents. Employers are currently motivated to be engaged with workforce development. Staff report great interest from employers in learning about Labor Market Information and competitive wages for the positions locally and across the state/nation.

- C.14. Describe how the local area board will support a local workforce development system that meets the needs of businesses in the local workforce development area.
102(b)(4)(ii).

The LWDB is key to planning workforce development strategies for the region. The board identifies economic and business trends, develops community linkages and partnerships, and provides a focus on system outcomes. Through a sector-driven, data-informed approach, the local board focuses on the key industries in the region, working with businesses to identify needs and challenges within those industries. The local area board develops strategies and provides leadership to increase business awareness of the workforce development system's role and resources for the region.

- C.15. Describe how the local area board will better coordinate programs and services with local and regional economic development providers.

Key partner staff are actively engaged with our regional economic development providers. We have representation from our regional economic development providers on our WDB. Additionally, we maintain strong partnerships with local economic developers and share in initiatives and strategies on the local level. Through these connections and partnerships, we continue to develop new initiatives and strengthen ones in place that are effective. Regional economic development providers are also members of our Regional Workforce Alliance.

- C.16. Describe how the local area board will strengthen linkages between the one-stop delivery system and unemployment insurance programs by offering services to laid-off workers and possible lay-off preventative services for businesses, such as incumbent worker training that up-skills the workers and meets the needs of employers (can include but not be limited to, on-the-job training, apprenticeships, etc.).

A key strategy to strengthening linkages between local workforce services and unemployment insurance is through coordination with Reemployment Assistance (REA). Job Service staff contact each UI applicant that has been referred by a REA specialist. Staff inform UI recipients about the broad range of services available at CareerForce locations including dislocated worker services specifically. Attendees that express an interest in dislocated worker services are connected to the appropriate staff for intake.

Local MN DEED staff, with their connection to local employers, is a key link in providing employers information on lay-off prevention strategies and dislocated worker services. Staff provide information to local businesses on potential lay-off prevention strategies such as shared work and training services including incumbent worker training, on-the-job training, transitional jobs/work

experience and apprenticeship. When lay-offs are unavoidable, we reach out to these businesses and their employees to provide information on dislocated worker services available to impacted workers or refer to Rapid Response if the lay-off is significant.

Dislocated worker services provided by our WIOA Title I providers include the full complement of services, including career services, upskilling and training through classroom training and work-based training (including on-the-job training, work experience and apprenticeships). Individuals are supported through career counselors, the provision of supportive services and referrals to other resources in the area.

- C.17. Describe how the local area board will coordinate workforce investment activities with economic development activities, including the promotion of entrepreneurial skills training and microenterprise services.

The Northwest WDB is supportive of entrepreneurship as a valid method of re-entering the workforce after dislocation. In many cases, individuals pursuing entrepreneurship can benefit from career guidance, business related training, assistance in the development of a business plan, and/or assistance in obtaining needed startup financing. The Northwest WDB and its service providers will provide assistance and/or referrals for other services based on the goals/needs identified in the person's Individual Service Strategy.

Dislocated Worker Supports

- C.18. How does the local workforce development area ensure staff comply with the policies and procedures for Rapid Response as communicated on DEED's website?

The Employment and Training Director of Inter-County Community Council is responsible for ensuring that staff, both internal staff and contracted service providers, are familiar with and aware of DEED policies and procedures for Rapid Response events. In the event of a dislocation event the policies will be reviewed with staff to ensure that they are aware of how rapid response activities will proceed.

The Employment and Training Director will maintain close contact with the state Rapid Response team to assist as needed and to communicate directives and decisions with program staff.

- a. How does the local workforce development area inform the state Rapid Response team within 24 hours about an actual or potential dislocation event when there is possibility of a mass layoff (50 or more dislocations)?

The Employment and Training Director of Inter-County Community Council notifies the State Rapid Response team by phone or email as soon as possible after the he or she becomes aware of a layoff or potential layoff. This notification either comes from the employer or staff will learn of the layoff through the local media. The Employment and Training Director then provides the State Rapid Response team with as much information as possible about the layoff including the name and location of the business, the number of potential layoffs, and the ability of the local program staff to serve these workers under formula funding. If available, the Employment and Training Director will provide the Rapid Response team with copies of press releases, newspaper articles, or any other pertinent information. The Employment and Training Director will fully cooperate and provide all assistance requested by the State Rapid Response team.

- b. Describe how the local area board will coordinate workforce investment activities carried out in the local workforce development area with statewide rapid response activities.

The Employment and Training Director of Inter-County Community Council has been designated as the rapid response liaison within the Northwest WSA. As such, the Executive Director will work directly with the State Rapid Response office to coordinate all activities within the local area to effectively serve those workers affected by a mass layoff.

- C.19. How does the local workforce development area inform the state Trade Act staff of companies that are potentially TAA certifiable?

The Employment and Training Director of Inter-County Community Council notifies the State Trade Act staff by phone or email as soon as possible when the WSA learns of companies that may be TAA certifiable. The Employment and Training Director will provide the State Trade Act staff with all local information that is currently available and will assist in gathering any additional information needed for the State Trade Act staff to pursue an investigation.

- a. How does the local workforce development area cooperate with the state Trade Act staff where the layoff involves a company that the DOL trade-certified?

The Employment and Training Director of Inter-County Community Council would be the primary contact for the State Trade Act staff. As such, the Executive Director will work directly with the Trade Act staff to gather local information and to coordinate all activities within the local area to effectively serve those workers who may be TAA eligible.

- b. Is the local workforce development area willing to participate in TAA Counselor Training and TAA Participant Training when a trade-certification occurs?
Yes XXX

- C.20. The local workforce development area has developed and implemented local Supportive Service policies that are consistently applied for all participants.
Yes XXX

Describe the steps taken to ensure consistent compliance with the policy.

Staff are provided with copies of both the DEED and local support service policies and trained in the local process and policies to stay compliant with policy. The local policy has defined categories, limits and amount of services for each program.

Assigned staff review the client barriers and determine the support service need during individual assessment with each eligible client. Based on unmet need and availability of support service funds, the staff follows the outlined process for approval as outlined in policy.

Services to Military Service Members and Spouses

- C.21. Are all WIOA-funded partners complying with the guidance provided in [TEGL 10-09](#) regarding Priority of Service for Veterans and Eligible Spouses?

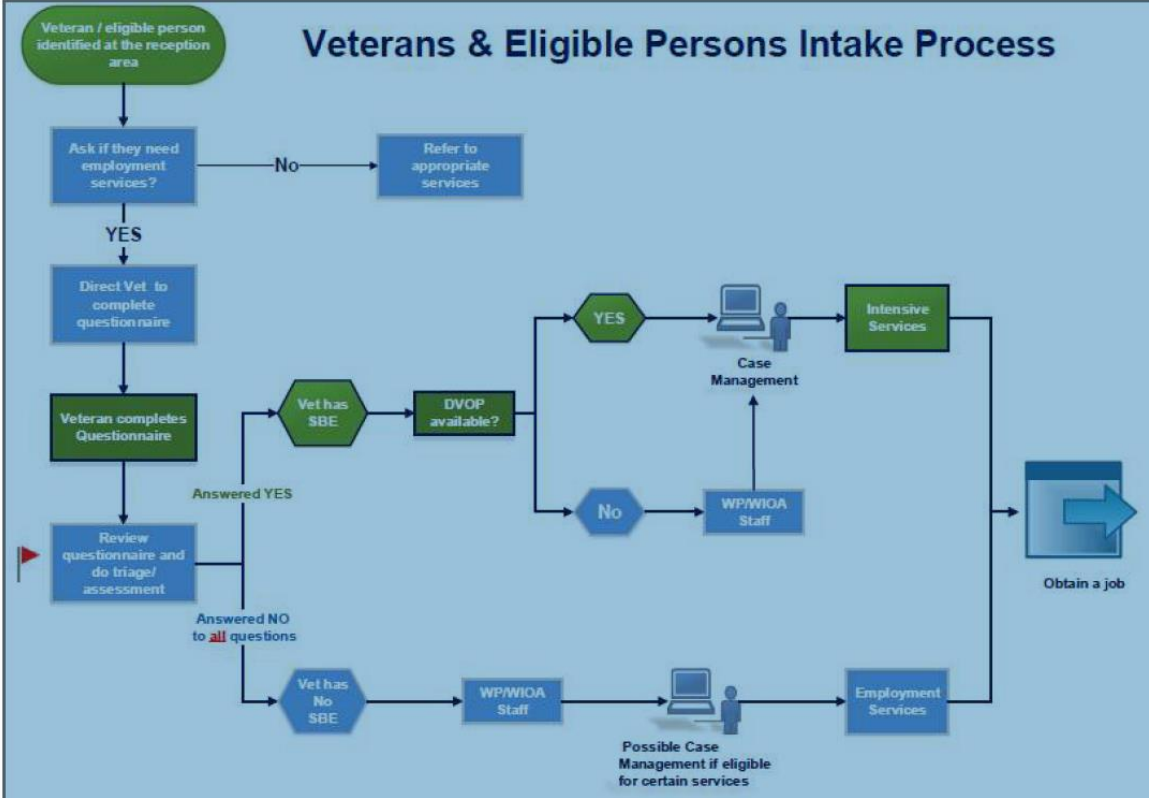
Yes XXX

- C.22. How do you identify current or former Military Service Members coming into your CareerForce Center?

The Northwest Workforce Investment Board has established local policy in reference to the Jobs for Veterans Act (Public Law 107-288). This policy has established that veterans shall have priority of service for all Department of Labor programs within the CareerForce System.

All job seekers entering the CareerForce are initially asked if they are a veteran by the receptionist or resource area staff. Upon a positive response, the veteran is provided with a questionnaire which provides staff with basic information about the veteran. All CareerForce staff and management support and actively work toward providing priority of service to all veterans coming into the CareerForce

Centers. All staff are trained to solicit for and to identify veterans using services at the CareerForce Center. All staff work to ensure that veterans are made aware of all services available to them, that veterans are encouraged to use these services, and to ensure that the veterans receive preference or priority access to all appropriate services offered through the CareerForce Center.



C.23. How do you inform current or former Military Service Members coming into your CareerForce Center about “Veteran Priority of Service?”

All job seekers, including veterans, receive an initial assessment of need when they access CareerForce Services. The guided interview that takes place between Resource Room staff and the job seeker helps to identify a job seeker’s status as a veteran, assists in the determination of need for more intensive and/or training services, and also identifies potential barriers to employment. Referrals to appropriate programs WPWIOA are made based on the needs and interests of the job seeker.

If the need for intensive services is identified, a more comprehensive assessment is completed which includes but is not limited to an assessment of literacy and basic skills, occupational skills, career interests, and work history. If significant barriers to employment are identified during this process, the job seeker would

be referred to the DEED Veterans staff for additional assistance. Any subsequent services received would be coordinated with the DEED Veterans staff.

For those veterans enrolled in CareerForce programs, case management services provide for additional ongoing assessment of needs. Program staff provide community-based referrals, support services, and assistance in obtaining needed accommodations. If at any point during the course of the program enrollment a significant barrier to employment is identified, the program staff would refer and consult with the DEED veterans staff as appropriate given the needs of the program participant.

- C.24. If your CareerForce Center has a presence on the Internet (outside of your local DEED CareerForce Center site) how do you promote Public Law 107-288, "Veterans Priority of Service" to veterans on that website?

The local CareerForce does not have a presence on the internet outside of CareerForceMN.com.

- C.25. How do you identify current or former Military Service Members with "significant barriers to employment?"

CareerForce and ICCC staff work closely with the staff of partner agencies to ensure that job seekers accessing services through the CareerForce System have access to all of the programs and services needed to meet their employment goals. All staff are trained regarding the basic programs and services provided by partner agencies so that they are able to make appropriate referrals to other programs based on the needs of the job seeker. Program and partner staff work closely together to provide coordination of services to those participants in one or multiple programs. This assists in the leveraging of funding to support job seekers and also ensures non-duplication of services.

- C.26. When a current or former Military Service Member with a significant barrier to employment is identified, how do you refer them to an appropriate intensive service provider when there is no Disabled Veteran Outreach Program (DVOP) specialist in your CareerForce Centers?

Veterans with significant employment barriers are referred to the DEED Veterans Employment Representative for additional services as appropriate to the needs of the individual.

At the present time, there is not a DVOP located in our local service area; however, there is one housed in Bemidji, about 90 minutes away, and a that staff is willing travel or use technology to meet with the veteran.

The Veterans staff has valuable knowledge regarding veteran’s issues, as well as regional and statewide programs and services that are specific to veterans. As such, local program staff uses the DEED Veterans staff as a resource for serving veterans in their own programs.

- C.27. How are DVOP and/or Local Veterans Employment Representatives (LVER) staff integrated into the overall service delivery strategy in your CareerForce Centers?

The Northwest Local Workforce Development Area does not currently have a local DVOP in our service area. Referrals are made to regional representatives located outside of our seven-county service area. Local program staff and local DEED staff have made local contacts and work with the county veteran service officers.

- C.28. What is your strategy to ensure that job-ready job seekers enrolled in your programs (including non-program universal customers) are registering in MinnesotaWorks.net and are making their resumes viewable to employers?

All individuals interested in receiving services in WIOA, State Dislocated Worker, MFIP, or Veteran’s programs are required to register on Minnesotaworks.net prior to the completion of the enrollment process. All participants are required to create a resume as part of their job search and all job-ready participants create a resume as one of the activities outlined on their Individual Service Strategy. Universal Customers are provided with information regarding Minnesotaworks.net and are encouraged to register and create a viewable resume as one method of connecting with local employers.

All participants and Universal Customers are informed of the benefits of making their resume viewable to employers as an increasing number of local businesses are using this tool to recruit potential applicants for job openings within their organizations.

- C.29. Are all WIOA-funded partners complying with the guidance provided in [TEGL 11-11, Change 1](#) and [TEGL 11-11, Change 2](#) regarding Selective Service?

Yes XXX

SECTION D: ASSURANCES AND CERTIFICATIONS

Training and Employment Guidance and State Law Compliance

Conflict of Interest and Integrity: Local area boards must make decisions in keeping with several laws and regulations. Indicate below that your local area board is aware and that the local workforce development area's conflict of interest policies are in compliance with DOL Training and Employment Guidance Letter [\(TEGL\) 35-10](#) and [Minnesota OGM 08-01](#) and its relevant federal laws and regulations, including being aware of the:

- A) referenced statute on Government Records
- B) requirement to retain documentation for six years.

Yes XXX

Handling and Protection of Personally Identifiable Information: The local workforce development area is complying with the guidance provided in [TEGL 39-11](#).

Yes XXX

Human Trafficking: The local workforce development area is aware of [TEGL 09-12](#) and will follow the procedures for working with trafficked persons.

Yes XXX

Gender Identification: The local workforce development area is aware of [TEGL 37-14](#) (and associated Attachments [1](#) and [2](#)) and will follow the procedures for developing a similar policy including key terminology and have in place regarding working with customers who may be lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender. Local workforce development areas will also participate in any related training.

Yes XXX

Uniform Guidance: The local workforce development area is aware of [TEGL 15-14](#) regarding Uniform Guidance.

Yes XXX

Assurances

By signing and submitting this plan, the local area board is assuring on behalf of itself and the subgrantee, where applicable:

As a condition to the award of financial assistance from the Department of Labor under Title I of the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 (WIA) and the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act and any other DEED/Workforce Development Employment and Training funds, the grant applicant assures that it will comply fully with the nondiscrimination and equal opportunity provisions and other assurances of the following laws:

- **Accessibility** - [Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended](#) - Requires that federally funded program providers make their electronic information and technology accessible to people with disabilities;
- **ACORN** – [Funds may not be provided](#) to the Association of Community Organizations for Reform Now, or any of its affiliates, subsidiaries, allied organizations or successors;
- **Audits** – [2 CFR 200.501](#) and [Single Audit Act Amendments of 1996](#) - organization-wide or program-specific audits shall be performed;
- **Buy American**- Buy American Act – award may not be expended unless the funds comply with [USC 41, Section 8301-8303](#);
- **Data Sharing** – [MN Access to Government Data](#), [MN Duties of Responsible Authority](#); [MN Access to Information](#); [MN Administrative Rules Data Practices](#); [DEED Policy – Data Practices](#);
- **Disability** - that there will be compliance with the [Architectural Barriers Act of 1968](#), [Sections 503 and 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973](#), as amended, and the [Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990](#);
- **Drug-Free Workplace** – [Drug-Free Workplace Act of 1988](#) – requires all organizations to maintain a drug-free workplace;
- **Equipment** – [2 CFR 200. 313](#), [200.439](#) – must receive prior approval for the purchase of any equipment with a per unit acquisition cost of \$5,000 or more, and a useful life of more than one year;
- **Fire Safety** – [15 USC 2225a](#) – ensure that all space for conferences, meetings, conventions or training seminars funded in whole or in part complies with the protection and control guidelines of the Hotel and Motel Fire Safety Act ([Public Law 101-391](#));
- **Fraud/Abuse** - that the provider has policies on fraud and abuse and will contact DEED for potential fraud and abuse issues; [20 CFR 667.630](#); [DEED Policy – Fraud Prevention and Abuse](#);
- **Health Benefits** – [Public Law 113-235, Division G, Sections 506 and 507](#) – ensure use of funds for health benefits coverage complies with the [Consolidated and Further Continuing Appropriations Act, 2015](#);
- **Insurance** - that insurance coverage be provided for injuries suffered by participants in work-related activities where Minnesota's workers' compensation law is not applicable as required under Regulations [20 CFR 667.274](#);
- **Insurance** – [Flood Disaster Protection Act of 1973](#) – provides that no Federal financial assistance to acquire, modernize or construct property may be provided in identified flood-prone communities in the United States, unless the community

participates in the National Flood Insurance Program and flood insurance is purchased within 1 year of the identification;

- **Limited English** - [Executive Order 13166](#) - Improving access to services for persons with limited English proficiency;
- **Nondiscrimination** - [Section 188 of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act \(WIOA\)](#) - Requires applying nondiscrimination provisions in the administration of programs and activities for all eligible individuals, including individuals with disabilities;
- **Nondiscrimination** - [Section 188 of the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 \(WIA\)](#) - Requires applying nondiscrimination provisions in the administration of programs and activities for all eligible individuals, including individuals with disabilities;
- **Nondiscrimination** - [Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended](#) – Prohibits discrimination on the bases of race, color, and national origin under any program receiving federal financial assistance;
- **Nondiscrimination** - [Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended](#) - Prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, sex or national origin in employment;
- **Nondiscrimination** - [Title II of the Genetic Information Nondiscrimination Act of 2008](#) - Prohibits discrimination in employment on the basis of genetic information;
- **Nondiscrimination** - [Title V of the Older Americans Act of 1965](#) - Prohibits discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex, national original, age disability or political affiliation or beliefs in any program funded in part with Senior Community Services Employment Program funds;
- **Nondiscrimination** - [Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, as amended](#) - Requires applying nondiscrimination provisions, based on sex, in educational programs;
- **Nondiscrimination** - [Title I \(Employment\) Americans with Disabilities Act \(ADA\)](#) - Prohibits state and local governments, from discriminating against qualified individuals with disabilities in job application procedures, hiring, firing, advancement, compensation, job training, and other terms, conditions, and privileges of employment;
- **Nondiscrimination** - [Title II \(State and Local Governments\) Americans with Disabilities Act \(ADA\)](#) - Prohibits qualified individuals with disabilities from discrimination in services, programs, and activities;
- **Nondiscrimination** - [Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended](#) - Prohibits discrimination against qualified individuals with disabilities;
- **Nondiscrimination** - [Age Discrimination Act of 1975, as amended](#) - Prohibits discrimination on the basis of age;
- **Nondiscrimination** - [Title 29 CFR Part 31](#) Nondiscrimination in federally-assisted programs of the Department of Labor, effectuation of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964;
- **Nondiscrimination** - [Title 29 CFR Part 32](#) Nondiscrimination on the basis of disability in programs and activities receiving or benefiting from federal assistance;

- **Nondiscrimination** - [Title 29 CFR Part 33](#) Enforcement of nondiscrimination on the basis of disability in programs or activities conducted by the Department of Labor;
- **Nondiscrimination** - [Title 29 CFR Part 35](#) Nondiscrimination on the basis of age in programs or activities receiving federal financial assistance from the Department of Labor;
- **Nondiscrimination** - [Title 29 CFR Part 37](#) Implementation of the Nondiscrimination and Equal Opportunity provisions of the Workforce Investment Act of 1998;
- **Nondiscrimination** - [Title 29 CFR Part 38](#) Implementation of the Nondiscrimination and Equal Opportunity provisions of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act;
- **Nondiscrimination** - [Executive Order 13160](#) Nondiscrimination on the basis of race, sex, color, national origin, disability, religion, age, sexual orientation, and status as a parent in federally conducted education and training Programs;
- **Nondiscrimination** - [Executive Order 13279](#) - Nondiscrimination against grant seeking organizations on the basis of religion in the administration or distribution of federal financial assistance under social service programs, including grants, contracts, and loans;
- **Nondiscrimination** - [The Minnesota Human Rights Act of 1973, Minnesota Statutes, Chapter 363A](#) - Prohibits discrimination in employment and providing public services on the basis of race, color, creed, religion, natural origin, sex, marital status (employment only), disability, status with regard to public assistance, sexual orientation, familial status (employment only), citizenship, or age (employment only), and local human rights commission activity (employment only);
- **Nondiscrimination** - that collection and maintenance of data necessary to show compliance with the nondiscrimination provisions of WIA and [WIOA Section 188](#), as provided in the regulations implementing that section, will be completed;
- **Opportunity** – [Executive Order 12928](#) – encouraged to provide subcontracting/subgranting opportunities to Historically Black Colleges and Universities and other Minority Institutions and to Small Businesses Owned and Controlled by Socially and Economically Disadvantaged Individuals;
- **Personally Identifiable Information (PII)** – [Training and Guidance Letter 39-11](#) – must recognize and safeguard PII except where disclosure is allowed by prior written approval of the Grant Officer or by court order;
- **Procurement** – Uniform Administrative Requirements – [2 CFR 200-317-36](#) – all procurement transactions to be conducted in a manner to provide, to the maximum extent practical, open and free competition;
- **Publicity** – no funds shall be used for publicity or propaganda purposes, preparation or distribution or use of any kit, pamphlet, booklet, publication, radio, television or film presentation designed to support or defeat legislation pending before the Congress or any state/local legislature or legislative body, except in presentation to the Congress or any state/local legislature itself, or designed to support or defeat any proposed or pending regulation, administrative action, or order issued by the executive branch of any state or local government. Nor shall grant funds be used to pay the salary or expenses of any recipient or agent acting for such recipient, related to any activity designed to influence the enactment of legislation, appropriations

regulation, administrative action, or Executive Order proposed or pending before the Congress, or any state government, state legislature or local legislature body other than for normal and recognized executive-legislative relationships or participation by an agency or officer of a state, local or tribal government in policymaking and administrative processes within the executive branch of that government;

- **Salary/Bonus** – [Public Law 113-235, Division G, Title I, Section 105](#) – none of the funds appropriated under the heading “Employment and Training” shall be used by a recipient or sub-recipient of such funds to pay the salary and bonuses of an individual, either as direct costs or indirect costs, at a rate in excess of [Executive Level II](#). Further clarification can be found in [TEGL 5-06](#);
- **Seat Belts** - [Executive Order 13043](#) – Increasing Seat Belt Use in the United States;
- **Text Messaging** – [Executive Order 13513](#) – encouraged to adopt and enforce policies that ban text messaging while driving company-owned or –rented vehicles or GOV or while driving POV when on official Government business or when performing any work for or on behalf of the Government;
- **Trafficking of Persons** – [2 CFR 180](#) – OMB Guidelines to Agencies on Government wide Debarment and Suspension – may not engage in severe forms of trafficking, procure a commercial sex act or use forced labor in the performance;
- **Veteran Priority of Service** - [Public Law 107-288: Jobs for Veterans Act](#) - Priority of service for veterans (including veterans, eligible spouses, widows and widowers of service members) in qualified job training programs;
- **Veterans** - [Public Law 112-56: Vow to Hire Heroes Act of 2011](#) - Establishes guidelines for service providers who are providing employment, training, academic or rehabilitation services for military veterans;
- **Veterans** - that veterans will be afforded employment and training activities authorized in WIA and WIOA Section 134, and the activities authorized in Chapters 41 and 42 of Title 38 US code, and in compliance with the veterans' priority established in the Jobs for Veterans Act. ([38 USC 4215](#)), U.S. Department of Labor, [Training and Employment Guidance Letter 5-03](#) and Minnesota's Executive Order 06-02;
- **Voter Registration** - that the required voter registration procedures described in [Minnesota Statutes 201.162](#) are enacted without the use of federal funds;
- **Voter Registration** – [52 USC 20501 – 20511](#) – National Voter Registration Act of 1993.

Certifications

By signing and submitting this plan, the local area board is certifying on behalf of itself and the subgrantee, where applicable:

- A. That this ***Regional and Local Workforce Development Area Plan*** was prepared and is in accordance with all applicable titles of the WIOA Act of 2014, Title V of the Older Americans Act, applicable Minnesota state statutes and that it is consistent with Minnesota’s current and future state plans;

- B. that it has provided at least a thirty day period for public comment and input into the development of plan by members of the local area board and the public (including persons with disabilities) and has provided information regarding the plan and the planning process, including the plan and supporting documentation, in alternative formats when requested and that any comments representing disagreement with the plan are included with the local plan forwarded to DEED (as the Governor's representative) Section 118(c); Section 108 (d)
- C. that the public (including individuals with disabilities) have access to all of the local area boards and its components' meetings and information regarding the local area board's and its components' activities;
- D. that fiscal control and fund accounting procedures necessary to ensure the proper disbursement of, and accounting for, funds paid through the allotments funded through the contract/master agreement issued by DEED have been established;
- E. that it is, and will maintain a certifiable local area board;
- F. that it will comply with the confidentiality requirements of WIA Section 136 (f)(3) and WIOA Section 116 (i)(3)
- G. that the respective contract/master agreement and all assurances will be followed;
- H. that it will ensure that no funds covered under the contract/master agreement are used to assist, promote, or deter union organizing;
- I. that this plan was developed in consultation with the local area board;
- J. that it acknowledges the specific performance standards for each of its programs and will strive to meet them;
- K. that the local area board members will not act in a manner that would create a conflict of interest as identified in 20 CFR 667.200(a)(4), including voting on any matter regarding the provision of service by that member or the entity that s/he represents and any matter that would provide a financial benefit to that member or to his or her immediate family;
- L. that local area board and staff are aware of local WorkForce Center services, and are working with and referring to the WorkForce Center services as appropriate;
- M. that all staff are provided the opportunity to participate in appropriate staff training;
- N. that, if applicable, the local area board must maintain the currency of its information in the System Award Management until submission of the final financial report or receive the final payment, whichever is later;
- O. that sponsored (in whole or in part) conferences are charged to the grantee as appropriate and allowable; and

- P. that funds are not used for the purpose of defraying costs of a conference unless it is directly and programmatically related to the purpose of the award.
- Q. that the local area board and its sub-grantees must also adhere to the same certifications and assurances that DEED must assure.

WIOA Guidance

This list of guidance is non-exhaustive and applies only to ETA programs. ETA has published a number of documents to guide the operationalization of WIOA, with the most recent and popular listed below. Find the full library of guidance [here](#).

- [Training and Employment Guidance Letter \(TEGL\) 04-23](#)
 - *Conveys to states the Administration's priorities, State Plan requirements, submission process, and deadline for WIOA Unified and Combined State Plans (State Plans) for PY 2024 through 2027, consistent with WIOA Sections 102 and 103.*
- [Training and Employment Guidance Letter \(TEGL\) 05-23](#)
 - *Provides information to the public workforce system and other entities that receive federal financial assistance under Title I of WIOA, as well as education and training programs or activities receiving DOL financial assistance, regarding the prohibition on discrimination based on actual or perceived religion, shared ancestry, or ethnic characteristics.*
- [Training and Employment Guidance Letter \(TEGL\) 09-22](#)
 - *Guidance and planning information to states, local workforce areas, and other recipients of Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Title I youth formula funds on the activities associated with the implementation of WIOA.*
- [Training and Employment Guidance Letter \(TEGL\) 07-22](#)
 - *Increasing Employer and Workforce System Customer Access to Good Jobs.*
- [Training and Employment Notice \(TEN\) 16-22](#)
 - *The Employment and Training Administration is Implementing Grant Solutions for Grant Award Processing and the Payment Management System for Financial Reporting.*
- [Training and Employment Guidance Letter \(TEGL\) 22-20](#)
 - *Program Year (PY) 2021 Funding Allotments and Instructions for the Indian and Native American (INA) Programs.*
- [Training and Employment Guidance Letter \(TEGL\) 23-20](#)
 - *Program Year (PY) 2021 Planning Guidance for National Farmworker Jobs Program Career Services and Training Grantees and Housing Grantees.*
- [Training and Employment Guidance Letter \(TEGL\) 07-20](#)

- *Effective Implementation of Priority of Service Provisions for Most in Need Individuals in the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Adult Program.*
- [Training and Employment Guidance Letter \(TEGL\) 08-19](#)
 - *Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Title I Training Provider Eligibility and State List of Eligible Training Providers (ETPs) and Programs.*
- [Training and Employment Guidance Letter \(TEGL\) 19-16](#)
 - *Guidance on Services provided through the Adult and Dislocated Worker Programs under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) and the Wagner-Peyser Act Employment Service (ES), as amended by title III of WIOA, and for Implementation of the WIOA Final Rules.*
- [Training and Employment Guidance Letter \(TEGL\) 21-16](#)
 - *Third Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Title I Youth Formula Program Guidance.*

Attachment A

REGIONAL OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE

**Regional Workforce
Development Area**

Regional Workforce Development Area 1

**Local Workforce Development
Area**

Northwest Private Industry Council (LWDA 1) and Rural
Minnesota CEP, Inc. (LWDA 2)

MEMBER (Name, Title)	ORGANIZATION	LWDA	COMMITTEE ROLE
Carol Anderson	Anderson Farms	LWBD2 and LEO WDA2	
Terry Blake	Ada-Felton County Store	LWBD2 and LEO WDA2	
James Whirlwind Soldier	DEED		Executive Committee Member
Ed Bolas	DyCast Specialties	LWBD2 and LEO WDA2	
Nate Dorr	Northwest Minnesota Foundation		
Brianna Efta	DEED-VRS		
Sally Erickson	Ericco Manufacturing	LWBD1	
Kirsten Fuglseth	Northwest Service Cooperative	LWBD1	
Don Hickman	Initiative Foundation		
Madison Jansky	MSCTCC		
Tina Jaster	Rural MN CEP, Inc.		Executive Committee Member

Amy Johnson	Cardinal Consulting		
Cindy Hager	Alexandria Technical College		
Catherine Johnson	Inter-County Community Council	LWBD1	Executive Committee Member
Jeff Bjornson	DEED	LWBD2 and LWBD1	
Sarah Kerbeshian	Delta Dental of Minnesota-Bemidji		
Janelle Klinke	Fairview Range Medical Center	LEO WDA2	
Sonja Merrild	Blandin foundation		
John Preuss	Inter-County Community Council		Executive Committee Member
Julie Sachs	DEED	LWBD2	
Tammy Schatz	Moorhead Schools	LWBD2	
Ahmed Shiil	United Way of Cass-Clay		
Karen Pifher	Creative Community Consulting		
Curtis Anderson	Beltrami County		
Mary Thompson	Heartland Lakes Development		

Attachment B

LOCAL WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT AREA CONTACTS

ROLE	Contact Name	Phone	Email	Reports to (name only)
Rapid Response Liaison for Mass Layoffs	John Preuss	218-796-5144 ext 1018	jpreuss@interco.untgcc.org	Catherine Johnson
Equal Opportunity Officer	John Preuss	218-796-5144 ext 1018	jpreuss@interco.untgcc.org	Catherine Johnson
Program Complaint Officer	John Preuss	218-796-5144 ext 1018	jpreuss@interco.untgcc.org	Catherine Johnson
Records Management/Records Retention Coordinator	John Preuss	218-796-5144 ext 1018	jpreuss@interco.untgcc.org	Catherine Johnson
ADA Coordinator	John Preuss	218-796-5144 ext 1018	jpreuss@interco.untgcc.org	Catherine Johnson
Data Practices Coordinator	John Preuss	218-796-5144 ext 1018	jpreuss@interco.untgcc.org	Catherine Johnson
Language Access Coordinator	John Preuss	218-796-5144 ext 1018	jpreuss@interco.untgcc.org	Catherine Johnson

CareerForce Center in _____ Thief River Falls _____

ROLE	Contact Name	Phone	Email	Reports to (name only)
Site Representative	Jason Pangiarella	218-683-8063	Jason.pangiarella@state.mn.us	Art Larsen
Job Service Manager	Jason Pangiarella	218-683-8063	Jason.pangiarella@state.mn.us	Art Larsen
Vocational Rehabilitation Services Manager	Jeff Bjornson	218-331-5998	jeffery.bjornson@state.mn.us	Jeri Werner
State Services for the Blind Manager	Jon Benson	651-539-2332	Jon.benson@state.mn.us	Natasha Jerde
Local Workforce Development Area Director	John Preuss	218-796-5144 ext 1018	jpreuss@intercountycc.org	Catherine Johnson
Adult Basic Education (ABE)	Kirsten Fuglseth	218-681-0900	kfuglseth@nw-service.k12.mn.us	Rob Blankenfeld
Carl Perkins Post-Secondary Manager	Sandy Kiddoo	218-793-2465	sandy.kiddoo@northlandcollege.edu	MnSCU Board
Adult	John Preuss	218-796-5144 ext 1018	jpreuss@intercountycc.org	Catherine Johnson
Dislocated Worker	John Preuss	218-796-5144 ext 1018	jpreuss@intercountycc.org	Catherine Johnson
Youth	John Preuss	218-796-5144 ext 1018	jpreuss@intercountycc.org	Catherine Johnson

LOCAL WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD MEMBERSHIP

WIOA Sec. 107(b)(2)(B) Representatives of the workforce within the local area – At least 20% of the total board membership must represent the categories in this section.			
<u>Membership Category</u> Name of labor organization, CBO, etc.	<u>Member's Name</u>	<u>Nominated By</u>	<u>Term Expiration Date</u> If Vacant, Date to be Filled
(i) Representatives of labor organizations (for a local area in which employees are represented by labor organizations), or (for a local area in which no employees are represented by such organizations) other representatives of employees;			
Minimum of two representatives (Must be nominated by local labor federations or other employee representative group.)			
Teachers Union	Joel Ziegler	Teachers Union	1/31/2027
(ii) Representative of labor organization or a training director, from a joint labor-management apprenticeship program, or if no such joint program exists in the area, such a representative of an apprenticeship program in the area			
Minimum of one representative, if such a program exists in the area			
		Not Applicable	
(iii) Representatives of community-based organizations that have demonstrated experience and expertise in addressing the employment needs of individuals with barriers to employment, including organizations that serve veterans or that provide or support competitive integrated employment for individuals with disabilities (Optional category)			
Individuals with Disabilities		Not Applicable	
Veterans			
(iv) Representatives of organizations that have demonstrated experience and expertise in addressing the employment, training, or education needs of eligible youth, including representatives of organizations that serve out-of-school youth (Optional category)			
		Not Applicable	

LOCAL WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD MEMBERSHIP

WIOA Sec. 107(b)(2)(C)

Each local board shall include representatives of entities administering education and training activities in the local area.

When there is more than one local area provider of adult education and literacy activities under Title II, or multiple institutions of higher education providing workforce investment activities the CLEO must solicit nominations from those providers and institutions, respectively, in appointing the required representatives.

<u>Membership Category</u> List Business or Agency Name	<u>Names</u> Member's Name	<u>Nominated By</u> Organization Name	<u>Term Expiration Date</u> If Vacant, Date to be Filled
A representative of eligible providers administering adult education and literacy activities under title II of WIOA			
Minimum of one representative			
Adult Literacy	Kirsten Fuglseth	LWDB	1/31/2027
A representative of institutions of higher education providing workforce investment activities (including community colleges)			
Minimum of one representative			
Higher Education – NCTC	Sandy Kiddoo	LWDB	1/31/2027
Representatives of local educational agencies, and of community-based organizations with demonstrated experience and expertise in addressing the education or training needs of individuals with barriers to employment (Optional category)			
Community Based Organization	Catherine Johnson	LWDB	1/31/2027

LOCAL WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD MEMBERSHIP

WIOA Sec. 107(b)(2)(D)

Each local board shall include representatives of governmental and economic and community development entities serving the local area.

<u>Membership Category</u> List Business or Agency Name	<u>Names</u> Member's Name	<u>Nominated By</u> Organization Name	<u>Term Expiration Date</u> If Vacant, Date to be Filled
Representatives of economic and community development entities (Minimum of one representative)		Not applicable	
Economic Development	Sean Ranum		6/30/2025
Representative from the State employment service office under the Wagner-Peyser Act serving the local area (Required)		Not applicable	
DEED Job Service	Jason Pangiarella		6/30/2025
Representative of the programs carried out under title I of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 serving the local area [other than section 112 or part C of that title] (Required)		Not applicable	
DEED VRS	Jeff Bjornson		6/30/2025
Representatives of agencies or entities administering programs serving the local area relating to transportation, housing, and public assistance (Optional)		Not applicable	
Representatives of philanthropic organizations serving the local area (Optional)		Not applicable	
<i>Other</i>		Not applicable	

I certify that I have accurately reported the above information included in this document. I understand that misreporting this information could result in decertification of the local workforce development board for my area.

(Signature)

(Date)

Attachment

LOCAL AREA BOARD SUBCOMMITTEE LIST

<p>Regional Workforce Development Area</p>	<p>Northwest - RWDA 1</p>
<p>Local Workforce Development Area</p>	<p>Northwest - LWDA 1</p>

Committee Name	Objective/Purpose
Executive Committee	As directed by the Northwest Private Industry Council Board of Directors at its regularly scheduled meetings, the business, property and affairs of the corporation shall be managed by its Executive Committee. All other standing committees may only make recommendations for adoption by the Board of Directors.
One-Stop Operations	This committee is to provide information and assist with operational and other issues relating to the one-stop delivery system; it includes as members representatives of the one-stop partners. This committee also provides information and assists with operational and other issues relating to the provision of services to individuals with disabilities, including issues relating to compliance with section 188, if applicable, and applicable provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C. 12101 et seq.) regarding providing programmatic and physical access to the services, programs, and activities of the one-stop delivery system, as well as appropriate training for staff on providing supports for or accommodations to, and finding employment opportunities for, individuals with disabilities.
Youth Committee	This committee provides information and assists with planning, operational, and other issues relating to the provision of services to youth.

Attachment E

LOCAL WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT AREA SUB-GRANTEE LIST

**Regional Workforce
Development Area**

Northwest - RWDA 1

**Local Workforce
Development Area**

Northwest - LWDA 1

Name of Sub-Grantee	Services Provided	Funding Source	Sub-Grantee located in which CFC?	If not in CFC, provide Address, City, State, ZIP Code
Inter-County Community Council	Adult, Dislocated Worker and Youth	WIOA Adult; WIOA DW; State of MN DW; and WIOA Youth	Thief River Falls and Crookston	

Attachment F

LOCAL WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT AREA NON-CFC PROGRAM SERVICE DELIVERY LOCATION LIST

Regional Workforce Development Area

Northwest - RWDA 1

Local Workforce Development Area

Northwest - LWDA 1

Name and Location (City)	Program Service Delivered
Inter-County Community Council (Oklee)	WIOA Adult, Dislocated Worker, Youth, Senior Employment
Inter-County Community Council (East Grand Forks)	WIOA Adult, Dislocated Worker, Youth, Senior Employment
MN DEED Vocational Rehabilitation (Roseau)	
MN DEED Vocational Rehabilitation (Crookston)	
ABE – NCTC – East Grand Forks	Adult Literacy
MN DEED Job Service (East Grand Forks)	MFIP, SNAP, DWP

Attachment G

LOCAL WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT AREA KEY INDUSTRIES IN REGIONAL ECONOMY

Based on your most recent analysis of regional economies, provide a list of the key industries in your regional economy.

Key Industries in LWDA 1 are:

- Manufacturing
- Health Care and Social Assistance
- Wholesale Trade
- Retail Trade
- Educational Services

According to the DEED 2022 Regional Profile for Economic Development Region 1:

With 6,929 jobs at 114 establishments, the Manufacturing industry by far employs the most people in Region 1. Even after losing 280 jobs since 2019, it still accounted for 19.6% of total regional jobs in 2021. With 2,738 jobs, the region has an extremely high concentration of employment in transportation equipment manufacturing, and over 900 jobs in food manufacturing.

Health Care & Social Assistance remained the second largest industry in terms of employment with 5,136 jobs but lost 318 jobs since 2019, the largest job loss of any sector. Due to the region's older population, the largest sectors were hospitals and nursing and residential care facilities with over 1,800 jobs each.

The next largest industry in Region 1 is Wholesale Trade, which gained 289 jobs or 6% from 2019 to 2021 and now accounts for 5,121 jobs in the region at 141 establishments. Wholesale Trade accounts for 14.5% of total employment in the region, compared to just 4.6% of total employment in the state. In addition, average annual wages in Wholesale Trade, at \$65,511, were nearly \$14,640 higher than the regional average of \$50,871, and slightly higher than in Manufacturing at \$65,107. Wholesale Trade employment is over three times more concentrated in the region than statewide.

Construction out-paced Wholesale Trade job growth with an 8% gain, but a much smaller 84 jobs added. Management of Companies had the fastest growth of 21.8% from 2019 to 2021, but given the small size of the industry, this was only 19 additional jobs. Professional & Technical Services added 24 jobs and Utilities added 5. All the industries that grew had above average wages.

Retail Trade is the fourth largest sector, but it lost the third most jobs behind Health Care & Social Assistance and Manufacturing. Like Health Care & Social Assistance, it continued to shed jobs in 2021, albeit at a much slower pace. Like Retail, Accommodation & Food Services was greatly affected by the pandemic nationwide and in the region. However, it regained a lot of the jobs lost in 2021. By far the largest percentage job declines were in Arts, Entertainment & Recreation, down nearly -20% from the pre-pandemic level (Table 14).

NAICS Industry Title	2021 Annual Data				2020-2021		2019-2021	
	Number of Firms	Number of Jobs	Total Payroll (\$1,000s)	Avg. Annual Wage	Change in Jobs	Percent Change	Change in Jobs	Percent Change
Total, All Industries	2,750	35,292	\$1,795,326	\$50,871	+557	+1.6%	-1,206	-3.3%
Manufacturing	114	6,929	\$451,126	\$65,107	+213	+3.2%	-280	-3.9%
Health Care & Social Assistance	233	5,136	\$251,895	\$49,045	-188	-3.5%	-318	-5.8%
Wholesale Trade	141	5,121	\$335,483	\$65,511	+301	+6.2%	+289	+6.0%
Retail Trade	318	3,334	\$95,176	\$28,547	-43	-1.3%	-211	-6.0%
Educational Services	69	3,290	\$154,466	\$46,950	+72	+2.2%	-113	-3.3%
Public Administration	138	2,167	\$116,446	\$53,736	-7	-0.3%	-88	-3.9%
Accommodation & Food Services	185	1,893	\$31,081	\$16,419	+123	+6.9%	-204	-9.7%
Agriculture, Forestry, Fish & Hunt	329	1,163	\$55,419	\$47,652	+6	+0.5%	-25	-2.1%
Construction	287	1,132	\$66,019	\$58,321	-8	-0.7%	+84	+8.0%
Transportation & Warehousing	191	1,132	\$61,038	\$53,921	+35	+3.2%	-5	-0.4%
Other Services	219	915	\$19,507	\$21,319	+19	+2.1%	-125	-12.0%
Finance & Insurance	150	846	\$55,306	\$65,373	-25	-2.9%	-32	-3.6%
Arts, Entertainment, & Recreation	61	592	\$14,933	\$25,224	+8	+1.4%	-146	-19.8%
Professional & Technical Services	114	487	\$29,699	\$60,984	+15	+3.2%	+24	+5.2%
Information	41	412	\$21,495	\$52,171	-2	-0.5%	-37	-8.2%
Admin. Support & Waste Mgmt. Svcs.	81	360	\$11,172	\$31,035	+23	+6.8%	-42	-10.4%
Utilities	13	136	\$11,675	\$85,847	+2	+1.5%	+5	+3.8%
Management of Companies	10	106	\$7,743	\$73,046	+11	+11.6%	+19	+21.8%
Real Estate & Rental & Leasing	49	100	\$3,272	\$32,721	0	0.0%	-3	-2.9%
Mining	9	38	\$2,374	\$62,482	+1	+2.7%	-4	-10.2%

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

Attachment H

Comments submitted in regards to the Local and Regional plan during the public comment period.

We received on comment during the comment period and it was taken under consideration but did not change the plan. Below is the comment received on 5/9/2024:

Hi John and Gabe,

Sorry this is coming in on the last day; think of these few comments just as ideas or food for thought, not criticism but a point of departure for future conversations and meetings.

Local Workforce Development Area 1

- A. A.3.c – When it discusses publicity to customers, do we really *utilize...videos...social media...radio...newsletters* – I'd recommend mentioning where and how, and more specificity in which social media platforms. The kinds of audiences reached via Facebook is markedly different than say, TikTok or Snapchat.
- B. Again, A.3.c, we should also list that we have relationships with the Polk County Family Resource Centers, in Crookston and East Grand Forks to help prospective customers learn of service availability.

Regional Plan

- A. A.5. One trend I am seeing, and that we see in demographics is the aging population in our workforce; I am now consistently getting requests from mature workers for career pivoting away from manufacturing and agriculture because of the physicality of these jobs. There are simply not enough office-based jobs for these customers and I think we need to set goals on diversifying our development efforts as more and more people will be entering that age-bracket and have similar requests.

Jason Pangiarella | NW Minnesota Job Service Supervisor

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