

Regional and Local Plans

Minnesota's Workforce Development System under WIOA

Program Years 2016 & 2017

Submitted by

RWDA:

Regional Workforce Development Planning Area #2

LWDA:

Local Workforce Development Area #3 (Northeast Minnesota)

Department of Employment and Economic Development

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SECTION A: REGIONAL PLAN

REGIONAL LEADERSHIP APPROACH

The regional leadership approach describes how the local area boards within each regional workforce development area will define and coordinate the strategic priorities established by the Governor under WIOA.

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

Regional planning efforts in Northeast Minnesota will be facilitated by a leadership team comprised of 4-5 members from each Local Workforce Development Board (LWDB) – 8 to 10 total members. Interested individuals will volunteer and be selected based on criteria that ensures broad representation from a variety of industries and occupations, including both private and public.

Both boards agree that a small leadership team will be more nimble and effective in the initial phases of development, but concur that others must be engaged at various stages to ensure those most affected by these efforts have an equal opportunity to provide input and actively participate. Additional recruitment will be undertaken as efforts develop and/or as ad hoc members are needed, including elected officials and key decision-makers from business and industry. Voting members of the leadership team will be current board members and each board will have an equal number of members represented.

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

The regional leadership committee will meet at least quarterly, either in-person or by phone, to facilitate implementation of regional strategies. One representative from each local board will serve as a co-chair of the committee. Communication back to local boards will occur after each regional meeting so all members are informed of and connected to initiatives and projects as they develop.

The committee is charged with ensuring all regional strategies are clearly defined and measurable. They will guide decision-making and monitor progress of regional efforts to ensure progress is made and outcomes are achieved. The committee will engage key stakeholders, individuals from diverse groups, and those experiencing barriers throughout the process of development and implementation of regional strategies.

See Attachment A for membership listing.

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

Engagement of key stakeholders with diverse perspectives and experiences is

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critical to the success of regional planning efforts. The leadership team will reach out to and garner input from individuals and organizations, including those with the greatest barriers to employment. Intentional efforts will be made to connect with those who are experiencing barriers to employment, decision-makers from organizations that serve individuals with barriers to employment, and other key stakeholders who can help identify and implement solutions. This includes, but is not limited to, representatives from communities of color, tribal communities, those involved with the criminal justice system, individuals with disabilities, K12, higher education, and organizations/associations specifically committed to addressing employment disparities. Efforts will be made to engage diverse groups early in the process to ensure strategies are reflective of their voices and ideals.

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

Any proposed method for negotiating performance measures among local workforce development areas within the region is currently on hold awaiting further clarification and guidance. It is important that performance measures consider those most in need of support, as existing measures make it difficult to do some of the things we're being asked to do. We are hopeful efforts will be made to propose modifications to the performance measures in order to deliver what we are being asked to deliver. We will continue to work with MWCA and DEED to develop a plan once final regulations have been released.

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

For the 2-year term of this regional plan, both boards have agreed to maintain primary focus on collective goals associated with developing sound career pathways approaches and addressing disparities. Any additional goals, developed locally or regionally, would likely be aligned with and support the collective goals and are yet to be determined.

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

System alignment within the region will involve both internal and external partners.

Internal: Since the inception of the One-Stop system under WIA, Northeast and Duluth Workforce Center partner management has met monthly to discuss Center operations, determine and clarify policy, address staffing or programmatic issues, identify opportunities for collaboration, ensure appropriate access to Center programs and services, and provide updates on what is happening within each represented agency. These meetings already include local WIOA providers from both WSA 3 and 4 (the Northeast Minnesota Office of Job Training and Duluth Workforce Development), DEED Job Service, Vocational Rehabilitation and State Services for the Blind management, and Arrowhead Economic and Opportunity Agency (AEOA), the largest Community Action program provider in the region and long-time partner in the Workforce Center system. Having this existing partnership between the two local

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areas has already helped streamline the regional planning process and is an effective means of aligning shared policies and practices among all system partners.

In addition to regular partner management meetings, Workforce Center Operations committees also meet monthly to promote and support internal alignment and include representatives from the front-line staff of each partner agency. These staff meet to ensure day-to-day operations run smoothly, including the development of agreed-upon resource room staffing models, the availability of adequate resource materials, development of safety plans and other shared practices. Many shared policies and practices are already in place, including a common intake form for drop-in clients making inquiries. Others will be developed as needs and opportunities are identified, including the current effort to develop a unified training and procedure manual for customer service/reception staff.

External: In addition to having representatives from ABE, local MnSCU colleges, community based organizations and other external partners actively engaged on both local boards, additional points of alignment also exist, including participation in the Grand Rapids Chamber of Commerce workforce committee, engagement in the Employment Table in Duluth, membership on the Iron Range Economic Alliance and Arrowhead Growth Alliance.

To facilitate further alignment between the Workforce Center and external partners, including higher education, Chambers of Commerce, community-based organizations, K-12 education, and others, the new Rural Workforce Coordinator (referred to as the Rural Career Counseling Coordinator in legislation) will direct an environmental scan and asset mapping initiative to establish a baseline from which work can begin. This process will identify all workforce development partners, their programs/resources, barriers, funding and opportunities – all of which will provide a foundation upon which increased alignment with public workforce development systems can be built. This information will be combined with existing data and/or the results of efforts already underway, such as the current College of St. Scholastica mapping project for individuals leaving incarceration.

To develop more consistent, streamlined and client-centered methods of referral and service delivery, efforts to promote development and utilization of common intake forms and other processes will continue.

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

Existing informal agreements between Workforce Center partners in the northeast region already work very effectively. For example, determination of which WIOA provider at the Duluth Workforce Center serves Duluth residents vs. non-Duluth residents is clear and referrals occur seamlessly: Duluth Workforce Development staff work with City of Duluth residents and NEMOJT staff work with non-Duluth residents. If situations arise that necessitate adjustments to the established process, partners simply maintain open lines of communication and adjust accordingly to ensure the needs of program participants are met.

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Partners in the northeast region also work collaboratively on special projects and frequently facilitate cross-referrals and co-enrollments between agencies. For example, individuals served through WIOA programs may also co-enroll with Vocational Rehabilitation Services (VRS). Job counselors may promote program eligible participants to training opportunities available through another partner's special project (i.e. AEOA's non-traditional training for women).

A cooperative service agreement between the Office of Job Training and AEOA is currently in place that identifies a process to serve dislocated workers by either agency. Other cooperative service agreements will be developed with other system partners over the development of career pathways initiatives.

Relationships and respect have developed over time and provide a firm foundation upon which Northeast Minnesota partners work to ensure consistency within the regional workforce development area and alignment with state policy. Additional formal cooperative service agreements will be developed as needed.

REGIONAL STRATEGIC PLANNING

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

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

8. Describe the condition of the regional economy and cite the sources of data and analysis.

The following comes from the Regional Profile for the Northeast Region assembled by DEED Labor Market Analyst Erik White:

INDUSTRY EMPLOYMENT

The Northeast region has seen several employment ups and downs over the past decade, but ended 2014 with 2,920 more jobs than it had in 2004. The region peaked in employment with 142,425 jobs in 2007, before suffering severe declines in 2009 and 2010. Since then, Northeast Minnesota has recovered more slowly than the state, which gained jobs at a 6.5 percent clip from 2010 to 2014, compared to a 3.0 percent increase in the region.

According to DEED's Quarterly Census of Employment & Wages (QCEW) program, Northeast Minnesota was home to 8,638 business establishments providing 141,554 covered jobs through 2014, with a total payroll of just over \$5.7 billion. That was about 5.2 percent of total employment in the state of Minnesota. Average annual wages were \$40,508 in the region, which was about \$11,000 lower than the state's average annual wage.

St. Louis County is the largest employment center in the region with 96,302 jobs at 5,243 firms; followed by Itasca County and Carlton County with 15,980 and 13,669 jobs, respectively. Five of the 7 counties in the region added jobs since 2010, led by

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St. Louis, which gained 2,895 jobs and Carlton County, which added 971 jobs. In contrast, Aitkin and Koochiching County saw job declines since 2010. The city of Duluth has 59,647 jobs at 2,654 firms and has experienced a 2.4% increase of jobs in the past 5 years and a net gain of 666 jobs in the past year.

The Northeast region gained over 1,200 net new jobs in the past year, a 0.9 percent increase, which was slightly slower than the state overall. Six of the 7 counties added jobs from 2013 to 2014, again led by St. Louis County, and followed by Itasca and Carlton County.

With 32,805 jobs at 874 firms, healthcare and social assistance is the largest employing industry in the Northeast region, accounting for 23.2 percent of total jobs in the region. That is over 7 percent higher than the state's concentration of employment in the healthcare industry. The amount of jobs in this industry held stable recently, with only 150 jobs added since 2010 and about 30 jobs in the previous year. At \$43,680 in 2014, average annual wages were about \$3,000 higher in healthcare than all industries.

The next largest industries were retail trade and accommodation and food services. After seeing job gains in the past 5 years, these two industries made up nearly 23 percent of all the jobs in the region. However, the average annual wages were low in these industries, with retail trade at \$23,348 and accommodation and food services at \$13,884, which were both considerably less than the average annual wage of \$40,508 for all industries in the region.

The construction and mining industries saw strong gains from 2010 to 2014 as they both grew by nearly 20 percent, and combined to add 1,800 jobs in the region. Wages are high in these industries, with annual average wages of \$57,392 and \$90,012 respectively. However, recent events have affected employment in the mining sector in Northeast Minnesota, as many mining workers have been idled.

Other important industries in Northeast Minnesota include educational services, public administration, manufacturing, finance and insurance, other services, professional and technical services, and administrative support and waste management services. Seventeen of the 20 main industries in the region added jobs since 2010, with huge gains in construction, mining, professional and technical services, other services, retail trade, and transportation and warehousing. In contrast, the region saw job declines in management of companies and arts, entertainment, and recreation.

INDUSTRY PROJECTIONS

As noted above, Northeast Minnesota's economy is projected to grow 3.8 percent from 2012 to 2022, a gain of 5,963 new jobs. The largest and fastest growing industry is expected to be healthcare and social assistance, which may account for over 80 percent of total projected growth in the region from 2012 to 2022. Other industries that are expected to grow in Northeast Minnesota include retail trade, accommodation and food services, construction, mining, professional and technical services, and administrative support and waste management services, which includes temporary staffing agencies. In contrast, the region is expected to see declines in information, manufacturing, transportation and warehousing, utilities,

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wholesale trade, and other services.

DISTINGUISHING INDUSTRIES

Northeast Minnesota stands out in the state for its higher concentrations of employment in mining and natural resources, and as measured by location quotient, its distinguishing industries reflect these particular industries. The region has more than 70 percent of the state's jobs in water transportation and mining. With trees as a natural resource in the region, forestry and logging and paper manufacturing are also distinguishing industries with location quotients above 4.0.

EMPLOYMENT PROJECTIONS

The Northeast Minnesota planning region is projected to grow 3.8 percent from 2012 to 2022, a gain of 5,963 new jobs. In addition, the region is also expected to need 45,000 replacement hires to fill jobs left vacant by retirements and other career changes. In fact, the number of replacement openings is expected to dwarf the number of new jobs created in every occupation group except Healthcare Practitioners, Healthcare Support, and Personal Care and Service, which are all projected to grow more than an additional 1,000 jobs each. Each of those occupational groups will have replacement needs as well, indicating the strong demand for these occupations in the region. The largest need for workers will be in food prep and serving, sales, and office and administrative support.

EMPLOYERS BY SIZE CLASS

The vast majority of businesses in Northeast Minnesota are small businesses, with 51.0 percent of businesses reporting 1 to 4 employees in 2013, according to County Business Patterns from the U.S. Census Bureau. Another 35.6 percent had between 5 and 19 employees; and 11.2 percent had between 20 and 99 employees. Only 1.9 percent had 100 to 499 employees, though that was in line with the state. Just 15 businesses in the region had more than 500 employees, which is the Small Business Administration's official cut off for a "small business". Obviously then, small businesses are vital to the region's economy.

HOUSEHOLD INCOMES

Household incomes were significantly lower in Northeast Minnesota than the state. Median household incomes in the region ranged from \$41,617 in Aitkin County to \$53,016 in Carlton County, with St. Louis County residing in the middle with a \$46,517 median household income and the city of Duluth with a median household income of \$43,064. More than half (52.8%) of the households in the region had incomes below \$50,000 in 2013, compared to 42.4 percent statewide. About one-third of households earned between \$50,000 and \$100,000 in the region. In contrast, only 15.0 percent of households earned over \$100,000 per year, compared to nearly 25 percent of households statewide.

PER CAPITA INCOMES

Per capita incomes were also lower in the Northeast region than the state, with a more than \$5,000 difference. The region's per capita income was \$25,651, compared to \$30,913 in the state. Per capita incomes ranged from a low of \$24,079 in Itasca County to a high of \$32,868 in Cook County with the city of Duluth having a per capita income of \$24,926.

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WAGES AND OCCUPATIONS

According to DEED's Occupational Employment Statistics program, the median hourly wage for all occupations in Region 3 was \$16.58 in the first quarter of 2015, which was in the middle of the six planning regions in the state. Northeast's median wage was about \$2.00 below the state's median hourly wage, and nearly \$4.00 below the median hourly wage in the 7-County Twin Cities metro area, which would amount to over \$8,000 per year for a full-time worker (see Table 8).

Lower paying jobs tend to have lower educational and training requirements such as food preparation, sales, personal care and service, and building and grounds cleaning and maintenance jobs. For the most part, the gap in pay between the region and the state is much lower for these type of jobs. For those occupations that have higher wages, the gap in pay is more pronounced. Computer and mathematical occupations make on average about \$8.00 less in Northeast than they do statewide. In contrast, construction and extraction occupations make on average slightly more in the Northeast region than they do statewide.

The highest paying jobs in the region are found in management, legal, architecture and engineering, computer, business and financial operations, healthcare practitioners, and life, physical, and social science occupations, which all need higher levels of education and experience, including many that require postsecondary training. The pay gaps between the region and state are much bigger in these jobs.

JOB VACANCY SURVEY

Employers in Northeast Minnesota reported 6,213 job vacancies in the second quarter of 2015, which was the third highest number ever recorded, and a 16 percent increase compared to 2014. Overall, 40 percent of the openings were part-time, and about one-third required postsecondary education or 1 or more years of experience. The median hourly wage offer was \$11.53.

OCCUPATIONS IN DEMAND

According to DEED's Occupations in Demand tool, about 250 occupations are showing relatively high demand in Northeast Minnesota, with training and education requirements ranging from short-term on-the-job training to postsecondary education to advanced degrees.

The in-demand occupations are spread across different sectors but are also concentrated in the region's major industries, especially in healthcare. Home Health Aides, Registered Nurses, Medical Assistants, Surgical Technologists, Physicians, and Pharmacists are occupations that are needed in the healthcare field and span education requirements. Construction, retail trade, and accommodation and food services are also industries that are creating significant demand for workers in the region.

A Note about Mining:

The mining industry in Northeast Minnesota is going through a downturn with more than 2,000 layoffs to those directly employed by the mines and thousands more in related support industries such as manufacturing, construction, and transportation. The impacts of these layoffs are great and far reaching and should not be diminished. For many towns in the region, mining supports the local economy, due to the high wages it offers, and has effects on the regional economy because of the

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other industries that rely on a steady production of this natural resource. Recent events, however, show a glimmer of optimism with rising ore prices, stricter enforcement of steel dumping, and announcements of idled mines to shortly re-open. Despite this particular sector of the regional economy's struggle, it should be noted that the overall regional economy of Northeast Minnesota has continued to grow and transformed since the recession, as evidenced by the record high employment in the region, wage growth experienced, and the tightening of the labor market.

9. Describe the condition of the regional workforce and cite the sources of data and analysis.

The following comes from the Regional Profile for the Northeast Region assembled by DEED Labor Market Analyst Erik White:

REGIONAL DEMOGRAPHICS

POPULATION CHANGE, 2000-2014

Northeast Minnesota, also known as the Arrowhead region or Economic Development Region 3, includes a total of 7 counties. According to population data from the U.S. Census Bureau, Northeast was home to 326,649 people in 2014, accounting for 6.0 percent of the state's total population. From 2000 to 2014, Northeast increased its population by 4,576 residents. This 1.4 percent increase was considerably less than the 10.9 percent increase experienced across the state of Minnesota during this time frame.

With 200,949 people, St. Louis County is the largest county in the area, accounting for 61.5 percent of the region's population. Carlton County grew the most and the fastest in the region, with an increase of 12.3 percent, or 3,900 people. Itasca County also saw steady growth. On the other hand, Koochiching County lost 1,499 residents and Lake County lost 378 people, both losing population since 2000. The city of Duluth has 86,234 people and has experienced a decrease of 684 people since 2000.

POPULATION BY AGE GROUP, 2000-2013

Northeast Minnesota has a considerably older population than the state. Over one-third of the population in the region is 55 years of age or older, compared to just one-fourth of the state's population. In contrast, the percentage of population that is under 15 years of age is 3.3 percent lower in the region than it is for the state. Northeast also had a much lower percentage of people in the 25 to 54 year old age group, which is typically considered the "prime working years", at 35.6 percent compared to 40.2 percent statewide. Since 2000, the number of people aged 55 years and older – including the Baby Boom generation, people who were born between 1946 and 1964 – has increased by 25,440 people, and now consists of 111,245 people. It should be noted that the demographic composition for the city of Duluth is different than the region as a whole because of the large college aged population that is supported by area colleges and universities. 23.4% of the population in Duluth is 15-24 years old, compared to 13.3% for the state of Minnesota and 13.9% for the overall Northeast region.

POPULATION PROJECTIONS BY AGE GROUP, 2015-2035

Northeast Minnesotans projected to have relative population stability in the next 20

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years. According to population projections from the Minnesota State Demographic Center, Northeast is expected to gain close to 5,000 people in the next 10 years, then lose about 5,000 people over the following 10 years. In comparison, the state of Minnesota is projected 10.8 percent growth from 2015 to 2035.

While the overall population is not expected to grow, older age cohorts in the region are projected to expand considerably. Northeast Minnesota is expected to add more than 36,500 people aged 65 years and older, a 53 percent increase by 2035. The results of the current Baby Boom generation moving through the population pyramid will cause the age cohorts of 45 to 64 to experience the greatest declines in population. The amount of children under 5 years old is expected to be unchanged, but school-aged children and young adults are expected to decline by about 8,500 people.

POPULATION BY RACE, 2013

Northeast Minnesota's population is considerably less diverse than the state of Minnesota, but has increased in diversity over time. In 2013, about 93 percent of the region's residents reported White alone as their race, compared to 85.6 percent of residents statewide. The region has a greater percentage of American Indian and Alaska Natives than the state, but considerably smaller percentages of people reporting Black or African American, Asian, or Hispanic or Latino origin.

Cook County had the most diverse populace in the region, with just 88 percent of residents reporting White alone as their race, while 7 percent of residents reported being American Indian or Alaska Native. In contrast, Aitkin and Koochiching Counties had more than 95 percent of their population reporting their race as White alone.

Duluth's population is less diverse than the state of Minnesota, but has increased in diversity over time. In 2013, about 90 percent of the city's residents reported White alone as their race, compared to 85.6 percent of residents statewide. The city of Duluth has a greater percentage of American Indian and Alaska Natives and people of Two or More Races than the state, but smaller percentages of people reporting Black or African American, Asian, or Hispanic or Latino origin. However, these groups have seen considerable increases in population in the last decade, while whites and American Indians saw a decrease.

In Duluth, the Black or African American population increased by 840 people since 2000, while the population reporting Two or More Races rose by 931 people. Together, those two race groups saw the fastest increases in the city over the past 14 years.

REGIONAL LABOR FORCE

LABOR FORCE CHANGE, 2000-2014

According to data from DEED's Local Area Unemployment Statistics program, Northeast had just over 163,000 workers in 2014. In the depths of the recession in 2009, the region's labor force reached its peak with nearly 170,000 workers, but has steadily declined as the recovery from the recession has taken hold. Even though the region's population has experienced a modest increase over the last decade, the labor force lost 2,747 workers since 2004. Northeast suffered the biggest loss in

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labor force for the planning regions in the state, with only the Southwest planning region also experiencing a loss since 2004.

LABOR FORCE PROJECTIONS, 2015-2025

Applying current labor force participation rates to future population projections creates labor force projections for the region. If the region's population grows at the projected rate, the region's labor force is expected to decrease significantly. Northeast Minnesota's workforce is expected to drop by nearly 10,000 workers by 2025, a 6.1 percent decrease.

The movement of Baby Boomers will result in an increase nearly of 3,000 workers who are 65 years and older in 2025. There is also expected to be an increase of about 1,450 workers who are 20 to 24 years old in the next 10 years. The largest loss of workers will occur in the 45 to 64 year old age cohort, as these Baby Boomers reach the retirement age and start exhibiting much lower labor force participation rates. This will likely lead to a tight labor market in the future as well, with employers needing to respond to the changing labor force availability in the region.

EMPLOYMENT CHARACTERISTICS, 2013

With just 61.2 percent of the population aged 16 years and over in the labor force, Northeast had considerably lower labor force participation rates than the state's 70.3 percent rate. Labor force participation rates were lower for all age cohorts in the region than the state.

The region also had lower participation rates for every race; and also had larger unemployment rate disparities for most minority groups when compared to Whites. The unemployment rate for Black or African Americans in the region was 26 percent, 18.5 percent for American Indians, and 23.7 percent for people of Two or More Races. Meanwhile, the unemployment rate for Whites was just 7.8 percent. In sum, unemployment rates were highest for young people, minorities, workers with disabilities, and people with lower educational attainment.

UNEMPLOYMENT RATE, 2005-2015

Northeast has consistently reported higher unemployment rates than Minnesota, typically hovering at least 1.0 percent above the state rate. According to Local Area Unemployment Statistics, the region's unemployment rate reached its peak in 2009 at 9.3 percent, then steadily declined to an annual rate of 5.4 percent in 2014. The region contains some of the highest county unemployment rates in the state, with Koochiching County and Itasca County reporting annual unemployment rates of 8.4 percent and 6.4 percent in 2014, respectively.

COMMUTE SHED AND LABOR SHED, 2013

According to commuting data from the U.S. Census Bureau, the vast majority – about 80 percent – of workers who live in the region also work within the region. However, Northeast is a net importer of labor, having slightly more jobs than available workers; drawing in workers from surrounding counties but also having residents drive outside the region to find work. In sum, 119,372 workers both lived and worked in the 7-county region, while another 29,939 workers drove into the region for work, compared to 28,830 who live in the region but drove to surrounding counties for work.

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St. Louis County is the largest employment center in the region and was the biggest draw for workers, followed by Itasca, Carlton, Koochiching, Lake, and Cook counties. Employers in the region draw workers from Douglas County in Wisconsin as well as Pine County to the south of the region. In contrast, the region sends workers to the Twin Cities, represented by Hennepin and Ramsey County, as well as to Douglas County.

AN AGING WORKFORCE

Another factor that is significant to the condition of the regional workforce alluded to in the labor force projections above is our aging population. According to an article entitled, “*Older Employees in the Workforce - The Times They Have A-Changed,*” written by Labor Market Analyst Erik White (August 2015), workers to replace impending retirements is a significant concern. The article examines Quarterly Workforce Indicators and focuses just on the variable of Full Quarter Employment which measures the number of jobs that are held on both the first and last day of the quarter with the same employer. Using this methodology, we can determine the age of jobholders in the region. Since 2005, there has been an increase of about 13,000 jobs held by workers aged 55 years or older in Northeast Minnesota. This age cohort held about 16.5% of the total jobs in 2005, but now holds 24.3% of all jobs.

Using the same dataset and variable, we can identify the industries that have the greatest amount of and reliance on older workers in Northeast Minnesota. Education and Health Services – including schools, hospitals, nursing homes, clinics, and social assistance – have about 10,000 jobs that are held by older workers. Local government, mining, and professional and technical services are other industries that have large numbers and high percentages of jobs that are held by older workers. Further evidence that the regional Boards have selected appropriate sectors on which to base our first forays into systematic career pathways programming (healthcare and skilled construction trades, including mining).

Due to the age of the workforce in these industries, there will be a need to replace these workers as they reach the age of retirement, which could cause stress or limit the region’s potential growth. While attraction and retention of younger workers will be an important strategy, industries shouldn’t forget about continuing to work with those who are older.

Older workers are often seen as valuable to the workplace because they bring values of loyalty, reliability, productivity, as well as a wealth of experience and belief in a job well-done. Not to mention that you typically don’t need to tell them to put away their phones or that their appearance needs to be more professional. But there are other challenges that can affect the contributions of older workers.

In addition to the natural aging of the workforce, perhaps the most prominent change since the turn of the century is the advancement of technology and its role in the workplace. Job duties have changed and new types of jobs have been created to incorporate the technology upgrades.

The advancement and prominence of technology in the workplace can be a barrier for older workers seeking employment even as older adults have increasingly embraced technology in their everyday life. For older workers, even finding out what

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jobs are available can be a burden as newspaper classifieds are no longer the main source for employment opportunities. Instead, most job banks are online and many applications are now done on a computer; and it might take much longer to hear back from the employer during the hiring process than in the past. Technological skills will need to be gained, especially for those who haven't worked for a while, but training can be hard to find.

RACIAL DISPARITIES

In another article by Labor Market Analyst Erik White (November 2015), illustrates the racial disparities evident in the regional economy. According to this article, U.S. Census Bureau data released last fall indicates widening racial disparities in Minnesota as a whole. The median household income for Black or African American Minnesotans fell more than \$4,500 to an estimate of \$27,000 in 2014, the only racial group to see their household income estimate drop during the past year. In comparison, household income for Whites increased more than \$2,000 from 2013 to 2014, to a median of \$64,000.

In contrast, according to DEED's Alternative Measures of Unemployment in Minnesota, the unemployment rate for Black or African Americans in Minnesota increased from 10.2 percent in September 2014 to 16.0 percent in September 2015. Meanwhile, the unemployment rate for Whites dropped to 2.8 percent, and the overall state unemployment rate fell to 3.8 percent.

Similar racial disparities can also be seen in Northeast Minnesota. Using the 2011-2013 American Community Survey 3-Year Estimates, data show that the Duluth-Superior Metropolitan Statistical Area –which includes St. Louis and Carlton counties in Minnesota and Douglas County in Wisconsin – had considerable differences in income and unemployment rates between the races.

Household incomes are lower in the Duluth MSA for all race categories than they are in Minnesota, but the income gap between whites and non-whites is substantial in the region. Whites had a median household income estimate of \$48,045, significantly higher than the average income of \$18,321 for Blacks in the Duluth MSA. The unemployment rate for Black or African American was more than three times that of the rate for Whites, 23.7 percent compared to 7.2 percent. Workers of Two or More Races had an unemployment rate 22.9 percent, and American Indians had a rate of 17.1 percent, indicating barriers to employment for the largest minority groups in the region. This speaks loud and clear to the need to always include themes of addressing racial disparities in all sector initiatives and programming in the Northeast region.

INITIATIVES RELATED TO EXAMINING CONDITION OF WORKFORCE

There are two important efforts occurring in the Northeast region that may shed further light on the condition of the current workforce. Firstly, the Blandin Foundation is currently implementing a study of unemployment in Itasca county, a county that has historically had a much higher unemployment rate than others in the region. The study seeks to understand the factors at play for individuals who are underemployed, unemployed (short- and long-term), and individuals who are on public assistance.

One-on-one surveys will be conducted with people in varying stages of employment

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to identify several things, including:

- What 2 or 3 things are most important in a job
- Impressions of what jobs/fields seem like better places to work than others
- The top barriers to getting a job or getting a better job
- Whether they have accessed employment programs to assist their search
- Whether they made enough income over the preceding month to cover all expenses
- Opinions of what jobs in Itasca County pay a living wage in an effort to discern knowledge about the actual job market
- Whether respondents had or are participating in public assistance and whether this may be a barrier or a support to seeking work in effort to determine whether public benefits may actually prohibit participants from seeking work

The interview stage of this initiative is just getting underway with assistance from Workforce Center partners and other community groups. Workforce Center partner staff are helping to identify participants in a variety of employment situations along with working with Itasca County Health and Human Services to identify and encourage individuals on public assistance to participate. It has so far proven tricky to engage this particular population as they face significant issues regarding telephone access and transportation to participate face-to-face. However, we are confident this study will help shed some light on the impressions of the local labor force that could provide insight region-wide.

The other initiative involves APEX, the Arrowhead Partnership for Economic Expansion, a private economic development entity based in Duluth. APEX wishes to study the skill sets of the unemployed to better attract business development to the region. This has long been a desire of a number of regional economic development entities, including the IRRRB and the Arrowhead Growth Alliance, in order to understand the depth and breadth of talent available in the region. This information could be used in a number of ways in addition to business recruitment – there are significant training implications as well as providing existing employers with information on the workforce pipeline. Paula Reed, Duluth Local Workforce Development director, and Michelle Ufford, Northeast Local Workforce Development Area director, have both been involved in the development of this concept, which is currently in the beginning stages.

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

The Northeast Region will be embarking on a regional asset mapping initiative in the coming months to be led by the regional leadership team, consisting of members from both boards. This initiative will seek to assess the condition of the regional workforce development system in order to more fully understand the address this particular question. This will be a contracted service using regional planning funds in concert with the new legislatively-funded Rural Career Counseling Coordinator.

According to this legislation (Minnesota Statute 116L.667), the charge of this individual is to make an accounting of workforce development and career counseling

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programs and services offered in the assigned workforce service area, and any recommendations for changes to workforce development efforts in the workforce service area. This responsibility dovetails wonderfully with the notion of performing regional asset mapping.

Information acquired through the mapping process would directly support key components of this strategic plan:

- Broader business sector engagement – information that informs decisions and supports workforce development initiatives
- Increased community awareness of existing opportunities and services
- Coordination of resources and partnerships – development of a more seamless workforce development system that benefits businesses and job seekers
- Potential leveraging of financial resources to provide the region with workforce development services that meet the needs of employers and job seekers

By linking this effort to the regional strategic plan, efforts would be assessed annually and progress noted based on actions outlined in the plan.

Additionally, information gathered as part of the mapping would benefit far beyond the Workforce Boards. This effort would also:

- Increase general awareness of available programs and services for job seekers, service providers and employers in the community;
- Increase opportunities for collaboration between service providers
- Increase opportunities for collaboration between employers and the workforce system
- Ensure most efficient and effective use of financial resources
- Identify redundancies and open conversation about increased collaboration

Proposed next steps include:

- Articulate project purpose and timeline
- Engage stakeholders to establish buy-in
- Utilize the joint Board leadership committee to oversee the process
- Define project scope and mapping process
- Secure funding, including that made available for regional planning through the incentive award and NEG funding
- Develop RFQ
- Identify consultants and release RFP
- Review proposals
- Recommend selection to Workforce Development Boards and implement the process

Through this process, we will be able to more clearly assess the condition of the workforce development system and take action to address gaps and better coordinate efforts towards a career-pathways-oriented system.

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11. Describe the regional workforce development area's vision for a skilled workforce.

For Region 2, the Workforce Boards of Duluth and the Northeast have adopted the and built on the GWDB vision:

“An engaged and diverse workforce, where all Northeast Minnesotans, regardless of background, have or are on a path to meaningful employment and a family sustaining wage, and all employers are able to fill jobs in demand”.

Both boards acknowledge the importance of striving to achieve employment equity and will consistently address variances between populations in every regional and local workforce development effort. We seek to grow a diverse workforce with the right skills, knowledge and abilities to obtain and keep a job with family-supporting wages.

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

Area 1 – Business Engagement

12. Describe how the region will use the labor market information and conduct outreach to business and industry to select the targeted sectors for developing career pathways for occupations in demand that provide family sustaining wages. If sectors and occupations have been already selected, describe them within this response. Complete **Attachment G – Local Workforce Development Area Key Industries in Regional Economy.**

Based upon real time and LMI data, Region 2 has selected healthcare and skilled construction trades as the first two sectors around which to build career pathway partnerships and initiatives. It is our intent to develop a model for building career pathways that can be honed through experience and applied to any sector. This includes identifying the career pathways, ladders and lattices within each sector and engaging service providers, training institutions, and employers within each sector in deliberate and meaningful ways. Employer engagement will focus on validating pathways and training opportunities, assisting in the development of training curriculum, engaging in experiential learning opportunities and work experience, and sharing their industry expertise.

Regional in-demand occupations are spread across different sectors but are also concentrated in the region's major industries, especially in healthcare. Home Health Aides, Registered Nurses, Medical Assistants, Surgical Technologists, Physicians, and Pharmacists are occupations that are needed in the healthcare field and span education requirements. Construction, retail trade, and accommodation and food services are also industries that are creating significant demand for workers in the region. Of these industries, healthcare and construction/trades top the list of those that offer jobs that are in demand, clear career pathways, and family-sustaining wages.

With 32,805 jobs at 874 firms, healthcare and social assistance is the largest employing industry in the Northeast region, accounting for 23.2 percent of total jobs in the region. This is over 7 percent higher than the state's concentration of employment in the healthcare industry. The amount of jobs in this industry held stable recently, with only 150 jobs added since 2010 and about 30 jobs in the

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previous year. At \$43,680 in 2014, average annual wages were about \$3,000 higher in healthcare than all industries.

The construction and mining industries saw strong gains from 2010 to 2014 as they both grew by nearly 20 percent, and combined to add 1,800 jobs in the region. Wages are high in these industries, with annual average wages of \$57,392 and \$90,012 respectively. Though recent events have affected employment specifically in the mining sector in Northeast Minnesota as many mining workers have been idled, the industry is expected to make a full recovery. Skill requirements between the mining, supply chain, and construction industries often intersect, including the needs for skilled trade workers. Accounting for 4.5% of the region's total employment, wages in the construction and extraction occupations make slightly more in the Northeast region than statewide, where the per capita income is nearly \$5,000 less than statewide. The median hourly wage of occupations in this sector are \$25.65 compared to the region's average wage among all industries of \$16.58.

Outreach will be conducted using a combination of DEED BSS staff, LWDB members, WFC staff and service area Directors, as well as the new Rural Career Counseling Coordinator. Outreach will begin by identifying key employers within the healthcare and skilled construction trades sectors and convincing them of the benefits of participating in a career pathways system. This message will be clear and concise and help targeted employers understand:

- How participating will help the workforce system better meet their workforce needs;
- How they may gain access to a wider pool of qualified applicants;
- How they will be helping to make the northeast region a more economically competitive place;

Part of this process will be to clarify the roles of participating key employers, which may include:

- Determining which occupations within targeted industries and sectors should be included within the career pathways system;
- Vetting the set of foundational academic, work readiness, and technical skills, abilities, and knowledge that are chosen as required for key occupations;
- Vetting the certificates and credentials that are required for key occupations
- Collaborating with training institutions to design education and training programs;
- Participating as instructors or training sites in the skill training programs;
- Providing training funds for individuals through tuition reimbursement or class-size training projects;
- Participating in the skill certification/credentialing process;
- Serving as mentors;
- Serving as a job shadowing site;
- Providing paid or unpaid internship positions for students; and/or
- Hiring individuals who have obtained the required certificates and credentials.

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

Led by industry and using real time job data, sector partnerships developed under the purview of the region will include a variety of stakeholders, each with their own expertise and resources. The details of such resources are yet unknown as we are just embarking on this experience, but generally, decision makers from the below entities will be invited to participate in career pathways partnerships with the Boards in the following ways:

Employers:

- Develop curricula
- Provide trainers/faculty
- Provide training facilities and equipment
- Provide employment/internships

Workforce Agencies:

- Provide labor market information
- Engage employers
- Recruit and make referrals
- Provide support services
- Assess skills
- Provide job search assistance
- Provide job placement services

Educational Institutions

- Design programs
- Develop curricula
- “Chunk” and “modularize” curricula
- Create links between credit and non-credit based programs
- Promote portability through articulation agreements
- Provide support services
- Assist with financial aid

Economic Development Agencies:

- Provide real-time labor market information
- Engage employers

Human Service Agencies:

- Recruit and make referrals
- Provide support services

Community Based Organizations:

- Recruit and make referrals
- Engage employers
- Provide support services

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14. Describe how the partnership(s) will work toward developing and implementing a career pathway sector strategy during the two years of this plan. If sectors and occupations have not been selected, address the process for these decisions within this response.

The two Boards will begin by ensuring we all have a common understanding on the definition of career pathways and work to develop a process/model that can be applied to any industry. A career pathways orientation presentation has been developed and will be delivered to both boards as well as other stakeholders who join the initiatives within healthcare and construction.

We are fortunate that Duluth has already embarked on the career pathways discussion, including establishment of a Career Pathways Committee in June 2015. Facilitated and led by the LWDB, the charge of the committee is to:

- Convene business and industry sector leaders, educators and community based organizations to identify and create sector-based, career pathway programs for skill development.
- Work to create a bridge between educational institutions, business and industry by identifying skills needs and communicating them to educational partners (career pathways).
- Support initiatives which increase the labor supply for high demand industries, both current and future, in cooperation with state and local economic development partners.
- Provide support to existing or emerging business/industry clusters, and to help generate and implement strategies that expand these types of business in the area.

Since its inception, the committee has established an employer-led working group focused on healthcare pathways and a small working group of employers from the hospitality industry. Key representatives on each include leadership from Lake Superior College, Adult Basic Education, ISD 709 Duluth Public Schools, local community-based organizations and workforce partners.

The Northeast Board will join this effort, learn from this work and apply their successes to leading career pathways discussion around the construction trades sector. Both boards will participate in the development of each of these sector initiatives, which will be overseen by the joint leadership committee which will include members of both boards.

Specifically, both boards will engage in the recommended steps of developing career pathway sector strategies in healthcare and construction trades in the effort to develop a suite of processes that can be applied to other industries in the future. Over the two years of this plan, these steps will include:

Engaging key employers within identified sectors, including:

- Analyze labor market information related to healthcare and construction trades to identify occupations within key subsectors
- Identify key employers within these sectors
- Recruit key employers to engage in the process
- Clarify roles of key employers

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- Sustain and expand business partnerships (to target other industries)

Identify and develop training opportunities, including:

- Identify target populations and their “entry” points
- Review or develop competency models related to selected occupations
- Develop career ladders and lattices within subsectors
- Seek employer validation of competencies and pathways
- Work with local training institutions to design educational options that are progressive, modularized, accelerated, contextualized, and provide flexible scheduling
- Ensure programs lead to industry recognized and/or post-secondary stackable credentials
- Provide comprehensive wrap-around support services using community networks of providers who offer resources to address transportation and childcare needs
- Widely promote opportunities to obtain industry recognized credentials

Begin to identify funding resources to support career pathways programming, including:

- Identifying costs associated with system and program development and operations
- Determining the funds to be contributed by key partner agencies, and
- Securing funding from public agencies and private foundations and organizations.

However, the Boards of Region 2 would like to express concern over this last item, funding to support career pathways. A significant amount of work will be undertaken to develop these sector initiatives and appropriate state and federal funding resources must be made available to accomplish this work, complementary to funding that can be cobbled together using local resources. By concertedly engaging employers in this process, the implied promise is that there are resources to accomplish the implementation of this significantly new approach to workforce programming. As a system, we need to ensure that we can come through on this promise and be able to financially support new ways of providing training and education.

Area 2 – Community Engagement

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

The process for identifying the characteristics, size and scope of populations not fully benefitting from economic recovery will include:

- Review of the Blandin Foundation’s study of unemployment in Itasca County which seeks to understand the factors at play for individuals who are underemployed, unemployed (short- and long-term), and individuals who are on public assistance. It will be a great source of insight into the needs of this population.
- Review of results from a survey of Duluth-based job seekers. While not statistically significant, the survey will provide insight into barriers to employment

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and other challenges from a qualitative perspective.

- Integration of questions as part of the mapping activity that can draw out information from service providers, including those serving opportunity youth, to better understand their client population (i.e. unemployment, educational attainment, participation in public assistance, etc.).
- Work with all counties in the region to identify the number of county residents on public assistance (MFIP, FSET, etc.).
- Connect with the State demographer's office.
- Review of corrections/judicial system demographics.
- Work with Vocational Rehabilitation Service and other partners to collect information on people with disabilities in the northeast region.
- Broad stakeholder engagement/dialogue with individuals not fully benefiting from the economic recovery and groups representing those directly affected.

16. Describe who will be included in the broad stakeholder engagement to address a targeted number of socio-economic issues faced by diverse populations.

Broad stakeholder engagement will include, but not be limited to, the following:

- Existing and potential client populations, including low skill, low wage individuals
- Individuals not currently connected to services
- Disparity Project partners including AEOA and Community Action Duluth
- Chambers of Commerce
- Employers
- Economic development groups
- Education (Pre-K to Higher Ed)
- Government entities (corrections, social services)
- Local Elected Officials
- Unions/labor
- Parents/teachers/guidance counselors
- Community-based organizations
- Tribes

Some of the issues already identified for further discussion include:

- Pay and benefits (lots of low-paying jobs; low average pay compared to other regions)
- Barrier-specific (transportation, drug testing, child care, criminal background)
- Retraining skilled workers
- Matching workers with available jobs;
- Identifying true employer needs (soft and hard skills)
- Lack of workers with certain skill sets
- Opportunities to provide soft skills/professionalism/leadership development
- In-migration/recruitment opportunities
- Adequately promoting the career opportunities in region (including apprenticeships, entry- and advanced-level jobs, future industry needs, etc.)
- Adequately promoting the workforce development resources available in the region

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

Because this is a new way of doing business in the public workforce development sector, the exact impacts are unknown. However, we hope to achieve the following outcomes:

- More partners will be involved with the public workforce system, engaged with various components of sector strategies, strengthening the system;
- Development of Career Pathways programming representing a more concerted and comprehensive approach to workforce development; and
- Increased engagement leading to the expansion of innovative and creative solutions to workforce development issues.
- Coordinated efforts that produce excellent outcomes for individuals and employers.

Area 3 – Customer Centered Design

18. 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, based on career pathway thinking.

The upcoming service/asset mapping exercise (see question 10) will assess the capacity of the employment and training system; the strengths, weaknesses, challenges and gaps within the region's workforce system to meet industry needs; and the wrap-around and support services available. All of this information will feed into the process for creating career-pathway-based programming by identifying potential partners as well as areas where additional resources may need to be developed.

Though the exact details on how this process will specifically help to align employment and training services is unknown, strategies to align system services may include:

- Ensuring that all workforce system partners understand each other's specific goals, resources at their disposal, and their program performance measures and requirements, perhaps resulting in a one-page document on each organization's workforce program and services that can be catalogued and searchable online
- Making sure all partners understand the big picture and necessity of developing career pathways
- Identify better strategies of engaging system customers, including development of culturally adapted curriculum and services
- Clearly communicate expectations of each of the participating partners while also acknowledging the value of their contribution to workforce development/career pathways effort
- Among system partners, establish a shared vision and mission aligned with the common goals of the region

This will be the first step in determining ways of better aligning system resources. Participating in the mapping activity will also help to make ancillary organizations

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aware of the regional plan and opportunities to participate.

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

As referenced in question 13, sector partnerships developed under the purview of the region will include a variety of stakeholders, each with their own expertise and resources. The details of such resources are yet unknown as we are just embarking on this experience, but in reality there are limited number of organizations within the region that are engaged in each of these partnership categories.

Using WFC staff and LWDB members to perform outreach, decision-makers from the below entities will be invited/selected to participate in career pathways partnerships with the Boards, with special consideration given to geographic representation:

Employers:

- Develop curricula
- Provide trainers/faculty
- Provide training facilities and equipment
- Provide employment/internships

Workforce Agencies:

- Provide labor market information
- Engage employers
- Recruit and make referrals
- Provide support services
- Assess skills
- Provide job search assistance
- Provide job placement services

Educational Institutions

- Design programs
- Develop curricula
- “Chunk” and “modularize” curricula
- Create links between credit and non-credit
- Promote portability through articulation agreements
- Provide support services
- Assist with financial aid

Economic Development Agencies:

- Provide real-time labor market information
- Engage employers

Human Service Agencies:

- Recruit and make referrals
- Provide support services

Community Based Organizations, including those working with disparate populations and individuals with barriers to employment:

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- Recruit and make referrals
- Engage job seekers
- Provide support services

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

Regional sector initiative leadership, including the Boards, employers and additional stakeholder organizations, will take these steps to measure system change and performance:

- Define desired system and program outcomes, including reducing disparities
- Determine how to measure system and program outcomes
- Decide on collection methods
- Establish how the data will be stored, tracked, and shared
- Analyze data, revisit desired outcomes, and assess progress.

Leaving room for developing related outcomes as these career pathways initiatives progress, initial outcomes and measurement of success at the end of this two year plan will include:

- Increased partnership and collaboration around strategies to address employment disparities.
- Well-developed career ladders and lattices in targeted sectors vetted with private sector;
- Deep understanding of career pathway systems & philosophy shared between workforce system and higher education;
- Comprehensive cataloguing of all regional training programs and providers and the specific credentials their programs award;
- Developed educational options that are culturally appropriate, progressive, modular, accelerated and contextualized, including short-, moderate- and long-term training options, that lead to industry-recognized and/or stackable credentials;
- Identification of entry points into career pathways, including corresponding certifications/credentials that lead to employment; and
- Completed pilots based on the identified sectors of healthcare and construction trades.
- Developed measures to determine whether or not career pathways models have met employer expectations and whether participant expectations were met as well.

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SECTION B: LOCAL PLAN

Strategic Operations: *The core elements of strategic operations focuses on operating policies and procedures related to the one-stop system and physical locations of service delivery.*

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

Both directors from Region 2 participate on the Joint MWCA/DEED WIOA One Stop Operations Committee, where the WIOA criteria for comprehensive Workforce Centers is currently being reviewed. This effort includes examination of the recent regulations regarding comprehensive centers, affiliate sites, and standalone partner compared to the existing system so that we can reach statewide consensus on the definition of sites that don't qualify as a comprehensive center. Once these determinations are made, the boards will be involved in local discussions with core title providers to designate comprehensive centers, affiliate and standalone sites. Of the 6 current Workforce Centers in the Northeast region, only one, Aitkin, would not qualify as a comprehensive center under WIOA and in fact has always operated as an affiliate site.

The Board has no wish to limit or curtail existing services so it is anticipated that all Workforce Centers (with the exception of Aitkin) would be designated as comprehensive centers. These centers will continue to provide:

1. Resource areas where the general public can continue to access career and program services, access to LMI and job listings, and information on how to file a UI claim
2. Access to persons with disabilities
3. A non-discriminatory and welcoming environment to all customer groups
4. A site that complies with statewide branding policies, currently under development
5. Services to businesses
6. Services to job seekers

The Board will adhere to the Minnesota Workforce Center System Certification Standards policy that is being developed by the One Stop Operations Committee, which states that each Local Workforce Development Board (LWDB) must operate at least one comprehensive WorkForce Center in their local area that provides access to the required programs designated in the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act of 2014. LWDBs may also designate WorkForce Center Affiliate sites and provide services in stand-alone partner sites.

In order for a site to obtain certification as a comprehensive or affiliate WorkForce Center:

1. The Center must be identified in the LWDB's Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for the local One Stop system.
2. Co-location of programs (Wagner Peyser, WIOA Adult, Dislocated Worker

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and Youth, Minnesota Youth, State Dislocated Worker, and Vocational Rehabilitation Services) is required in comprehensive WFCs, and co-location of additional partners is encouraged for more efficient customer access to programs and financial savings. Staff from these programs must be physically present on site and available on a regular and predictable schedule. These programs must also contribute financially to the space and infrastructure costs of the comprehensive WFCs as outlined in the local Memorandum of Understanding.

3. The comprehensive WFC must also **provide access to** the other required One-Stop System partners outlined in WIOA. At a minimum, “access to” means that WFC staff is trained to make appropriate referrals. “Access to” also means that program staff can be physically present or direct links to program staff using technology are available. LWDBs may require a financial contribution from other partners for the operations or staffing of the Comprehensive WFC if partner program regulations allow for the contribution. These programs include:

- Jobs for Veterans
- Unemployment Insurance programs
- Trade Adjustment Assistance
- State Services for the Blind
- Adult Basic Education
- Minnesota Family Investment Program (i.e. federal TANF program)
- Job Corps
- Youthbuild
- Native American programs
- Migrant and Seasonal Farmworker programs
- Senior Community Service Employment Program
- Carl D. Perkins career and technical education programs
- Community Services Block Grant programs
- Department of Housing and Urban Development employment and training activities

4. Procedures are in place to assure coordination of and avoid duplication among WorkForce Center system partner programs.
5. Facilities, programs, websites and documents must be accessible to all populations including people with disabilities.

The Board will also follow recommendations for designating affiliate sites, the draft criteria of which includes:

1. Providing access to one or more of the following:
 - WIOA Career Services
 - Training services
 - Services or programs from Workforce Center system partner agencies
 - Workforce and labor market information
 - Access to job listings
 - Job search resources
2. Accessibility to persons with disabilities

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3. A non-discriminatory and welcoming environment to all customer groups
4. Provision of procedures that promote a safe environment for customers and employees.

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

Connectivity and coordination occurs throughout the workforce service area through monthly meetings of partner program management, known as the Partner Group. Since the inception of the one-stop system under WIA, Northeast region partner management has met monthly to discuss center operations, determine and clarify policy, deal with staffing or programmatic issues, identify opportunities for collaboration, ensure appropriate access to Center programs and services, and updates on what is happening within each represented agency. This group includes local WIOA providers from both WSA 3 and 4 (the Northeast Minnesota Office of Job Training and Duluth Workforce Development), DEED Job Service, Vocational Rehabilitation and State Services for the Blind management, and Arrowhead Economic and Opportunity Agency (AEOA), the largest community action program provider in the region and long-time partner in the Workforce Center system. All these partners also contribute to the infrastructure costs at each center in the region.

At each meeting, partner management also reviews minutes from Operations Committees from each Workforce Center in the region, further ensuring consistent coordination among physical sites. These Operations Committees consist of front-line staff from each partner in a specific Workforce Center who meet monthly to discuss Center operations, staffing, programs, and opportunities for coordination. Where the Operations Committee ensures connectivity and coordination within a Workforce Center, it is up to the Partner Group to ensure there is connectivity and coordination between physical sites.

Further coordination and connectivity between physical sites is achieved through the itinerant staff that routinely travel between Workforce Centers, such as REA staff, Veterans representatives, and Job Service staff who conduct workshops like Creative Job Search at many local centers. These staff members are often sources of ideas of how to collaborate differently within a center as they see how various centers operate regarding referrals, cooperative staffing, and service delivery tactics.

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

The same tactics mentioned above regarding connectivity and connection among physical sites applies to coordination among service providers in the Northeast region. The Partner Group includes decision-makers from all the relevant service providers and the Operations Committees includes front-line staff from service providers and programs and services are routinely discussed to ensure effective coordination. Examples include streamlining referral systems, developing common intake procedures or forms, ensuring cooperative staffing of resource rooms and

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workshop facilitation, and sharing knowledge or resources that would benefit other service provider program participants. These face-to-face monthly meetings will continue to be the mechanism by which connectivity and coordination among service providers will be achieved.

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

Strategies to maximize access to services often revolve around special circumstances, such as setting up temporary satellite locations for dislocated worker projects or providing services during non-traditional hours for dislocated worker groups prior to their anticipated layoff. As the Northeast region includes many remote areas where large-scale layoffs have occurred, staffing an office that is located in the town where the layoffs have occurred has been an effective way to reach workers and can sometimes lead to greater participation in programming.

Additionally, many WFC staff hold regular hours at local community colleges, including WIOA and ABE staff. These staff usually have dedicated space within a community college and are there to support existing clients attending school, but also to encourage others to access WFC services and resources. It has proven an effective mechanism for increasing the visibility of WFCs as well as strengthening relationships with training providers. Other ways services have been expanded include delivering workshops at local libraries and schools, also strengthening partnerships with community stakeholders.

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.*

Both directors from Region 2 participate on the Joint MWCA/DEED WIOA One Stop Operations Committee, where Career Services required under WIOA are currently being reviewed. Workforce Centers in the region operate comprehensive Resource Rooms to assist job seekers in a variety of ways, including internet access, the provision of labor market information, and access to workshops. Career services required under WIOA aren't substantially different than under WIA. Locally we have developed a WFC assessment tool that compares current core and intensive services to Career Services requirements. Existing core and intensive services are routinely provided to youth and individuals with barriers to employment already, and strategies to develop additional Career Services will also be made available to these groups.

Required Career Services that aren't currently widely available along with strategies to provide these services include:

- Opportunities for advancement within in-demand occupations: this specific provision will be accomplished through upcoming work in developing Career Pathways which will include articulating career ladders and lattices within in-demand sectors. It is also hoped that statewide Labor Market Information will find

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ways of incorporating this information into existing data on in-demand occupations. A suggestion would be to somehow capture all the career ladder/lattice information that will be developed through Boards throughout the state into a database that can be shared statewide.

- Assistance with establishing eligibility for non-WIOA financial aid programs: Though many staff are accustomed to advising eligible clients on the breadth of financial aid available to supplement program funds, there isn't currently a mechanism of advising the general public on these opportunities. One strategy that could be implemented to address this is to deliver a financial aid workshop that has been developed for other purposes (i.e. for the Career EdVenture initiative to provide career planning services to local schools) to the public in the regular workshop rotation at each WFC. This four-part series includes units on education costs; completing the FAFSA; grants, loans, and work study; and scholarships.
- Financial Literacy Services: Financial literacy can be delivered by ABE partners as well as WIOA program staff using a variety of tools. Similar to the financial aid workshop mentioned above, we have developed a financial literacy and money management series that is being used in area schools that could easily be adapted into a workshop for the universal customer. This resource was developed using Wells Fargo curriculum and includes a four-part progressive series focused on such topics as introduction to the basics of financial literacy, basic money management, taxes and credits, financial aid, investing, and protecting your money. Our ABE partner utilizes the Four Cornerstones of Financial Literacy and DollarWorks curriculum to address personal budgeting; savings; debt reduction and asset building; building good credit; consumer protection; and how to engage with financial institutions. These workshops are available throughout the region and will be made more widely available in the transition to WIOA.
- Certain business services: as outlined in WIOA, there is an expectation for expanded services to business, including HR consultation services such as writing/reviewing job descriptions and employee handbooks, developing performance evaluation and personnel policies, creating orientation sessions for new workers, honing job interview techniques, analyzing employee turnover, and explaining labor laws to comply with wage/hour and safety/health regulations. The region is not currently equipped to meet these demands as there is no DEED Business Services Representative in the service area nor any other staff that is exclusively dedicated to providing business services. It is hoped that this position will be filled and charged with delivering these expanded services to the business community.

The Local ABE provided has developed and continues to develop relationships with local unions. One example of this work is their Carpenter's Pre-apprenticeship course linked directly to the Carpenters' Local #606 2-year apprenticeship training. Additional coursework is being developed to link directly to heavy equipment, HVAC, and laborers in response to industry need.

In addition to the business services referenced here, also included in required services for businesses is customized assistance/referral in the development of registered apprenticeship program. The local area has relatively little experience in the apprenticeship realm, however the new Rural Career Counseling

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Coordinator hired under recent Minnesota legislative funding is charged in part to learn about registered apprenticeship with the intent to be able to assist businesses to develop apprenticeship opportunities.

6. *Describe strategies that will be used to leverage technology for services and ensure compliance with accessibility standards.*

Technology is currently used in a variety of ways in the region. The Customer Registration System is used on all Resource Room computers, including preloaded tabs and bookmarks of appropriate career services. Gov Delivery is used to communicate with over 2,000 business and job seeker subscribers in the region to broadcast information on community events and job resources.

Local providers are taking measures to create electronic intake systems, such as online applications, Individual Service Strategies, resume worksheets, and MFIP plans. We are examining each aspect of our enrollment process in the effort to streamline intake using technology – both for the convenience of our clients as well as counselors. Eventually the entire paper-based components of our intake and enrollment will be made available online through our website. Regarding the website, we are currently researching how to ensure that it is compliant with accessibility standards to ensure that any future online process is available to everyone who wishes to access services.

Local service providers are also working with a local community-based newspaper, Hometown Focus, to develop a 'Jobs' component to their DiscoverMN app. DiscoverMN was developed as a mobile tool to access a myriad of services and resources in the Northeast region, such as auto services, restaurants, realty, shopping, health providers, education providers, gas stations, lodging, and many more. We are working with them to add a 'Jobs' button to these resources which will include information on Workforce Centers (including partner resources such as OJT, program services, workshops, etc.), as well as links to a variety of topics such as career research and job search assistance, including links to sources of employment opportunities. These include MinnesotaWorks, Northforce, and other job banks, as well as direct links to employment pages of numerous private and public entities like schools, counties, and municipalities.

Workforce Centers are also utilizing social media resources like Facebook and LinkedIn to connect with the wider community. Many Workforce Centers in the region have developed dedicated Facebook pages as a way of staying in touch with program participants and general job seekers. They use this tool to share information about job openings, workshops, and available program resources. Also, social media has become an invaluable follow up tool for staying connected with program participants as they exit services and obtain employment.

The Office of Job Training is developing their own LinkedIn page which will routinely include insider information about the hidden job market, how to connect to groups and professionals that can influence a job search, job seeker events, and tips and tricks for a successful job search. This information is currently also broadcast in a

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monthly electronic newsletter that is sent to nearly 1,000 subscribers, but it is hoped that LinkedIn will develop as more of a two-way communication mechanism as well as expand the network of individuals connected to programs and services.

AEOA uses their Agency Facebook page to post information related to seeking and retaining employment, training opportunities, and program eligibility criteria. Additionally, the Adult Education program maintains its own Facebook page to connect with learners across the region as well as a page specifically for distance learners within the program. ABE also engages learners via multiple online resources such as iPathways, SkillsTutor, GoToMeeting, Skype and Google applications. These platforms allow for outreach and engagement into remote communities that otherwise may struggle to access workforce resources.

With such a vast region with many isolated communities, maximizing the use of technology to increase access to services is an issue that will be tackled in the near future. However, as a relatively small service provider without a dedicated IT department or financial resources to invest in creating and implementing new technology tools, this is a tall order. We hope that state partners will assist in the development of these resources, such as continuing the effort to create the virtual one-stop.

7. *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.*

In the Northeast region there is a high degree of existing coordination among service providers, including the provision of supportive services. Supportive service needs for individuals seeking employment or participating in training are coordinated through close working relationships among front-line program staff, who are aware of supportive services offered through all partner programs. Often cross referrals and co-enrollment is used to ensure that participants in any one program benefit from other service provider resources.

In such a rural area with the absence of mass transit options, transportation is a major barrier for many of the people we work with and we are fortunate to have strong partnerships with AEOA, the region's largest CAP agency. AEOA operates Arrowhead Transit, a dial-a-ride service available throughout the entire region. Routes are available between the region's cities and even to farther destinations like Brainerd. In addition to Arrowhead Transit, AEOA also operates an innovative transportation program called Rural Rides that utilizes volunteer drivers to transport individuals to employment and other important engagements. This service has added tremendous value to participants in all Workforce Center programs and offers a solution to deal with this all-too-often prohibitive barrier to successful employment.

Staff also often works with non-WFC providers of support services to support the success of program participants. Because we live and work in small communities, available resources are generally well-known and referrals to those services are made often. An example of how this is accomplished are monthly 'cross-functional'

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meetings on the eastern Iron Range with county social services and many of these community partners to discuss needs common among programs and agencies, often leading to opportunities to partner to deliver services across organizations. We work with many non-profit and community partners to connect participants to resources such as professional clothes closets, the Sharing Fund which provides funds for emergencies that aren't covered through WFC programs, food shelves and other community-based supportive services.

In addition, the new Rural Career Counseling Coordinator will be assisting the Northeast and Duluth Boards to conduct an assessment of workforce programs and providers which will include mapping assets in the region as they relate to supports for job seekers. It is anticipated that this initiative will uncover a host of new ways to partner among supportive service providers as well as help identify where the gaps in services are in order to develop new support service resources.

8. *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 area is aware of potential changes to infrastructure changes under WIOA and is awaiting the final regulations on exactly what this means for our local system. Meanwhile, participation on the One Stop Operations committee mentioned in question 1 will help the region better understand those implications, leading to the ability to prepare for whatever changes to the current system occur. The existing close relationship of WFC partners will be relied upon to ensure that the local system adheres to all infrastructure funding requirements, as we have a long history of cooperatively funding local Centers through the cost allocation process. We have successfully dealt with discrepancies or disagreements about cost allocation through mutually respectful relationships, however if mediation were needed, we would rely on the board to provide guidance.

There is an effort underway to combine Memorandums of Understanding with a new cost allocation methodology, which will help marry these two important points of agreement in a new way. The Northeast Minnesota Office of Job Training Executive Director and Fiscal Director are both involved in this effort and continually update the partner group on the progression of this effort.

9. *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.*

N/A: The Northeast Minnesota Board does not contract for services.

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10. Describe how the Memorandum of Understanding will be developed and used to ensure commitment of resources from service providers and required partners.

The effort underway to combine Memorandums of Understanding with a new cost allocation methodology through the CAP Policy workgroup lead by Dave Niermann will provide direction for ensuring clear commitment of resources from service providers and required partners. The Northeast Minnesota Office of Job Training Executive Director and Fiscal Director are both involved in this effort.

Prior to the inception of this workgroup, we developed a MOU assessment tool to ensure that local MOUs adhere to the requirements under WIOA. This tool has helped partners identify new components that have been absent from previous MOUs. Necessary amendments will be incorporated into new MOUs among required partners include an updated service matrix to reflect Career Services, more detail about the methodology for sharing costs, detail about access to technology and materials for services to be offered through the one stop system, timelines for MOU review, and adding the time period in which the MOU is effective to the signature page.

MOUs are also often used among non-required partners to outline how agencies will work together to align programs and services. Examples of this include MOUs with Elder Circle, an independent provider of SCSEP services in Itasca county, and with Adult Basic Education throughout the region. These documents detail the role of both partners in regard to serving common clients and is an effective way of reaching an understanding about program alignment. We anticipate the need to develop additional MOUs with partners referenced in WIOA, such as Carl Perkins/TechPrep and correctional programs, to reflect current and upcoming partnerships and to fulfill the expectation of closer alignment under WIOA.

11. A. Describe the local area board's strategic vision and how it aligns with the designated state priorities under WIOA.

The Northeast Minnesota Workforce Board is committed to ensuring employers have access to a skilled workforce to fill available jobs and that all people, regardless of race or background, can achieve meaningful employment and a family sustaining wage.

This strategic vision is well aligned with the designated state priorities under WIOA including development of a "Career Pathway System" that aligns with the needs of Minnesota's business and workforce. As part of the regional effort to develop sector initiatives and corresponding career pathway programming, the Board will be closely engaged with the Duluth Board to align our local and regional strategic vision for a skilled workforce with state priorities under WIOA. This effort includes:

- Convening business and industry sector leaders, educators and community based organizations to identify and create sector-based, career pathway programs for skill development.

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- Working to create a bridge between educational institutions and business and industry by identifying skills needs and communicating them to educational partners.
- Developing and supporting initiatives which increase the labor supply for high demand industries, both current and future, in cooperation with state and local economic development partners.
- Providing support to existing or emerging business/industry clusters, and to help generate and implement strategies that expand these types of business in the area.

The Northeast Board also understands the complexities of workforce development and is acutely aware of how important stakeholder engagement is to identifying and implementing local strategies that will positively affect workforce equity issues and employment disparities. The Board will reach out to and coordinate with local service providers and representatives from disparate communities to identify barriers and develop specific strategies that address barriers to success.

The alignment and coordination of local employment, education and training programs and providers is an integral component of the Northeast Board's strategic vision. To facilitate this, the Board will undertake a resource mapping process with support from the region's Rural Workforce Coordinator to assess the capacity of employment and training system; the strengths, weaknesses, challenges and gaps within the region's workforce system to meet industry needs; and the wrap-around and support services available. All of this information will feed into the process for creating career-pathway-based programming by identifying potential partners as well as where additional resources may need to be developed.

Results of the mapping will provide a foundation for discussing specific strategies for increasing coordination of services among agencies and identifying opportunities for leveraging financial and human resources. Additionally, the mapping will help local providers better understand what each public and private organization contributes to ensuring all people can achieve their career goals.

B. Describe the local area board's goals for preparing an educated and skilled workforce, including youth and individuals with barriers to employment.

The Northeast Board's goals for preparing an educated and skilled workforce for all individuals, including youth and individuals with barriers to employment, revolves around developing strong career pathway programming for key sectors of the local economy. As a prevailing theme under WIOA, the career pathway model offers a holistic approach to providing vocational training specifically to groups experiencing barriers to employment. Part of this process is to more deliberately engage the employer community in the development of career pathways programming, which inherently will strengthen the ability of the public system to prepare an educated and skilled workforce. Central to this theme is cultivating the existing relationships we have with educational organizations and working in concert to design training programs that meet the variety of needs experienced by the populations that we serve.

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Specific goals related to the development of career pathways programming include:

- Well-developed career ladders and lattices in targeted sectors vetted with private sector;
- Deep understanding of career pathway systems & philosophy shared between workforce system and higher education;
- Comprehensive cataloging of all regional training programs and providers and the specific credentials their programs award;
- Developed educational options that are progressive, modular, accelerated and contextualized, including short-, moderate- and long-term training options, that lead to industry-recognized and/or stackable credentials;
- Identification of entry points into career pathways, including corresponding certifications/credentials that lead to employment; and
- Completed pilots based on the identified sectors of healthcare and construction trades.
- Developed measures to determine whether or not career pathways models have met employer expectations and whether participant expectations were met as well.

C. *Describe how these goals relate to the performance accountability measures based on the primary indicators in order to support regional economic growth and economic self-sufficiency.*

The Workforce Center system is accustomed to working within the parameters of performance accountability measures, particularly through Adult and Dislocated Worker programming, and is proud of the consistent achievement of these standards under WIA. The Board acknowledges that some measures are new under WIOA, such as skill gains and employer engagement, and we anxiously await definition of how these new measures will be assessed when the final regulations are released in June. Prior to this clarification, we can describe how a career pathways system will relate to the clearly defined performance accountability measures under WIOA:

- Entered Employment: the percent of career pathway exiters who are employed in the second calendar quarter after leaving the career pathway
- Employment Retention: the percent of career pathway exiters employed in the fourth calendar quarter after leaving the career pathway
- Median Earnings: the median quarterly earnings of pathway exiters who are employed in the second calendar quarter after leaving the pathway
- Credential Attainment: the percentage of career pathway participants who obtain a recognized postsecondary credential or a secondary school diploma or equivalent, during participation or within 1 year after exiting.

Without final guidance on the additional two measures, we can only speculate on how the goal to use career pathways systems to prepare a skilled and educated workforce relate to these measures:

- Employer Engagement could relate to the degree of employer participation in the career pathways development process, including the number of employers who

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- engaged and the form of engagement they took (vetting labor market information, providing work experience sites, providing industry instructors for education, etc.)
- Achievement of measurable skill gains could relate to achieving a progressive chain of credentials along a career pathway or somehow measuring gained competencies as one moved through a career pathway. Guidance is needed on methods of assessing skill gains and clarifying the expectation for achievement in this area. ABE currently assesses skill gains and will be counted upon to help the region determine how to meet this new demand as a system.

D. *Describe the strategy to work with the entities that carry out the core programs to align resources available to the local workforce development area, to achieve the strategic vision and goals of the local area board.*

As referenced in questions 2 (connectivity and coordination among physical sites), 3 (connectivity and coordination among service providers), and 7 (coordination of supportive services), there is already a strong system of aligning core program resources in place in the local area. Framing these program resources using a career pathways lens will be an integral part of the process of achieving the strategic goal of a strong career pathways system in Northeast Minnesota. As active members of WFC governance via the Partner Group as well as active members of the Board, core program partners will be a part of the development of the local career pathways system and will be able to identify precisely where they can contribute resources to the various components of the career pathways system. This includes core partners such as:

- ABE: just-in-time contextualized literacy “bridges”; college and career preparation; co-enrollment of students in workforce programming and basic referral of participants; staff to assist in pathways development
- Job Service: labor market intelligence needed in the development of career pathways systems; referrals of job seekers and veterans; facilitation of job search workshops at end of career pathways programming; staff to assist in pathways development
- Northeast Minnesota Office of Job Training: provision of WIOA training and support service funding to support eligible participants in career pathways programming; referrals to career pathways programming; role of navigator similar to that under FastTRAC; staff to assist in pathways development
- AEOA: referrals to career pathways programming; leverage of Agency resources to further develop career pathways programming that connects with the overall regional plan; provision of support services such as transportation, fuel assistance, and other supports for individuals with barriers to employment; staff to assist in pathways development
- Vocational Rehabilitation: referrals to career pathways programming; provision of support services for eligible individuals

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12. *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.*

Programs of study authorized under Carl D. Perkins represent a wide range of sectors important to the economy of Northeast Minnesota. There are four Perkins consortiums that operate within the region and efforts are currently underway to identify opportunities to align their core programs of study with the career pathways efforts of the Northeast and Duluth boards, specifically related to skilled trades and healthcare sectors. The largest consortium operating in the region, the East Range School-to-Work and Tech Prep Partnership, represents 12 schools in 9 districts. Through their programs of study, this consortium is closely aligned with the Applied Learning Institute (ALI), an innovative educational partnership that provides technical and vocational training to high school students through higher education instructors and facilities, which will also be aligned with regional career pathways efforts in healthcare and skilled trades (and others as career pathway development progresses).

This work will be accomplished in part through the efforts of the Rural Career Counseling Coordinator who has participated in a day-long training session sponsored by the East Range School-to-Work and Tech Prep Partnership developed for school counselors, Perkins instructors, secondary principals, and Perkins college representatives. The purpose of this training is for state-level Career and Technical Education staff to provide an overview of programs of study and technical skill assessment, including the history and current and future expectations for Perkins consortiums. To have staff from the WFC system participate in this training provides an excellent opportunity to not only learn about programs of study, but also to meet the players from both the secondary and postsecondary levels with whom we hope to work closely with on the development of career pathways in the region. Information gleaned from this training along with strategies for aligning core program supports across all WFC programming.

Workforce Center staff are also engaged with regional Tech Prep consortium boards and have assisted with the development of consortium plans. Additional to this effort to align with Perkins programs of study, consortium staff will also be participating in the upcoming Northeast regional NGA policy forum to assist in establishing youth experiential learning policy among technical education entities, including Perkins programs. Their feedback on ways for secondary and postsecondary students to gain work skills and industry exposure will help to further this important partnership, hopefully leading to opportunities for the Workforce Center system to play a critical role in the development of experiential learning opportunities related to programs of study.

13. A. *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.*

Several strategies will be used to expand access to employment opportunities for

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eligible individuals as we move into WIOA. Chief among them is the expanded use of career pathways methodology, including the identification of career ladders and lattices within key sectors. Often it is simply the lack of accurate and compelling information about how to access good career opportunities that prevents individuals from preparing for and entering the workforce. Under a career pathways system, better information will be available to the general public and eligible program participants about in-demand opportunities, with the goal of increasing access to these opportunities.

Once the details of a particular career pathway are developed, that information will be broadcast widely through existing core program networks and beyond, including WFC counselors, school districts (both students and personnel) via the Northeast Career EdVenture initiative, and through technological resources including social media and local provider websites. The type of information that will be broadcast will include the progression of occupations within a career pathway, entrance and exit points into corresponding training, the kinds of employers who hire individuals along a pathway, wages and progressive earning potential, and opportunities to learn more about careers along a pathway. As this career pathway effort will be led by the Board, where all core partner programs are represented, coordinating efforts to expand access to employment for eligible individuals, particularly those with barriers to employment, can be accomplished.

Another initiative that may shed light on how the system can help expand access to employment is the Blandin Foundation study of unemployment in Itasca County that is currently underway. Part of this study is to identify issues that prevent public assistance recipients from seeking or obtaining work, a population with a host of barriers to employment. This information promises to help inform both county health and human service programs and the public workforce system on the need for different strategies to address identified issues, including identifying possible gaps in workforce services. Also included in this study is the intent to determine what preconceived notions held by the unemployed affect their willingness to seek work within specific sectors that are particularly in need of workers in Itasca County, such as retail and service sectors. Gaining these insights presents a unique opportunity to design service delivery strategies to increase access to employment opportunities.

Additionally, the Range Area Business Team (RABT), a interprogram team of representatives from all partners in the local system, meets monthly to share information that each partner has learned from the business community, from job openings to skill and education requirements. Identified openings are then broadcast to program customers in a concerted effort to refer system participants.

Specific to core program partners, each plays a unique role in expanding access to employment for individuals with barriers to employment:

AEOA: Being one of the largest community action agencies in the state, AEOA has a long history of working with a broad range of people facing unemployment and underemployment. Services specific to this work include the following programs:

The Employment Equity Program aims to use cultural appropriate services to help people of color on MFIP gain meaningful employment. We address the many

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barriers families face every day, caused by poverty and racism, through the use of an empowering, strength-based approach. This includes connecting with and developing community relationships with local Tribal entities and local African American support agencies. This strategy focuses on the particular institutional barriers that create the racial and ethnic disparities that affect individual/family sustained self-sufficiency.

The Senior Community Service Employment is designed to promote part-time, temporary employment through which program participants are engaged in community service and receive work experience and job skills that can lead to unsubsidized employment. We believe that older workers provide a valuable resource to assist employers in meeting the needs of the current workforce.

Lives in Transition is a program designed to assist individuals who have not been in the workforce for at least two years, have provided unpaid household services and lost their primary source of income due to separation, divorce, death or disability of a spouse or partner. We provide counseling and assistance in helping the individual determine a future path whether it be work or education.

The Minnesota Family Investment Program (MFIP) is a Work First focused program designed to assist public assistance recipients and enhance their efforts so they can successfully transition from Welfare-to-Work.

The Diversionary Work Program (DWP) is a four-month program that provides services and supports to eligible families to help them move immediately to work rather than go on public assistance.

Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) is designed to assist low income individuals, generally without dependents and ineligible for cash assistance, with job search and employment enhancing activities that will lead to self-sufficiency and an exit from public assistance.

Blandin Adult Scholarship Program, through the support of the Blandin Foundation, provides adults the financial support to pursue post-secondary degrees that are in career areas that have current needs as well as growth potential in the Itasca County area.

AEOA's Adult Education program provides a myriad of education options fashioned to increase the individual student's access to employment opportunities. These include GED education, basic skills training, college and career preparation, English Language Learning, and industry specific training opportunities including carpentry pre-apprenticeship, ServSafe Food Manager certification, ParaProfessional certification, and more. Even though ABE eligibility does not include income limits, the program works to engage students most in need and performs outreach to high barrier populations such as those experiencing homelessness, people of color, women seeking nontraditional careers, and students co-enrolled in public assistance and workforce programming. ABE has been co-located on community college campuses for over 10 years and has participated in both FastTRAC and Adult Work career pathways programming across the region aimed at engaging individuals with barriers to employment.

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Vocational Rehabilitation Services: The mission of Vocational Rehabilitation Services is to empower Minnesotans with disabilities to achieve their goals for employment, independent living and community integration. Employment for those with disabilities will be in integrated, competitive positions in the community, at or above minimum wage. Wages are not less than that customarily paid by the employer for the same or similar work performed by non-disabled individuals. All of the individuals that VRS serve have disability related barriers to employment at a minimum. In addition, many of those individuals are from diverse racial, ethnic and cultural backgrounds, are individuals with criminal histories, and or experiencing barriers related to poverty. Vocational Rehabilitation Services is expanding services to transition aged youth, in the areas of job exploration counseling, work-based learning experiences, counseling on opportunities for enrollment in comprehensive transition or post-secondary educational programs at institutions of higher education, workplace readiness training, and instruction in self-advocacy.

Services for the Blind (SSB): SSB doesn't see limitations, only opportunities, for people with a significant vision loss who want to become employed or remain employed. Individuals who are blind, visually impaired or Deafblind can apply for services as early as age 14. SSB counselors work with eligible individuals to help them obtain the skills of blindness as well as the vocational training they require to become successfully employed. Once the person is stable on the desired job, their case is closed with SSB. However, should the person need future assistance with keeping their job, getting another job or advancing in their career field, they can reapply for services. Counselors are knowledgeable about the multiple electronic devices, both hardware and software, utilized by the blind/visually impaired and Deafblind to access print and be successful in school or work. SSB assistive technology specialists can provide comprehensive assessments of the technology skills and needs of a student on a statewide basis. These specialists will make detailed recommendations of the assistive technology a student would require to succeed in school or work.

Job Service: Job Service/Wagner Peyser staff will coordinate with Unemployment Insurance staff delivering Reemployment Assistance sessions to increase awareness of Workforce Center programs and services to individuals identified as most likely to exhaust benefits. These sessions, held multiple times per week in most regional WorkForce Centers, reach individuals seeking employment and/or training. In addition to serving those on unemployment insurance, Job Service staff serve veterans and those not enrolled in eligibility-based programs. Veterans with barriers to employment are case managed by the Disabled Veteran Outreach Program (DVOP) staff to find appropriate employment. The Senior Veteran Employment Representative, a new hire for our region, works with regional businesses to promote veteran employment as well as monitor, report on, and ensure that performance standards are met or exceeded as specified in the Jobs for Veterans State Grant.

Northeast Minnesota Office of Job Training: As the administrator of WIOA programs throughout the region, NEMOJT will continually explore ways of increasing enrollment in dislocated worker, adult, and youth programming. Specifically with regard to youth, we are focusing efforts at expanding engagement of out of school

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youth, including increased access to employment opportunities for this population with a high incidence of barriers. In addition, NEMOJT uses income-based eligibility for enrollment in the Adult program, specifically serving individuals with a range of barriers to employment. Through this program, many strategies for addressing employment barriers are incorporated into the case management process. In conjunction with AEOA and higher education partners, NEMOJT has operated a number of FastTRAC projects that specifically serve to engage individuals with barriers to employment, an effort that will expand in the future under career pathways programming under WIOA.

- B. *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.*

Providing access to supportive services for eligible individuals is an integral part of the existing case management system for all core partners in the region. There is no program offered through the local system that does not incorporate supportive services such as access to transportation resources, assistance with child care costs, and a variety of supportive services for individuals attending training (tutoring, study skills, test prep, etc.). Most programs offered by core partners also include provisions for clothing or equipment required for a new job and resources for medical needs, relocation, and emergency financial assistance. Also, the Northeast region has a strong resource in the *United Way 211 First Call* for Help that allows staff to have a one-stop resource referral source and the ABE program screens every student with the MN Bridge to Benefits screening tool to ensure they are accessing all the resources available to them to help them achieve their program goals

A regional effort that will help to identify expanded sources of support that can be accessed by system participants includes the upcoming asset mapping initiative being undertaken by the Northeast and Duluth Boards as part of the regional planning process. This initiative will identify the depth and breadth of services related to supporting job seekers and may uncover sources of support resources that aren't presently accessed by WFC staff. Such sources will be introduced to the Workforce Center system, leading to formal or informal MOUs in order to increase access to supportive services.

- C. *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.*

Region 2 has selected healthcare and skilled construction trades as the first two sectors around which to build career pathway partnerships and initiatives. It is our intent to develop a model for building career pathways that can be honed through experience and applied to any sector. This includes identifying the career pathways, ladders and lattices within each sector and engaging service providers, training institutions, and employers within each sector in deliberate and meaningful ways. Employer engagement will focus on validating pathways and training opportunities,

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assisting in the development of training curriculum, engaging in experiential learning opportunities and work experience, and sharing their industry expertise. The Northeast Board will lead the career pathway development efforts in skilled trades while the Duluth Board will take the lead on healthcare career pathways.

Infused throughout this effort will be the identification of coenrollment opportunities focused on the obtainment of industry recognized postsecondary credentials. Portability and stackability of training offerings will be determined as career pathway efforts progress to the education design phase; work in this realm has already begun by making a concerted effort to educate higher education partners on this aspect of career pathways. In the Northeast region, this will likely be accomplished through strong partnerships with AdvancedMinnesota, the customized training enterprise of the 5-college Northeast Higher Education District. AdvancedMinnesota has the capability of designing flexible and non-traditional models of education that can closely align with the career pathways under development.

14. A. *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.*

Working closely with employers is the cornerstone of a successful career pathways program. Engaging employers in the healthcare and skilled trades is the next step in the career pathways process and will be accomplished through both the efforts of Board staff as well as the Rural Career Counseling Coordinator. This engagement will begin by delivering clear and concise reasons to engage in career pathways discussions, including helping targeted employers understand:

- How participating will help the workforce system better meet their workforce needs;
- How they may gain access to a wider pool of qualified applicants;
- How they will be helping to make the northeast region a more economically competitive place;

Part of this process will be to clarify the roles of participating key employers, which may include:

- Determining which occupations within targeted industries and sectors should be included within the career pathways system;
- Vetting the set of foundational academic, work readiness, and technical skills, abilities, and knowledge that are chosen as required for key occupations;
- Vetting the certificates and credentials that are required for key occupations
- Collaborating with training institutions to design education and training programs;
- Participating as instructors or training sites in the skill training programs;
- Providing training funds for individuals through tuition reimbursement or class-size training projects;
- Participating in the skill certification/credentialing process;
- Serving as mentors;
- Serving as a job shadowing site;

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- Providing paid or unpaid internship positions for students; and/or
- Hiring individuals who have obtained the required certificates and credentials.

The key employers will be engaged in every step along the way in the design of a career pathways system, from validating labor market information to the design of education and training programs. Employers are already closely involved with the local higher education system through General Program Advisory Committees, a springboard for conversations about engaging in a career pathways development process.

B. 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.

The Northeast Minnesota Workforce Investment Board brings community leadership together with the common goal of ensuring that all customers are provided with a comprehensive array of services to enable them to become successful in the workforce. In northeastern Minnesota, collaborative efforts have created service strategies that can effectively meet the needs of the area's employers and participants. One example is the Range Area Business Team (RABT), a cross-program team of individuals from all partners in the local system. The RABT meets monthly to share information that each partner has learned from the business community, from job openings to skill and education requirements, to ensure there is no duplication of employer services among partner staff. These workforce investment activities and strategies are closely linked to the local labor market needs as well as assessment of employer needs.

An important way the Workforce Development Board will ensure the local workforce system meets the needs of employers is the upcoming career pathways effort, which is entirely based on the needs of employers in key sectors. The first sectors to engage in career pathways development will be healthcare and skilled trades/construction. The first step in this process will be to vet labor market information with employers within these sectors and identify ways of maintaining engagement throughout the process. This might include:

- Determining which occupations within targeted industries and sectors should be included within the career pathways system;
- Vetting the set of foundational academic, work readiness, and technical skills, abilities, and knowledge that are chosen as required for key occupations;
- Vetting the certificates and credentials that are required for key occupations
- Collaborating with training institutions to design education and training programs;
- Participating as instructors or training sites in the skill training programs;
- Providing training funds for individuals through tuition reimbursement or class-size training projects;
- Participating in the skill certification/credentialing process;
- Serving as mentors;
- Serving as a job shadowing site;

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- Providing paid or unpaid internship positions for students; and/or
- Hiring individuals who have obtained the required certificates and credentials.

The key employers will be engaged in every step along the way in the design of a career pathways system, from validating labor market information to the design of education and training programs, to ensure the system meets their needs for workers.

Additionally, the new Rural Workforce Coordinator will work to ensure that the wider workforce development system, including WFC providers and higher education, meet the needs of local employers through strategic engagement. The Rural Workforce Coordinator is closely tied to the Board and is charged with assisting with the development of regional sector initiatives, including key employer outreach. This position is shared between the Northeast Minnesota Office of Job Training and AdvancedMinnesota, the customized training enterprise of the 5 colleges in the Northeast Higher Education District, a deliberate strategy to ensure that both systems are addressing the needs of the employer community.

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

Members of the Board are currently engaged in many ways with economic development throughout the region, including involvement with a host of economic development entities including:

- The Iron Range Resources and Rehabilitation Board (IRRRB): most Workforce Development Board meetings are held at IRRRB headquarters; Workforce Development Board membership includes key representatives from this organization, including Roy Smith, Regional Workforce Director jointly employed by IRRRB and the Northeast Higher Education District (Mr. Smith is also a member of the GWDB). Workforce Center programs are included as part of the workforce services packaging for new business recruits and staff are often included in meeting with prospective employers to speak to workforce availability.
- The Arrowhead Growth Alliance: a unique collaborative between regional economic development players, higher education, and workforce development. Members include the Commissioner of the IRRRB, Director of the Northland Foundation and Vice President of the Blandin Foundation, Presidents of the Northeast Higher Education District and Lake Superior College, Director of the Natural Resources Research Institute, the executive director of the Northeast Minnesota Office of Job Training, the economic development director of the City of Duluth, economic development directors of Minnesota Power and Great River Energy, the executive director of the Arrowhead Regional Development Commission, the president of the Northspan Group, the Duluth Port Authority, the UMD Center for Economic Development, St. Louis County community development, and the Northeast Entrepreneur Fund. The group meets quarterly to identify strategies to align economic development efforts as well as to ensure that all members are kept up to date on important key initiatives.
- The Iron Range Economic Alliance: a group of county and municipal economic

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developers which includes representation from the Workforce Center system, the Small Business Administration and other related entities. Often opportunities to partner with these smaller economic development entities are identified at quarterly meetings, including the promotion of Workforce Center services like On the Job Training and hiring/recruiting services available through the one stop system.

Another example of how the Board coordinates programs with economic development is the creation of a workforce programs and services unit of the UMD Center for Economic Development training program, a nationally recognized educational program for new and mid-level economic developers. Staff from the local Workforce Center system facilitate this unit and share local best practices on economic development working together with workforce development as well as general system overviews and resources that can be found in any one stop center across the United States.

In addition to holding all Board meetings at the offices of the IRRRB, other ways the Board coordinates with economic development is through Board membership which includes a senior member from IRRRB's economic development team as well as a member who is jointly employed by both IRRRB and the Northeast Higher Education District as their director of workforce development. All these alliances and partnerships will continue in order to better coordinate programs and services with regional economic development providers.

- D. 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.).*

The local Workforce System will strengthen links with unemployment insurance programs by working more closely with local REA staff. This includes ensuring that program staff present in each REA session across the region to ensure that REA participants are aware of the services available through the Dislocated Worker program. Highlighted services include On the Job Training and access to training and education, along with the supportive services available to program enrollees. We have designated weekly Dislocated Worker orientation and enrollment sessions in each Workforce Center in the region where REA participants can learn details about the program and how to enroll. Attendees at these orientation sessions are introduced to the array of services available through the Workforce Center system, including Adult Basic Education. The coordination of these two opportunities – REA sessions and Dislocated Worker orientations – has proven successful in capturing a higher degree of laid off workers and will continue into the foreseeable future.

Addition to this work with REA staff and UI orientations, the Office of Job Training routinely partners with state-level unemployment insurance to communicate with dislocated workers who could benefit from program services. A recent example of this effort regards the layoffs in the mining industry where Unemployment Insurance

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staff in St. Paul made personal phone calls to individuals about to exhaust their unemployment benefits to encourage them to utilize services through the dislocated worker program and to promote weekly dislocated worker program orientations held at each Workforce Center.

While ABE does provide some work-based programming to employers to up-skill their workers, the Northeast region overall is anxious to make incumbent worker training available to local employers and is waiting on policy guidance from DEED in order to begin offering these services. With experience with a previous incumbent worker training grant, dubbed the Northeast Talent Development Program, along with a partnership with IRRRB to administer a wage subsidy grant much like the old MEED program, we are well positioned to launch this effort as soon as official policy is released.

15. *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 answer to this question can also be found in the response to question 14 C above (*'Describe how the local area board will better coordinate programs and services with regional economic development providers'*).

The Northeast region has a successful history of facilitating small business development and entrepreneurial activities from prior involvement with Project GATE and GATE II. Both initiatives were delivered in area Workforce Centers and built a delivery system that provides the foundations for business start-up training, career counseling and entrepreneur assessments, core activities needed for entrepreneurs. Partnerships with The University of Minnesota, Duluth, Center for Economic Development and the Northeast Entrepreneur Fund leveraged the regional expertise and business start-up resources. Services involved business mentoring opportunities, related classroom training offerings, and financial literacy activities.

Additionally, our Northeast Career EdVenture initiative to provide career exploration and work readiness resources to area schools includes a workshop on entrepreneurialism using Junior Achievement curriculum. These sessions have been delivered to groups of 11 and 12 graders using staff from local SBA offices in order to inspire youth to start thinking about entrepreneurship as they consider their future.

AEOA's Adult Education program has partnered with the Entrepreneur Fund to assist low-income individuals who want to launch or grow their businesses. The ABE program provides an expanded version of the CORE FOUR business planning course that walks individuals through researching, designing, and writing their own business plan including the needed personal and professional financial components. Learners are then connected with the Entrepreneur Fund to continue their progress toward owning their own business. A real innovative spin on the CORE FOUR curriculum is the local ABE's initiative to adapt this curriculum to be culturally accessible for Native Americans by working closely with a sector of the Bois Forte

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Band of Chippewa in Nett Lake.

16. A. *Describe how the local area board will ensure continuous improvement of eligible providers of services through the system.*

Often opportunities for continuous improvement are relatively spontaneous as we become aware of activities, seminars, and training that occur throughout the year. WSA staffs are encouraged to participate in any training that further hones their customer service and service delivery skills. In the Northeast region, continuous improvement activities are coordinated on behalf of the Board by the Partner Group, a coalition of all the managers of Workforce Center partners. The Partner Group routinely discusses opportunities to improve coordination of services, which often include cross-agency training on topics that are common among programs. The most recent example of this effort to ensure continual improvement is the two-day Bridges Out of Poverty training facilitated by well-known trainer Jodie Pfarr. This training focused on the impact of poverty on an individual's processing and response to situations and provides practitioners with concrete understanding of how to more effectively work with this population. As many of our programs serve individuals striving to climb out of poverty, offering this collectively to all Workforce Center partner staff as well as to county financial and social workers made sense and served to strengthen the local system as a whole.

In addition to the Partner Group, each Workforce Center has an Operations Committee that meets monthly and consists of two representatives from each partner agency. Workforce Center operations are discussed from a front-line staff perspective and meeting minutes are forwarded to the Partner Group for review and discussion. Each Partner Group meeting includes discussion of specific questions, issues, or requests as identified by the Operations Committee from ordering supplies to continuous improvement activities or requests. While at first glance this arrangement may seem complicated, it in fact engages staff at every level and is an effective way of sharing information across the region and represents a system staying in touch with WFC operations, including the identification continuous improvement opportunities.

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

This closely corresponds to the response to question 14 B., '*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*' related to ensuring providers are meeting the needs of local employers.

On the job seeker front, connecting individuals to education, providing support services for those in education, providing career navigation to ensure individuals are entering the appropriate training program for them, and providing employment placement and retention services after credential attainment is the foundation of what

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eligible providers do. When a WIOA-eligible individual who is seeking training sits down with a Career Counselor, the first thing that occurs is determining the ultimate goal of the client, identifying the field they wish to enter, and the skills they wish to improve or gain. Sometimes that goal requires several steps to reach, steps along a 'career pathway', where supports are built in along the way to improve the chances of reaching that ultimate goal. Because of the limitations of WIOA funding no more than two years of training expenses, we must identify the full career pathway at the outset in order to determine where WIOA resources are best plugged in. Many clients have plans to eventually build upon their vocational training, whether by finishing a bachelor's degree or other specialized training. Ensuring that Workforce Center services provide the necessary foundation for those future plans precisely illustrates our capacity to fully meet the needs of job seekers.

Further evidence of this capacity is through our partnership with ABE. Often WIOA-eligible clients come to us wishing to enter a post-secondary training program but don't have the skills and discipline necessary to initially succeed in that environment. Instead of discouraging that client from their goal, we first ensure they have the developmental tools necessary to succeed in basic areas like math, reading for information, and critical thinking strategies. Part of a successful career pathways strategy is ensuring clients are not set up for failure but rather have the appropriate skills in place before they set out on their pathway.

All WIOA-funded clients are closely followed through their career pathway and provided a myriad of necessary supports to keep them going. Critical among these supports for many non-traditional students is the provision of day care assistance and transportation assistance for those that travel a great distance to attend school. Chief among our services is the provision of placement assistance upon graduation. We offer a series of placement services including resume development, mock interviews, Creative Job Search, and other workshops designed locally including 'Accessing the Hidden Job Market' and 'Job Searching with Social Media'. Incidentally these workshops and services are also available to the unemployed who may have been working on their own career pathway independently.

Meeting the needs of incumbent workers is a new area for us and we are excited to develop resources for workers under new provisions of WIOA. Providing incumbent worker training using WIOA funds will be the first place to start to meet the needs of local workers. The opportunity to gain skills that enhance one's current position or lead to positions of greater responsibility or pay is critical not only to those workers who participate, but also the competitiveness of the participating business, enhancing the economic stability of that employer.

- C. *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.*

The Northeast Board recognizes that technology must play a greater role in service delivery as we attempt to increase access to programs in more remote areas of the

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region. One of the ways the region hopes to increase access is by creating an online intake system, including electronic enrollment documents like the program application and other documents like individual service strategies and employment plans. Using technology to better enable the enrollment process will also help to streamline the case management process, allowing technology as an avenue for addressing the all-too-common transportation barrier that sometimes prevents individuals from accessing services. ABE services are provided in almost 30 classrooms throughout the region allowing for workforce program outreach in even very rural communities. Additionally, ABE is able to provide services utilizing online distance learning platforms including advising and case management via Skype and GoToMeeting.

Local system providers are also in the process of developing a mobile app with a local community newspaper, Hometown Focus (HTF). HTF has developed a mobile app called DiscoverMN which is positioned as the definitive guide to Northeast Minnesota resources such as restaurants, auto repair/purchase, realty, shopping, healthcare, education, lodging, gas stations, churches, and events. The Northeast Minnesota Office of Job Training and AEOA, two of the largest partners in the local Workforce Center system are collaborating on adding a 'button' to these offerings entitled 'jobs' where users can access information about a host of workforce services. At the top of the list are programs and resources available through the Workforce Center system, but will also include links to a host of job posting sources, including municipal and county jobs, job banks (including MinnesotaWorks), and jobs in the education and nonprofit sectors.

We look to DEED to assist in the effort to increase access to services using technology through initiatives like the virtual one stop to help local providers increase access to services provided through Workforce Centers. Most small providers do not have the expertise or resources to develop regional portals to services, so collaboration with state-level partners is critical to increase access via technology.

D. Describe how entities within the one-stop delivery system will comply with section 188, 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.

On a statewide level, an accessibility assessment is completed at each Workforce Center prior to certification and at intervals on an ongoing basis. Workforce Centers are equipped with accessible equipment and the Department of Employment and Economic Development monitors this equipment to ensure it is current and in working order. Software developed by DEED for the Workforce Centers are designed to be fully accessible. All programs within the Minnesota Workforce system are expected to be fully accessible to all Minnesotans. Vocational Rehabilitation Services and State Services for the Blind located within the Workforce Centers are available for consultation with other programs, should unexpected issues of accessibility occur. There is frequent co-enrollment and collaboration between

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Vocational Rehabilitation and the other partners, which further enhances overall accessibility.

AEOA ensures all Adult Education facilities comply with all federal and state guidelines regarding accessibility of facilities and programming. All ABE staff are provided quarterly professional development training on engaging with students with perceived and documented physical and learning disabilities. The State ABE Office also provided ongoing resources to ABE staff via supplemental service provider PANDA that provides disability support, knowledge and resources to increase academic opportunities for students.

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

Job Service: With limited Wagner Peyser staff in Northeast Minnesota, services will be primarily focused on providing reemployment assistance to Wagner Peyser's targeted population of UI claimants. A Wagner Peyser staff person will attend Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment (REA) sessions that the UI program offers across the service area. These services are offered to applicants who are at risk of exhausting their benefits. The REA and Wagner Peyser staff will conduct a quick assessment of participants to determine who will most likely need additional services from the Workforce Center. Additionally, the Wagner Peyser staff person will conduct an overview of WFC services either one on one or in a group setting (depending on the size of the group) that includes information on how to register for the state's labor exchange system MinnesotaWorks, and information about services such as the Dislocated Worker program that they may be eligible for.

The Wagner Peyser staff person will 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. Wagner Peyser will then follow up with REA participants who are not enrolled in a program to ensure that they have a complete registration and resume in MinnesotaWorks and that they are taking advantage of job placement services.

In addition to supporting REA activities, Wagner Peyser staff will assist with customers utilizing services in the Resource Room. Additional workshops will be offered where staff is available. The Wagner Peyser program also provides services to businesses by assisting with job postings and recruiting events in the region.

State Services for the Blind State Services for the Blind provides the tools, training and technology to help people who are blind, visually impaired, DeafBlind or experiencing vision loss to live independently and to prepare for, find and keep a job. The mission of State Services for the Blind (SSB) is to facilitate the achievement of vocational and personal independence by Minnesotans who are blind, visually

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impaired or DeafBlind. The Workforce Development Unit of State Services for the Blind (SSB) ensures delivery of rehabilitation services individuals need to prepare for, seek, gain or retain employment. Services take many forms and may include: vocational assessment and counseling; training in adjustment-to-blindness, braille, use of assistive technology; job seeking skills and vocational skills; job placement assistance; and job adaptation assistance. The customer and counselor work together to produce the right mix of services for an employment plan. A new customer, for example, may need the full spectrum of services, including assessment, cane travel, braille and adjustment to blindness training before enrolling in an educational program that will lead to employment. In the Northeast region, these services are provided throughout the region by staff located at the Hibbing Workforce Center.

Vocational Rehabilitation Services Vocational Rehabilitation Services specializes in working with individuals with disabilities that create barriers to employment, post-secondary training, independent living and community integration. All partners, including Vocational Rehabilitation Services, contribute to the infrastructure of the WorkForce Center system. Resources contributed through Vocational Rehabilitation Services include pre-employment transition services, vocational assessments, job tryouts, community-based evaluations, job search assistance, job coaching, case management, tuition assistance and supportive services. Staff from Vocational Rehabilitation Services are available as needed, to consult with partners who happen to be working with individuals with disabilities. Additionally, VRS regularly co-enrolls consumers with other one-stop partners to ensure wrap around services for the consumer.

AEOA: As a regional provider of employment and training services AEOA is a partner in the Workforce Centers throughout the region. Services provided include state dislocated worker programming; displaced homemaker services; MFIP, DWP, and SNAP programming; SCSEP (Senior Community Service Employment Program); FAIM (Family Assets for Independence in Minnesota); and offender re-entry programming. In addition, AEOA's transportation department provides an employment transportation program called Rural Rides for program participants seeking work or attending training. Resources contributed through these programs include job search assistance, case management, tuition assistance and supportive services. AEOA staff also contribute time to staff resource areas along with the staff of other WFC partners.

ABE: AEOA's Adult Education program is co-located at most regional Workforce Centers except Grand Rapids (located two blocks away) and International Falls (down the hall in Rainy River Community College). At these locations ABE provides GED, college, and career preparation, just-in-time literacy skills, contextualized industry recognized learning opportunities, English Language Learning, and computer skills. ABE also provides Bridge to Benefits screening and access to support services including payment of GED test and college entrance fees.

The Northeast Minnesota Office of Job Training is the WIOA Title I provider at each Workforce Center in the region, including the provision of Dislocated Worker, Adult and Youth programming. In addition, NEMOJT is the administrator of the state dislocated worker and Minnesota Youth programs as well as one of two MFIP

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employment and training providers along with AEOA. Resources contributed through these programs include job search assistance, case management, tuition assistance and supportive services. NEMOJT staff also contribute time to staff resource areas along with the staff of other WFC partners.

17. *Describe and assess the type and availability of adult and dislocated worker employment and training activities in the local workforce development area.*

The Office of Job Training is the provider of adult and dislocated worker programming under WIOA and State-funded programs, including WIOA Adult and Dislocated Worker and the Minnesota Dislocated Worker Program. AEOA's Employment and Training program operates a Small Layoff Independent Grant (SLIG) program, which defines other program providers who receive Dislocated Worker program funds, but are not the designated WIOA provider. In addition, they also operate the Displaced Homemaker program, the Senior Community Service Employment program, the Equity program, the SNAP program, MFIP and DWP programs, and the Blandin Adult Scholarship program. AEOA also operates Adult Basic Education in almost all Workforce Center locations and regional community colleges, serving both adults and dislocated workers to increase basic skills and prepare to enter further education or the workforce. AEOA has provided specialized career pathway programming for unemployed and underemployed individuals via DEED Adult Worker grants, a Department of Commerce Innovative Training Strategies grant, and special allocations under the Women's Economic Security Act and MN Women's Foundation to assist women in entering nontraditional trades occupations. Both agencies provide employment and training services to adults in the Minnesota Family Investment Program and have collaborated on a number of FastTRAC projects to serve a variety of adult populations using a career pathways approach. Rehabilitation Services offers career development and placement services to adults with Disabilities, and Job Service provides job search assistance to any adult regardless of program eligibility through the provision of Creative Job Search and other workshops (including Reemployment Assistance workshops for dislocated workers collecting unemployment), and Veterans Services.

Each core partner offers a host of resources connected to these programs, which are available at each Workforce Center in the region (Aitkin, Cloquet, Hibbing, International Falls, Grand Rapids, and Virginia). Generally, these include:

- Assessment of career-related interests, abilities, aptitudes, values and personality, with corresponding recommendations of appropriate careers/occupations that match results;
- Case management to include mapping out individual service strategies based on the unique goals and characteristics of each individual;
- Connection to community resources including transportation, housing or fuel assistance, emergency financial assistance, and charitable organization resources;
- The provision of supportive services that include mileage assistance for job search or education, out of area job search assistance, relocation assistance, expenses related to short-term out of area training, emergency financial assistance, and tools and equipment required for training or a job;
- The provision of tuition assistance for career or vocational training, including the completion of a Bachelor's degree. Generally, only educational programs that lead

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to readily available occupations paying family sustaining wages are considered for funding. When clients propose training programs, part of the case management process is to determine the job prospects upon credential attainment in order to ensure that clients are truly preparing to meet their goals. Also, all clients who wish to attend training must first undergo the assessment process, including a reading and math assessment, in order to ensure that an individual is suited to that occupation and ready for the rigor of postsecondary education.

- Placement assistance, including teaching job search strategy (resumes, interviewing, accessing the hidden job market, communicating with employers) and job development
- Follow up services after placement to mitigate unexpected barriers to retain employment

18. 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.

There are a wide variety of youth programs operating in the region, each with a suite of supportive services to ensure the success of program participants. Additional programs and resources for youth workforce development will be identified through the upcoming asset mapping initiative.

Regional youth investment activities:

Northeast Minnesota Office of Job Training

As the provider of WIOA and State youth employment and training activities, The Office of Job Training offers a host of services and resources for area young people. WIOA requires a renewed focus on serving out of school youth, with at least 75% of funding to be spent to be spent on this population. In the first year of operating youth services under WIOA, the Office of Job Training has achieved over 80% of expenditures dedicated to out of school youth. This is due in large part to two factors: 1) being able to serve youth up to the age of 24, and 2) strong partnerships with judicial and corrections systems, community based organizations (such as AEOA's Homeless Youth Foyer, ABE and GED), and higher education institutions. Services to both in-school and out-of-school youth include:

- Placement in paid work experience to gain employability skills and understanding of employer expectations, including temporary or seasonal jobs and internships and permanent placements through On the Job Training
- Develop and achieve personal goals, including work readiness goals
- Prepare to compete in the job market, including job search strategy
- Pursue and achieve a high school credential
- Identify options for postsecondary training, including traditional short- and long-term programming, vocational programs, and apprenticeship

Northeast Career EdVenture, a program to provide career exploration and work readiness resources to area school districts, was developed by the Office of Job Training and is in its fourth year of operation. This program provides schools with a host of resources to educate all students, regardless of program eligibility, about career options, accessing postsecondary training, and the needs of employers. Both individual and group services

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are available.

One-on-one career counseling is available to individuals students, including:

- Assessment of personality, ability/aptitude, and interests as they relate to careers
- Job search assistance and strategy
- Postsecondary planning (one of the tenants of this program is the message that all students need some kind of postsecondary training, which could include vocational training or apprenticeship as well as the achievement of a four year degree).

Group/classroom resources include:

- A four-part Financial Literacy series
- FAFSA/Financial Aid workshop
- Career Assessments/results review
- CEOs in the Classroom (local business leader speakers in 8th grade classrooms)
- Navigating Business Culture: a four-part series covering generations in the workplace, communication, employer expectations, and the future world of work
- Industry-specific speakers and panels
- A variety of popular games and gameshows adapted with career exploration themes, including Interview Pictionary and Career Feud
- Social Media and the Job Search

Vocational Rehabilitation Services

Vocational Rehabilitation Services provides to youth with disabilities from the age of 14-21. Youth who are still in school and have not graduated from high school are eligible for Pre-Employment Transition Services. These can include job exploration counseling, work-based learning experiences, counseling on opportunities for enrollment in comprehensive transition or post-secondary educational programs at institutions of higher education, workplace readiness training, and instruction in self-advocacy. These services can be provided for students whether or not they have applied for services. The specifics of how these services will be provided is still being developed pending the final WIOA regulations.

Vocational Rehabilitation Services also provides services to transition-aged youth who apply for services and meet the state's current priority for service. Individuals in this group can be either in school or out of school youth and can receive any service Vocational Rehabilitation Services offers if it is necessary for the student to reach their educational and employment goals.

The Applied Learning Institute (ALI) ALI was formed in 2006 to enhance technical education in northeast Minnesota by providing experiential learning that combines hands-on training and technology. The goal of ALI is to help create highly trained, knowledgeable workers who are equipped with the technical and problem-solving skills needed by employers everywhere. ALI has a membership of 17 northeast Minnesota school districts with 25 high schools, and the five colleges of the Northeast Higher Education District (NHED). Nearly 1500 students enroll in ALI programming each year. With an eye toward the future and help from local industry, ALI programs are collaborative efforts between high schools and community/technical colleges in northeast Minnesota. Classes are scheduled to meet a variety of student needs, including online classes, daytime classes, and late-afternoon classes. Programs of study available through ALI include Transportation / Mechanical Systems, Construction Trades, Healthcare, Industrial Technology, and Pre-Engineering.

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Iron Range Science and Engineering Festival is a Regional three-day event that held in April each year at the MN Discovery Center. The event attracts approximately 1200 7th grade students from schools across the region to learn about science and engineering through hands-on activities. This is a satellite event of the Annual USA Science & Engineering Festival.

Sub-regional youth investment activities: These programs are occurring in smaller subsets of the region and represent promising models of youth workforce development activities:

AEOA provides multiple programs aimed at engaging high barrier youth in employment and training opportunities:

The *Free at Last* program in Itasca and Koochiching Counties focuses on teaching at-risk youth independent living skills through experiential education, teamwork, and individual counseling for youth in foster care and at-risk youth. HUD and Homeless Youth Act funds also provide youth ages 17 - 21 that are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless and are in need of structured support to increase their self-sufficiency. The program also provides housing for homeless young people. In Cook, Lake, and St. Louis Counties, AEOA's Housing Department runs programming for youth experiencing homelessness or who are precariously housed. Components include case management, support services, and connecting youth to employment and education opportunities to ensure their success.

AEOA's DEED Youth at Work funded *Pathways to Employment Readiness for Youth* (PERY) program is a comprehensive training program serving youth aged 14-24 in St. Louis and Itasca Counties who are at-risk of dropping out or have already dropped out of the traditional school setting. The PERY program includes case management, specialized training while part of a paid work experience, and post-program job placement. Each participant is provided life- and work-skills training; basic literacy skills and financial literacy. Industry sectors targeted for PERY are hospitality and construction trades.

The *YouthBuild* program provides basic construction and carpentry training to young people who are struggling with education and other life challenges while helping her or him complete a high school equivalency. The program also works with each young person to develop their leadership and independent living skills. Each youth is provided hands-on instruction at a professional community worksite in construction skills. In addition, they spend up to 10 hours a week in an Adult Education classroom working toward their high school equivalency. Opportunities for community engagement and volunteering are also key to participant success.

There are several additional examples of smaller-scale youth workforce development efforts, including:

- The Range Engineering Council (REC), organized to support and facilitate educational programs and activities across the Iron Range that promote awareness of and encourage participation in Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) programs. The REC is directly involved in many programs; below are a few highlights:
 - *Iron Range STEM Showcase featuring the Michigan Tech Mind Trekkers* was a

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Regional two-day event that occurred in October of 2014 that was a huge success that has now become an annual event. The first day is just open to students where approximately 2,000 5-6th grade students and 200 teachers attended from over 20 school districts. Michigan Tech and Iron Range Engineering provide the projects and students for the main event but various other organizations are involved and provide hands on STEM related experiences for those participating.

- *Mentoring Night* is an evening program directed towards 9-12 grade students and their parents. The event is currently hosted in two locations, Hibbing and Virginia, though students are invited from across the Iron Range. Mentoring Night is designed to provide students and their parents with exposure to “real” engineers to have an open dialogue about what engineers do, discuss the amazing career opportunities that exist, and talk about college programs. Approximately 20 engineers of various disciplines from local businesses and engineering schools meet with approximately 75 students to discuss what it is they do and answer any questions they may have.
 - The *Engineering, Cool!* program is an after-school program directed to 6th graders. The course started as an 11-week program in the Hibbing School district and has expanded to a 16 week program. Engineering volunteers spend one two-hour session a week for approximately 16 weeks doing various hands-on experiments with the students such as rocket building and launching, water resources, facility design, and mining. The program has been taking place in Hibbing and was recently expanded to Virginia, and Chisholm in 2015 with plans to expand even further. The course is free for students to participate and includes two field trips, the Laurentian Environmental Center and the Wolf Ridge.
 - *Job Shadowing* is a program where students are given the opportunity spend a half day with Engineers at local companies, touring and understanding their work. Approximately twelve 11-12th grade students have been participating from Hibbing High School and we are working to expand to other school districts.
- Rotary in International Falls is active in two youth development initiatives, Interact and RYLA (Rotary Youth Leadership Awards) in partnership with the local school district and Workforce Center staff. These programs focus on community service learning and developing leadership skills, teaching students valuable tools that can enhance employability.
 - STRIVE is a program operated in the International Falls school district. STRIVE is a motivational program for high school seniors who face academic challenges. STRIVE students are matched with volunteer mentors who attend monthly meetings together where speakers address topics mean to assist the student in transitioning from high school to the world of work and/or postsecondary training.
 - Several Chambers of Commerce in the region are operating youth workforce development initiatives, including *Teen Works* in Grand Rapids, a two-week work readiness bootcamp for eligible teens. The Cloquet Area Chamber is also actively engaged in finding ways to connect students with local business and industry by working with partners such as private employers, higher education, and Workforce Center programs.
 - The Blandin Foundation has been facilitating an extensive effort in Itasca County called

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the *Student Success Initiative*, working with school districts, community partners, local government, and employers. Part of this effort was to co-sponsor a series of community conversations focused on the question, “what can be done to better help all students succeed in the Itasca Area?” These conversations have since informed a host of community initiatives, including extensive student surveys that detail the perspective of 2,357 youth on a variety of topics from family and community support to academic confidence, from education plans after high school to measuring perseverance and positive identity. The results of this survey are currently being used to identify gaps in services to youth and developing efforts to assist with identified needs. The Workforce Center has been involved in this effort from the beginning by hosting community conversations and bringing youth program resources to bear where applicable.

- Ramp up to Readiness, a school-wide advisory program that features an engaging and interactive series of Activities designed to help all students graduate from high school ready for postsecondary success developed by the U of M, is being used in several school districts in the region. Part of this curriculum includes Career Readiness (the ability to identify careers that match personal, financial, and other goals and an understanding of the skills, credentials, and experiences required to succeed in those careers) as well as financial literacy, academic readiness, admissions readiness, and personal and social readiness.

This spring, the Board will host a session of the National Governors Association Talent Pipeline Policy Academy through the GWDB to identify challenges and opportunities related to work-based learning for youth. Many local stakeholders will participate in this listening session including K12 and higher education, ABE, CTE, employers, foundations, organized labor, and workforce development representatives. The goal of the session is twofold: 1) help identify ways in which state policy could be better aligned to support the developing of work-based learning models, and 2) assist the Board to identify partners who can participate in the development of career pathways, including the development of regional models for youth work-based learning opportunities like job shadowing, work experience, and mentoring.

19. *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.*

Education and workforce investment activities under WIOA are coordinated with relevant secondary and postsecondary education programs in a variety of ways but also offer opportunities for achieving better alignment. One population of youth that has already been identified as one not currently connected to system resources in some way are homeschooled and online learning students. Part of the effort to coordinate youth services will be to identify the number of individuals in the region who are classified as such and find ways of connecting to these populations.

There are over 40 K12 districts in the region, the majority of who participate in progressive workforce investment activities such as the Applied Learning Institute (ALI) and Career EdVenture programming, efforts in which WIOA-eligible students participate along with the general student population. ALI is an innovative partnership between secondary and

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postsecondary schools to provide technical training to high school students. This is done by providing secondary students access to postsecondary vocational programming by transporting students to local college campuses for credit-based classroom and applied training in a variety of sectors including healthcare, construction trades, and engineering. Though WIOA-eligible students most certainly participate in ALI classes, there is an opportunity for better alignment in several areas: 1) using ALI as a mechanism for program participant outreach and enrollment; 2) developing work-based learning opportunities for WIOA-eligible ALI students that align with their program of study; 3) providing Career EdVenture services to ALI students to help them understand the job market for which they are preparing. An additional opportunity for aligning more closely with secondary schools will be including Perkins Act consortium directors and information about their Programs of Study in the development of career pathways and sector initiatives under WIOA. The Board intends to explore these opportunities for better alignment as they develop a career pathways system.

Within higher education, there are 6 colleges that operate in the region, including the 5 campuses of the Northeast Higher Education District (Mesabi Range in Virginia and Eveleth, Hibbing Community College, Rainy River Community College in International Falls, Vermilion Community College in Ely, and Itasca Community College in Grand Rapids) and the Fond du Lac Tribal and Community College in Cloquet. Not only is the majority of WIOA tuition funding for a wide range of vocational training programs expended at these institutions, but each has collaborated on a number of workforce development initiatives, including those that are eligible for WIOA funding. Such collaborations include a number of FastTRAC projects, Adult Worker grants, Department of Commerce Innovative Training grants, and foundation-funded projects.

The Board is excited about the potential of the new MnSCU Two-Year Occupational Grant Pilot Program that will cover the cost of tuition and fees for high-demand two-year programs at local MnSCU campuses, particularly the required mentorship component. Several programs through the Northeast Higher Education District will qualify for this program and the local Workforce Center system is ready to collaborate on implementation, including referrals of students and assistance with mentorship.

AEOA's Employment and Training Department operates the Blandin Adult Scholarship program, which supports and promotes individuals living within the Itasca County region to further their education and employment opportunities through post-secondary education. The program offers supports which include career counseling, tuition, books, child care, as well as support needed to maintain a household while attending school on a full time basis.

Workforce Center program staff coordinate with higher education in a variety of ways, from staffing regular office hours to advise current and prospective program participants to participating on program advisory boards. Local college academic advisors are connected to Workforce Center staff and routinely communicate opportunities for funding under WIOA programs to students. Adult Basic Education is co-located on each community college campus allowing for coordination with higher education throughout the region. To that end, ABE provides integrated classes co-teaching with MnSCU instructors on multiple campuses, is embedded in campus learning community courses providing learning labs, provides college prep bridges and boot camps to prepare students for entry into coursework, and acts as a resource for students struggling with basic literacy or English language learning.

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These strong partnerships ensure that potentially program eligible students who register for training are connected with workforce system resources. Opportunities to increase alignment with higher education include: 1) educate a wider higher education audience about WIOA programs, including instructors and financial aid staff, in order to increase program participation and identify ways of better supporting mutual students; 2) continue to increase the presence of ABE at local campuses; 3) develop a more far-reaching navigation service to provide prospective and existing students with a better foundation for understanding occupational opportunities available in the region as they relate to education; and 4) develop a mentorship system using past WIOA participants as mentors to new students with similar occupational interests.

Embarking on the development of a career pathways system will help identify other opportunities for better alignment and ways of enhancing shared services, ultimately reducing duplication among service providers.

20. *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.*

As referenced in response to 13.B., providing access to supportive services for eligible individuals is an integral part of the existing case management system for all core partners in the region. There is no program offered through the local system that does not incorporate supportive services such as access to transportation resources, assistance with child care costs, and a variety of supportive services for individuals attending training (tutoring, study skills, test prep, etc.). Most programs offered by core partners also include provisions for clothing or equipment required for a new job and resources for medical needs, relocation, and emergency financial assistance.

Transportation represents a widespread barrier that can prevent participants from accessing programs and services or attending training to gain skills needed to increase employability. A common barrier in rural areas, the Northeast region is fortunate to have innovative solutions to address this barrier through programs operated by Workforce Center partner AEOA. AEOA is the region's largest CAP agency and operates many support programs, including Arrowhead Transit and Rural Rides. Arrowhead Transit is a regional dial-a-ride service with regular routes between communities, including to area Workforce Centers. It has been in operation for 42 years, operates 96 buses, and serves eight counties and hundreds of communities. Annually, they provide over 570,000 rides and travel over 1,630,000. Rural Rides is a program funded through Job Access Reverse Commute to manage an infrastructure of volunteer drivers that are available to transport individuals to job interviews, work, ABE classes, and sometimes college classes. This program has been in operation for eight years and serves as an invaluable resource for all WIOA participants.

AEOA also offers a host of other supportive services for which strong cross-referral mechanisms are in place. Examples include:

- Housing Services operates the Energy Assistance Program (EAP) which provided services to 8,569 households in 2015 and Minnesota Power's CARE Program provided

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services to 5,000 households. Housing also offers services through the Fix Up Fund Home Improvement Loans Homeownership Program, Deferred Rehabilitation Loans, Rehabilitation/Emergency and Accessibility Loans, Weatherization Assistance Program, Small Cities Development Program, and Foreclosure Prevention and Homeless Services.

- Head Start provides comprehensive early childhood programming for low income families in Cook, Lake and St. Louis counties. They partner with families to provide support, education/special education and community connections in education, school readiness, family literacy, employment, health/nutrition, mental health, self-sufficiency and self-esteem. They provide services to over 400 children and their families per year.
- Senior Services provides essential community-based services that allow older adults to maintain their health, independence, and quality of life at home in this community. In 2015, Senior Services provided over 402,000 nutritious meals to 6,700 seniors. Of those meals, 220,000 were delivered to older people who are homebound. The Northeast Minnesota Food Shelf Network provided food assistance to 6,400 families and distributed 890,144 pounds of food. Through Arrowhead's Retired Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP), 1,551 volunteers provided 177,572 hours of service to deliver meals, build homes, helped children to read, improved our environment and helped feed needy families.

A regional effort that will help to identify expanded sources of support that can be accessed by system participants includes the upcoming asset mapping initiative being undertaken by the Northeast and Duluth Boards as part of the regional planning process. This initiative will identify the depth and breadth of services related to supporting job seekers and may uncover sources of support resources that aren't presently accessed by WFC staff. Such sources will be introduced to the Workforce Center system, leading to formal MOUs or informal referral processes in order to increase access to supportive services.

21. *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.*

Services under the Wagner Peyser Act focus on providing a variety of employment related labor exchange services including but not limited to job search assistance, job referral, and placement assistance for job seekers, re-employment services to unemployment insurance claimants, promotion of the MinnesotaWorks website, and recruitment services to employers with job openings. The Northeast region has been operating under a cooperative system with the relatively few Wagner Peyser staff in the region for many years. Of the 6 Workforce Center locations in the region, Wagner Peyser staff are housed in only 2, International Falls and Hibbing. Through informal cooperative service agreements, we have developed an efficient system of regularly scheduled visits to each Workforce Center to deliver services such as Reemployment Assistance workshops (REA), New Leaf, individual Veteran Services appointments, and Creative Job Search workshops on a predictable monthly basis. Master calendars of workshop dates are distributed to staff and Workforce Center patrons in every WFC. Operations committees in each WFC, consisting of front-line staff from each partner agency, monitor this schedule and ensure

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that all staff are aware of new or additional offerings during any particular month. The Board plans to maintain this cooperative agreement and work with DEED to identify new ways of maximizing coordination if needed.

The Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development has made the following assurances concerning the availability of Wagner-Peyser services in local Workforce Centers:

- The Wagner-Peyser Employment Service is co-located with the one-stop center where feasible given the current staffing level.
- If a State Workforce Development Board, department or agency administers State laws for vocational rehabilitation of individuals with disabilities, that board, department, or agency cooperates with the agency that administers Wagner Peyser services, Adult and Dislocated Worker programs and Youth Programs under Title I; and
- State agency merit-based public employees provide Wagner-Peyser Act-funded labor exchange activities in accordance with Department of Labor regulations.

However, the Board wishes to express concern over the absence of a Business Services Specialist in the region. This position has been vacant several months and leaves a significant gap in the region's ability to engage the employer community. This position is more critical than ever with impending plans to develop sector partnerships and career pathways programming.

22. *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, the review of local applications submitted under title II.*

AEOA's ABE program is an active partner in the local and regional workforce system, being collocated at almost all Workforce Centers and community college campuses. ABE administers the skills assessment (TABE) for dislocated worker and MFIP orientation sessions on behalf of area employment service providers, co-enrolls and cross refers students to employment service programs, and works to provide just-in-time literacy programming for career pathways across the region. ABE has built programming and partnerships to create multiple points of entry for students along several career pathways and is eager to work more closely with the local area board to embed this work further across the region.

Every Adult Education program in the state provides a program narrative to the State Department of Education every five years for approval of their service model and programming. Future 5-year narratives will include provisions for local ABE program to provided evidence that programming aligns with the local and regional WIOA plan. These components may include evidence of common referral, co-location, program collaboration, alignment of assessment processes, and helping select and design key occupational pathways. All ABE's are expected to compete again in 2017 and a new 5-year rotation will begin. Under this provision of WIOA it is expected that the narrative will be shared with the local area board once approved by the State Department of Education. Plan creation will occur with consideration of the local and regional workforce strategies in mind.

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23. *Describe the replicated cooperative agreements (as defined in section 107(d)(11)) 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 Northeast 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 WorkForce Centers to provide access to a wide variety of services. Each Workforce Center 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 to inform job seekers about the impact earned income will have on federal and state benefits, including public health insurance.

The Northeast 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. The local Board sponsors local job fairs and other events in which Vocational Rehabilitation participates. 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.

24. *Describe and identify the entity responsible for the disbursement of grant funds described in section 107(d)(12)(B)(i).*

WIOA Section 107 (d)(12)(B)(i)(I) states that the chief elected official in a local area shall serve as the local grant recipient for, and shall be liable for any misuse of, the grant funds allocated to the local area. In the Northeast Region, this entity is the Local Elected Official board consisting of a county commissioner representing each county in the region: Aitkin, Carlton, Cook, Itasca, Koochiching, Lake, and St. Louis.

WIOA Section 107 (d)(12)(B)(i)(II) states that the chief local elected officials may designate an entity to serve as a local fiscal agent to assist in the administration of grant funds. The

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entity that has been designated under this provision that serves as the local fiscal agent is the Northeast Minnesota Office of Job Training, a regional unit of county government formed under a Joint Powers agreement in 1974. The Office of Job Training has a presence at each Workforce Center in the Northeast region.

25. *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 this title.*

The Northeast MN Office of Job Training adheres to requirements pertaining to the procurement for State and local governmental grantees and sub grantees of goods and services both competitive and non-competitive listed in 29 CFR 97.36. The Workforce Development Board shall make recommendations to the Northeast MN LEO Board on the most effective designation of administrative entities, grant recipients and program operators for the region with the exception of the State of MN Job Service, as the administrative entity and grant for Wagner-Peyser, Veterans Title 38 programs and Unemployment Insurance.

Should the Workforce Development Board wish to identify a new service provider, a competitive Request for Proposals process would be instituted. The RFP process includes solicitation for bids that request comprehensive information addressing the following elements: knowledge of identified need, experience of administration and staff, services to be provided, performance outcomes, commitment to partnership and collaboration, budget and costs, and operational capability. Each one of these criteria is assigned a point value and ranked for a total score. The solicitation contains a description of program requirements and basic design elements to which bidders respond. Eligibility for bidding includes organizations which have adequate administrative controls and personnel to achieve the goals and objectives of the program. This includes but is not limited to governmental units, public or private non-profit corporations, educational institutions, a tax supported organization or a private or for-profit entity

The Board will soon be working on the parameters for selecting a One Stop Operator by June 20, 2017, as required under WIOA, including defining the role of the One Stop Operator in the region. Part of this process will be to perform a cost analysis of the current site supervisor/Partner Group system that now acts in this capacity by coordinating programs, services and Workforce Centers in the region. The annual cost/price of such services will determine the method of procurement that will be used per 2 C. F. R. Parts 200.319 and 200.320, defining allowable procurement methods corresponding to the dollar amount of services to be procured. According to this statute, if the total cost is determined to be less than \$150,000, price or rate quotations can be obtained from an adequate number of qualified sources rather than deploying a RFP process.

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 and the One-stop delivery system.*

The Board expects that local service providers will, at a minimum, meet the performance standards negotiated with the Governor and chief elected officials, as they apply to each

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program/Title. Historically the region has met or exceeded all performance standards under WIA Title I and it is anticipated this will continue under WIOA.

The Board is aware there are two new additional performance standards under WIOA, employer engagement and measurable skill gains that have yet to be clearly defined, including the mechanisms for measuring these criteria. When clarification is received under the final regulations due later this spring, the Board will work with providers to ensure that these new measures are fully understood and a plan is in place to monitor achievement of these standards.

In addition, performance achievement on core measures is expected to be achieved by system partners that have previously have not had to report performance on these measures, specifically Rehabilitation Services, Adult Basic Education, and Job Service. The measures new to Adult Education include employment rate in the second and fourth quarters after exit, median earnings in the second quarter after exit, and credential attainment. The State Department of Education will be performing data matches at the state level to determine ABE's outcome levels for the first three criteria noted above. For credential attainment, the local ABE program will be gathering that information from students while attending the program and upon exit. In addition, follow-up with programs students may be co-enrolled in will occur to ensure as much data in relation to this goal is collected.

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.*

Though specific criteria for what constitutes a high performing board has not yet been clearly articulated by the state board, the Northeast Board will strive to achieve the expectations for local boards identified in each of the 6 areas of strategy described in the Combined State Plan. These areas are:

Area 1 – Business Led Sector Partnerships: The local Workforce Development Boards in Region 2 will select 1-3 sectors to pursue sector partnerships. Drawing from State labor market information, these sector partnerships will focus on identifying occupations in demand that provide career pathways to family sustaining wages. The Northeast Workforce Development Board will work to align core program activities and coordinate sector partnerships. Under the guidance of the Board, career pathway information will be included in job search and career planning activities, and contextualized within Adult Basic Education, enabling greater "informed choice" by the general public and program participants who are seeking sustainable careers and family wages.

Area 2 – Workforce Stakeholder Engagement: The local Workforce Development Boards in Region 2 will identify socio-economically disadvantaged populations through the use of data and public engagement. The goal of is this process is to identify what causes barriers to successful access to employment and training services and the outcomes that these services seek to achieve. The Northeast Workforce Development Board will facilitate workforce stakeholder engagement focused on identifying and recommending strategies that address barriers to success, including various population-centric perspectives of how the system itself impedes access to services, service design needs and a customer centric

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look at how the system is organized.

Area 3 – Employment and Training Program Design: The local Workforce Development Boards in Region 2 will work with local system partners to identify the design needs across the available system partners that delivery employment, education and training activities. A primary focus will be utilizing existing career pathway experiences to assist with understanding how local areas can build off of their past success and expand the capacity of their work over time. Facilitated by the Northeast Workforce Development Board, the employment, education and training efforts will assist core program activity alignment with the Career Pathway approach.

Area 4 – Funding Needs and Resources: The local Workforce Development Boards in Region 2 will work with local system partners to map the local and regional resources that support understanding the gaps and assets to how the system is funded and coordinated at its broadest level. This effort aligns with recent Minnesota legislation that supported the provision of a Rural Career Counseling Coordinator. Facilitated by the Northeast Workforce Development Board, an assessment specific to the core programs will be conducted with an underlying emphasis of how the core programs interact within the one-stop centers and community related partnerships.

Area 5 – Policy and Program Alignment: The local Workforce Development Boards in Region 2 will work to adopt local policies that support and encourage program alignment across system partners. Existing MOUs will eventually evolve into a central component of creating a Career Pathway system.

Area 6 – System Management: The local Workforce Development Boards in Region 2 will work with local system partners to integrate a system management approach that demonstrates the shared benefit and connections that programs have in working together.

28. *Describe how training services under chapter 3 of subtitle B will be provided in accordance with section 134(c)(3)(G), 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.*

Individual Training Accounts (ITAs) are used for everyone receiving training funds under WIOA, representing a payment agreement established on behalf of a participant with a training provider. Contracts for training services are rarely, if ever, used in the local area. ITAs are linked to in-demand industry sectors and occupations in the local area or in other regions to which the adult or dislocated worker is willing to relocate. Understanding all the options available for preparing for a specific occupation is an integral part of the case management process. Adult and Dislocated Worker participants work with their Career Counselor to select an appropriate training program that corresponds to their goals as they align with the opportunities within the local economy. Part of this process is to identify all the available training programs for the specified occupation, including a discussion of quality and performance information on the available training providers, allowing for making informed choices in the selection of training programs

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29. *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.*

The PY17 Local Unified Plan will be made available throughout the region for public viewing and comments utilizing the internet and electronic communication. The plan will be posted on the Northeast Minnesota Office of Job Training's website (www.nemojt.org) and copy of the plan with how to access the document electronically will also be available at each regional Workforce Center location. The Board will send the plan to their business and partner networks as well as organized labor communities. Stakeholders have been involved with the development and subsequent implementation of this plan via representation on the Board and by invitation to participate in upcoming development phases of sector-led career pathways systems.

30. *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 this Act and programs carried out by one-stop partners.*

Programs operated by the current workforce system use WorkforceOne for case management, utilizing all the tools that system provides, including case noting, tracking activities, documenting milestone achievements like credential attainment, and automatic follow up reminders.

There is still a great degree of paper documents used in the intake process, however, and some partners are currently exploring electronic means of accomplishing the comprehensive enrollment process. This includes developing electronic, fillable-forms such as the application, employment plans, self-assessments, and individual service strategies that can be downloaded from a website and either submitted back through the website to the appropriate personnel or emailed.

Also included in the effort to create a more technology-enabled system is expanding the ability to communicate with participants via text message, a method that works particularly well for younger clients. Towards this end, Workforce Centers have recently instituted a communication form that is completed by drop-ins should their counselor not be available. This form specifically asks for the method of communication the client prefers counselors use to follow up with them – text, email or phone. The form includes instructions for counselors on how to send a text from an email to facilitate this form of communication, as many people are using smart phones as their primary way of communicating and often prefer the ease and expediency of texting.

Other efforts at better integrating technology into the current system will be for local program providers to ensure their websites are accessible by individuals with disabilities or English language learners and are optimized for mobile platforms. These are two relatively simple strategies that can have a large impact on the number of individuals who access the system.

One of the limitations to moving toward a technology-enabled system in this largely rural region is the availability of broadband services to remote areas of the region. There are

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initiatives under way to expand that access, but change sometimes comes slowly. We need to remain cognizant that large portions of the populations that participate in one-stop programs either don't have access to the technology we are trying to integrate or have a low degree of comfort or skill with using technology tools.

SECTION C: PROGRAM OPERATIONS

1. A. *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 Northeast Minnesota Office of Job Training ensures that all staff comply with the procedures for Rapid Response as noted on the DEED website. Rapid Response policy has been integrated into the local Dislocated Worker Program handbook. Staff continue to stay abreast of changes with policies and procedures for Rapid Response through feedback from agency administration who is well connected to policy updates through the Minnesota Workforce Council Association, as well as by receiving targeted e-mails, newsletters, reviewing the DEED website (hyperlinked in the local Dislocated Worker program handbook) , and attending state-sponsored workshops and the Job Seeker Conference.

- B. *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)?*

Timely communication is the key to success between the Office of Job Training and the State Rapid Response team. Within 24 hours of learning about a dislocation event, whether actual or potential, the Office of Job Training contacts the State Rapids Response Team. This contact can be in the form of a telephone call, e-mail, regular mail, or by personal contact. The Rapid Response team is a critical partner in any local layoff. All information about a specific event is shared by both partners, so that the service delivery can begin as soon as possible.

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

When a closure of an area business is recognized either through state notification or by staff, the Rapid Response Team is an integral partner of the workforce investment activities and services provided to local dislocated workers. The WSA via the Northeast Minnesota Office of Job Training has always worked very closely with the state's Rapid Response Team on all dislocated worker projects. The Rapid Response Team is considered one of the primary modes of gathering pertinent information about the needs and wishes of the affected workforce. The survey administered by the Rapid Response Team is essential to the development of the dislocated worker proposal and to the provision of services to the affected workers.

Rapid Response team members often conduct joint orientation meetings with WSA staff where each partner in the dislocated worker project process presents program

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information, including local dislocated worker services. In many cases, NEMOJT staff members are able to begin the enrollment process at these initial meetings, completing paperwork and making individual appointments with workers. In addition to describing services and initiating enrollment, worker needs are begun to be evaluated.

The State's Rapid Response Team has been crucial to the overall development of Northeast Minnesota's workforce by being a responsive and flexible partner of the Workforce Center system. The continued coordination with the Workforce Development Board, the Northeast Minnesota Office of Job Training, and the state's Rapid Response team is seen as integral to the future success of the Workforce Center system and the provision of services to the dislocated workers.

D. Complete **Attachment B – Local Workforce Development Area Contacts.**

2. A. *How does the local workforce development area inform the state Trade Act staff of companies that are potentially TAA certifiable?*

The Office of Job Training immediately contacts and informs the State Trade Act staff of the potential TAA certifiable company if there is any indication a population may be eligible based on how a layoff event is reported or insider information staff may collect through local networks. This contact can be in the form of a telephone call, e-mail, regular mail, or by personal contact. The State Trade Act staff can be a critical partner in any local layoff if the company can be certified by the Trade Act particularly because it can relieve local and state resources by proving funding for training and support services. All information about a specific event is shared by all partners, so that the service delivery can begin as soon as possible, even before TAA certification is complete.

- B. *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?*

When a mass layoff occurs involving a company that is Trade Act certified, coordination begins immediately. Any and all dislocated worker activities that are scheduled are done in partnership with the local WSA and state TAA staff. TAA representatives are a crucial component of the local service team providing dislocated workers with critical information regarding approved activities, services, application process, reporting forms and training funds available to eligible workers under the TAA act.

All TAA-eligible individuals are co-enrolled with the dislocated worker program and all training plans must be approved through the local dislocated worker program counselors before being sent to St. Paul for final approval by TAA unit staff. Each eligible dislocated worker receives an individualized assessment and employment plan developed by local WSA staff. Local staff then act as a liaison between the TAA office and the client, gathering and submitting required documents, adjusting training plans, or communicating policy guidance. Dislocated worker counselors work closely

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with TAA staff to ensure that participants are granted the full complement of services available to ensure a successful reentry into the labor force.

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

Yes

3. A. *The local workforce development area has developed and implemented local Supportive Service policies that are consistently applied for all participants.*

Yes

- B. *Describe the steps taken to ensure consistent compliance with the policy.*

Staff of the Northeast Minnesota Office of Job Training adhere to a comprehensive Support Service manual that encompasses service guidelines for all programs, including WIOA programs, the Minnesota Dislocated Worker and Youth programs, and the Minnesota Family Investment Programs. All support service provisions are described in detail and include the maximum amounts that can be funded for each service by program. Requests for payment or reimbursement for supportive services are made using a 'Request for Reimbursement' form, which is completed by the Career Counselor, verifying that the amounts requested are within guidelines. These forms are submitted to the Operations Director or Executive Director for authorization, and are once more checked for policy compliance by the fiscal staff that processes payment. If deviation from policy is discovered at any stage in this process, the request form is turned back to the Career Counselor to correct any discrepancies.

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SECTION D: SYSTEM OPERATIONS AND ATTACHMENTS

1. *The local workforce development area has processes in place to assure non-duplicative services, and avoid duplicate administrative costs.*

Yes

2. *The local workforce development area is aware of and staff participate in the Reception and Resource Area Certification Program (RRACP) to better serve all customers?*

Yes

3. A. *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

B. Complete **Attachment B – Local Workforce Development Area Contacts.**

- C. *The local workforce development area is aware and conducts annually a physical and program accessibility review?*

Yes

4. *Does the local workforce development area have in place an agreed upon WIOA Discrimination complaint process per the regulations?*

Yes

5. A. *Does the local workforce development area have in place an agreed upon WIOA Program Complaint Policy per the regulations?*

Yes

B. Complete **Attachment B – Local Workforce Development Area Contacts.**

6. *How do you identify current or former Military Service Members coming into your WorkForce Center?*

Career Counselors work closely with Veteran's Employment Representatives on a regular basis to identify veterans and facilitate the exchange of program information. It is common practice to automatically refer veterans identified during another program's intake process to local Veterans Employment Representative staff for vet-specific services. The process also works in reverse: when a Veterans Employment Representative works with a client seeking training or another service available through WIOA programs, she refers that client to an appropriate Office of Job Training Career Counselor .

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All WFC Staff have or will receive annual training on the Veteran's Priority of Service rule in order to best and most efficiently serve all veterans. There are a number of ways to identify Veterans in the Workforce Center:

- As individuals enter the center, the receptionist greets customers at the front desk. Through a series of questions, we learn how to best serve the individual. Often during this exchange, veterans will self-identify their military background.
- Resource Room staff ask about Veteran status and encourage vets to complete a questionnaire to determine barriers and need (see attachment H). Persons applying for WIOA programs are asked about military service during intake/application. County Veteran's Service office refers individuals to the WFC for services as well.
- Individuals signing into the Resource Room Customer Registration System indicating Military Service are flagged as Veterans and contacted via e-mail, phone or letter.

Workforce Center staff and management support and actively work toward providing preference to all Veterans coming into the local Workforce Center. Staff will continue to watch for opportunities to increase services to veterans and promote the hiring priority with area businesses. WFC staff from all partners will receive on-going training and updates at local WFC meetings to ensure that this executive order is clear and the action plan to address this is followed through.

7. *How do you inform current or former Military Service Members coming into your WorkForce Center about "Veteran Priority of Service?"*

As referenced in the response to the above question, individuals are asked about their status as a vet by resource room personnel. Self-identifying vets are referred to programs that suit their needs, including WIOA programs (see attachment I for a flow chart on how veterans move through the system). Provider websites clearly advertise the priority of service for veterans. No veteran is ever turned away for service, including enrollment into programs.

To ensure that all staff are deeply familiar with priority of service provisions for veterans, all staff will participate in upcoming priority of service training throughout the region. Staff, particularly those who staff resource areas and reception desks, will also participate in online training through NVTI (National Veterans Training Institute) geared toward educating one stop staff about veteran priority of service. This training can be found at <http://www.nvtihelpvets.ucdenver.edu/splash.php>.

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

No Workforce Center in the region has a unified presence on the internet outside of the DEED Workforce Center site, but program providers all have their own websites. For providers who operate WIOA programs, each website clearly includes language regarding priority of service for Veterans, including a link to Public Law 107-288.

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9. *How do you identify current or former Military Service Members with “significant barriers to employment?”*

Staff who work the resource room and/or reception desk at each Workforce Center in the region use a questionnaire to identify current or former military service members with significant barriers to employment, though this information is self-identified by the veteran (see attachment H). These questionnaires are given to each person who uses the Workforce Center who affirms they are a military service member when asked by resource room and reception staff. Veterans representatives are given all completed surveys and follow up with individuals who express a need for services.

10. *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 WorkForce Centers?*

All veterans, including those with significant barriers to employment, are referred to appropriate service providers by front desk or resource room personnel to assist them with expressed needs that can be met by program services. They are never denied enrollment for any reason. See attachment I for the flow of referrals for veterans. The Northeast service area, including the local providers network, provides a systematic offering of services to veterans. The workforce and employability needs of all veterans, including those with significant barriers to employment will be met through variety of flexible strategies that lead to employment.

The Individual Service Strategy form (ISS) is the foundation for the entire case management strategy and is developed in partnership with the participant, reflecting their needs related to achieving their objective. This assessment expresses the interests and desires of the participating veteran and includes an examination of capabilities, vocational potential, barriers to employment, and supportive service needs and is used to develop a realistic employment goal and a service strategy. The objective assessment is an ongoing process and is not viewed as a one-time event. A comprehensive ISS is developed with the veteran, including both short- and long-term goals and how the skills they acquired in the military relate to civilian occupations. ISS goals and strategies are updated as short-term goals are achieved or the veteran’s needs change.

WSA 3 also conducts, partners and supports Job/Career Fairs throughout our region and encourages veterans, including those with significant barriers to employment, to attend in order to practice networking skills and potentially meet their next employer. Private businesses in high demand industries are specifically recruited to attend these events, as well as educational institutions catering to high demand careers with a shared interest in training veterans.

11. *How are DVOP and/or Local Veterans Employment Representatives (LVER) staff integrated into the overall service delivery strategy in your WorkForce Centers?*

DVOP and LVER staff are centrally located in the Northeast region, primarily housed at the Hibbing Workforce Center. They hold regular and predictable office hours at all Workforce Centers where they routinely connect with local program staff to ensure referrals are made, to follow up on common clients, answer any veteran-related

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questions from clients or staff, and collect and follow up on completed

The schedule of the region's DVOP currently is: the Virginia WFC every Friday, the Grand Rapids WFC every Wednesday, and the Hibbing WFC on Mondays, Tuesdays, and Thursdays. Appointments are schedule around the region as needed.

The region's LVER travels throughout the region visiting with businesses and clients responding to customer needs with no set dates to be in each WFC.

12. *Are all WIOA-funded partners complying with the guidance provided in the TEGL regarding Selective Service?*

Yes _____

13. *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 who come into northeast WorkForce Centers are asked if they are registered for CRS and MinnesotaWorks and if they have posted their resume in MinnesotaWorks so employers can view the resume. If a customer does not have a resume, staff informs the customer about the resume workshops held in each WFC and encourages everyone to post to Minnesotaworks.net once a resume is developed. Also, a customer is given the opportunity to complete a worksheet questionnaire detailing their employment history to aid in the development of a resume. A component of all service delivery, whether through established programs or career services, include resumes posted on MinnesotaWorks that are closely linked to the local labor market needs and the labor needs of the area employers. Special care has recently been taken requiring that each program counselor ensures enrolled clients have a professional resume posted to the site.

14. *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 of DOL Training and Employment Guidance Letter 35-10 and Minnesota OGM 08-01 and its relevant federal laws and regulations.*

Yes _____

15. *The local workforce development area's conflict of interest policies are in compliance with the above two references?*

Yes _____

16. A. *The local workforce development area is aware of the referenced statute on Government Records.*

Yes _____

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B. *The local workforce development area is aware of the requirement to retain documentation for six years.*

Yes

C. Complete **Attachment B – Local Workforce Development Area Contacts.**

17. *Handling and Protection of Personally Identifiable Information: The local workforce development area is complying with the guidance provided in TEGL 39-11.*

Yes

18. *Human Trafficking: The local workforce development area is aware of TEGL 09-12 and will follow the procedures for working with trafficked persons.*

Yes

19. *Gender Identification: The local workforce development area is aware of TEGL 37-14 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

20. *Uniform Guidance: The local workforce development area is aware of TEGL 15-14 regarding Uniform Guidance.*

Yes

21. A. *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, 2016.*

An extensive process is used to recruit new Workforce Development Board members who have major decision-making, ownership, or management authority, and represent the geographical industrial and cultural diversity of Northeast Minnesota. Consideration is given to women, minorities, the disabled and veteran nominees. Letters of recruitment describing the Workforce Development Board as an active, interesting group that meets six to nine times per year to design and oversee employment and training services as well as activities of the local WorkForce Centers in Aitkin, Carlton, Cook, Itasca, Koochiching, Lake and St. Louis counties are sent to appropriate, representative organizations. Such organizations include both public and private entities including economic development and organizations that provide community services like housing and various support assistance. Businesses in high-growth occupations such as healthcare and finance are also targeted for recruitment.

All nominations are reviewed by the entire Local Elected Official Board. Discussion takes place regarding a candidate’s merit and how they could contribute to the composition of the board. The Board then appoints members based on information supplied by nominees such as qualifications, interests, and how the applicant feels he/she can best

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contribute to the goals of the Workforce Development Board. Applicants also provide information regarding their current duties and positions. Preference is given to nominees who have identified optimum policy-making authority and have the necessary expertise to contribute to developing and overseeing innovative and cost-effective employment and training activities.

Consideration is also given to nominees who could best donate time and energy to Workforce Development Board activities and who share a goal of developing a skilled workforce in northeastern Minnesota.

With the advent of WIOA, Board by-laws will be reviewed and updated to reflect term parameters, and replacing or reappointing individuals. Part of this process will be an assessment of the current composition of the board to ensure compliance with board structure under WIOA.

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

Yes _____ No x

If No, what steps will be taken to bring your local area board into compliance by June 30, 2016?

Recruit additional private sector individuals related to career pathway work about to be undertaken as well as from other key industries. Several new members are in the process of applying for a position on the WIB but have yet to be confirmed prior to the submission of this plan.

C. Complete **Attachment C – Local Area Board Membership List**.

D. Complete **Attachment D – Local Area Board Committee List**.

22. Complete remaining portions of **Attachment B – Local Workforce Development Area Contacts**.
23. If applicable, complete **Attachment E - Local Workforce Development Area Sub-Grantee List**.
24. If applicable, complete **Attachment F - Local Workforce Development Area Non-WFC Program Service Delivery Location List**.

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ASSURANCES AND CERTIFICATIONS

ASSURANCES

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;

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- **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

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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 Governmentwide Debarment and Suspension – may not engage in severe forms of trafficking, procure a commercial sex act or use forced labor in the performance;

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- **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 board's 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;

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- 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 it's sub-grantees must also adhere to the same certifications and assurances that DEED must assure.

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SIGNATURE PAGELocal Workforce Development
Area NameNortheast

Local Area Board Name

Northeast Workforce Development Board

Name and Contact Information for the Local Area Board Chair:

Name	<u>Bud Stone</u>
Title	<u>President</u>
Organization	<u>Grand Rapids Area Chamber of Commerce</u>
Address 1	<u>28650 Hidden Point Trail</u>
Address 2	<u></u>
City, State, ZIP Code	<u>Grand Rapids, MN 55744</u>
Phone	<u>(218) 326-6619</u>
E-mail	<u>bud@grandmn.com</u>

Name and Contact Information for the Chief Local Elected Official(s):

Name	<u>Rusty Eichorn</u>
Title	<u>County Commissioner</u>
Organization	<u>Itasca County</u>
Address 1	<u>123 NE 4th St</u>
Address 2	<u></u>
City, State, ZIP Code	<u>Grand Rapids MN 55744</u>
Phone	<u>218/326-1201</u>
E-mail	<u>rusty@rustyeichorn.com</u>

We, the undersigned, attest that this submittal is the Program Year 2016-2017 Local Plan for our Workforce Development Board and Local Workforce Development Area and hereby certify that this Local Plan has been prepared as required, and is in accordance with all applicable state and federal laws, rules and regulations.

Local Area Board Chair**Chief Local Elected Official**Name Bud StoneName Rusty Eichorn, ChairTitle Local Area Board ChairTitle Itasca County CommissionerSignature Signature Date May 12, 2016Date May 12, 2016**Department of Employment and Economic Development**1st National Bank Building | 332 Minnesota Street | Suite E200 | Saint Paul, MN 55101-1351

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REGIONAL OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE

Regional Workforce Development Area

2

Local Workforce Development Area

Northeast and Duluth

MEMBER	ORGANIZATION
Allen Rasmussen	Higher Education
Roland Root	Rehabilitation Services Regional Administrator
Bud Stone, NE WIB Chair	President, Grand Rapids Area Chamber of Commerce
Betsy Harmon	Job Service Manager
Stan Paczynski	Organized Labor Rep/Bricklayers & Allied Craftworkers
Mary Ferguson, Duluth Board Chair	Essentia Health
Ian Vincent, Duluth Board	Arrowhead Partnership for Economic Expansion (APEX)
Patty Fleege, Duluth Board	Adult Basic Education
Brad Vieths, Duluth Board	Duluth Public Schools & Superior Carl Perkins Consortium

LOCAL WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT AREA CONTACTS

ROLE	Contact Name	Phone	Email	Reports to (name only)
Rapid Response Liaison for Mass Layoffs (see section C.2.D.)	Randy Back	218/735-6102	Randy.back@nemojt.org	Michelle Ufford
Equal Opportunity Officer (see section D.3.B.)	Renee' Marconett	218/735-6170	Renee.marconett@nemojt.org	Michelle Ufford
Program Complaint Officer (see section D.5.B.)	Renee' Marconett	218/735-6170	Renee.marcoentt@nemojt.org	Michelle Ufford
Records Management/Records Retention Coordinator (see section D.16.C.)	Renee' Marconett	218/735-6170	Renee.marconett@nemojt.org	Michelle Ufford
ADA Coordinator (see section D.22.)	Renee' Marconett	218/735-6170	Renee.marconett@nemojt.org	Michelle Ufford
Data Practices Coordinator (see section D.22.)	Randy Back	218/735-6102	Randy.back@nemojt.org	Michelle Ufford
English as Second Language (ESL) Coordinator (see section D.22.)	Randy Back	218/735-6102	Randy.back@nemojt.org	Michelle Ufford

Official Name of WorkForce Center Virginia, Hibbing, Grand Rapids, International Falls, Cloquet

ROLE	Contact Name	Phone	Email	Reports to (name only)
Site Representative	Randy Back/Virginia Cindy Slater/Cloquet John Peterson/Grand Rapids Sheila Demenge/Int'l Falls Roland Root/Hibbing Betsy Harmon/Duluth	218/735-6102 218/878-5004 218/322-6083 218/283-9427 218/231-8590 218/302-8404	Randy.Back@nemojt.org Cindy.Slater@areoa.org John.Peterson@nemojt.org Sheila.Demenge@state.mn.us Roland.Root@state.mn.us Betsy.Harmon@state.mn.us	Michelle Ufford John Pettinari Michelle Ufford Betsy Harmon Jan Thompson Dave Niermann
Job Service Manager	Betsy Harmon	218/302-8404	Betsy.Harmon@state.mn.us	Dave Niermann
Vocational Rehabilitation Services Manager	Jeri Werner (Virginia, IFalls) Lori Thorpe (Grand Rapids, Cloquet)	218/302-8430 763/279-4460	Jeri.lynn.werner@state.mn.us Lori.thorpe@state.mn.us	Roland Root
State Services for the Blind Manager	Mike Newman (Hibbing)	651/539-2348	Michael.Newman@state.mn.us	John Benson

Local Workforce Development Area Director	Michelle Ufford	218/735-6173	Michelle.ufford@nemojt.org	LEO Board
Adult Basic Education (ABE)	Beth Peterson	218/735-6834	Beth.peterson@aeoa.org	Paul Carlson
Carl Perkins Post-Secondary Manager	Dave Dailey	218/749-7773	D.dailey@mesabirange.edu	Bill Maki
Adult	Randy Back	218/735-6102	Randy.Back@nemojt.org	Michelle Ufford
Dislocated Worker	Randy Back	218/735-6102	Randy.Back@nemojt.org	Michelle Ufford
Youth	Randy Back	218/735-6102	Randy.Back@nemojt.org	Michelle Ufford

LOCAL AREA BOARD MEMBERSHIP LIST

Regional Workforce Development Area

2

Local Workforce Development Area

3 - Northeast

MEMBER	POSITION/ORGANIZATION	TERM ENDS
REPRESENTATIVES OF BUSINESS IN LOCAL WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT AREA (must be majority)		
Bud Stone 28650 Hidden Point Trail, Grand Rapids MN 55744 218/326-6619 bud@grandmn.com	President/Grand Rapids Chamber of Commerce	12/1/17
Terri Nystrom 730 S Broadway, Gilbert MN 55741 218/748-2052 tnystrom@decare.com	Director-Customer Service/DeCare Dental	6/30/17
Dave Debevec 7831 County Rd 921, Virginia MN 55792 218/966-1020 ddebevec@ulland.com	Human Resources & Safety Director/Ulland Brothers Inc	2/1/18
Kelly Zink 225 Sunnyside Dr, Cloquet MN 55720 218/879-1551 kzink@cloquet.com	President/Cloquet Area Chamber of Commerce	6/30/17
Craig Pagel 324 W Superior St, Suite 502, Duluth MN 55802 218/722-7724 cpagel@taconite.org	President/Iron Mining Association of MN	12/1/17
Allan Rudeck 2115 NW 9 th Ave, Grand Rapids MN 55744 218/999-5702 arudeck@mnpower.com	Vice-President Generation/MN Power	6/12/17
Jeff Lee P O Box 409, Grand Rapids MN 55744 218/326-9414 Jeff.lee@grsb.com	Senior Vice-President/Grand Rapids State Bank	10/1/16
Mike Valentine 1465 Hwy 12, Two Harbors MN 55616 218/834-3384 nsbec@lakenet.com	Consultant/NorthShore Business Enterprise Center	6/30/17

<p>Tom Jamar 3800 5th Ave W, Hibbing MN 55746 218/262-3421 tdjamar@jaspereng.com</p> <p>David Ulrich 380 St Peter St #705, St Paul MN 55201 612/325-2126 dulrich@twin-metals.com</p>	<p>President/Jasper Engineering</p> <p>Vice-President/Twin Metals MN</p>	<p>4/18/16</p> <p>9/1/17</p>
<p>LABOR & COMMUNITY-BASED ORGANIZATIONS (20% Minimum and 2 or more nominated by state labor federations and one joint labor-management apprenticeship program labor organization or training director)</p> <p>Paul Carlson 521 N 11th St, Virginia MN 55792 218/749-7319 pcarlson@aeoa.org</p> <p>Jason Quiggin 107 S 15th Ave W, Virginia MN 55792 218/741-2482 Lu589bm@uanet.org</p> <p>Stan Paczynski 3529 Stebner Rd, Duluth MN 55812 218/724-8374 spaczynski@bac1mn-nd.org</p> <p>Darik Carlson 2002 London Rd, Room 111, Duluth MN 55812 218/728-6895 dcarlson@unions-america.com</p>	<p>Executive Director/Arrowhead Economic Opportunity Agency</p> <p>Business Manager/Plumbers & Pipefitters Local 589</p> <p>Business Rep/Bricklayers & Allied Craftworkers Union 1 MN/ND</p> <p>Membership Development/UBEW Local 242</p>	<p>8/13/17</p> <p>9/24/17</p> <p>9/24/17</p> <p>9/24/17</p>
<p>EDUCATION & TRAINING (Required: ABE; Higher Education)</p> <p>Paul Carlson 521 N 11th St, Virginia MN 55792 218/748-7319 pcarlson@aeoa.org</p> <p>Bill Maki 1001 Chestnut St W, Virginia MN 55792 218/471-0016 wmaki@nhed.edu</p> <p>Allen Rasmussen 116 Park Avenue, International Falls MN 56649 218/283-8111 allen.rasmussen@rainyriver.edu</p>	<p>Executive Director/Arrowhead Economic Opportunity Agency</p> <p>President/NE Higher Education District</p> <p>Education Consultant/Self-Employed</p>	<p>8/13/17</p> <p>6/30/18</p> <p>6/30/17</p>
<p>GOVERNMENT (Required: Economic Development; Job Service; Rehabilitation)</p> <p>Dave Hart P O Box 441, Eveleth MN 55734 218/735-3015 Dave.hart@state.mn.us</p>	<p>Asst Director Business Development/Iron Range Resources</p>	<p>6/30/17</p>

Betsy Harmon 656 Jill St, Duluth MN 55803 218/302-8404 betsy.harmon@state.mn.us	Job Service Manager/DEED	6/30/17
Roland Root 12812 Floodwood Rd, Hibbing MN 55746 218/723-4720 roland.root@state.mn.us	Manager/Rehabilitation Services	6/30/17
Lynn Krall 1810 12 th Ave E, Hibbing MN 55746 218/262-6010 krall@stlouiscountymn.gov	Financial Worker Senior/St Louis County Social Services	7/1/17

CONTACT INFORMATION

NAME	ADDRESS/PHONE/EMAIL
CHAIR Bud Stone	28650 Hidden Point Trail, Grand Rapids MN 55744 218/326-6619 bud@grandmn.com
VICE CHAIR (Currently Open)	
SECRETARY Allen Rasmussen	116 Park Ave, International Falls MN 56649 218/283-8111 allen.rasmussen@rainyriver.edu

LOCAL AREA BOARD SUBCOMMITTEE LIST

Regional Workforce Development Area	2
Local Workforce Development Area	3 - Northeast

Committee Name	Objective/Purpose
Leadership Committee	Joint committee with the Duluth Board to oversee the regional planning process and development of sector initiatives.
Youth Committee TBD	
Career Pathways Committee TBD	

LOCAL WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT AREA SUB-GRANTEE LIST

Regional Workforce Development Area	2
Local Workforce Development Area	3 - Northeast

Name of Sub-Grantee	Services Provided	Funding Source	Sub-Grantee located in which WFC?	If not in WFC, provide Address, City, State, ZIP Code
N/A				

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

Regional Workforce Development Area	2
Local Workforce Development Area	3 - Northeast

Name and Location (City)	Program Service Delivered
Aitkin Workforce Center Office, Aitkin MN 56431	WIOA/WIA Adult, In-school/Out-of-school Youth, Federal and State Dislocated Workers, MFIP, DWP, MYP

LOCAL WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT AREA KEY INDUSTRIES IN REGIONAL ECONOMY

Table 13. Northeast Minnesota Industry Employment Statistics, 2014

NAICS Industry Title	2014 Annual Data				Avg. Annual Wage	2010-2014		2013-2014	
	Number of Firms	Number of Jobs	Percent of Jobs	Total Payroll		Change in Jobs	Percent Change	Change in Jobs	Percent Change
Total, All Industries	8,638	141,554	100.0%	\$5,734,434,954	\$40,508	+4,116	+3.0%	+1,208	+0.9%
Health Care & Social Assistance	874	32,805	23.2%	\$1,433,908,775	\$43,680	+156	+0.5%	+28	+0.1%
Retail Trade	1,378	17,632	12.5%	\$411,927,446	\$23,348	+355	+2.1%	+65	+0.4%
Accommodation & Food Services	924	14,411	10.2%	\$201,034,976	\$13,884	+22	+1.6%	+26	+0.2%
Educational Services	264	11,803	8.3%	\$493,375,488	\$41,964	+134	+1.1%	+145	+1.2%
Public Administration	331	10,644	7.5%	\$504,202,121	\$47,372	+38	+0.4%	+29	+0.3%
Manufacturing	342	8,511	6.0%	\$479,299,599	\$56,316	+212	+2.6%	-387	-4.3%
Construction	952	6,674	4.7%	\$365,555,362	\$54,392	+1,058	+18.8%	+614	+10.1%
Finance & Insurance	437	4,861	3.4%	\$216,519,102	\$44,512	+162	+3.4%	+37	+0.8%
Other Services	783	4,770	3.3%	\$118,412,414	\$24,804	+423	+9.7%	+131	+2.8%
Mining	30	4,590	3.2%	\$413,321,170	\$90,012	+765	+20.0%	+92	+2.0%
Professional & Technical Svcs.	551	4,177	3.0%	\$252,342,643	\$60,320	+425	+11.3%	+155	+3.9%
Admin. Support & Waste Mgmt.	304	4,105	2.9%	\$103,463,096	\$25,168	+126	+3.2%	+160	+4.1%
Arts, Entertainment & Recreation	240	3,672	2.6%	\$79,082,159	\$21,528	-81	-2.2%	-4	-0.1%
Transportation & Warehousing	322	3,668	2.6%	\$163,921,908	\$44,668	+321	+9.6%	+94	+2.6%
Wholesale Trade	275	3,119	2.2%	\$156,746,139	\$50,232	+116	+3.9%	+38	+1.2%
Utilities	55	1,752	1.2%	\$154,522,424	\$88,192	+97	+5.9%	+40	+2.3%
Information	146	1,647	1.2%	\$71,032,937	\$43,108	N/A	N/A	-97	-5.6%
Real Estate, Rental & Leasing	266	1,240	0.9%	\$33,045,739	\$26,624	+33	+2.7%	-23	-1.8%
Management of Companies	38	863	0.6%	\$59,735,500	\$69,212	-142	-14.1%	+43	+5.2%
Agriculture, Forestry, Fish & Hunt	127	606	0.4%	\$22,985,956	\$37,492	0	0.0%	+20	+3.4%

Source: [DEED Quarterly Census of Employment & Wages \(QCEW\)](#)

Table 14. Northeast Minnesota Distinguishing Industries, 2014

NAICS Industry Title	NAICS Code	Number of Firms	Number of Jobs	Total Payroll	Avg. Annual Wages	Location Quotient
Total, All Industries	0	8,638	141,554	\$5,734,434,954	\$40,508	1.0
Water Transportation	483	7	249	\$23,853,639	\$95,628	14.9
Mining (except Oil & Gas)	212	24	4,492	\$407,905,371	\$90,792	14.0
Support Activities for Mining	213	6	97	\$5,415,799	\$55,796	11.3
Forestry & Logging	113	96	457	\$18,567,201	\$39,676	9.3
Paper Manufacturing	322	9	2,077	\$159,817,171	\$76,908	4.2
Apparel Manufacturing	315	3	140	\$3,348,027	\$23,868	3.9
Fishing, Hunting & Trapping	114	4	21	\$778,230	\$37,856	2.9
Electric Power Generation & Transmission	2211	42	1,695	\$151,178,603	\$89,232	2.7
National Security & International Affairs	928	5	319	\$20,041,842	\$62,868	2.7
Administration of Environmental Quality	924	70	1,131	\$65,175,406	\$57,668	2.7



Minnesota Veteran Questionnaire

TO BEST SERVE YOU, PLEASE FILL OUT THIS QUESTIONNAIRE.

The information you provide is voluntary and will be kept confidential. You don't have to provide the information, but failure to do so could affect your eligibility for additional veteran program benefits.

Name: _____ Phone: _____

Address: _____ City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Email: _____ Military Service Dates: From _____ To _____

PLEASE CIRCLE			
1.	Do you have a service connected disability rated 10% or higher from the Veterans Administration, or have you filed a claim for a service connected disability?	YES	NO
	Were you discharged or released from active duty because of service-connected disability?	YES	NO
2.	Have you left the military within the past three years AND been unemployed for at least 27 weeks at any time in the past year?	YES	NO
3.	Are you homeless? OR lacking a fixed, regular, adequate nighttime residence? OR is your primary nighttime residence a shelter?	YES	NO
	Based on section 103 of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, are you fleeing or attempting to flee, domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, stalking, or other dangerous or life-threatening conditions in your current housing situation, including where the health and safety of children are jeopardized, and you have no other residence and you lack the resources or support networks to obtain other permanent housing.	YES	NO
4.	Are you 18 to 24 years old?	YES	NO
5.	Is your education level less than a high school diploma or GED?	YES	NO
6.	Are you, or your immediate family that you live with, currently receiving public assistance, and/or are you at a lower-income level according to the chart below?	YES	NO
7.	Are you an offender who is currently incarcerated or have you been released from incarceration?	YES	NO
8.	Have you participated in the Transition Assistance Program, and <i>been identified as in need of additional career services?</i>	YES	NO
9.	Are you an active service member who is ill, or wounded and receiving treatment in a military treatment facility or warrior transition unit?	YES	NO

For spouses of military members and veterans:

1.	Are you the spouse of a veteran rated at 100% disabled by the VA? Or the spouse of a military member who was POW, MIA, KIA or who died of their service connected disability?	YES	NO
2.	Are you the spouse or other family caregiver of a wounded, ill or injured active duty member?	YES	NO

INCOME LEVEL		
Family Size:	Metro Area	Non-Metro
1	\$ 9,111	\$ 9,006
2	\$14,931	\$14,752
3	\$20,498	\$20,252
4	\$25,300	\$24,998
5	\$29,860	\$29,505
6	\$34,919	\$34,504

Metro area counties include:
Anoka, Carver, Dakota, Hennepin, Ramsey, Scott, Washington

FOR STAFF USE ONLY		
DATE RECEIVED:	RECEIVED BY:	REFERRED TO:
ADDITIONAL STAFF NOTES:		



Thank You for Serving.

DEED is an equal opportunity employer and service provider. Upon request, this information can be made available in alternate formats for individuals with disabilities.



April 2016

Veterans & Eligible Persons Intake Process

