

April 20, 2018

MN Department of Employment & Economic Development  
332 Minnesota Street, Suite E-200  
St. Paul, MN 5101

**RE: 2018 UPDATE OF THE REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT AREA #5 REGIONAL PLAN**

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) requires that local workforce development boards and chief elected officials within a planning region prepare, submit, and obtain approval of a regional plan. At the end of the first 2-year period local and regional boards shall review, prepare and submit modifications to the plan.

The regional plan focuses on the Regional Leadership Approach and Regional Strategic Planning. Below is a list of the modifications made to the Regional Development Area #5 Regional Plan. A copy of the revised regional plan is available on our websites at: [www.swmnpic.org](http://www.swmnpic.org) or [www.workforcecouncil.org](http://www.workforcecouncil.org).

**Revised State Goals**

**Goal 1:** To reduce educational, skills training and employment disparities based on race, disability, disconnected youth or gender.

**Goal 2:** Build employer-led sector partnerships that expand the talent pipeline to be inclusive of gender, race and disability to meet industry demands for a skilled workforce.

Regional WDA #5 included youth in our original plan as a target population experiencing employment disparities citing the higher unemployment rates experienced by youth. Under Item 11 we have updated the language to be consistent with the revised State language.

Service levels in the Region based on gender are at or above incidence; however, we have not tracked outcomes based on gender in the past. Future reports on service levels and outcomes will include gender as well as race, disability, age (youth and older workers) and offender status.

In addition, in response to the revised State goals Regional WDA #5 has added the following goal to our Regional Plan:

Goal 8: Identify high demand, high wage sectors and occupations that lack gender equity. Develop regional materials and activities that promote “non-traditional” careers to job seekers and gender equity hiring practices to employers.

**Section A: Regional Plan**

**Regional Leadership Approach**

Item 2: Updated the dates and added the following bullet under the list of responsibilities of the Regional Leadership Team:

- Provide oversight and evaluate progress of regional plan and goals, with emphasis on the DEED's

two primary goals of reducing disparities and employer-led sector partnerships.

Item 3: Updated dates.

Item 5: Updated dates and added regional goals:

Regional Goal 1: Address the shortage of skilled workers through sector-based career pathway approaches.

Regional Goal 2: Expand partnership with local school districts to increase career awareness and career counseling opportunities for students and parents.

Regional Goal 3: Complete asset-map and gap analysis of career and workforce development services in the region utilizing results to broadly inform the region on services available and to align/target resources to fill gaps.

Regional Goal 4: Cooperative alignment of administrative processes between South Central and Southwest Minnesota Workforce Boards.

WIOA Work Plan Goals 5 & 6 was also identified as Regional Goals.

Item 6: Updated dates and added the following bullets to update Regional Services Alignment Goal 1:  
*Address the shortage of skilled workers through sector-based career pathway approaches.*

- Expanded the number of career pathway opportunities by: 1) adding a new industry of a construction/trades pathway; 2) expanding occupations to include a Phlebotomy to Medical Lab Technician Health Care Pathway; and 3) increasing stackable credentials/earning college credits such as The Community Interpreter certificate. Regional Pathway to Prosperity grant obtained November 2016 and application submitted February 2018.
- Conduct focus groups with target populations to understand how to better promote the benefits and opportunities of participating in training programs – January 2018 – June 2020. Focus groups have proven to be an excellent source of information and feedback, and have resulted in new marketing strategies.
- Expand and maintain representation on career pathway partnerships – August 2016 – June 2020. In 2017, there was a significant increase of diverse representation and employer participation on Career Pathway Teams.
- Develop and utilize labor market infographics customized to career pathways programs. Initial infographics developed for youth in 2017. Due to the great response, the development of infographics will expand to more occupations and career pathways in 2018.
- Increased number of target population enrollments into career pathways.
- Increased number of work-based learning opportunities.
- Increased employer participation through offering clinicals, internships, work experience, job shadowing, guest speakers, industry tours, etc. Work-based learning opportunities will be expanded to be a part of the bridge & integrated curriculum.
- Development of career academies (pathways) for youth and facilitate alignment with adult career pathways. March 2017- June 2018 (potentially a three-year grant through June 30, 2020). Career academies developed at pilot high schools in the demand industries of Health Care, Information Technology, Manufacturing, and Teaching/Social Services. High school students earn dual credits and credentials.



- Develop common evaluation tools – July 2016 with annual evaluation in 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020. Baseline report was developed in 2016 on service levels to target populations and outcomes for target populations. Plans are to “regionalize” customer satisfaction/feedback methods.
- Pursue funding opportunities to support career pathway strategies as a region – December 2016, February 2018, seek additional grant funding as a region as opportunities arise through June 30, 2020. The region was successful in obtaining a Career Pathway Equity grant in December of 2016 and GTCUW Career Academy grants. Additionally, the region submitted two MN P2P Competitive Grant proposals in February 2018.

Item 6: Updated dates and added the following bullets/language to update Regional Services Alignment Goal 2: *Expand partnership with local school districts to increase career awareness and career counseling opportunities for students and parents.*

- Contact all local ISDs in Region to complete asset map and marketing career counseling/workforce services – May 2016 to March 2019 (77 School Districts in Region 5). School visits began in 2016. By June 2017, nearly half the schools were visited. These visits resulted in increased number of school districts utilizing workforce career advising services for high school students.
- Develop process for tracking & reporting partnerships with school districts – May 2016 – March 2019.
- Develop and implement strategies to disseminate career information & services – September 2016 – June 2020. Increase student and parent knowledge of regional labor demand, highlighting opportunities that do not require a 4-year degree. In 2017, new labor market infographics were created. Additional labor market infographics will be created for youth and career pathways and potentially being utilized across the state. Strategies will be developed to share labor market information with parents as well as students.
- Continue to develop strategies to partner with high school career counselors and provide career resources – July 2016 – June 2020.
- Provide reports to local WDBs, LEOs, MN DEED & legislators – December 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019.

Item 6: Updated dates and added the following language to update Regional Services Alignment Goal 3: *Complete asset-map and gap analysis of career and workforce development services in the region utilizing results to broadly inform the region on services available and to align/target resources to fill gaps.*

- Contact key stakeholders & identify career/workforce development services available to complete asset map and promote best practices and address gaps in services – April 2016 – June 2020. Stakeholder visits were completed in 2016 and 2017.
- Conduct best practice & gap analysis/develop white paper – December 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019. Preliminary reports on opportunities/gaps and best practices completed in 2016 and 2017. Work continues on asset map and gap analysis.
- Communicate gaps, duplication, and best practices to regional stakeholders – January 2017 – June 2020. Presentations were made to stakeholders, including the Chief Elected Official Boards, Workforce Development Boards, Economic Development, and Career Counselors.
- Develop & implement strategies to align resources, bring best practices to scale and address gaps – January 2017 - June 2020. New strategies were incorporated into regional plan, March



2018.

- Develop & implement marketing and regional awareness of services and best practices – June 2020.

Item 7: Updated dates and added the following language to update Regional Services Alignment Goal 4: *Establish cooperative alignment of administrative processes between South Central and Southwest MN Workforce Development Boards to promote consistency within the regional workforce development area and with state policy.*

- South Central & Southwest Workforce Development Boards entered into Memorandum of Understanding (completed December 2016).
- Align identified and appropriate local workforce development policies by September 2017. Five WIOA policies completed and approved. Will continue policy development in April 2018- June 2019.
- Connect with and inform local legislators on workforce issues. Completed March 2016 and March 2017; scheduled for April 2018 and will be done annually.
- Jointly hire the Rural Career Counseling Coordinator (completed February 2016 and January 2018). In addition, DEED hired a Workforce Strategy Consultant (Fall 2018). Orientations completed. On-going direction provided through regional workgroup meetings.
- Jointly respond to grant opportunities – July 2016 – June 2018 (Region 5 received 2 Equity Grants – December 2016). In 2017-2018 have submitted 3 regional grants for funding.
- Explore coordinated regional monitor teams – July 2018.
- Explore joint marketing materials/social media campaign. Explore strategies and align with CareerForce rebranding. Regional branding meeting held in 2017. New CareerForce brand implemented Fall 2018.
- Local WDA EO officers will work together jointly to develop Equal Opportunity policies and plans required under WIOA regulations.

### **Regional Strategic Planning**

Items 8 & 9: Updated labor market information for the region based on the Southwest Minnesota 2017 Regional Profile, updated by MN DEED Labor Market Information Office August 1, 2017 (updated profile attached to Regional/Local Plans).

Item 11: Updated language on our goal to increase service levels and outcomes for targeted populations experiencing employment disparities to be consistent with State language.

Increase service levels and outcomes for individuals experiencing employment disparities, focusing on racial disparities, but also including individuals with disabilities, low-income populations, offenders, older workers, veterans and **disconnected** youth.

Item 12: Made it clear that *construction* should be a key industry for the two local areas and for the region.

RWDA #5 will focus on the five key industries the local workforce development areas have in common: *agriculture, health care/social assistance, manufacturing, construction and transportation/warehousing.*

Item 13: Added the Industry Led Sector Strategy goals developed in consultation with Maher & Maher under Employers. Goal 8 below is in response to the State's goal rewrite.

- Region 5 engaged with the consulting services of Maher & Maher on April 7, 2017 and again on June 6-7, 2017, sponsored by DEED, to increase employer engagement and create 1-3 Business Led Sector Partnerships. The following plan was developed as a result of the meetings.
- The vision of the Business Led Sector Partnerships is to create a focus shift from programmatic administration to Workforce System Solutions. The mission is to develop and implement industry led sector partnerships in manufacturing and health care to address workforce development issues.
- Goal 1: Engage industry leaders in workforce development issues by utilizing industry champions as conveners and facilitators. Garner commitment to lead the effort from industry leaders. Orient and support the new Workforce Strategy Consultant in the facilitating this work.
- Goal 2: Identify workforce development issues and solutions with industry leaders leading and engaging in the conversations.
- Goal 3: The industry led workgroup(s) adopt an action plan in response to identified issues including goals and measures.
- Goal 4: Determine workforce development board's commitment (e.g. resources) to implementing the industry lead action plan and embed the solutions into the broader workforce system.
- Goal 5: Develop communication message, materials and methods of the industry led issues and solutions to be shared with the broader workforce system's internal and external stakeholders.
- Goal 6: Develop a written agreement and/or incorporate into the MOU regarding ongoing communications on sector strategies and solutions with workforce development partners and the Workforce Development Boards.
- Goal 7: Develop and implement regional evaluation methodologies for each issues/solution.
- Goal 8: Identify high demand, high wage sectors and occupations that lack gender equity. Develop regional materials and activities that promote "non-traditional" careers to job seekers and gender equity hiring practices to employers.

Item 14: Added language to include a goal to expand career pathways to include a construction pathway.

Additionally, an increasing demand in the construction industry has led to a goal of developing career pathway training opportunities in construction.

Region 5 also applied in 2018 and will expand the career pathways programming to include construction skills.

Item 15: Updated the chart identifying populations experiencing employment disparities.

Total Labor Force Population	Number	Unemployment Rate
Youth Ages 16-19	12,829	14.0%
Youth Ages 20-24	24,373	6.3%
Black or African American	2,983	15.9%
American Indian/Alaskan Native	1,123	7.5%



Asian/Pacific Islander	3,197	4.8%
Some Other Race	2,717	11.6%
Two or More Races	1,649	11.2%
Hispanic or Latino	10,433	10.7%
Veterans	9,812	5.4%
Individuals with any Disability	10,510	9.2%
High School Drop-outs	9,212	4.1%

Item 16: Updated dates and added the following language:

Two focus groups have already been conducted with specific and easy to implement recommendations on how to better market services to diverse communities.

**Attachment A Regional Oversight Committee:** Updated Vice Chair for the SC Workforce Council, the SC Joint Powers Board and Southwest MN Workforce Development Board.

**Updated the Southwest Minnesota Regional Profile (2017 report).**

Sincerely,



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Executive Director  
South Central WorkForce Council



Carrie Bendix  
Executive Director  
Southwest MN Workforce Development Board