REGIONAL PLAN

Local Elected Officials and Local Workforce Development Boards (LWDB) within each Regional Workforce Development Area must participate in a planning process to address the following:

1. Describe the region's economic conditions, including existing and emerging in-demand industry sectors and occupations and also the employment needs of employers in these sectors and occupations. Attach a copy of an analysis addressing these factors. It is acceptable and recommended to use the regional analysis and other information if desired that is available from DEED's Labor Market Information Division.

The Region 3 Leadership & Planning Board (R3LPB), comprised of local elected officials and LWDB members, participated in the development of the Regional Plan in Region 3, using the following vision, mission, values, and regional analysis outlined below.

VISION
The Region 3 Leadership & Planning Board is committed to the establishment of regional strategies that are progressive, innovative, collaborative, and responsive to the needs of its communities within the 13-county region.

MISSION
To improve the economic prosperity of business and jobseekers in Region 3 by collaborating with key stakeholders to provide successful solutions to workforce, education, and economic development needs.

STATEMENT OF VALUES
The Region 3 Leadership & Planning Board:

- Values trust, fairness, and integrity in all interactions.
- Promotes opportunities for jobseekers to find gainful employment and for employers to find skilled labor.
- Embraces diverse and immigrant populations and promotes hiring within the communities.
- Establishes itself as the regional convener of workforce, education, and economic development.
- Encourages stakeholder participation in finding responsive solutions to workforce needs through analysis of regional labor market data and the cooperative development of regional service strategies. (Attachment A)

REGIONAL ANALYSIS
Central Minnesota is home to over 700,000 people and almost 18,000 businesses. The demographics of the region continue to change, but the region continues to grow and was the second fastest growing region of the state.

Region 3 includes the following counties in Central Minnesota: Benton, Chisago, Isanti, Kanabec, Kandiyohi, Meeker, McLeod, Mille Lacs, Renville, Pine, Sherburne, Stearns, and Wright. It includes three Economic Development Regions (EDR); 6E, 7E, and 7W.

Based on data from the Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED) labor market data, Central Minnesota's economy had the second fastest growth in the state (Twin Cities was fastest), growing +6.8% from 2013-2018; however, in the most recent year it was at +0.5%—half as fast as the state overall.

Despite slowing employment growth, the broad economy of the region is quite strong, with faster than statewide labor force growth from 2004-2019 (+12.4%). Sectors that outpaced statewide growth in the most recent year (2017-2018) include agriculture, manufacturing, wholesale trade, retail trade, transportation and warehousing, and other services. The largest number of jobs added in the past year was in the manufacturing sector (+636 jobs), followed by retail trade (+488).

Emerging industries in the region that have substantial growth in the past few years include air transportation, private households, warehousing and storage, chemical manufacturing, accommodation, support activities for agriculture, and specialty trade contractors.

Another important indicator of regional economic synergism are industries with high location quotients. In Central Minnesota, subsectors with high relative concentration of employment include motor vehicle body and trailer mfg., poultry and egg production, household and institutional furniture product mfg., nonmetallic mineral product mfg., other motor vehicle dealers, industrial machinery mfg., support activities for animal production, animal slaughtering and processing.

The most in-demand occupations are included in the chart below. The wage has been filtered to $31,800, the minimum cost to live for a single person with no children. The educational requirements for the most in-demand occupations are also included in the chart, a reflection of the types of formal training required. For higher paying occupations without formal educational requirements, skills, or credentialing are likely required to gain employment.

Occupations In Demand for Central Minnesota, 2019

Wages in the chart are the median annual wage

Demand Rank	Occupation	Minimum Education Typically Required	Median Annual Wage
5	Truck Drivers, Heavy and Tractor-Trailer	High School or Less	$48,425
8	First-Line Supervisors/Managers of Retail Sales ..	High School or Less	$41,149
9	Registered Nurses	Associate's Degree	$77,526
10	Laborers and Freight, Stock, and Material Move..	High School or Less	$34,830
11	Nursing Assistants	Vocational Training	$35,265
13	Carpenters	High School or Less	$50,024
14	Elementary School Teachers, Except Special Edu..	Bachelor's Degree	$57,806
15	First-Line Supervisors/Managers of Food Prepar..	High School or Less	$36,181
16	Welders, Cutters, Solderers, and Brazers	High School or Less	$46,676
17	Licensed Practical and Licensed Vocational Nurs..	Vocational Training	$46,876
18	Secondary School Teachers, Except Special and ..	Bachelor's Degree	$58,086
19	Automotive Service Technicians and Mechanics	Vocational Training	$39,870
20	Secretaries, Except Legal, Medical, and Executive	High School or Less	$41,947
21	Heating, Air Conditioning, and Refrigeration Me..	Vocational Training	$51,059
24	Machinists	Vocational Training	$49,847
26	Office Clerks, General	High School or Less	$36,597
27	Maintenance and Repair Workers, General	High School or Less	$43,720
29	Customer Service Representatives	High School or Less	$34,038
30	Social and Human Service Assistants	High School or Less	$34,455
31	First-Line Supervisors/Managers of Mechanics, I..	High School or Less	$59,699
36	Software Developers, Applications	Bachelor's Degree	$85,496
37	Preschool Teachers, Except Special Education	Bachelor's Degree	$32,388
38	Shipping, Receiving, and Traffic Clerks	High School or Less	$36,108
39	Meat, Poultry, and Fish Cutters and Trimmers	High School or Less	$32,229
41	First-Line Supervisors/Managers of Production ..	High School or Less	$62,475
42	Medical Assistants	High School or Less	$38,400
44	Sales Representatives, Wholesale and Manufac..	High School or Less	$59,100
46	Pharmacy Technicians	High School or Less	$35,037
47	Cutting, Punching, and Press Machine Setters, ..	High School or Less	$39,608
48	Employment, Recruitment, and Placement Speci..	Bachelor's Degree	$56,611
49	Medical Secretaries	High School or Less	$42,152

The economic conditions in Central Minnesota are strong despite recent layoffs and company closures. Please refer to the entire Central Minnesota Regional Profile attached for additional detail (Attachment B).

2. What is the regional strategy to coordinate efforts to address existing and in-demand industry sector and occupations workforce needs? Describe the methodology for outreach to these industry sectors and how they will be connected with the workforce system in the region.

The R3LPB membership includes the Central Minnesota Jobs and Training Services, Inc. (CMJTS) Joint Powers Board (JPB) chair and vice chair, CMJTS LWDB chair and vice chair, CMJTS chief executive officer, Career Solutions (CS) JPB chair and vice chair, CS LWDB chair and vice chair, and CS executive director. Support staff from both CMJTS and CS attend as non-voting members. Other key guests attend, as requested.

The LWDA boards have industry sector representation as members. LWDA staff participate in local industry sector associations or groups when available. Industry experts are brought in for presentations to both the LWDA boards and the R3LPB for guidance in workforce strategies.

The R3LPB has identified the following sectors as in-demand based on DEED labor market information as well as employer (stakeholder) input:

- Manufacturing
- Healthcare
- Construction/Transportation
- Natural Resources and Energy (Agriculture)
- Professional and Business Services (Information Technology)

Identifying in-demand occupations and employment projections through use of data about employment by location, labor supply and demand, earnings, unemployment, and demographics of the labor force helps employment specialists/career counselors and their jobseekers find relevant training opportunities to fill skills gaps, address skills shortages in the current economy, and anticipate employer need for trained workers in the listed fields.

A roster of sector partnership members will be developed and updated consisting of individuals who will represent the business partners, specific organizations representing targeted populations, and those providing pathway-specific services. Specific organizations representing targeted populations include Adult Basic Education, Minnesota State Colleges, Functional Industries, RISE, Vocational Rehabilitation Services, and others, as appropriate. This partnership will be business driven and create solutions that integrate education, workforce, and economic development resources across systems that provide businesses, individuals, and communities the opportunity to grow the state's economy.

The following are sector initiatives identified by the R3LPB being facilitated by or occurring in the region:

Manufacturing: Central Minnesota Manufacturers Association (CMMA) is a successful membership-based organization which exists to enhance Region 3's interrelated industries and to gain and hold a competitive advantage in today's global marketplace. CMMA hosts monthly membership meetings, special events, and social gatherings. CMMA has 156 members with over 50% from manufacturing firms. CMMA consists of a healthy mix of new and sustaining members, including a strong cross section of manufacturers, servicers, suppliers, and supporters. It has contributed more than $80,000 in grants, sponsorships, and scholarships since its inception. This support and investment in communities includes college scholarships, high school robotics, STEM education, events and expos, student field trips, youth apprenticeships, partnership with Wright Technical College, Tour of Manufacturing, and more. The R3LPB will continue to provide staff support, demographic statistics, labor market information, and organizational development assistance. CMMA members hold a seat on the respective LWDBs, as well as CMJTS and CS staff either holding committee memberships on CMMA or active participation at large membership meetings. This group is actively involved in the sector-led EPIC activities (large scale, hands-on career exploration event for high school sophomores), development of a Career Pathway website, actively promoting youth apprenticeship throughout Central Minnesota, and hosting a Jamboree informational event on youth engagement in manufacturing occupations.

Healthcare: The Central Minnesota Healthcare Taskforce has changed its name to the Central Minnesota Healthcare Coalition and is led by a group of members versus a stand-alone employer-

led sector group. The coalition met and completed a strategic plan, moving forward with the help of a consultant. The strategic plan focused on three specific issues that continually rose to the top of the healthcare summits: training and education, recruitment, and retention. Coalition members signed up for one of the three subcommittees to tackle each issue. This group has been temporarily put on hold due to the COVID-19 pandemic that is affecting healthcare providers. (See attached healthcare coalition strategic plan – Attachment C).

Additional healthcare initiatives to promote healthcare include:

- SCRUBS camps
- Partnerships and collaborations to promote and offer certified nursing assistant training in local high schools
- Healthcare partners lead "hands-on activities" at both EPIC and IGNITE events
- CareerONE summer youth camp – healthcare track option

Business Services programming for all in-demand sectors: Incumbent worker programming policy gives preference for projects submitted from high-demand industries.

The WorkWright radio program is a collaboration between CMJTS and KRWC to highlight CareerForce partners and programs and a local employer every Monday morning. This has been a successful model to promote sector initiatives and help with recruitment efforts of employers. The goal is to replicate this program throughout Central Minnesota.

Human Resource Networking groups are facilitated throughout the region and provide a platform to share industry challenges with their peers. Rule number one of these groups – leave competition at the door.

Sector-specific hiring events: These events focus on a targeted industry and promotional efforts to identify individuals looking for sector careers is made.

Educational initiatives: Occurring throughout the region, these initiatives promote that youth and young adults focus on a career or industry sector early in their high school career. Tiger Pathway in Hutchinson is a great model. Local employers provide equipment and input on curriculum to help youth identify and attain career skills prior to high school graduation. This allows youth to explore careers prior to paying for a college education that might not align with their skills and interests. CareerONE offered by CS is summer programming that provides eligible youth with career exploration in specific sectors. Central Minnesota high schools are promoting sector knowledge by hosting the DEED LMI expert at high school registrations and conferences to ensure that parents and students know the in-demand careers to help guide their planning.

Region 3 works directly with employers, private and public training providers, and union labor organizations to provide work-based training opportunities that meet the needs of business. The regional goal is to continue work-based training initiatives through activities like on-the-job training (OJT), registered apprenticeship, work experience and transitional jobs, workforce protégé, and incumbent worker training program (IWTP). Work-based training methods are a

proven and effective strategy that meet employers' workforce needs. The R3LPB surveyed employers and created an employer database to better match their needs with work-based training methods. The information collected is used to connect educators and service providers to young people, career changers, and other jobseekers in Region 3 who want to meet with employers to learn more about occupations in their specific area of career interest. The goal is to update this information, complete additional surveys, and create an online directory that will be on both the LWDA websites. This will promote sector engagement.

Wagner-Peyser works closely with representatives from the R3LPB to assist with regional sector workforce needs. Coordinated efforts with our On-Site Hiring events culminated in hosting hiring events for the untapped workforce populations with disabilities, criminal backgrounds, and new immigrants. The On-Site Hiring events are held monthly and are focused on industry sector needs and demands.

The DEED workforce strategy consultant supports regional initiatives and will share partner information and services as appropriate.

The CS executive director attends quarterly meetings of the St. Cloud Area Executive Director/CEO networking group. Participation in this group allows community CEOs to engage in pertinent conversations specific to their management role. Topics relevant to workforce development include discussing current industry challenges, problem solving, and obtaining access to industry experts who have implemented best practices.

With the continued evolution of the COVID-19 crisis, the regional strategy is to ensure all partners in the workforce development system remain flexible and responsive to the needs of the local businesses in the region. As resources and tools are available, information is shared to all contacts/networks and partners.

3. Describe how the local boards will direct regional workforce system alignment through shared policies and practices. In this description include 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.

A Region 3 Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) was created between LWDA 5 and LWDA 17. Both parties entered into this agreement with the understanding that the LWDA boards would "maintain their local identities" and collaborate as the R3LPB, serving the 13-county region of Benton, Chisago, Isanti, Kanabec, Kandiyohi, Meeker, McLeod, Mille Lacs, Pine, Renville, Sherburne, Stearns, and Wright counties.

Furthermore, the MOU creates a R3LPB designed to provide oversight of the regional planning process and its sector strategies, review labor market and economic data, select sectors for the region based on this data, explore opportunities to share resources and seek additional funding sources to better serve Region 3 employer and jobseeker needs, organize and create a regional vision that is employer-driven and proactive in creating solutions to meet their needs and

collaborate with CareerForce partners to establish a quality customer service delivery system responsive to both jobseekers and employers. The MOU also lays out a methodology, duration, and modification determinations, dispute resolution and other necessary provisions. The MOU is signed by all elected voting members of the R3LPB to solidify the partnership.

Furthermore, there are cooperative agreements signed between the two LWDAs—for LWDA 5 to provide accounting and HR services to LWDA 17. In addition, cooperative agreements are in place for collaborative/regional grants that have been awarded, such as the Rural Career Counseling Coordinator grant (RC3), which provides the opportunity to expand current agreements. CS and CMJTS will consider and determine the need, format, and content of additional cooperative service agreements as needed to promote consistency within the region and align with state policy.

Expanding and enhancing partnerships and collaboration: The R3LPB encourages both the CS and CMJTS LWDBs to collaborate on competitive grants that serve Region 3 in the best interests of both jobseekers and employers.

Each CareerForce location in Region 3 holds staff meetings regularly to identify and implement regional services, including career, training, and/or follow-up services for jobseekers. These meetings allow for discussions leading to program alignment of goals. Staff meetings include co-located CareerForce partners (e.g., CS, CMJTS, Job Service, Vocational Rehabilitation, Adult Basic Education, Public Assistance, Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP), and State Services for the Blind). A minimum of one meeting is scheduled annually.

The one-stop operator (OSO) consortium, a collaboration of CareerForce partners, meets on a quarterly basis to review the regional plan goals and ensure activities are being completed and reported to the R3LPB and LWDBs. Shared training and updates occur among all the partners. Additional professional training opportunities are shared as well as best practices amongst programs. One such training opportunity is the eLearning modules developed by the National Institute on Disability. These modules are shared with all one-stop partners. The topics are:

- Serving Individuals with Disabilities
- Working Across Partners
- Providing Inclusive Business Services

As an OSO partner, Wagner-Peyser takes guidance in policy alignment from the R3LPB and LWDA's 5 and 17.

Regarding Business Services, each partner within CareerForce locations, including CMJTS, CS, Vocational Rehabilitation Services, Wagner-Peyser, Veteran Services, have varying roles for staff participating in reaching out to employers. All Region 3 business service staff meet on a semi-annual basis to ensure a coordinated effort and message to the business community. Aligning a consistent message and approach are important. Some key concepts agreed upon include:

- Viewing businesses as customers
- Taking steps to understand their needs

- Understanding that businesses make decisions based on their needs, not programming available
- Asking what the business seeks from relationships, as opposed to the service provider's goals
- Employer Navigator services are promoted

To ensure system alignment, in addition to alignment of policy and practices, common goals are identified based on R3LPB directives, one-stop-operator conversations, and community stakeholder input. Specific strategies are developed collaboratively, and partners participate jointly with initiatives occurring in the region that align with the identified goals, some of which are included in the cooperative agreements. Most of these initiatives include not only CareerForce partners, but also community members, education organizations, and employers.

Addressing the need for skilled workers in the region:
One initiative is the "*Untapped Workforce Series*"*:* Employer educational events are being offered to help promote potential workforce populations that are currently unrepresented in the workforce. These sessions provide tools and resources to the employers in the region. Untapped populations include:

- Persons with disabilities
- Older workers
- Offenders
- Veterans
- Youth and young adults
- Immigrants
- Low-income persons/families

Hiring Events: Each of these educational seminars are followed up by a hiring event targeting the *untapped population* of focus. Surveys are completed by the employers after each hiring event to track if job offers were made as a result of participation in the hiring event. In addition, topics of interest to employers have been identified, such as cyber security, support for employees, on-going labor market information and others. Sessions will be held to address employer interests. Coordinated fundraising events and a collaborative grant through the Initiative Foundation are some of the ways these events have been jointly funded.

Incumbent worker training is provided to upskill employers' current workforce and assist businesses with layoff aversion. Both LWDAs in the region offer this resource to businesses. CMJTS and CS staff give presentations to professional employer groups and make direct contacts for the purpose of offering incumbent worker (IW) and other resources to businesses. CMJTS has become the "go to" resource on how to deliver incumbent worker training to businesses. In support of regional goals, the workforce strategy consultant refers local businesses to both LWDAs and to state resources to help increase the skills of their current workforce.

Expanding and Enhancing Career Exploration:
Career exploration to students in Region 3 through the following activities/events:

IGNITE Your Future: A Hutchinson's IGNITE Your Future event – includes partnerships with CMJTS, Ridgewater College, the Hutchinson and Litchfield Chambers of Commerce, and several key businesses to organize this community collaborative hands-on career exploration event. Held at Ridgewater College, there were 13 schools, 1,200 students, 100 businesses, and 75 volunteers in attendance. This is now an annual event with potential expansion to the Willmar Campus.

Exploring Potential Interests and Careers (EPIC): A large-scale, hands-on career exploration event at St. Cloud Technical and Community College. EPIC is an annual hands-on career exploration event supported through a community-wide collaboration. CS and CMJTS are partners and heavily involved with planning and executing this annual event. The goal is to create a high-quality career exploration annual event that effectively bridges education and industry for high school students in Central Minnesota, contributing to the fulfillment of the economic and workforce needs of the greater Central Minnesota region. This unique event format allows students hands-on, interactive experiences that simulate the activities of a variety of careers achieved through a multitude of educational accomplishments. EPIC is supported by a community-wide collaborative of business, education, nonprofit, and government organizations.

Topics covered with the students:

- Education and or training requirements for jobs in this industry
- Work available with the participating employers, including hours, schedule, vacation, promotion, culture, etc.
- Financial expectations – salary opportunities, growth potential, economic outlook, etc.

Six career fields that are represented:

- Engineering, Manufacturing, Technology
- Health Science Technology
- Human Services
- Agriculture, Food, and Natural Resource
- Business, Management, and Administration
- Communications & Information Systems

Student attendance in 2020: 3,500 10th graders from 29 schools within a 45-miles radius of St. Cloud. Next Event: February 2021.

Hands-on Career Exploration Event in Region 7E: Expansion goal is to develop and offer an event similar to EPIC and IGNITE for EDR 7E. The GPS Workforce committee co-chairs have had several meetings with local chambers and businesses on starting their own hands-on career exploration event in the 2020-21 school year. A survey was created and sent out to all school districts to confirm the support of this type of event.

Construct Tomorrow shares hands-on construction trades experiences with high school students. Sponsored by the construction trades unions, construction employers, and local partners, this career exploration event promoting apprenticeship trades education, has been held in Hinckley in partnership with CMJTS and the Mille Lacs Band and in St. Cloud since 2016.

CareerONE: CS' CareerONE is a unique summer youth employability skills training opportunity, which provides youth ages 14–17 identified as at-risk with a realistic and positive work-readiness skills training in a safe, nurturing, and learning-rich environment. It also helps prevent participants from regressing academically during the summer months. Youth participate in a variety of classroom activities, including teamwork, contextual academic enrichment, career exploration, work-readiness skills, workplace safety, financial literacy, reflections and journaling, and work projects for community-based organizations and agencies.

CareerONE has three 40-hour Career Tracks (about 4 hours per day over 10 days):

<u>Healthcare</u>
1.5 college credits for CPR/first aid
1.5 college credits for CNA prep course
Health terminology class
Mock accident scenes and how to react

<u>Construction/Manufacturing</u>
Safety Awareness class that will give students OSHA 10 and 2 college credits
Build raised planter boxes to donate to community
Design cell phone holders on computer and print using 3D laser printer

<u>Business Technology (new track)</u>
2 college credits for Excel class – 20 hours
Other 20 hours are not confirmed yet but will be geared towards sales/marketing of business and products.

SCRUBS Camps: A hands-on healthcare career education exploration. St. Cloud Scrubs Camp is a collaborative effort between the business and industries of the St. Cloud region, St. Cloud Technical & Community College, and St. Cloud State University. This is an engaging, interactive, and fun day camp open to any student entering grades 7–12 in the fall. Students spend three days exploring a variety of healthcare careers like nursing, laboratory science, social work, alternative therapies, and many others. Students experience these careers through field trips and hands-on activities facilitated by healthcare professionals and college faculty. Students are provided a t-shirt, daily lunches, and snacks. Scrubs Camp will run Tuesday, July 14 to Thursday, July 16, 2020. CS and DEED partners assist with labor market activities. A day long SCRUBS camp occurs in Cambridge at Anoka Ramsey Community College. All one-stop partners will promote the training opportunity.

CTE Jamboree: Central Minnesota Manufacturing Association's (CMMA) first Career and Technical Education (CTE) Jamboree was held on Nov 21, 2019. The event focused on bridging businesses with schools and the opportunities that are available for student apprenticeships and work-based learning opportunities. A second event is currently being planned for August 2020.

Career Pathway Infographics: A Rural Career Counseling Coordinator (RC3) initiative started in 2018 has been the creation of career pathway infographics. Through collaboration of all the RC3 staff, 16 career pathways have been created, as well as some for occupations in-demand. These are being shared with local schools and employers. Additional sharing of the career pathway infographics, through social media, information on websites, and WIOA partner networks is planned. These infographics are updated annually, and additional occupations in-demand created. A goal this year for existing pathways is to make the electronic format more interactive.

Innovative Approaches to Career Readiness: An initiative and spring event hosted by the Workforce Committee of GPS 45:93 (regional economic development collaborative in Region 7E) has focused on connecting schools and employers with opportunities for partnership that will increase innovation and opportunities for career and technical education to meet employer needs. It also works to highlight labor market and training information for parents and students. In its first year, the event hosted Cardinal Manufacturing, a high school student-run manufacturing business and training program from Aleva/Strom High School. Students shared the success of their program, followed by a fall tour of their school and program. Additional programs, such as Tiger Path 2.0, and the efforts and successes of local schools have been shared as inspiration. The May 2020 event has become limited due to COVID-19; however, it will feature the keynote speaker electronically. The showcase of Mora High School programs and highlights of innovative fund grantee schools will be postponed. The GPS Workforce Committee offered a grant opportunity for schools in Pine, Isanti, Chisago, Kanabec, and Mille Lacs counties. Four schools were offered grants: Rush City for their career-readiness kickoff, Willow River for their Lessons for Life Workshop, TRIO Wolf Creek on student career exploration, and Mora for their presentation event with Luke Greiner presenting at parent-teacher conferences. Co-chaired by CMJTS staff and the regional workforce strategy consultant, the GPS 45:93 Workforce Committee will continue to promote connections between schools, employers, students, and parents to highlight labor market information, increase opportunities for career and technical education innovation, and career exploration in Region 7E.

Tiger Path 2.0: An event hosted by Hutchinson High School and Southwest Initiative Foundation to share all the innovative career pathways and career and technical education opportunities happening in the McLeod County area. CMJTS staff presented information on LYFT activities to attendees and offered suggestions for replication in other areas across the state. Best practices from Central Minnesota were highlighted, including youth apprenticeship. An action planning worksheet was shared that is promoted to school districts to continue the conversation and expand career pathways activities in their area.

Launch Your Future Today (LYFT) is a rural career and technical education (CTE) pathway initiative with the purpose of rebuilding CTE in west Central Minnesota. The goal of LYFT Pathways is for

every secondary student in the region to gain marketable skills through meaningful CTE courses and opportunities, which lead to further education and careers that match our region's labor market needs. Through this initiative, CMJTS staff assist school-identified students with vocational exploration and advise them on the steps required to enter careers of interest. They also help the students build workplace skills and coordinate work-based learning opportunities, internships, job shadowing, informational interviews, etc., to give them first-hand knowledge of local jobs, employers, and industries.

College tours and career fairs are being promoted across the region. Both LWDA 5 and 17 have active participation with the Perkins consortiums across Region 3.

Career events targeted for educators: Business & Industry Summit Sauk Rapids-Rice High School was held on February 10, 2020. The vision for this event was to foster communication and collaboration between educators and local business/industry leaders to better understand how they can prepare students for the future workplace. The full event was held from 7:30 a.m.–1:00 p.m. with all 650 district staff from Sauk Rapids-Rice schools interacting with approximately 50 local businesses. School staff participated in face-to-face, real-life discussions with local business owners and employees, and engaged through interactive activities designed to help them understand the skills and interests necessary to succeed in various industries. Six career clusters were showcased, including Health, Science & Technology; Engineering, Manufacturing & Technology; Arts, Communications & Information Systems; Agriculture, Food & Natural Resources; and Business, Management & Administration. This was a collaborative effort and partners included CS, SR-R High School, Benton Economic Partnership, St. Cloud Chamber, Sauk Rapids Chamber, Rice Chamber, United Way, PFSS, and GSDC. The goal is to continue and replicate this event across the region.

Career Crawl for the K-12 teachers: Another innovative strategy to assist educators in industry knowledge is to take educators to the business. The DEED workforce strategy consultant and CMJTS will assist Buffalo High School in putting together a Career Crawl for the K-12 teachers on a fall 2020 in-service day. This will allow teachers to learn about the businesses in their community. (This event is a replica of a similar event held in Princeton.)

CEO in the Classroom: Entrepreneurship education seeks to prepare people, especially youth, to be responsible, enterprising individuals who become entrepreneurs or entrepreneurial thinkers and contribute to economic development and sustainable communities. The CEO program is much more than a textbook course. Rather, students are immersed in real life learning experiences with the opportunity to take risks, manage the results, and learn from the outcomes. Partners assist in providing additional programming and credentials when available (e.g., National Retail Federation Customer Service and Sales credential), assistance with business tours, mock interviews, and development of new CEO programs. Currently, the following school districts offer CEO programs: Willmar High School, Wright Technical Center, and a Western Stearns County Creating Entrepreneurial Opportunities (CEO) Program, which started in the 2019 school year for combined Albany, Sauk Center, and Melrose schools.

Ensuring those in need receive the information about services:
Collaborate with partners to develop outreach, informational materials, engagement, and dissemination strategies for the following groups:

- Farmers who are struggling – receiving information about dislocated worker programs
- Small businesses impacted by COVID-19
- Populations experiencing economic disparities

With the COVID-19 pandemic, workforce development staff and partners have had to be innovative in the ways to provide services to individuals. Use of electronic communication, such as WebEx and Zoom, are being used.

4. Describe how the regional approaches used will ensure that it includes diverse representation, specifically among populations experiencing the greatest barriers to employment or communities facing the greatest levels of economic disparities?

R3LPB, CMJTS, and CS staff engage with organizations representing targeted populations, through continued use of surveys, data collecting, conducting focus groups, and program outreach. This will ensure greater awareness of resources available to diverse populations, specifically among people experiencing barriers to education and employment opportunities in Planning Region 3. Committees will be developed as a result, and stakeholder engagement will occur through sector-led activities planned through collaboration with partners.

Through targeted outreach and engagement, increased knowledge of staff, and specific programming, those populations experiencing disparities will enroll in and increase outcomes in service programs.

Recruitment efforts are being made to increase diversity and representation of individuals experiencing disparities on boards, committees, and staff.

Initiatives to Engage those with Disabilities
The goal of the Disability Employment Initiative (DEI) is to increase access to the CareerForce System and programs for persons with disabilities. The best practices for case management, including the use of integrated resource teams, guideposts for success in youth goal planning, and customized employment, will be shared with other Rural Career Counseling Coordinators (RC3). The sharing of knowledge and resources with the broader system will create an effective referral process, ensure a close relationship between all partners, and increase services to more jobseekers. DEI staff from CMJTS were selected to be part of an e-Learning taskforce with the National Disability Institute to make disability services information and resources available to all staff in American Job Centers. This training will be shared with all Region 3 partners. The goal is to have greater awareness and promote inclusiveness in the CareerForce System.

Regional Employment Networks include Functional Industries, Vocational Rehabilitation Services, RISE, Options, and CMJTS. Employment Networks help ticket holders (those 18–64 years of age) receiving Supplemental Security Income (SSI) or Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) become self-sufficient. Communication and referrals between Employment Networks will be ongoing. All partners provide or offer unique services and refer ticket holders to the appropriate service agency. The CMJTS Ticket Team, comprised of six employment specialists, will complete the benefits analysis coaching training through the Minnesota Department of Human Services. This curriculum focuses on assisting those individuals receiving SSI or SSDI navigate employment options and the impact on benefits. Regional employers will be educated about available ticket to work incentives. An Ability Resource Fair, a career fair serving individuals with diverse abilities and providing resources, will be held in 2021.

SOAR Services: CMJTS will provide SSI/SSDI Outreach, Access, and Recovery (SOAR) services as a subcontractor though Southwest Minnesota Private Industry Council. SOAR is a national program designed to increase access to the disability income benefit programs administered by the Social Security Administration (SSA) for eligible adults and children who are experiencing or are at risk of homelessness and have a serious mental illness, medical impairment, and/or a co-occurring substance use disorder. These advocacy services will be available to individuals in Region 3.

Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS): In partnership with Vocational Rehabilitation Services (VRS), CMJTS provides Pre-ETS to youth with disabilities, ages 14–21, who are potentially eligible for VRS services. Career You provides an opportunity for these youth to explore career and training options, gain work skills, and learn how to be successful after high school, including post-secondary education and/or competitive employment. Through Career You, youth are provided services one-on-one or through large group activities, which are centered on job search/exploration, post-secondary education counseling, work-based learning, budgeting, work-readiness training, self-advocacy instruction, and community learning projects. CareerQuest is a program, funded by the Minnesota Department of Vocational Rehabilitation Services, designed to help high school students prepare for life after graduation. Itis a chance for youth to explore career and training options, gain work skills, and learn how to be successful after high school. CareerQuest is for students who have any type of disability and want to prepare for a bright future. Career Planners work on MCIS career assessments with students and complete Skills Verification Assessments, Skills Sort, Post-Secondary Educational Choices and Financial Aid options, as well as a Cost of Living Estimator that reflects life after high school.

Initiatives to Engage those with Criminal Backgrounds

The Leaving Incarceration Finding Employment (LIFE) Project, incorporating the 360° Career Success Skills modules, is tailored to address a person's criminal background and help avoid recidivism. Currently, CMJTS is facilitating the LIFE Project in the McLeod and Wright County jails and plans to expand these services to additional counties in the future. To expand opportunities for individuals with criminal backgrounds, a collaboration with SW PIC, Central Lakes College, Adult Basic Education, and the Renville County Jail will be partnering to provide the LIFE project curriculum with hands-on, industry-specific skills (e.g., welding training), to ensure those being

released have concrete skills for their résumé as well as transition skills. This is a pilot project that if successful, will be replicated across the region.

Initiatives to Engage People of Color

The Immigrant Employment Connection Group (IECG) is a collaboration of St. Cloud community businesses and organizations. The group's focus is to better the St. Cloud community by working with the Somali population and address workforce development issues which improve the health and wellbeing of jobseekers and their families. To make the greatest impact, the group's focus is on individuals within the Somali community who possess minimal skills and have multiple barriers to employment, including cultural and language barriers and transportation issues. The IECG is working with employers to help them overcome real or perceived hiring barriers. They are also helping jobseekers to obtain employment. The IECG is creating meaningful connections between employers and jobseekers in Region 3. Committee members include service providers, local employer representation, education, and representation from the immigrant population. This group had achieved the initial goals of job fairs and educational events. It is re-establishing new goals moving forward.

The Ridgewater College Multi-Cultural Outreach Coordinator, Jehana Khan Schwandt, serves as a liaison between workforce development, the college, and the community in Economic Development Region 6E. The goal is to engage populations experiencing inequities in education and employment and develop multi-cultural events and marketing/recruitment strategies to inform multi-cultural populations of resources available. Meetings began in January 2017 and continue quarterly. Jehana Khan Schwandt is an active member of the CMJTS Youth Committee of the LWDA 5 board.

Initiatives to Engage At-Risk Youth and Young Adults

Partner for Student Success (PFSS) unites Central Minnesota parents, businesses, community organizations, and public-school districts to support student success. The PFSS Board of Directors consists of 21 members from 19 partner organizations, and PFSS committees and working groups consist of more than 70 organizations from across the greater St. Cloud area. PFSS has a cradle-to-career approach, including a pre-K and elementary as well as college and career-ready work groups. The CS executive director sits on the college and career-readiness steering committee and co-chairs the experiential learning planning group. Participation at this level creates opportunities for Region 3 to expand education and employment services to youth and young adults. PFSS engages, aligns, and coordinates community resources to set goals, define priorities, and close gaps; creates awareness and urgency around PFSS and student success within the community; advocates for financial support and resources around student success; and monitors and measures progress against the community goals and priorities.

Grants received by each LWDA will provide programming to targeted populations.

Pathways to Prosperity grants:

CMJTS' P2P provides the ability to partner with Adult Basic Education providers and local colleges to give 38 low-income individuals the training necessary to enter careers as either certified nursing assistants or commercial drivers. The Pathways to Prosperity Program will serve adults

who are living at or below 200% of the federal poverty guideline. No less than one-third will be People of Color and no less than one-fourth of the cohort will be made up of people who have one or more disabilities.

CS' P2P is designed to provide workforce development and training opportunities to economically disadvantaged adults that will help them develop increased career awareness; acquire basic skills education; participate in skills-training programs; and place into employment in high growth, high demand industries with long-term employment opportunities. CS' P2P jobseekers in 2019 were able to explore careers in manufacturing, work on completing a GED and résumé writing, and learn in-demand welding/ manufacturing skills. CS will continue this program.

Job Service and CMJTS have a long-standing history of coordinating services through pathway programs for low-income and New American recipients of public assistance. Recent pathway programs include pre-manufacturing and forklift training, hospitality training for non-English speaking recipients, and CNA training. These pathway programs have been very beneficial to the recipients and have provided access to support services and post-secondary credentials for those enrolled.

Women's Economic Security Act (WESA) grant: CMJTS' Women-on-the-Move project will focus on serving women ages 16 and over, particularly women of color. The project will help 50 women identify better-paying jobs in traditionally male-dominated professions (e.g., manufacturing-related careers, commercial driving), where their talents and interests will be put to good use. The Women-on-the-Move project will then help these women obtain the training necessary to enter these fields. Career coaching and mentorship will be provided by women already successful in nontraditional arenas and it is expected that at least half of the women served will also be enrolled in additional employment and training programs to help them achieve success.

Support Services Grant: CMJTS' Colorful Tomorrow project will provide employment preparation assistance, financial literacy instruction, career training, paid internships, and entrepreneurial skills exploration activities to 25 additional residents of Central Minnesota, particularly those receiving public assistance. All Colorful Tomorrow participants will be People of Color and CMJTS will focus recruitment in the Willmar and Southeast St. Cloud areas.

Immigrant and Refugee Community Workforce Development and Business Partnerships
LEARN & EARN Program: CS has been doing extensive work with the immigrant population in Central Minnesota. In 2016, CS started collaborating with the Coleman Company in Sauk Rapids. A program was started for young adults aging out of high school (ages 18–24) who have been in the country for 1–5 years and have a desire to continue their education. In partnership with the Coleman Company and Adult Basic Education, the LEARN & EARN program was created. Participants spend 4 hours working and 4 hours in training for 7 weeks. Outcomes of the program are improved math and reading scores, work experience, and employment. Almost all participants since 2016 continued their education in the fall by attending Adult Basic Education. Through new grant funding, this summer, CS will be using the LEARN & EARN program model for the construction industry. Currently, two employers have agreed to help develop the

training curriculum and provide work experiences for participants. LWDA 5 hopes to replicate this program.

Community Outreach: The immigrant population has several barriers to obtaining employment. One of the largest barriers for them is transportation. Because of this barrier, CS staff take their services into the community. CS provides services in multiple locations throughout the community. Sites include La Cruz Community, Community Outpost, Quarryview Education Center, and the Islamic Center. CMJTS provides services at the Iftiin Somali Youth Center.

Iftiin Somali Youth Organization

The IFTIIN Somali Youth Organization creates a safe and engaging space for youth within the community. The organization provides resources and services to lead the youth to success. Preparing the students academically, socially, mentally, and physically to be active citizens and pursue higher education. CMJTS youth staff can meet with youth onsite for services.

LaCruz

La Cruz is an apartment complex and townhomes on the southside of St. Cloud that houses a large Somali population. La Cruz has a community center within the apartments and townhomes where residents can visit with onsite CS bilingual staff who provide services. CS staff assist residents with completing job applications, résumés, and mock interviews. CS staff are dedicated to meeting with residents at this location.

Community Outpost

The Community Outpost, also known as the COP House, is located in the southside of St. Cloud as well. The St. Cloud Police Department has partnered with human service providers such as CentraCare and Stearns County. Some of the services offered onsite include WIC, public health nurses and a registered nurse from CentraCare are available for triage. CS bilingual staff connect with community members who are already there to assist with job searching skills, job applications and interviews. The Community Outpost is open to all community members in the Southside neighborhood.

Quarryview Education Center

CS also provides services to immigrants at Quarryview. Jobseekers can get assistance with résumés, cover letters, résumé review, job applications, employer research, interviewing techniques/ practice, job search websites and community resources and services. CS staff are available at Quarryview from 9:30–12:30 a.m. on Wednesdays.

Islamic Center

The Islamic Center of St. Cloud hosts hundreds of students and parents for education and community awareness programs. CS presents youth programs to the Islamic Center, including Youth at Work and CareerONE. Students are recruited to participate in the programs in the summer and fall. CS, in partnership with the Islamic Center, conducted a number of summer youth programs involving career exploration and work-based experiences. In 2019, there were 12 outstanding Islamic Center students that completed work experience hours at the Islamic Center

to mentor another 50 students. In the fall of 2019, the Islamic Center was also a work experience site for a cohort of Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) youth who were new to the country.

Immigrant Business Services: Cultural Training, Cultural Accommodations & Communication Solutions

CS is also able to assist businesses with immigrant services. Cargill expanded their production facility in Big Lake. They were struggling to fill 40 new food handler positions. The company's HR manager reached out to CS to receive help with filling those positions with immigrant populations. In less than three weeks Cargill was able to fill 40 positions. Once the immigrant employees started working at Cargill, management encountered issues with communication and cultural gaps. CS bilingual staff created cultural training for supervisors and management to make them aware of the culture of their new employees, and provided training for employees, so they also understand the company's culture, responsibilities, and expectations.

Cintas in St. Cloud reached out to CS seeking help regarding communication barriers with their immigrant population. CS staff members responded to Cintas' request and resolved their issues related to cultural misunderstandings and provided suggestions to ease communication barriers.

BWS Cleaning Services reached out to CS seeking assistance with cultural competency training as a large number of their employees are East African. CS staff provided two hours of cultural competency training to the executive management of the company. After the initial training, BWS requested line managers receive the same training as they felt the training was helpful. Since then, CS has provided continuous cultural competency counsel to BWS.

Spee-Dee Delivery Service was experiencing some communication barriers. A group of employees thought they were handling packages containing pork and alcohol and were ready to walk off the job. Mediation services were provided to their employees by CS, explaining that this was misinformation. In working with both parties, recommendations for policies and procedures to be translated into Somali were given to human resources to resolve issues going forward.

Ensuring stakeholder engagement reflects programming and polices:

- Hold focus groups – fall/winter of 2020
- Surveys to program participants sent and feedback incorporated, when appropriate
- Provide training to staff and partners on populations experiencing disparities, disabilities, offenders, new Americans, older workers, veterans

Region 3 will be exploring the Inclusive Employer Designation being implemented by Rural Minnesota CEP.

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

Each LWDA will negotiate performance measures.

The CMJTS LWDB expects local service providers to, at minimum, meet the performance standards negotiated with the governor and local chief elected officers (or JPB), as they apply to each program. Historically, LWDA 5 has met or exceeded all performance standards under WIA/WIOA and it is anticipated this will continue.

As required by WIOA, a more collaborative and robust service delivery system has been implemented. This includes common performance measures for core partners.

The CMJTS LWDB will review performance on a quarterly basis, as well as a more in-depth performance evaluation at the close of each program year. Staff will provide board members with a dashboard of key performance indicators, allowing board members to identify and manage potential issues throughout the program year. Specific program performance will be shared with CMJTS LWDB committees on a more regular basis. For example, Youth Program performance will be reported to the Youth Committee at each meeting held every other month, and Adult and Dislocated Worker Program performance dashboards will be reported to the Workforce Development Committee monthly. The CMJTS Business Services coordinators complete and submit a detailed report on employer engagement each month to the board. The board also receives monthly an updated on-the-job training and incumbent worker activity report for review.

The CS LWDB will review performance on a quarterly basis, as well as a more in-depth performance evaluation at the close of each program year. Staff will provide board members with a dashboard of key performance indicators, allowing board members to identify and manage potential issues throughout the program year. Specific program performance will be shared with CS LWDB committees on a more regular basis. For example, Youth Program performance will be reported to the Youth Committee at each meeting held every other month, and Adult and Dislocated Worker Program performance dashboards will be reported to the Program Committee on a quarterly basis.

6. Describe how the region's workforce development efforts will be coordinated with economic development services and providers.

LWDA 5 and 17 staff are active participants at the table in the economic development organizations across Central Minnesota as outlined below:

Economic Development Region 7W:
Central Minnesota Quad Counties CEDS Steering Committee for Region 7W. This is a continuation of the work of the EDR 7W CEDS, which is a necessary document that allows the region to apply for federal grants for emergency disaster and federal economic development

funding. Key players—economic development professionals for the four counties and cities in EDR 7W—are the primary conveners and advocate for this initiative. Partners include community/economic development coordinators, county administrators, county commissioners for 7W, workforce development professionals, private industry, school officials, and required partners under CEDS. The project is ongoing, with Joint Powers Board meetings being facilitated by CMJTS until further decisions on the future of this mission is determined. Once determined, a new board will be established under the rules of the CEDS guidelines. CMJTS will continue to facilitate updates to the CEDS to maintain compliance and ensure that community needs are met.

Wright County Economic Development Partnership (WCEDP). The WCEDP's mission is to create a healthy and diverse environment for existing, expanding, and new businesses, which in turn creates employment opportunities and enhances the overall economic vitality of the region. Local area businesses are the primary conveners and advocate for this initiative and the WCEDP board chair oversees the project. Wright County cities, municipalities, and infrastructure providers deliver funding through membership dues. Wright County also provides operational funding on an annual basis. Additional partners include community/economic development coordinators, county commissioners for EDR 7W, small business development centers, workforce development professionals, private industry, educators, and city officials. The WCEDP is the primary point of contact for existing, start-up, expanding, and relocating businesses. The Partnership provides technical and financial assistance to businesses and communities within Wright County. The WCEDP provides monthly development and capacity-building seminars on various topics. Past topics include Regional Economic Outlook by the Federal Reserve Bank, Marketing Your Website by U of M Extension, Legislative Updates, A Site Selector's View of Wright County, and more. The WCEDP also administers a revolving loan fund to provide business development assistance. The involved CMJTS Business Services coordinator is a seven-term board member and two-time board chair. Meetings are held monthly and work with this group will continue. The WCEDP works to identify and assist Wright County businesses with their workforce needs to create a long-term vibrant community through education, training, marketing, and collaboration.

Wright County companies continue to thrive in a strong economy, but a severe worker shortage overshadows their growth and profitability and hampers their desire to expand. Growth will come to those companies that understand their employee needs, partner with existing CareerForce programs, utilize educational institutions at the high school and post-secondary levels, and have leveraged the appropriate combination of automation, productivity strategies, effective leadership, team development, and strategic planning. The group has created a web-based interactive career exploration and workforce pathways tool to assist students, parents, and teachers in making informed decisions about education, training, and local labor market opportunities.

The Greater St. Cloud Development Corporation (GSDC) is a private collaboration of approximately 250 regional business and community leaders within Benton, Sherburne, and Stearns counties in Central Minnesota. The charge of the GSDC is to spearhead the economic development efforts of the greater St. Cloud region by identifying and unifying opportunities to

engage community leaders, foster business growth, expand and nurture the area's talent base, and support the communities that make up the greater St. Cloud region.

Economic Development Region 7E:
CEDS Committee for EDR 7E. Part of the work of the East Central Regional Development Commission (ECRDC) is to develop a CEDS plan, which serves as "an economic roadmap to diversify and strengthen regional economies." The CEDS Committee is made up of a broad cross-section of public and private interests, and provides input, direction, implementation, and monitoring of the CEDS. The LWDB is an advocate for the CEDS as it impacts workforce development and the labor market. As a partner, the LWDB provides staff support and project guidance. A CMJTS staff representative has been part of this committee since 2009. The five-year CEDS plan was adopted in 2017 and is updated annually. Several projects funded by the EDA through this work in recent years include campus upgrades at Pine Technical & Community College, infrastructure for the Sandstone Medical Campus, Pine Technical and Community College Business Incubator, ECRDC Business Park Marketing, and Polaris Research and Development Facility, Wyoming, MN.

GPS 45:93 (GPS) is a nonprofit, regional economic development consortium in EDR 7E dedicated to growing and attracting businesses with high-paying jobs to East Central Minnesota. It takes its name from the point of latitude and longitude at which the four original counties in the partnership meet—the point of opportunity. The mission statement of GPS is: Collaborate to strengthen the regional economy by providing a regional approach to workforce development, business attraction, retention, and expansion—acting as a conduit for members and the region to access resources and educational opportunities.

GPS membership includes economic/community development and workforce development professionals, cities, counties, businesses, banks, chambers, utilities, K-12 and higher education, the Mille Lacs Band, and community organizations concerned about the economy and workforce. The partnership believes "when one wins – all win." The group meets monthly and is hosted at member locations throughout the region. The organization has a board of directors composed of representatives from a member of the governing body for each participating city and county, post-secondary and K-12 education entities, DEED, and others, which may include staff from each participating city and county, Mille Lacs Corporate Ventures, chambers of commerce, economic development entities, the CMJTS Workforce Development Board, financial institutions, private industry, utilities, and community-based organizations. Non-voting members include elected officials from the Minnesota Legislature, U.S. Congress, and the Initiative Foundation in Little Falls. A number of current and former LWDA 5 board members and CMJTS staff are key members of the GPS group and DEED's regional workforce strategy consultant also attends.

GPS has several key committees that meet regularly to help accomplish its goals.
The Workforce Committee that meets monthly and is co-chaired by the representative CMJTS staff member and the regional workforce strategy consultant. This committee supports and promotes regional workforce resources such as those offered through CareerForce and its partners, as well as projects and initiatives such as Construct Tomorrow. For the past two years

the Workforce Committee has hosted events entitled "Innovative Approaches to Career Readiness." During 2019, the committee awarded small grants with funding from the Initiative Foundation to three local high schools as seed funds for their innovative career-readiness projects.

The Broadband Committee actively pursues opportunities to improve the reach of high-speed broadband across our rural area. The committee has worked on several opportunities with Blandin and GPS and its members participate in and have held offices with the Minnesota Rural Broadband Coalition.

GPS holds a membership in the Community Venture Network which provides an opportunity for member communities to hear presentations from and be connected directly with small to medium-sized businesses looking to locate or relocate in rural communities. This is one tool GPS uses for business expansion in the region. GPS and its Marketing Committee works to promote the region as a whole and finds ways to showcase each community. The committee has hosted several Familiarization Tour (FAM Tour) events to showcase the region for business recruitment with site selectors.

Economic Development Region 6E:

The Mid-Minnesota Development Commission (MMDC) is the RDC for EDR 6E. It administers state and federal programs, coordinates multi-jurisdictional activities, and provides technical assistance to government, businesses, and local organizations to maintain or enhance the quality of life in Kandiyohi, McLeod, Meeker, and Renville counties. CMJTS has represented workforce development on the board of commissioners, advocating for and providing input for workforce development issues. Each of the four counties are represented by a county commissioner, a city representative, and a township representative. In addition, cities with populations over 10,000 are entitled a member, and two school board representatives are required. Other special interest members are chosen to meet the needs of the federal EDA requirements for Economic Development Commissions. The MMDC currently has 21 commission board member seats and meets five times a year.

Willmar Lakes Area Vision 2040. Strategy #2 Workgroup: Economic Diversity. This group conducts strategic planning for the future of the Willmar Lakes Area (Willmar and Kandiyohi counties). The overall plan outlines four goals and 21 strategies which align with strategic plans that are underway, while others are new and address the region's future as a center of excellence. Strategic Goal Two is to strengthen the region's occupational diversity through a strategic mix of workforce training, economic measurement, enhanced career options, and support for entrepreneurs. This sub-committee developed a promotional video of manufacturing companies in Kandiyohi County and conducted a tour of businesses for Willmar High School teachers and students. Willmar has a high percentage of Latino- and Somali-owned businesses in its downtown area. For its next project, the committee is exploring ways to help small minority-owned businesses thrive and grow. CMJTS holds a seat in this subcommittee, representing workforce development. Key members include city and county elected officials and staff, the

Kandiyohi County and City of Willmar Economic Development Commission, the Willmar Lakes Area Chamber of Commerce, Ridgewater College, and the MinnWest Technology Campus.

Regarding economic development services and providers, each partner within CareerForce locations have varying roles for staff participating in reaching out and partnering with economic development.

7. Describe any regional coordination of administrative cost arrangements, including the pooling of funds for administrative costs, as appropriate. Also, please describe regional coordination of transportation and other supportive services.

Each local area has well-established cooperative agreements in place with multiple partners/stakeholders and those will continue.

Regionally, the Infrastructure Funding Agreement (IFA) is the main source of cost arrangements for all partners in CareerForce. Additional cost sharing agreements or cooperative agreements have been created when applicable. CS currently contracts with CMJTS to provide accounting and fiscal services. Short-term human resource service contracts have been drafted. A contract with Vocational Rehabilitation Services to provide Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) is in place for both LWDA 5 and 17.

Wagner-Peyser has not had an additional coordination of cost arrangements outside of the cost sharing agreement through the IFA requirements. Eligibility-based programs provide the transportation and support services to our customers. If Wagner-Peyser customers are co-enrolled in Title 1 eligibility-based programs, they would have access to transportation and support services.

Communication between all partners when clients are co-enrolled ensures there are no duplication of support services, but rather a blending and braiding of program funds to best serve the client.

CareerForce staff participate on local committees regarding transportation, housing, and childcare to help be part of the solution. The committees address issues in a collaborative effort.

Region 3 Leadership & Planning Board
Mission, Vision, Values, Statement of Purpose, Guiding Principles, and Goals

---

VISION

The Region 3 Leadership & Planning Board is committed to the establishment of regional strategies that are progressive, innovative, collaborative, and responsive to the needs of its communities within the 13-county region.

MISSION

To improve the economic prosperity of business and jobseekers in Region 3 by collaborating with key stakeholders to provide successful solutions to workforce, education, and economic development needs.

STATEMENT OF VALUES

The Region 3 Leadership & Planning Board:

- Values trust, fairness, and integrity in all interactions.
- Promotes opportunities for jobseekers to find gainful employment and for employers to find skilled labor.
- Embraces diverse and immigrant populations and promotes hiring within the communities.
- Establishes itself as the regional convener of workforce, education, and economic development.
- Encourages stakeholder participation in finding responsive solutions to workforce needs through analysis of regional labor market data and the cooperative development of regional service strategies.

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

Under the Workforce Innovations and Opportunity Act of 2014 (WIOA), the purpose of the regional board includes these regional collaborations:

- Prepare the regional plan.
- Establish regional service strategies, including cooperative service delivery agreements.
- Develop and implement sector initiatives for in-demand industry sectors or occupations in the region.
- Collect and analyze regional labor market data (in conjunction with the state).
- Establish administrative cost arrangements, including the pooling of funds for administrative costs, as appropriate, for the region.
- Coordinate supportive services, as appropriate, for the region.
- Coordinate services with the region's economic development providers.
- Establish an agreement concerning how the planning region will collectively negotiate and reach agreement with the Governor on local levels of performance for, and report on, the performance accountability measures for the local areas or the planning region.
- MFIP/TANF/SNAP agencies

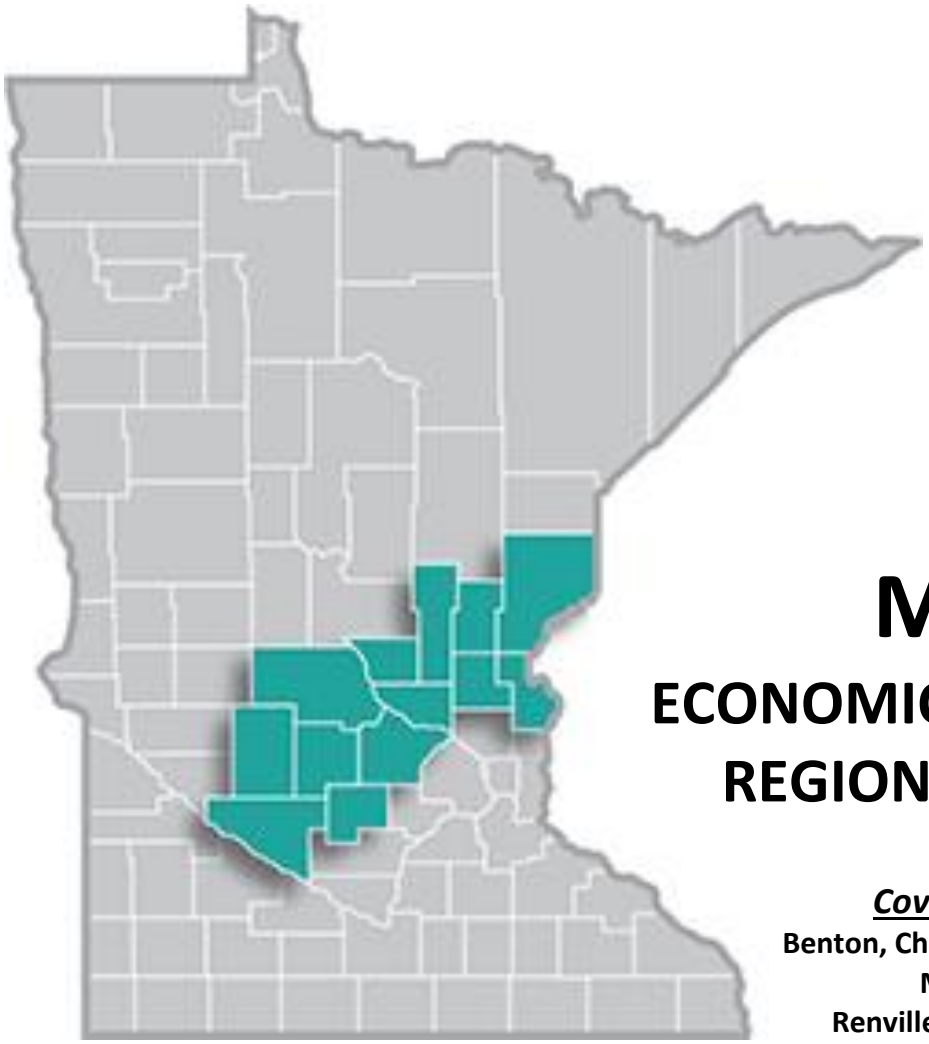
GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR ASSESSMENT OF THE REGION 3 LEADERSHIP & PLANNING BOARD'S PROGRESS

The Region 3 Leadership & Planning Board will continue to review and assess its work by establishing continuous improvement and assessment processes to ensure success, including

- **Collaboration:** Establish the board(s) as the convener of workforce development, education, and economic development in the region and local areas.
- **Value Stakeholders:** Value stakeholder input, bring key stakeholders to the table to provide progressive, innovative, collaborative, and responsive solutions to regional issues and needs.
- **Effective Communication:** Integrate information, sharing with local workforce boards and key stakeholders.
- **Promote Diversity:** Understand and respect individuals, increase staff hiring in diverse populations, promote diverse populations in the employer community, etc.
- **Ethical Decision Making**: Keep the clients, both jobseeker and employer, as the focal point of all decision making in the region.
- **Partnerships**: Maintain and develop existing and new One-Stop partnerships that lead to the cooperative and coordinated delivery of unduplicated workforce development programs and services in the region; focused on quality customer service delivery to jobseekers and employers.

REGION 3 LEADERSHIP & PLANNING BOARD GOALS (R3LPB)

Please refer to the Regional Workplan for detailed R3LPB goals, timelines, and expected outcomes.



CENTRAL MINNESOTA

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT REGIONS 6E, 7E, and 7W

Covering the following counties:

Benton, Chisago, Isanti, Kanabec, Kandiyohi, McLeod, Meeker, Mille Lacs, Pine, Renville, Sherburne, Stearns, and Wright

2019 REGIONAL PROFILE

Updated September 20, 2019

Luke Greiner
Regional Analyst, Central & Southwest Minnesota
Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development
St. Cloud WorkForce Center
1542 Northway Dr. Door 2
St. Cloud, MN 56303
Office: 320-308-5378
E-mail: luke.greiner@state.mn.us
Web: http://mn.gov/deed/data/

DEMOGRAPHICS

POPULATION CHANGE

The Central Minnesota planning region includes a total of 13 counties, covering three separate Economic Development Regions (EDRs) and two Workforce Development Boards (WDBs). Central Minnesota was home to just over 716,000 people in 2018, comprising 13 percent of the state's total population. The region welcomed a 4.7 percent increase in population over the past 8 years, primarily due to rapid gains in EDR 7W. That made Central Minnesota the second fastest growing region of the state, accounting for over 10.5 percent of the state's population growth from 2010 to 2018. In comparison, Minnesota saw a 5.8 percent gain statewide (Table 1).

Table 1. Population Change 2010-2018

	2010 Population	2018 Estimates	2010-2018 Change Number	2010-2018 Change Percent
Central Minnesota	**684,001**	**716,384**	***+32,383***	***+4.7%***
Region 6E	**117,920**	**116,481**	***-1,439***	***-1.2%***
Kandiyohi Co.	42,239	42,855	*+616*	*+1.5%*
McLeod Co.	36,651	35,873	*-778*	*-2.1%*
Meeker Co.	23,300	23,141	*-159*	*-0.7%*
Renville Co.	15,730	14,612	*-1,118*	*-7.1%*
Region 7E	**163,789**	**167,717**	***+3,928***	***+2.4%***
Chisago Co.	53,887	55,922	*+2,035*	*+3.8%*
Isanti Co.	37,816	39,966	*+2,150*	*+5.7%*
Kanabec Co.	16,239	16,207	*-32*	*-0.2%*
Mille Lacs Co.	26,097	26,139	*+42*	*+0.2%*
Pine Co.	29,750	29,483	*-267*	*-0.9%*
Region 7W	**402,292**	**432,186**	***+29,894***	***+7.4%***
Benton Co.	38,451	40,545	*+2,094*	*+5.4%*
Sherburne Co.	88,499	96,036	*+7,537*	*+8.5%*
Stearns Co.	150,642	159,256	*+8,614*	*+5.7%*
Wright Co.	124,700	136,349	*+11,649*	*+9.3%*
Minnesota	**5,303,925**	**5,611,179**	***+307,254***	***+5.8%***

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Population Estimates

Eight of the 13 counties in the region gained population from 2010 to 2018, with the other 5 seeing decreases. Wright and Sherburne were the 3rd and 6th fastest growing counties in the state, respectively. In fact, 5 of the 13 counties in the region were among the 15 fastest growing counties in the state since 2010, also including Stearns, Isanti, and Benton. In contrast, Renville was the second fastest declining county in the state, and is now the smallest county in the region.

COMPONENTS OF POPULATION CHANGE

With a young and fast-growing population, Central Minnesota experienced a natural increase – more births than deaths – of 30,359 people so far this decade. In addition, the region gained residents from in-migration, with 2,214 more people moving into the region than moving out. However, this was marked by domestic out-migration (meaning more people moved out of the region to other parts of the state or other states than moved in), but the region did enjoy positive in-migration of more than 7,550 additional residents from international sources (Table 2).

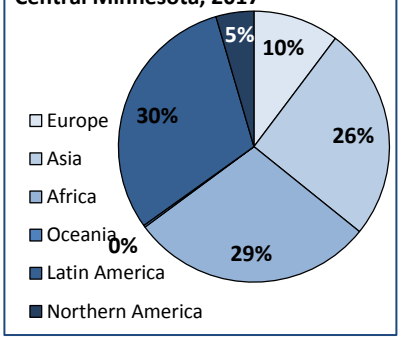
Table 2. Estimates of the Components of Population Change, 2010-2018

	Total Change	*Natural Increase*	Vital Events: Births	Vital Events: Deaths	Net Migration: *Total*	Net Migration: *International*	Net Migration: *Domestic*
Central	*+32,404*	*+30,359*	72,277	41,918	*+2,214*	*+7,550*	*-5,336*
Minnesota	*+307,254*	*+228,289*	570,171	341,882	*+81,671*	*+107,830*	*-26,159*

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Population Estimates Program

Central Minnesota is now home to 25,657 foreign born residents, or about 3.7 percent of the total population. The number of immigrants in the region increased by 43.4 percent since 2010, nearly doubling the statewide growth rate of 22.2 percent. Almost one-third (7,789 people) of these immigrants were from Latin America, while the second largest number of foreign born residents were from Africa, accounting for three in every ten immigrants. The fastest growing wave of new immigrants to Central Minnesota came from Africa, rising by 5,088 people from 2010 to 2017, a 214 percent jump. About one-quarter of immigrants were from Asia, after increasing almost 30 percent since 2010, and about 10 percent were from Europe and 5 percent were from Canada (Figure 1).

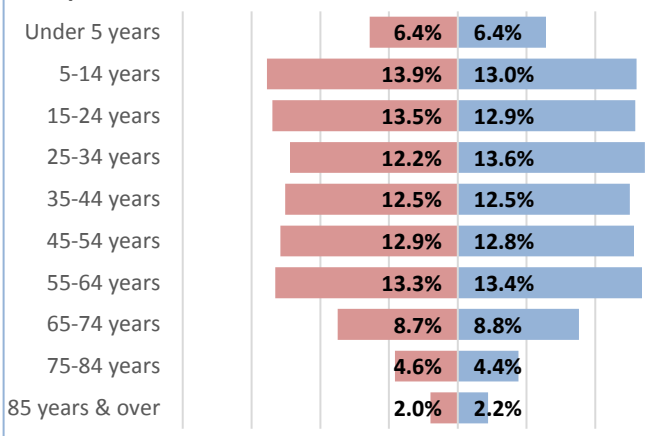
Figure 1. Place of Birth for the Foreign Born Population in Central Minnesota, 2017



POPULATION BY AGE GROUP

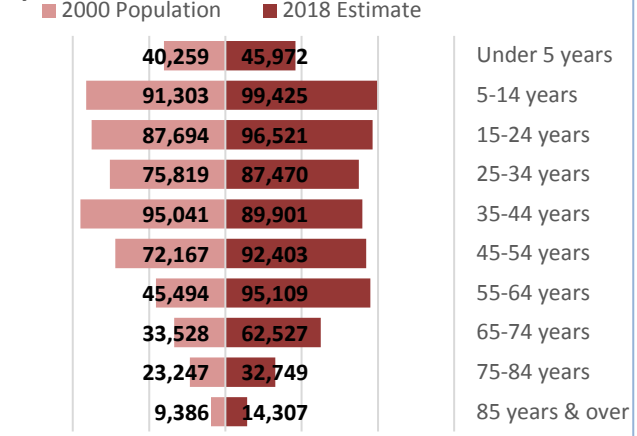
Central Minnesota has a slightly younger population than the rest of the state, with 33.8 percent of the population under 25 years of age, compared to 32.3 percent statewide. Central Minnesota also has a similar percentage of people aged 55 years and older, but a slightly smaller share of people between 25 and 54 years of age, often considered the "prime working years" (Figure 2).

Figure 2. Percentage of Population by Age Group, 2018



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Population Estimates

Figure 3. Central Minnesota Population Pyramid, 2000-2018



Source: U.S. Census Bureau

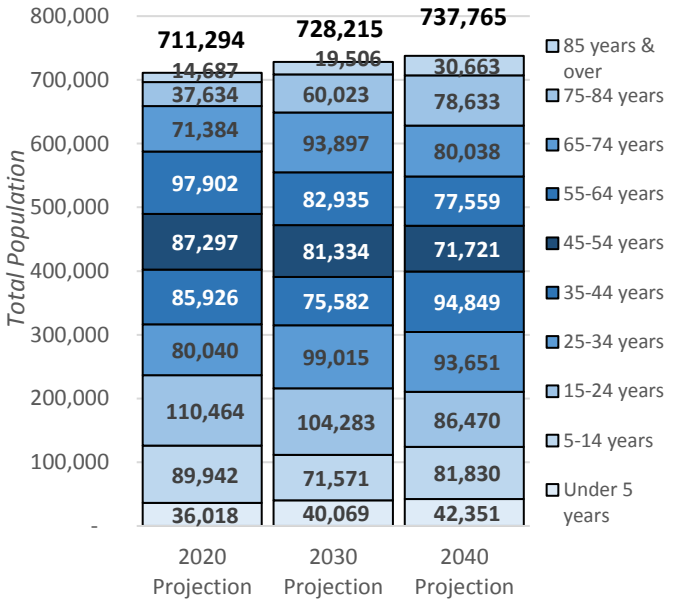
While the number of younger residents was rising rapidly as young, married couple families moved into the region, the number of residents aged 45 years and over was also expanding quickly because of size of the Baby Boom generation – people born between 1946 and 1964. The only age group to experience a decline in the last 18 years was the 35 to 44 year age group, right in the middle of "prime working" age and a direct result of the void Baby Boomers are leaving behind (Figure 3).

POPULATION PROJECTIONS BY AGE GROUP

The entire region is projected to continue growing through 2040. According to population projections from the Minnesota State Demographic Center, Central Minnesota is expected to gain 26,471 net new residents from 2020 to 2040, a 3.7 percent increase (Figure 4). In comparison, the state of Minnesota is projected to grow 8.8 percent.

Central Minnesota is projected to add over 65,000 people aged 65 years and over, a 53 percent increase. The region is also expected to gain people in the 25 to 44 year old age group, as well as a corresponding increase in children under 5 years of age. In contrast, Central Minnesota is expected to lose school-aged children and young adults from 5 to 24 years of age, as well as people from 45 to 64 years of age – as the Baby Boom generation moves through the population pyramid.

Figure 4. Central Minnesota Population Projections by Age Group, 2020-2040



Source: Minnesota State Demographic Center

POPULATION BY RACE

Central Minnesota's population is less diverse than the state's, but is becoming more diverse over time. In 2017, 92.8 percent of the region's residents reported white alone as their race, compared to 83.7 percent of residents statewide. The region had smaller percentages of every other race than the state, and at 3.5 percent, Central Minnesota also had a lower percentage of people reporting Hispanic or Latino origin than the state (Table 3).

Six of the 13 counties in the region had more than 94 percent of the population reporting white alone as their race, whereas Stearns and Kandiyohi County reported the most diverse populations, thanks to large Black and Hispanic populations, respectively. Mille Lacs and Pine were also more diverse due to larger American Indian populations.

Table 3. Race and Hispanic Origin, 2017	Central Minnesota			Minnesota	
	Number	Percent	*Change from 2000-2017*	Percent	*Change from 2000-2017*
Total	**697,631**	**100.0%**	***+21.6%***	**100.0%**	***+11.6%***
White	647,101	92.8%	*+17.0%*	83.7%	*+4.5%*
Black or African American	16,919	2.4%	*+425.9%*	6.0%	*+90.4%*
American Indian & Alaska Native	4,614	0.7%	*+26.6%*	1.0%	*+4.7%*
Asian & Other Pac. Islander	8,512	1.2%	*+88.7%*	4.7%	*+79.2%*
Some Other Race	8,256	1.2%	*+71.1%*	1.7%	*+45.3%*
Two or More Races	12,229	1.8%	*+153.3%*	2.8%	*+86.7%*
Hispanic or Latino origin	24,339	3.5%	*+115.1%*	5.2%	*+98.5%*

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2013-2017 American Community Survey

EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

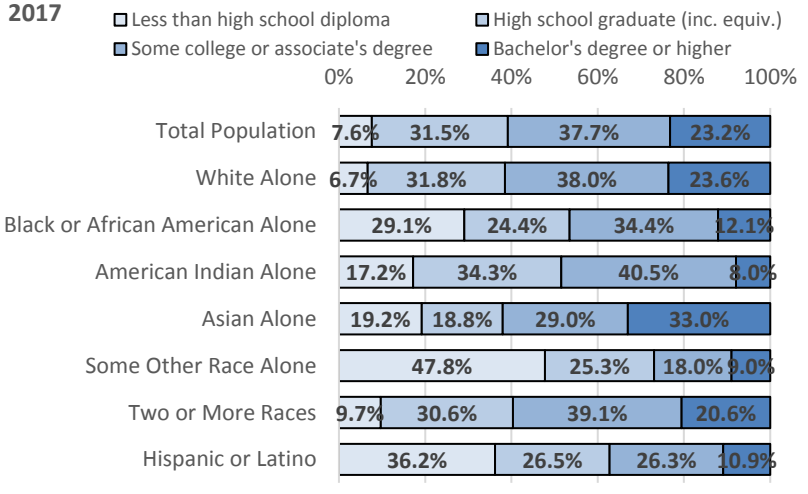
With 33.8 percent of adults aged 18 years and over having a college degree, Central Minnesota has lower educational attainment than the state, where 42.7 percent of adults have an associate, bachelor's, or advanced degree. However, 12.5 percent of adults in Central Minnesota have an associate degree, which outpaces the state. Another 26.8 percent have some college experience, but no degree, compared to 23.8 percent statewide. Data show that Central Minnesota has a younger population that is focused on advancing their education.

Table 4. Educational Attainment for the Adult Population, 2017	Central Minnesota		Minnesota
	Number	Percent	Percent
Total, 18 years & over	**524,132**	**100.0%**	**100.0%**
Less than high school	42,787	8.2%	7.8%
High school graduate (incl. equiv.)	163,581	31.2%	25.6%
Some college, no degree	140,719	26.8%	23.8%
Associate's degree	65,302	12.5%	10.6%
Bachelor's degree	80,807	15.4%	21.7%
Advanced degree	30,936	5.9%	10.4%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2013-2017 American Community Survey

Educational attainment varies widely by race and ethnicity in Central Minnesota. Over 36 percent of Hispanic or Latino residents or people of Some Other Race had less than a high school diploma, compared to just 6.7 percent of white residents. However, over 30 percent of Black or African Americans, American Indians, and people of Two or More Races have attended some college or earned an associate's degree, and 33 percent of Asian residents had a bachelor's degree or higher, which was higher than the white population, where about 24 percent had bachelor's degrees or higher (Figure 5).

Figure 5. Central Minnesota Educational Attainment for the population aged 25 years & over by Race or Origin, 2017



Source: 2013-2017 American Community Survey

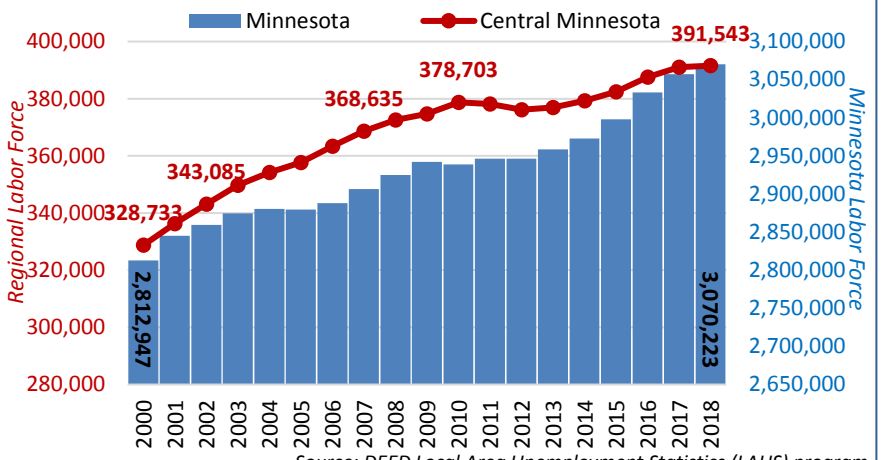
LABOR FORCE

LABOR FORCE CHANGE

According to data from DEED's Local Area Unemployment Statistics program, Central Minnesota had an annual average labor force count of just over 391,500 workers in 2018. The regional labor force has increased rapidly since 2000, adding 62,810 new workers over the past 18 years. As such, the labor force in Central Minnesota actually reached a new peak in 2018, and is still seeing growth (Figure 6).

Central Minnesota added 50,000 workers from 2000 to 2010, then added just 23,000 workers from 2010 to 2018. Despite recent gains, the labor market in Central Minnesota continues to tighten, with fewer unemployed workers available. There were just over 13,000 unemployed workers in 2018, down from a high of more than 30,000 unemployed workers in both 2009 and 2010. These labor force constraints will have a substantial impact on the regional economy.

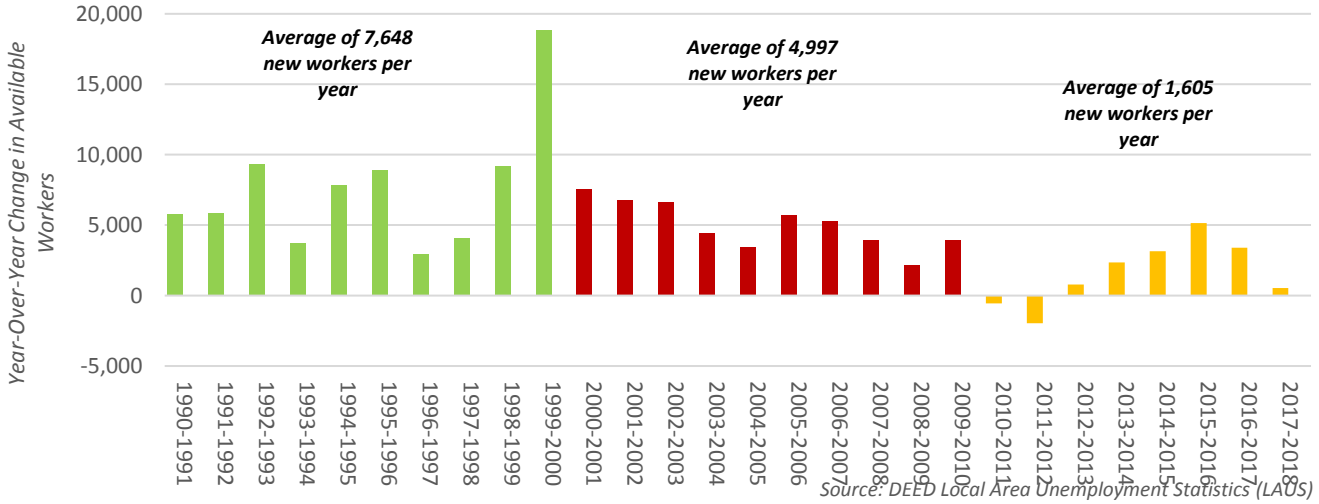
Figure 6. Annual Labor Force Estimates, 2000-2018



Source: DEED Local Area Unemployment Statistics (LAUS) program

Averaging a net gain of 7,648 additional labor force participants per year between 1990 and 2000, employers in Central Minnesota were able to tap into a large and growing pool of talented workers. Although the regional labor force and economy continue to grow, the rate of labor force growth is slowing down considerably, demonstrated by Central Minnesota adding an average of only 1,605 workers per year from 2010 to 2018 (Figure 7). Increasingly tight labor markets and a growing scarcity of workers is now recognized as one of the most significant barriers to future economic growth in Central Minnesota. In the face of these constraints, it has become evident that a more diverse workforce in terms of age, gender, race, ethnicity, disability status, and immigration has been and will continue to be a vital source of the workers that employers need to succeed. As the white, native-born workforce continues to age, younger workers of different races or from different countries will comprise the fastest growing segment of the labor force.

Figure 7. Annual Change in Central Minnesota Labor Force, 1990-2018



Source: DEED Local Area Unemployment Statistics (LAUS)

LABOR FORCE PROJECTIONS

If Central Minnesota's population changes at the projected rates shown in Figure 4 above, the region would be expected to see a slight decrease in the labor force over the next decade from applying current labor force participation rates to future population projections by age group. This departure from a growing labor force to a shrinking one is unprecedented in the region.

Aside from an overall decrease, the labor force will also see a significant shift over time, with gains in the number of workers aged 65 years and over against large declines in the number of workers aged 45 to 64 years. However, the region is still expected to see gains in the number of 20 to 44 year olds (see Table 5). In step with workforce declines, the shift in aging will lead to an even tighter labor market in the future with employers needing to respond to the changing labor force availability.

Table 5. Central Minnesota Labor Force Projections, 2020-2030

	2020 Labor Force Projection	2030 Labor Force Projection	*2020-2030 Change*	
			Numeric	*Percent*
16 to 19 years	24,887	21,207	*-3,680*	*-14.8%*
20 to 24 years	49,056	50,582	*+1,526*	*+3.1%*
25 to 44 years	145,905	153,493	*+7,588*	*+5.2%*
45 to 54 years	77,523	72,228	*-5,295*	*-6.8%*
55 to 64 years	70,349	59,594	*-10,755*	*-15.3%*
65 to 74 years	18,419	24,228	*+5,809*	*+31.5%*
75 years & over	3,163	4,807	*+1,645*	*+52.0%*
Total Labor Force	**389,302**	**386,139**	***-3,163***	***-0.8%***

Source: calculated from Minnesota State Demographic Center population projections and 2013-2017 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

EMPLOYMENT CHARACTERISTICS

With 70.4 percent of the population aged 16 years and over in the labor force, Central Minnesota had slightly higher labor force participation rates than the state's 69.9 percent. The region had slightly higher participation rates than the state in several age groups, with the overall rate trending higher because a higher percentage of Central Minnesota's labor force was younger (Table 6).

In contrast, the region had lower participation rates than the state for every race group except white, Asian or Other Pacific Islanders, and two or more races; and also had large unemployment rate disparities for minority groups similar to the state. The highest rates were reported for American Indians and Black or African Americans. Central Minnesota also had nearly 20,000 workers with disabilities in the workforce, despite lower participation rates and higher unemployment rates than the general population.

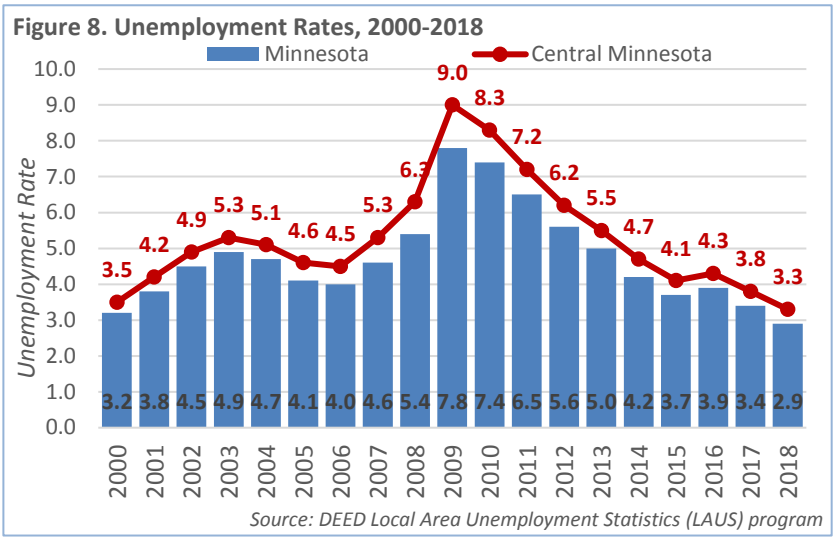
Table 6. Central Minnesota Employment Characteristics, 2017

	Central Minnesota			**Minnesota**	
Age Group	Labor Force	Labor Force Partic. Rate	Unemp. Rate	Labor Force Partic. Rate	Unemp. Rate
Total Labor Force	**382,729**	**70.4%**	**4.1%**	**69.9%**	**4.3%**
16 to 19 years	22,240	57.9%	10.6%	52.6%	12.8%
20 to 24 years	40,522	86.5%	6.5%	84.2%	7.1%
25 to 44 years	153,131	87.9%	4.0%	88.4%	3.9%
45 to 54 years	86,427	88.8%	2.9%	87.2%	3.0%
55 to 64 years	63,510	71.9%	2.9%	72.5%	3.2%
65 to 74 years	14,308	25.8%	1.7%	27.4%	2.7%
75 years & over	2,597	6.0%	2.2%	6.1%	2.8%
Employment Characteristics by Gender					
Male	202,358	73.7%	4.6%	73.7%	4.8%
Female	180,347	67.1%	3.5%	66.1%	3.8%
Employment Characteristics by Race & Hispanic Origin					
White alone	360,424	70.6%	3.7%	69.7%	3.6%
Black or African American	6,990	62.2%	12.7%	69.8%	11.0%
American Indian & Alaska Native	1,690	50.8%	15.2%	58.6%	13.3%
Asian or Other Pacific Islanders	4,968	75.6%	7.4%	71.1%	5.2%
Some Other Race	3,751	72.8%	7.8%	77.2%	7.5%
Two or More Races	4,847	73.8%	8.7%	72.5%	9.1%
Hispanic or Latino	11,108	73.3%	7.8%	76.2%	7.2%
Employment Characteristics by Disability					
With Any Disability	19,838	54.3%	8.2%	52.3%	9.5%
Employment Characteristics by Educational Attainment					
Population 25 to 64 years	303,077	84.2%	3.5%	84.1%	3.5%
Less than H.S. Diploma	14,243	68.5%	4.6%	65.4%	4.9%
H.S. Diploma or Equivalent	81,059	79.6%	2.9%	78.7%	2.9%
Some College or Assoc. Degree	127,616	86.1%	3.0%	85.2%	3.5%
Bachelor's Degree or Higher	80,089	90.0%	1.8%	89.6%	2.1%

Source: 2013-2017 American Community Survey, 5-Year Estimates

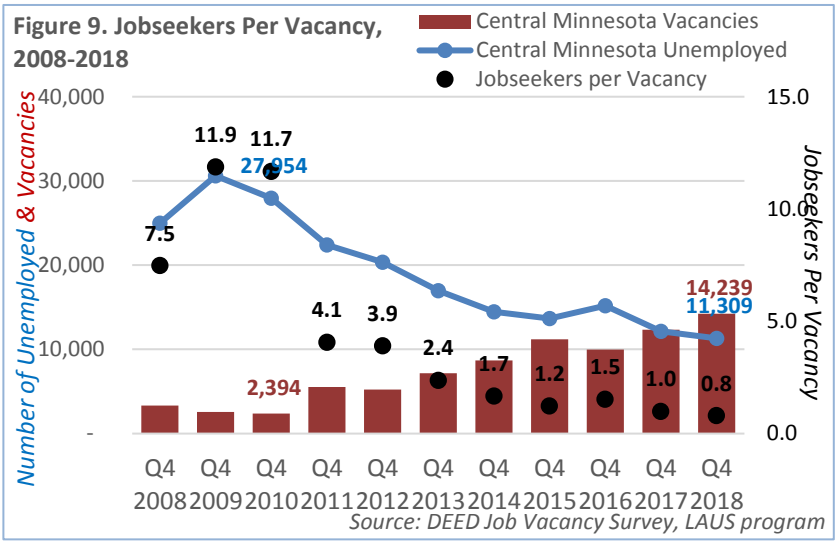
UNEMPLOYMENT RATE

Central Minnesota has consistently reported slightly higher unemployment rates than Minnesota, regardless of the state of the economy. According to Local Area Unemployment Statistics, the region's unemployment rate hovered at least a half percent above the state rate from 2005 to 2008, before rising as high as 9.0 percent in 2009, then dropping back to prerecession levels in 2014. At 3.3 percent in 2018, unemployment rates were at historic lows in the region (Figure 8). The highest rates of unemployment in the region were consistently found in Kanabec, Mille Lacs, and Pine County.



JOBSEEKERS PER VACANCY

As the number of available workers has declined, the region's labor market has tightened. One clear demonstration of this is the ratio of unemployed jobseekers per vacancy, which dipped to 0.8-to-1 in the fourth quarter of 2018. According to 2018 Job Vacancy Survey results, there were 14,239 openings reported by employers compared to 11,309 unemployed jobseekers in the region. The ratio climbed as high as 11.9-to-1 during the recession, but has dropped steadily since then, to historically low levels in 2018 (Figure 9).



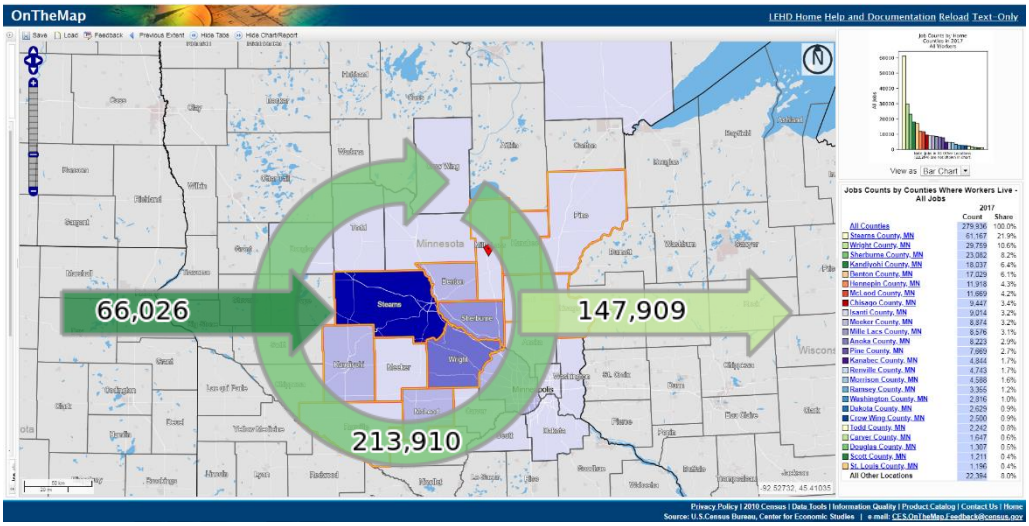
COMMUTE SHED AND LABOR SHED

According to commuting data from the U.S. Census Bureau, Central Minnesota has the most mobile workers in the state. Just over 40 percent of the region's working residents drive outside the region for work, primarily to the Twin Cities metro area. Central Minnesota is a net exporter of labor, having more workers than available jobs. In sum, 213,910 workers both lived and worked in Central Minnesota in 2017, while 147,909 workers who lived in the region drove to surrounding counties for work (Table 7 and Figure 10).

Table 7. Central Minnesota Inflow/Outflow Job Counts (All Jobs), 2017	2017	
	Count	Share
Employed in the Selection Area	279,936	100.0%
Employed in the Selection Area but Living Outside	66,026	23.6%
Employed and Living in the Selection Area	213,910	76.4%
Living in the Selection Area	361,819	100.0%
Living in the Selection Area but Employed Outside	147,909	40.9%
Living and Employed in the Selection Area	213,910	59.1%
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, OnTheMap		

Stearns County is the largest employment center in the region, followed closely by Hennepin County as employers in the region both lose and draw workers from the Twin Cities metro area. Other counties drawing large amounts of workers include Wright, Sherburne, and Kandiyohi County. Hennepin, Anoka, and Ramsey Counties attract over a quarter of workers in the Central Minnesota region (Figure 10).

Figure 10. Central Minnesota Labor and Commute Shed, 2017

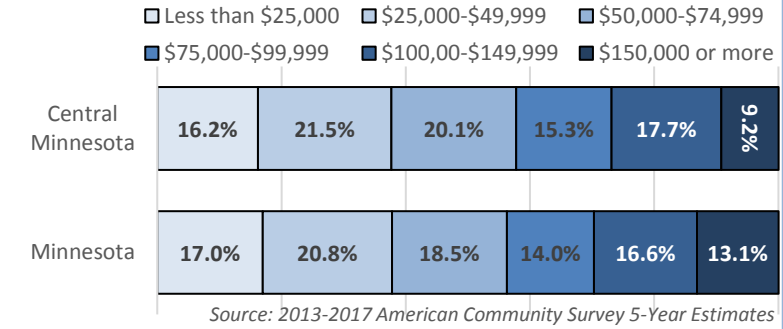


INCOMES, WAGES AND OCCUPATIONS

HOUSEHOLD INCOMES

Household incomes in Central Minnesota were slightly higher than the rest of the state. The median household income was $65,949 in 2017, compared to $65,699 in Minnesota. About 37.7 percent of the households in the region had incomes below $50,000 in 2017, the same as the state. Another 35.4 percent earned between $50,000 and $100,000, and 9.2 percent earned over $150,000 per year (Figure 11).

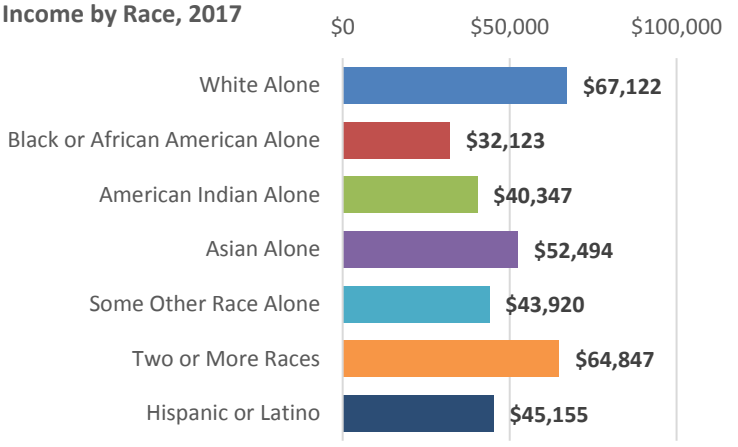
Figure 11. Household Incomes, 2017



Source: 2013-2017 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

Median household income varied by race or origin in the region. Whites accounted for over 95 percent of households reporting incomes in 2017, and had the highest median income level. Black or African American households reported the lowest incomes in Region 7W, with a median of $32,123, which is less than half of the white alone median household income (Figure 12). Median incomes were also about $25,000 lower for American Indian and Hispanic or Latino households than for whites, while households of two or more races were the only group with incomes that were similar to whites.

Figure 12. Central Minnesota Median Household Income by Race, 2017



Source: 2013-2017 American Community Survey

COST OF LIVING

According to DEED's Cost of Living tool, the basic needs budget for an average Minnesota family (which consists of 2 adults and 1 child, with 1 full-time and 1 part-time worker) is $55,548 in 2018. The cost of living for a similar family in Central Minnesota was $53,076 – which was the second highest in the state, behind only the Twin Cities metro area. Because of all the commuting, the region has higher transportation costs than the state, and also had very similar housing costs. The highest monthly costs were for transportation, food, and housing, but child care costs rise rapidly in the region as well. In order to meet the basic needs cost of living for the region, the two workers in the family scenario described would need to earn $17.01 per hour working a combined 60 hours per week (Table 8).

DEED's Cost of Living tool provides different estimates for household compositions including single people, partnered couples, and up to 4 children. For a single person living alone and working full-time, the estimated yearly cost in Central Minnesota would be $31,212, which would require an hourly wage of $15.01 to meet the basic needs standard of living (Table 8).

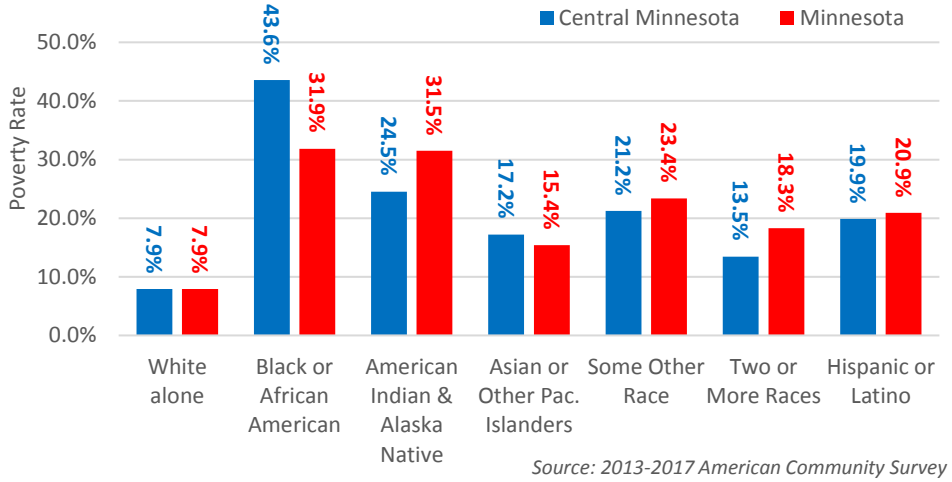
Table 8. Central Minnesota Cost of Living, 2018

Family Composition	Number of Workers	Yearly Cost of Living	Hourly Wage Required	Monthly Costs						
				Child Care	Food	Health Care	Housing	Trans-portation	Other	Taxes
Central Minnesota										
Single, 0 children	1 FT	$31,212	$15.01	$0	$326	$137	$727	$698	$323	$390
Single, 1 child	1 FT	$49,044	$23.58	$716	$481	$325	$939	$703	$436	$487
2 parents, 1 child	**1 FT, 1 PT**	**$53,076**	**$17.01**	**$358**	**$745**	**$487**	**$939**	**$815**	**$517**	**$562**
2 parents, 2 children	2 FT	$78,528	$18.88	$1,228	$972	$495	$1,312	$860	$702	$975
State of Minnesota										
Single, 0 children	1 FT	$30,900	$14.86	$0	$335	$137	$759	$629	$336	$379
2 parents, 1 child	**1 FT, 1 PT**	**$55,548**	**$17.80**	**$511**	**$764**	**$484**	**$986**	**$729**	**$537**	**$618**

Source: DEED Cost of Living tool

Overall, Central Minnesota's poverty rate was 9.2 percent, which was just below the statewide rate of 10.5 percent. Like incomes, poverty levels varied widely by race and origin. It was estimated that over 43 percent of the region's Black or African American population was below the poverty level in 2017, compared to just 7.9 percent of the white population. Likewise, poverty levels hovered around 20 percent for American Indians, people of some other race, and people of Hispanic or Latino origin. Only 17 percent of Asian residents and 13.5 percent of people of two or more races were below the poverty level in 2017. In almost all cases, the region's poverty rate was lower than the state's poverty rate, a reflection of the higher household incomes as noted above (Figure 13).

Figure 13. Percent Below the Poverty Level by Race or Origin, 2017



Source: 2013-2017 American Community Survey

WAGES AND OCCUPATIONS

According to DEED's Occupational Employment Statistics program, the median hourly wage for all occupations in Central Minnesota was $18.94 in the first quarter of 2019, which was the 3rd highest wage level of the six planning regions in the state. Central Minnesota's median wage was about $2.00 below the state's median hourly wage, equaling roughly 90 percent of the statewide wage rate, and $3.84 below the median hourly wage in the 7-County Twin Cities metro area, which would amount to $8,000 less per year for a full-time worker. The highest median wage in Central Minnesota for all occupations was found in EDR 7E (Table 9).

Table 9. Occupational Employment Statistics by Region, 1st Qtr. 2019	Median Hourly Wage	Estimated Regional Employment
Central Minnesota	**$18.94**	**286,270**
EDR 6E - Southwest Central	$18.15	52,370
EDR 7E - East Central	$19.30	45,270
EDR 7W - Central	$19.10	188,620
Twin Cities Metro Area	$22.78	1,793,870
Northeast Minnesota	$18.57	144,430
Northwest Minnesota	$18.09	223,830
Southeast Minnesota	$19.28	241,540
Southwest Minnesota	$18.02	176,430
State of Minnesota	**$20.95**	**2,867,700**

Source: DEED Occupational Employment Statistics

Based on location quotient, Central Minnesota stands out for having higher concentrations of production, education, training and library; farming, construction and extraction, installation and maintenance, healthcare support, and transportation and material moving workers than the state. The largest occupations in the region include office and administrative support, production, and sales related positions (Table 10).

Table 10. Occupational Employment Statistics, 2019

Occupational Group	Central Minnesota				State of Minnesota		
	Median Hourly Wage	Estimated Regional Employment	*Share of Total Employment*	*Location Quotient*	Median Hourly Wage	Estimated Statewide Employment	*Share of Total Employment*
Total, All Occupations	**$18.94**	**286,270**	***100.0%***	***1.0***	**$20.95**	**2,867,700**	***100.0%***
Office & Administrative Support	$18.22	39,130	*13.7%*	*1.0*	$19.10	405,970	*14.2%*
Production	$18.88	33,920	*11.8%*	*1.6*	$18.68	214,230	*7.5%*
Sales & Related	$13.96	29,050	*10.1%*	*1.1*	$14.97	277,070	*9.7%*
Education, Training & Library	$22.85	23,270	*8.1%*	*1.4*	$24.22	166,300	*5.8%*
Healthcare Practitioners & Technical	$32.31	20,690	*7.2%*	*1.1*	$35.79	190,720	*6.7%*
Transportation & Material Moving	$18.65	20,530	*7.2%*	*1.2*	$18.48	177,580	*6.2%*
Food Preparation & Serving Related	$11.60	14,780	*5.2%*	*0.6*	$11.90	242,170	*8.4%*
Management	$42.76	13,540	*4.7%*	*0.8*	$51.26	171,250	*6.0%*
Construction & Extraction	$26.03	13,430	*4.7%*	*1.3*	$28.07	100,510	*3.5%*
Personal Care & Service	$12.72	12,750	*4.5%*	*0.9*	$12.90	144,070	*5.0%*
Installation, Maintenance & Repair	$22.08	12,010	*4.2%*	*1.2*	$23.13	100,030	*3.5%*
Healthcare Support	$16.63	10,300	*3.6%*	*1.2*	$16.82	83,380	*2.9%*
Business & Financial Operations	$29.04	9,830	*3.4%*	*0.6*	$33.03	164,510	*5.7%*
Building, Grounds Cleaning & Maint.	$14.25	8,230	*2.9%*	*1.0*	$14.97	85,820	*3.0%*
Community & Social Service	$22.84	5,250	*1.8%*	*0.9*	$22.73	57,870	*2.0%*
Architecture & Engineering	$32.85	4,680	*1.6%*	*0.8*	$37.53	56,070	*2.0%*
Protective Service	$24.03	4,520	*1.6%*	*1.0*	$21.52	44,390	*1.5%*
Computer & Mathematical	$32.26	4,470	*1.6%*	*0.5*	$40.96	96,020	*3.3%*
Arts, Design, Entertainment & Media	$18.75	2,860	*1.0%*	*0.7*	$24.35	39,670	*1.4%*
Life, Physical & Social Science	$29.05	1,610	*0.6%*	*0.6*	$33.54	26,210	*0.9%*
Legal	$31.54	960	*0.3%*	*0.5*	$36.50	19,870	*0.7%*
Farming, Fishing & Forestry	$15.30	450	*0.2%*	*1.1*	$16.51	3,980	*0.1%*

Source: DEED Occupational Employment Statistics, Qtr. 1 2019

Not surprisingly, the lowest-paying jobs are concentrated in food prep and serving, building, grounds cleaning and maintenance, sales and related, personal care and service, and healthcare support, which tend to have lower experience and educational requirements. For the most part, the gap in pay between Central Minnesota and the state is also much lower in these jobs.

In contrast, the highest paying jobs are found in management, legal, architecture and engineering, computer and mathematical, healthcare practitioners, business and financial operations, 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 occupations.

JOB VACANCY SURVEY

Employers in Central Minnesota reported 14,239 job vacancies in the fourth quarter of 2017, which was the second highest number ever reported in the region, and an increase of almost 2,000 additional openings compared to the prior year. The median hourly wage offer was $13.76 across all occupations, but ranged from a low of $10.67 per hour for food prep and serving related workers, to more than $30 per hour for management and architecture and engineering occupations. Reflecting changing demand for occupations and for the workers to fill the openings, the median wage offer increased about $1.75 compared to 2013, a 15 percent increase.

The largest number of vacancies were in food prep and serving related occupations, followed by production, sales and related, office and administrative support, transportation and material moving, and personal care and service positions. Over 60 percent of the vacancies in the region were in these six occupational groups. Overall, 43 percent of the openings were part-time, just 28 percent required postsecondary education, and 34 percent required a year or more of experience (Table 11). In sum, educational requirements in the region had been stable or declining over the past 5 years, while previous work experience requirements were rising, largely the result of an expanding economy and tightening labor market.

Table 11. Central Minnesota Job Vacancy Survey Results, Qtr. 4 2018

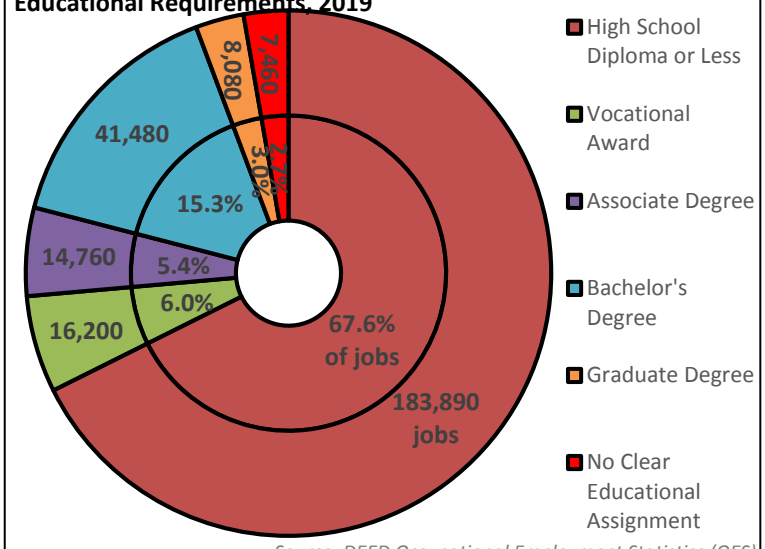
	Number of Total Vacancies	Percent Part-time	Percent Temporary or Seasonal	Requiring Post-Secondary Education	Requiring 1 or More Years of Work Experience	Requiring Certificate or License	Median Hourly Wage Offer
Total, All Occupations	**14,239**	**43%**	**10%**	**28%**	**34%**	**31%**	**$13.76**
Food Preparation & Serving Related	2,418	66%	4%	9%	8%	11%	$10.67
Production	1,305	6%	29%	11%	15%	2%	$13.99
Sales & Related	1,289	57%	2%	2%	36%	4%	$11.51
Office & Administrative Support	1,283	53%	2%	13%	29%	5%	$12.62
Transportation & Material Moving	1,241	33%	15%	5%	38%	60%	$15.74
Personal Care & Service	1,180	70%	9%	11%	9%	30%	$11.50
Installation, Maintenance & Repair	889	6%	3%	80%	84%	46%	$21.87
Building, Grounds Cleaning & Maint.	844	67%	12%	7%	6%	9%	$12.14
Healthcare Practitioners & Technical	701	35%	3%	95%	64%	97%	$25.86
Education, Training & Library	614	53%	31%	87%	68%	87%	$14.43
Construction & Extraction	554	15%	23%	30%	54%	56%	$23.21
Healthcare Support	480	64%	2%	29%	13%	75%	$13.00
Computer & Mathematical	371	0%	0%	86%	100%	16%	$29.49
Community & Social Service	188	30%	4%	69%	89%	64%	$19.83
Management	139	1%	5%	81%	90%	27%	$34.54
Protective Service	137	64%	9%	36%	39%	53%	$12.93
Business & Financial Operations	103	8%	3%	79%	82%	14%	$24.95
Arts, Design, Entertainment & Media	103	53%	0%	56%	56%	23%	$14.74
Life, Physical & Social Sciences	66	0%	2%	100%	100%	22%	$23.55
Architecture & Engineering	56	0%	4%	95%	91%	13%	$32.31

Source: DEED Job Vacancy Survey, Qtr. 4 2018

EDUCATIONAL REQUIREMENTS

Similar to Job Vacancy Survey results, data from DEED's Occupational Employment Statistics program shows that only about 30 percent of jobs in the region require postsecondary education for entry. The other two-thirds can be started with a high school diploma or less and some amount of on-the-job training (Figure 14).

Figure 14. Central Minnesota Share of Jobs by Educational Requirements, 2019



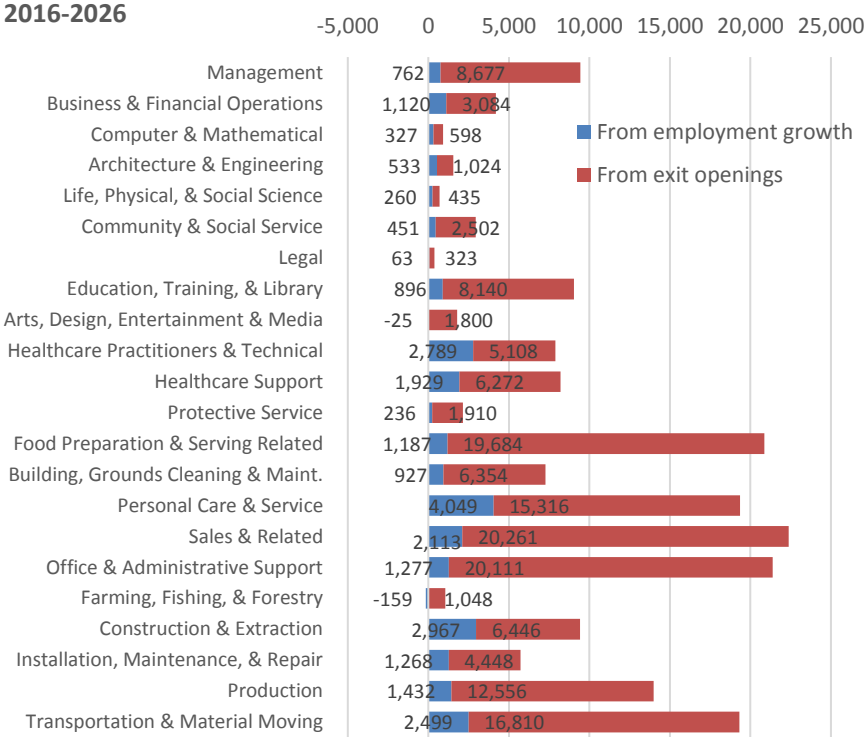
Source: DEED Occupational Employment Statistics (OES)

Certain careers – such as dentists, lawyers, and teachers – require a college education, while other jobs – including cost estimators, sales representatives, and correctional officers – do not. College is an excellent way to move up career ladders and open windows of opportunity to fields that would otherwise be closed, such as nursing or engineering. Many of these occupations offer high wages and are in high demand in the marketplace. While education is typically a worthwhile investment, college can be expensive – with average annual expenses ranging between $14,500 and almost $50,000 per year in Minnesota. For those who go to college, choice of major matters – different programs lead to jobs that earn different amounts of money.

EMPLOYMENT PROJECTIONS

Overall, the 13-county Central Minnesota planning area is projected to grow 8.6 percent from 2016 to 2026, a gain of 26,629 new jobs. That is the fastest of the 6 planning regions in the state. In addition, the region is also expected to need 157,485 replacement openings to fill jobs left vacant by retirements and other career changers. Personal care and service, construction and extraction, transportation and material moving, sales and related, and healthcare support and practitioners are expected to see the most new growth, but every occupational group will show some future demand either through new jobs or replacement openings (Figure 15).

Figure 15. Central Minnesota Employment Projections, 2016-2026



Source: DEED 2016-2026 Employment Outlook

OCCUPATIONS IN DEMAND

According to DEED's Occupations in Demand tool, there are over 200 occupations showing relatively high demand in the region, with training and education requirements ranging from short-term on-the-job training to postsecondary education to advanced degrees. These occupations are spread across different sectors but are also concentrated in the region's major industries. For example, nursing assistants, personal care aides, home health aides, licensed practical and registered nurses, slaughterers and meat packers, industrial engineers, carpenters, and truck drivers are all in high demand (Table 12).

Table 12. Central Minnesota Occupations in Demand by Education Level, 2019

Less than High School	High School or Equivalent	Some College or Assoc. Degree	Bachelor's Degree or Higher
Retail Salespersons ($25,362)	Heavy & Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers ($48,425)	Registered Nurses ($77,526)	Elementary School Teachers ($57,806)
Personal Care Aides ($26,819)	First-Line Supervisors of Retail Sales Workers ($41,149)	Nursing Assistants ($35,265)	Secondary School Teachers ($58,086)
Combined Food Prep & Serving Workers ($23,801)	Teacher Assistants ($30,937)	Licensed Practical Nurses ($46,876)	Software Developers, Applications ($85,496)
Cashiers ($24,482)	Carpenters ($50,024)	Automotive Service Techs. & Mechanics ($39,870)	Accountants & Auditors ($60,319)
Stock Clerks & Order Fillers ($25,685)	First-Line Supervisors of Food Prep Workers ($36,181)	Heating, Air Cond, (HVAC) & Refrig. Mechanics ($51,059)	Human Resources Specialists ($56,611)
Janitors & Cleaners ($29,692)	Welders, Cutters, Solderers, & Brazers ($46,676)	Machinists ($49,847)	Construction Managers ($78,625)
Laborers & Freight, Stock, & Material Movers ($34,830)	Secretaries & Administrative Assistants ($39,370)	Hairdressers, Hairstylists, & Cosmetologists ($30,265)	Industrial Engineers ($82,415)
Home Health Aides ($28,942)	Team Assemblers ($34,098)	Police & Sheriff's Patrol Officers ($63,297)	Market Research Analysts & Marketing Specs. ($52,743)
Cooks, Restaurant ($27,711)	Office Clerks, General ($36,597)	Electricians ($68,811)	Nurse Practitioners ($107,387)
Maids & Housekeeping Cleaners ($26,215)	Maintenance & Repair Workers ($43,720)	Radiologic (X-Ray) Technologists ($62,286)	Financial Managers ($90,684)

Source: DEED Occupations in Demand

ECONOMY

INDUSTRY EMPLOYMENT

According to DEED's Quarterly Census of Employment & Wages (QCEW) program, Central Minnesota was home to 17,925 business establishments providing an average of 276,393 covered jobs through 2018, with a total payroll of just over $12 billion. That was 9.6 percent of total employment in the state of Minnesota. Average annual wages were $43,746 in the region, which was about $14,000 lower than the state's average annual wage. Central Minnesota has led Greater Minnesota in job growth during the recovery since the recession, growing 6.8 percent in the past five years (Table 13).

Table 13. Central Minnesota Industry Employment Statistics, 2018

Geography	Number of Firms	Number of Jobs	Total Payroll	Average Annual Wage	*2013-2018*		*2017-2018*	
					Change in Jobs	*Percent Change*	*Change in Jobs*	*Percent Change*
Central Minnesota	**17,925**	**276,393**	**$12,090,968,947**	**$43,746**	***+17,590***	***+6.8%***	***+1,466***	***+0.5%***
Region 6E	3,562	53,972	$2,266,198,213	$41,988	*+2,149*	*+4.1%*	*+12*	*0.0%*
Region 7E	3,653	48,367	$1,910,621,111	$39,503	*+2,093*	*+4.5%*	*+247*	*+0.5%*
Region 7W	10,711	174,053	$7,914,149,623	$45,470	*+13,347*	*+8.3%*	*+1,206*	*+0.7%*
Minnesota	**175,424**	**2,881,172**	**$167,122,456,472**	**$58,005**	***+189,002***	***+7.0%***	***+27,207***	***+1.0%***

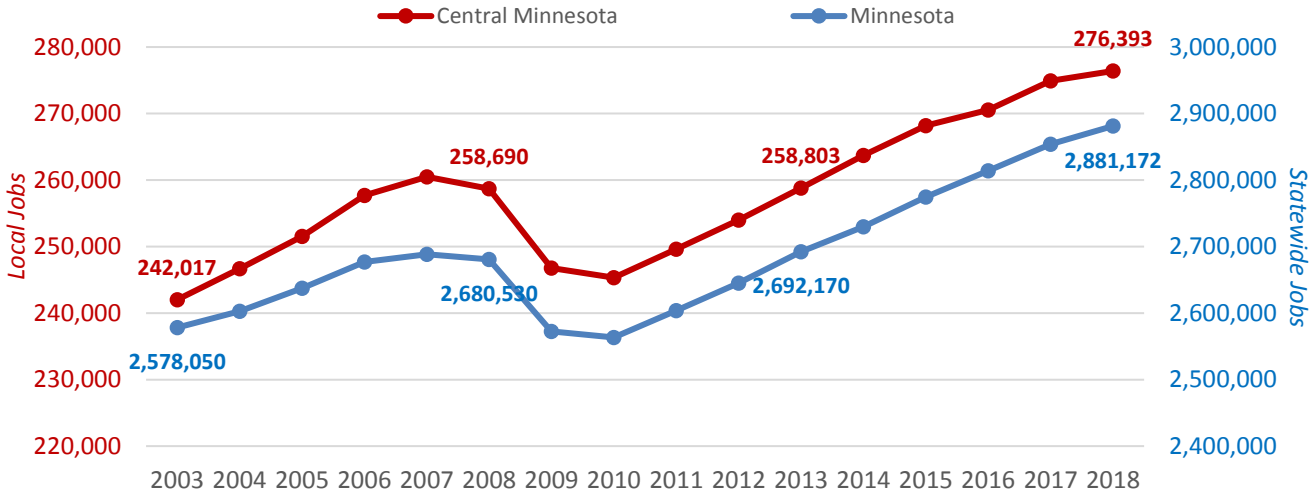
Source: DEED Quarterly Census of Employment & Wages (QCEW)

With 174,053 jobs at 10,711 business establishments, EDR 7W accounts for about 63 percent of total employment in the Central Minnesota planning region. EDR 7W also accounted for 76 percent of the region's

job growth during the recovery from 2013 to 2018, adding 13,347 net new jobs, an 8.3 percent increase. In contrast, EDR 7E had the smallest number of jobs, with 48,367 jobs at 3,653 establishments, but saw an increase 2,093 jobs in the past five years. EDR 6E had 3,562 business establishments providing 53,972 jobs, after gaining 2,149 net new jobs from 2013 to 2018, a 4.1 percent increase (Table 14).

Central Minnesota has seen employment ups and downs over the past decade, but ended 2018 with 34,376 more jobs than it had in 2003. The region entered the recession at the same time as the state in early 2008, suffering severe declines in 2009 and 2010. Since then, Central Minnesota has recovered at a similar pace to the state, which gained jobs at a 7 percent clip from 2013 to 2018, compared to a 6.8 percent increase in the region. Central Minnesota reached a prerecession peak of 260,488 jobs in 2007, then hit a low of 245,310 jobs in 2010, before recovering to a new record of 276,393 jobs in 2018 (Figure 16).

Figure 16. Industry Employment Statistics, 2003-2018



Source: DEED QCEW program

With 49,935 jobs at 1,685 firms, health care and social assistance is the largest employing industry in Central Minnesota, accounting for 18.1 percent of total jobs in the region. That is 1 percent higher than the state's concentration of employment in health care. In addition, Central Minnesota is still adding health care and social assistance jobs, gaining 3,308 net new jobs over the past five years. At $46,294 in 2018, average annual wages were about $2,500 higher in health care than the total of all industries.

The next largest industry in Central Minnesota was manufacturing, with 42,416 jobs at 1,181 firms, after adding 3,181 jobs from 2013 to 2018. Central Minnesota has large concentrations of food manufacturing and fabricated metal product manufacturing, as well as significant amounts of machinery manufacturing and transportation equipment manufacturing. Retail trade is the third largest industry, with 36,754 jobs at 2,322 establishments, and the related accommodation and food services industry also provides 24,040 jobs in the region, combining to provide about 22 percent of total jobs in the region. However, both industries have relatively low wages.

Other important industries in Central Minnesota include educational services, construction, public administration, transportation and warehousing, wholesale trade, and administrative support and waste management services. Sixteen of the 20 main industries in the region added jobs since 2013, and the huge loss in arts, entertainment, and recreation was due to a classification switch into accommodation and food services. In contrast, 9 of the 20 industries lost jobs in the past year. The largest job growth in the last year was in manufacturing, retail trade, construction, public administration, educational services, and health care and social assistance (see Table 14).

Table 14. Central Minnesota Industry Employment Statistics, 2018								
	2018 Annual Data				2013-2018		2017-2018	
NAICS Industry Title	Number of Firms	Number of Jobs	Total Payroll ($1,000s)	Avg. Annual Wage	Change in Jobs	Percent Change	Change in Jobs	Percent Change
Total, All Industries	**17,925**	**276,393**	**$12,090,969**	**$43,746**	***+17,590***	***+6.8%***	***+1,466***	***+0.5%***
Health Care & Social Assistance	1,685	49,935	$2,311,695	$46,294	*+3,308*	*+7.1%*	*+223*	*+0.4%*
Manufacturing	1,181	42,416	$2,291,006	$54,013	*+3,181*	*+8.1%*	*+636*	*+1.5%*
Retail Trade	2,322	36,754	$1,014,146	$27,593	*+2,282*	*+6.6%*	*+488*	*+1.3%*
Educational Services	344	24,219	$1,083,875	$44,753	*+1,326*	*+5.8%*	*+225*	*+0.9%*
Accommodation & Food Services	1,266	24,040	$413,159	$17,186	*+2,185*	*+10.0%*	*-431*	*-1.8%*
Construction	2,728	18,060	$1,113,100	$61,633	*+3,828*	*+26.9%*	*+299*	*+1.7%*
Public Administration	480	13,120	$657,965	$50,150	*+911*	*+7.5%*	*+226*	*+1.8%*
Transportation & Warehousing	840	9,826	$447,053	$45,497	*+1,224*	*+14.2%*	*+173*	*+1.8%*
Wholesale Trade	667	9,627	$559,412	$58,109	*+131*	*+1.4%*	*+80*	*+0.8%*
Admin. Support & Waste Mgmt. Svcs.	777	9,622	$338,709	$35,201	*-640*	*-6.2%*	*-54*	*-0.6%*
Other Services	1,958	8,243	$216,498	$26,264	*+475*	*+6.1%*	*+35*	*+0.4%*
Finance & Insurance	847	7,079	$441,061	$62,306	*+471*	*+7.1%*	*-91*	*-1.3%*
Professional & Technical Services	1,086	6,494	$409,815	$63,107	*+869*	*+15.4%*	*-82*	*-1.2%*
Agriculture, Forestry, Fish & Hunt	459	4,374	$161,016	$36,812	*+82*	*+1.9%*	*+72*	*+1.7%*
Arts, Entertainment, & Recreation	356	3,288	$47,452	$14,432	*-1,505*	*-31.4%*	*+43*	*+1.3%*
Information	224	3,085	$146,151	$47,375	*-446*	*-12.6%*	*-199*	*-6.1%*
Utilities	63	2,301	$240,739	$104,624	*-360*	*-13.5%*	*-45*	*-1.9%*
Real Estate & Rental & Leasing	550	2,028	$63,624	$31,373	*+26*	*+1.3%*	*-44*	*-2.1%*
Management of Companies	70	1,564	$114,652	$73,307	*+190*	*+13.8%*	*-58*	*-3.6%*
Mining	25	313	$19,841	$63,391	*+51*	*+19.5%*	*-31*	*-9.0%*
Source: DEED Quarterly Census of Employment & Wages (QCEW) program								

INDUSTRY EMPLOYMENT

According to DEED's Quarterly Employment Demographics (QED) program, the workforce in the region was aging over the past 10 years. Nearly one-quarter (22.1%) of workers in the region were 55 years or older, compared to 21.5 percent statewide and just 15.7 percent in the region one decade earlier. In contrast, the percentage of teenaged workers was falling, and while wages were going up for younger workers, the number of hours worked was going down (Table 15).

As noted above, wages were climbing across the board for all workers due to rising demand and a tight labor market. While wages were still lowest for the youngest and oldest workers who tend to fill lower-skilled, less-than-fulltime jobs in industries like retail trade and accommodation and food services, these two age groups enjoyed the fastest percentage increase in wages from 2008 to 2018. Wages were highest for workers between 45 and 64 years of age, and males worked more hours than females, though the gap was narrowing.

Table 15. Workforce Demographics by Age Group and Gender, Total of All Industries, 2008-2018								
Central Minnesota	**Percentage of Workers**		***Percent of Workers, Minnesota***		**Median Hourly Wage**		**Median Hours Worked (Per Qtr.)**	
	2018	**2008**	***2018***	***2008***	**2018**	**2008**	**2018**	**2008**
Total, all ages	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	$17.66	$13.88	401	400
19 years & under	8.7%	10.0%	6.1%	7.5%	$10.49	$7.50	122	124
20 to 24 years	10.9%	12.6%	10.3%	11.6%	$14.10	$10.64	278	277
25 to 44 years	39.6%	40.4%	42.9%	42.7%	$19.96	$15.99	456	459
45 to 54 years	18.7%	21.4%	19.1%	22.5%	$21.66	$17.11	480	480
55 to 64 years	16.8%	12.1%	16.7%	12.6%	$20.30	$16.10	473	455
65 years & over	5.3%	3.6%	4.8%	3.1%	$15.15	$11.42	214	194
Male	48.3%	47.5%	49.1%	49.0%	$19.86	$15.87	468	469
Female	51.7%	52.5%	50.9%	51.0%	$16.54	$12.65	357	348
Source: DEED Quarterly Employment Demographics								

INDUSTRY PROJECTIONS

As noted above, Central Minnesota is projected to grow 8.6 percent from 2016 to 2026, a gain of 26,629 new jobs, which would make it the fastest growing region in the state. The largest and third fastest growing industry is expected to be health care and social assistance, which may account for one-third (35.1%) of total projected growth in the region by 2026. The region is also expected to see significant employment growth in construction, manufacturing, public administration, and retail trade. Construction and professional and technical services were projected to be the fastest growing. In contrast, agriculture, information, and mining are all expected to suffer job cuts in the next decade (Table 16).

Table 16. Central Minnesota Industry Projections, 2016-2026

Industry	Estimated Employment 2016	Projected Employment 2026	*Percent Change 2016-2026*	*Numeric Change 2016-2026*
Total, All Industries	**310,433**	**337,062**	***+8.6%***	***+26,629***
Health Care & Social Assistance	47,461	56,807	*+19.7%*	*+9,346*
Manufacturing	41,361	43,677	*+5.6%*	*+2,316*
Retail Trade	35,825	37,842	*+5.6%*	*+2,017*
Educational Services	25,717	26,325	*+2.4%*	*+608*
Accommodation & Food Services	21,568	22,458	*+4.1%*	*+890*
Construction	16,522	20,503	*+24.1%*	*+3,981*
Public Administration	18,239	20,261	*+11.1%*	*+2,022*
Other Services	11,569	12,024	*+3.9%*	*+455*
Transportation & Warehousing	10,210	11,568	*+13.3%*	*+1,358*
Wholesale Trade	10,237	11,189	*+9.3%*	*+952*
Administrative & Waste Services	9,834	10,892	*+10.8%*	*+1,058*
Professional & Technical Services	6,961	8,372	*+20.3%*	*+1,411*
Finance & Insurance	7,341	7,521	*+2.5%*	*+180*
Arts, Entertainment & Recreation	5,562	5,683	*+2.2%*	*+121*
Agriculture, Forestry, Fish & Hunt	4,475	4,189	*-6.4%*	*-286*
Information	2,855	2,673	*-6.4%*	*-182*
Utilities	2,234	2,342	*+4.8%*	*+108*
Real Estate & Rental & Leasing	1,965	1,981	*+0.8%*	*+16*
Management of Companies	1,681	1,763	*+4.9%*	*+82*
Mining	336	267	*-20.5%*	*-69*

Source: DEED 2016-2026 Employment Outlook

NONEMPLOYER ESTABLISHMENTS

Central Minnesota was home to 48,809 self-employed businesses or "nonemployers" in 2017, which are defined by the U.S. Census Bureau as "businesses without paid employees that are subject to federal income tax, originating from tax return information of the Internal Revenue Service (IRS)." Unlike covered employment, Central Minnesota saw a steady decline in nonemployers over the past decade, responding to economic changes. In sum, the region lost 1,738 nonemployers from 2007 to 2017, a -3.4 percent decrease. However, Region 7W did see an increase due to population and economic growth. In sum, these non-employers generated sales receipts of over $2.2 billion in 2017 (Table 17).

Table 17. Nonemployer Statistics, 2017

	2017		*2007-2017*	
	Number of Firms	Receipts ($1,000s)	*Change in Firms*	*Percent Change*
Central Minnesota	**48,809**	**$2,281,655**	***-1,738***	***-3.4%***
Region 6E	8,251	$398,471	*-440*	*-5.1%*
Region 7E	10,944	$468,809	*-1,760*	*-13.9%*
Region 7W	29,614	$1,414,375	*+462*	*+1.6%*
Minnesota	**409,860**	**$19,370,490**	***+22,876***	***+5.9%***

Source: U.S. Census, Nonemployer Statistics program

CENSUS OF AGRICULTURE

Like other parts of Greater Minnesota, agriculture is also a key industry in Central Minnesota, including 13,540 farms producing just under $3 billion in the market value of products sold in 2017 according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Several of the highest ranked agriculture counties in the state are in Central Minnesota, including Stearns (#1), Renville (#3), and Kandiyohi (#8). Like the state, the number of farms in the region declined over the past 5 years, but Central Minnesota still accounts for 20 percent of the farms in the state (Table 18).

Table 18. Census of Agriculture, 2017

	Number of Farms	Market Value of Products Sold	*State Rank*
Central Minnesota	**13,540**	**$2,939,547,000**	***3***
Region 6E	4,154	$1,484,036,000	*5*
Region 7E	3,780	$214,252,000	*11*
Region 7W	5,606	$1,241,259,000	*7*
Minnesota	**68,822**	**$18,395,390,000**	

Source: 2017 Census of Agriculture

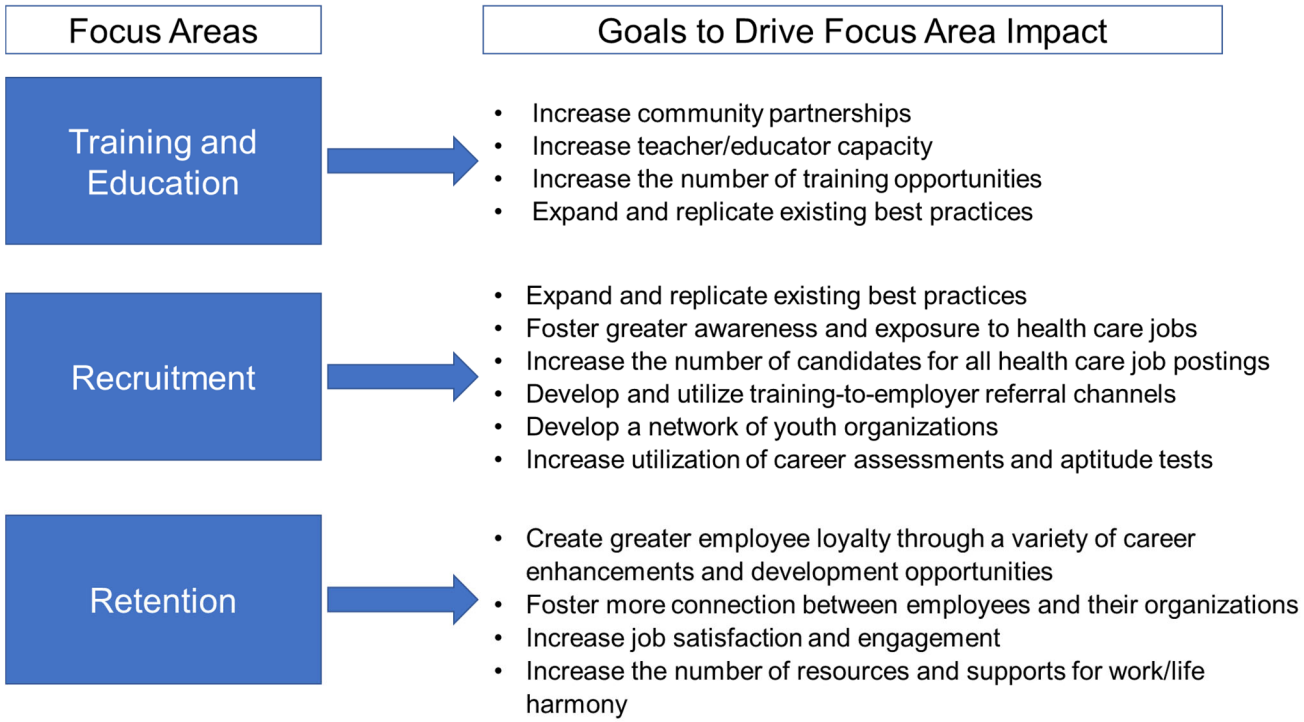
Upon request, this information can be made available in alternate formats for people with disabilities by contacting Luke Greiner at 320-308-5378 or at luke.greiner@state.mn.us

Central Minnesota Health Care Workforce Coalition
2019 Meeting Summary and Work Plan

Tuesday, October 15, 2019
8:30 AM – 12:00 PM
Location: Rasmussen College, 226 Park Ave S, St. Cloud, MN 56301

The Central Minnesota Health Care Workforce Coalition convened for its 2019 working session where the coalition defined goals and strategies for driving impact in its three previously developed focus areas: 1) training and education, 2) recruitment, and 3) retention.

The following includes a high-level visual of the three focus areas and the goals that were developed to drive impact within each area. Work plans for each focus area are included on the following pages that can be used by coalition members to pursue next steps that will advance a strong health care workforce in Central Minnesota.



FOCUS AREA WORK PLANS

Focus Area	Goals	Strategies to Achieve Goal
Training and Education Susie Olson, Leah, Kristine Raymo	Increase community partnerships	1. Add more high school health intro classes & HOSA 2. Encourage employers to provide mentors/navigators for youth they hire to ensure success (i.e., help overcome barriers) 3. Develop a scholarship program 4. Increase funding and state reimbursement 5. Create a platform and venue to share ideas
	Increase teacher/educator capacity	1. Develop a mentor/navigator program to support educators
	Increase the number of training opportunities	1. Develop an internship program for high schoolers 2. Intentionally reduce barriers to engagement o Transportation support o Accommodating hours (e.g., weekend) o Cost reductions and assistance 3. Increase the diversity of those in training programs o Reflect local care needs o Recruit students/caregivers to meet need
	Expand and replicate existing best practices	1. Expand and replicate best practices o Example: CentraCare CNA program 2. Create a platform and venue to share ideas

Focus Area	Goals	Strategies to Achieve Goal
Recruitment RaeAnn Hagen, Susie Olson, Kristine Raymo, Lori Vrolson, Tracy, Nick Jungles	Expand and replicate existing best practices	1. Compile best practices shared to date and share on multiple platforms and websites
	Foster greater awareness and exposure to health care jobs	1. Pilot health care career fairs at a high school and HOSA 2. Build a health care employer speaker team for high schools and colleges to call upon 3. Pilot a job fair for non-traditional students and retirees 4. Develop a video on high-demand health care jobs
	Increase the number of candidates for all health care job postings	1. Engage teachers and encourage their participation in a business and industry summit 2. Coach workforce development organizations to share health care job opportunities when non-health care closures occur, especially when closures impact those with transferable skills
	Develop and utilize training-to-employer referral channels	1. Develop a mechanism for recruiters to build relationships with educators 2. Create referral incentives for training organizations
	Develop a network of youth organizations	1. Implement an outreach approach targeting Junior Achievement, Girl and Boy Scouts, 4H, Boys and Girls Club, YMCA 2. Leverage existing programs (e.g., SCRUBS, EPIC, Melrose program) 3. Invite youth organizations (and future network) to skills events, to take tours of facilities, and offer shadow opportunities
	Increase utilization of career assessments and aptitude tests	1. (To be developed)

Focus Area	Goals	Strategies to Achieve Goal
Retention Tracy, Becky Fossand, Connie Frisch, Jason Nelson	Create greater employee loyalty through a variety of career enhancements and development opportunities	1. Develop a clear set of career pathways that are agreed upon and utilized across health care organizations, including what education/training is required 2. Create common commitments across employer organizations to offer employees development opportunities a. Mentoring programs b. Ongoing skills training and learning opportunities c. Internal career navigator to support employee when moving jobs, considering career growth, etc. 3. Establish a common language that can be used across employers, educators, and workforce organizations/professionals 4. Map out the MDE pie chart with open positions that align
	Foster more connection between employees and their organizations	1. Encourage employers to provide employees with employer branded gear and materials 2. Promote holding celebrations for employees (e.g., potluck lunch peer networking, themed holiday “get-togethers” to connect) 3. Encourage all organizations to clearly define and communicate their mission, vision, and values and define value at every level of health care work
	Increase job satisfaction and engagement	1. Promote high number of touch points during the first 90 days 2. Encourage offering development programs within organizations 3. Develop opportunities for sharing best practices around mentorship models across employer organizations 4. Utilize “stay interviews” for all level employees 5. Develop a tier classification “reward/recognition system"
	Increase the number of resources and supports for work/life harmony	1. Encourage employers to offer a confidential EAP program to employees when they seek help and solutions to challenges 2. Address common barriers to employment (child care, transportation) 3. Explore a program to offer employees a “life coach lite” 4. Encourage employers to proactively offer and manage flexible employee schedules (FT, part time, casual, etc.)

NEXT STEPS

What	Who	When
Convene the Training and Education Work Group • Further discuss the two training and education areas for development: youth and adult • Consider identifying legislative focus areas that link to the training and education need	Susie Olson, Leah, Kristine Raymo	December 2019
Convene the Recruitment Work Group	RaeAnn Hagen, Susie Olson, Kristine Raymo, Lori Vrolson, Tracy, Nick Jungles	December 2019
Convene the Retention Work Group	Tracy, Becky Fossand, Connie Frisch, Jason Nelson	December 2019
Convene the Learning and Best Practices Work Group	Leslie Wojtowicz, Barb Chaffee	December 2019
Invite others into this coalition: • HealthForce • Initiative Foundation • LeadingAge Minnesota • Community-based mental health providers • Goodwill Easter Seals • Minnesota Hospital Association (MHA) • CHI St. Gabe's • Welia • Care Providers of Minnesota • College presidents (from all 7 colleges) • MDH National Registry	 Susie Olson Susie Olson Lori Vrolson RaeAnn Hagen RaeAnn Hagen Barb Chaffee Barb Chaffee Barb Chaffee Barb Chaffee Barb Chaffee Barb Chaffee	December 2019

Goal #1 - Describe the region's economic conditions (Regulation 679.510 a.1.iv and 679.560 a.1.i.ii)

This section of the plan outlines the existing and emerging in-demand sectors and occupations and employment needs of employers in these sectors and occupations.

Key Action Steps	Expected Completion Date	Expected Outcomes	Data Source & Evaluation Method	Person(s) Responsible
Define regional economic conditions	**Complete**	**Economic conditions identified**	**DEED LMI - Regional overview prepared by Luke Greiner**	**Local Workforce Development Areas (LWDA) 5 and 17 - boards & staff**
COVID-19 impact	*On-going*	*Continually adapt, remain flexible to changing needs, pandemic preparedness plan in place*	*DEED information, employer requests and feedback, Governor's office*	*LWDA 5 and 17 - boards & staff*
Distribute COVID-19 employer survey	*May-20*	*Business conditions and needs identified*	*SurveyMonkey used - report created*	*LWDA 5 and 17 - boards & Business Services staff*
Engaging stakeholders	**On-going**	**Strategies for engagement identified**	**Minutes**	**Region 3 Leadership & Planning Board (R3LPB), LWDA 5 and 17 staff, Local Business Navigators**
Facilitate human resource groups in each Economic Development Region	*Held monthly*	*Employer input received and resources provided, relationships established/maintained*	*Local participating employers - Minutes*	*HR Group facilitators (LWDA staff)*
Develop an employer survey	*Dec-21*	*Employer input received - understanding of employer needs*	*SurveyMonkey used - report created*	*LWDA 5 and 17 Business Services staff, DEED Workforce Strategy Consultant*

Goal # 2 - Regional Strategy to coordinate efforts to address existing and in-demand sector and occupations (Regulation 679-510 a.1.iii) *This section of the plan outlines the sector initiatives for in-demand sectors or occupations for the planning region.*				
Key Action Steps	**Expected Completion Date**	**Expected Outcomes**	**Data Source & Evaluation Method**	**Person(s) Responsible**
Assess LMI to identify key sectors with demand occupations	**July-20**	**Understand which sectors are key to the regional economy**	**DEED LMI - Regional overview prepared by Luke Greiner**	**R3LPB, LWDA 5 and 17 boards and staff**
Raise awareness of career pathways	**On-going**	**Individuals in the region are aware of career pathways through Career Pathway Infographics**	**Infographic distribution (social media, local high schools, employers, and on websites)**	**R3LPB, LWDA 5 and 17 boards and staff (Rural Career Counseling Coordinators)**
Manufacturing: participation in employer-led sector partnership	**On-going**	**Strong, employer-led sector partnerships with clearly defined pathways that facilitate access to employment**	**Roster of Central Minnesota Manufacturing Association (CMMA)**	**R3LPB, LWDA 5 and 17 staff, DEED Workforce Strategy Consultant**
Create and enhance career cluster activities for the large scale hands-on events (EPIC & IGNITE)	*Feb-21*	*Informational activities created for youth career exploration - youth have a better understanding of manufacturing careers*	*Event surveys*	*Employer-led cluster groups*
Develop an interactive career pathway website	*Dec-20*	*Information on career pathways will be available for youth and career changers*	*Website use*	*CMMA*
Promotion of youth apprenticeship	*On-going*	*Jamboree event is held - employers and educators understand how to navigate youth apprenticeship*	*Event surveys*	*CMMA, LWDA 5 and 17 staff*
Healthcare: facilitation and participation in coalition sector partnership	**On-going**	**Businesses and partners engaged in supporting employer led sector partnership efforts in Healthcare**	**Roster of coalition members**	**R3LPB, LWDA 5 and 17 boards and staff**
Work the strategic plan created	*On-going*	*Small committee will complete the work identified in the strategic plan*	*Minutes*	*Healthcare coalition*
Development of a preceptor curriculum	*Mar-21*	*Pilot employer will increase retention through trained preceptors on staff*	*Employer retention and surveys*	*Coalition committee members, college staff, and piloting employer*
Create and enhance career cluster activities for the large scale hands-on events (EPIC & IGNITE)	*Feb-21*	*Informational activities created for youth career exploration - youth have a better understanding of healthcare careers*	*Event surveys*	*Employer-led cluster groups*
Business programming to promote sector initiatives	**On-going**	**Businesses and partners engaged in activities to increase sector awareness**	**Minutes**	**R3LPB, LWDA 5 and 17 staff, partners, sector partnerships**
Continue WorkWright radio program and replicate in other central Minnesota communities	*On-going*	*CareerForce partners and programs highlighted and local employers*	*Radio program*	*Radio station, local employers, and LWDA staff*

Offer sector-specific hiring events	*On-going (virtual during COVID-19)*	*Business workforce needs are met*	*Surveys - actual hires due to event*	*Business Services staff and participating employers*
Promotion and priority of incumbent worker training to in-demand sectors	*On-going*	*Businesses upskill current employees, lay-off aversion*	*Evaluation and outcomes tracked in WF1*	*Business Services staff and participating employers*
Implement educational strategies for moving people into pathways (grants - e.g., P2P, WESA)	**On-going**	**Participants complete training and enter sector-specific occupations**	**# trained, # hired**	**R3LPB, LWDA 5 and 17 boards and staff, partners, employers**
Identify virtual services for sector strategies during COVID-19	**On-going**	**Participation in virtual hiring events, business consultations via phone or virtually, meetings and events held via Zoom or WebEx**	**Minutes, # of job postings, # of employers participating in events**	**R3LPB, LWDA 5 and 17 boards and staff, partners, employers**

Goal #3 - Identify and Implement Alignment through shared policies and practices (Regulation 679.510 a. 1.ii)				
This section outlines the establishment of regional services strategies, including use of cooperative service delivery agreements.				
Key Action Steps	**Expected Completion Date**	**Expected Outcomes**	**Data Source & Evaluation Method**	**Person(s) Responsible**
Regional leadership identifies/completes an updated MOU	**Jun-20**	**Partners understand expectations**	**Completed MOU**	**R3LPB and all partners**
Expand and enhance partnerships and collaboration	**On-going**	**Staff have increased knowledge of all programs and services available, increased opportunities due to partnerships and collaborations**	**Minutes**	**R3LPB, all partners, and one-stop-operator consortium**
Coordinated professional development for staff and boards, including program sharing at team meetings	*On-going*	*All partners bring training to the table, cooperative agreements signed*	*Training evaluations completed, attendees complete plans on how to incorporate knowledge into their daily work*	*All partners*
Coordinated marketing and communication of CareerForce programs, events, initiatives, and local branding	*On-going*	*Cooperative marketing materials developed and approved*	*Shared policy statements or service agreements*	*All partners, and one-stop-operator consortium*
Incorporate the completion of the disability eLearning modules among all partners	*20-Dec*	*All staff provide inclusive services for individuals with disabilities, establish a process for completion during on-boarding of new staff*	*Minutes*	*All partners, and one-stop-operator consortium*
Implementation of identified goals for the region	**On-going**	**Directives for local area directors/staff**	**Minutes**	**R3LPB**
Addressing the need for a skilled workforce	*21-Dec*	*Employers and jobseekers make positive connections through collaborative efforts*	*Documentation of agenda, list of participants (Untapped Workforce series, incumbent worker training, hiring events)*	*All partners, and one-stop-operator consortium*
Expanding and enhancing career pathways and career exploration	*21-Dec*	*Coordinated marketing efforts in central Minnesota - enhanced knowledge among youth, jobseekers, and employers*	*e.g., event evaluations, tour lists, targeted career pathway program documentation, infographic distribution list*	*All partners, one-stop-operator consortium, and community partners*
Active working groups - to develop outreach, informational materials, engagement and dissemination strategies for the following:	*20-Dec*	*Informational materials created and social media posts developed*	*Minutes*	*All partners and one-stop-operator consortium*
Engagement of farmers	*On-going*	*Identify how/where to reach people with resources and information.*	*# of farms/farmers engaged*	*Leadership Team, boards, and staff*

Engagement of businesses impacted by COVID-19	*As businesses re-open*	*Ensure they are being connected to available resources to rebuild*	*# of businesses engaged, # of work-based learning opportunities initiated*	*Leadership Team, boards, and staff*
Engagement of populations experiencing disparities	*On-going*	*Identify how/where to reach people with resources and information.*	*# of diverse individuals being served*	*Leadership Team, boards, and staff*

Goal #4 - Identify the populations experiencing the greatest barriers to employment and ensure representation. (Part of the State Plan) *This section outlines the regional strategies es for LWDA 5 and 17 for diverse representation and engagement of diverse populations.*				
Key Action Steps	**Expected Completion Date**	**Expected Outcomes**	**Data Source & Evaluation Method**	**Person(s) Responsible**
Assess demographic data	**Jul-20**	**Identify populations experiencing disparities**	**Labor Market Information**	**R3LPB**
Provide professional development for staff on inequities	**Dec-21**	**Staff will be knowledgeable to provide services to populations experiencing disparities**	**Customer surveys and training evaluations**	**R3LPB, LWDA 5 and 17 staff**
Expand representation of those experiencing disparities on boards, committees, and staff	**Dec-21**	**Increased representation**	**Board and staff self-identify**	**Human Resources for LWDA 5 and 17**
Engage stakeholders	**Jun-21**	**Input received to enhance programming**	**Minutes**	**R3LPB, LWDA 5 and 17 staff**
Host focus groups	*Dec-20*	*Better understanding of the unique needs and barriers of the individuals experiencing disparities, changes in programming reflect input received*	*Minutes from the groups, changes in programming*	*R3LPB, LWDA 5 and 17 staff*
Create targeted marketing to individuals experiencing disparities	Dec-20	*Increased service levels of individuals experiencing employment disparities*	*Workforce One Data and Outcome Data Report*	*LWDA 5 and 17 staff*
Increased outcomes for individuals experiencing disparities	*Dec-20*	*Increased service levels and outcomes for individuals experiencing employment disparities*	*Workforce One Data and Outcome Data Report*	*LWDA 5 and 17 staff*
Explore Inclusive Employer Designation	**Dec-20**	**Identify if this designation is feasible and if employers find value in the designation within the region (Rural Minnesota CEP presenting to LWDA boards)**	**Minutes**	**R3LPB, LWDA 5 and 17 boards**

Goal # 5 - Establish an Agreement for Negotiating local levels of performance (Regulation 679.510 a.1.viii) *This section outlines the process by which LWDA 5 and 17 negotiate local levels of performance.*				
Key Action Steps	**Expected Completion Date**	**Expected Outcomes**	**Data Source & Evaluation Method**	**Person(s) Responsible**
Local boards identify who will participate in negotiations	**Jun-20**	**Roster of members**	**Meeting minutes**	**LWDA 5 and 17: Directors**
Develop a plan/process for negotiating local levels of performance	**Jun-20**	**Alignment with statewide expectation for a new negotiation process**	**Submission to State**	**LWDA 5 and 17: Directors**
Local boards approve process for negotiating levels of performance	**Jun-20**	*Plan/Process for negotiating finalized*	*Meeting minutes*	*LWDA 5 and 17: Directors*
Initiate negotiations for local levels of performance	**Jun-20**	*Negotiations underway*	*Meeting minutes*	*LWDA 5 and 17: Directors*
Local levels of performance finalized	**Jun-20**	*Proposed levels finalized*	*Meeting minutes*	*LWDA 5 and 17: Directors*
Local levels of performance approved by local boards	**Jun-20**	*Boards approve*	*Meeting minutes*	*LWDA 5 and 17: Directors*

Goal # 6 - Coordination with Economic Development Services and Providers (Regulation 679.510 a.1.vii) *This section outlines strategies for aligning and coordinating efforts of workforce development and economic development.*				
Key Action Steps	**Expected Completion Date**	**Expected Outcomes**	**Data Source & Evaluation Method**	**Person(s) Responsible**
Participation by board and/or staff in various economic development committees and organizations	Ongoing - Meeting schedules vary, but connectivity is at least monthly through one or more committees or groups (due to COVID-19, most of these meetings are occurring virtually)	Increased awareness of economic development efforts and opportunities for collaboration	Listing of Economic Development (ED) groups, meeting dates, and minutes (7W CEDS Steering Committee, WCEDP, GPS 45:93, ECRDC 7E CEDS, Vision 2040, GSDC)	R3LPB members and staff
Sharing of regional plan/priorities with economic development entities	Dec-20	Increased awareness of workforce development resources, initiatives, and participation in meeting regional goals; validate that workforce goals support economic development goals	ED groups engaged in understanding regional workforce development goals, including Chambers of Commerce	R3LPB members and staff
Utilize ED networks to promote workforce system resources that help hire, train, and retain workers	Dec-20	Increased use of On-the-Job Training, incumbent worker, and other work-based learning opportunities	Increased number of participants in OJT, work experience, and incumbent worker programs, including populations experiencing disparities	R3LPB members and staff
Continue to identify opportunities to align with economic development	Ongoing	Continued participation on each other's boards & committees and regularly shared communication	Copies of communication and minutes	R3LPB members and staff

Goal # 7 - Regional coordination of administrative cost share agreements (Regulation 679.510 a.1.v.vi)

This section outlines the regional cost arrangements and coordination of transportation and other support services.

Key Action Steps	Expected Completion Date	Expected Outcomes	Data Source & Evaluation Method	Person(s) Responsible
Completion of the IFA	Jul-21	Signed IFA in place	Signed contracts	R3LPB and all partners
Cooperative agreements signed (e.g., CS subcontract, Pre-ETS)	Jul-20	Agreements are in place	Signed agreements	R3LPB and applicable partners