CAREER SOLUTIONS JOINT POWERS BOARD & WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT-EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE BOARD MEETING

Thursday, September 10, 2026, at 3:00pm

Career Solutions Guest Wi-Fi: Welcome2CareerSolutions!

Physical Location: CareerForce St. Cloud
1542 Northway Drive (Parking Lot B / Door #2), St. Cloud, MN 56303
Virtual Option is Available Upon Request.

1. **Call the Meeting to Order**
   - A. Joint Powers Board (JPB) — Bertram
   - B. Local Workforce Development Board-Executive Committee (LWDB-Exec) — Magelssen

2. **Approval of the Agenda**
   - A. JPB
   - B. LWDB-Exec

   Action: JPB & LWDB-Exec

3. **Consent Agenda: JPB & LWDB-Exec** — Action: JPB & LWDB-Exec
   - A. 05/14/2026 JPB & LWDB-Exec Minutes (Attachment 3.A.)
   - B. 06/18/2026 JPB & LWDB Minutes (Attachment 3.B.)
   - C. 07/16/2026 JPB & LWDB-Exec Minutes (Attachment 3.C.)
   - D. 2025-2026 Exempt Organization Tax Return Preparation - CohnReznick (Attachment 3.D.)
   - E. Minnesota State Customized Training Contract for Advance Safety and Maintenance Facilities Discovery Day Agreement Starting 9/23/26 (Attachment 3.E.)
   - F. Disposal of Outdated Equipment (Attachment 3.G.)

4. **Business Items/Updates**
   - A. 2024-2027 Local and Regional Plan (Attachment 4.A.) **– ACTION** — Action: JPB & LWDB-Exec
     - Biennial Review
     - Posted for 30 Day Comment Period
     - Regional Plan Review – TDB
     - Submission to the Governors' Office by 10/01/2026
   - B. DEED CAPR's Update (Attachment 4.B.)
   - C. 2027 Medical Insurance Renewal (Handout) **– ACTION** — Action: JPB & LWDB-Exec
   - D. 07/2026 Preliminary Statement of Revenue & Expenditures (Attachment 4.D.) **– ACTION** — Action: JPB & LWDB-Exec
   - E. 2025-2026 Annual Meeting / Celebration & Staff Recognition (Attachment 4.E.) **– ACTION** — Action: JPB & LWDB-Exec
   - F. 2025-2026 Financial Audit Update
     - Started Fieldwork 09/02/2026
     - Boad Presentation Scheduled 12/10/2026 (Tentative)
   - G. DEED Performance Negotiations
   - H. 2026 CareerONE Video & Magazine Highlight:
     - Link: https://youtu.be/trBStABONjc

Note: If you are unable to attend this meeting, please contact Kari Court at 320.380.4938 or email at Kari.Court@CSJobs.org. Upon request, this material can be made available in alternate formats.

- CMMA Magazine (Page 38): https://online.fliphtml5.com/slrxz/CMMA-Tom-Magazine-2026-final/#p=39

I. Upcoming Events or Recap:
- Open House – 09/08/2026
- Free Maintenance Training – 09/23/2026

5. Other

A. Executive Director Updates — Bertram
B. From the Floor/Announcements — Magelssen

6. Adjourn

REASONABLE ACCOMMODATIONS: ALL CAREER SOLUTIONS WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD ARE ACCESSIBLE TO THE HANDICAPPED. ATTEMPTS WILL BE MADE TO ACCOMMODATE ANY OTHER INDIVIDUAL NEED FOR SPECIAL SERVICES. PLEASE CONTACT ADA/AA COORDINATOR TAMMY STARK AT (320) 266-5060 AS EARLY AS POSSIBLE SO NECESSARY ARRANGEMENTS CAN BE MADE. INDIVIDUALS WITH HEARING OR SPEECH DISABILITIES MAY CONTACT US VIA THEIR PREFERRED TELECOMMUNICATIONS RELAY SERVICE. CAREERFORCE DOES NOT DISCRIMINATE ON THE BASIS OF RACE, COLOR, CREED, RELIGION, NATIONAL ORIGIN, GENDER, MARITAL STATUS, STATUS WITH REGARD TO PUBLIC ASSISTANCE, SEXUAL ORIENTATION, DISABILITY, OR AGE.

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CAREER SOLUTIONS JOINT POWERS BOARD & LOCAL WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE BOARD MEETING MINUTES

Date May 14, 2026, at 3:00pm
Attendance: **Joint Powers Board:** *Jeff Bertram, *Steve Heinen, *Pam Benoit, and *Bob Johnson.
Local Workforce Development Board-Executive Committee: *Jill Magelssen, *David Borgert and *Les Engel.
Career Solutions: *Tammy Stark and *Kari Court.
(= In Person)*
Absent: Jeff Bloss and Ken Matthews

Call the Meeting to Order:

- Bertram called the Joint Powers Board (JPB) meeting to order at 3:01pm.
- Magelssen called the Local Workforce Development Board-Executive Committee (LWDB-Exec) meeting to order at 3:01pm.

Approval of the Agenda

JPB Motion:

Results: Approved the modified agenda.
Mover: Heinen
Seconder: Benoit
Ayes: Bertram, Heinen, Johnson, & Benoit.
Nayes: NA

LWDB-Exec Motion:

Results: Approved the modified agenda.
Mover: Engel
Seconder: Borgert
Ayes: Magelssen, Borgert, & Engel.
Nayes: NA

Approval of the Consent Agenda

- 2025-2026 Client Waiver Overages – as of 05/07/2026
- 2025-2026 MAWB Regional Planning Extension
- Disposal of Outdated Assets
- MN State/Alexandria Technical College Public Safety Track Contract for the CareerONE Program
- St. Cloud YMCA Contract for 2026 CareerONE Team Building Activities
- Big Ideas Road Show Mobile Classroom Contract for 2026 CareerONE Program
- Minnesota State Customized Training Contract for 2026 CareerONE Facilities/Site Agreement
- Minnesota State Customized Training Contract for Drive for 5 Welding Discovery Day

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- The Village EAP Renewal Agreement
- 2026 LWDB Calendar Year Budget
- 2026 MAWB Summer Conference

JPB Motion:

Results: Approved the consent agenda items 3.A. through 3.J.
Mover: Johnson
Seconder: Benoit
Ayes: Bertram, Heinen, Johnson, & Benoit.
Nayes: NA

Johnson pulled item 3.K. 2026 MAWB Summer Conference as a discussion item. There were some questions about why Career Solutions is requesting approval for travel when it was already approved in the budget that had these travel expenses already included. Stark stated items like this are brought to the board for approval per our current policies. In the future, when policy revisions are needed, we will take this into consideration and so no approval needed if travel is conducted within Minnesota. Motion then taken.

JPB Motion:

Results: Approved the consent agenda items 3.K 2026 MAWB Summer Conference expenses.
Mover: Johnson
Seconder: Benoit
Ayes: Bertram, Heinen, Johnson, & Benoit.
Nayes: NA

LWDB-Exec Motion:

Results: Approved the consent agenda.
Mover: Engel
Seconder: Borgert
Ayes: Magelssen, Borgert, & Engel.
Nayes: NA

Business Items/Updates:

- **Workforce Development Board Member Status**
  - **DEED Update** – Career Solutions discussed the Workforce Development Board Membership status for Mohamed Goni. Goni is the Executive Director of CMCEO. As the board is aware of the history with CMCEO, it's been a year since the final invoice for services by Career Solutions (approximately $35,000 for work performed in March 2025).
  - DEED is continuing to audit CMCEO and while doing so has placed CMCEO on the State of MN Debarred Vendor List. Originally, the

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debarment was through 4/17/26, however it has since been extended to 4/17/2028. This greatly limits the chance of Career Solutions receiving payment from CMCEO.
- In addition, Goni's board meeting attendance is also a concern as he has only attended 2 out of 5 board meeting last year.
- The board recommended reaching back out to CMCEO to find out any more information about when we will receive our payment for services provided. In the meantime, with these concerns outlined above, the board took the following action.

LWDB-Exec Motion:

Results: Recommend to the Joint Powers Board to remove Goni Mohamed (Central Minnesota Community Empowerment Organization / CMCEO) from the Local Workforce Development Board.
Mover: Borgert
Seconder: Engel
Ayes: Magelssen, Borgert, & Engel.
Nayes: NA

JPB Motion:

Results: Approved the LWDB membership removal of Goni Mohamed from Central Minnesota Community Empowerment Organization / CMCEO.
Mover: Benoit
Seconder: Johnson
Ayes: Bertram, Heinen, Johnson, & Benoit.
Nayes: NA

- **2026-2028 Request for Proposal Updates:**
  - **Managed IT Services** – Career Solutions conducted a Managed IT Services RFP. After reviewing the five proposals, the team has narrowed it down to two proposals; Marco & Xtona. The team met with Benton County's IT Director to review the proposals in-depth where the IT Director provided technical knowledge and insight into these proposals. Both Marco and Xtona have comparable monthly pricing and monitoring / security tools. The Executive Assistant met with customer referrals provided in their RFP's asking an extensive list of questions and received positive input.
  - The team's recommendation is to approve the contract with Xtona as the agency's Managed IT provider. This is based off of their attention to detail as they developed their RFP including an in-person site visit, positive

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customer referrals, customer retention, demonstrated quick follow through, clear communication delivered in a timely fashion, and scored higher on the scoring matrix than Marco.

- Summary of Xtona's proposal includes $4,287.50 monthly managed IT services which include helpdesk support, Security Operations Center (SOC), mail security, etc. and $1,000 onboarding fee.
- The new IT Provider will start the onboarding process and address the server issue as a billable project to transition from a virtual server to another platform (i.e. SharePoint). This will be a project requiring 50-60 billable hours at $150/hour if approved through Xtona (estimated $7,500 - $9,000). Note: Marco proposed this billable project to be an estimated cost of $24,652.50.

JPB Motion:

Results: Approved the new Managed IT Services Provider as Xtona.
Mover: Heinen
Seconder: Johnson
Ayes: Bertram, Heinen, Johnson, & Benoit.
Nayes: NA

LWDB-Exec Motion:

Results: Approved the new Managed IT Services Provider as Xtona.
Mover: Engel
Seconder: Borgert
Ayes: Magelssen, Borgert, & Engel.
Nayes: NA

- **Individual & Financial Counseling for Client Services** – Career Solutions conducted an RFP for Individual and Financial Counseling Services for clients. Career Solutions clients may need access to three types of counseling services:
  - Individual counseling
  - Individual financial counseling
  - Money management workshop
- Career Solutions current counseling services for clients is with Granite City Counseling / Catholic Charities. They have sunset some of their programs including individual financial counseling and money management workshops.
- Shown below is a summary of proposals received:
  - **Lutheran Social Services:**
    - Individual Counseling – N/A

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- Hourly rate for Individual Financial Counseling – $150
- Rate for Money Management Workshop – $650

▪ **Granite City Counseling (a Program of Catholic Charities):**

- Individual Counseling - $100 per hour
- Hourly Rate for individual Financial Counseling – NA
- Rate for Money Management Workshop – NA

o In reviewing the proposals, we suggest renewing the agreement with Granite City Counseling/Catholic Charities for individual counseling services. In addition, obtaining an agreement with Lutheran Social Services for individual financial counseling and money management workshop for clients.

JPB Motion:

Results: Approved renewing the agreement with Granite City Counseling / Catholic Charities for individual counseling services. In addition, obtaining an agreement with Lutheran Social Services for individual financial counseling and money management workshop for clients.
Mover: Benoit
Seconder: Johnson
Ayes: Bertram, Heinen, Johnson, & Benoit.
Nayes: NA

LWDB-Exec Motion:

Results: Approved renewing the agreement with Granite City Counseling / Catholic Charities for individual counseling services. In addition, obtaining an agreement with Lutheran Social Services for individual financial counseling and money management workshop for clients.
Mover: Borgert
Seconder: Engel
Ayes: Magelssen, Borgert, & Engel.
Nayes: NA

- **Compensation Analysis & Supporting Documents** – Every two to three years, Career Solutions conducts a compensation analysis, with a goal to stay market competitive. With previous board approval, Career Solutions accessed the assistance of the HR Director with Central MN Jobs & Training Services (CMJTS) to perform the study again this year. All job descriptions were reviewed and and a few were updated as necessary. Also, gathered industry data from Bureau of Labor Statistics, Stearns and Benton County's data, etc. In addition, updated market pricing, salary scales, and are proposing a merit matrix increase.

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- When reviewing the job descriptions, there are two staff who needed significant changes to their job descriptions, which in return suggest they should receive a promotion. Career Solutions recommends the Client Services Manager be promoted to Program Director and the Executive Assistant be promoted to an Operations Manager.
- Stark then reviewed the proposed salary scale, salary adjustment, and merit matrix along with how the wages increase will impact budget projections.

JPB Motion:

Results: Approved the compensation study salary adjustment for staff meeting or exceeding performance expectations, salary scale, merit matrix, and new job descriptions effective 07/01/2026.

Mover: Heinen
Seconder: Johnson
Ayes: Bertram, Heinen, Johnson, & Benoit.
Nayes: NA

LWDB-Exec Motion:

Results: Approved the compensation study salary adjustment for staff meeting or exceeding performance expectations, salary scale, merit matrix, and new job descriptions effective 07/01/2026.
Mover: Borgert
Seconder: Engel
Ayes: Magelssen, Borgert, & Engel.
Nayes: NA

- **Performance Reviews Conducted in May/June** – all eligible staff performance reviews will take place in May or June 2026 with an effective date for a possible pay increase being 07/01/2026.
    - **Executive Director Performance Review: 360-Degree Approach** – The Executive Director performance review will take place with the board chairs. In addition, like prior years, a survey will be sent to board members, direct staff, and community members who work closely with the Executive Director to receive a 360-degree review. That way the board chairs can receive feedback from multiple different perspectives.
- **03/2026 Board Financials** – included in your agenda packet was the board financials for March 2026. Stark reminded the board about the additional rent fees due to the state which is now included in the financials.

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JPB Motion:

Results: Approved the 03/2026 Board Financials.
Mover: Benoit
Seconder: Johnson
Ayes: Bertram, Heinen, Johnson, & Benoit.
Nayes: NA

LWDB-Exec Motion:

Results: Approved the 03/2026 Board Financials.
Mover: Engel
Seconder: Borgert
Ayes: Magelssen, Borgert, & Engel.
Nayes: NA

- **WIOA/DEED Subsequent Designation** – every two years, all Workforce Services Areas must re-apply to remain a Workforce Service Area. This application is due at the end of May and last time it was submitted, it included over 150 pages of documentation. It includes copies of the audit, performance measures, etc. Staff is requesting the board approve the submission of the Subsequent Designation to continue as Workforce Service Area #17 as its designated two-county region serving Stearns and Benton County's.

JPB Motion:

Results: Approved the Subsequent Designation for Career Solutions (WSA #17) and submit to DEED.
Mover: Johnson
Seconder: Heinen
Ayes: Bertram, Heinen, Johnson, & Benoit.
Nayes: NA

LWDB-Exec Motion:

Results: Approved the Subsequent Designation for Career Solutions (WSA #17) and submit to DEED.
Mover: Borgert
Seconder: Engel
Ayes: Magelssen, Borgert, & Engel.
Nayes: NA

- **Finance Manual ~ First Reading** – Career Solutions provided the 1st reading of the newly drafted Finance Manual. Per the boards request, a red line version was provided to highlight proposed changes. Proposed changes to the policies outlined below are requested to be included as drafted addendums for reference,

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rather than directly in the Finance Manual, as they change periodically. The next step is to send this to Creative Planning for review to ensure compliance from an auditing standpoint and as much segregation of duties as possible within the small organization.
    - Support Services Policy
    - Cost Allocation Policy
    - Classroom Training Limitations
- **Employee Handbook Overview of Changes** – Career Solutions is updating the Employee Handbook and provided an overview of changes in the agenda packet. Next step is to provide a draft copy to the attorney and then review/approval from the board in June or July 2026.
- **Training Provider Complaint** – Career Solutions received a complaint that was submitted to DEED. Stark shared the letter provided. This individual owned a barber school and was going to provide training to a client. The owner accepted the downpayment of $5,500 for training expenses and then closed his business shortly after. Stark wrote him a letter demanding repayment for unprovided barber training services and listed the Theft by Swindle MN Statue (609.52, subdivision 2(a)(4). However, no response was received.
- Career Solutions provided DEED with detailed correspondence and a timeline of events, noting that the matter was not a client complaint. DEED initially recommended that Stark conduct the investigation because she is listed as the EOO officer; however, Stark noted a conflict of interest due to the outstanding funds owed to the agency. DEED has since recognized the matter as a vendor complaint rather than a client complaint and will conduct its own investigation.
- This is the first formal complaint the agency has received during Stark's time with the agency. Not knowing the outcome, Stark wanted to bring it to the board's attention.
- **Summer Staff Appreciation** – As we begin planning this year's staff appreciation event, the Wellness Committee wants to make sure it truly reflects the board's voice and appreciation for the team. Because of weather last year and for convenience, the committee recommended catering a meal buffet style and will be inviting board members to host a table. Table numbers will be found on the back of name taga and will monitor RSVPs to confirm food count and table arrangement. This will encourage relationship building between board members and staff. This is an opportunity to show your support and appreciation.
- The committee asks that a few board members say a few words (short speech) to the entire group to show appreciation. The committee is excited to help bring the boards vision to life and create something meaningful for the team. The Committee is asking board members if they have any themes, activities, or other ideas to bring forth to the group. If so, please share. The team is looking forward to the event!

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Executive Director Updates – N/A.

From the Floor/Announcements – N/A.

Adjournment:

- Bertram adjourned the Joint Powers Board meeting at 4:27pm.
- Magelssen adjourned the Local Workforce Development Board-Executive Committee meeting at 4:27pm.
- Thanks for attending our board meeting!

CAREER SOLUTIONS JOINT POWERS BOARD & LOCAL WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD MEETING MINUTES

Date June 18, 2026, at 1:00pm

Attendance: **Joint Powers Board:** *Jeff Bertram, *Steve Heinen, and *Pam Benoit. **Local Workforce Development Board:** *Jill Magelssen, *David Borgert, *Melissa Ball-Warriner, *Jeff Bloss, *Ken Huling, *Ken Matthews, Gail Cruikshank, Georgia McCann, Janet Goligowski, Brittany Haycraft, *Bernie Perryman, *Carrie Stang, Michelle Schmitz, and Ryan Strong. **Career Solutions:** *Tammy Stark and *Kari Court. *(* = In Person)*

Absent: Bob Johnson, Les Engel, Adam Genereaux, Julie Lunning, Brandon Schauer, Mary Swingle, Elizabeth Valencia-Borgert, and Meghan Woods Lehrer.

Guest: Della Ludwig, Jenny Zimmer, and Lori Schneider

Call the Meeting to Order:

- Bertram called the Joint Powers Board (JPB) meeting to order at 1:03pm.
- Magelssen called the Local Workforce Development Board (LWDB) meeting to order at 1:03pm.

Approval of the Agenda

JPB Motion:

Results: Approved the agenda.
Mover: Benoit
Seconder: Heinen
Ayes: Bertram, Heinen, & Benoit.
Nayes: NA

LWDB Motion:

Results: Approved the agenda.
Mover: Borgert
Seconder: Bloss
Ayes: Magelssen, Borgert, Ball-Warriner, Bloss, Huling, Matthews, Cruikshank, McCann, Goligowski, Haycraft, Perryman, Stang, Schmitz, and Strong.
Nayes: NA

Approval of the Consent Agenda

- 04/09/2026 JPB & LWDB Meeting Minutes
- 04/2026 Statement of Revenue and Expenditures
- 2025-2026 Client Waiver Overages – as of 06/12/2026
- 2026-2028 Granite City Counseling (Program of Catholic Charities) Agreement to offer Counseling Services to Clients

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- 2026-2028 Lutheran Social Services Agreement to offer Counseling Services to Clients
- Accept LWDB Resignations From:
  - Danelle Montury (Adult Basic Education Representative)
  - Meghan Woods Lehrer, Bernicks (For-Profit Representative)
  - Adam Genereux, CentraCare (For-Profit Representative)
- Minnesota State/SCTCC Contract for CareerTWO Track Agreement
- Minnesota State/SCTCC Contract for CareerONE Remaining Tracks Agreement ~ Revised
- Minnesota State/SCTCC Contract for MFG Core Skills & Welding Foundation Agreement ~ Revised
- 2026 Spanier Transportation Renewal Agreement for CareerONE Youth Transportation
- ISD 743 Facilities Renewal Agreement to host CareerONE Onsite
- MN State/Alexandria Technical College Contract for CareerONE Criminal Justice Systems for Public Safety Track
- Storage Rental Agreement – JK Self Storage – Sartell South Additional Storage Unit Rental Agreement

JPB Motion:

Results: Approved the consent agenda.
Mover: Benoit
Seconder: Heinen
Ayes: Bertram, Heinen, & Benoit.
Nayes: NA

LWDB Motion:

Results: Approved the consent agenda.
Mover: Cruikshank
Seconder: McCann
Ayes: Magelssen, Borgert, Ball-Warriner, Bloss, Huling, Matthews, Cruikshank, McCann, Goligowski, Haycraft, Perryman, Stang, Schmitz, and Strong.
Nayes: NA

WACOSA Presentation

- Jenny Zimmer and Lori Schneider introduced themselves from WACOSA and provided an overview of the organization. They shared that WACOSA serves approximately 650 clients and recently received a grant from Stearns County. Through a partnership with Career Solutions, WACOSA is offering clients with

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disabilities training through the Career Trek class, as well as exposure to employer tours through the Discovery Day model. These opportunities help expand clients' job coaching experiences, and participants have enjoyed taking part in the activities.
- They also shared an upcoming free lunch and learn event ch-hosted by Career Solutions on June 30th which focuses on diversifying employment opportunities by employing those with disabilities.

Business Items/Updates:

- **Thank you to those who attended the Staff Appreciation!** – Career Solutions would like to thank board members who attended the staff appreciation today. Hope you enjoyed getting to know the staff better and we are certain the staff appreciated you hosting the event and learning more about you. In addition, we thank the Wellness Committee for organizing the event.
- **2026-2027 Preliminary Budget** – shown on the screen is the preliminary budget for fiscal year 2026-2027. Career Solutions shows a positive balance for the upcoming year.

JPB Motion:

Results: Approved the 2026-2027 Preliminary Budget.
Mover: Heinen
Seconder: Benoit
Ayes: Bertram, Heinen, & Benoit.
Nayes: NA

LWDB Motion:

Results: Approved the 2026-2027 Preliminary Budget.
Mover: Matthews
Seconder: Schmitz
Ayes: Magelssen, Borgert, Ball-Warriner, Bloss, Huling, Matthews, Cruikshank, McCann, Goligowski, Haycraft, Perryman, Stang, Schmitz, and Strong.
Nayes: NA

- **Finance Manual Update** – Career Solutions is in its final stages of updating the Finance Manual and are hoping to have the final copy presented during the July board meeting. However, seeking approval of the following policies below effective 7/1/2026.
    - **Increasing Support Services Limits & Classroom Training Limitations Effective 07/01/2026** – With costs increasing, the proposal is to raise some of the support service limits and classroom training costs to

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align with market rates. Stark outlined the specific rate increases on the screen.

JPB Motion:

Results: Approved the revised Support Services Limits & Classroom Training Limitations Effective 07/01/2026
Mover: Heinen
Seconder: Benoit
Ayes: Bertram, Heinen, & Benoit.
Nayes: NA

LWDB Motion:

Results: Approved the revised Support Services Limits & Classroom Training Limitations Effective 07/01/2026
Mover: Borgert
Seconder: Perryman
Ayes: Magelssen, Borgert, Ball-Warriner, Bloss, Huling, Matthews, Cruikshank, McCann, Goligowski, Haycraft, Perryman, Stang, Schmitz, and Strong.
Nayes: NA

- **Employee Handbook Update** – Career Solutions is updating the Employee Handbook and are planning to present the final copy for board approval in July.
- **DEED Required Documents:**
  - **Subsequent Designation: Submitted 05/27/2026** – every few years, all Workforce Service Areas are required to submit a Subsequent Designation to the state. This includes our performance scorecards, financial audits, etc. This was included in the agenda packet and was submitted to the state on 5/27/2026.
  - **Local and Regional Plans: Open for Public Comment 09/01/2026** – The state is requiring Career Solutions and our region to update Local and Regional Plans. This will be posted on our website for a 30-day open comment period in which we will request board approval in the upcoming months.
  - **ADA Annual Assessment: Due Date TBD** – The state requires all Workforce Service Areas to complete an ADA Assessment annually. This will be due soon and will supply a copy to the board once finalized.
  - **Fiscal Monitoring Report: Due Date TBD** - The state requires all Workforce Service Areas to complete a Fiscal Monitoring Report annually. This will be due soon and will supply a copy to the board once finalized.

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- **MAWB – Empowering Job Seekers, Supporting Employers, and Growing MN's Workforce Website:** https://www.mawb-mn.org/ - Stark showcased the MAWB website as it's a good resource for employers.
- **PY2025 Quarter 3 Performance Scorecards** – included in your agenda packet was the PY25 Quarter 3 Performance Scorecards. We have highlighted our row for easy reading but you can see our scores are good.
- **Executive Director Goals for 2026-2027** – Stark had her performance review with the Board Chairs. As part of her review, she created performance goals for fiscal year 2026-2027 and shared them with the board.
- **LWDB Board Member Recommendations** –in the consent agenda, there are several LWDB board member resignations. If you have any recommendations of executive level individuals to join the workforce board, please reach out to Stark.
- **Project/Grant Updates:**
    - **Pathways to Prosperity (P2P) Maintenance Program:** 15 clients completed the Advanced Safety & Maintenance Facility training program Wednesday, June 17th. 11 of the 15 clients passed the MN Boilers exam on the first try. The other 4 will be scheduled for a retest after a 30-day waiting period.
    - **Drive for 5 Welding Program:** 20 clients started the Foundations of Welding 7-week training program on Monday, June 15th. The program involves 2 weeks of Core Skills & OSHA 10 training and then hands on welding instruction in the Lab. Students will receive a welding tool supply package (helmet, tools, gloves, jacket) and steel toed boots.
- **Upcoming Events/Recap** – Stark provided a recap of the following events:
    - **CDL Discovery Day** – on May 13th we had a CDL Discovery Day. 11 participants attended along with 2 employers. Our next event is July 22nd.
    - **Job Seeker Open House** – held an Open House in June where 55 job seekers attended.
    - **WACOSA Partnership** – As a follow up to the earlier presentation, we partnered with WACOSA and started offering Career Treks in February 2026. 27 participants have attended thus far and have received positive feedback from the individuals who took the survey. Career Solutions also offers a Discovery Day event which took place in May at Blue Line and Coborn's. 11 clients attended and 4 WACOSA staff.
    - **Talent Talks Inclusion that Works** – as WACOSA mentioned earlier, there is a lunch and learn scheduled June 30th.
    - **MAWB Summer Conference** – The MAWB Summer Conference is scheduled to start August 12th in Duluth. Stark shared the drafted agenda thus far.

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Executive Director Updates – N/A.

From the Floor/Announcements – N/A.

Adjournment:

- Bertram adjourned the Joint Powers Board meeting at 2:02pm.
- Magelssen adjourned the Local Workforce Development Board meeting at 2:02pm.
- Thanks for attending our board meeting!

CAREER SOLUTIONS JOINT POWERS BOARD & LOCAL WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE BOARD MEETING MINUTES

Date July 16, 2026, at 3:00pm
Attendance: **Joint Powers Board:** *Jeff Bertram, *Steve Heinen, *Pam Benoit, and *Bob Johnson.
Local Workforce Development Board-Executive Committee: *David Borgert, *Jeff Bloss, and *Ken Matthews.
Career Solutions: *Tammy Stark and *Kari Court.
(= In Person)*
Absent: Jill Magelssen and Les Engel.

Call the Meeting to Order:

- Bertram called the Joint Powers Board (JPB) meeting to order at 3:02pm.
- Borgert called the Local Workforce Development Board-Executive Committee (LWDB-Exec) meeting to order at 3:02pm.

Approval of the Agenda

JPB Motion:

Results: Approved the agenda.
Mover: Johnson
Seconder: Benoit
Ayes: Bertram, Heinen, Johnson, & Benoit.
Nayes: NA

LWDB-Exec Motion:

Results: Approved the agenda.
Mover: Bloss
Seconder: Matthews
Ayes: Borgert, Bloss, & Matthews.
Nayes: NA

Approval of the Consent Agenda

- 2025-2026 Client Waiver Overages – as of 07/08/2026
- 03/12/2026 JPB & LWDB-Exec Minutes
- State of MN Professional & Technical Services Master Contract for VRS Pre-ETS
- Minnesota State Customized Training Contract for Advance Safety and Maintenance Facilities Discovery Day Agreement
- WACOSA Subcontract Agreement for Career Trek & Discovery Day Events
- State of MN/St. Cloud State University Memorandum of Agreement for Student Training Experience/Internship for Non-Allied Health Programs
- Disposal of Outdated Equipment

CAREER SOLUTIONS JOINT POWERS BOARD & LOCAL WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE BOARD MEETING MINUTES

JPB Motion:

Results: Approved the consent agenda.
Mover: Benoit
Seconder: Heinen
Ayes: Bertram, Heinen, Johnson, & Benoit.
Nayes: NA

LWDB-Exec Motion:

Results: Approved the consent agenda.
Mover: Bloss
Seconder: Matthews
Ayes: Borgert, & Engel.
Nayes: NA

Matthews abstained from item 3.D. Minnesota State Customized Training Contract for Advance Safety and Maintenance Facilities Discovery Day Agreement.

Business Items/Updates:

- **05/2026 Board Financials** – Financials were included in your agenda packet, and Stark reviewed them with the board. She also explained once the board financials are released for June, there will be an increased amount for technology as through the Managed IT Services transition, many of the staff laptops were beyond its life expectancy and some most of the staff received new laptops. This will reduce our costs in the future as many staff had two machines and now only having one machine will eventually save us funds under our managed IT agreement.
- Bloss stated he reviewed the revenue and because of our grant cycle, he anticipated the grant revenue and expenditures would be down. Bloss did have a question about why we are down about $500,000 from prior year in grant revenue? Stark stated that is what we have spent on the grants so a reduction in staff costs, grants sunsetting, etc.

JPB Motion:

Results: Approved the Board Financials from May 2026.
Mover: Heinen
Seconder: Johnson
Ayes: Bertram, Heinen, Johnson, & Benoit.
Nayes: NA

LWDB-Exec Motion:

Results: Approved the Board Financials from May 2026.
Mover: Bloss

CAREER SOLUTIONS JOINT POWERS BOARD & LOCAL WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE BOARD MEETING MINUTES

Seconder: Matthews
Ayes: Borgert, Bloss, & Matthews.
Nayes: NA

- **Travel Policy Discussion** – at our last board meeting, Johnson brought up the travel policy and if the board truly needs to approve travel within Minnesota. As a result, Career Solutions has incorporated a note within the Finance Manual that states 'Board approval needed for any outside of state travel'; that way its only needed when traveling occurs outside of MN.
- **Employee Handbook** – The Employee Handbook was sent to the attorney, and feedback was provided which was incorporated into the document. Court then sent the Employee Handbook and coversheet outlining the major changes via email earlier this week for review.
- **Finance Manual** – Creative Planning reviewed our Finance Manual and created a memo which was shared with you via email along with the proposed Finance Manual. Bloss reminded Career Solutions that he is a partner for Creative Planning, but his vote should not impact this approval as this is a policy (not an agreement).

JPB Motion:

Results: Approved the Travel Policy, Employee Handbook, and Finance Manual.
Mover: Benoit
Seconder: Johnson
Ayes: Bertram, Heinen, Johnson, & Benoit.
Nayes: NA

LWDB-Exec Motion:

Results: Approved the Travel Policy, Employee Handbook, and Finance Manual.
Mover: Bloss
Seconder: Matthews
Ayes: Borgert, Bloss, & Matthews.
Nayes: NA

- **IFA & MOU Updates** – Career Solutions is waiting on one more signature on the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) and then it will be ready for the board signatures. The Infrastructure Funding Agreement is tied to the MOU which outlines each partner's responsibility and shared funding costs to run the center. Since one signature remains, staff is requesting board approval to sign.

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- Johnson commented that this is an extensive list of partners but do not see the Regional Center for the Deaf and Heard of Hearing listed. Stark responded stating that DEED – Vocational Rehabilitation Services (VRS) is on the partner list which they do provide similar services. It is good to know there is another option for individuals, especially as DEED VRS has a wait list at times.

JPB Motion:

Results: Approved the Infrastructure Funding Agreement (IFA) and Memorandum of Understanding Agreement (MOU).
Mover: Johnson
Seconder: Heinen
Ayes: Bertram, Heinen, Johnson, & Benoit.
Nayes: NA

LWDB-Exec Motion:

Results: Approved the Infrastructure Funding Agreement (IFA) and Memorandum of Understanding Agreement (MOU).
Mover: Matthews
Seconder: Bloss
Ayes: Borgert, Bloss, & Matthews.
Nayes: NA

- **DEED's Letter on CAPR's** – Stark shared that the agency is on a cash basis (CAPS) for most DEED grants and we received a letter from DEED regarding the future change of the payment processing of DEED grants. Currently, grant drawdowns occur every two weeks for payroll and accounts payable expenses. DEED is stating all vendors are moving to a reimbursement model starting fiscal year 2028. This would mean that the agency would incur expenses for an entire month, submit a reimbursement by the 20th of the month, and then wait up to 30 days (if not longer) for reimbursement.
- A few DEED grants were on a reimbursement basis last year and were more challenging to process with the state. Not only does the agency have to float the month we are spending these funds in. The report is due on the 20th of next month and then DEED has 30 days to pay the reimbursement. Unfortunately, DEED has been taking beyond 30 days to pay the reimbursement, on occasion.
- This means the agency will need to have at least 2-3 months' worth of disposable income upfront to float/cover our expenses. Career Solutions is grant-based and therefore do not have a large reserve to rely on.
- Bloss mentioned if DEED goes down this route, we may have to consider a line of credit and asked if Career Solutions has done that before? Career Solutions

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has not in Starks tenure but that would be a costly expense of taxpayer dollars. Also, interest paid on any loan is not an allowable grant expense.

- **LWDB Membership Discussion** – a few meetings ago, the Board had removed a few members from the LWDB. One of those was Mohamed Goni from Central Minnesota Community Empowerment Organization. Career Solutions wanted to make the board aware of concerns with Credent Care, lead by Shirwa Adan. Staff shared a news article released that the Bureau of Criminal Apprehension (BCA) and Attorney General's Office executed a search warrant at Credent Care. The search warrant was related to a Medicaid fraud investigation. The board discussed their options and decided it was in the best interest for Career Solutions and took the following action.

LWDB-Exec Motion:

Results: Recommend the Joint Powers Board to suspend Shirwa Adan from the Local Workforce Development Board until pending resolution of the BCA investigation.
Mover: Bloss
Seconder: Matthews
Ayes: Borgert, Bloss, & Matthews.
Nayes: NA

JPB Motion:

Results: Approved the LWDB recommendation by suspending Shirwa Adan from the Local Workforce Development Board until pending resolution of the BCA investigation.
Mover: Benoit
Seconder: Johnson
Ayes: Bertram, Heinen, Johnson, & Benoit.
Nayes: NA

- **Employer Toolkit: Action Guide** – Included in your agenda packet is an employer resource. We will also bring it forth at the next large board meeting.

Executive Director:

- There is a health concern with one of our employees and may need to ask Creative Planning for their assistance. It is unknown of how long this person will need to take time off. Wanted to inform the board in case a new or modified agreement needs to take place with Creative Planning.
- At the last board meeting, staff reviewed a training provider complaint. DEED conducted an investigation and released their investigation summary letter. This

CAREER SOLUTIONS JOINT POWERS BOARD & LOCAL WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE BOARD MEETING MINUTES

letter states *'there is no evidence to suggest that the delay resulted from intentional misconduct, neglect of duties, or unreasonable actions by an individual. Rather, the investigation determined that they timeframe was consistent with the complexity of the matter, and the dependencies that existed between various states of the process."*

- The Managed IT Services transition is going well. The next project will be to transition from the agency's virtual server to an online platform. Stark reminded the board members of those future costs.
- CareerONE VIP day was held on July 15th - the event went well! 35 guests attended and great conversations took place as well as making some great connections.

From the Floor/Announcements – N/A.

Adjournment:

- Bertram adjourned the Joint Powers Board meeting at 3:48pm.
- Borgert adjourned the Local Workforce Development Board-Executive Committee meeting at 3:48pm.
- Thanks for attending our board meeting!

CohnReznick

August 31, 2026

Via Docusign: tammy.stark@csjobs.org

Tammy Stark
Stearns-Benton Employment & Training Council
DBA: Career Solutions
1542 Northway Drive
St. Cloud, MN 56303

Re: 2025 Exempt Organization Tax Return Preparation Services for Stearns-Benton Employment & Training Council

Dear Tammy:

Thank you for choosing CohnReznick Advisory LLC ("CohnReznick" or "we") to perform professional services for Stearns-Benton Employment & Training Council (referred to herein as the "Entity" or "you"). This engagement letter and attached General Terms and Conditions (collectively referred to herein as the "Agreement") shall confirm our understanding of the terms and objectives of our engagement, our mutual responsibilities and the nature and limitations of the services we will provide for the fiscal year begun July 1, 2025 and ended June 30, 2026.

Services

We will prepare for filing by the Entity, the federal and state exempt organization tax returns as follows:

- 990 Return of Organization Exempt from Income Tax
- Minnesota Annual Charities Report

We are responsible for preparing returns only for the jurisdictions that are explicitly specified in this Agreement. The rules regarding when a state or local tax return is required to be filed are complex, and such rules may vary by jurisdiction and taxpayer and may change year-to-year. If the basis for our preparing a return in a specific jurisdiction is not correct and has an effect on apportionment or inclusion of income, you agree that we are not responsible beyond the information originally provided by you. We will make every effort to bring to your attention any liability that we do notice; however, overall advice on these issues is not within the scope of this engagement. We do not, in addition, make any representation about the completeness of any sales/use, payroll or any other non-income tax filings. Accordingly, we recommend that you undertake an annual nexus review to ensure that you are filing all required tax returns. A nexus review is not included in the services to be performed under this Agreement. Please let us know if you would like additional information on undertaking a nexus review.

As we look to prepare the returns noted above, you should also consider the following potential additional services and fees:

- This Agreement also covers general tax consulting matters that may arise for which you seek our advice, both written and oral, and that are not the subject of a separate engagement letter. If any matter exceeds the scope of general tax consulting, we will issue a separate engagement letter or addendum to this letter, setting forth the scope and related terms. For instance, general tax consulting matters included in this

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Agreement do not include tax consulting projects (e.g., such as nexus studies, R&D studies, transfer pricing studies; private letter ruling applications; tax controversy matters; the purchase, merger, or sale of a business, including buy/sell arrangements with any new owners; etc.).

- Recently enacted tax legislation has resulted in several tax provisions that may impact your federal and state income tax returns. This engagement will, if requested by you, include additional services related to researching and analyzing how such legislation impacts your overall tax position, including identifying potential planning opportunities.
- Our fees, specified in the Fees section further below, do not include our work related to the new Forms K-2/K-3.
- If a separate engagement letter is not issued with respect to any additional services, such services shall be subject to the terms and conditions of this Agreement and these additional services will be billed at CohnReznick's hourly rates in effect at the time the services are provided, and will be based upon the time expended by CohnReznick in performing these services. Such fees are in addition to the fees specified in the Fees section further below. Similarly, the fee set forth below does not account for services that could be required in the event of any tax law change that may be enacted after the date of this Agreement.

Client Responsibilities

You are responsible for the proper recording of transactions in the books of accounts, the substantial accuracy of the financial records, and the full and accurate disclosure to us of all relevant facts affecting the return(s). You are responsible for providing us with a complete understanding of all states and localities (including foreign jurisdictions) in which you are doing business and/or involved in financial transactions. You represent that the information you are supplying to us is accurate and complete to the best of your knowledge and that you have disclosed to us all relevant facts affecting the returns. We will prepare the Entity's returns that are the subject of this Agreement based on the information you furnish to us. We will not audit or verify the data, although we may ask you to clarify some of it, or to provide additional data.

It is your responsibility to maintain, in your records, the documentation necessary to support the data used in preparing your tax returns, including but not limited to the auto, travel, entertainment, gifts and similar expenses and the required documents to support charitable contributions over $250. In addition, proper documentation is required to be maintained for each activity or investment in which you materially participate. The tax laws call for significant penalties to be imposed against taxpayers for "substantial understatement" of tax and for "negligence." In cases of substantial understatement of income (or substantial overstatement of deductions), the statute of limitations (number of previous years' returns still open for audit) can be extended. If we are aware that applicable tax law is unclear or that there are conflicting interpretations, we will discuss with you our knowledge and understanding of the possible positions that may have a material effect on the return and the alternatives that may be available and use our best judgment in protecting your interests.

You have the responsibility for the filing of all necessary tax returns and the payment of any taxes due on them. Therefore, you should review the returns carefully before you sign and file them, or before you authorize us to file them electronically on your behalf, including confirming that the correct routing numbers and bank account information have been provided to us. You are responsible for returning a properly signed and dated e-file authorization form prior to the

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filing deadline where some or all of your tax returns will be filed electronically. We will not be responsible for any penalties and/or interest imposed for your failure to do so.

You are responsible for the safeguarding of assets. Our work, in connection with the preparation of your income tax returns, does not include any procedures designed to discover defalcations or other irregularities, should any exist.

Changes in Tax Law and Information

The returns we prepare for you are based on the current tax law, as we understand it, at the time of preparing the returns. We are not responsible for future changes in the law that may affect the returns we have already prepared in connection with prior years, including law changes that may require the amendment of previously filed returns. While we may attempt to advise you of such changes, we are under no obligation to do so.

In addition, if, during our work, we discover information that affects your previously filed tax returns, we will make you aware of the facts; however, we are not responsible for identifying items that may affect previously filed returns. If you become aware of such information, please advise us of such information. Should you desire that we prepare such amended returns or other filings such as Form(s) 3115, Application for Change in Accounting Method, as a result of new information, we will separately agree to the terms of the engagement by means of an addendum to this Agreement or a separate engagement letter. However, in the event that an addendum or separate engagement letter is not issued and CohnReznick prepares such amended returns or other filings, such services shall be subject to the terms and conditions of this Agreement.

Reporting to IRS of Foreign Activity or Assets

There are significant taxpayer penalties for failing to report foreign activity or assets to the Internal Revenue Service ("IRS"). One such report, FinCEN Form 114, Report of Foreign Bank and Financial Accounts, is required to be filed by a U.S. person if such person has a financial interest in a foreign financial account or has signature or other authority over a foreign financial account. Form 5471, Information Return of U.S. Persons with Respect To Certain Foreign Corporations, and Form 5472, Information Return of a 25% Foreign-Owned U.S. Corporation or a Foreign Corporation Engaged in a U.S. Trade or Business, are two other reports that have significant failure to file penalties. The IRS also requires information reporting with respect to transactions involving certain foreign trusts or foreign gifts received. Involvement in these transactions requires you to file Form 3520, Annual Return to Report Transactions with Foreign Trusts and Receipt of Certain Foreign Gifts, or Form 3520-A, Annual Information Return of Foreign Trust with a U.S. Owner, as applicable. There are also many other foreign information filings that could apply with respect to direct or indirect investments in, or transactions with, foreign entities. Failure to disclose any of these items can result in significant failure to file penalties. In addition, the statute of limitations may remain open for the entire return if these forms are required and not filed. No foreign-activity form(s)/filing(s) is/(are) included in the deliverables under this Agreement unless specifically enumerated herein or specifically requested by you in writing. Any such form(s)/filing(s) prepared by CohnReznick shall be subject to the terms and conditions of this Agreement.

Required Disclosures

The Internal Revenue Code and regulations set forth preparation and disclosure standards. Failure to comply with these standards exposes both the tax return preparer and the taxpayer to penalties. To avoid exposure to these penalties, it may be necessary, in some cases, to make

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certain disclosures to you and/or in the return concerning positions taken on the return that do not meet these standards. Accordingly, we will advise you if we identify such a situation, and we will discuss those tax positions that may increase the risk of exposure to penalties and any recommended disclosures with you before completing the preparation of the return. If we disagree on how to proceed with respect to any position in the return, we reserve the right to withdraw from the engagement. Likewise, in such a situation, you have a right to choose another professional to prepare your return. In either event, you agree to compensate us for our services performed up to the date of withdrawal. Our engagement with you will terminate at the date of withdrawal.

Additionally, the IRS requires you to file certain disclosure statements regarding tax strategies and reportable transactions. Failure to disclose any of these transactions can result in significant penalties being imposed on you. When providing information to us, please verify and disclose if you were involved in a tax strategy or reportable transaction.

A partial list of reportable transactions can be found under the following IRS website:

http://www.irs.gov/Businesses/Corporations/Listed-Transactions

Consents

By signing and dating below, you authorize CohnReznick to use and disclose your name and contact information (a) as a reference to potential clients of CohnReznick, on CohnReznick's website or in connection with CohnReznick's marketing activities, and (b) to send to you non-tax related information regarding CohnReznick and other services it offers, information from or about CohnReznick's affiliated companies and the services they offer, and information concerning upcoming events, webinars or webcasts offered by CohnReznick or its affiliated companies (collectively, "Mailings"). In addition, you understand that CohnReznick may utilize third party vendors from time to time to send its Mailings and you authorize CohnReznick to disclose your name and contact information to any third-party vendors solely for the purpose of sending such mailings on CohnReznick's behalf.

In addition, by signing and dating below, you authorize CohnReznick to disclose your tax return information to entities or individuals that will assist CohnReznick with the preparation of your returns including our affiliated entities, CohnReznick Professional Services PVT Ltd. or its successor and/or CohnReznick Philippines, Inc. or its successor, and our tax processing software providers some of which may be located outside the United States. You have the right to limit your consent to specific information, not just authorize disclosure of all of your tax return information.

Your consent as provided above will remain in effect during the time in which you engage CohnReznick to provide services. You may terminate your consent at any time by providing written notice to CohnReznick.

Engagement Administration, Fees and Other

We would appreciate your forwarding us your information as early as possible. **For all tax compliance engagements, we reserve the right to place your return(s) on extension and this Agreement authorizes us to do so**.

You agree to pay CohnReznick fees for its services based upon the time expended by CohnReznick in performing the services at CohnReznick's hourly rates in effect at the time the services are rendered plus out-of-pocket expenses. Also, an administrative and technology

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charge of 5% of our fees will be added to each invoice to cover costs such as technology usage, software licensing, research databases, telecommunications, etc.

Invoices will be rendered periodically as work progresses and are payable upon presentation.

By the undersigned execution of this Agreement, you represent and warrant that you are authorized on behalf of the entity or entities listed to bind and are in fact binding each such entity to the terms and conditions of this Agreement.

We appreciate the opportunity to be of service to you. If you have any questions, please let us know. If you agree with the terms of our engagement as described in this Agreement, please sign the enclosed copy and return it to us.

Sincerely,

Jason Miller
Partner

JM:tad

Attachment: General Terms and Conditions (ver. 4/2026)

AGREED TO AND ACCEPTED BY:

Stearns-Benton Employment & Training Council

Signed by:

By: Tammy Stark
4E40DA6AA49A4A3...
Authorized signature

Print Name: Tammy Stark

Title: Executive Director

Date: 8/31/2026

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References in these General Terms and Conditions to Client include "you," "Company," "Client" or other term used in the engagement letter to refer to the individual(s) or entity(ies) for whom the services are being performed and the individual(s) or entity(ies) who signed the engagement letter.

Alternative Practice Structure: Use of "CohnReznick" in this Agreement means and refers solely to CohnReznick Advisory LLC, which operates in an alternative practice structure with CohnReznick LLP and its affiliates ("CRLLP"; together with CohnReznick and its affiliates, the "Company Group"). By executing this Agreement, Client consents to CohnReznick sharing with CRLLP Client Confidential Information obtained in connection with this engagement or prior engagements.

Client acknowledges and agrees that Client's sole and exclusive remedy with respect to any claims arising from or relating in any way to this Agreement or CohnReznick's services shall be against CohnReznick and no other entity or person, including without limitation, CRLLP or any of its or CohnReznick's employees, partners or representatives. If Client violates this covenant not to sue, Client agrees to pay all costs and expenses (including reasonable attorneys' fees) of defending such suit, including those incurred in collection of such amounts.

Client Representations: Client agrees, to the best of Client's knowledge and belief, to be truthful, accurate and complete in making oral or written representations to CohnReznick during the engagement and in any written representations at the conclusion of the engagement. Because of the importance of management's representations to the services, Client shall be responsible for all liabilities, losses, damages and costs (including attorneys' fees) incurred or suffered by CohnReznick arising out of or caused by any misrepresentations by Client or its representative(s).

Invoicing: Invoices not paid in full within thirty (30) days of receipt will accrue interest of 1% per month (12% annually) from the date of the invoice until paid.

Client shall reimburse CohnReznick for reasonable costs and attorneys' fees incurred by CohnReznick should it prevail in proceedings to collect unpaid fees and expenses.

Confidentiality: The parties agree that any confidential, proprietary or non-public information disclosed by or on behalf of a party hereto ("Confidential Information") will be kept confidential. No party may disclose any such Confidential Information except with the disclosing party's prior written consent or as permitted in this Agreement including, but not limited to, the Alternative Practice Structure, Use of Third Parties, Third-Party Requests and Electronic Signatures, Transmissions & Storage sections.

Personal Data & Data Privacy: Client shall not provide CohnReznick with Protected Health Information, Personal Identifiable Information or other information regulated by data protection laws (collectively, "Personal Data") except to the extent necessary for CohnReznick's performance of the services. Unless otherwise mutually agreed to in writing, the parties agree that the services are not intended to process, store, disclose or transmit any information that requires safeguarding or dissemination controls under any applicable law, regulation or government policy concerning information that is restricted for dissemination or disclosure to foreign nationals, including any Controlled Unclassified Information ("CUI"). CohnReznick's Client Data Privacy and CUI Notices can be accessed at https://www.cohnreznick.com/insights/client-data-privacy-notice.

Application of IRS Code §7216: The following provisions apply to engagements for tax preparation services subject to Internal Revenue Code §7216. Client authorizes CohnReznick to use and disclose Client's tax return information for the following purposes: (a) to offer other (non-tax) services to Client; and (b) disclosure to Company Group members and tax processing software providers, some of which may be located outside of the United States, for the purposes of performing administrative support services (e.g., resource management, marketing, invoicing, billing).

Use of Third Parties: CohnReznick may use affiliated entities and subcontractors, some of which may be located outside the United States, in connection with the performance of services under this Agreement. CohnReznick shall be responsible for work performed by any affiliated entities or subcontractors, who shall be subject to confidentiality obligations no less stringent than those set forth in this Agreement. Client agrees that with respect to all such work performed under this Agreement, its sole recourse is against CohnReznick.

Additionally, CohnReznick may use third-party providers to provide administrative, technological and operational support to CohnReznick and its engagement teams. All such third-party providers shall be subject to confidentiality obligations no less stringent than those set forth in this Agreement.

Third-Party Software & Automated Tools: In performing the services under this Agreement, CohnReznick may use third-party software, including generative artificial intelligence or other automated technologies, as tools in connection with the delivery of services, including, for example, for task automation, data analysis or extraction, or project management. CohnReznick makes no representation, warranty or guarantee, whether written or oral, on behalf of any third-party software provider or regarding such third-party software, including that it will be error-free or available without interruption. CohnReznick shall not be

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responsible for any representations, warranties or guarantees made by any third-party software provider.

Any use of Client Confidential Information in connection with CohnReznick's use of such third-party software shall be handled in accordance with this Agreement, including the confidentiality and data privacy provisions hereunder. To the extent artificial intelligence is used to generate output that is incorporated into Client deliverables, such output is subject to review by CohnReznick personnel.

Third-Party Requests: If any member of the Company Group is required by law, regulation, subpoena or applicable professional standards or rules to produce Confidential Information or their personnel as witnesses (collectively, a "Demand"), Client will, to the extent legally permissible, be notified promptly of the Demand to allow Client to seek a protective order or other relief, unless the Demand is made pursuant to regulatory oversight. Client shall reimburse the Company Group member(s) for time spent at then-current hourly rates, expenses (including reasonable attorneys' fees), costs and losses incurred in connection with a Demand or any other production of Confidential Information authorized or requested by Client, provided the Company Group member is not a party to the proceeding or the subject of the regulatory investigation in which the information is sought.

Data Collection & Benchmarking: CohnReznick may collect and aggregate data disclosed by Client to develop and enhance its services and offerings, develop new services and offerings, and to conduct marketing, research and development activities, benchmarking and knowledge sharing. For the avoidance of doubt, any such aggregated data shall be anonymized and not include any Client Confidential Information or Personal Data that may be used to identify Client or any individual. Client acknowledges that such aggregated data in combined form is owned by CohnReznick, and CohnReznick may use and disclose such data at its discretion (including for commercial purposes) and as described herein.

Record Retention: CohnReznick's working papers and other file materials are CohnReznick's property and are not a substitute for Client's own records. It is Client's responsibility to retain copies of its own records and any deliverables. CohnReznick shall not store any Client files or deliverables for Client, including documents contained in any Portal (as defined below). CohnReznick and CRLLP shall not be liable for the destruction of their files including any Client files.

Non-Solicitation: During the performance of the services and for one (1) year thereafter, in the event Client hires an employee/partner used to provide services under this Agreement, Client will pay a fee equal to one times that individual's total annual compensation (which shall be payable at the time of employment); provided, however, that such fee shall not apply when the individual is hired by Client with CohnReznick's express written consent.

LIMITATIONS: TO THE FULLEST EXTENT PERMITTED BY APPLICABLE LAW, CLIENT AGREES THAT THE AGGREGATE MAXIMUM LIABILITY TO CLIENT AND ITS AFFILIATES, MEMBERS, PARTNERS, OFFICERS, DIRECTORS, CONTRACTORS, AGENTS AND REPRESENTATIVES (COLLECTIVELY, THE "CLIENT PARTIES") FOR ANY ACTS OR OMISSIONS (INCLUDING NEGLIGENT ACTS AND OMISSIONS) ARISING OUT OF OR RELATED TO THIS AGREEMENT OR ANY SERVICES PROVIDED TO CLIENT, REGARDLESS OF THE NATURE OR TYPE OF CLAIM, WILL BE LIMITED TO THE AMOUNT PAID FOR THE SERVICES THAT GIVE RISE TO THE LIABILITY.

EXCEPT FOR THE INDEMNIFICATION OBLIGATIONS SET FORTH HEREIN, IN NO EVENT SHALL EITHER THE COHNREZNICK PARTIES (AS DEFINED BELOW) OR THE CLIENT PARTIES BE LIABLE FOR ANY CONSEQUENTIAL, INCIDENTAL, INDIRECT, PUNITIVE OR SPECIAL DAMAGES, INCLUDING ANY AMOUNT FOR LOSS OF PROFIT, BUSINESS, DATA, GOODWILL, PENALTIES, INTEREST OR PRE-JUDGMENT INTEREST, WHETHER OR NOT THE LIKELIHOOD OF SUCH LOSS OR DAMAGE WAS CONTEMPLATED.

ANY CLAIM OR PROCEEDING, REGARDLESS OF ITS FORM, ARISING OUT OF OR RELATED TO THIS AGREEMENT OR ANY SERVICES PROVIDED TO CLIENT (COLLECTIVELY, "CLAIM") MUST BE ASSERTED BY CLIENT WITHIN ONE (1) YEAR OF THE COMPLETION OF THE PARTICULAR SERVICES GIVING RISE TO THE CLAIM. ANY CLAIM NOT BROUGHT BY CLIENT WITHIN THAT TIME PERIOD SHALL BE BARRED WITHOUT REGARD TO ANY OTHER LIMITATIONS PERIOD SET FORTH BY LAW OR STATUTE.

USE & INDEMNIFICATION: THE SERVICES, WORK PRODUCT, DELIVERABLES AND ADVICE PROVIDED TO CLIENT UNDER THIS AGREEMENT (COLLECTIVELY, "DELIVERABLES") ARE FOR THE USE AND BENEFIT OF CLIENT ONLY. ACCORDINGLY, CLIENT SHALL INDEMNIFY AND HOLD HARMLESS THE COMPANY GROUP AND EACH OF THEIR CURRENT OR FORMER PARTNERS, PRINCIPALS, DIRECTORS, OFFICERS, EMPLOYEES, CONTRACTORS, SUCCESSORS AND ASSIGNS (COLLECTIVELY, THE "COHNREZNICK PARTIES") FROM AND AGAINST ANY AND ALL CLAIMS (INCLUDING CLAIMS BY ANY OF THE CLIENT PARTIES OR ANY THIRD PARTY), CAUSES OF ACTION, DAMAGES, LIABILITIES AND LOSSES INCLUDING COSTS AND LEGAL FEES, ARISING OUT OF OR RELATED TO: (A) USE OF OR RELIANCE ON THE DELIVERABLES BY ANY THIRD PARTY INCLUDING A THIRD PARTY WHO ACCESSED ANY DELIVERABLES PURSUANT

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TO AN ACCESS AGREEMENT OR OTHERWISE; (B) A BREACH OF ANY CLIENT OBLIGATIONS, REPRESENTATIONS OR WARRANTIES SET FORTH HEREIN; OR (C) ANY CLAIM BY CLIENT'S AFFILIATED ENTITY WHEREIN IT ASSERTS OR MAINTAINS BY WAY OF DIRECT CAUSE OF ACTION OR DEFENSE THAT IT IS NOT BOUND BY THE TERMS OF THIS AGREEMENT.

Management's Responsibilities: If applicable, any tax services will be rendered using CohnReznick's professional judgment and will be guided by the relevant tax rules of the jurisdiction(s) covered by this Agreement. CohnReznick shall not be liable, to any extent, for any assessments of tax, interest or penalties.

Client is responsible for making all management decisions and performing all management functions, for designating an individual with suitable skill, knowledge or experience to oversee the services provided under this Agreement and for evaluating the adequacy and results of the services performed and accepting responsibility for such services.

Investment Advice: The services do not include investment advice, as CohnReznick is not a registered investment adviser and does not and will not provide advice with respect to investments made or maintained by Client, or otherwise. Client agrees that any advice received from CohnReznick will not be understood or used by Client as investment advice.

Electronic Signatures, Transmissions & Storage: An electronic, digital or electronically transmitted signature will be deemed an enforceable original. The parties may use third-party systems (including portals, data rooms or services/websites hosted by a third party) or other electronic means to communicate, transmit, share and store documents under this Agreement (collectively, "Portals"). Each party accepts the associated risks, and the Company Group shall not be responsible for the security, thereof. Portals are subject to their terms of use and are intended solely for Client (and Client alone will be given access).

Force Majeure: No party shall be responsible for any failure to comply with the terms of this Agreement, including, but not limited to, delays in performance or completion of the services, where such failure or delay is directly or indirectly caused by or results from events of force majeure (including, but not limited to, acts of war or terrorism, civil or military disturbances, nuclear or natural disasters, pandemics, and interruptions or loss of utilities) beyond the reasonable control of such party.

Choice of Law: This Agreement and any claims arising out of or related to this Agreement or any services provided to Client (including, but not limited to, claims arising in contract, tort, fraud, statute or otherwise) shall be governed by and construed in accordance with the laws of the State of New York without giving effect to any choice of law provisions.

Dispute Resolution; Jury Trial Waiver: Any dispute, controversy or claim arising out of or relating to the services or the performance or breach of this Agreement (including disputes regarding the termination, validity, interpretation or enforceability of this clause) or any prior services or agreements between the parties shall be finally resolved by arbitration in accordance with the International Institute for Conflict Prevention and Resolution ("IICPR") Rules for Non-Administered Arbitrations in effect on the date of this Agreement (except to the extent those rules are inconsistent with this clause in which case this clause shall govern) by a panel of three arbitrators, with claimant(s) and respondent(s), respectively, to each designate a single arbitrator and the two party-appointed arbitrators to select the third arbitrator who shall be a retired Judge. None of the selected arbitrators need to be on the IICPR's list of arbitrators. The arbitration shall take place in New York, New York and shall be governed by the Federal Arbitration Act, 9 U.S.C. §§ 1 et seq. The arbitration shall be confidential, and any award shall be binding and final. IN AGREEING TO ARBITRATION, THE PARTIES ACKNOWLEDGE THAT IN THE EVENT OF ANY DISPUTE (INCLUDING A DISPUTE OVER FEES) THE PARTIES ARE GIVING UP THE RIGHT TO HAVE THE DISPUTE DECIDED IN A COURT OF LAW BEFORE A JUDGE OR JURY AND INSTEAD ARE ACCEPTING THE USE OF ARBITRATION FOR RESOLUTION.

The arbitration panel shall have no authority to award punitive damages, damages that are not allowable under this Agreement, or a remedy that could not be made or imposed by a court deciding the matter under applicable law.

All fees and expenses for the arbitrators, meeting and hearing facilities and hearing transcripts shall be split evenly 50% by the claimant(s) and 50% by the respondent(s), with any division among claimants or respondents to be decided by each side respectively as the case may be. No neutral experts shall be appointed by the arbitration panel.

At the initial pre-hearing conference, the arbitrators shall (a) require that the parties exchange (i) a good faith calculation of any claimed damages, (ii) the name and, if known, address and telephone number of each person likely to have knowledge of relevant information, and (iii) non-privileged documents that are relevant to the issues raised by any claim, defense or counterclaim; and (b) determine the number of depositions to be permitted, taking into consideration the nature of claims and damages sought. Third-party subpoenas seeking documents and/or testimony shall be permitted. Absent extraordinary circumstances, the arbitration hearing shall be held on consecutive hearing days. In the event it is necessary to confirm the arbitration award in court, the costs of such

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confirmation proceedings, including attorneys' fees, incurred by the party seeking confirmation shall be borne entirely by the party against whom enforcement is sought.

Term & Termination: This Agreement applies to all services performed at any time (including before the date of this Agreement) arising out of or related to the subject matter of this Agreement.

This Agreement and the services may be terminated upon (i) either party's termination, effective upon thirty (30) days' written notice; or (ii) CohnReznick's termination, effective immediately upon written notice to Client (a) if CohnReznick determines in its professional judgment that it is unable to complete the services in accordance with applicable law or professional standards, (b) for reasonable cause (including failure to provide the information or cooperation necessary for successful performance of the services) or (c) if Client's account becomes overdue.

Client shall compensate CohnReznick for the time expended and all expenses and out-of-pocket costs through the date of termination.

The provisions of this Agreement that give a party rights or obligations beyond its termination shall survive termination of this Agreement.

Entire Agreement: This Agreement is the complete and exclusive statement of agreement between the parties, and it replaces and supersedes all prior proposals, communications and agreements between the parties, whether written or oral, related to the subject matter of this Agreement, including any confidentiality agreements.

No terms or conditions contained in any "shrink-wrap," "click-wrap" or "click-through" license or agreement of Client, or similar electronic Client notification, shall be of any force or effect (even if accepted), nor shall any terms or conditions contained on Client's website, invoice, purchase order, billing, payment or similar transactional documentation be deemed to amend or supplement this Agreement.

If any provision of this Agreement is found to be invalid, then such provision will be modified to reflect the parties' intention as closely as possible without being unenforceable, and all remaining provisions of this Agreement shall remain in full force and effect.

Assignment: Either party may assign its rights under this Agreement in the event of a merger, acquisition, corporate reorganization or sale of all or substantially all of its assets or voting shares, provided that any such assignment by Client shall be subject to CohnReznick's standard client acceptance procedures. Any assignment in contravention of the foregoing shall be deemed void. Any assignment permitted hereunder shall bind and inure to the benefit of the parties, their respective successors and assigns.

Certificate Of Completion

Envelope Id: 3BA0F140-5653-864C-81D0-4F324E790365
Status: Completed
Subject: Stearns-Benton Employment & Training Council - CohnReznick Engagement Letter
Related#:
Client#:
Document Type: Engagement Letter
Other Notes:
Source Envelope:
Document Pages: 9
Signatures: 1
Certificate Pages: 5
Initials: 0
AutoNav: Enabled
EnvelopeId Stamping: Enabled
Time Zone: (UTC-05:00) Eastern Time (US & Canada)

Envelope Originator:
Sakina Campbell
1301 Ave of The Americas
New York, NY 10019
Sakina.Campbell@CohnReznick.com
IP Address: 151.186.182.77

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Signer Events	Signature	Timestamp
Tammy Stark tammy.stark@csjobs.org Executive Director Security Level: Email, Account Authentication (None)	Signed by: Tammy Stark 4E40DA6AA49A4A3... Signature Adoption: Pre-selected Style Using IP Address: 206.198.204.244	Sent: 8/31/2026 4:22:15 PM Viewed: 8/31/2026 4:45:57 PM Signed: 8/31/2026 4:47:07 PM

Electronic Record and Signature Disclosure:
Accepted: 8/31/2026 4:45:57 PM
ID: b67dffb7-7c8d-46fe-a6e9-1f8dc7fe4478

In Person Signer Events	Signature	Timestamp

Editor Delivery Events	Status	Timestamp

Agent Delivery Events	Status	Timestamp

Intermediary Delivery Events	Status	Timestamp

Certified Delivery Events	Status	Timestamp

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7216 Form Preparation 7216FormPreparation@CohnReznick.com Security Level: Email, Account Authentication (None) **Electronic Record and Signature Disclosure:** Not Offered via Docusign	COPIED	Sent: 8/31/2026 4:22:15 PM
Jason Miller jason.miller@cohnreznick.com Security Level: Email, Account Authentication (None) **Electronic Record and Signature Disclosure:** Not Offered via Docusign	COPIED	Sent: 8/31/2026 4:22:16 PM

Carbon Copy Events	Status	Timestamp
MINN Admin Inbox MINN-.Admin@CohnReznick.com Security Level: Email, Account Authentication (None) **Electronic Record and Signature Disclosure:** Not Offered via Docusign	COPIED	Sent: 8/31/2026 4:22:16 PM

Witness Events	Signature	Timestamp

Notary Events	Signature	Timestamp

Envelope Summary Events	Status	Timestamps
Envelope Sent	Hashed/Encrypted	8/31/2026 4:22:16 PM
Certified Delivered	Security Checked	8/31/2026 4:45:57 PM
Signing Complete	Security Checked	8/31/2026 4:47:07 PM
Completed	Security Checked	8/31/2026 4:47:07 PM

Payment Events	Status	Timestamps

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If you decide to receive notices and disclosures from us electronically, you may at any time change your mind and tell us that thereafter you want to receive required notices and disclosures only in paper format. How you must inform us of your decision to receive future notices and disclosure in paper format and withdraw your consent to receive notices and disclosures electronically is described below.

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Unless you tell us otherwise in accordance with the procedures described herein, we will provide electronically to you through your DocuSign user account all required notices, disclosures, authorizations, acknowledgements, and other documents that are required to be provided or made available to you during the course of our relationship with you. To reduce the chance of you inadvertently not receiving any notice or disclosure, we prefer to provide all of the required notices and disclosures to you by the same method and to the same address that you have given us. Thus, you can receive all the disclosures and notices electronically or in paper format through the paper mail delivery system. If you do not agree with this process, please let us know as described below. Please also see the paragraph immediately above that describes the consequences of your electing not to receive delivery of the notices and disclosures electronically from us.

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You may contact us to let us know of your changes as to how we may contact you electronically, to request paper copies of certain information from us, and to withdraw your prior consent to receive notices and disclosures electronically as follows:
To contact us by email send messages to: john.recker@cohnreznick.com

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To let us know of a change in your e-mail address where we should send notices and disclosures electronically to you, you must send an email message to us at john.recker@cohnreznick.com and in the body of such request you must state: your previous e-mail address, your new e-mail address. We do not require any other information from you to change your email address..
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To withdraw your consent with CohnReznick Production
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i. decline to sign a document from within your DocuSign account, and on the subsequent page, select the check-box indicating you wish to withdraw your consent, or you may;
ii. send us an e-mail to john.recker@cohnreznick.com and in the body of such request you must state your e-mail, full name, IS Postal Address, telephone number, and account number. We do not need any other information from you to withdraw consent.. The consequences of your withdrawing consent for online documents will be that transactions may take a longer time to process..

Required hardware and software

Operating Systems:	Windows2000? or WindowsXP?
Browsers (for SENDERS):	Internet Explorer 6.0? or above
Browsers (for SIGNERS):	Internet Explorer 6.0?, Mozilla FireFox 1.0, NetScape 7.2 (or above)
Email:	Access to a valid email account
Screen Resolution:	800 x 600 minimum
Enabled Security Settings:	•Allow per session cookies •Users accessing the internet behind a Proxy Server must enable HTTP 1.1 settings via proxy connection

** These minimum requirements are subject to change. If these requirements change, we will provide you with an email message at the email address we have on file for you at that time providing you with the revised hardware and software requirements, at which time you will have the right to withdraw your consent.

Acknowledging your access and consent to receive materials electronically
To confirm to us that you can access this information electronically, which will be similar to other electronic notices and disclosures that we will provide to you, please verify that you were able to read this electronic disclosure and that you also were able to print on paper or electronically save this page for your future reference and access or that you were able to e-mail this disclosure and consent to an address where you will be able to print on paper or save it for your future reference and access. Further, if you consent to receiving notices and disclosures exclusively in electronic format on the terms and conditions described above, please let us know by clicking the 'I agree' button below.
By checking the 'I Agree' box, I confirm that:

- I can access and read this Electronic CONSENT TO ELECTRONIC RECEIPT OF ELECTRONIC RECORD AND SIGNATURE DISCLOSURES document; and

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- Until or unless I notify CohnReznick Production as described above, I consent to receive from exclusively through electronic means all notices, disclosures, authorizations, acknowledgements, and other documents that are required to be provided or made available to me by CohnReznick Production during the course of my relationship with you.

Agenda Cover Sheet:
Disposal of Outdated Equipment

Agenda Item:

Career Solutions has some obsolete assets that would like to dispose of:

- CS-000-003 (Desktop Printer)
- CS-000-007 (Desktop Printer)
- CS-000-243 (Scanner)
- CS-000-361 (Desktop Printer)

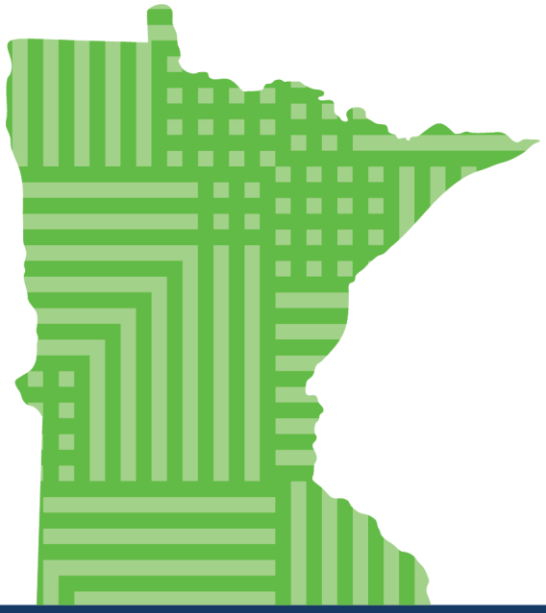
Financial Impact:

In order to properly recycle printers, there may be a recycling fee based upon weight.

Action Requested:

Board approves the disposal of asset tag # 3, 7, 243, & 361.

MINNESOTA
GOVERNOR'S WORKFORCE
DEVELOPMENT BOARD



WIOA State, Regional and Local Plan Guidance for 2024-2027

PREPARED BY THE GOVERNOR'S WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD

WIOA Combined State Plan Modifications for 2024-2027

Under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), the Governor of each state is required to submit a Unified or Combined State Plan to the U.S. Department of Labor that establishes a four-year strategic framework for the state's workforce development system. Within this framework, states may submit a two-year modification to reflect significant changes in economic conditions, workforce needs, policies, or priorities.

The State Plan serves as Minnesota's strategic workforce development roadmap, providing analysis of economic conditions, workforce characteristics, and workforce development activities. These analyses inform the state's vision, goals, and alignment strategies to support economic growth and workforce system effectiveness. Approval of this two-year modification ensures continued alignment with federal requirements and supports Minnesota's ongoing eligibility for federal workforce development funding.

Minnesota submits a Combined State Plan that meets the requirements described above and outlines a four-year strategy for WIOA's core programs plus the following Combined State Plan partner programs:

- Career and technical education programs authorized under the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act of 2006, as amended by the Strengthening Career and Technical Education for the 21st Century Act (Perkins V) (20 U.S.C. 2301 et seq.)
- Temporary Assistance for Needy Families program (42 U.S.C. 601 et seq.)
- Employment and Training programs under the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (programs authorized under section 6(d)(4) of the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 (7 U.S.C. 2015(d)(4)))
- Trade Adjustment Assistance for Workers programs (Activities authorized under chapter 2 of title II of the Trade Act of 1974 (19 U.S.C. 2271 et seq.))
- Jobs for Veterans State Grants Program (programs authorized under 38, U.S.C. 4100 et. seq.)
- Senior Community Service Employment program (programs authorized under title V of the Older Americans Act of 1965 (42 U.S.C. 3056 et seq.))
- Reintegration of Ex-Offenders program (programs authorized under section 212 of the Second Chance Act of 2007 (42 U.S.C. 17532))

The Governor's Workforce Development Board (GWDB) is established under WIOA and supports the development, implementation, and modification of the State Plan as required by the Act.

State Plan Organization

As described by the Department of Labor (DOL) in the WIOA State Plan Information Collection Request (ICR), the major content areas of the Combined State Plan include strategic and operational planning elements. WIOA separates the strategic and operational elements to facilitate cross-program strategic planning.

- The Strategic Planning Elements section includes analyses of the state's economic conditions, workforce characteristics, and workforce development activities. These analyses drive the required vision and goals for the state's workforce development system and alignment strategies for workforce development programs to support economic growth.
- The Operational Planning Elements section identifies the State's efforts to support the State's strategic vision and goals as identified in the Strategic Planning Elements section. This section ensures that the state has the necessary infrastructure, policies, and activities to meet its strategic goals, implement its alignment strategy, and support ongoing program development and coordination. Operational planning elements include:
    - State Strategy Implementation,
    - State Operating Systems and Policies,
    - Assurances,
    - Program-Specific Requirements for the Core Programs, and
    - Program-Specific Requirements for the Combined State Plan partner programs.

The GWDB will be responsible for developing the Strategic Planning Elements and State Strategy Implementation, but this work is only possible with the contributions of each of the program partners.

In addition to the question prompts provided for each of the programs by the DOL in the ICR (linked above and below), each program partner should describe as part of their contribution to the State Strategy Implementation section of the Combined Plan:

1) How the State Plan Vision, Goals and Strategies will be implemented by their programs;
2) Promising practices from the previous 4-year plan will your program be expanding on, including the data or empirical evidence used to inform this decision; and

3) What areas described in your last state plan contribution you will not continue to pursue, including the data or empirical evidence used to inform this decision.

4) How is your program aligning programmatic activities with state or federal investments in the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL), the Creating Helpful Incentives to Produce Semiconductors (CHIPS) and Science Act, and the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) (collectively referred to as Investing in America (IIA))?

State Plan Administrators should send their responses to these questions for inclusion in the State Strategy Implementation section to Nicole.Hochsprung@state.mn.us after proofreading and receiving appropriate internal approvals.

More information about the specific plan section requirements can be found in the DOL "Requirements for Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) State Plans for Program Years (PY) 2024 – 2027 Training and Employment Guidance Letter TEGL 07-25 | U.S. Department of Labor (WIOA TEGL), the Department of Education "Requirements for Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) State Plans for Program Years (PY) 2026 – 2027 Program Memorandum OCTAE 26-1", and the accompanying WIOA State Plan Information Collection Request (ICR) as described below with ICR page numbers:

- Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth Activities under Title I-B, pages 19–24
- Wagner-Peyser Act Employment Service Program, pages 25–29
- Adult Education and Family Literacy Act Program, pages 30–34
- Vocational Rehabilitation Program and State Services for the Blind, pages 35–49
- Career and technical education programs authorized under Perkins V, pages 58–64
- Temporary Assistance for Needy Families Program, pages 65–68
- Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Employment and Training and Work Programs, pages 69–72
- Trade Adjustment Assistance, page 73
- Jobs for Veterans State Grants, pages 73–74
- Senior Community Service Employment Program, pages 76–77

Strategic Vision, Goals and Strategies for 2024-2027

The State Strategic Vision, Goals and Strategies for 2024-2027 were developed by modifying the previous State Plan's Vision, Goals and Strategies in consultation with workforce program administrators, the Governor's Workforce Development Board, the Minnesota Association of

Workforce Boards, and the National Governor's Association. The shift in Vision, Goals and Strategies represents a new strategic direction for workforce development in the state, one that is focused on breaking down silos across workforce partners and being more intentional and proactive about the delivery of programs and services to Minnesotans. More information on the rationale behind the updated language can be found below.

2024-2027 WIOA Strategic Vision

The strategic vision of the One Minnesota Workforce Development Vision is a healthy economy where all Minnesotans have equitable access to a workforce development system in which partners across the state are working toward a collective goal of providing workforce development programs that are responsive to employer needs in in-demand occupations and lead to good jobs with family-sustaining wages.

2024-2027 WIOA State Plan Goals

1. Increase interagency and local area coordination and alignment around shared goals, maximizing efficiency and coordination of workforce funding and programs and improving system integration, and creating a "no wrong door" approach for individuals or employers engaging in the workforce system.
2. Build employer-led industry-sector partnerships across the state to create or expand responsive and equitable workforce development programs and career pathways with embedded work-based learning or on-the-job training, including Registered Apprenticeships, focused on closing gaps in participation and representation based on race, ethnicity, disability, gender, veteran status, and age.
3. Create a more inclusive, equitable, accessible, and proactive workforce system to serve all Minnesotans, preparing employers and the current and emerging workforce for the changing nature of work including new and emerging technology, changing labor market demands, and for the state's shifting demographics, including our new Minnesotans.

2024-2027 WIOA State Plan Strategies

For the state to achieve the One Minnesota Vision for workforce development, each workforce partner across the state should be working toward implementing the Governor's major workforce priorities in a unified manner. For the 2024-2027 State, Local and Regional plans, we request that plan writers describe how they are implementing any or all of the priorities put

forward by the Governor and those requested by DOL and the U.S. Department of Education who oversee and approve the State plans.

The strategies described below are intended to support and advance the coordination of statewide initiatives and strategies and better understand how these strategies can be implemented at a program or local level. This will also help with improving alignment between federally funded and state-funded programs, ensuring that all programs are moving in similar strategic directions.

- Drive for 5: The Drive for 5 Initiative was created to prepare more Minnesotans for high-demand jobs in five occupational categories: technology, the trades, caring professions, manufacturing, and education. Plan writers are encouraged to consider how their programs, local areas, or regions prioritize any or all of the five in-demand sectors.
- Transformative Career Pathways: This state-wide initiative was created to bring workers who have been overlooked for employment – particularly people of color – into the workforce at family-sustaining wages. Plan writers are encouraged to consider who their program's Overlooked Workers are and their plans for providing pathways to family sustaining wages.
- Office of New Americans (ONA): ONA was created to support immigrant and refugee inclusion, reduce barriers to employment, and improve connections between employers and job seekers. Plan writers are encouraged to consider how they will work with ONA to support immigrants and refugees in their programs.
- High Quality Jobs Framework . Minnesota's High Quality Jobs Framework provides a shared definition and guiding principles for what constitutes a high-quality job across the state's workforce development system. The framework emphasizes wages that support economic stability, access to benefits, safe and healthy working conditions, opportunities for advancement, and inclusive workplace practices. By centering job quality, Minnesota seeks to align workforce development, education, and economic development efforts to connect jobseekers to sustainable employment while supporting employers in building a skilled, stable workforce and advancing equitable economic growth.
- North Star Promise: Minnesota is implementing a free college program beginning in the fall of 2024. Plan writers are encouraged to examine eligibility criteria as compared to their existing clients and consider how they will account for changes in uses of funds in light of the free college program.
- Individualized Career Services: Career services to job seekers play a critical role in supporting placement, and providing more individualized career services as described in section 134(b)(2)(A)(xii) of WIOA are an evidence-based model for

improving individual's earnings. Plan writers are encouraged to describe how they will be utilizing this strategy to improve outcomes for job seekers, and how they may potentially shift funding to career services as funding for workforce training becomes more readily available with the implementation of the North Star Promise Program.

- Attracting and retaining workers: Minnesota continues to face challenges with population growth, which makes attracting and retaining workers all the more important to supporting a healthy and thriving economy in our state. Plan writers are encouraged to describe what strategies they are implementing to support employers in improving job quality and marketing of job opportunities to support attraction and retention strategies.
- Supportive Services: Providing wraparound or supportive services is critical to ensuring that underrepresented populations or individuals with barriers to employment have access to the resources they need to enroll or complete workforce development programs and are retained in employment. Plan writers are encouraged to describe how they are providing supportive services, leveraging partnerships to expand access to such services, or potentially shifting resources to provide supportive services as funding for workforce training becomes more readily available with the implementation of the North Star Promise Program. Please see the WIOA TEGL for more implementation ideas.

Regional and Local Planning Guidance

WIOA requires that in addition to a State Plan being submitted by each state applying for funding under the Act, local and regional plans must also be submitted to remain in compliance with the legislation. This guidance for Local and Regional planning reflects a commitment that is guided by the One Minnesota Plan. Minnesota does best when state agencies and community partners collaborate to achieve common goals. Through the state, local and regional planning process, the GWDB seeks to build in alignment of the state agency, local, and regional programs and priorities. This involves transparency in the state's planning, programs, initiatives and funding prior to the start of the local and regional planning process.

In the planning process each local area provides an opportunity to share with the state their regional perspective on ways to incorporate the state's vision, goals, and strategies for interagency coordination at the local level. Local/regional planning will now be overseen by the Governor's Workforce Development Board (GWDB) staff, with the goal of increasing alignment and strategic coordination with the State Plan.

Regional Planning Guidance

- Regional plan narratives must be reviewed for updates in regional activities, partners, and or developments identified and deemed necessary by their area's regional leadership team. Regional plan narratives must incorporate updates in data analysis. In order for communities to flourish there must be equitable access for all Minnesotans to workforce development programming, employment, and a family sustaining wage. DEED's Labor Market Analysts have provided data specific to regions and local areas. Regions have challenges, successes, trends, and promising practices that are unique to their respective locations.
- Regional work plans must be reviewed and updated, based on guidance criteria. The updated work plans should reflect the updated narratives and prioritization of alignment with the state's planned goals.

Local Planning Guidance

- Local plans must be reviewed for updates in policies, activities, partnerships, and or other area updates identified and deemed necessary by the Local Workforce Development Board. Plans should reflect that WIOA places an emphasis on the integration of services by WIOA partners. All one-stop partners are responsible for providing access to programs and services that will assist in the reemployment of unemployed individuals. It's imperative that partner agencies work seamlessly

together with a shared goal to provide opportunities for both the unemployed and the underemployed, particularly for individuals with barriers to employment, including individuals with disabilities and English language learners. Local areas all have challenges, promising practices, and silos of excellence that are unique to their respective locations.

- Local work plans must be reviewed for strategic alignment with the state's updated vision and goals. The local plans work plan and narrative must take into consideration our One Minnesota vision where all Minnesotans are aware of and can access Workforce Development programs and services. There should also be an effort to prioritize the alignment of local strategies with state identified goals.

Through this planning process our local partners are being asked to incorporate strategic alignment between local, state, and federal programs, planning, and resources. It is critical that local areas and regions look to their economic and labor market information (LMI) and adjust strategies for what may now be a different set of circumstances post pandemic, with growing and declining industries, occupations and skills, and changing demographics. Regionally there will be a need to adapt workforce goals and strategic focus for those communities with disproportionately higher unemployment rates and lower earning particularly among underserved population groups, or individuals facing barriers to employment (e.g., low-income individuals, English language learners, individuals without housing, and individuals with disabilities).

Regional and Local Plan Structure

The Regional and Local plan template is organized into four sections:

- Section A: Vision, Goals and Strategies
- Section B: Program Operations
- Section C: Program and Service Delivery
- Section D: Assurances and Certifications

In the Local and Regional Plan template are links to a variety of TEGL's, regulations, and State laws and regulations. Recently, the release of TEGL 07-25 provided Local and Regional areas with guidance that exemplifies best practices in outreach. In the future, TEGL guidance and information will be shared by DEED with local area in full and in a highlighted and summarized form for easier access to critical information.

Local and Regional Plan Required Attachments

- Attachment A - Regional Oversight Committee
- Attachment B – Local Workforce Development Area Contacts
- Attachment C – Local Area Board Membership List
- Attachment D – Local Area Board Subcommittee List
- Attachment E – Local Workforce Development Area Sub-Grantee List
- If applicable, Attachment F - Local Workforce Development Area Non-CFC Program Service Delivery Location List
- Attachment G - Local Workforce Development Area Key Industries in Regional Economy

Timing

Regions and Local Areas will submit their planning drafts to the GWDB staff contact for Local and Regional planning by October 1, 2026. A review committee will be selected for the state, local and regional plans to read, provide recommended updates, and recommendations for plan approval for the State Plan, 16 local areas and 6 regions in Minnesota. The full timeline can be found in the timeline section above, with specific local and regional plan timeline details below:

- **October 1, 2026:** Local and Regional Plans due
- **October 1 – December 30, 2026:** GWDB State, Local and Regional Plan Special Committee review and provide feedback or suggested modifications
- **December 30, 2026:** All Local and Regional Plans receive final determinations

Please contact Nicole Hochsprung at Nicole.Hochsprung@state.mn.us if you have questions or would like to request an extended submission date.

Regional Plan Template

SECTION A: REGIONAL VISION, GOALS AND STRATEGIES

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

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

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

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

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

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

SECTION B: REGIONAL OPERATIONS

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

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

B.3. Describe how the selected organizations from the region will provide oversight to development and implementation of the regional plan. Complete Attachment A - Regional Oversight Committee

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

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

B.6. Describe any cooperative service arrangements being planned for the region and how they will promote consistency within the regional workforce development area and with state policy.

SECTION C: PROGRAM AND SERVICE DELIVERY

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Local Plan Template

SECTION A: LOCAL BOARDS VISION, GOALS AND STRATEGIES

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

The Board of Commissioners of Stearns and Benton Counties created the Career Solutions Joint Powers Board to maintain the Workforce Development Area (WDA) fiduciary responsibilities. The Career Solutions Local Workforce Development Board (LWDB) is the required Workforce Investment Board under federal legislation, the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act. The LWDB is appointed by the Joint Powers Board and is employer-led, with an employer majority representing industry sectors targeted for growth. Other board members include representatives from post-secondary education, community-based organizations, county programs, organized labor, and adult basic education.

The LWDB:

- Provides leadership on current and emerging workforce issues and needs and seeks solutions.
- Collaborates to maintain the economic health of Stearns and Benton Counties.
- Creates partnerships to serve the workforce needs of businesses and job seekers.
- Oversees publicly funded workforce programs in Stearns and Benton Counties.
- Identifies and seeks additional resources that may be retained for Board projects, used to purchase products and services, and support the work of community partners.

Mission: Career Solutions exists to provide comprehensive workforce development, helping all community members acquire the skills, training, and experience to achieve economic security while meeting the workforce needs of local businesses and industries.

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

Goals:

1. Grow the economic vitality of our communities by investing in strategic industries and occupations.

2. Ensure Stearns & Benton County workers have opportunities to improve their earning potential by acquiring, advancing, and transferring their skills.
3. Ensure compliance with the Local Workforce Development Board requirements per federal and state legislation.

With their extensive knowledge and expertise, the Workforce Development Board and Program Committee have identified target industries in the local and regional areas. These sectors, with high demand employment opportunities, are the focus of our strategic efforts. Career Solutions LWDB members are resolutely committed to supporting training for and placing workers in jobs within these targeted industries.

- Business Services: Accounting Clerk, Administrative Secretary, Network Administrator, Finance Manager, Computer Software Analysis, Software Developers/Applications.
- Health Services: Nursing Assistant, Dental Assistant, Health Care Technician, Emergency Medical Technician, Surgical Technician, Practical Nursing, Pharmacy Technician, Medical Secretary, Childcare Assistant.
- Manufacturing: Assembly, Production Worker, Boiler Maker, Packaging, Welder, Industrial Engineers, Machine Operator.
- Construction and Extraction: Carpenters, Plumbers, Electrician, Equipment Operator
- Transportation: Delivery Driver, CDL, Bus Drivers, Material Movers, Forklift Drivers, Refrigeration Warehouse stocker/loader
- Education Services: Early Childhood Education.
- Information Technology: Network Administrator, Computer Software Analysis, Software Developers.

The local area approach is a strategic alignment with state priorities under WIOA. The LWDB's strategic vision is not only its own but also coincides with the goals established by the Governor's Workforce Development Board. This includes outreach to businesses in these six sectors. Career Solutions Business Services Manager and DEED's regional workforce strategy consultant are tasked with gathering "leading indicators" of area businesses—where companies are headed and what hiring is anticipated. This process provides forward-looking data the LWDB can use to advance its goal of getting Minnesotans back to work via a meaningful career pathway and supporting business needs. DEED's labor market analyst is also consulted to gather data on the local workforce changes, demographics of job seekers, and industry data.

Table 37. Industry Employment Statistics, 2025								
WDB 17 - Stearns-Benton	2025 Annual Data				2024-2025		2020-2025	
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	**5,730**	**104,385**	**$6,716,848**	**$64,347**	***-225***	***-0.2%***	***5,834***	***5.9%***
Construction	713	8,387	$790,553	$94,259	*231*	*2.8%*	*1,406*	*20.1%*
Manufacturing	326	14,865	$1,042,610	$70,139	*-72*	*-0.5%*	*638*	*4.5%*
Utilities	14	214	$26,503	$123,847	*-1*	*-0.5%*	*17*	*8.6%*
Wholesale Trade	219	5,248	$401,408	$76,488	*-154*	*-2.9%*	*818*	*18.5%*
Retail Trade	705	13,219	$540,151	$40,862	*50*	*0.4%*	*375*	*2.9%*
Transportation & Warehousing	218	4,202	$279,248	$66,456	*-152*	*-3.5%*	*295*	*7.6%*
Information	77	1,328	$101,238	$76,233	*-49*	*-3.6%*	*-211*	*-13.7%*
Finance & Insurance	308	3,889	$396,043	$101,837	*13*	*0.3%*	*-190*	*-4.7%*
Real Estate & Rental & Leasing	188	1,151	$51,487	$44,732	*43*	*3.9%*	*231*	*25.1%*
Professional & Technical Services	277	1,696	$161,385	$95,156	*-227*	*-11.8%*	*-815*	*-32.5%*
Management of Companies	30	959	$107,069	$111,646	*21*	*2.2%*	*-81*	*-7.8%*
Admin. Support & Waste Mgmt. Services	247	2,797	$149,551	$53,468	*-260*	*-8.5%*	*-1,547*	*-35.6%*
Educational Services	128	8,105	$480,587	$59,295	*-145*	*-1.8%*	*87*	*1.1%*
Health Care & Social Assistance	751	21,067	$1,470,402	$69,796	*346*	*1.7%*	*1,711*	*8.8%*
Arts, Entertainment, & Recreation	119	1,197	$23,124	$19,318	*100*	*9.1%*	*395*	*49.3%*
Accommodation & Food Services	446	7,225	$163,957	$22,693	*130*	*1.8%*	*1,344*	*22.9%*
Other Services	687	3,286	$134,432	$40,911	*-29*	*-0.9%*	*500*	*17.9%*
Public Administration	92	3,502	$267,862	$76,488	*-62*	*-1.7%*	*237*	*7.3%*
Source: DEED Quarterly Census of Employment & Wages (QCEW) program								

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

DEED leads the negotiations on performance measures with the Department of Labor. They then pass those measures to the local providers for discussion, negotiation, and agreement. Performance measures are monitored monthly by the Career Solutions Program Director and Team Leaders, who then review the outcome at team meetings. Current outcomes are reported on and discussed quarterly at the WDB Executive Committee meetings. The Career Solutions Program Committee is updated quarterly to ensure performance measures are met. Outcomes are reported annually to all committees and/or as needed. Career Solutions is graded in and exceeds assigned performance measures year after year. Strong performance measures allow the agency to acquire additional grants to support workforce development and innovative initiatives aligned with existing services. These initiatives support economic growth in Stearns and Benton County.

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

Career Solutions is co-located with the St. Cloud Technical & Community College (SCTCC) and regularly partners with all community secondary and post-secondary schools. ABE, SCTCC, and St. Cloud State University (SCSU) are members of the WDB, sharing 1 vote (1/2 vote per member).

- Career Solutions secures interns from public and private post-secondary institutions to assist with the Outreach to School program and to develop additional community outreach initiatives.
- DEED/Job Service staff refer to universal customers.
- CareerONE is a youth-centered work readiness program partnering with SCTCC and CentraCare.
- Career Solutions developed the Immigrant Services program in 2019, which provides area businesses with cultural training for employees, supervisors, and leadership to ensure new hires feel welcome and mediation services if/when issues arise. The program collaborates with 501(c)3 Friends of Career Solutions (FOCS) and offers support to job seekers at Immigrant Community centers.

Additional FOCS partnership programs include Discovery Days, Open Houses, Job Club, and other workforce development Initiatives that are outside of the scope of state and federal grants. Each program supports job seekers and/or businesses and is designed to be a bridge to Career Solutions' State and Federally funded Workforce initiatives.
In addition to programs offered by Career Solutions, the Executive Director is a board member for EPIC, an annual hands-on career exploration event for high school students in Central MN, is a member of the St. Cloud Rotary serving as a board member, serves as a board member for Canvas Health, and a member of the Greater St. Cloud Area Chamber's Government Affairs Committee. The Executive Director is actively involved in community initiatives that address barriers to employment – transportation, housing and childcare.

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

Career Solutions is recognized for its innovative approach to reaching and supporting job seekers, while incorporating businesses in the process. The organization identifies needs and relationships that can further a job seeker's success in the workplace. Programming is as broad, unique, and creative as the clients served. Input from businesses and job seekers is the key to success when paired with support from the State of Minnesota. As essential as it is to seek and use available resources, so is awareness of the users' needs, goals, and aspirations – job seekers who can elevate both Stearns and Benton County's economic success. Communication between DEED, businesses, and workers has led to a unique programs that ensure a client is prepared for success in state workforce programs.

Career Solutions has been an award recipient of the MN Association of Workforce Boards Promising Practice Award for the past six years. The award spot lights our new and innovative programming which has been replicated in other areas of the state. Career Solutions award winning programs include Job Club, Discovery Days, Open Houses, and CareerONE. Program presentations have been given to MAWB members to provide necessary information to replicate programs throughout the state.

A.6. Describe the sectors or occupations of focus for the local area board, including:

a. How those sectors compare to the sectors of focus within your workforce region;

The local area board's focus sectors are chosen using several factors. The needs of area businesses and the number of openings in a particular industry are reviewed. Access to needed training and available support for that training factor in decisions. The organization also reviews the existing demographics in those sectors to be able to address changing diversity and equity needs in the communities served. Career Solutions reviews the economic impact of the sectors and finally community needs come into play. Areas of focus are Agriculture, Manufacturing and Construction, Healthcare and Social Assistance, Admin Support, Educational Services, and Transportation.

b. The demographic makeup of the labor force in those sectors as compared to the local labor force, and how the local area will work to close any identified gaps;

The LWDB regularly receives updates from DEED's Regional Labor Market Analyst regarding the status of in-demand industry sectors and occupations. WDB members provide updates at LWDB meetings, as do representatives from economic development. Board members and/or Executive Director participate in the Community Priorities and the Greater St. Cloud (GSC) and various industry-specific activities related to their constituency so that information about employer needs is current. Representatives of strategic industries provide presentations about the challenges, and opportunities they face to keep the LWDB informed of the local climate.

Career Solutions staff are directed to grow capacity in the region and to develop the local workforce. Career Solutions uses labor market information, employer input and reports, asset mapping and community resources, client skills/aptitudes/interests/needed wage, and other job seeker information to define and craft goals. Staff assesses gaps between current skills and those required to obtain the career objectives. They then develop a detailed plan to address the gap. Staff also used

information obtained from employers. Employers training investments are analyzed. Employers indicate the classroom and on-the-job training that is required to meet demands and for increasing customization and cross-training of their workforce.

LWD 17 Workforce Demographics for Targeted Industries, 2024										
	Total All		Male		Female		Hispanic or Latino		or Hispanic Latino	
Total All	**92,500**	**100%**	**48,394**	**52%**	**44,106**	**48%**	**78,136**	**84%**	**14,364**	**16%**
Construction	10,159	11%	8,532	84%	1,627	16%	9,297	92%	862	8%
Manufacturing	12,043	13%	8,644	72%	3,398	28%	9,950	83%	2,093	17%
Transportation and Warehousing	3,605	4%	2,687	75%	918	25%	3,284	91%	321	9%
Administrative and Support and Waste Mgmt	2,678	3%	1,565	58%	1,114	42%	2,056	77%	622	23%
Health Care and Social Assistance	19,181	21%	3,775	20%	15,406	80%	15,532	81%	3,649	19%
Source; LEHD, QWI										

Career Solutions works with SCTCC to provide certificate programs for youth who complete specific projects, participate in soft skills training, and complete certifications. Once completed they can advance to higher levels within career pathways. The youth/apprentice then starts at a higher pay rate and the amount of classroom time needed to achieve credentials is decreased.

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

Career Solutions operates 8am – 4:30pm. St. Cloud CareerForce lobby hours of operation are 8am – 4pm, Monday through Friday. CareerForce is staffed by Career Solutions. The organization has also developed job fairs, Job Club, and industry targeted Discovery Days for Healthcare, Welding, Construction, Facilities Maintenance, and CDL to expand its impact. Special sessions are held outside of business hours to support programs held at partner facility or business location. Special arrangements are made to meet the needs of clients outside of the normal hours of operation.

Career Solutions staff provide services to the universal customer at strategic locations throughout the community – such as the Islamic Centers and Hillside and Quarryview Education Centers (ABE sites).

Table 10. Employment Characteristics, 2024		WDB 17 - Stearns-Benton			Minnesota		Percent of Total Labor Force	
		In Labor Force	Labor Force Partic. Rate	Unemp. Rate	Labor Force Partic. Rate	Unemp. Rate	WDB 17 - Stearns-Benton	Minnesota
Total Labor Force		**111,965**	**70.2%**	**4.1%**	**68.1%**	**4.1%**		
16 to 19 years		8,031	61.5%	5.8%	52.6%	10.3%	*7.2%*	*5.1%*
20 to 24 years		15,996	83.9%	6.1%	83.3%	6.6%	*14.3%*	*9.5%*
25 to 44 years		45,113	89.6%	4.3%	88.7%	3.7%	*40.3%*	*43.4%*
45 to 54 years		18,856	89.6%	3.0%	87.8%	3.0%	*16.8%*	*18.7%*
55 to 64 years		17,914	74.1%	2.8%	72.7%	3.2%	*16.0%*	*17.2%*
65 to 74 years		4,936	26.7%	2.4%	27.7%	3.6%	*4.4%*	*5.2%*
75 years & over		1,104	8.4%	0.7%	6.7%	3.2%	*1.0%*	*0.9%*
Employment Characteristics by Race & Hispanic Origin								
White alone		95,310	69.9%	3.1%	67.0%	3.5%	*85.1%*	*78.7%*
Black or African American		7,852	73.3%	13.5%	70.8%	8.7%	*7.0%*	*6.5%*
American Indian & Alaska Native		174	61.7%	29.9%	58.0%	10.8%	*0.2%*	*0.7%*
Asian or Other Pac. Islanders		2,133	68.9%	5.8%	75.2%	3.5%	*1.9%*	*5.5%*
Some Other Race		2,335	82.3%	3.0%	75.4%	5.8%	*2.1%*	*2.9%*
Two or More Races		4,132	68.5%	8.0%	74.0%	5.7%	*3.7%*	*5.9%*
Hispanic or Latino		4,704	78.9%	4.6%	76.6%	5.8%	*4.2%*	*6.1%*
Employment Characteristics by Veteran Status, 18 to 64 years								
Veterans, 18 to 64 years		3,408	74.2%	4.7%	80.9%	4.6%	*3.3%*	*3.1%*
Employment Characteristics by Disability, 20 to 64 years								
With Any Disability, 20 to 64 years		6,369	56.4%	7.8%	56.1%	9.4%	*6.5%*	*6.4%*
Employment Characteristics by Educational Attainment, 25 to 64 years								
Population, 25 to 64 years		81,899	85.7%	3.7%	84.5%	3.4%	*73.1%*	*79.4%*
Less than H.S. Diploma		4,727	73.3%	4.9%	66.2%	4.9%	*5.8%*	*4.6%*
H.S. Diploma or Equivalent		18,303	79.3%	3.0%	76.6%	2.5%	*22.3%*	*18.5%*
Some College or Assoc. Degree		32,865	87.6%	4.3%	85.0%	3.7%	*40.1%*	*31.7%*
Bachelor's Degree or Higher		25,976	91.0%	1.4%	90.5%	2.2%	*31.7%*	*45.1%*
Employment Characteristics by Gender					Minnesota		Percent of Total Labor Force	
	Total Population	In Labor Force	Labor Force Partic. Rate	Unemp. Rate	Labor Force Partic. Rate	Unemp. Rate		
Male, 16 years & over	**80,376**	**58,590**	**72.9%**	**4.1%**	**71.6%**	**4.4%**	***52.3%***	***52.4%***
16 to 19 years	6,432	3,664	57.0%	7.9%	50.1%	12.2%	*6.3%*	*4.7%*
20 to 24 years	9,518	7,786	81.8%	4.6%	83.1%	7.1%	*13.3%*	*9.2%*
25 to 44 years	26,525	24,569	92.6%	4.5%	91.6%	4.0%	*41.9%*	*43.7%*
45 to 54 years	10,722	9,814	91.5%	2.9%	90.4%	3.1%	*16.8%*	*18.8%*
55 to 64 years	12,322	9,322	75.7%	3.1%	75.9%	3.5%	*15.9%*	*17.2%*
65 to 74 years	9,120	2,867	31.4%	1.9%	30.9%	3.5%	*4.9%*	*5.4%*
75 years & over	5,737	568	9.9%	1.4%	9.1%	3.4%	*1.0%*	*1.0%*
Female, 16 years & over	**79,016**	**53,366**	**67.5%**	**4.0%**	**64.7%**	**3.7%**	***47.7%***	***47.7%***
16 to 19 years	6,624	4,364	65.9%	4.0%	55.1%	8.6%	*8.2%*	*5.5%*
20 to 24 years	9,549	8,212	86.0%	7.5%	83.4%	5.9%	*15.4%*	*9.9%*
25 to 44 years	23,815	20,548	86.3%	4.0%	85.8%	3.4%	*38.5%*	*43.0%*
45 to 54 years	10,333	9,047	87.6%	3.1%	85.0%	2.7%	*17.0%*	*18.6%*
55 to 64 years	11,854	8,585	72.4%	2.3%	69.4%	2.8%	*16.1%*	*17.2%*
65 to 74 years	9,361	2,074	22.2%	3.1%	24.7%	3.8%	*3.9%*	*5.0%*
75 years & over	7,480	536	7.2%	0.0%	5.0%	3.0%	*1.0%*	*0.8%*

Source: 2020-2024 American Community Survey, 5-Year Estimates

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

Career Solutions is a Minnesota Association of Workforce Boards (MAWB) member. This membership assists this region in capacity building, evaluation and reporting, and continuous improvement.

Career Solutions continues to develop its strengths to address the region's talent needs. The Program Committee reviews all customer satisfaction reports, monitoring reports, and evaluation summaries for its LWDA. The Youth Council performs a parallel review of its service. LWDB members provide updates on their respective sectors at LWDB meetings and offer presentations for partners.

Career Solutions provides and reviews customer satisfaction comment cards at the point of contact at CareerForce. Data is compiled and action is taken as needed.

Career Solutions, in its commitment to fostering collaboration, has established a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) partner group. This group, comprising leadership representatives from various community service providers, meets quarterly to exchange information on new initiatives, update existing services, and discusses potential collaborative opportunities. This approach is at the heart of the mission to serve the community.

"All Staff" meetings are held to increase information sharing, relationship building, program updates, and education to build connections and skills that support referrals and improve client services. Feedback from staff has confirmed these meetings are valuable to their work.

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

The LWDB is a testament to the power of collaboration, bringing together a diverse range of partners to deliver services such as job preparation, job search assistance, job placement, and supportive services. The required partners in the LWDA 17 work in

unison, fostering strong relationships with business, industry, and post-secondary education, all in support of the LWDB's mission.

Partner managers, supervisors, and staff are not just passive participants in the LWDA but active contributors. They regularly convene in various settings to discuss activities and results and, most importantly, to identify opportunities for further collaboration that can enhance the LWDA's effectiveness.

The LWDB and its subcommittees represent a multitude of service providers, each offering unique services tailored to the needs of the community. Among them are Wagner-Peyser, Adult Basic Education, and Vocational Rehabilitation Services, all working to provide comprehensive support to the Black and Immigrant population.

Childcare, housing, and transportation are all barriers to employment. Lack of access to technology and broadband continues to be one of the most significant barriers to employment. Career Solutions has representation on local and statewide committees working to address these barriers to employment. To mitigate barriers of current clients, the organization offers multiple access points to programming, technology, and to staff with appropriate skills.

Career Solutions has developed a Human Resources Networking group. Employers share job postings with Career Planners. If they have clients who are candidates for the positions, referrals are made. Clients and/or universal customers may also attend the monthly networking meetings in a spotlight setting to introduce themselves and share their resumes with the HR Professionals. Many successful matches are made through this process.

Clients receive support services to help alleviate/mitigate barriers to employment. Partnerships strengthen those referrals by including a personal connection and to increase action taken on the client's behalf for services. Discussions are taking place through the One Stop Operator group to explore how to obtain client consent to share information between core partners.

SECTION B: PROGRAM OPERATIONS

CareerForce Operations – Connection to Services

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

Stearns-Benton Employment & Training Council (SBETC), DBA Career Solutions local board designated a single CareerForce (CF) location to serve Stearns and Benton Counties. CareerForce is strategically located in the St. Cloud Technical & Community College (SCTCC) in Stearns County, closely bordering Sauk Rapids, the largest city in Benton County. CareerForce is easily accessed by public transportation and offers free parking.

CareerForce St. Cloud includes the following core partners:

- Career Solutions – Title I
- Job Service – Wagner-Peyser
- State Services for the Blind (SSB)
- Vocational Rehabilitation Services (VRS)
- MFIP/TANF and SNAP Consultant from Avivo.

Space is available for community partners as requested. Also, many community meetings, including those for core title providers, are held at CareerForce St. Cloud.

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

St. Cloud has one CareerForce location to serve Stearns and Benton Counties.

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

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

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

Strategic initiatives are brainstormed and planned in formal meeting settings as well as informally on an ad hoc basis. Career Solutions and the other St. Cloud CareerForce partners re-evaluate the CF location and space needs in order to maximize efficiency whenever the lease is renewed. The group determined it was best to remain in the current location and completed this work prior to signing a 5-year lease with SCTCC in 2024. Requests and adjustments were made in the renewal process to improve the facility and daily operations. The Facility Director from the St. Cloud Technical & Community College (SCTCC) is involved in planning to increase communications, safety and to provide a seamless service approach from a facilities standpoint.

A quarterly meeting is held with SCTCC leadership and deans to strengthen the working relationship and build synergy between programs. The Executive Director of Career Solutions and the area Job Service Supervisor represent CareerForce St. Cloud at these meetings.

Career Solutions facilitates quarterly meetings with Community Partners who are included in the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU Partners) in efforts to communicate and update partner agencies on the work that is being planned and completed by their organizations. Partners are encouraged to provide programmatic updates, increasing communication, avoid duplication of services in the area and identifying opportunities for collaboration.

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

The St. Cloud CareerForce lobby current hours of operation are 8am – 4pm, Monday through Friday. CareerForce St. Cloud resource lab is managed and staffed by Career Solutions team members. Career Solutions participates and/or hosts job fairs and events in the area at any time of day. Also, special sessions are held outside of business hours to support Career Solutions programs, occasionally held at a partner's facility or business location. Special arrangements can be made to meet the needs of clients outside of the normal hours of operation.

To expand accessibility to job search, Career Solutions has laptops available for client check out. In partnership with the Great River Regional Library, there is a hotspot check out program available to enable customers and clients the ability to job search any time

of day from their own home. We can assess customers' digital literacy needs and provide 1:1 support to bridge any skills gaps.

Career Solutions staff also provide services to the universal customer at strategic locations throughout the community – such as Adult Education (formerly ABE) sites. We look to find locations where the community is in need of services and may face transportation challenges. Based upon community need, staff are available to work outside of business hours.

Another example of CareerForce strategic maximization of services can be seen in the partnership between Job Service and Career Solutions. Together, the partners offer an online course for job seekers which outlines the services provided to the universal customer and highlights other programs that they could qualify for – i.e. Dislocated Worker, Adult and Youth programs. CareerForce St. Cloud is solely staffed by Career Solutions team members which makes seamless referrals to our programs.

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

Career Solutions demonstrates excellent capacity for providing career pathway services to participants. 1:1 career planning provides in-depth career assessment and exploration identifying marketable and strategic career goals. Not all career goals can be met due to limitations in funding and participant life needs/limitations such as limited financial resources for long-term training. In these situations, credentialed training to begin a career pathway is identified and supported. Support services exist within program funds to assist individuals while enrolled in the program. Job search and placement preparation assistance is available from Career Planners, who direct participants to access many job placement assistance opportunities including careerfor. Additionally, follow-up contact is maintained with helpful retention information shared with individuals. Career Solutions coordinates with other LWDA's through the Minnesota Association of Workforce Boards.

Career Solutions provides equitable and unrestricted job information to all customers and clients. This includes referral activities that are not based on stereotypes of what is considered traditional women's and men's work. Shortly after enrolling in a program when enrollment criteria has been met, clients attend Career Trek, a program designed by Career Solutions. This program helps clients find career paths that are a fit with their personal interests and aptitudes, which does not focus on gender when determining career options. Individual client Career Trek

results are reviewed with their career planner. Using labor market information, Career Planners discuss the feasibility of non-traditional occupations since in many cases, pay a higher wage. Local success stories are shared in order to encourage clients to consider non-traditional work.

Career Solutions has been convening partners in the development of career pathways since the inception of WIA and "School-to-Work." Career Solutions has worked with partners to offer "Academies" through ABE and SCTCC partners. Many of these programs are offered through adult competitive grants (i.e. P2P and Drive for 5) or through resources received from foundations or other funders.

Youth in the area may enroll in the WIOA Youth program, where they will receive individualized attention in planning their career, navigating their education plans, and preparing to find a job. Career assessments, career plans, training scholarships, supportive services, and work experience related to their career pathway (when possible) are some of the services available. If necessary, community referrals are provided. Services are provided year-round.

Other programs are offered to support at risk/historically underserved youth, such as Youth at Work, and Outreach to Schools programs are efforts to introduce career exploration opportunities. CareerONE is an intensive summer offering that provides at risk/historically underserved youth ages 14-17 work readiness skills, training in a safe, nurturing and learning rich environment. The purpose of the summer program is to give at-risk youth a realistic and positive work readiness training experience and to keep youth from regressing academically during the summer months. Summer components include: teamwork, contextual academic enrichment, career exploration, work readiness skills, workplace safety, financial literacy, reflections and journaling, mental health resources, and work projects for community based organizations and agencies.

CareerONE is not only a paid (stipend) work experience opportunity, it's a place to explore careers and set a vision/goals for the future. For students who are interested in healthcare, manufacturing, construction, early childhood education, or public safety, a special track has been designed to expand their ability to explore that career field. 20 students are enrolled in each track. At completion, students may receive 1-3 college credits for the work performed throughout CareerONE. With CareerONE being held on a college campus, the program is preparing many potential first generation college students by giving them an opportunity to earn one to seven college credits and become comfortable in the college setting. The goal is to ease their transition from high school to a local post-secondary institution.

Career Solutions also provides the Youthbuild Program to the community, operated in collaboration with Central Minnesota Habitat for Humanity and Union Training Centers. Youthbuild provides an opportunity for high school dropouts and potential dropouts to focus on completing high school while working part-time on projects. Youthbuilders learn basic

safety and construction skills while improving the availability of low-income housing in the community.

Through a partnership with VRS, Career Solutions offers Pre-ETS services to youth with disabilities. This work is assigned by VRS counselors and youth career planners who plan and coordinate the completion of tasks with individuals or in group settings as appropriate.

Job Service: Job Service, Wagner Peyser staff coordinates closely with CareerForce co-located partners to provide basic career services to universal customers. When appropriate referrals are made to eligibility-based programs/services of co-located partners (i.e. WIOA Adult, DW, Vocational Rehabilitation services, Veterans Services, etc.).

Basic Career Services include the following:

- Eligibility determination;
- Outreach, intake and orientation;
- Initial assessment of skill levels and supportive service needs;
- Labor exchange services including: job search, job placement and provision of in demand industry and occupation information and nontraditional employment opportunities;
- Referrals to other programs and services;
- Provision of workforce and labor market information.

Job Services also provides virtual and interactive services for job seekers, to include workshops, one to one visits and virtual career fairs. https://www.careerforcemn.com/virtual-interactive-services-career-seekers On-line and virtual services were incorporated into our service delivery model during the pandemic.

VRS: Vocational Rehabilitation Services (VRS) assist youth, ages 14-21, who have disabilities. Youth who are still in school and have not graduated from high school are eligible for Pre-Employment Transition Services. These services can include job exploration counseling, work-based learning experiences, counseling on opportunities for enrollment in comprehensive transition or post-secondary educational programs at institutions of higher education, workplace-readiness training, and instruction in self-advocacy. They can be provided for students whether or not they have applied for services. In July 2017, VRS began partnering with the Career Solutions Youth Team to provide these services across LWDA 17. Services are performed under a fee for service contract.

VRS also provides services to transition-aged youth who apply for services and fall within the state's priority for service. Individuals in this group can be either in school or out of school and can receive any service VRS offers if that service is necessary to help the student to achieve

their educational and employment goals.

SSB: SSB assists all eligible clients to explore their unique career potential. This would include eligible individuals considering career pathways programs.

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

Career Solutions WDB supported an initiative to revamp the technology framework to allow more flexibility for staff to access information outside of the office. This allows the potential for increased customer service by allowing Career Planners to meet clients where they are rather than requiring them to visit CareerForce/Career Solutions.

Numerous intake sessions and trainings have been held at businesses, high schools and other locations during the day and in the evening to serve the needs of our clients and the family members of our youth participants.

The board has a Transporting Client Files and Telecommuting policies in place to guide this work.

With these policies in place, Career Solutions is able to efficiently serve all clients including individuals and employers whose locations are not near our physical office. We can also help with small business closures and mass layoffs, by using their meeting spaces to connect with clients prior to layoff for information, intake and planning sessions, job fairs and job search/trainings.

Career Solutions has modified their business model to meeting with clients virtually, relying heavily on technology when needed. Many forms have been added to the careersolutionsjobs.org website and a locked drop box is in place at our office to accept documents from clients outside of business hours.

Access to technology has been an issue for some clients. Career Solutions created a device checkout program and has partnered with the Great River Regional Library to include hot spots in the program.

Career Solutions also has a strong social media presence to connect with future and existing clients. The agency's website continues to evolve as a resource for employers and job seekers.

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

Minnesota is compliant with an integrated technology-enabled case management information system, WorkforceOne (WF1). Programs operated by the current workforce system use WF1 for case management. Specifically, it is used for notation, activity and goal tracking, credential documentation, and follow up. WF1 promotes collaboration and co-enrollment by allowing One-Stop partners to see program information related to common participants when the appropriate releases and permissions are in place.

Career Solutions has transitioned to electronic data storage for all programs as of January of 2022. Partners are also exploring electronic means of completing a universally accepted enrollment process to reduce paperwork barriers for applicants. A broader use of other electronic, fillable forms (e.g., employment plans, budgets and self-assessments) may also be incorporated.

All staff members who meet with clients, have been given cell phones to be able to both call and text participants and enrollees to increase the likelihood of communication.

Virtual meeting platforms are also available for staff to use for client meetings, connecting with potential clients, etc.

Enhancements have been made to intake forms – making them fillable PDF's and accessible via the careersolutionsjobs.org website when possible/appropriate.

Career Solutions must remain aware of the population in the WDA that do not have access to technology and/or broadband. The pandemic had heightened awareness of this population and that services need to be flexible to meet the customer where they are at. Current broadband initiatives, especially in Benton County are improving this situation.

VRS:
A mobile app for VRS' case management system was developed and released, available to staff and customers. Electronic signature functionality was built into the case

management system. WF1 implemented the e-signature with AdobeSign for most common documents to give greater portability in obtaining signature from participants without having to print documents.

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

Career Solutions only issues supportive services to clients with a financial barrier to employment. Support Services are given based on financial need and are dependent upon funding availability. Clients are made aware of this at their initial orientation session. Clients complete a monthly financial budget form that determines their need for support in relation to their employment or training plan. A need is classified by a deficit between the total money in and money out each month. All sources of household income for the family unit are included in determining whether or not a need exists.

If a client is approved to pursue a training pathway, they must detail how they will meet their monthly financial obligations prior to final approval of the training plan. Per Local policy, support services cannot exceed $4,000.00 per client per program year. This policy can be waived by the Career Solutions Program Director or Executive Director. Waivers are reviewed quarterly by the Career Solutions leadership team and Workforce Development Board. There are also limits for support for different categories such as transportation, housing, clothing, tools, childcare, mental health & financial counseling and healthcare. Career Solutions chooses to issue supportive services on a "first come, first serve" basis and assist clients as the need arises and as funds are available. The Program Director, team leaders and agency staff monitor the amounts very closely and make adjustments as needed. For example, there are times when, as a team, it has been decided to only allow payments to be made to cover travel expenses related to job search or to reach approved training programs based on available funds.

Career Solutions contracts with Catholic Charities and LSS to provide mental health & financial counseling through their Client Assistance Program. A licensed independent social worker will provide individual mental health counseling services to help referred Career Solutions clients transition from job loss to training and employment and/or identify barriers preventing them from securing and maintaining successful long-term employment (above and beyond career counseling).

Experienced financial and housing counselors are also available to guide referred clients and help them make the best choices during the critical time in their lives. The procedure for one-on-one client financial counseling services begins with a thorough assessment of the client's

financial situation. One-on-one financial/ housing counselor assessment sessions average between 1-1.5 hours. Additional financial/ housing counseling services depend on the client's individual financial situation and his/ her ability to address barriers to financial stability.

To support clients with their computer skills, Career Solutions provides basic computer literacy training on an as-needed basis in Career Solutions' computer lab, at CareerForce St. Cloud.

To assist with transportation issues, clients, who use public transit, are provided with bus passes when needed. If they have issues with their car, connections are made with the St. Cloud Technical and Community College automotive program, where clients may receive free or reduced cost car repairs. Referrals are made to other community resources and agencies, such as Tri-CAP, who provides support to those facing transportation challenges. If referrals are unable to assist, Career Solutions will follow car repair procedures before utilizing support services policies.

Other resources/connections made are:

- Depending on CASAS results, referrals are made to Adult Basic Education to help those who score low work on improving their math and reading ability.
- Referrals are made to Vocational Rehab and MFIP as needed. Some clients may be co-enrolled between agencies.
- Suggestions are made to connect with their personal place of worship as many faith-based organizations have supported their members with food, clothing, etc.
- Lutheran Social Services is also provided as a potential housing resource.
- We share information with clients about local food shelf resources in order to increase access to low cost, quality foods. We promote our programs by communicating with the local food shelf organizations about resources we have available for the people they serve.

VRS provides supportive services to eligible participants in conjunction with their employment plan. As a CareerForce Partner, VRS refers to the Partners as appropriate for these services as well.

CareerForce Operations - Accessibility

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

Career Solutions completed a restructuring of its technology infrastructure has proven to be more mobile, supporting the need to be a service rather than a place. This

restructuring has allowed Career Solutions the ability to expand outreach and conduct work outside of its physical location.

All Career Planners have smartphones allowing them to text, meet virtually, or call clients from any work location to increase accessibility.

Career Solutions regularly advertises through digital marketing via social media outlets/our website (which is ADA-compliant). Testimonials and informational videos have proven to be strong forms of marketing. Greater connections and positive feedback have been received by job seekers, community leaders, employers, and board members. Many resources and forms, some fillable PDFs have been added to the website for easy customer access. We have filled many seats in employment and training programs through social media marketing.

All State of MN websites including the CareerForce site are fully compliant with federal regulations for accessibility standards.

We use appropriate technologies for all clients seeking services. These technologies will be available at our One-Stop Center. Hardware technology will be augmented by software programs, including the CareerForce platform, for more comprehensive job seeker experience and connectivity to real-time job openings. We comply with all ADA requirements by making assistive technologies available to persons with disabilities.

Virtual services are primarily accessed through the CareerForce website. All State of MN websites are fully compliant with federal regulations for accessibility standards. For customers who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing, staff are comfortable using the customer's chosen method for communication including but not limited computer/phone applications (ie: voice to text apps). Video-based ASL interpreters are available if needed.

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

enhance the provision of services to individuals with disabilities and to other individuals, such as cross training of staff, technical assistance, use and sharing of information, cooperative efforts with employers, and other efforts at cooperation, collaboration, and coordination.

Cooperative Agreements between the local Workforce Investment Boards and Vocational Rehabilitation Services (the designated state unit providing services under the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 as amended).

Each WDA is required to complete a Memorandum of Understanding to include all collocated and non-collocated partners that define each area as required by federal regulations.

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

The LWDB consults with Vocational Rehabilitation Services as they are developing initiatives such as Incumbent Worker Training programs, customized training programs, career pathways initiatives, youth services, and other business services.

Services are co-located in the CareerForce Center to provide access to a wide variety of services. Staff offer an orientation to services available to assist jobseekers, so they may make informed decisions when choosing a service provider. All staff participate in cross-training to ensure they understand the services and eligibility criteria for each program offered by the various partners.

Career Solutions and Vocational Rehabilitation Services are both members of the One Stop Operating (OSO) Committee which meets quarterly to share updates on services and grant programs as well.

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

1990, regarding the physical and programmatic accessibility of facilities, programs and services, technology and materials for individuals with disabilities including providing staff training and support for addressing the needs of individuals with disabilities.

MOU Attachment D: Accessibility Plan
DEED completed an onsite ADA inspection in the summer of 2026. There were three adjustments to be made and those items were addressed. Annual ADA Assessments are also completed and returned to DEED.

On a statewide level, an accessibility assessment was submitted on August 2, 2026, and is completed at each CareerForce before certification and at intervals on an ongoing basis. The CareerForce Career Labs are equipped with accessible equipment and the Department of Employment and Economic Development monitors this equipment to ensure it is current and in working order. Software developed by MN DEED for the CareerForce locations is designed to be fully accessible. All programs within the Minnesota CareerForce system are expected to be fully accessible to all Minnesotans. Vocational Rehabilitation Services and State Services for the Blind located within CareerForce are available for consultation with other programs should unexpected issues of accessibility occur. There are opportunities for co-enrollment and collaborations between Vocational Rehabilitation and the other partners, which further enhances overall accessibility.

CareerForce Operations – EEO Compliance

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

Yes X

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

Yes X

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

Yes X

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

Yes X

B.16. Does the local workforce development area have in place a language access policy and plan? Describe your local workforce development areas language access policy. If you do not have a policy in place, use the following link as a guide in creating your policy Language Access Assessment and Planning Tool for Federally Conducted and Federally Assisted Programs (lep.gov). Should you have questions pertaining to your LWDAs language access policy contact the Office of Diversity and Equal Opportunity at DEED.ODEO@state.mn.us

Yes X

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

The Career Solutions Workforce Development Board's focus is on maximizing ALL available labor, including new labor force entrants, mature workers, English language learners, youth and job seekers entering or returning to the workforce for any reason – caring for family, re-entry after incarceration, etc. Focus needs to be on preparing not just the entry-level worker or retraining the dislocated worker but also increasing the skills of incumbent workers and low-wage, entry-level workers to increase productivity and advance their positions on their career ladder.

Career Solutions has hired bilingual staff to better reflect the demographics of our community. Currently, there are three bilingual Somali and one bilingual Spanish on staff. When hiring, additional emphasis is placed on marketing positions to increase diverse representation in the applicant pool. This intentional recruitment benefits CareerForce since it is staffed by Career Solutions, as customers need to see diverse staff in the Career Lab.

Career Solutions has built strong relationships with several key community-based organizations, such as the Islamic Center, The Yes Network, 180 Degrees Youth Shelter, Promise

Neighborhood, and LSS/Pathways 4 Youth. Below are a few illustrations of the agency's outreach efforts.

Islamic Center – The center is open to staff for recruitment activities, hosting work experiences, job shadowing, etc.

Quarryview Education Center and Hillside – Staff regularly visit these Adult Basic Education and Community Education facilities to provide services and recruit WIOA Youth and Adult participants.

Place of Hope - Place of Hope is a multi-faceted outreach program serving many people in our community who need support and services because of homelessness, poverty, previous incarceration, drug addiction, alcoholism, and other crises. Strong connections with the POH team help to recruit clients for programs where below-poverty level income levels are a requirement.

180 Degrees Youth Shelter – Connect with staff and youth to meet new potential WIOA youth Clients and to recruit for CareerONE.

McKinley ALC High School – Staff facilitate job fairs as requested by McKinley HS. Most of these students are people of color or low income and face additional barriers to success such as substance abuse struggles. There are up to forty employers in attendance at these job fairs and Career Solutions also has a booth for staff to recruit for CareerONE summer youth programs, WIOA Young Adult, P2P programs, Welding Discovery Day events, etc.

Central MN Re-Entry Project – Career Solutions, Benton Economic Partnership and CMNRP had partnered together to assist CMNRP participants get back into the workforce after incarceration.

The agency's intake and eligibility specialist and a Career Planner meet quarterly with the Stearns County Parole Officers to provide program updates, events (Discovery Days, Job Fairs, etc.) and answer any questions they may have.

The Workforce Development Board supports work and engagement by staff within the community – taking our services to the community, instead of expecting the community to come to CareerForce. The board sees these services to the public as a recruitment effort for state and federally-funded grant programs. Also, with transportation and childcare being two of the top barriers to employment in the community, these outreach efforts respect these barriers by providing personalized, local services.

Many initiatives performed by Friends of Career Solutions (FOCS) (Career Solutions non-profit partner) serve the immigrant population and youth in the area.

Employers:

Career Solutions connects businesses with qualified workers, and links businesses to state, federal and local resources. We partner with other local service providers to create innovative workforce development solutions and help employers onboard and upskill quality workers.

An Employer Resource Guide, which is a directory of organizations (or departments within a larger organization) working primarily with Immigrant Communities or Communities of Color is maintained, hosted, and available on the Career Solutions website - https://careersolutionsjobs.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/07/Employer-Action-Guide_final.pdf

Through the Region 3 Leadership and Planning Board, Career Solutions is partnering with Central MN Jobs and Training Services (CMJTS) on initiatives to support employers. Employer training events are held on a periodic basis. More information on this can be found in the Regional Plan.

VRS: We have an online Interest Form, as well as accepting walk-in and phone inquiries and referrals from stakeholders.

CareerForce Partners

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

The St. Cloud CareerForce includes the following core partners:

- Career Solutions – Title I
- Job Service – Title III (Wagner-Peyser)
- Services for the Blind (SSB)
- Vocational Rehabilitation Services – Title IV (VRS)
- MFIP/TANF and SNAP Consultant from Avivo

Job Service

Wagner-Peyser, under the One Stop delivery system, provides universal access to an integrated array of labor exchange services so that workers, job seekers and businesses can find the services they need in under one roof in easy-to-find locations.

Wagner-Peyser Employment Service focuses on providing a variety of employment related labor exchange services including but not limited to job search assistance, job referral, and placement assistance for job seekers, re-employment services to unemployment insurance claimants, and recruitment services to employers with job openings. Services are delivered in one of three modes including self-service, facilitated self-help services and staff assisted service delivery approaches. Most WP services are offered virtually via phone, internet or video chats.

The Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED) delivers key services to job seekers and businesses through Job Service. The focus of all services, which are available through Minnesota's statewide network of CareerForce locations, is to help job seekers find work and help employers find and retain qualified employees.

Vocational Rehabilitation Services

Vocational Rehabilitation Services (VRS) specializes in working with individuals with disabilities that pose barriers to employment, post-secondary training, independent living and community integration. VRS works with other partners to, contribute to the infrastructure of the One Stop system. Resources contributed through VRS include pre-employment transition services, vocational assessments, job tryouts, community based evaluations, job search assistance, job coaching, case management, tuition assistance, and supportive services. VRS staff are available, as needed, to consult with partners working with individuals with disabilities. Additionally, VRS co-enrolls participants with other One-Stop partners to ensure collaboration and cohesive service delivery to the benefit of the consumer. Specifically, VRS provides access or referral to the following partner programs:

- Career & Technical Education
- Title V Older Americans Act
- Job Corps
- Native American Programs
- Migrant Seasonal Farmworkers
- Veterans
- YouthBuild
- Trade Act

- Community Services Block Grant (CSBG)
- Housing and Urban Development (HUD)
- Unemployment Compensation
- Second Chance Programs
- Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) (Minnesota Family Investment Program (MFIP))
- Ticket to Work
- Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) Employment and Training Programs

All core partners included in a particular One-Stop location are included in the Infrastructure Funding Agreement (IFA)) to fund One-Stop overhead costs. Expenses are shared based on square footage leased by all partners.

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

Career Solutions is a member of the MN Association of Workforce Boards (MAWB) where best practices are shared amongst the board directors, program managers/directors, and WDB members at the Annual Summer and Winter meetings. "Best practices" on continuous improvement processes for WIOA and other programs are shared during these meetings. Career Solutions has been a "Promising Practice" award winner in 2017, 2019, 2020, 2021, 2022 and 2023, 2024 and 2025.

Many MAWB members represent our association/state on a variety of boards or are assigned to attend meetings with groups such as NAWB, US DOL, US DOE, DEED, and GLETA's 10-state region to learn and share best practices on continuous improvement processes for WIOA service providers. Updates are given to the LWDB and Program Committee as needed to keep them informed of innovative ideas from across the US.

Career Solutions staff have the Global Career Development Facilitator Certificate. Annual training are required in HIPAA and Mandatory Reporting. Career Solutions also participates in the regional Human Services Council to remain current about available community resources.

Career Planners attend weekly meetings along with two all-staff meetings per month, which includes staff development. Individual staff performance is reviewed annually, and improvement plans are developed to include necessary training. Staff who attend training on behalf of the LWDA are required to share lessons learned upon completion with their colleagues in the agency.

Career Solutions sends electronic surveys to clients who have exited the programs to gather participant feedback. Also, the Career Solutions team is responsible for staffing the CareerForce Lab, surveys are placed at each lab computer to gather general customer feedback as well.

In 2023, we received 38 cards. Among the short survey, we asked *'How likely would you be to recommend the services at this CareerForce location to a friend or colleague?'* Average response rate was 9.71 out of 10. Many open ended comments mentions how staff are very friendly, courteous, and helpful!

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

Career Solutions created a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between local agencies and community partners. The purpose of the MOU is to establish an agreement among the parties concerning their respective roles and responsibilities for implementation of the provisions.

This agreement is to coordinate resources to prevent duplication and ensure the effective and efficient delivery of workforce services in the Career Solutions Workforce Development Area (Stearns and Benton Counties). In addition, this agreement will establish joint processes and procedures that will enable partners to integrate the current service delivery system resulting in a seamless and comprehensive array of education, human service, job training, disabilities, and other workforce development services to the Career Solutions Workforce Development Area.

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

Career Solutions has a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) partner group and another with the CareerForce partners. This group includes leadership representatives from CareerForce St. Cloud and multiple community service providers who meet quarterly to exchange information on new initiatives, updates on existing services, and to discuss opportunities to collaborate, while avoiding duplication of services in the area.

The purpose of the MOU is to confirm the understanding of the Parties regarding the operation and management of Local Workforce Development Area 17 (LWDA 17), its One-Stop delivery system, and to define the roles and responsibilities as mutually agreed by the Parties for the operation of the CareerForce Center delivery system in LWDA 17 as required under the Workforce Opportunity and Innovation Act (WIOA) of 2014.

The MOU is to coordinate resources to prevent duplication and ensure the effective and efficient delivery of workforce services in the Career Solutions Workforce Development Area. In addition, the MOU establishes joint processes and procedures that enable partners to integrate the current service delivery system resulting in a seamless and comprehensive array of education, human service, job training, disabilities, and other workforce development services to the Career Solutions Workforce Development Area.

The sharing and allocation of infrastructure costs among one-stop partners is governed by WIOA sec. 121(h), its implementing regulations, and the Federal Cost Principles contained in the Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards (Uniform Guidance) at 2 CFR part 200.

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

A Memorandum of Understanding endorsed and signed by the current Local Area Board Chair and all current CareerForce partners. An Infrastructure Funding Agreement (IFA) is agreed upon and in place reviewed by the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED). The IFA is updated as required and any changes in cost allocations due to discrepancies or disagreements are addressed at that time.

CareerForce partners work collaboratively to make improvements, research costs associated with maintenance, enhancements, etc., striving to improve the overall customer experience, while focused on the goals of a customer centered design.

The MOU and IFA have been revised in accordance with DOL's feedback to DEED and DEED's IFA policy. Revisions were needed as CareerForce leaders adjusted square footage in the site's lease renewal in November 2024, where were needed to be solidified in order for an IFA to be signed. The group signed a new IFA in July 2026.

In the event of a discrepancy or disagreement, the regularly scheduled MOU meeting would convene and take up the issue.

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

All current CareerForce partners and contracted providers that have a presence in CareerForce St. Cloud are required to participate in the Infrastructure Funding Agreement (IFA) to fund the infrastructure of CareerForce St. Cloud. The Local Workforce Development Board, through the Program Committee, maintains an active role in monitoring service delivery by assisting the service provider in developing credential criteria and establishing policies. The Program Committee also reviews program performance, service evaluations, customer satisfaction and other reports to ensure quality of service delivery. Performance information is also presented to the Local Workforce Development Board on a consistent basis.

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

The LWDA provides services directly and does not create sub-grants unless necessary. For example, if workers who are a part of a mass layoff live outside of Stearns and Benton Counties, the LWDA may sub contract with another neighboring LWDA to serve clients where they live vs where they used to work.

For all contracts and sub-grants, the LWDA follows the OMB Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards in the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Section 200.319-320 regarding competition and procurement and adheres to the requirements pertaining to the procurement for State and local government as defined in 29 CFR 97.36.

When a competitive bid process is used the proposals are evaluated in detail, a summary evaluation is presented to the Joint Powers Board who approves the final selection and the corresponding contract.

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

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

There is an agreement between the Joint Powers Board and LWDB designate Career Solutions as the as the grant recipient and administrative entity for activities under the Workforce Investment and Opportunities Act.

Levels of Performance

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

State performance is negotiated between the Department of Labor and the Department of Employment and Economic Development. The measures are then negotiated between DEED and the local board. Once set, performance compliance is reported to all of the boards numerous times throughout the year and more often if there is an issue. If there is an issue, measures are taken to make changes. Actions are based on input from the provider as well as the governing boards. Performance measures are a top priority along with client service standards.

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

As previously stated, performance is a top priority of the board and the local provider. Continuous examination of current practices is key to maintaining a level of high performance. Changes will be made when needed and the agency will continue to adapt to change in order to remain relevant. The local boards evaluate the programs, performance, and the provider, yearly. The Joint Powers Board then certifies Career Solutions as the local provider based on meeting performance.

Local Labor Market information is also utilized to ensure innovative initiatives are meeting the needs of local businesses and job seekers. Additional grants and foundation funding are sought to develop programs and provide services to support workforce development in the community.

Local Workforce Board Governance

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

The LWDB Executive Committee addresses membership recruitment, orientation, and discusses ideas for process improvement. The roster of members is reviewed in committee periodically. Any member whose term is expiring is identified and contacted by Committee members to inquire about their desire to continue on the LWDB. Those continuing are presented by roster to the LWDB and Joint Powers Board for approval no later than the Annual Meeting. Any member resigning or any member not wishing to renew is asked to submit a letter to the LWDB indicating that decision. The resignation/vacancy is accepted by both the LWDB and Joint Powers Board and recruitment begins. Meeting calendar impacts the timeline.

For recruitment, the notice of vacancy is published and provided to LWDB members and business/employer organizations. LWDB members identify and recruit members for the constituency and industry the vacancy represents. Completed board application forms are presented to the LWDB for consideration and recommendation to the Joint Powers Board for appointment.

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

Yes ___X____

No _____

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

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

SECTION C: PROGRAM AND SERVICE DELIVERY

Local Area Board Program and Service Delivery

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

The LWDB brings many separate partners together to provide an effective and efficient array of services, including job preparation, job search assistance, job placement, and supportive services. All required partners in the LWDA 17 One-Stop collaborate to ensure strong

relationships with business, industry, and post-secondary education as well as the continued support of the LWDB.

Partner managers, supervisors, and staff meet often and in a variety of settings to discuss activities, results, and opportunities for further collaboration to benefit the LWDA.

Additionally, the LWDB and subcommittee membership includes many service providers, including Wagner-Peyser, Adult Basic Education, and Vocational Rehabilitation Services.

Table 4. Race and Hispanic Origin, 2022	WDB 17 - Stearns-Benton				Minnesota	
	Number	Percent	*Change from 2011-2022 Numeric*	*Percent*	Percent	*Change from 2011-2022*
Total	**199,922**	**100.0%**	***12,228***	***6.5%***	**100.0%**	***7.9%***
White	170,210	85.1%	*-4,148*	*-2.4%*	79.7%	*-0.4%*
Black or African American	15,100	7.6%	*10,035*	*198.1%*	6.7%	*44.3%*
American Indian & Alaska Native	400	0.2%	*-303*	*-43.1%*	0.9%	*-10.2%*
Asian & Other Pac. Islander	3,458	1.7%	*-47*	*-1.3%*	5.1%	*37.1%*
Some Other Race	3,534	1.8%	*1,765*	*99.8%*	2.3%	*84.7%*
Two or More Races	7,220	3.6%	*4,926*	*214.7%*	5.3%	*159.6%*
Hispanic or Latino origin	7,246	3.6%	*2,559*	*54.6%*	5.7%	*34.6%*
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2018-2022 American Community Survey						

To serve the growing Black or African American population, Career Solutions hired bilingual staff (Somali and Spanish) to better reflect the clients served in the CareerForce. Career Solutions continues to build on the foundation started by the Immigrant Employment Connection group in 2015 to address the issues with a large portion of the unemployed Immigrants who have language and skill barriers. This work has and continues to evolve into the Immigrant Services offered, which is funded through foundation grants as the work performed does not align with current state and federal grant requirements.

Childcare, housing, and transportation are all barriers to employment. During the pandemic, lack of access to technology and broadband had escalated to become one of the biggest barriers to employment. While broadband is increasing in Stearns and Benton Counties, on average in 2025 there were 176 visitors per week at CareerForce St Cloud to access technology and utilize assistance with technology, representing barriers still exist in the LWDA. Career Solutions has representation on local and/or statewide committees working to address these barriers to employment.

In addition to the Job Search Activities provided by Job Service outlined below, Career Solutions has developed a Human Resources Networking group. These employers share job postings with

staff to see if they have clients that are candidates for the positions and referrals are made. Also, clients attend the networking meetings to introduce themselves and share their resume with HR Professionals. Many successful matches have been made through this process.

Clients may receive support services to help alleviate/mitigate barriers to employment. (See response to question #7 above for details)

Partners are encouraging staff to strengthen referrals to partner agencies by including a personal connection/warm handoff – via phone, facetime, or other technology or in person to increase action taken on the clients part to receive services. Discussions are taking place through the One Stop Operator group to explore how to obtain client consent to share information between core partners.

Job Service

DEED delivers key services to jobseekers and businesses through Job Service. The focus of all services, which are available through Minnesota's statewide network of CareerForce locations, is to help jobseekers find work and help employers find and retain qualified employees.

DEED's Job Service staff guide jobseekers through all steps of job search and make referrals to Career Solutions programs and services.

Job Service Activities

Provide virtual and interactive services for job seekers, to include workshops, one to one visits and virtual career fairs.

https://www.careerforcemn.com/virtual-interactive-services-career-seekers

- Inform jobseekers about CareerForce services, including eligibility-based employment and training programs including Title 1 Adult Programs such as the Dislocated Worker Program, Youth Programs and Career Pathway grant programs.
- Educate jobseekers on how to use CareerForceMN.gov, DEED's online job bank, to search for and apply for jobs
- Offer 1:1 job search advice and assisting with writing effective résumés
- Provide free workshops and training on job-search fundamentals, including up-to-date online and social media strategies, to jobseekers
- Recommend other community-based resources and services
- Jobseekers who are veterans receive priority referral to jobs and training, as well as special employment services and assistance

Wagner-Peyser staff attempt to connect with UI RESEA participants via phone and provide follow-up services with the intent of helping each participant create a viewable résumé on MinnesotaWorks.net.

RESEA participants also receive information and referrals to eligibility-based programs (such as WIOA Dislocated Worker), orientations to CareerForce services, and workshops.

Encourage co-enrollment with Title 1 programs for Public Assistance recipients to access additional education and support services.

DEED/Job Service manage the "Good Jobs Now" Campaign, contacting UI recipients to provide outreach services to this population and provide career guidance along with referrals to WIOA Dislocated Worker, VRS and community partners.

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

Providing access to supportive services for eligible individuals is an integral part of the existing case management system for all core partners in the area. Available supportive services, such as access to transportation resources, assistance with childcare expenses, and housing, enable individuals to participate in activities and maintain successful progress.

Most programs offered by core partners also include provisions for clothing or equipment required for a new job and resources for medical needs, relocation, and emergency financial assistance during training and/or job search.

In many cases, before support services funds are used, staff provide alternative suggestions to assist clients with their issue – i.e. suggesting client call the SCTCC automotive program to see if they can assist with car repairs, reducing or eliminating the demand for support services funds. Local resources are outlined within the client enrollment information, including resource and referral information for community-based organizations, including:

- County human service departments
- Food shelves
- Energy assistance
- Weatherization/winterization
- Housing
- Head Start and/or Milestones
- Counseling and therapy

Through the MOU meetings, program updates, funding levels and/or deadlines for applications from local providers are shared with agency staff – i.e. heating assistance updates from Tri-CAP.

Career Solutions continues our 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, construction, facilities maintenance, forklift, CNA, and welding. These pathway programs have been very beneficial to the recipients and have provided access to support services and postsecondary credentials.

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

Career Solutions services revolve around the development of career pathways for clients on an individual basis, as well as programs when available (i.e. P2P Competitive Grant funding) that provide participants with stackable credentials. Career Solutions has long required that the majority of training funds be committed to industry accepted credentialed training which leads to employment in targeted high-growth, high-wage, demand driven, and/or career laddering occupations in our area.

CareerForce customers are directed to appropriate online resources to investigate career pathways and given career guidance by CareerForce staff or, when enrolled, by Career Planners.

The LWDB and Program Committee continues to be concerned about the ability of the system to secure credentialed training in an employment/skill market requiring increasing educational and skill attainment that is also increasingly specialized in a fiscal environment of declining resources and increasing costs of credentialed training (including books, tools, tests/exams required to obtain credentials).

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

Career Solutions provides an array of services to adult and dislocated worker clients. With dislocated workers, this starts pre-layoff if possible. Working around shift start/end times, Career Solutions attempts to provide on-site informational sessions. This allows for less intrusion or disruption of the employee's current work schedule and is more convenient for potential clients. This also allows for the information to be received on familiar grounds.

Once a client decides they want to participate in the dislocated worker program, they attend an intake session with our Outreach and Eligibility Specialist and are subsequently assigned a Career Planner. They participate in Career Trek, a 9-hour course including assessments, aptitude tests, job search tools, etc. that assist career services staff in ensuring the client will be happy and successful in their next chosen career path and validate training plans and expenditures. The Career Planner asks questions pertaining to the client's work history, education, experiences and anything else that helps them advise the client on their next move. If, after a lengthy conversation and assessment(s), it is deemed a client is fully employable, they are then placed into job search activities. The assigned Career Planner then helps the client obtain re-employment at the needed wage as soon as possible. If the client needs minor skill increases, in certain areas, that is explored as well. An example of this could be training in Microsoft Office software such as Word or Excel. If it is determined that a client's skills are obsolete, they have minimal education, or their previous sector of employment is decreasing in demand, the client may be eligible for retraining in a high demand, high wage area. During all of the processes noted above the client is required to maintain participation and contact with their assigned Career Planner. Plans are signed and agreed upon between the Agency and the participant.

For individual inquiries about the Dislocated Worker or Adult programs, Outreach and Eligibility Specialists work to determine edibility and if requirements are met, invite applicants to an intake session. Once paperwork is complete, clients are then assigned a Career Planner.

Note: the services described above are for a small layoff. For large layoffs, action will not occur until DEED's Rapid Response team has followed the process to determine who the DW provider will be for the project.

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

Career Solutions provides youth services to youth between the ages of 14 and 24 under WIOA, MYP, Youthbuild, YAW, Pre-ETS and other special project youth models. Career Solutions enrolls youth that fall under one of the "underserved" categories per the WIOA law. This

includes youth with disabilities. Career Solutions does extensive outreach to other community agencies as well as presentations in schools and utilizes other Career Solutions grant specialists for recruitment. Career Solutions looks at our youth programs as a pathway model. A youth may start in one program, complete it, and move into another program provided they meet eligibility requirements. This "pathway" model allows for the youth to be provided with a progression of service and allows them to continue to build on what is learned in the previous program. Ultimately, our goal is to enroll them into WIOA and assist them into a career pathway. Career Solutions does extensive assessment with the youth to ensure the career path of choice is a proper fit. From there, the youth go through a progression of services somewhat similar to the dislocated worker and adult programs depending on their individual needs. However, overall youth are harder to serve and may require a longer-term commitment than an adult would. Many of the youth Career Solutions services do not have a positive or committed role model in their life or stable housing. This requires Career Solutions youth staff to act as mentors and to hold the youth accountable. Career Solutions utilizes incentive payments at times to ensure the youth follow through and attain benchmarks that are written into their individual plan.

In addition to individualized case management, many youth participants are offered work-based learning opportunities, On-the-job Training (OJT) and career exploration through Career Trek.

Over the last decade, Career Solutions has worked with CentraCare, the area's largest employer, to increase the size and locations of the CareerONE summer program. This employer has committed in more ways than just monetarily. They are committed, alongside Career Solutions, to providing a life altering experience for the youth of Central Minnesota. This comes in the form of education to the youth, career exploration, mock interviews, health screenings, campus tours and providing supervisorial staff to work with the youth while on site. This has proven to be a very valuable relationship and will continue to grow in the future to meet the needs of the hundreds of kids who need these vital services each year. As with all of the other programs, the need greatly exceeds the funding available.

In 2016, an abbreviated, two-week CareerONE program was held in Sauk Centre, MN for 10 youth. Based on the success of this expansion, 20 youth were served in 2017 and another remote site was added in Paynesville, MN. Also, 10 youth mentors were offered 40 hour internships within the CentraCare Health System and other businesses and non-profits to further explore careers in healthcare.

Starting in summer 2017, CareerONE added a healthcare track – a focused program for 20 youth interested in a medical career. At the completion of the program, participants receive 1-3 college credits. The following tracks were added – manufacturing and construction in 2018,

Childcare and Teaching Track in 2022, Public Safety in 2023, and manufacturing became its own track in 2026. Since 2021, CareerONE students in the healthcare and construction tracks will be offered a CareerTWO opportunity which starts promptly after CareerONE has ended. CareerTWO will continue learning and increase the experience and credits earned. Of the students who received college credits in 2019-2023, tracked by SCTCC, 89% of those who went to college have had successful results (graduated, still in school, etc.). Career ONE is proving to be a solid foundation for its participants, leading to success after high school.

In 2025, Stearns Bank employees volunteer their time to each the Money Smart curriculum developed by the FDIC. Their participation has magnified the financial training provided which has been a core component of the program for many years. They share industry experience and passion for financial education as well.

By participating in CareerONE, students can work with their school guidance counselor to gain an elective credit for their participation in the program. Also, participants can earn up to seven college credits for the work performed. CareerONE is held on the St. Cloud Technical and Community College campus.

Career Solutions partners with 180 Degrees, a youth homeless shelter and LSS/Pathways 4 Youth (a day center for youth experiencing homelessness) and Catholic Charities to help with job applications, resumes, cover letters, etc. to achieve employment, allowing them to transition into stable housing. When appropriate, youth are enrolled into youth programs offered by Career Solutions.

Many youth have multiple encounters with Career Solutions. Co-enrollment in multiple programs is common. Youth might start off by attending CareerONE, then YAW or Youthbuild, then WIOA OSY to prepare them for employment with a credential.

In 2017, Career Solutions expanded its youth offering by becoming a recipient of the Pre-ETS grant to serve youth with disabilities. Through a partnership with Vocational Rehabilitation Services, school guidance counselors, SPED leadership, etc. served 75-100 youth annually under this grant for the first two years. This grant was instrumental in increasing outreach efforts and strengthening connections between Career Solutions and VRS. In 2019, VRS switched Pre-ETS from a grant to a fee for service. Career Solutions worked to create a fee for service model in order to continue providing services to youth with disabilities.

Vocational Rehabilitation Services (VRS) assist youth, ages 14-21, who have disabilities. Youth who are still in school and have not graduated from high school are eligible for Pre-Employment Transition Services. These services can include job exploration counseling, work-based learning experiences, counseling on opportunities for enrollment in comprehensive transition or post-

secondary educational programs at institutions of higher education, workplace-readiness training, and instruction in self-advocacy. These can be provided for students whether or not they have applied for services.

VRS also provides services to transition-aged youth who apply for services and fall within the state's priority for service. Individuals in this group can be either in school or out of school and can receive any service VRS offers if that service is necessary to help the student to achieve their educational and employment goals.

Throughout the State of Minnesota, VRS is committed to providing students with disabilities Pre-Employment Transition Services to meet their needs. VR transition services assist eligible youth to plan for and make the transition from secondary school to competitive integrated employment. Ultimately, VRS assists students in choosing a post high school employment goal and ensures that they receive the services needed to reach that goal. Each school is assigned a Counselor and a Pre-ETS Representative who work in collaboration with school staff to provide services to students with disabilities. Some of the ways that VR staff support the needs of students include, attending IEP meetings, providing group services and instruction to prepare for employment, arranging work experiences or job shadowing for students, and any activity that aligns with the Pre-ETS categories below that will meet the need of a student and fill in the gaps of what the school is unable to provide.

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

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

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

placement and Pre-ETS providers come together as partners to share information about employer relationships in order to assist in job placements and Pre-ETS WBLEs.

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

A participant who expresses interest in pursuing post-secondary education and has completed the required "Basic Criteria for Training" is used for training approval. It is during this process the participant chooses their training institution, using the ETLP list on DEED's website to ensure funding is WIOA certified. The Basic Criteria for Training requires a thorough investigation of the training program by the participant including researching Labor Market Projections indicating it is a demand occupation. It is expected that the vast majority of training programs will not only be in demand occupations, but regionally selected strategic/targeted Industries.

Career Solutions has a local policy regarding classroom training which further defines the prerequisites and responsibilities. Each participant is required to complete a budget and apply for state and federal financial aid grants. When the participant's request for training is approved, a Training Authorization for Classroom Training is generated. The authorization will list the amount for tuition, fees, books, and supplies, needed for the specific semester. This authorization is signed by the Career Planner and a Director. The post-secondary institution will submit a bill and the payment will be made by check directly to the institution. The invoice is printed and kept in the participant's file. Payments are posted in the electronic accounting system. When a Career Solutions Career Planner meets with a client, and a training program is decided on, the Career Planner advises the client on their options for training providers. At no time does Career Solutions decide for the client. Career Solutions does advise the client of available funding and what amount of support is available. It is up to the client to decide where they will pursue training based on the totality of the situation and all of the options available.

C.7. Describe the plans and strategies for, and assurances concerning, maximizing coordination of service provided by the state employment service under Wagner-Peyser

Act, and services provided in the local workforce development area through the one-stop delivery system, to improve service delivery and avoid duplication of services.

Wagner-Peyser, under the One Stop delivery system, provides universal access to an integrated array of labor exchange services so that workers, job seekers and businesses can find the services they need under one roof in easy-to-find locations.

Wagner-Peyser Employment Service focuses on providing a variety of employment related labor exchange services including but not limited to job search assistance, job referral, and placement assistance for job seekers, re-employment services to unemployment insurance claimants, and recruitment services to employers with job openings. Services are delivered in one of three modes including self-service, facilitated self-help services and staff assisted service delivery approaches.

Job Service

The Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED) delivers key services to job seekers and businesses through Job Service. The focus of all services, which are available through Minnesota's statewide network of CareerForce locations, is to help job seekers find work and help employers find and retain qualified employees.

Job Service Mission:

To **inform**, **educate** and **connect** job seekers, career changers **and employers** through innovative, effective and customer-friendly services

We achieve our mission by:

- Facilitating access to services and resources that help businesses attract and retain good workers.
- Connecting Unemployment Insurance applicants, Veterans and others to good career opportunities.
- Operating as an enterprise to offer consistent and high quality services, leverage resources, improve efficiencies, and build capacity.
- Collaborating with our state and local partners to improve services to customers and minimize duplication.
- Using the most effective tools and latest data to serve our customers.
- Adapting quickly to changes in the economy and finding innovative ways to address the needs of our customers and communities.

DEED's Job Service staff guide job seekers through all steps of job search and career planning.

Job Service Activities:

- Informing job seekers about CareerForce (CF) services including eligibility-based employment and training programs.
- Educating job seekers on how to use CareerForceMN.gov, DEED's online job bank, to search for and apply for jobs.
- Offering job search advice and assisting with writing effective resumes.
- Providing free workshops and training to job seekers on the fundamentals of a successful job search; including up-to date strategies using social media and online tools.
- Recommending other community-based resources and service.
- Job seekers who are Veterans receive priority referral to jobs and training as well as special employment services and assistance.
- Wagner-Peyser staff attend every UI RESEA workshop and provide follow up services with the intent of having every participant create a viewable resume in CareerForceMN.gov.
- RESEA participants also receive information and referrals to eligibility-based programs (such as WIOA Dislocated Worker), orientations to CF services, and workshop enrollments.

Business Service Activities:

- Providing information on CareerForceMN.gov, our no-fee online job bank connecting job seekers and employers in Minnesota.
- Delivering proven recruitment and retention strategies through job fairs, recruitment events and employer workshops.
- Offering training on CareerForceMN.gov to help find the best candidate by creating effective online job postings for access to the largest group of Minnesota job seekers.
- Providing education on labor market information, tax credits and hiring incentives.
- Connecting to local, state and federal business information and resources on education, training, exports, business expansion and human resources.

All CareerForce locations provide a staffed Career Lab to serve the public without regard for eligibility. Minnesota maintains strong, inclusive eligibility policies that also address services available to the universal customer, ensuring that all individuals can access services.

CareerForce uses the "customer service protocol" to simplify and clarify the process of assisting customers effectively in the Career Lab. The steps are to greet the customer, assess needs and expectations with the customer, take action on expressed needs and confirm customers' needs were met.

Other continuous improvement efforts include:

Classroom presentation skills training based on the state's Creative Job Search workshop will continue to be offered to all employees who facilitate workshops.

All Job Service employees have access to the Skill-soft online training platform. Training specific to each employee is documented in the employee's Individual Development Plan.

Quarterly partner manager meetings are held to discuss CareerForce program and operational practices to ensure program compliance, discuss concerns and/or improvements. Best practices are shared among partners and new ideas generated based on changes in employment practices, unemployment figures and business input.

Minnesota's WIOA State Plan describes the state's strategy for providing reemployment assistance to Wagner Peyser's targeted population of UI claimants. The strategy will be as follows:

A Wagner Peyser staff person will attempt to reach Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment (RESEA) individuals by phone. Calls include information on how to register for the state's labor exchange system CareerForceMN.gov, and information about programs such as the Dislocated Worker program that they may be eligible for. Workshops are offered consisting of training on how to find a job that includes career planning, preparing for the job hunt, skills identification, resumes and cover letters, applications and references, social media, interviewing skills, and more.

Wagner Peyser will follow up with RESEA participants who are not enrolled in a program to ensure that they have a complete registration and resume in CareerForceMN.gov, and that they are taking advantage of job placement services.

WAGNER-PEYSER ASSURANCES

The State assures the following:
The Wagner-Peyser Employment Service is co-located with one-stop centers or a plan and timeline has been developed to comply with this requirement within a reasonable amount of time.

The State agency is complying with the requirements under 20 CFR 653.111 (State agency staffing requirements) if the State has significant Migrant Seasonal Farm Worker one-stop centers;

If a State Workforce Development Board, department or agency administers State laws for vocational rehabilitation of individuals with disabilities, that board, department, or agency cooperates with the agency that administers Wagner Peyser services, Adult and Dislocated Worker programs and Youth Programs under Title I; and

State agency merit-based public employees provide Wagner-Peyser Act-funded labor exchange activities in accordance with Department of Labor regulations.

Interagency Coordination

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

Career Solutions is co-located within the St. Cloud Technical & Community College (SCTCC) campus and partners regularly with all post-secondary schools in the area. To support talent retention and provide meaningful work opportunities to post-secondary students. Career Solutions has partnered regularly with SCTCC to provide Drive for 5 and Pathways to Prosperity programming, Adult Career Pathways Grants, along with other DEED Grants and SCTCC has developed transition programming for adult learners accessing training after layoff that better serves all learners.

Perkin V's requires a Comprehensive Local Needs Assessment (CLNA) to be done by each consortium. The findings in a CLNA are to help the consortium identify programs of study with careers having high wage, in-demand jobs in our consortium area. One of those programs of study identified by the Great River Perkins Consortium's (GRPC) CLNA was healthcare. Career Solutions is supporting this work by offering a healthcare track in CareerONE and CareerTWO, and is working with the Boys and Girls Club to enroll any CareerONE participants that were not accepted into CareerTWO into their CNA program.

Career Solutions has partnered with Adult Basic Education (ABE) in programming. Career Solutions has offered to work with ABE and the library to explore how we can maximize resources in the community. SCTCC, St. Cloud State University (SCSU) and ABE are MOU partners. ABE, SCTCC and SCSU are members of the LWDB, sharing voting authority (.5 vote for SCSU and SCTCC). Career Solutions staff host office hours at ABE locations in the St. Cloud area. Career Solutions has secured interns from public and private post-

secondary institutions to assist with the Outreach to Schools program activities as well as developing community outreach initiatives.

DEED/Job Service staff refer universal customers to Adult Basic Education (ABE) service to upgrade their basic skills, computer skills and to learn/improve English skills. High schools and post-secondary schools request labor market and career information which Job Service staff present to students. Job Service also provides an online resume review service to universal customers and to area high school students.

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

Career Solutions is co-located in the St. Cloud Technical and Community College. Career Solutions and SCTCC collaborate on numerous projects and regularly provide each other input on services. Career Solutions and SCTCC meet regularly to discuss service strategies and how to best ensure any SCTCC students that are eligible for services receive services. Career Solutions has also built extensive relationships with area school districts within the service area and collaborates on projects with them also. Career Solutions plays a crucial role in ensuring that the schools meet the requirements outlined in the World's Best Workforce Legislation through the Outreach to Schools program. The guidance counselor to student ratio within the school districts is definitely alarming. For example, Minnesota counselor averages is ratio of 1 counselor per every 558 students, when the recommended ratio is 1:250. This hinders individual students' mental health, academic progress, career exploration and preparation. *(Source: https://www.house.mn.gov/comm/docs/r6JiRiz2CUCFN_4iSvEdYA.pdf5)*

CareerONE is held on the SCTCC campus to get youth comfortable being in a college setting, many of them are potential first-generation college students. College credit is given to those participating in CareerONE, providing motivation to these students to consider post-secondary, and relieving some of the costs in doing so. During CareerONE, campus tours and career exploration opportunities are provided by SCTCC and SCSU.

EPIC – Exploring Potential Interests in Careers event is held annually for high school sophomores in Central MN (60 mile radius of St. Cloud). Career Solutions Executive Director is an EPIC Board Member and staff are involved in event planning as a Career Cluster Leader or volunteers the day of the event to assist in hosting activities or providing guidance to students. EPIC is a Hands-On Career Exploration Event supported through a Community-wide

Collaboration. 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 MN region. This event is also held on the SCTCC campus, getting youth comfortable with the post-secondary environment.

United Way of Central MN also leads a number of initiatives driven through collective impact. The goal of our Post-Secondary Readiness network is that every student is ready for career training or post-secondary education. Members of our network continue to develop and implement plans to achieve this goal through community-wide work teams that coordinate and engage multiple constituencies and existing initiatives and efforts in the partnership area.

Career Solutions is a member of the Career and Post-Secondary Readiness Network, guiding the work as well as ensuring connections are made to the youth programs offered by Career Solutions.

This group is working to:

- Develop a peer network to connect 9th grade students with high school seniors for support during the transition year.
- Align and create curriculum and resources to support community partners to leverage college and career readiness plans for students through trainings and a toolkit that enhances what is being delivered within our three school districts.
- Develop a framework and program that provides internships, apprenticeships and other experimental opportunities with community partners and businesses.

Efforts in the area are well connected and are achieved through collaboration amongst agencies, business, non-profits and business leaders which greatly reduces the risk of duplicating services.

Career Solutions is also a partner in the Full Service Community Schools program being piloted at North Junior High School, led by District 742. This started in fall of 2024. Career Solutions has staff present during scheduled times to provide services to youth and members of their family.

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

Transportation, childcare, housing and language are the top barriers to employment in Stearns and Benton County.

Public Transportation:
Career Solutions Program Committee, which reports to the LWDB is well connected with St. Cloud's public transportation system. At least annually, status updates are presented to the Program Committee by public transportation and other support service organizations. Public transportation passes are used to support clients in their job search activities. Employer feedback is given to increase services to a broader area in the community as well as longer service hours to support second shift workers. Career Solutions Executive Director was recently a member of Metro Bus's strategic planning process led by an outside consultant.

Housing:
Career Solutions Executive Director is a member of the Economic Development, Workforce, and Housing Policy Subcommittee. The subcommittee goals are to support legislative efforts to ensure a speedy, equitable, and sustainable economic recovery that aims to alleviate stresses borne by business owners, employees, landlords, homeowners, renters, and those without access to housing during the pandemic. As of late, other community groups have formed to address the shortage of workforce housing. Career Solutions is represented by board members who report back to the LWDB periodically.

Child Care:
Career Solutions Executive Director is also a member of the Childcare Strategies Committee, focused on improving access to affordable and quality childcare in the area.

Language Support:
Career Solutions works closely with ABE and will make referrals frequently to them for language support. Also, in 2025, Career Solutions was one of a three LWDA's that participated in the Office of New America DEED grant.

Career Solutions works with community partners to host Job Fairs (i.e. FAHAN) to increase opportunities for employment.

As previously mentioned, Career Solutions has Bilingual staff (Somali and Spanish) to assist job seekers and clients. When needed, Career Planners will assist with one-on-one intake/enrollment sessions to provide translation.

To expand Outreach to non-English speakers, it has been identified that the local food shelf is a where many connections could be made with primarily the Spanish speaking population. Periodic visits are made and bilingual flyers are distributed.

Support Services:
Representatives from support service agencies, such as Tri-CAP, Catholic Charities, and United Way present program updates to Career Solutions. Also, Career Solutions staff are engaged in committee and/or board work for local agencies to increase connections and communication with clients.

Other support services include financial assistance with the following items to lessen the burden for job seekers and students. Examples include:

- Rent/ mortgage
- Utilities/ telephone
- Transportation (car repairs, gas vouchers/ bus passes to help clients get to interviews and training, auto insurance, car payment, car tabs)
- Mental health & financial counseling
- Health insurance
- Eyewear
- Childcare

Career Solutions has other vendors that are approved and are coordinated with to provide support services. These include certain reputable local gas stations for client gas vouchers and local auto repair shops for client car repairs.

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

The Adult Basic Education (ABE) Director from Dist. 742 (Consortium leader) is a member of the Career Solutions WDB, the ABE Manager was the Vice-Chair of the Youth Council (until staff transition in 2026) and is currently a member of the WDB. There are frequent exploration meetings held between the two agencies to collaborate to serve clients. District 742's ABE leads a consortium which includes all school districts in the Career Solutions service area. Career Solutions has collaborated on many projects with ABE and continues to explore opportunities. ABE and Career Solutions youth staff work very strategically together to provide a steady stream of recruitment for Career Solutions youth programs. This allows for the needs of area youth to be met and allows them to access services that will provide them with a fruitful career path.

With a growing population of immigrants that need English language courses, ABE's services are in high demand. Career Solutions continues to monitor service availability and to ensure referrals are made correctly and are appropriate.

Employer & Economic Development Engagement

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

The LWDB is made up of at least 51% membership from local businesses. Their experience and guidance at the board level is a critical driver for planning and program development. Many LWDB board members are also members of the Program Committee where more detail is shared, and discussions take place about programs development and offerings.

Career Solutions is held to very stringent yearly performance measures. These measures are reviewed several times per year by the different committees. Career Solutions continually meets and exceeds these measures. Career Solutions is devoted to high client satisfaction. Career Solutions has processes in place, and an appeal process, to ensure non-discrimination and fair client treatment. Career Services staff are trained to be an advocate for the client as well as educate them on all available community resources. This ensures that Career Solutions understands the needs of many of the local businesses and can promote the services that are available through CareerForce. Career Solutions also partners with many local employers to recruit potential employees and meet their needs through specific grants. Surveys are sent to local employers to ensure that their needs are being met. Career Solutions has participated in many

projects and partnerships to help increase skills and abilities to become better employees and work toward wage increases and promotions within their respective places of work.

The monthly HR Networking group is another way for Career Solutions to monitor the needs of local employers. During each meeting, employers share current events, challenges they are facing, etc. which guides the work we do as well as allow timely suggestions/solutions/recommendations to programs available through Career Solutions or DEED (MJSP, JTIP, etc.).

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

The LWDB regularly receives updates from DEED's Regional Labor Market Analyst as to the status of in-demand industry sectors and occupations. WDB members provide updates at LWDB meetings as do representatives from economic development. Board members participate in the Community Priorities and the work of the Greater St. Cloud (economic development agency), and various industry-specific activities related to their constituency so that information about employer needs is current. Representatives of strategic industries provide presentations about their industry, challenges, and opportunities at board meetings to keep the LWDB informed of the local climate.

Career Solutions staff are directed to grow capacity in the region to develop the local workforce. Staff use labor market information, employer input and reports, and community resources, client skills/aptitudes/interests/needed, wage, and other job seeker information to define a career goal when working on employer-led employment and training programs. Staff assess gaps between current skills and those needed to obtain the career goal and develop a service plan to address the gap. Staff also use information obtained from employer visits/tours. An example is input received from employers about training investments. Historically, more funds have been used to "upskill" the labor force during a recession by investing in classroom training; and in a recovery, more is used for "on-the-job." Employers have now indicated that a combination of the two is required to meet demands for increasing customization and cross-training of the workforce. This is leading to increasing interest in apprenticeship.

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

Career Solutions: The LWDB is a convener as well as participating in efforts convened by others that address the "system" needs; to identify needs/gaps and plan how to address them. This may mean that the WDB challenges "system partners" to be innovative and to take risks - not usually encouraged with taxpayer funding. The WDB defined "meeting the needs of participants" to include "meeting the needs of employers". This includes mapping community resources, integration at the co-located SCTCC facility, and supporting needs identified as being critical to maximizing available labor. The WDB continues its role as a provider of service. At the class level, employers, including WDB members, develop the curriculum and the "credential" criteria as well as assist in teaching the classes. This creates a "value-added" service for both the job seeker and the employer. The Program Committee of the WDB reviews program performance, service evaluations, customer satisfaction, and other reports to ensure quality of service delivery.

Career Solutions offers a monthly Human Resources Networking meeting. Standing items on the agenda include highlighting one of Career Solutions' programs, up to four job seekers are invited to showcase their talents to HR professionals, and business best practices and challenges are shared by all participants. Business professionals and LWDB members have expressed that this meeting is a valuable resource that fills a need in the business community. Participation has grown to over 170 companies on the group list. The Career Solutions Business Services Manager meets periodically with employers to review their hiring practices, recruitment and training needs, networking opportunities, etc., and provides an overview of the menu of services provided. Career Solutions also offers the employers Incumbent Worker training programs to assist employers with credentialed training for their current workforce and promotes the OJT program for new hires as well as services for their immigrant workforce.

Businesses recognize Career Solutions as a source of innovative workforce development initiatives and are willing to invest time and resources into developing a creative program that meets their needs and in turn benefits local job seekers. In addition to the MAWB Promising Practices previously discussed, Career Solutions received the Inovation Award in 2025 from Greater St. Cloud for the CareerONE youth employment program.

In 2025, Career Solutions started a partnership with WACOSA to serve individuals with disabilities. Through this partnership, career solutions offers Career Trek to WACOSA participants. During the 9 hour course, they explore careers that would be a good fit for themselves and explore opportunities in our community. In addition, Career Solutions Business Services Manager has developed Discovery Days in partnership with employers interested in hiring individuals with disabilities. This allows clients to tour companies/manufacturers to see if they are interested in the job opportunities available to them.

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

Connections have been made with the Benton County Economic Partnership, as well as the Greater St. Cloud (GSC) which serves as the regional economic development provider. GSDC has four Strategic Imperatives – Engage Leaders, Expand Talent, Grow Business, and Shape Tomorrow. Career Solutions Executive Director is a member of the talent core to ensure that resources are used wisely and do not overlap with the work of Career Solutions. A collaborative approach is taken to create synergy between the two organizations.

Business attraction/retention visits and presentations – When Economic Development partners are working with prospective companies to relocate or expand in the St. Cloud area, Career Solutions is a part of the team to share information about the local workforce. In collaboration with DEED's Labor Market Analyst, data is shared to provide a clear assessment of the workforce available to support the company. CareerForce is promoted to businesses as a resource to use as an extension of their recruitment office – job fairs, application drop-off sites, interview areas, etc.

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

As the selected local provider, Career Solutions provides services to dislocated workers.

Career Solutions offers and promotes all the above-mentioned programs. Career Solutions, along with the State Rapid Response team and UI, responds to potential layoffs as early as possible. This could mean lay-off aversion, if possible, but usually means getting to the affected workers to provide information on available services to allow for a quicker, less stressful, transition back into suitable employment. Career Solutions partners with many local employers on specific projects as well as provide services under allocated grant funds. Career Solutions conducts business visits when possible.

Career Solutions has been offering Job Seeker Open House events – offering many job search activities and services that have proven to be successful in bringing in new customers who have been laid off.

Leadership at the Benton County Economic Partnership (BEP) has been briefed on the programs and services provided by Career Solutions to ensure proper referrals are made to businesses in transition.

Career Solutions utilizes both state and federal funding, up to 20 percent, to provide Incumbent Worker Training programs to employers to upskill and retain current employees. Incumbent worker training (IWT) is designed to increase the competitiveness of businesses by helping employees acquire the skills necessary to retain employment, advance within the business, or to gain the work skills necessary to avert a layoff.

Whenever possible, On-the-Job Training (OJT) opportunities are maximized, utilizing training dollars. OJTs have helped employers hire clients who may not have been a perfect match for the position, knowing they have the resources needed to provide training to fill in the skills gap. Some companies have reported that the additional savings to their budget have allowed them to hire a second staff person. OJTs are set up for 2-4 months, depending on the training needed to meet the demands of the job description, and reimburse the company 50% of the employee's wages.

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

Career Solutions has utilized the CLIMB (Converting Layoffs into Minnesota Businesses) Program offered to State Dislocated Workers to encourage and support clients

interested in starting their businesses. Dislocated Worker clients who are interested in entrepreneurship discuss their goals with their career planner; they complete a self-assessment tool and watch several online training classes from the US Small Business Administration (SBA). If CLIMB seems like a good choice, the service provider helps them identify organizations in the community that can help them develop an effective business plan and obtain funding to start their business. CLIMB cannot provide either direct grants or loans to participants, but the state-funded Dislocated Worker program can pay for business consulting and training for the CLIMB participant to help them establish their business. The cost of entrepreneurial training (and support services, if needed) for the CLIMB participants is provided through dislocated worker program funds. CLIMB participants are advised about the benefits that are built into the program participation. Since they are in re-employment assistance training, they are not required to complete work search activities to be eligible for Unemployment Insurance (UI) benefits, earnings generated by the business are not deducted from their UI benefit, and they may work more than 32 hours per weeks on their new businesses and still be eligible for UI.

Business consulting and training services are available through the Small Business Development Center, located on the St. Cloud State Campus. connections are made to obtain additional consultation support in developing their business plan and other resources available. Connections are also made with other resources in the community – including Launch MN, Initiative Foundation, Great North Labs, Entrepreneur Fund, and gBETA Greater MN St. Cloud.

Dislocated Worker Supports

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

Career Solutions is fully aware of and committed to complying with all policies and procedures for Rapid Response including the two specific policies cited. Career Solutions Program Director ensures that all program and administrative staff working within the Dislocated Program review the two policies at the onset of the program year, and that compliance is maintained with each dislocation event coordinated by Rapid Response. The Executive Director and Program Director ensures compliance with all policies by taking a lead role with Rapid Response.

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

Immediate contact with Rapid Response is made via email (with more than one Rapid Response staff) and/or phone by Career Solutions to upon hearing fact or alleged actual or potential dislocation event.

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

When Career Solutions is informed of a mass layoff from an employer primarily located in Stearns and/or Benton County, contact is immediately made with the Rapid Response office indicating willingness to provide services locally. The board then awaits follow-up instructions and information from Rapid Response.

Career Solutions works closely with Rapid Response in ascertaining whether a project is needed or if formula funds are more appropriate to be used to serve the workers. Career Solutions will comply with Dislocated Worker Policies 13.09 and 13.10 in delivering Dislocated Worker Services in coordination with State Rapid Response.

When Rapid Response issues an email Broadcast of mass layoff, Career Solutions administrative staff evaluate interest and resources to serve an employer inside of the WSA area.

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

Immediate contact will be made with TAA Program Coordinator at DEED via email and/or phone by Career Solutions upon hearing any facts that could signal potential TAA certification. Email will also be sent to TRA Unit (deed.tra@state.mn.us)Close WSA contact with Rapid Response Unit also ensures State Trade Act staff be brought into the loop as quickly as possible.

Note: TAA funding has ended in 2026.

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

When the company layoff is identified as a TAA project, the TAA Specialist team meets with the impacted employees to share TAA benefit information. The project is then handed off to the Career Solutions team to form an employee committee where they evaluate the needs of the group and then services are coordinated based on these needs. Career Solutions staff works with the TAA Specialists assigned to help process all TAA benefits for the impacted employees, such as training approvals, training progress reports, RTAA/ATAA plans, OJT contracts, and support for interviews and relocations.

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

Yes X

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

Yes X

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

Per Local policy, support services cannot exceed $4,000.00 per client per program year. This policy can be waived by the Career Solutions Program Director. Waivers are reviewed quarterly by the Career Solutions leadership team. There are also limits for support for different categories such as transportation, housing, clothing, tools, childcare and healthcare. Career Solutions chooses to issue supportive services on a "first come, first served" basis and assist clients as the need arises and as funds are available. The Program Director and agency staff monitor the amounts very closely and make adjustments as needed. For example, there are times when, as a team, it has been decided to only allow payments to be made to cover travel expenses related to job search or to reach approved training programs.

The DEED Policy requirement to identify the need for support services on the Individual Employment Plan and that support services are made available during the 12 month follow up period are adhered to.

Services to Military Service Members and Spouses

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

Yes X

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

CareerForce staff actively support providing a priority of service for all veterans coming into our CareerForce through the multiple services offered by partners. Upon meeting a customer, staff are trained and will ask for the information to determine their veteran status to then be able to expedite the services they are interested in receiving and need to assist them to be re-integrated into the civilian workforce or the veteran will self-disclose their veteran status. Programs funded by the Department of Labor are covered by Section 4215 of the "Jobs for Veterans Act" (PL 107-288). These programs include Wagner Peyser, WIOA Title One Adult and Dislocated Worker, Trade Adjustment Act, National Emergency Grants, Migrant/Seasonal Farmworker, WIOA Demonstration Grants, H-1B Technical Skills Training/Grants, Youth Opportunity Grants, WIOA Youth Formula program and Labor Market Information.

The Minnesota Veterans Questionnaire is used to identify Veterans. We ask all customers that come to the CareerForce if they ever served in the US Military. If the answer is yes, we ask them to complete the Veterans Questionnaire. Non-JVSG staff do the initial assessment/review of the questionnaire, and make appropriate referrals based on the responses on the questionnaire.

On-site signage helps the customers to self-identify themselves as U.S. Military members.

Job Service: If a customer is a veteran, the staff will "thank" them for their service to our country. The veteran will receive information about the availability of the Local Veteran Representative on-site whose primary job is to assist the veteran to receive information regarding CareerForce services/community resources and to assist him/her in their career selection and to obtain the skills needed to become re-employed. All veterans

are provided one on one interviews upon their initial visit or are contacted to arrange for a future meeting on a timely basis. The veteran is encouraged to register and submit their resume on the labor exchange job listing CareerForceMN.gov. They are also informed about the job preparation workshops offered by Job Service to universal customers at the CareerForce.

The law states that Disabled Veteran Outreach Program Specialists (DVOPS) are to provide services to veterans with a barrier to employment. This means that not all veterans coming into a CareerForce will (need to) see a DVOP or an LVER.

All CareerForce staff are responsible for the delivery of Gold Card services to veterans.

Career Solutions: Career Solutions Intake and Outreach Specialist inquires of all individuals seeking services as to their veteran status to ensure priority of services is afforded these individuals. Even if a waiting list exists for services, Veterans are immediately served. As funds permit, veterans receive direct client training and support services within eligibility based programs as a priority. All Career Solutions Career Planners make a point of reviewing the Veteran Status of participants at the first meeting.

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

Signage in CareerForce advises veterans and other eligible persons of the Veterans' Priority of Service Section D - Page 41 Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development 2021-2024 Regional and Local Plans Service (POS). Information on Priority of Service is also provided during various program orientations, by CareerForce Lab staff, and during workshops. LVER staff train and update local partner staff on the provisions of POS and PL 107-288.

Career Solutions: For Title IB – Career Solutions, self-disclosure is used for any initial barrier to employment. Meetings with the Career Planner identify and plan for addressing and finding solutions to the presenting barriers and any additional barriers that are identified as the Veteran participant receives services. An Individual Service Strategy is developed for each Veteran participant. Coordination with the Job Service

Veteran's Representative is required. Career Solutions has identified a Career Planner as a Veteran's Specialist.

Job Service: At their initial visit to the CareerForce, the veteran will either self-disclose their veteran status or staff will inquire if they are a veteran. The veteran is then given a self-assessment questionnaire available at the reception desk. Upon completion of the self-assessment form, the veteran will either meet with the Local Veteran Representative immediately or he/she will be contacted by the Veteran Representative staff to set up an appointment to be seen. During this meeting, the Veteran Representative will inquire about their current situation to determine if there are barriers to the veteran returning to work or address the information on the questionnaire regarding the barriers the veteran has self-disclosed. Veteran Representatives are knowledgeable about the programs and services available in the CareerForce and are aware of the community resources that the veteran may be eligible to access for further assistance. The veteran is assisted in registering on and submitting their resume on CareerForceMN.gov and informed of the universal workshops offered by Job Service staff.

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

All websites associated with the CareerForce locations provide information on and notice of Veterans Priority of Service.

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

In CareerForce, it is a phone call or personal visit to the service provider. Because every provider of service has an eligibility criteria, the veterans are moved to the next intake session and eligibility is determined. If the veteran is unable to schedule at their convenience, at a minimum the appropriate paperwork may be given to the veteran to complete and return or they will see someone from the service provider that will personally explain the process to the veteran. Services are provided depending on the need of the veteran and may include scheduling a workshop, resume writing assistance, career guidance, discussion of local employers and economy, research regarding

training opportunities, and referral to supportive services (such as a County Veterans Service Officer or VA contact depending on the need such as Voc. Rehab.), referral to training programs, basic unemployment insurance information, referral to educational contacts, etc.

The Minnesota Veterans Questionnaire, a DOL approved standard process, is used to identify Veterans with a significant barrier to employment (SBE). The questionnaire identifies DOL designated SBE's per VLP 03-14, including change 2.

In regards to Veterans Retraining Assistance (VRAP), referrals are made by DEED/Veteran Representatives to the local post-secondary contact person, the Higher Education Veterans Program representative from the Minnesota Department of Veteran Affairs for information and enrollment. We do help veterans navigate the website and give them copies of the application and the list of growing occupations to those interested in pursuing the VRAP training and also refer to the appropriate technical college to assist with career choice or assist them ourselves with career plans.

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

The local area has identified partner staff in each CareerForce to provide services (including intensive services) to SBE veterans in the absence of a DVOP. These staff have had training on serving Veterans via the NVTI Webinar "Helping Veterans to Meaningful Careers", and from LVER staff one on one, and during staff and partner meetings.

CareerForce staff conducts an initial assessment with current or former Military Service Member with a significant barrier to employment and then refers them to the designated intensive service provider when the DVOP is not available.

Job Service: For referrals to the appropriate program staff, the Veteran Representative will give the veteran the specific contact information and/or often directly contact the program staff person with the referral information. The Local Veteran Representative provides outreach services at the Veteran's Administration Hospital and works closely with their staff to provide services to those veterans who are in transition to employment. Outreach services are also provided in the western part of Stearns County

in Sauk Centre, MN on a bimonthly basis by appointment. Coordination of services and referral also occurs with the County Service Officers in both Stearns and Benton Counties as well as with the local VFW and American Legion.

The Local Veteran Representative takes a lead in organizing the local "Stand Down" event where multiple services are provided by the various community organizations for veterans. Information about the Stand Down event is well publicized throughout the community as well as at the CareerForce. Veteran Representatives and Job Service management participate in the local "Call to Action" effort to identify and coordinate local services for veterans and their families. We will continue to explore opportunities to provide and expand the provision of information and services to veterans in our area by promoting the hiring of veterans on a priority basis. CareerForce staff will continue to receive updates and training at our local meetings to insure that veterans will be provided the best service and information available in our continual commitment to the priority of service to those that served our country.
Career Solutions: An excellent referral and coordination process is in place between Local Veteran's Representative and Career Solutions Eligibility and Outreach Specialist. During the Career Solutions Intake process, if the Veteran is not aware of the local Veteran's Employment Representative, the Eligibility and Outreach Specialist conducting the intake, supplies the name and phone number of this individual. This is in addition to, but not in lieu of program specific services from Career Solutions. Any Veteran with a self-disclosed permanent disability is referred to Rehabilitation Services. Career Solutions services are available to complement the plan instituted by Rehab Services and the veteran.

LWDA 17 has identified partner staff in CF to provide services (including intensive services to SBE veterans. These staff have been trained on how to effectively serve veterans via the NVTI Webinar "Helping Veterans to Meaningful Careers," and from LVER staff. CF staff conduct initial assessments with current and former military service members with significant barriers to employment and refer them to the designated intensive service provider.

CareerForce St. Cloud has a State Veteran Service Officer(s). This individual shares information and provides assistance with Veteran Assistance and state veteran benefits applications. This includes applications for service connected disability compensation, pensions, home loans, education benefits, burial benefits, surviving spouse benefits, health care, long-term nursing home care, emergency financial grants, and other benefits.

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

Local DVOP and/or LVER staff attend staff and partner meetings and orientations participate on CF teams, collaborate with CF partners on various events, and provide training to partner staff and management regarding the JVSG program.

Career Solutions: Staff ask each veteran accessing services, veterans being a priority.

Job Service: As identified previously, we use the Veterans Job Search Assessment and ask each veteran visiting the CareerForce to self-identify themselves. The first question is "Are you a Post 9/11 Veteran?" and veterans are asked for active duty dates, etc. Each veteran visiting the CareerForce is then seen individually by staff. All staff provide services to veterans on a priority basis. Services are explained face to face and the opportunity for the veteran to ask questions is provided. Veterans staff will typically follow up with a phone call or a follow up interview to ensure the veteran has received the information they are seeking. As needed, they are referred to the appropriate resource for additional services.

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

Career Solutions: Career Solutions requires registration of all participants funded by WIOA and State Dislocated worker funds prior to intake. This is also reiterated at the first meeting with the job seeker client and is part of their Employment Plan with Career Solutions.

Job Service has CareerForceMN.gov information available in the CF reception and Career Lab area. This information provides complete registration instructions for customers to register with Minnesotaworks.net. Staff who assist customers in the Career Lab inform customers about CareerForceMN.gov and provide individual assistance to help them become registered and enter their resumes so they are viewable to employers. For jobseekers participating in the MFIP and Title I Adult and Dislocated Worker programs, customers are required to register and enter their viewable résumé on Minnesotaworks.net.

UI recipients enrolled in Re-employment Assistance are also required to register on

CareerForceMN.gov and are provided information on creating viewable resumes. Staff who provide workshops and facilitate networking groups inform all participants about

CareerForceMN.gov and provide registration instructions, Veterans receiving case management services are also required to be registered on Minnesotaworks.net. In addition to CareerForceMN.gov registration, work-ready jobseekers are encouraged to attend local resume workshops.

C.29. Are all WIOA-funded partners complying with the guidance provided in TEGL 11-11, Change 2 regarding Selective Service?

Yes X

SECTION D: ASSURANCES AND CERTIFICATIONS

Training and Employment Guidance and State Law Compliance

Conflict of Interest, Integrity, Fraud and Abuse:

Indicate below that the local area board affirms and assures that it makes all decisions in accordance with applicable federal and state laws and regulations, including the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), the Uniform Guidance at 2 CFR 200, and Minnesota OGM 08-01. The local workforce development board assures that its conflict-of-interest policies comply with these requirements and that the board upholds transparency, ethical conduct, and integrity in all governance and decision-making processes.

The local area board further assures that it maintains policies and procedures for preventing, detecting, and reporting fraud and abuse, consistent with federal requirements under Training and Employment Guidance Letter No. 15-23 and the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED) Fraud Prevention and Abuse policy. The board confirms that it will immediately contact DEED, the US Department of Labor Employment and Training Administration, and the Office of Inspector General if potential fraud or abuse issues arise and will follow all required reporting, documentation, and corrective-action procedures.

Additionally, the local area board confirms awareness of:

:

A) the applicable statutes related to government records;

B) requirement to retain documentation for six years.

By providing the indication below, the local area board certifies that its policies and practices are consistent with all relevant federal and state requirements for conflict of interest, integrity, fraud and abuse prevention, documentation, and ethical governance.

Yes X

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

Yes X

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

Yes X

Assurances

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

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

- **Accessibility** - Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended - Requires that federally funded program providers make their electronic information and technology accessible to people with disabilities;
- **Audits** – 2 CFR 200.501 organization-wide or program-specific audits shall be performed;

- **Buy American**- Buy American Act – award may not be expended unless the funds comply with USC 41, Section 8301-8303;
- **Data Sharing –** MN Access to Government Data, MN Duties of Responsible Authority; MN Access to Information; MN Administrative Rules Data Practices;
- **Disability** - that there will be compliance with the Architectural Barriers Act of 1968, Sections 503 and 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990;
- **Drug-Free Workplace** – Drug-Free Workplace Act of 1988 – requires all organizations to maintain a drug-free workplace;
- **Equal Opportunity** - Section 188 of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) - Requires applying nondiscrimination provisions in the administration of programs and activities for all eligible individuals, including individuals with disabilities;
- **Equal Opportunity** - Section 188 of the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 (WIA) - Requires applying nondiscrimination provisions in the administration of programs and activities for all eligible individuals, including individuals with disabilities;
- **Equal Opportunity** - Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended – Prohibits discrimination on the bases of race, color, and national origin under any program receiving federal financial assistance;
- **Equal Opportunity** - Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended - Prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, sex or national origin in employment;
- **Equal Opportunity-** Title II of the Genetic Information Nondiscrimination Act of 2008 - Prohibits discrimination in employment on the basis of genetic information;
- **Equal Opportunity** - Title V of the Older Americans Act of 1965 - Prohibits discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex, national original, age disability or political affiliation or beliefs in any program funded in part with Senior Community Services Employment Program funds;
- **Equal Opportunity** - Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, as amended - Requires applying nondiscrimination provisions, based on sex, in educational programs;
- **Equal Opportunity** - Title I (Employment) Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) - Prohibits state and local governments, from discriminating against qualified individuals with disabilities in job application procedures, hiring, firing, advancement, compensation, job training, and other terms, conditions, and privileges of employment;

-
- **Equal Opportunity** - Title II (State and Local Governments) Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) - Prohibits qualified individuals with disabilities from discrimination in services, programs, and activities;
-
- **Equal Opportunity** - Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended - Prohibits discrimination against qualified individuals with disabilities;
- **Equal Opportunity** - Age Discrimination Act of 1975, as amended - Prohibits discrimination on the basis of age;
- **Equal Opportunity** - Title 29 CFR Part 31 Nondiscrimination in federally-assisted programs of the Department of Labor, effectuation of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964;
- **Equal Opportunity** - Title 29 CFR Part 32 Nondiscrimination on the basis of disability in programs and activities receiving or benefiting from federal assistance;
- **Equal Opportunity** - Title 29 CFR Part 33 Enforcement of nondiscrimination on the basis of disability in programs or activities conducted by the Department of Labor;
- **Equal Opportunity** - Title 29 CFR Part 35 Nondiscrimination on the basis of age in programs or activities receiving federal financial assistance from the Department of Labor;
- **Equal Opportunity** - Title 29 CFR Part 37 Implementation of the Nondiscrimination and Equal Opportunity provisions of the Workforce Investment Act of 1998;
- **Equal Opportunity** - Title 29 CFR Part 38 Implementation of the Nondiscrimination and Equal Opportunity provisions of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act;
- **Equal Opportunity** - Executive Order 13160 Nondiscrimination on the basis of race, sex, color, national origin, disability, religion, age, sexual orientation, and status as a parent in federally conducted education and training Programs;
- **Equal Opportunity**- Executive Order 13279 - Nondiscrimination against grant seeking organizations on the basis of religion in the administration or distribution of federal financial assistance under social service programs, including grants, contracts, and loans;
- **Equal Opportunity** - The Minnesota Human Rights Act of 1973, Minnesota Statutes, Chapter 363A - Prohibits discrimination in employment and providing public services on the basis of race, color, creed, religion, natural origin, sex, marital status (employment only), disability, status with regard to public assistance, sexual orientation, familial status (employment only), citizenship, or age (employment only), and local human rights commission activity (employment only);

- Equal Opportunity- that collection and maintenance of data necessary to show compliance with the nondiscrimination provisions of WIA and WIOA Section 188, as provided in the regulations implementing that section, will be completed; **Equipment** – 2 CFR 200. 313, 200.439 – must receive prior approval for the purchase of any equipment with a per unit acquisition cost of $5,000 or more, and a useful life of more than one year;
- **Fire Safety** – 15 USC 2225a – ensure that all space for conferences, meetings, conventions or training seminars funded in whole or in part complies with the protection and control guidelines of the Hotel and Motel Fired Safety Act (Public Law 101-391);
- **Fraud/Abuse** - that the provider has policies on fraud and abuse and will contact DEED for potential fraud and abuse issues; 20 CFR 667.630; DEED Policy – Fraud Prevention and Abuse;
- **Health Benefits** – Public Law 113-235, Division G, Sections 506 and 507 – ensure use of funds for health benefits coverage complies with the Consolidated and Further Continuing Appropriations Act, 2015;
- **Insurance** - that insurance coverage be provided for injuries suffered by participants in work-related activities where Minnesota's workers' compensation law is not applicable as required under Regulations 20 CFR 667.274;
- **Insurance –** Flood Disaster Protection Act of 1973 – provides that no Federal financial assistance to acquire, modernize or construct property may be provided in identified flood-prone communities in the United States, unless the community participates in the National Flood Insurance Program and flood insurance is purchased within 1 year of the identification;
- **Personally Identifiable Information (PII) –** Training and Guidance Letter 39-11 – must recognize and safeguard PII except where disclosure is allowed by prior written approval of the Grant Officer or by court order;
- **Procurement** – Uniform Administrative Requirements – 2 CFR 200-317-36 – all procurement transactions to be conducted in a manner to provide, to the maximum extent practical, open and free competition;
- **Publicity** – no funds shall be used for publicity or propaganda purposes, preparation or distribution or use of any kit, pamphlet, booklet, publication, radio, television or film presentation designed to support or defeat legislation pending before the Congress or any state/local legislature or legislative body, except in presentation to the Congress or any state/local legislature itself, or designed to support or defeat any proposed or pending regulation, administrative action, or order issued by the executive branch of any state or local government. Nor shall grant funds be used to

pay the salary or expenses of any recipient or agent acting for such recipient, related to any activity designed to influence the enactment of legislation, appropriations regulation, administrative action, or Executive Order proposed or pending before the Congress, or any state government, state legislature or local legislature body other than for normal and recognized executive-legislative relationships or participation by an agency or officer of a state, local or tribal government in policymaking and administrative processes within the executive branch of that government;

- **Salary/Bonus** – Public Law 113-235, Division G, Title I, Section 105 – none of the funds appropriated under the heading "Employment and Training" shall be used by a recipient or sub-recipient of such funds to pay the salary and bonuses of an individual, either as direct costs or indirect costs, at a rate in excess of Executive Level II. Further clarification can be found in TEGL 5-06;
- **Seat Belts -** Executive Order 13043 – Increasing Seat Belt Use in the United States;
- **Text Messaging** – Executive Order 13513 – encouraged to adopt and enforce policies that ban text messaging while driving company-owned or –rented vehicles or GOV or while driving POV when on official Government business or when performing any work for or on behalf of the Government;
- **Trafficking of Persons** – 2 CFR 180 – OMB Guidelines to Agencies on Government wide Debarment and Suspension – may not engage in severe forms of trafficking, procure a commercial sex act or use forced labor in the performance;
- **Veteran Priority of Service** - Public Law 107-288: Jobs for Veterans Act - Priority of service for veterans (including veterans, eligible spouses, widows and widowers of service members) in qualified job training programs;
- **Veterans** - Public Law 112-56: Vow to Hire Heroes Act of 2011 - Establishes guidelines for service providers who are providing employment, training, academic or rehabilitation services for military veterans;
- **Veterans** - that veterans will be afforded employment and training activities authorized in WIA and WIOA Section 134, and the activities authorized in Chapters 41 and 42 of Title 38 US code, and in compliance with the veterans' priority established in the Jobs for Veterans Act. (38 USC 4215), U.S. Department of Labor, Training and Employment Guidance Letter 10-09 and Minnesota's Executive Order 06-02;
- **Voter Registration** - that the required voter registration procedures described in Minnesota Statutes 201.162 are enacted without the use of federal funds;
- **Voter Registration** – 52 USC 20501 – 20511 – National Voter Registration Act of 1993.

Certifications

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

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

B. that it has provided at least a thirty day period for public comment and input into the development of plan by members of the local area board and the public (including persons with disabilities) and has provided information regarding the plan and the planning process, including the plan and supporting documentation, in alternative formats when requested and that any comments representing disagreement with the plan are included with the local plan forwarded to DEED (as the Governor's representative) Section 118(c); Section 108 (d)

C. that the public (including individuals with disabilities) have access to all of the local area boards and its components' meetings and information regarding the local area board's and its components' activities;

D. that fiscal control and fund accounting procedures necessary to ensure the proper disbursement of, and accounting for, funds paid through the allotments funded through the contract/master agreement issued by DEED have been established;

E. that it is, and will maintain a certifiable local area board;

F. that it will comply with the confidentiality requirements of WIA Section 136 (f)(3) and WIOA Section 116 (i)(3)

G. that the respective contract/master agreement and all assurances will be followed;

H. that it will ensure that no funds covered under the contract/master agreement are used to assist, promote, or deter union organizing;

I. that this plan was developed in consultation with the local area board;

J. that it acknowledges the specific performance standards for each of its programs and will strive to meet them;

K. that the local area board members will not act in a manner that would create a conflict of interest as identified in 20 CFR 667.200(a)(4), including voting on any matter regarding the provision of service by that member or the entity that s/he

represents and any matter that would provide a financial benefit to that member or to his or her immediate family;

L. that local area board and staff are aware of local WorkForce Center services, and are working with and referring to the WorkForce Center services as appropriate;

M. that all staff are provided the opportunity to participate in appropriate staff training;

N. that, if applicable, the local area board must maintain the currency of its information in the System Award Management until submission of the final financial report or receive the final payment, whichever is later;

O. that sponsored (in whole or in part) conferences are charged to the grantee as appropriate and allowable; and

P. that funds are not used for the purpose of defraying costs of a conference unless it is directly and programmatically related to the purpose of the award.

Q. that the local area board and its sub-grantees must also adhere to the same certifications and assurances that DEED must assure.

WIOA Guidance

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

- Training and Employment Guidance Letter (TEGL) 07-25
    - *Conveys to states the Administration's priorities, modification requirements, submission process, and deadline for the required two-year modification of the WIOA Unified and Combined State Plans (State Plans) for PY 2026 and 2027, consistent with WIOA Sections 102 and 103.*
- Training and Employment Guidance Letter (TEGL) 05-25
    - *Encourages state and local workforce development boards to maximize innovation and flexibility within WIOA formula-funded programs — including through the use of waivers — to align service delivery with the Administration's strategic priorities under Executive Order 14278.*
- Training and Employment Guidance Letter (TEGL) 04-23
    - *Conveys to states the Administration's priorities, State Plan requirements, submission process, and deadline for the original WIOA Unified and Combined State Plans (State Plans) for PY 2024 through 2027, consistent with WIOA Sections 102 and 103.*
- Training and Employment Guidance Letter (TEGL) 05-23
    - *Provides information to the public workforce system and other entities that receive federal financial assistance under Title I of WIOA, as well as education and training programs or activities receiving DOL financial assistance, regarding the prohibition on discrimination based on actual or perceived religion, shared ancestry, or ethnic characteristics.*
- Training and Employment Guidance Letter (TEGL) 09-22
    - *Guidance and planning information to states, local workforce areas, and other recipients of Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Title I youth formula funds on the activities associated with the implementation of WIOA.*
- Training and Employment Guidance Letter (TEGL) 07-22
    - *Increasing Employer and Workforce System Customer Access to Good Jobs.*
- Training and Employment Notice (TEN) 16-22

- *The Employment and Training Administration is Implementing Grant Solutions for Grant Award Processing and the Payment Management System for Financial Reporting.*

- Training and Employment Guidance Letter (TEGL) 22-20
  - *Program Year (PY) 2021 Funding Allotments and Instructions for the Indian and Native American (INA) Programs.*
- Training and Employment Guidance Letter (TEGL) 23-20
  - *Program Year (PY) 2021 Planning Guidance for National Farmworker Jobs Program Career Services and Training Grantees and Housing Grantees.*
- Training and Employment Guidance Letter (TEGL) 07-20
  - *Effective Implementation of Priority of Service Provisions for Most in Need Individuals in the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Adult Program.*
- Training and Employment Guidance Letter (TEGL) 08-19
  - *Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Title I Training Provider Eligibility and State List of Eligible Training Providers (ETPs) and Programs.*
- Training and Employment Guidance Letter (TEGL) 19-16
  - *Guidance on Services provided through the Adult and Dislocated Worker Programs under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) and the Wagner-Peyser Act Employment Service (ES), as amended by title III of WIOA, and for Implementation of the WIOA Final Rules.*
- Training and Employment Guidance Letter (TEGL) 21-16
  - *Third Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Title I Youth Formula Program Guidance.*

SIGNATURE PAGE

Local Workforce Development Area Name	Region 3 – Region 3 Leadership and Planning Board
Local Area Board Name	Career Solutions Workforce Development Board

Name and Contact Information for the Local Area Board Chair:

Name	Jill Magelssen
Title	Owner
Organization	Brookline Consulting
Address 1	3044 County Road 136
Address 2	
City, State, ZIP Code	St. Cloud, MN 56301
Phone	320.267.1577
E-mail	Jill@brooklinehr.com

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

Name	Jeff Bertram
Title	Stearns County Commissioner
Organization	Stearns County
Address 1	705 Courthouse Square

Address 2	
City, State, ZIP Code	St. Cloud, MN 56303
Phone	320.250.6999
E-mail	Jeff.Bertram@stearnscountymn.gov

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

Local Area Board Chair

Name Jill Magelssen

Title Local Area Board Chair

Signature

Date

Local Elected Official

Name Jeff Bertram

Title Joint Powers Board Chair

Signature

Date

Attachment A

REGIONAL OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE

Regional Workforce Development Area	Region 3 – Leadership and Planning Board
Local Workforce Development Area	Career Solutions Workforce Development Board

MEMBER (Name, Title)	ORGANIZATION	LWDA	COMMITTEE ROLE
Steve Heinen, Joint Powers Commissioner	Benton County	Career Solutions	Chair
Jeanne Holland, Joint Powers Commissioner	Wright County	CMJTS	Vice-Chair
Jeff Bertram, Joint Powers Commissioner	Stearns County	Career Solutions	Board Member
Dan Whitcomb, Joint Powers Commissioner	Mille Lacs County	CMJTS	Board Member
Jeff Bloss, Partner	Creative Planning	Career Solutions	Board Member
Rebecca Nelson, HR Manager	IRD Glass	CMJTS	Board Member
Jill Magelssen, Owner	Brookline Consulting	Career Solutions	Board Member
Rob Stark, Financial Advisor	Edward Jones Investments	CMJTS	Board Member
Tammy Stark, Executive Director	Career Solutions	Career Solutions	Board Member
Dina Wuornos, Executive Director	Central Minnesota Jobs & Training Services, Inc. (CMJTS)	CMJTS	Board Member

Attachment B

LOCAL WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT AREA CONTACTS

ROLE	Contact Name	Phone	Email	Reports to (name only)
Rapid Response Liaison for Mass Layoffs	Angie Dahle	320.308.5334	Angie.Dahle@csjobs.org	Tammy Stark
Equal Opportunity Officer	Tammy Stark	320.266.5060	Tammy.Stark@csjobs.org	Career Solutions Joint Powers Board
Program Complaint Officer	Rapid Response Liaison for Mass Layoffs	Angie Dahle	320.308.5334	Angie.Dahle@csjobs.org
Records Management/Records Retention Coordinator	Tammy Stark	320.266.5060	Tammy.Stark@csjobs.org	Career Solutions Joint Powers Board
ADA Coordinator	Carrie Stang	320.330.9671	Carrie.Stang@statem.mn.us	Department of Employment & Economic Development (DEED)
Data Practices Coordinator	Casey Carmody	651.201.2505	Casey.Carmody@state.mn.us	Taya Moxley-Goldsmith
Language Access Coordinator	Danelle Montury	320.370.8226	Danelle.Montury@isd742.org	Shannon Aversion

CareerForce Center in __Saint Cloud_____

ROLE	Contact Name	Phone	Email	Reports to (name only)
Site Representative	Tammy Stark	320.266.5060	Tammy.Stark@csjobs.org	Career Solutions Joint Powers Board
Job Service Manager	Melissa Ball-Warriner	320.441.6568	Melissa.Ball-Warriner@state.mn.us	Department of Employment & Economic Development (DEED)
Vocational Rehabilitation Services Manager	Carrie Stang	320.330.9671	Carrie.Stang@statem.mn.us	Department of Employment & Economic Development (DEED)
State Services for the Blind Manager	Sara Kreiling Edward Lecher	612.394.3000 651.539.2324	Sara.L.Kreiling@state.mn.us Edward.Lecher@state.mn.us	Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED)
Local Workforce Development Area Director	Tammy Stark	320.266.5060	Tammy.Stark@csjobs.org	Career Solutions Joint Powers Board
Adult Basic Education (ABE)	Danelle Montury	320.370.8226	Danelle.Montury@isd742.org	Shannon Aversion
Carl Perkins Post-Secondary Manager	Susan Jordahl	320.308.3435	Susan.Jordahl@sctcc.edu	Kenneth Matthews, Interim VP of Institutional Effectiveness, Assessment and Research
Adult, Dislocated Worker, & Youth Programs	Jacob Kaduk	320.250.5964	Jacob.Kaduk@csjobs.org	Tammy Stark

Attachment C

LOCAL AREA BOARD MEMBERSHIP ROSTER

Please Click on the link below to access Attachment C:

2026 LWDB Membership List - A

Attachment D

LOCAL AREA BOARD SUBCOMMITTEE LIST

Regional Workforce Development Area	Regional Workforce Development Area 3
Local Workforce Development Area	Career Solutions Workforce Development Board

Committee Name	Objective/Purpose
Youth Council	**Youth Council Mission:** To lead and bring together community resources to focus on youth becoming capable and satisfied workers. **Youth Council Purposes:** Guide Youth Policy and Coordinate Youth Services in Local Area. **Youth Council Functions/Responsibilities:** • Strategic Planning • Leveraging Resources • Overseeing Programs. To coordinate youth activities in WSA; develop portions of local plan related to eligible youth as determined by Local Board; recommend eligible youth service providers subject to Local Board approval; conduct oversight with respect to eligible providers of youth activities in local area subject to approval of Local Board; carry out other duties as authorized by the chairperson of local board. The purpose of the Youth Council is to provide expertise in youth policy and to assist the local board in: • Developing and recommending local youth employment and training policy and practices; • Broadening the youth employment and training focus in the community to incorporate a youth development perspective;

	• Establish linkages with other organizations services youth in the local area; and Talking into account a range of issues that can have an impact on the success of youth in the labor market.
Program Committee	**Mission:** Create a collaborative partnership between the CareerForce Center, jobseekers, employers, and the community partners that assist people to acquire skills, advance and transfer employable skills while building economic vitality and prosperity. **Vision:** Educate, prepare, and assist job seekers by building and strengthening their skills and knowledge through active participation from the CareerForce Center, job seekers, employers, and the community partners using their expertise and resources. To provide input to, review performance of, and report to Boards and Community about the programs available through the CareerForce Center, partnership (the "core" business of the WIB), the Memorandum of Understanding partners, and other community resources. Includes input into local plans, review of local performance, Customer Satisfaction reports and Annual Report, recommendations to local boards on certification of training providers. Receive reports from Local CareerForce Center Site Manager and "core" CF partners. Recommend and approve subject to approval of local board service providers.
Executive Committee	Comprised of the Current Workforce Development Board Chair, the past Workforce Development Board Chair, Chair-Elect, the Workforce Development Board representative to the Joint Powers Board, and the chairs of the standing committees, to coordinate the work of the Local Workforce Development Board. To market and communicate needs of employers and job seekers, needs identifications, outcomes to the public and stakeholder groups. To recruit and train Board and Committee members, evaluate member experiences (at minimum annual satisfaction survey and review of attendance records), recommend slates of members and officers for full Workforce Council Board consideration. With Joint Powers Board, to provide guidance and oversight of Executive Director of Career Solutions. Duties of the Executive Committee shall include but not limited to: • Member Recruitment; • Orientation and Development; • Performance;

	• Career Solutions Executive Director Hire and Performance Reviews; • Day-to-Day Governance of Career Solutions as LWSA Administrative Entity; • Oversight of the One-Stop Operating Consortium; • And Oversight of Memorandum of Understanding.

Attachment E

LOCAL WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT AREA SUB-GRANTEE LIST

Regional Workforce Development Area	Regional Workforce Development Area 3
Local Workforce Development Area	Career Solutions Workforce Development Board

Name of Sub-Grantee	Services Provided	Funding Source	Sub-Grantee located in which CFC?	If not in CFC, provide Address, City, State, ZIP Code
St. Cloud Technical and Community College (SCTCC)	Educational Training Provider: • Drive for 5 P2P	State Funding		St. Cloud, MN 56303
Central MN Jobs and Training Services, Inc (CMJTS)	CentraCare Mass Layoff Grant	State Funding	Monticello, Willmar	Monticello, MN 55362

Attachment F

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

Regional Workforce Development Area	Regional Workforce Development Area 3
Local Workforce Development Area	Career Solutions Workforce Development Board

Name and Location (City)	Program Service Delivered
ISD # 742 (St. Cloud with various locations)	Youth at Work (YAW), Discovery Days, Program Recruitment, and Job Fairs
ISD # 47 (Sauk Rapids)	Youth at Work (YAW) and Program Recruitment
Sauk Centre High School (Sauk Centre), Melrose High School, and Paynesville High School	MYP (CareerONE)
Foley High School & Sauk Centre High Schools (Foley & Sauk Centre) Or other schools located in Stearns or Benton Counties	Outreach to Schools (OTS) Interns & Program Recruitment
St. Cloud Technical & Community College (St. Cloud)	MYP (CareerONE), Youth Build CareerTWO, Discovery Day Events, and Program Recruitment
CentraCare Health (St. Cloud)	CareerONE
Hillside (Sauk Rapids)	Immigrant services, job search related activities, and program referrals.
Quarryview (Waite Park)	Immigrant services, job search related activities, and program referrals.

Attachment G

LOCAL WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT AREA KEY INDUSTRIES IN REGIONAL ECONOMY

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

WDB 17 - Stearns-Benton	2024 Annual Data				2023-2024		2020-2024	
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	**5,792**	**104,596**	**$6,409,812**	**$61,282**	***860***	***0.8%***	***6,045***	***6.1%***
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing & Hunting	142	1,373	$68,583	$49,951	*-18*	*-1.3%*	*94*	*7.3%*
Mining	6	109	$6,470	$59,172	*-15*	*-11.8%*	*-36*	*-24.6%*
Construction	720	8,189	$736,571	$89,946	*365*	*4.7%*	*1,208*	*17.3%*
Manufacturing	330	14,929	$988,302	$66,200	*-91*	*-0.6%*	*702*	*4.9%*
Utilities	13	215	$25,402	$118,151	*2*	*0.9%*	*215*	*#DIV/0!*
Wholesale Trade	222	5,402	$390,578	$72,303	*170*	*3.2%*	*972*	*21.9%*
Retail Trade	716	13,171	$515,015	$39,102	*275*	*2.1%*	*327*	*2.5%*
Transportation & Warehousing	227	4,350	$275,382	$63,306	*73*	*1.7%*	*443*	*11.3%*
Information	81	1,377	$97,265	$70,635	*-91*	*-6.2%*	*-162*	*-10.5%*
Finance & Insurance	310	3,875	$361,330	$93,247	*-53*	*-1.3%*	*-204*	*-5.0%*
Real Estate & Rental & Leasing	197	1,111	$46,403	$41,767	*99*	*9.8%*	*191*	*20.8%*
Professional & Technical Services	295	1,924	$171,266	$89,015	*-34*	*-1.7%*	*-587*	*-23.4%*
Management of Companies	30	938	$96,059	$102,408	*55*	*6.2%*	*-102*	*-9.8%*
Admin. Support & Waste Mgmt. Services	233	3,043	$149,501	$49,129	*-750*	*-19.8%*	*-1,301*	*-29.9%*
Educational Services	131	8,250	$477,259	$57,850	*-26*	*-0.3%*	*232*	*2.9%*
Health Care & Social Assistance	717	20,705	$1,397,888	$67,515	*668*	*3.3%*	*1,349*	*7.0%*
Arts, Entertainment, & Recreation	114	1,099	$20,450	$18,608	*83*	*8.2%*	*297*	*37.0%*
Accommodation & Food Services	439	7,094	$148,936	$20,995	*-87*	*-1.2%*	*1,213*	*20.6%*
Other Services	730	3,312	$129,796	$39,190	*82*	*2.5%*	*526*	*18.9%*
Public Administration	98	3,558	$255,854	$71,909	*177*	*5.2%*	*293*	*9.0%*

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

Table 29. Occupational Employment & Wage Statistics, 2025							
Occupational Group	Region 7W				State of Minnesota		
	Median Hourly Wage	Estimated Regional Employ-ment	*Share of Total Employment*	*Location Quotient*	Median Hourly Wage	Estimated Statewide Employ-ment	*Share of Total Employ-ment*
Total, All Occupations	**$24.27**	**179,570**	***100.0%***	***1.0***	**$26.22**	*********	***100.0%***
Management	$50.18	10,110	*5.6%*	*0.8*	$59.38	200,060	*6.9%*
Business & Financial Operations	$37.66	7,840	*4.4%*	*0.6*	$39.95	208,210	*7.1%*
Computer & Mathematical	$39.67	2,370	*1.3%*	*0.4*	$50.02	97,460	*3.3%*
Architecture & Engineering	$40.64	2,240	*1.2%*	*0.6*	$45.03	57,950	*2.0%*
Life, Physical & Social Science	$41.66	1,030	*0.6%*	*0.5*	$38.33	32,150	*1.1%*
Community & Social Service	$30.55	3,070	*1.7%*	*0.8*	$29.82	59,290	*2.0%*
Legal	$42.95	660	*0.4%*	*0.5*	$49.52	20,750	*0.7%*
Education, Training & Library	$28.39	12,170	*6.8%*	*1.2*	$27.84	170,270	*5.8%*
Arts, Design, Entertainment & Media	$23.62	1,470	*0.8%*	*0.7*	$28.84	36,030	*1.2%*
Healthcare Practitioners & Technical	$44.48	11,280	*6.3%*	*1.0*	$46.51	187,480	*6.4%*
Healthcare Support	$18.83	9,780	*5.4%*	*0.9*	$18.67	176,750	*6.1%*
Protective Service	$32.60	2,720	*1.5%*	*0.9*	$29.37	46,960	*1.6%*
Food Preparation & Serving Related	$15.41	15,880	*8.8%*	*1.1*	$16.05	240,830	*8.2%*
Building, Grounds Cleaning & Maint.	$18.65	5,480	*3.1%*	*1.1*	$19.16	81,700	*2.8%*
Personal Care & Service	$17.40	3,560	*2.0%*	*0.9*	$17.54	63,300	*2.2%*
Sales & Related	$18.00	17,080	*9.5%*	*1.1*	$18.66	244,780	*8.4%*
Office & Administrative Support	$23.58	19,480	*10.8%*	*0.9*	$24.07	340,040	*11.6%*
Farming, Fishing & Forestry	$23.37	210	*0.1%*	*1.0*	$23.48	3,300	*0.1%*
Construction & Extraction	$33.11	11,100	*6.2%*	*1.6*	$34.20	114,050	*3.9%*
Installation, Maintenance & Repair	$30.00	7,680	*4.3%*	*1.2*	$30.40	105,650	*3.6%*
Production	$23.66	17,720	*9.9%*	*1.4*	$23.56	205,220	*7.0%*
Transportation & Material Moving	$22.56	16,640	*9.3%*	*1.2*	$22.85	228,260	*7.8%*
Source: DEED Occupational Employment & Wage Statistics, Qtr. 1 2025							

Regional Plan Template

SECTION A: REGIONAL VISION, GOALS AND STRATEGIES

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

Regional Workforce Development Area #3 has embraced the state's vision of building a thriving economy where all Minnesotans have equitable access to an effective workforce development system. The Region 3 Leadership and Planning Board is committed to implementing innovative, collaborative, and responsive strategies that address the needs of the communities within the 13-county region.

Region 3 aims to foster a thriving economy and enhance the quality of life for central Minnesotans by emphasizing collaboration, equity, and responsiveness to employer needs. To achieve its goals, Region 3 is implementing several initiatives, including:

- Investing in employer-driven regional workforce education and training systems.
- Producing and distributing clear, accessible information for job seekers.
- Engaging with businesses to address challenges in recruiting and developing a skilled workforce.
- Assisting businesses with upskilling and retaining employees.
- Making career pathways visible to everyone.
- Providing seamless access to program resources.
- Creating skilled workers who earn family-sustaining incomes.

Through these efforts, Region 3 aims to establish a more equitable and user-friendly workforce system that effectively meets the needs of individuals and employers, ultimately leading to improved outcomes for the region's workforce and economy.

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

The 2024 -2027 Region 3 strategic vision and plan align with the state's vision, goals, and strategies. All three state goals are embedded in the work being done, with a focus on the local needs and priorities in the strategies developed.

Goal 1: Enhance interagency and local area coordination with a focus on optimizing efficiency, coordinating workforce funding and programs, and improving system integration. This initiative aims to establish a seamless experience for individuals or employers interacting with the workforce system, ensuring they encounter no barriers ("no wrong door" approach).

Strategies for achieving this goal:

Interagency and Local Area Coordination: Facilitating Collaboration among various agencies and stakeholders within Region 3 to align efforts and resources towards common workforce goals.

- Specifically, ongoing one-stop operator meetings and stakeholder engagement interactions.

Efficiency and Coordination of Workforce Funding and Programs: Streamlining the allocation and use of workforce funding across agencies and programs to maximize impact and minimize duplication of efforts.

- Increased partnerships and Collaboration in grant opportunities
- Increased communication across agencies
- Share best practices, identify those from other regions for replication

"No Wrong Door" Approach: Implementing strategies to ensure that individuals or employers seeking assistance from the workforce system can easily access the services they need through any entry point without encountering unnecessary hurdles or confusion.

- Establish seamless referral processes and warm handoffs
- Resource sharing across the workforce system.

Stakeholder Engagement: Engaging with stakeholders, including government agencies, local organizations, education entities, employers, and community groups, to gather input, foster buy-in, and drive collective action toward achieving shared workforce development goals.

- Community forums
- Targeted outreach to underrepresented populations
- Participation in community/partner/education advisory groups and boards

Data Sharing and Analysis: Enhancing data sharing mechanisms and analytical capabilities to facilitate informed decision-making, monitor progress, and identify areas for improvement within the workforce system.

- Surveys of those accessing services are reviewed at one-stop-operator meetings, and service improvements are made.

By pursuing these strategies, Region 3 aims to create a more coordinated, responsive, and user-friendly workforce system that effectively meets the needs of individuals and employers, ultimately improving outcomes for the region's workforce and economy.

Goal 2: Establish or engage existing employer-led industry-sector partnerships throughout Region 3 to develop and enhance workforce development programs and career pathways. These initiatives will prioritize responsiveness to industry needs and promote equity by addressing gaps in participation and representation across various demographic groups, including race, ethnicity, disability, gender, veteran status, and age.

Strategies include:

Employer Engagement – Actively involving employees from board-identified industries in designing and implementing workforce development programs to ensure alignment with industry needs and priorities.

- Sector initiatives, such as the Drive for Five grants and Industry career exploration events
- Ongoing promotion of Future Forward – a free database for employers to share their willingness and availability to engage with education and job seekers/youth
- Board members leverage their employer relationships to share information
- We are committed to responding to employer needs in in-demand occupations that provide on-ramps, laddering, and latticing opportunities leading to family-sustaining wages.
- Provide effective training and support to help businesses attract and retain a skilled workforce for the present and future.

Industry-Sector Partnerships: Facilitating Collaboration among employers, industry associations, educational institutions, government agencies, and community organizations to identify workforce development needs, share best practices, and collectively address skill gaps within specific sectors. Ensuring employers have a voice in the development of career pathway training that meets their needs.

- Participation with Central Minnesota Manufacturers Association
- Assistance and promotion of the tour of manufacturing
- Provide information and access to programs available for incumbent worker training.
- Partnership and engagement with employers for several career exploration events

Work-Based Learning, On-the-Job Training, and Registered Apprenticeships: Integrating work-based learning opportunities, such as internships, apprenticeships, and on-the-job training, into workforce development programs to provide hands-on experience and facilitate smoother transitions into the workforce.

- Promote opportunities to regional employers as a viable pathway for engaging new hires.
- Provide employers with the High Quality Jobs Framework information.
- Act as a central hub for Minnesota by sharing information about Registered Apprenticeship programs.

The Region aims to address skill gaps, promote economic opportunity, and foster growth across central Minnesota communities and industries by building employer-led industry-sector partnerships and implementing responsive workforce development programs.

Goal 3: Transform central Minnesota's workforce system to meet the needs of all central Minnesota residents. This initiative aims to prepare employers and the current and emerging workforce for the evolving work landscape of new technologies, shifting labor market demands, and demographic changes.

Programs and Services: Ensuring that workforce services and programs are accessible to all Minnesotans, regardless of background or circumstances, addressing barriers to participation and promoting equitable outcomes.

- Targeted outreach, recruitment, and support services to ensure access and opportunities for all individuals
- A focus on skills as the cornerstone of the work with job seekers
- Implementing measures to enhance the accessibility of workforce services and facilities for individuals with disabilities, ensuring that accommodation is available as needed to support full participation
- Engaging with immigrant and refugee communities, as well as other populations of new Minnesotans, to understand their unique needs, experiences, and contributions to the workforce and to develop targeted strategies for integration and economic empowerment
- Sharing information about untapped populations (i.e., BIPOC, individuals with disabilities, second-chance individuals, Veterans) with employers and assisting with engagement and outreach to these individuals for potential employment

Proactive Skills Development: Anticipating and responding to the changing nature of work by proactively developing the skills and competencies needed for success in emerging industries and occupations, including those driven by technological advancements.

- Artificial Intelligence workshop for employers
- Collaborating with educational institutions and industry partners to align workforce training and education programs with evolving labor market demands, ensuring that individuals are equipped with relevant skills and qualifications (i.e., customized training, incumbent worker training)
- Promoting a culture of lifelong learning and continuous upskilling among workers, providing opportunities for ongoing education and training to adapt to changing job requirements and career pathways

Data-Driven Decision-Making: Leveraging data and analytics to inform strategic planning, resource allocation, and program development within the workforce system, focusing on addressing emerging trends and disparities.

Region 3 aims to build a resilient and adaptive workforce system that effectively supports its residents' needs and aspirations amid ongoing economic and demographic changes.

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

Central Minnesota excels at partnerships and Collaboration within the two LWDAs that comprise Region 3 and across the state. Resources and programming developed are shared with all partners at state-level meetings (e.g., MAWB job seeker and business services meetings).

Best practices of the Region:

Partnerships and Collaboration: with colleges, Adult Basic Education, school districts, community-based organizations, and employers. Partners are adept at making cross-referrals, creating a "no wrong door" approach, and helping job seekers access the resources they need to succeed. We also partner on numerous regional events targeting youth, service providers, and/or employers.

HR Networking Groups: Career Solutions and CMJTS offer monthly HR Networking Groups. The purpose of the HR Groups is for local human resources professionals to collaborate and brainstorm new ideas that work, share best practices, validate ideas, meet peers, conduct comparative analysis, and learn new skills. This group is also a way to network and partner with HR staff to share upcoming local workforce development events, connect businesses to federal, state, and local resources, and provide employers with access to employee training.

Discovery Day Events are 3-hour, bi-monthly Discovery Day workshops for job seekers. Job Seekers can "try a career" for the day and get all their questions about their career of interest answered. These Discovery Day workshops are comprised of two parts: local labor market information from the employers and hands-on career activities with the college. There is an employer panel so the job seekers can get all their questions answered by those who work in these positions, as well as hands-on activities with a semi-truck/ bus and welding equipment, depending on the workshop. In these Discovery Day workshops, job seekers can learn about:

- Requirements for the positions
- The abundant job openings, excellent wages, and company perks from these local employers
- Insight and advice from the local workers in these positions
- Tools, equipment, and safety gear
- And get all their questions answered to see if the career is right for them!

Job Seeker Open House Events: These events have been successful and have brought in many job seekers. Many job search activities are offered, and the staff makes the atmosphere fun,

upbeat, and inviting. Job seekers become more aware of the employment and training services provided and can obtain assistance to better prepare for their next career.

Social Media Marketing: Social media marketing has successfully recruited training grant program participants and employer participation.

Youth-Specific Programming: Hands-on career exploration events, such as EPIC Student Day - Exploring Potential Interests and Careers, IGNITE - Ignite Your Future, Construct Tomorrow, CareerOne, and Operation Exploration, are exciting opportunities for youth and young adults to identify their interests and start mapping out a career pathway. All of these opportunities leverage partnerships with education, employers, community partners, and lessons learned to accelerate progress.

SNAP 50/50 Programming: We replace a transactional, compliance-driven model with an integrated, whole-person approach, addressing food insecurity, housing, transportation, and language barriers alongside employment goals; strengthening the service ecosystem through program co-enrollments and sustaining an employer pipeline from a talent pool too often overlooked.

Employment Network: As an employment network, it provides safeguards and benefits analysis for individuals receiving Social Security disability insurance and Social Security income to return to work and eventually work off their Social Security benefits.

Registered Apprenticeship Hub: As an apprenticeship hub, we have staff members trained to assist job seekers and career changers in exploring and accessing registered apprenticeship opportunities. Our team also helps employers understand work-based learning options and connects them with the Department of Labor and Industry if they are ready to develop a registered apprenticeship program.

Employer Action Guide: Our Employer Action Guide toolkit is available to assist employers with increasing and strengthening recruitment, hiring, onboarding, retention, and employee career advancement.

Job Club: A weekly Job Club networking group connects job seekers with others in the community and teaches job search skills. This is open to anyone who is job searching.

Incumbent Worker Training: Region 3 continues to excel in assisting local employers with upskilling their workforce.

The state can create a more robust and effective workforce system by replicating these best practices and leveraging Central Minnesota's strengths.

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

To effectively carry out the core programs and align resources in Central Minnesota, a strategic approach involves Collaboration with various entities. Here's how the region will work together: Starting with a thorough, comprehensive assessment of local workforce needs sets the foundation for strategic goals. Collaborating with key stakeholders, including WIOA core programs, Regional Development Commissions, colleges, and service cooperatives, is essential. This Collaboration ensures a coordinated approach to training, services, and outreach to address unmet needs. Strategies already in place include a seamless referral process between programs/partners and ongoing partner meetings that include updates and information on programs and services to ensure all staff are knowledgeable. Using data to make informed decisions and measure impact is crucial for tracking progress and adjusting strategies. Data provides insights into what's working and what needs improvement. The one-stop-operator partners review LMI, employer, and customer surveys to identify service gaps and opportunities for improvement. Maintaining open communication through regular meetings and feedback sessions keeps the work moving forward smoothly. It also provides opportunities for continuous improvement by gathering input from stakeholders (i.e., one-stop-operator meetings and regional business service meetings).

Aligning the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy with the Regional Workforce Development Plan ensures synergy between economic development efforts and workforce development initiatives. Region 3 is unique because business service coordinators are on staff and work directly with employers as the primary customer. Often, this includes connecting employers with economic developers.

Partnering with colleges and service cooperatives to align plans such as the Perkins Plan with the WIOA Youth Plan fosters coordination and joint initiatives. This alignment facilitates innovation in addressing local needs effectively. Examples of these partnerships are the leveraged resources and collaborations of youth-focused hands-on events. Perkins funds are also used to help support these initiatives.

By working collaboratively, Central Minnesota can optimize resources, enhance program effectiveness, and achieve the region's shared vision and goals.

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

The following were goals identified by the Region 3 Leadership and Planning Board during the SWOT analysis.

1. Address some community needs that impact employment by convening stakeholders to discuss the issue, brainstorm solutions, and share best practices from other regions/areas that have positively impacted the issue. (i.e., childcare – can employers open a childcare center)
2. Sharing information about programs and services available, creating an elevator speech for board members to share with their networks.
3. Cross-regional knowledge sharing benefits everyone by accelerating progress, avoiding duplication of efforts, and promoting a sense of shared purpose; this will be accomplished through the following:
    - Increase the number of job seekers served
    - Increase the number of work-based learning opportunities, creating a talent pipeline
    - Increase interest in Drive for Five: Technology, the Trades, Caring Professions, Manufacturing, and Education.

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

The **Investing in America (IIA)** initiatives encompass a series of state and federal investments to bolster the nation's infrastructure, technology, and economic growth. These investments include the **Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL)**, the **Creating Helpful Incentives to Produce Semiconductors (CHIPS) and Science Act**, and the **Inflation Reduction Act (IRA)**. To prepare the workforce for these transformative investments, Central Minnesota is implementing several strategies:

Central Minnesota is partnering with state and local officials, employers, unions, colleges, and high schools to ensure a diverse and skilled workforce can meet the labor demand driven by these investments.

Region 3 will pursue Investing in America grant opportunities that align with the LWDAs' vision and mission. This may involve growing partnerships beyond the region and encompassing more statewide or rural initiatives.

Central Minnesota is promoting the expansion and diversification of pathways into good jobs and careers in advanced manufacturing that don’t require a four-year college degree.

Central Minnesota ensures every American has equitable access to high-quality training, education, and services. One strategy is to promote the North Star Promise so that MN residents can access free tuition. Efforts focus on providing pathways to promising careers without leaving local communities.

Private companies have announced significant investments in manufacturing and clean energy, complementing the federal investments. Central Minnesota is aligning workforce development efforts with these private-sector initiatives.

Central Minnesota collaborates with other regions to share best practices and lessons learned.

By aligning workforce development with the IIA investments, Central Minnesota aims to create a skilled, adaptable, and resilient workforce that can thrive in the changing economic landscape.

Central Minnesota is strategically positioning itself to maximize the impact of state and federal investments, enhance infrastructure, and promote economic growth
by working together.
Several infrastructure projects are planned in Central Minnesota to enhance transportation, water systems, public safety, and housing. Local projects in central Minnesota include apartments in **Little Falls** (The Views on 7th) and **Waite Park** (Vue Pointe Apartments) and funding for **Habitat for Humanity** projects in **St. Cloud**, **Cold Spring**, and surrounding counties. Manufactured home parks in **Alexandria**, **Little Falls**, and **Sauk Rapids** are also receiving support[2].

These infrastructure projects contribute to central Minnesota's well-being, economic growth, and quality of life.

SECTION B: REGIONAL OPERATIONS

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

SWOT analysis of the regional workforce system in Central Minnesota completed by the Board members, One-Stop-Operator Committee, and staff:

Strengths:	**Weaknesses**:
• Skilled Workforce: Central Minnesota has a pool of qualified workers across various industries. • Collaboration: Strong partnerships between employers, educational institutions, and workforce development agencies.	• Labor Shortages: Some sectors need more due to demographic shifts and an aging workforce. • Skills Mismatch: Gaps between available skills and industry requirements. • Limited Access: Rural areas may have limited training and employment services access.

• Responsive Programs: Existing programs address employer needs and provide relevant training. • Adaptability: Ability to adapt when local opportunities arise: layoffs, closures, new grant projects, etc. • Successful HR Networking Groups • Strong ROI for the programs • Communication within the Region • Expertise in workforce development programming • Nimble and Innovative	• Lack of Funding that can be used flexibly: Budgets are limited as more funding is allotted to the metro area.
Opportunities: • Technology Adoption: Embrace digital tools for training, job matching, and remote work. • Sector-Specific Programs: Develop targeted programs for high-demand industries. • Workforce growth: Tap into underrepresented groups for talent acquisition. • Innovate: Take risks, try something new, and accept failure as "ok." • Customer Surveys: Encourage customers to complete / new ways of collecting feedback from ALL customers who visit. • Outside the box Outreach Efforts • Northstar Promise for Recruitment • Alleviating Barriers to Employment	**Threats**: • Economic Downturns: Recessions can impact job availability and funding. • Changing Industries: Automation and industry shifts may render specific skills obsolete. • Competition: Nearby regions may attract businesses and workers with better incentives. • Reduction of Budgets: Federal dollars continue to decline • Private Vendor Grant Competition • Industry-Specific Age Barriers • Delays in Funding Disbursements • Siloed Partners making duplicate efforts: Not parallel or collaborative

Central Minnesota can build a more resilient and effective workforce system by leveraging strengths, addressing weaknesses, seizing opportunities, and mitigating threats.

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

Leadership for our region consists of a Regional Board made up of board members from each of the local Workforce Development Boards. This board, along with our local Workforce

Development Boards, oversees the development and coordination of the regional plan and its implementation. The Regional Board members are selected by their respective local Workforce Development Boards.

B.3. Describe how the selected organizations from the region will provide oversight to the development and implementation of the regional plan. Complete Attachment A - Regional Oversight Committee

Regional oversight will be provided through the Regional Board and the local Workforce Development Boards, which comprise our workforce partnering organizations (on-site and off-site), One-Stop partners, and educational institutions. Each group will receive an update on the plan's progress and discuss progress, innovations, and outcomes.

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

Each local Workforce Development Board partners with various community-based organizations and employers representing multiple population subsets. We are intentional in our outreach efforts to ensure that all worker and employer voices are heard, and we work particularly hard to ensure that those voices from targeted populations are included in our planning and implementation of services. Each board also reaches out to employers that own, manage, or employ diverse individuals and helps create opportunities for those finding employment challenging. Both rural and metro voices are included.

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

Our local workforce areas are governed and operated differently, with varying funding streams and fiscal oversight; however, at an implementation level, we strive to have seamless service delivery. Many participants who are served aren't fully aware of the actual programs or funding streams, and this is intentional to ensure the ‘no wrong door’ approach. Each local area will use best practices and approved policies to ensure that our operations align with State and Federal laws, rules, and regulations. Both local boards share policies and often utilize similar language or identical policies for both local areas (i.e., incumbent worker policies and forms).

B.6. Describe any cooperative service arrangements being planned for the region and how they will promote consistency within the regional workforce development area and with state policy. MOU – cooperative agreements.

We currently have a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) in place that guides our region's collaborative work. We also receive regional planning dollars from DEED to implement regional efforts in alignment with our state and regional plans. With these funds, we are required to develop a regional work plan and report on progress in utilizing this support in our region.

PROJECT GOAL: To develop and implement strategies in support of WIOA Regional Planning.				
STRATEGIES *(activities, steps to achieve goal):*	**EXPECTED MEASURABLE OUTCOMES**		**START DATE**	**END DATE**
On-going	Job Quality information will be shared as part of employer consultation. (Jobs for the Future (JFF - a **Job Quality Framework**: • https://archive.jff.org/resources/quality-jobs-framework/ • https://jfforg-new-prod.s3.amazonaws.com/media/documents/Quality_Jobs_Framework_-_JFF.pdf • Corporate tool-kit – **Your Guide to Becoming an Impact Employer** - https://corporate.jff.org/impact-employer-model • Colorado's Good Jobs Now information)		10/1/2024	9/30/27

Provide training opportunities to Region 3 employers	Employers in the region benefit from the training provided and embrace some of the tools and information shared with their companies (an estimated 60 employers will attend each event) Surveys were sent out after the event to gauge the value – Over 75% would refer others to events		10/1/2024	9/30/27
First Aid and Resilience training (mental health) for staff	Staff will be better equipped to work with individuals experiencing mental health concerns.		10/1/2024	9/30/27
Creation and/or increased completion of several surveys: General Business, OJT, Incumbent Worker, HR group, internal organizational surveys	Data received from surveys will be shared with boards, committees, and partners. It will direct programming and goals/activities in the regional plan.		10/1/2024	9/30/27
Customer focus groups	Focus groups will provide valuable information on programming and services, their accessibility, and their effectiveness. Information will be shared and used in the Regional Plan development.		10/1/2024	9/30/27
Use of Colorado job quality checklist and other tools during employer consultations.	The Good Jobs Now tools will be shared with employers during consultations and at the Regional Human Resource groups led by CMJTS and CS staff. Employers will access the tools to improve recruitment and retention efforts. Surveys will demonstrate if the tools shared have an impact on recruitment or retention.		10/1/2024	9/30/27
Completion of the Regional Plan	The Regional Plan will be completed, updated, and submitted as required.		10/1/2024	9/30/27

SECTION C: PROGRAM AND SERVICE DELIVERY

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

Region 3 has selected the following industry sectors; manufacturing, healthcare, construction/transportation, natural resources/agriculture, and professional business/information technology, based on the LMI data provided in the Central Minnesota Planning Region report prepared by Like Greiner and available at CENTRAL MINNESOTA PLANNING REGION (data below directly from report).

ECONOMY INDUSTRY EMPLOYMENT According to DEED's Quarterly Census of Employment & Wages (QCEW) program, Central Minnesota was home to 20,329 employer establishments providing an average of 282,951 covered jobs through 2024, with a total payroll of over $16.1 billion. That was 9.7% of total employment and 7.4% of total payroll in the state of Minnesota. Average annual wages were $56,976 in the region, which was about $17,250 lower than the state's average annual wage. Central Minnesota had led Greater Minnesota in job growth during the recovery since the pandemic recession, and in the past year, exceeded the state growth rate (Table 13). With 181,415 jobs at 12,251 establishments, EDR 7W accounts for about 64% of total employment in the Central planning region. EDR 7W also accounted for 74% of the region's job gain since the pandemic recession in 2020, adding 14,417 jobs, an 8.6% increase. In contrast, EDR 7E had the fewest jobs, with 49,145 jobs at 4,254 establishments, an increase of 3,452 jobs since 2020. EDR 6E had 3,825 establishments providing 52,390 jobs, after adding 1,654 jobs from 2020 to 2024, a 3.3% increase.

Central Minnesota reached a peak of 278,478 jobs in 2019, then hit a low of 263,427 jobs in 2020 as the pandemic recession spread throughout the state. Since then, the region has steadily recovered jobs each year, adding more than 5,000 jobs through 2022, then nearly 6,000 jobs in 2023, and almost 8,700 net new jobs in 2024 as the economy expanded (Figure 16). Over time, the region's economic fluctuations have closely matched the state overall.

With 47,389 jobs at 2,480 firms, Health Care & Social Assistance is the largest employing With 50,999 jobs at 2,773 firms, Health Care & Social Assistance is the largest employing industry in Central Minnesota, accounting for 18% of total jobs in the region. At $58,070 in 2024, average annual wages were slightly higher in Health Care than in the total of all industries. The industry saw strong job growth in the past year, adding 2,100 jobs, and was up more than 2,500 jobs compared to 2020. The next largest industry in Central was Manufacturing, with 41,266 jobs at 1,202 firms, after losing 500 jobs from 2023 to 2024. However, the industry did add about 1,750 jobs from 2020 to 2024. Central Minnesota has large concentrations of Food Manufacturing and Fabricated Metal Product Manufacturing, as well as significant amounts of Machinery and Transportation Equipment Manufacturing. Retail Trade is the third largest industry, with 36,654 jobs at 2,220 establishments, and the related Accommodation & Food Services industry also provides 24,164 jobs in the region. The Accommodation & Food Services sector suffered greatly from the pandemic recession, but regained more than 4,700 jobs in the region from 2020 to 2024. Likewise, the Arts, Entertainment & Recreation industry saw the fastest job growth since 2020, recovering over 1,000 jobs since 2020, a 40% increase. The 5th largest industry is

Educational Services, which provides more than 24,250 jobs at just over 400 institutions, primarily at Elementary & Secondary Schools, but also at Junior Colleges and Universities.

The Construction industry is the 6th largest industry in the region, with 21,725 jobs at 3,050 firms, and was one of the fastest-growing industries in the immediate aftermath of the pandemic recession. Sixteen of the 20 industries added jobs from 2020 to 2024. Administrative Support & Waste Management Services, which includes temporary staffing services, saw the biggest decline in jobs since 2020, cutting more than 1,000 jobs. In addition, Information, Finance & Insurance, and Mining all saw very small job declines.

The **regional economy** in Central Minnesota is a dynamic and evolving landscape influenced by various factors. Here are some key points about its current condition:

- Central Minnesota boasts a mix of industries, including manufacturing, healthcare, agriculture, and technology.
- These sectors contribute to the region's economic vitality and provide employment opportunities.
- The labor market faces challenges such as workforce shortages, skills gaps, and demographic shifts.
- Employers seek skilled workers, especially in fields like healthcare, construction, and information technology.
- The construction sector is active due to infrastructure projects, housing developments, and commercial buildings.
- Investments in roads, bridges, and utilities drive economic growth.
- Central Minnesota's natural beauty, lakes, and recreational activities attract tourists.
- Tourism-related businesses contribute to the local economy.
- **Challenges**: Aging workforce, rural-urban disparities, and economic disparities.
- **Opportunities**: Clean energy, technology, and diversification of industries.
- The regional economy has shown resilience during economic downturns.
- Adaptability to changing market conditions is crucial for sustained growth.

In summary, Central Minnesota's economy is multifaceted, with both strengths and challenges. Strategic investments, workforce development, and Collaboration will shape its future trajectory.

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

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

In Central Minnesota, we recognize the importance of using labor market information (LMI) to inform workforce development strategies. Here's how we plan to leverage LMI and conduct

outreach to select targeted sectors for developing sector partnerships that provide family-sustaining wages:

- We will regularly analyze LMI to identify high-demand sectors and occupations.
- LMI will guide our decisions on which industries are growing, which jobs are in demand, and where workforce gaps exist.
- We will actively engage with local businesses and industry associations.
- Outreach efforts will involve surveys, focus groups, and direct communication to understand their workforce needs.
- We will consider the following criteria when selecting sectors for sector partnerships:
    - Demand: Industries with high job growth and unfilled positions.
    - Wages: Prioritize sectors that offer family-sustaining wages.

- Skills Gap: Focus on areas where skills shortages exist.
- Alignment with Regional Priorities: Ensure alignment with economic development goals.
- Based on our analysis, the following sectors have been identified as priorities for sector partnerships:
    - **Manufacturing -** The Second largest industry in Central Minnesota was Manufacturing, with 41,384 jobs at 1,201 firms, after losing 594 jobs from 2019 to 2022. Central Minnesota has large concentrations of food manufacturing, fabricated metal product manufacturing, and significant amounts of machinery and transportation equipment manufacturing.
    - **Professional Business Services/Information Technology –** Accounting for 2.3% of employment, Professional Business Services provides nearly 6,423 regional jobs at almost 1,200 employers. The average annual wage is much higher overall than the region's average at $76,083. Information Technology is not a defined industry; it includes various technical occupations that are mostly related to computers, software, and mathematics. This family of occupations also has higher than typical wages in the region and typically requires higher education.
    - **Natural Resources/Agriculture-** This sector provides about 5,000 jobs at 509 establishments. The average annual wage is a bit lower than typical in the region at $46,123. The largest component was animal production, which had more than 3,000 jobs and an average annual wage of $50k annually. Crop Production also accounts for more than 1,200 jobs, with wages hovering under $46k.
    - **Construction/Transportation-** The Construction industry is the 6th largest industry in the region. It provides less than 21k jobs with an average annual wage of $75,867, more than $20k more than the average for the region. Construction has been a bright spot leading into the pandemic recession and remained steadfast in employment gains during the past few years, adding more jobs than any sector and growing payroll employment by 6% despite its relatively small size compared to manufacturing.

- **Healthcare and Social Assistance-** The largest growing industry is expected to be Health Care and Social Assistance, which may account for one quarter of total projected growth in the region by 2032.

- We will collaborate with employers, training providers, community organizations, and other stakeholders.
- Sector partnerships will address workforce needs, training, and career advancement for workers.
- Our goal is to ensure that jobs within these sectors provide wages that support families.
- We will advocate for policies and practices that lead to family-sustaining incomes.

By using LMI, engaging with businesses, and strategically selecting sectors, Central Minnesota aims to create effective sector partnerships that benefit employers and workers. Programs focus on promoting occupations in demand and those that offer family-sustaining wages.

OCCUPATIONS IN DEMAND: According to DEED's Occupations in Demand tool, there are 300 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, Electricians, Industrial Engineers, Machinists, Truck Drivers, and Teachers are all in high demand (Table 12).

Table 12. Central Minnesota Occupations in Demand, 2024

High School or Less	Vocational Training	Associate Degree	Bachelor's Degree or Higher
Home Health & Personal Care Aides $37,520/yr	Heavy & Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers $61,513/yr	Registered Nurses $101,788/yr	General & Operations Managers $86,311/yr
Retail Salespersons $35,294/yr	Nursing Assistants $45,077/yr	Police & Sheriff's Patrol Officers $80,894/yr	Elementary School Teachers $63,707/yr
Fast Food & Counter Workers $31,729/yr	Licensed Practical & Licensed Vocational Nurses $60,654/yr	Radiologic Technologists & Technicians $84,540/yr	Secondary School Teachers $64,803/yr
Cashiers $32,454/yr	Bookkeeping, Accounting, & Auditing Clerks $51,037/yr	Veterinary Technologists & Technicians $49,370/yr	Medical & Health Services Managers $109,085/yr
Stockers & Order Fillers $37,670/yr	Psychiatric Technicians $46,781/yr	Architectural & Civil Drafters $63,877/yr	Accountants & Auditors $76,798/yr
First-Line Supervisors of Food Preparation & Serving Workers $45,691/yr	Machinists $60,200/yr	Dental Hygienists $99,124/yr	Preschool Teachers, Except Special Education $38,622/yr
Teaching Assistants, Except Postsecondary $38,072/yr	Bus & Truck Mechanics & Diesel Engine Specialists $64,200/yr	Detectives & Criminal Investigators $81,545/yr	Substitute Teachers, Short-Term $44,131/yr
First-Line Supervisors of Retail Sales Workers $47,056/yr	Automotive Service Technicians & Mechanics $52,077/yr	Industrial Engineering Technologists & Technicians $64,951/yr	Project Management Specialists $94,626/yr
Customer Service Representatives $45,804/yr	Substance abuse, behavioral disorder, & mental health counselors $56,854/yr	Surgical Technologists $70,461/yr	Middle School Teachers $64,293/yr
Janitors & Cleaners $37,935/yr	Medical Assistants $48,651/yr	Diagnostic Medical Sonographers $97,765/yr	Child, Family, & School Social Workers $69,904/yr

Source: DEED Occupations in Demand

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

Region 3's key industry sectors: agriculture/natural resources, construction/transportation, professional services/information technology, health care, and manufacturing align with the Drive for Five industry sectors. LWDA 17 received a Drive for Five grant to expand employment and training services to advance manufacturing, a Drive for Five sector. The Drive for Five sectors are a focus across all of Region 3, and these high-growth, high-demand careers are promoted to youth and job seekers.

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

The composition of sector partnerships in Central Minnesota will be carefully determined to ensure effective Collaboration and successful outcomes. By bringing together diverse stakeholders and leveraging their expertise and resources, Central Minnesota aims to create robust sector partnerships that drive economic growth, meet workforce needs, and provide family-sustaining wages.

Identifying in-demand occupations and employment projections through the use of data about employment by location, labor supply and demand, earnings, unemployment, and demographics of the labor force helps employment specialists/career navigators 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.

Business Services programming for all in-demand sectors: The incumbent worker programming policy gives preference to projects submitted by high-demand industries.

The WorkWright radio program is a collaboration between CMJTS and KRWC to highlight CareerForce partners and programs, as well as a local employer, every Monday morning. This has been a successful model for promoting sector initiatives and supporting employer recruitment efforts. The goal is to replicate this program throughout Central Minnesota.

Human Resource Networking groups are held throughout the region and provide a platform for sharing industry challenges with peers. Rule number one of these groups: leave competition at the door.

Educational Initiatives: These initiatives occur throughout the region and encourage youth and young adults to focus on a career or industry sector early in high school. Tiger Pathway in Hutchinson is a great model. Local employers provide equipment and input on curriculum to help youth identify and attain career skills before high school graduation. This allows youth to explore careers before paying for a college education that might not align with their skills and interests. CareerONE, offered by CS, and Operation Exploration, offered by CMJTS, are summer programs that provide eligible youth with career exploration in specific sectors. Central

Minnesota high schools promote sector knowledge by hosting the DEED LMI expert at high school registration events and conferences, ensuring parents and students know about in-demand careers to help guide their planning.

Collaboration Initiatives: Region 3 works directly with employers, private and public training providers, and union labor organizations to provide work-based training opportunities that meet businesses' needs. The regional goal is to continue work-based training initiatives through activities like on-the-job training (OJT), registered apprenticeship, work experience, workforce protégé, and incumbent worker training programs. Work-based training methods are a proven and effective strategy that meets employers' workforce needs.
Wagner-Peyser works closely with representatives from the R3LPB to assist with regional sector workforce needs. Coordinated efforts with our On-Site Hiring culminated in hosting events for untapped workforce populations, including people with disabilities, those with criminal backgrounds, and new immigrants. The On-Site Hiring events are held monthly and are focused on industry sector needs and demands.

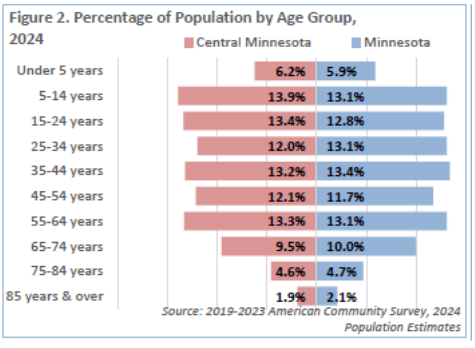
C.3. The demographic makeup of the labor force in those sectors compared to the regional labor force and how the region will work to close any identified gaps.

Below are charts from the DEED Central Planning Region report on the demographics of all industries and those based on age and population change.

Table 1. Population Change 2020-2024

	2020 Population	2024 Estimates	2020-2024 Change Number	2020-2024 Change Percent
Central Minnesota	**725,940**	**760,224**	***+34,284***	***+4.7%***
Region 6E	**118,626**	**119,398**	***+772***	***+0.7%***
Kandiyohi Co.	43,732	44,674	*+942*	*+2.2%*
McLeod Co.	36,771	36,780	*+9*	*0.0%*
Meeker Co.	23,400	23,491	*+91*	*+0.4%*
Renville Co.	14,723	14,453	*-270*	*-1.8%*
Region 7E	**169,123**	**177,296**	***+8,173***	***+4.8%***
Chisago Co.	56,621	59,105	*+2,484*	*+4.4%*
Isanti Co.	41,135	43,687	*+2,552*	*+6.2%*
Kanabec Co.	16,032	16,608	*+576*	*+3.6%*
Mille Lacs Co.	26,459	27,577	*+1,118*	*+4.2%*
Pine Co.	28,876	30,319	*+1,443*	*+5.0%*
Region 7W	**438,191**	**463,530**	***+25,339***	***+5.8%***
Benton Co.	41,379	41,881	*+502*	*+1.2%*
Sherburne Co.	97,183	103,059	*+5,876*	*+6.0%*
Stearns Co.	158,292	163,997	*+5,705*	*+3.6%*
Wright Co.	141,337	154,593	*+13,256*	*+9.4%*
Minnesota	**5,706,494**	**5,793,151**	***+86,657***	***+1.5%***

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Population Estimates



DEMOGRAPHICS and POPULATION CHANGE
The Central Minnesota planning region includes 13 counties, spanning three Economic Development Regions (EDRs) and two Workforce Development Boards (WDBs). Central Minnesota was home to just over 760,000 people in 2024, comprising 13.1% of the state's total population.
The region experienced a 4.7% population increase over the past four years, primarily due to rapid growth in EDR 7W and 7E. Central Minnesota was the fastest-growing region of the state, accounting for 39.6% of the state's total population growth from 2020 to 2024. In comparison,

Minnesota saw a 1.5% gain statewide (Table 1). Nine of the 13 counties grew faster than the state growth rate.
Twelve of the 13 counties in the region gained population from 2020 to 2024; only Renville County decreased. Wright, Isanti, and Sherburne were the 1st, 2nd, and 4th fastest-growing counties in the state, respectively.

EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

With 37.5% of adults aged 18 years and over having a college degree, Central Minnesota has lower educational attainment than the state, where 47% of adults have an associate, bachelor's, or advanced degree. However, 13.3% of adults in Central Minnesota hold an associate degree, outpacing the state average. Another 24.2% have some college experience, but no degree, compared to 21.4% statewide. The industry mix in Central Minnesota provides ample employment opportunities for workers of every education level.

The strategies below focus on efforts with employers and job seekers to close the identified gaps during consultations and provide resources available to both on the LWDA websites.
<u>Strategies promoted with employers:</u>

- Promote the implementation of blind recruitment: Remove identifying information (such as names or gender) from resumes during the initial screening process.
- Encourage setting hiring goals: Establish targets for hiring underrepresented groups and track progress regularly.
- Expand recruitment channels: Reach out to diverse networks, colleges, and community organizations to attract a broader pool of candidates.
- Encourage the creation of Employee Resource Groups (ERGs): ERGs can foster connections, provide mentorship, and share resources.
- Offer advancement opportunities from within: Create pathways for internal advancement and recognize potential in all employees.
- Regularly review compensation: Ensure that pay is fair and transparent across all demographics.
- Offer family-friendly policies: Support work-life balance through parental leave, flexible schedules, and remote work options.
- Collect demographic data: Regularly gather information on workforce demographics, promotions, and turnover.
- Collaborate with community organizations: Partner with local groups to recruit, train, and support untapped talent.
- Invest in education and skill-building: Support programs that prepare underrepresented individuals for careers in high-demand fields.
- Create pre-apprenticeship programs.
- Connect employers to the Department of Labor to develop registered apprenticeship programs
- Promote work-based learning opportunities

Strategies for working with the job seeker:

- Collaboration with community organizations to reach underrepresented groups.
- Conduct targeted outreach through job fairs, workshops, and community events.
- Develop training courses that address specific skill gaps identified
- Offer competency-based training to enhance workforce readiness.
- Partner with schools and colleges to promote STEM education among underrepresented groups.
- Offer scholarships and grants to encourage untapped students to pursue relevant fields.
- Highlight success stories of individuals from untapped backgrounds.

By implementing these strategies, Central Minnesota can create a more responsive workforce system meeting the needs of the region.

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

One of the goals identified by the Regional Board was to create an elevator speech that enables them to speak knowledgeably about programs and services and to easily share information with their networks.

Additional strategies to inform opportunities available and to create, modify, or expand responsive workforce development programs and initiatives:

- Conduct regular employer surveys to identify skill gaps, hiring needs, and training requirements.
- Promote job fairs, networking events, and industry-specific forums to connect employers with potential candidates.
- Analyze labor market data to identify high-demand occupations and emerging industries.
- Develop and promote clear career pathways that guide individuals from entry-level jobs to higher-skilled positions.
- Foster sector partnerships that bring together employers, education providers, and other stakeholders to address industry-specific workforce challenges.
- Modify existing programs based on industry trends and local job market demands.
- Develop short-term training courses aligned with employer feedback.
- Expand apprenticeship programs in Collaboration with local businesses.
- Promote workforce programs using social media, local newspapers, Open Houses, Discovery Days, and community events.
- Create targeted marketing campaigns to raise awareness about available workforce programs.
- Create a user-friendly website with program information and success stories – ensure a ‘no wrong door’ approach.
- Partner with community colleges, vocational schools, and training institutions.
- Establish pathways for students to transition from education to employment.

- Provide transportation assistance for job seekers to access training and employment opportunities.
- Offer childcare services during training sessions to support working parents and those preparing for work.
- Collect feedback from program participants and employers.
- Regularly evaluate program outcomes and adjust as needed.

Responsive workforce development programs require agility, Collaboration, and a commitment to meeting the needs of both employers and job seekers. Local boards can create a more effective and impactful workforce system by implementing these strategies.

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

In response to the regional/local assessment of workforce development system services, strategies will be thoughtfully crafted to enhance the alignment of employment and training services. Here are some key steps to achieve this:

- Engage with local employers, educational institutions, community organizations, and job seekers. Understand their needs, challenges, and aspirations.
- Establish regular feedback mechanisms to gather insights from stakeholders. Use surveys, focus groups, and town hall meetings.
- Leverage labor market data to identify emerging industries, skill gaps, and employment opportunities.
- Review key performance indicators to measure the effectiveness of employment and training programs.
- Ensure seamless coordination between employment services (job placement, resume building) and training programs (skills development, certifications).
- Create personalized career pathways for job seekers based on their skills, interests, and local job market demands.
- Upskilling and Reskilling: Offer targeted training programs to bridge skill gaps and enhance employability through incumbent worker training.
- Develop partnerships with local industries (e.g., healthcare, technology, manufacturing). Tailor training programs to meet their workforce needs.
- Promote apprenticeship programs that combine on-the-job training with classroom instruction.
- Reach untapped populations, including minorities, veterans, and individuals with disabilities.
- Address transportation, childcare, and language barriers to ensure access to services.
- Enhance digital platforms for job postings, virtual workshops, and e-learning.
- Organize virtual events to connect job seekers with employers.
- Regularly assess program effectiveness through participant feedback and outcome data.

- Be agile in adjusting strategies based on changing economic conditions and workforce dynamics.

A responsive alignment of employment and training services requires ongoing Collaboration, adaptability, and a commitment to empowering individuals for sustainable careers.

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

The selection of entities participating in this process will be deliberate and strategic. However, all entities providing workforce development activities are invited to participate at the table. Here's how we plan to choose these entities, along with their expected roles and responsibilities:

1. Local Area Workforce Development Boards (LWDAs):
    - Selection Criteria:
        - LWDAs will be composed of representatives from local businesses, educational institutions, labor organizations, and community-based organizations (as outlined in the WIOA law).
        - Variety in sectors, industries, and demographics will be considered.
    - Roles and Responsibilities:
        - LWDAs will provide insights into local workforce needs, industry trends, and skill requirements.
        - They will collaborate on program design, resource allocation, and outreach efforts.
2. Educational Institutions:
    - Selection Criteria:
        - Colleges, vocational schools, and universities with expertise in workforce training and education will be invited.
        - Institutions and other training providers with strong ties to local employers and a commitment to skill development will be prioritized.
    - Roles and Responsibilities:
        - Educational institutions will design and deliver training programs aligned with industry demands.
        - They will assess skill gaps, offer certifications, and provide career pathways.
3. Labor Organizations:
    - Selection Criteria:
        - Labor unions and worker advocacy groups will be part of the partnership.
        - Organizations representing diverse workers and advocating for fair wages will be engaged.
    - Roles and Responsibilities:
        - Labor organizations will ensure worker representation, advocate for family-sustaining wages, and promote worker rights.
        - They will collaborate on apprenticeship programs and worker training.

4. Community-Based Organizations:
    - Selection Criteria:
        - Nonprofits, chambers of commerce, and community organizations with local knowledge and outreach capabilities will participate.
        - Entities serving underserved populations will be actively involved.
    - Roles and Responsibilities:
        - Community organizations will facilitate outreach, address barriers, and connect resources to served populations.
        - They will ensure that workforce programs reach all segments of the community.

By carefully selecting these entities and defining their roles, Central Minnesota aims to create a collaborative ecosystem that effectively addresses workforce needs, promotes economic growth, and supports family-sustaining wages.

Communicating roles and responsibilities to all participating entities is crucial for effective Collaboration. Here's how we plan to ensure clear communication:

Draft written agreements or MOUs that detail each entity's responsibilities. These documents serve as reference points and provide clarity on expectations. Establish regular communication channels (e.g., email, newsletters, shared platforms). Provide updates on progress, changes, and upcoming activities. Equip participants with the necessary knowledge and skills. Create a feedback loop for continuous improvement. Encourage open dialogue and address any issues promptly. Schedule regular meetings to review progress and discuss challenges. Foster a culture of transparency and hold entities accountable for their commitments. Be flexible, recognize that roles may evolve, and adjust responsibilities as needs change.

By implementing these communication strategies, Central Minnesota ensures that all participating entities understand their roles and work collaboratively toward shared goals.

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

Determining outcomes for employment and training services involves assessing their effectiveness and impact. Here's how we plan to measure outcomes:

1. Employment Outcomes:
    - Job Placement Rate: Measure the percentage of program participants who secure employment within a specified period after completing training.
    - Retention Rate: Evaluate how long individuals remain employed after placement.
    - Wage Growth: Assess whether participants experience wage increases over time.
2. Training Outcomes:
    - Completion Rate: Track the percentage of participants who complete training programs.

    - Skill Attainment: Evaluate whether participants acquire the skills and competencies the training targets.
    - Certification and Credential Attainment: Measure the number of certifications or credentials earned.
3. Participant Satisfaction:
    - Surveys and Feedback: Collect feedback from program participants regarding their satisfaction with services, instructors, and resources.
    - Quality of Training: Assess training programs' relevance, quality, and delivery.
4. Employer Engagement:
    - Employer Satisfaction: Survey employers to gauge their satisfaction with the quality of workers hired and/or upskilled through training programs.
    - Partnerships: Evaluate the number and strength of partnerships with local businesses and industry associations.
5. Long-Term Impact:
    - Career Advancement: Track participants' career progression over time.
    - Economic Mobility: Evaluate whether individuals move into higher-paying jobs and improve their economic status.
6. Data Collection and Reporting:
    - Regular Data Updates: Continuously collect and update data on employment outcomes, training completion, and participant demographics.
    - Transparent Reporting: Share outcomes with stakeholders, policymakers, and the public.
7. Continuous Improvement:
    - Program Evaluation: Regularly assess program effectiveness using quantitative and qualitative methods.
    - Adaptability: Adjust strategies based on changing labor market conditions and participant needs.

By rigorously measuring these outcomes, Central Minnesota aims to enhance the impact of employment and training services, support workforce development, and improve economic well-being for all.

From: Tammy Stark <Tammy.Stark@csjobs.org>
Sent: Thursday, August 27, 2026 7:26 AM
To: Bertram, Jeff <jeff.bertram@stearnscountymn.gov>; Steve Heinen <SHeinen@co.benton.mn.us>; Pam Benoit <pbenoit@co.benton.mn.us>; Johnson, Bob <bob.johnson@stearnscountymn.gov>; Jill Magelssen <jill@brooklinehr.com>; Jeff.Bloss@berganKDV.com; David Borgert - Home Address <borgertdj@icloud.com>; les@engelmet.com; Matthews, Kenneth J <kenneth.matthews@sctcc.edu>
Cc: Kari Court <Kari.Court@CSJobs.org>
Subject: Fw: Cash Reimbursement vs Monthly Reimbursement

JPB and WDB Exec boards,

I was at a Chamber event where the Commissioner presented primarily to business owners. I was able to connect with him after the meeting to voice our concerns about the move from cash reimbursement to monthly reimbursement. The Commissioner offered to help make connections but asked that I sent him a note as a reminder. Please see my email below.

The move to monthly reimbursement is "to create uniformity amongst grant recipients". The Commissioner knew there's six Workforce areas in greater MN that would be affected by this change, which tells me he has been involved in discussions internally at DEED. He also said that its to reduce fraud which I don't understand. Catching fraud after two weeks (cash) is better than the 20th of the following month (monthly).

I will keep you posted on next steps.

Tammy Stark
Executive Director
320.266.5060
Tammy.Stark@CSJobs.org
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From: Tammy Stark <Tammy.Stark@csjobs.org>
Sent: Thursday, August 27, 2026 7:12 AM
To: Varilek, Matt (He/Him/His) (DEED) <matt.varilek@state.mn.us>
Subject: Cash Reimbursement vs Monthly Reimbursement

Dear Commissioner Varilek,

Great presentation yesterday! I am sure it's a challenge to summarize the depth and breadth of DEED's responsibilities into a short presentation.

Thank you for taking the time to briefly discuss the challenge we face in preparing for the potential switch from cash reimbursement to monthly reimbursement from DEED.

Career Solutions has spent nearly 30 years building its current fund balance of $375,000 through careful stewardship of public resources. While we have managed some grants on a monthly reimbursement basis and understand the time it takes to receive funds, the scale of this transition presents a much greater challenge. Under the current cash model, the agency requests cash for two weeks' worth of payroll and expenses on a Wednesday and receives the funds the following Wednesday, allowing those funds to be paid out on Thursday.

Under a monthly reimbursement model, the agency would need sufficient reserves to cover an entire month's payroll and expenses, submit a reimbursement request by the 20th of the following month, and then wait up to 30 days for payment from DEED. To operate under this model, we estimate that Career Solutions would need to conservatively double its fund balance by July 2027.

The difficulty is that it has taken nearly three decades to build our current fund balance. Asking a grant-funded organization with limited opportunities to generate unrestricted revenue to double that amount in less than a year represents a significant challenge and, realistically, a very steep mountain to climb. As we discussed, a loan is not a favored option because interest is not an allowable expense under state and federal grants.

I appreciate your offer to help make connections for the six workforce boards that are facing this transition. As you heard at the meeting yesterday, Jill Magelssen is chair of the Career Solutions Workforce Board. She would appreciate someone from DEED attending a future board meeting to discuss this transition. The next opportunity would be September 10th at 3pm. A special meeting would also be an option to better accommodate your schedule.

Thank you again for your time, your willingness to listen, and your support as we work through this significant transition. I look forward to hearing from you on next steps and meeting options.

Sincerely,

Executive Director
320.266.5060f
Tammy.Stark@CSJobs.org
www.careersolutionsjobs.org

Career Solutions
Statements of Revenues and Expenditures (Preliminary)
Current Fiscal Year to Date Periods Ended July 31, 2026 and Prior Fiscal Year

Description	Year To Date 07/31/26 Actual	Budget	Budget Diff	Budget % Var	Prior Year Actual 07/31/25 Actual	FY27 Year Ending Original Fiscal Budget
Revenues over Expenditures						
Revenues						
Contributions	$ -	$ 208	$ (208)	0%	$ -	$ 2,500
Grant Revenues	$ 440,726	$ 308,983	$ 131,743	43%	$ 231,288	$ 3,707,800
Program Service Revenue	$ -	$ -	$ -	0%	$ -	$ -
Investment Income	$ 326	$ 442	$ (116)	0%	$ 1,094	$ 5,300
Other Revenue	$ 6,336	$ 833	$ 5,503	0%	$ 2,962	$ 10,000
Total Revenues	**$ 447,389**	**$ 310,466**	**$ 136,923**	**44%**	**$ 235,344**	**$ 3,725,600**
Expenditures						
Direct	$ 190,572	$ 98,625	$ 91,947	93%	$ 90,128	$ 1,183,500
Personnel	$ 267,204	$ 175,000	$ 92,204	53%	$ 160,835	$ 2,100,000
Occupancy - Rent / Lease Expense	$ 10,112	$ 7,642	$ 2,470	32%	$ 4,277	$ 91,700
Professional Fees	$ 26,246	$ 13,300	$ 12,946	97%	$ 8,282	$ 159,600
General and Administrative Expenses						$ -
Advertising, Marketing & Website	$ 232	$ 1,442	$ (1,210)	-84%	$ 891	$ 17,300
Conferences, Conventions, and Meetings	$ 2,000	$ 742	$ 1,258	170%	$ 1,321	$ 8,900
Depreciation	$ -	$ 467	$ (467)	-100%	$ -	$ 5,600
Dues, Subscriptions & Memberships	$ 5,535	$ 1,483	$ 4,052	273%	$ 601	$ 17,800
Furniture, Computer, & Equipment	$ 1,282	$ 675	$ 607	90%	$ 381	$ 8,100
Bank Fees & Service Charges	$ 117	$ 117	$ (0)	0%	$ 117	$ 1,400
Insurance	$ 1,024	$ 1,342	$ (318)	-24%	$ 1,265	$ 16,100
Miscellaneous	$ 100	$ 100	$ (0)	0%	$ -	$ 1,200
Office, Janitorial, & Other Supplies	$ 2,706	$ 1,525	$ 1,181	77%	$ 1,779	$ 18,300
Printing, Publications & Copier	$ 710	$ 508	$ 202	40%	$ 403	$ 6,100
Postage and Delivery	$ 172	$ 50	$ 122	243%	$ -	$ 600
Telephone	$ 1,099	$ 1,867	$ (768)	-41%	$ 949	$ 22,400
Staff Travel	$ 5	$ 667	$ (663)	-99%	$ -	$ 8,000
Staff Training	$ 375	$ 542	$ (167)	-31%	$ 744	$ 6,500
Total General and Administrative Expenses	**$ 15,357**	**$ 11,527**	**$ 3,830**	**33%**	**$ 8,451**	**$ 138,300**
Total Expenditures	**$ 509,491**	**$ 306,094**	**$ 203,397**	**66%**	**$ 271,973**	**$ 3,673,100**
Total Revenues over Expenditures	**$ (62,103)**	**$ 4,372**	**$ (66,475)**	**-1520%**	**$ (36,628)**	**$ 52,500**

Career Solutions
Statements of Financial Position
As of July 31, 2026 and Prior Fiscal Year

	Year To Date 07/31/26 Current Year Balance	Year Ending 06/30/26 Prior Year
Assets		
Current Assets		
Cash and Cash Equivalents		
Checking Account	53,590.51	51,349.25
Reserve Account	40,167.24	40,163.83
Falcon N. Bank - IntraFi - ICS - Career Solutions	127,893.39	233,473.82
Total Cash and Cash Equivalents	221,651.14	324,986.90
Accounts Receivable		
Accounts Receivable	426,844.29	133,130.63
Grants Receivable - State	141,636.15	141,636.15
Grants Receivable - Federal	52,140.61	52,140.61
Total Accounts Receivable	620,621.05	326,907.39
Total Current Assets	842,272.19	651,894.29
Other Assets		
Deposits & Other Assets		
Prepaid Expense	3,760.00	3,760.00
Prepaid Insurance	5,793.36	6,813.00
Prepaid Insurance - Health, Dental & Vision	20,697.37	18,525.85
PrePaid Gas Cards	2,600.00	5,300.00
Deferred Outflows of Resources	3,300.00	0.00
Due To/From Other Grants	63,504.00	63,504.00
Right of Use Asset	306,026.00	306,026.00
Furniture & Fixtures	224,124.28	224,124.28
Accumulated Depreciation	(207,640.43)	(207,640.43)
Accumulated Depreciation - Right of Use Asset	(36,908.00)	(36,908.00)
Total Deposits & Other Assets	385,256.58	383,504.70
Total Other Assets	385,256.58	383,504.70
Total Assets	**1,227,528.77**	**1,035,398.99**
Liabilities and Net Assets		
Liabilities		
Current Liabilities		
Accounts Payable		
Accounts Payable - Vendors	100,154.19	83,017.14
Accounts Payable - Other	2,857.56	5,013.19
Divvy Credit Card - CS	5,962.01	6,336.09
Total Accounts Payable	108,973.76	94,366.42
Accrued Payroll		
Accrued Wages, Taxes, Fringe Benefits & Fees	152,511.81	106,296.65
PTO Payable	117,987.77	118,354.55
Net Pension Liability	609,531.00	609,531.00
Total Accrued Payroll	880,030.58	834,182.20
Deferred Liabilities		
Deferred Inflows of	509,724.83	509,724.83
Total Deferred Liabilities	509,724.83	509,724.83
Other Current Liabilities		
Lease Liability-Due in One Year	54,691.00	54,691.00
Total Other Current Liabilities	54,691.00	54,691.00
Total Current Liabilities	1,553,420.17	1,492,964.45
Long Term Liabilities		
Long Term Debt & Other		
Lease Liability - Due in More than One Year	217,102.00	217,102.00
Total Long Term Debt & Other	217,102.00	217,102.00
Total Long Term Liabilities	217,102.00	217,102.00
Total Liabilities	1,770,522.17	1,710,066.45

Agenda Cover Sheet:
Years of Service Recognition

Agenda Items:

The Career Solutions Annual Celebration is scheduled for November 12, 2026, where we will be celebrating a staff member who has been with our organization for 5 and 10 years and we would like to recognize them at our Annual Celebration. With this recognition, Career Solutions is asking the board to approve a budget to purchase recognition awards.

Fiscal Impact:

Spending up to the amounts listed below per staff member recognition:

- 5-year recognition: $50 (1 staff)
- 10-year recognition: $75 (1 staff)

These funds will be spent out of the unrestricted account.

Action Requested:

Approve Career Solutions to spend up to the amounts listed above per years of service milestone recognition awards.