

Governor's Workforce Development Board (GWDB)

Quarterly Report

4th Quarter, September 2025 – December 2025

Staff Transitions

Two GWDB staff members, Sarah Arentson, Policy Coordinator, and Patti Balacek, Workforce Development Coordinator, have recently transitioned to other roles within state. Throughout their tenure, both made significant contributions, strengthening key policy initiatives and interagency alignment efforts. GWDB staff are working in partnership with DEED workforce strategy consultants (WSCs) to ensure work continuity and coverage during the transition period. GWDB staff also plan to conduct an analysis of current roles and board support needs to determine appropriate future staffing levels.

Powering Climate and Infrastructure Careers (PCIC) Grant

GWDB staff, in coordination with the DEED WSC and Labor Market Information (LMI) teams continue to gather stakeholder feedback to inform the development of workforce resources and tools under the PCIC grant, which runs through 2027. Current efforts are focused on strengthening Minnesota's workforce partnerships and high-quality jobs framework. This work is closely coordinated with the State's Climate Action Framework update process, where DEED is providing workforce analysis to help ensure alignment between climate investments, infrastructure priorities and workforce needs.

GWDB Committee Activities

Bylaws Task Force

The Bylaws Task Force completed their revisions and submitted their recommendations for review by the Attorney General's office. The Task Force will complete final revisions once the AG's office completes their review and then submit the bylaw revisions for Executive Committee approval and for an approval vote at the first quarterly meeting of 2026.

Executive Committee Meeting

The executive committee meeting approved workforce development strategies to advance to full-board approval. These included a sector partnerships definition and a job-quality framework. The executive committee was informed of key work occurring within the Innovative Service Delivery and State and Local Coordination Committees.

Innovative Service Delivery Committee

Chair: Misun Bormann; Co-Chair: Scott Cummings

The Innovative Service Delivery Committee met in October and December to establish a strong foundation for its work. During these meetings, the committee finalized its charter materials and clarified its scope, priorities and approach to advancing recommendations focused on improving how individuals and employers experience the workforce system. Scott Cummings was selected by the Committee Chair to serve as Vice Chair. Beginning with its first meeting next quarter, the committee will start mapping and organizing policy ideas aligned with the committees chosen scope: service navigation, technology and data integration and scalable best practices to inform future board discussion and consideration.

State and Local Coordination Committee

Chair: Rob Stark; Co-Chair: Cate Duin

The State and Local Coordination Committee met in September to begin shaping its role in strengthening alignment and communication between state agencies, local workforce boards, and regional partners. Early conversations focused on identifying coordination challenges and opportunities to improve consistency across the workforce system. Early next quarter, the committee will finalize its scope of work and committee charter. Following that, the committee will begin mapping policy ideas at subsequent meetings to support clearer roles, improved coordination, and stronger state-local alignment statewide.

Sector Partnerships Committee

Chair: Matt Lewis

The Sector Partnerships Committee met in December to discuss 2026 goals and priorities. Looking ahead, the committee will advance the sector partnerships strategy and the high-quality jobs framework through targeted resource development. The committee will also explore alignment around definitions related to work-based learning to support shared understanding and coordinated implementation across partners. In addition, the committee will play a role in developing Workforce Pell criteria to support the approval of short-term workforce training programs for Pell Grant funding, prior to being put before the Board for final consideration and approval.

Workforce Development

State Plan Modification Timeline

State program administrators continued to work on their submissions for the upcoming state plan modification and met for the quarterly administrator's meeting. Administrators were requested to submit modifications based on labor market changes as defined in WIOA Sec. 102(c)(3)(A) and to submit all modifications by January 5th, with all submissions completed by January 16th.

Task Force on Workforce Development System Reform

GWDB members participated in Task Force meetings in October and December 2025. The Task Force has created a problem statement and scope of work which focuses on assessing whether workforce programs are efficient, coordinated and responsive, as directed by state statute. The December meeting focused on state and federal program scope. GWDB members who also serve on the Task Force are Carol Anderson, Michael Berndt, Misun Bormann, Nicole Mattson, Sen. Carla Nelson, and DEED Commissioner Matt Varilek.

Interagency Workforce Alignment Task Force & GWDB Joint Committees

Caring Professions Subcommittee

The Healthcare Caring Professions Subcommittee is in the processing of discussing three proposals for the long-term care (LTC) industry. The proposals emphasize the importance of integrating data into Statewide Longitudinal Education Data System (SLEDs) and creating cross-agency functions to better share and evaluate metrics. Thus far, a few key themes have been discussed:

- Building LTC career pathways through education, work-based learning and apprenticeships, partnering with Minnesota Department of education (MDE) and Minnesota State to use existing technologies,
- Re-launching Next Generation Nursing Assistant initiative to provide dedicated funding and wraparound support for CNA career pathways,
- Establishing a formal data sharing agreement between the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) and the Minnesota Office of Higher Education (OHE) for data integration and cross-agency oversight.

Subcommittee work also included developing now-near-far frameworks for programming deliverables, reviewing workforce development best practices and identifying opportunities to reduce duplication across initiatives. Communications efforts continued to support member engagement and coordination across workstreams.

Education

The Education Subcommittee is focused on strengthening teacher preparation and early career pathways. Current next steps include finalizing five theme recommendations for review at the January leadership meeting, to be used across all educator subcommittees. These themes are: (1) differentiating strategies for different audiences, (2) metrics and assessment, (3) creating sustainability, (4) avoiding duplication, and (5) diversifying the educator workforce. The subcommittee is also exploring grants and other funding options to expand teacher pathways and program opportunities. Members are developing a now-near-far framework for deliverables and plan to conduct a document scan to identify best practices from other organizations. Future recommendations may consider impact and evidence, innovation, sustainability and alignment with other initiatives.