The Minnesota Workforce Council Association is a statewide member-based coalition representing the 16 Chief Local Elected Officials (CLEOs), Workforce Development Boards (WDBs) and Workforce Development Area (WDA) organizations operating under the federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act.

**Membership:**

Each WDA has three voting members:

- Chief Local Elected Official
- Workforce Development Board Chair
- WDA Director

**Functions:**

- Represent the interests of local employment and training partners throughout the state
- Provide a forum to discuss common interests
- Develop policy consensus and share information with elected officials
- Share and communicate successful strategies among partners
- Provide training on emerging issues within the workforce system
- Encourage the development of members and boards
- Serve as a liaison to state and federal entities

**Mission:**

It is the mission of the Minnesota Workforce Council Association to provide Minnesota with a skilled and competitive workforce through engaged and proactive local elected officials, workforce development boards, and staff.

**Executive Committee**

Shirley Barnes, Chair  
Rick Greene, Vice Chair  
Kristine (Kiki) Anderson, Operations Chair  
Nicole Swanson, Treasurer  
Rhonda Sivarajah  
Deb Barnes  
Barb Chaffee  
Diane Halvorson

**Staff**

Anne Kilzer, Director  
akilzer@mncounties.org

Ben Baglio, Policy Liaison/Support  
bbaglio@mncounties.org

www.mwca-mn.org  
125 Charles Avenue  
Saint Paul, Minnesota 55103  
Phone: (651) 789-4323  
Fax: (651) 224-6540
Staff
MWCA has one full time Director and a part time support staff.

Relationship with the Association of Minnesota Counties
MWCA is one of several affiliate organizations of the Association of Minnesota Counties (AMC), a beneficial partnership as the majority of Chief Local Elected Officials in MWCA’s membership are County Commissioners (Duluth and Minneapolis are the exceptions). As an affiliate, MWCA staff is employed by AMC and works closely with the AMC policy analysts, member services and administrative staff. MWCA staff acts as the point person on behalf of AMC for workforce and economic development issues.

Committees
MWCA has three standing committees, and several Ad-Hoc committees. These are staffed by the MWCA Director and support staff.

Standing Committees
Executive Committee
The Executive Committee consists of the Chair, Vice Chair, Operations Chair, Treasurer and four at-large members. The Chair and Vice Chair of the Association must be a WDB Chair or CLEO.

Legislative Committee
The Legislative Committee is responsible for spearheading the ratification of the state and federal legislative platforms.

Operations Committee
The Operations Committee is made up of the sixteen Workforce Development Area Directors, and meets monthly.

Ad Hoc Committees
Meet as necessary and include staff from state level agencies and partner organizations. Current and previous committees include:
- Jobseeker Services
- Funding/Sustainability
- Business Services/Economic Development
- Workforce Board Development
- “Gang of Eight”/WIOA Implementation (policy development)
- Equity/Disparities
- Marketing

MWCA Annual Meetings
The full Association meets twice per year.

Summer Meeting
The MWCA Summer Meeting is typically held the second week of August. MWCA members, local staff, WDB members, and key staff from our partnering Administrative Departments are invited. The meeting includes a welcome reception on Tuesday evening; keynote speakers, roundtable discussions and agency updates on Wednesday; a business meeting and additional speakers on Thursday morning.

The Summer Meeting also features Promising Practices, more information on that program can be found on our website: http://www.mwca-mn.org.
**Winter Meeting**
The MWCA Winter Meeting is typically a one-day meeting. While topics vary, this event tends to focus at least in part on preparing for the Legislative Session; MWCA elections are also held at this meeting. This is typically held in conjunction with the Governor’s Workforce Development Board (GWDB), Minnesota’s statewide board appointed by the Governor.

Handouts and agendas from the MWCA’s Summer and Winter meetings can be found on our website: www.mwca-mn.org/meetings.htm

**Special Projects**
MWCA staffs many state-wide projects on behalf of members.

**Mystery Shopper Program**
The Mystery Shopper Program is a bi-annual “secret shopper” initiative designed to evaluate customer service within the WorkForce Center System. The purpose of the program is to gather consistent information about the quality of service provided by all of the WorkForce Centers (Minnesota’s One-Stops) throughout the state. This information is obtained by WorkForce Center staff members who visit each other’s centers as “clients”, to observe and record measurable examples of good service as well as aspects that needed improvement. Results can be found here: http://www.mwca-mn.org/reports.htm

**Return on Investment**
For several years, the MWCA has calculated a Return on Investment for the programs delivered by the WIA Title IB partners in the WorkForce Centers. The formula was derived with help from volunteers from one of Minnesota’s premier businesses, IBM, based in Southeast Minnesota. The ROI data is used internally for year-to-year management by Directors and WDBs, and is also shared with legislators.

**Promising Practices**
Each year, MWCA encourages each WDA to submit Promising Practices from their area. The submissions are then reviewed by staff of the Governor’s Workforce Development Board, senior leadership at the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development, the National Skills Coalition and the National Association of Workforce Boards. Awards are given based on pre-determined criteria. Each area also has the opportunity to “showcase” a promising practice at the MWCA Summer Meeting.

**Orientation Materials**
MWCA partnered with the GWDC to create a template for local areas to use as an Orientation Guide for their members. Information that is consistent regardless of which WDB a member serves on is included, along with pages that can be customized at the local level. The Orientation Guide is currently being updated and will be available this fall. In addition, plans are in place to develop a guide for Local Elected Officials as well as new Workforce Development Directors.

**Strategic Planning**
MWCA frequently leads strategic planning processes, both internally and with partner organizations across the state.

**Advocacy Activities**

*Platform Development*
Each year, MWCA creates a Federal and State platform, outlining priorities for the year. Additional information including white papers, policy background information, and our Legislative Wrap Ups can be found on the MWCA website: www.mwca-mn.org/legislative.
**White Papers**
MWCA creates white papers on topics of interest to brief members and legislators about how policy decisions may impact the local workforce system.

**Congressional Meetings**
In conjunction with the National Association of Workforce Boards Conference, MWCA staff organizes meetings with the Minnesota Congressional Delegation for those who wish to participate. MWCA also partners with Congressional offices to plan local events/tour opportunities for Members of Congress.

**Day at the (State) Capitol**
Each year, MWCA sponsors a Day at the Capitol. Legislators from key committees are invited to a morning breakfast meeting with MWCA members from across the state, at which they are briefed on priorities of those from their home districts. MWCA staffs a room which members can use as a “home base” as they visit their legislators or attend hearings throughout the rest of the day.

**Trainings**
MWCA provides, and partners with other groups to provide, training on a variety of topics throughout the year through webinars, seminars, speakers, and special events.

**Participation in Statewide and National Organizations**
MWCA strongly encourages members to take part in state and national organizations, to ensure that the voice of the locally-driven Workforce Development System is heard. In addition to participating in many national and state-wide initiatives, MWCA currently has representation in the following groups:

- National Association of Counties
- US Conference of Mayors
- National Association of Workforce Boards
- National Workforce Association
- National Skills Coalition
- Great Lakes Employment and Training Association
- Governor’s Workforce Development Board
- CareerForce Leadership Team
- Association of Minnesota Counties