

MINNESOTA PYS 2020-2023

# CONTENTS

Minnesota PYs 2020-2023.....	1
Overview.....	4
Options for Submitting a State Plan .....	4
How State Plan Requirements Are Organized .....	5
I. WIOA State Plan Type and Executive Summary.....	6
a. WIOA State Plan Type.....	6
Combined Plan Partner Program(s) .....	7
b. Plan Introduction or Executive Summary.....	8
II. Strategic Elements.....	12
a. Economic, Workforce, and Workforce Development Activities Analysis .....	12
b. State Strategic Vision and Goals.....	56
c. State Strategy .....	62
III. Operational Planning Elements.....	68
a. State Strategy Implementation.....	68
b. State Operating Systems and Policies.....	93
IV. Coordination with State Plan Programs.....	154
V. Common Assurances (For All Core Programs).....	155
VI. Program-Specific Requirements for Core Programs .....	157
Program-specific Requirements for Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth Activities under Title I-B .....	157
Program-Specific Requirements for Wagner-Peyser Program (Employment Services) .....	196
Program-specific Requirements for Adult Education and Family Literacy Act Programs... ..	225
Program-Specific Requirements for Vocational Rehabilitation (Combined or General).....	254
Program-Specific Requirements for Vocational Rehabilitation (Blind).....	322
VII. Program-Specific Requirements for Combined State Plan Partner Programs .....	391
Career and technical education programs authorized under the 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) (Title 20, United States Code (20 U.S.C. 2301 et seq.)) .....	392
Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF).....	461
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))) .....	483

Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) .....	498
Jobs for Veterans' State Grants.....	498
Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP) .....	519
Performance Indicator Appendix.....	553
All WIOA Core Programs .....	553
Additional Indicators of Performance.....	553
Other Appendices.....	554

## OVERVIEW

Under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), the Governor of each State must submit a Unified or Combined State Plan to the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Labor that outlines a four-year strategy for the State's workforce development system. The publicly-funded workforce development system is a national network of Federal, State, regional, and local agencies and organizations that provide a range of employment, education, training, and related services and supports to help all job-seekers secure good jobs while providing businesses with the skilled workers they need to compete in the global economy. States must have approved Unified or Combined State Plans in place to receive funding for core programs. WIOA reforms planning requirements, previously governed by the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 (WIA), to foster better alignment of Federal investments in job training, to integrate service delivery across programs and improve efficiency in service delivery, and to ensure that the workforce system is job-driven and matches employers with skilled individuals. One of WIOA's principal areas of reform is to require States to plan across core programs and include this planning process in the Unified or Combined State Plans. This reform promotes a shared understanding of the workforce needs within each State and fosters development of more comprehensive and integrated approaches, such as career pathways and sector strategies, for addressing the needs of businesses and workers. Successful implementation of many of these approaches called for within WIOA requires robust relationships across programs. WIOA requires States and local areas to enhance coordination and partnerships with local entities and supportive service agencies for strengthened service delivery, including through Unified or Combined State Plans.

### OPTIONS FOR SUBMITTING A STATE PLAN

A State has two options for submitting a State Plan— a Unified State Plan or a Combined State Plan. At a minimum, a State must submit a Unified State Plan that meets the requirements described in this document and outlines a four-year strategy for the core programs. The six core programs are—

- the Adult program (Title I of WIOA),
- the Dislocated Worker program (Title I),
- the Youth program (Title I),
- the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act program (Title II), and
- the Wagner-Peyser Act Employment Service program (authorized under the Wagner-Peyser Act, as amended by title III),
- the Vocational Rehabilitation program (authorized under Title I of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended by Title IV).

Alternatively, a State may submit a Combined State Plan that meets the requirements described in this document and outlines a four-year strategy for WIOA's core programs plus one or more of the Combined State Plan partner programs. When a State includes a Combined State Plan partner program in its Combined State Plan, it need not submit a separate plan or application for that particular program. If included, Combined State Plan partner programs are subject to the "common planning elements" (Sections II-IV of this document) where specified, as well as the program-specific requirements for that program where such planning requirements exist separately for the program. The Combined State Plan partner programs are—

- 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)))
- Work programs authorized under section 6(o) of the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 (7 U.S.C. 2015(o))
- 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.)
- Unemployment Insurance programs (programs authorized under State unemployment compensation laws in accordance with applicable Federal law)
- Senior Community Service Employment program (programs authorized under title V of the Older Americans Act of 1965 (42 U.S.C. 3056 et seq.))
- Employment and training activities carried out by the Department of Housing and Urban Development
- Community Services Block Grant (Employment and training activities carried out under the Community Services Block Grant Act (42 U.S.C. 9901 et seq.)) <sup>1</sup>
- Reintegration of Ex-Offenders program (programs authorized under section 212 of the Second Chance Act of 2007 (42 U.S.C. 17532))

[1] States that elect to include employment and training activities carried out under the Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) Act (42 U.S.C. 9901 et seq.) under a Combined State Plan would submit all other required elements of a complete CSBG State Plan directly to the Federal agency that administers the program. Similarly, States that elect to include employment and training activities carried out by the Department of Housing and Urban Development that are included would submit all other required elements of a complete State Plan for those programs directly to the Federal agency that administers the program.

#### HOW STATE PLAN REQUIREMENTS ARE ORGANIZED

The major content areas of the Unified or 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. (These requirements are available in a separate supplemental document, Supplement to the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Unified and Combined State Plan Requirements. The Departments are not seeking comments on these particular requirements).

When responding to Unified or Combined State Plan requirements, States must identify specific strategies for coordinating programs and services for target populations.<sup>2</sup> States must develop strategies that look beyond strategies for the general population and develop approaches that also address the needs of target populations.

**Paperwork Reduction Act:** The Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 (PRA) provides that an agency may not conduct, and no person is required to respond to, a collection of information unless it displays a valid OMB control number. Public reporting burden for this information collection is estimated to be 86 hours per state; including time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. Responding to this collection is required to obtain or retain the Federal grant benefit. In addition, responses to this information collection are public, and the agencies offer no assurances of confidentiality. Send comments regarding the burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden, to the U.S. Department of Labor, Office of Workforce Investment, and reference OMB control number 1205-0522. Note: Please do not return the completed plan to this address.

[2] Target populations include individuals with barriers to employment, as defined in WIOA Sec. 3, as well as veterans, unemployed workers, and youth.

## I. WIOA STATE PLAN TYPE AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### A. WIOA STATE PLAN TYPE

**Unified or Combined State Plan.** Select whether the State is submitting a Unified or Combined State Plan. At a minimum, a State must submit a Unified State Plan that covers the six core programs. Unified or Combined State Plan. Select whether the State is submitting a Unified or Combined State Plan. At a minimum, a State must submit a Unified State Plan that covers the six core programs.

**Unified State Plan.** This plan includes the Adult, Dislocated Worker, Youth, Wagner-Peyser Act, Adult Education and Family Literacy Act, and Vocational Rehabilitation programs.

**Combined State Plan.** This plan includes the Adult, Dislocated Worker, Youth, Wagner-Peyser Act, Adult Education and Family Literacy Act, and Vocational Rehabilitation programs, as well as one or more of the optional Combined State Plan partner programs identified below.

This is a combined plan

#### COMBINED PLAN PARTNER PROGRAM(S)

Indicate which Combined Plan partner program(s) the state is electing to include in the plan.

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.)

Yes

Temporary Assistance for Needy Families program (42 U.S.C. 601 et seq.)

Yes

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)))

Yes

Work programs authorized under section 6(o) of the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 (7 U.S.C. 2015(o))

No

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.))

Yes

Jobs for Veterans State Grants Program (programs authorized under 38, U.S.C. 4100 et. seq.)

Yes

Unemployment Insurance programs (programs authorized under State unemployment compensation laws in accordance with applicable Federal law)

No

Senior Community Service Employment program (programs authorized under title V of the Older Americans Act of 1965 (42 U.S.C. 3056 et seq.))

Yes

Employment and training activities carried out by the Department of Housing and Urban Development

No

Community Services Block Grant (Employment and training activities carried out under the Community Services Block Grant Act (42 U.S.C. 9901 et seq.))

No

## B. PLAN INTRODUCTION OR EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Unified or Combined State Plan may include an introduction or executive summary. This element is optional.

### **B. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

#### **One Minnesota 2020-2023 WIOA Combined Plan Overview**

##### **Introduction & Purpose**

The One Minnesota 2020 WIOA Combined State Plan contains the vision and strategies for workforce development that the Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED), other Minnesota State Departments, the Governor's Workforce Development Board (GWDB), local and regional workforce development boards, higher education and other community and business partners are prioritizing over the next four years. Responsibility for submitting the WIOA 2020 State Plan to the Governor for approval rests with the GWDB, the state board representing key leaders from business, education, labor, community-based organizations, and government. With a vision of best aligning workforce development services across the state, Minnesota has opted for a combined state plan framed after Governor Walz's One Minnesota mandate[1].

The publicly-funded workforce development system is a national network of Federal, State, regional, and local agencies and organizations that provide a range of employment, education, training, and related services and supports to help all jobseekers secure good jobs while providing businesses with the skilled workers they need to compete in the global economy.

This overview of the One Minnesota 2020 WIOA Combined Plan includes plan priorities as embodied in its vision, mission and goals, performance management reporting, economic and workforce analysis, and areas for future growth including strengthening equitable systems, addressing climate change, and preparing for the future of work to support innovation and adaptation in our workforce development system.

##### **Vision, Mission & Goals**

Vision: The strategic vision of the One Minnesota WIOA State Plan is a healthy economy, where every Minnesotan has meaningful employment and a family-sustaining wage, and employers are able to fill jobs in demand.

Mission: To create a Career Pathway System that aligns local, state, and federal resources, policies and services to meet the workforce needs of business and industry and improves access to employment, education, and training services for Minnesota's current and future workforce.

Goals: To build on this vision, live out our mission and continue strengthening the workforce development system, the 2020 WIOA goals are:

1. Reduce educational, skills training and employment disparities based on race, disability, gender, or disconnected youth.
2. Build employer-led industry sector partnerships that expand the talent pipeline to be inclusive of race, disability, gender, and age to meet industry demands for a skilled workforce.

As our state faces the reality of a shrinking and diversifying labor force, we must fully utilize the talents, skills, and experience of more people in the workforce. We need "all hands on deck" at a time when we are leaving too many Minnesotans behind. That's why, after months of discussion

and planning, our state and local partners have come together around a common vision for the future of workforce development in Minnesota, a vision that will be supported by the programs and services of WIOA.

The WIOA 2020 vision and goals are a continuation of the WIOA Modified Plan submitted in 2018. The economic outlook in Minnesota remains similar to what it was in 2018, the last year the WIOA State Plan was modified (See Economic Analysis). Additionally, the GWDB has worked diligently over the past two years focusing on developing and recommending strategies to address disparate outcomes based on race, disability, gender and with disconnected youth. Both goals were modified to include gender in 2018. Progress has been made but much work remains. Minnesota also continues to work on improving its career pathway systems by focusing on business and community engagement, customer-focused design, and policy and system alignment. In 2020, the WIOA State Plan adds the category of age to its second goal which is focused on building employer-led, industry sector partnerships.

The One Minnesota State Plan envisions ongoing and evolving priorities to prepare for future workforce development challenges. Minnesota's strategy for WIOA State Plan implementation includes robust involvement from the GWDB, State Departments, regional and local workforce development boards and other workforce partners including K-12 and postsecondary education, businesses and community-based organizations. Areas for growth that are currently identified are listed in this summary.

Policy and system alignment is happening across local, regional and state workforce boards and institutions. The Minnesota Association of Workforce Boards (MAWB) is working with the GWDB, local boards, and other state and community partners on systems alignment, including working to better understand the systems and institutions that contribute to the economic development of a community and the employment prospects of its members. We call these "workforce adjacent" issues and will continue exploring their impact on employment and our ability to align resources and support to strengthen access to child care, affordable housing, transportation, and health care.

### **Performance Management & Workforce Outcomes**

Under the direction of the Operations Committee of the GWDB, DEED's Performance Management staff prepared a WIOA State Plan Dashboard to provide transparency and accountability towards its state plan goals: <https://mn.gov/deed/performance>.

This dashboard shows program activities and employment outcomes by program, by year, and by a variety of participant demographics. It includes participants who have exited WIOA Title I, III and IV programs. The dashboard also shows progress towards developing and maintaining industry sector partnerships across the state.

We also report annually on effectiveness in serving employers. Measures of effectiveness include information and support services, workforce recruitment assistance, strategic planning and economic development activities, training and incumbent worker training services, business downsizing assistance, and planning for layoffs.

### **Economic Analysis & Demographics**

Table 1. Minnesota Labor Force Projections, 2020-2030 2020-2030 Change Percent

	2020 Labor Force Projection	2030 Labor Force Projection	2020-2030 Change Numeric	2020-2030 Change Percent
16 to 19 years	169,642	167,530	-2,112	-1.2%
20 to 24 years	342,326	378,558	+36,232	+10.6%
25 to 44 years	1,234,214	1,290,510	+56,296	+4.6%
45 to 54 years	602,222	611,017	+8,794	+1.5%
55 to 64 years	560,791	489,812	-70,979	-12.7%
65 to 74 years	157,518	193,484	+35,966	+22.8%
75 years & over	24,211	34,278	+10,068	+41.6%
Total Labor Force	3,090,925	3,165,190	+74,265	+2.4%

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

Minnesota's economy remains strong. The state reported a record number of workers, jobs, and job vacancies in the past year. It has now been a full decade since the end of the Great Recession in June of 2009, making this the longest running economic expansion on record. We surpassed 3 million jobs in the summer of 2019, a new record high. The state's seasonally adjusted unemployment rate has hovered between 2.8 and 3.5 percent every month since April of 2017, and the annual rate of 2.9 percent in 2018 was the lowest since 1998 and 1999. In fact, the state has had less than 1 job seeker per vacancy for the past two years, meaning that increasingly tight labor markets and a scarcity of workers with needed skills are now recognized as two of Minnesota's most significant barriers to sustained economic growth.

The tight labor market will make it more challenging for employers to grow, but will also shine a light on the importance of creating positive employment outcomes for all Minnesotans, including groups that have traditionally faced discrimination and systemic barriers in education, employment, housing and other areas, such as communities of color, individuals with disabilities, and immigrants.

Increasing labor force participation rates and reducing unemployment rate disparities for communities of color, as well as for people with disabilities, both younger and older workers, immigrants, people with lower educational attainment and people with a criminal record would lead to notable increases in the size of the state's available labor force.

This will be especially important in Greater Minnesota, which has an older population than the Twin Cities, with 18.2 percent of the population aged 65 years and over, compared to 14.0 percent in the metro area. Greater Minnesota also has a lower percentage of people in their prime working years, as well as less racial diversity than the Twin Cities. While every region in

the state saw an increase in the number of jobs held by people of color over the past 20 years, only about 8 percent of jobs in Greater Minnesota are held by people of color, compared to over 18 percent in the Twin Cities. Outside the metro area, the most diverse workforces are found in the Southeast and Southwest regions of the state, while the Northeast has the least diverse workforce overall. However, racial disparities in unemployment, based on inequitable systems, practices and policies are found in every region throughout the state, making eliminating these disparities an opportunity for growth regardless of location. In sum, the data show that current population and aging trends will lead to a tight labor market over the next decade with some local areas already experiencing labor force declines.

### **Areas for Development and Growth**

As previously described, the 2020 plan essentially continues the areas of focus originally identified in 2016 and modified in 2018. The equity goal to reduce disparities in employment rates and the career pathways goal remain top priorities given current analysis and consensus. However, as we look to future modifications to the WIOA Combined State Plan, we see an opportunity to explore innovations in our workforce system in a number of areas: Prioritizing Diversity, Inclusion, and Equity; Equitable Systems; Creating an Age-Friendly Minnesota; and the Future of Work.

Governor Walz has highlighted a number of priorities for the State of Minnesota. By Executive Order, these priorities prominently include Diversity, Inclusion and Equity; Affirming the Government to Government Relationship between the State of Minnesota and Minnesota Tribal Nations and creating an Age-Friendly Minnesota. Our implementation work will include incorporating these priorities into future WIOA Plan Strategies.

**Prioritizing Diversity, Inclusion and Equity:** Minnesota recognizes that although limited progress has been made in decreasing employment and educational disparities for people of color and indigenous people, it hasn't been enough. Minnesota is committed to this continued focus including greater inclusion and outreach to communities of color, immigrant and refugee communities, Tribal Nations and indigenous people.

**Equitable Systems:** We will continue working across agencies and institutions on "workforce adjacent" issues such as child care, affordable housing, transportation and health care. We recognize that multiple factors contribute to successful employment, and wrap-around services, longer "on-ramps" to employment and engaging additional partners will be key to advancing equitable employment outcomes.

**Creating an Age-Friendly Minnesota:** There are one million older adults in Minnesota and that figure is growing rapidly. In 2020, the number of older adults in Minnesota over age 65 will exceed the number of school-age children ages 5-17 for the first time in history[2]. Employment is one of the challenges that many older adults may face. Many older adults want to stay in the workforce, volunteer, and give back to their communities. Given Minnesota's tight labor market, employers stand to benefit from the skills and expertise of older workers.

**Future of Work:** As the nature of work changes, due to globalization, automation, and other trends, we recognize that our workforce development and training systems must adapt and innovate. Our career pathways system must remain relevant to current and emerging occupational needs. We will explore ways that the state workforce development system can align with the state's sustainability goals and support industries and regions in transition and development. Currently, job growth in the clean energy sector is outpacing job growth in the overall economy. We anticipate working with the newly formed Minnesota Subcabinet on Climate Change in areas where its work intersects with creating good-paying jobs, developing

the clean economy, and building resilient communities. The workforce development system, including DEED and other state agencies, must work to assist communities and local economies that have relied on industries that may be impacted by climate change or transitions to new technologies. Additionally, the impacts of automation, artificial intelligence, and other technological advancements that will have an enormous impact on the workforce need to be analyzed in order for the state to prepare for drastic changes effecting businesses and workers.

## **Implementation**

Minnesota believes that implementation of the 2020 WIOA State Plan is critical to success in achieving its vision. To that end, the GWDB will create an intentional and dynamic community engagement plan that includes interdepartmental State staff, businesses, local and regional workforce development boards, communities of color and indigenous people, people with disabilities, and community-based organizations. During implementation activities, Minnesota will further identify areas of growth and development for strengthening the statewide workforce development system.

[1] A Combined Plan outlines a four-year strategy for WIOA's six core programs plus one or more of the Combined State Plan partner programs. Core programs include: Adult, Dislocated Worker, Youth, Wagner-Peyser Act, Adult Education and Family Literacy, and Vocational Rehabilitation. Minnesota partner programs include Perkins V, Minnesota Family Investment Program (MFIP/TANF), Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Trade Adjustment Act (TAA), Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP), and Reintegration of Ex-Offenders Program (Second Chance Act).

[2] Minnesota State Demographic Center, <https://mn.gov/admin/demography/data-by-topic/aging/>

## **II. STRATEGIC ELEMENTS**

The Unified or Combined State Plan must include a Strategic Planning Elements section that analyzes the State's current economic environment and identifies the State's overall vision for its workforce development system. The required elements in this section allow the State to develop data-driven goals for preparing an educated and skilled workforce and to identify successful strategies for aligning workforce development programs to support economic growth. Unless otherwise noted, all Strategic Planning Elements apply to Combined State Plan partner programs included in the plan as well as to core programs.

### **A. ECONOMIC, WORKFORCE, AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES ANALYSIS**

The Unified or Combined State Plan must include an analysis of the economic conditions, economic development strategies, and labor market in which the State's workforce system and programs will operate.

#### **1. ECONOMIC AND WORKFORCE ANALYSIS**

##### **A. ECONOMIC ANALYSIS**

The Unified or Combined State Plan must include an analysis of the economic conditions and trends in the State, including sub-State regions and any specific economic areas identified by the State. This must include—

##### **I. EXISTING DEMAND INDUSTRY SECTORS AND OCCUPATIONS**

Provide an analysis of the industries and occupations for which there is existing demand.

## II. EMERGING DEMAND INDUSTRY SECTORS AND OCCUPATIONS

Provide an analysis of the industries and occupations for which demand is emerging.

### III. EMPLOYERS' EMPLOYMENT NEEDS

With regard to the industry sectors and occupations identified in (A)(i) and (ii), provide an assessment of the employment needs of employers, including a description of the knowledge, skills, and abilities required, including credentials and licenses.

## II. STRATEGIC ELEMENTS

The Unified or Combined State Plan must include a Strategic Planning Elements section that analyzes the State's current economic environment and identifies the State's overall vision for its workforce development system. The required elements in this section allow the State to develop data-driven goals for preparing an educated and skilled workforce and to identify successful strategies for aligning workforce development programs to support economic growth. Unless otherwise noted, all Strategic Planning Elements apply to Combined State Plan partner programs included in the plan as well as to core programs.

### A. ECONOMIC, WORKFORCE, AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES ANALYSIS

The Unified or Combined State Plan must include an analysis of the economic conditions, economic development strategies, and labor market in which the State's workforce system and programs will operate.

#### 1. ECONOMIC AND WORKFORCE ANALYSIS

##### A. ECONOMIC ANALYSIS

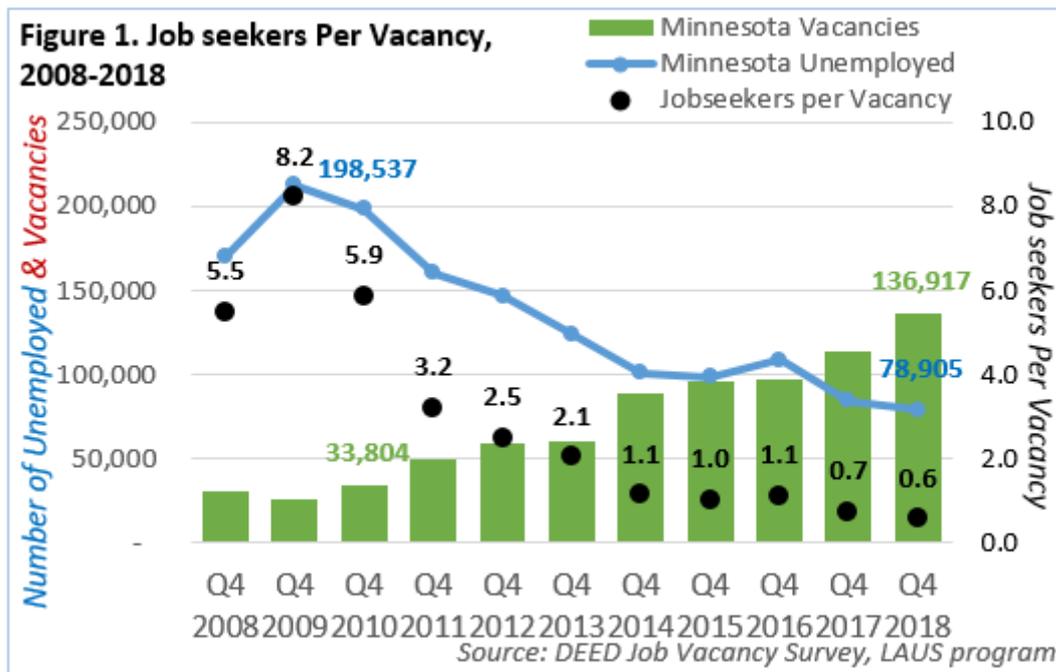
The Unified or Combined State Plan must include an analysis of the economic conditions and trends in the State, including sub-State regions and any specific economic areas identified by the State. This must include

1. EXISTING DEMAND INDUSTRY SECTORS AND OCCUPATIONS Provide an analysis of the industries and occupations for which there is existing demand.
2. II. EMERGING DEMAND INDUSTRY SECTORS AND OCCUPATION Provide an analysis of the industries and occupations for which demand is emerging.
3. III. EMPLOYERS' EMPLOYMENT NEEDS With regard to the industry sectors and occupations identified in 1 and 2 above, provide an assessment of the employment needs of employers, including a description of the knowledge, skills, and abilities required, including credentials and licenses.

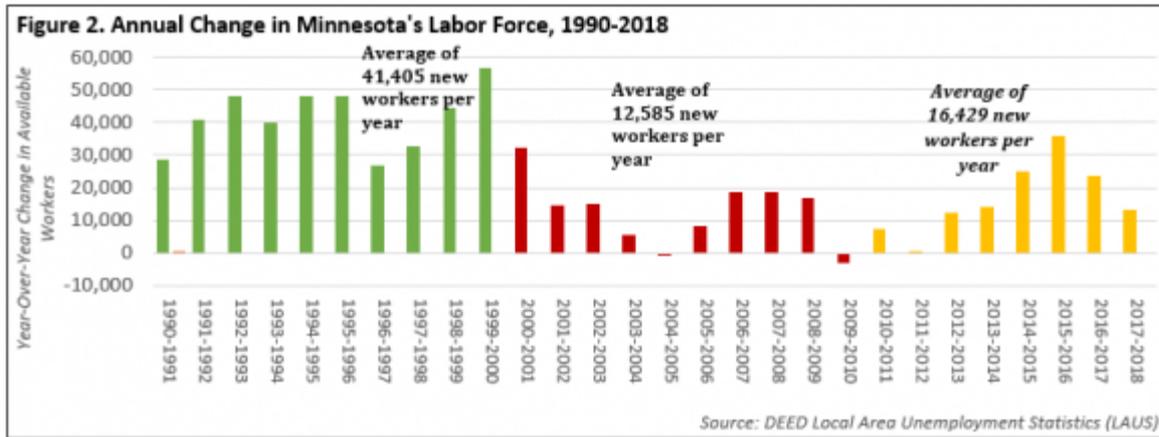
Minnesota's economy remains strong. The state reported a record number of workers, jobs, and job vacancies in the past year. It has now been a full decade since the end of the Great Recession in June of 2009, making this the longest running economic expansion on record. After suffering severe job losses during the recession, the state recovered all the jobs lost by 2013 and has continued growing. We surpassed 3 million jobs in the summer of 2019, a new record high. The state's seasonally adjusted unemployment rate has hovered between 2.8 and 3.5 percent every month since April of 2017, and the annual rate of 2.9 percent in 2018 was the lowest since 1998 and 1999.

Buoyed by steady growth, employers reported more than 142,000 job vacancies in the second quarter of 2018 and nearly 137,000 openings in the fourth quarter of 2018, in both cases the

highest number ever posted. Hiring demand was up across the state, with 56 percent of all vacancies in the Twin Cities metro area, and the remaining 44 percent located in Greater Minnesota. Led by the health care and social assistance, retail trade, and accommodation and food services industries, vacancies were spread across a wide variety of sectors. With an average of less than 100,000 unemployed workers, there are now more jobs than job seekers available to fill them. In fact, the state has had less than 1 job seeker per vacancy for the past two years, meaning that increasingly tight labor markets and a growing scarcity of workers are now recognized as two of Minnesota's most significant barriers to sustained economic growth (see Figure 1).



After averaging a net gain of about 41,400 additional labor force participants per year between 1990 and 2000, Minnesota employers could easily tap into a large and growing pool of talented workers. From 2000 to 2010, however, growth in available workers dropped to about one-third that rate, at 12,585 new workers per year. The labor force has continued growing so far this decade, adding about 131,500 workers from 2010 to 2018, but the average is just 16,400 new workers per year (see Figure 2).



Projections from the State Demographic Center suggest this growth will fall further in the years ahead, to an annual average of just under 7,500 additional labor force participants per year between now and 2030. The transition of the Baby Boom generation will have a huge impact on the state's workforce in the next decade, with a projected decline of 71,000 fewer workers in the 55 to 64 year old age group, but an increase of 46,000 workers aged 65 years and older from 2020 to 2030. The state is also expected to see a small decrease in the number of teenaged workers, but a strong gain of just over 100,000 workers in their entry-level and prime working years, from 20 to 54 years of age.

However, this aging and slowing growth will be the defining characteristic of our labor force in the years to come. Projections show Minnesota will have more than 225,000 workers aged 65 years and over by 2030, which would be the largest number and share of the workforce ever recorded. This assumes that labor force participation rates will remain the same as they are now, but participation rates may increase for older age groups, which may help provide some additional workers (see Table 1).

**Table 1. Minnesota Labor Force Projections, 2020-2030**

	2020 Labor Force Projection	2030 Labor Force Projection	2020-2030 Change Numeric	2020-2030 Change Percent
16 to 19 years	169,642	167,530	-2,112	-1.2%
20 to 24 years	342,326	378,558	+36,232	+10.6%
25 to 44 years	1,234,214	1,290,510	+56,296	+4.6%
45 to 54 years	602,222	611,017	+8,794	+1.5%
55 to 64 years	560,791	489,812	-70,979	-12.7%
65 to 74 years	157,518	193,484	+35,966	+22.8%

	2020 Labor Force Projection	2030 Labor Force Projection	2020-2030 Change Numeric	2020-2030 Change Percent
75 years & over	24,211	34,278	+10,068	+41.6%
Total Labor Force	3,090,925	3,165,190	+74,265	+2.4%

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

The tight labor market will make it more challenging for employers to grow, but will also shine a light on the importance of creating positive employment outcomes for all Minnesotans, including groups that have traditionally faced economic disparities in the state, such as communities of color, individuals with disabilities, and immigrants. While these groups have demonstrated a willingness to work with high labor force participation rates, they have also suffered from higher unemployment rates, lower educational attainment, and lower wages.

Racial diversity has been increasing in the state for a long time. Over the past 17 years, Minnesota's white population has grown by 4.5 percent, while its populations of color have grown at rates far exceeding that, including our Black (+90.4%), Asian (+79.2%) and Hispanic (+98.5%) populations (see Table 2).

**Table 2. Race and Hispanic Origin, 2017, Minnesota**

	Number	Percent	Change from 2000-2017 number	Change from 2000-2017 percent
Total Population	5,490,726	100.0%	+571,247	+11.6%
White	4,598,252	83.7%	+197,970	+4.5%
Black or African American	326,953	6.0%	+155,222	+90.4%
American Indian & Alaska Native	57,566	1.0%	+2,599	+4.7%
Asian & Other Pacific Islander	257,911	4.7%	+113,964	+79.2%
Some Other Race	95,600	1.7%	+29,790	+45.3%
Two or More Races	154,444	2.8%	+71,702	+86.7%
Hispanic or Latino origin	284,649	5.2%	+141,267	+98.5%

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

Going forward, the State Demographic Center projects that through 2030, our population of people of color and indigenous people will grow by 37.3 percent, while the white population will grow by 4.1 percent, most of which will be 65 years and older. While it is difficult to project the racial breakout of our workforce 15 years from now, especially as much of the growing

diversity is driven by foreign immigration, it is clear that what little growth we are likely to see in our workforce will come in large part from workers who are people of color or indigenous.

These changes are expected to continue and even accelerate in the coming years, especially among Minnesotans of working age. The reasons for these stark differences in the growth of working age populations by race are at least twofold: First, the white population is "aging out" into its retirement years at a much faster rate than our population of people of color or indigenous people. Second, there continues to be a significant influx of foreign-born immigrants who are typically in that working age cohort. Since 2010, the foreign-born population in Minnesota has increased by 81,500 people (+22.2% growth), and with nearly 450,000 people, immigrants account for over 8 percent of the state's total population (see Table 3).

**Table 3. Place of Birth for the Foreign Born Population, 2017, Minnesota**

	Percent	Number	Change from 2010-2017 number	Change from 2010-2017 percent
Total, Foreign-born Population	448,397	8.2%	+81,446	+22.2%
Europe	46,477	10.4%	+1,473	+3.3%
Asia	169,532	37.8%	+33,485	+24.6%
Africa	104,828	23.4%	+34,626	+49.3%
Oceania	2,249	0.5%	+649	+40.6%
Americas:	125,311	27.9%	+11,213	+9.8%
Americas: - Latin America	113,137	90.3%	+11,649	+11.5%
Americas: - Canada	12,174	9.7%	-436	-3.5%

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

Immigrants have become critical to Minnesota's economy, providing a rapid stream of new workers in the face of an aging native-born workforce. Foreign-born workers now account for 10 percent of the total available labor force in Minnesota, up from 7.5 percent just one decade earlier. More than half of our recent labor force growth has been driven by immigrants, and this will certainly continue to be the case, with immigrants displaying a much younger age profile than the native-born population, which is aging rapidly and exhibiting lower labor force participation rates as retirements pick up.

However, despite long-standing awareness that our populations of color generally – and our black or African American and American Indian communities in particular – have not benefited fully from an improving economy, disparities persist across the state.

According to recent estimates from the Current Population Survey, even after ten years of economic recovery, Minnesota's unemployment rate among blacks (6.6% in July 2019) was still over twice as high as it was for whites (2.9% in July 2019). According to 2017 American

Community Survey estimates, unemployment rates were also higher for American Indians (14.5%), people of two or more races (6.4%), and people of Hispanic or Latino origin (5.4%). In contrast, participation rates were higher for black or African Americans, Asians, people of some other race or two or more races, Hispanic or Latinos, and for foreign-born immigrants (see Table 4).

**Table 4. Minnesota Employment Status by Race and Origin, 2017**

	Total	Labor Force Part. Rate	Unemp. rate
Population 16 years and over	4,422,835	69.5%	3.6%
White alone	3,764,819	69.2%	3.1%
Black or African American	247,286	72.6%	8.3%
American Indian & Alaska Native	43,225	56.9%	14.5%
Asian	207,974	69.8%	4.2%
Some other race	75,912	76.1%	4.4%
Two or more races	81,837	74.7%	6.4%
Hispanic or Latino origin	194,685	76.6%	5.4%
Foreign-born	445,990	71.4%	4.9%

Source: 2017 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates

Increasing labor force participation rates and reducing unemployment rate disparities for other race groups, as well as for people with disabilities, both younger and older workers, foreign-born immigrants, and people with lower educational attainment would lead to notable increases in the size of the state's available labor force. Helping people of color, indigenous people and other groups with barriers to employment will be critical to ensuring that Minnesota's employers are able to find workers and our economy is able to continue growing (see Table 5).

**Table 5. Minnesota Labor Force Participation Rate and Unemployment Rate by Race and Origin, 2007-2017**

Labor Force Participation Rate	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
White	71.3%	72.3%	71.3%	70.7%	70.4%	70.4%	70.0%	69.6%	69.8%	69.4%	69.2%
Black or African American	66.6%	70.3%	68.4%	67.7%	68.9%	66.4%	68.5%	68.6%	69.7%	67.9%	72.6%
American Indian	58.4%	60.9%	61.7%	60.4%	57.7%	60.4%	59.1%	56.5%	57.2%	59.8%	56.9%
Asian	71.1%	72.9%	70.3%	69.5%	69.1%	69.5%	71.0%	72.7%	70.3%	71.1%	69.8%
Some other race	75.8%	79.3%	80.8%	74.0%	76.9%	78.7%	79.2%	77.1%	79.8%	78.0%	76.1%

<b>Labor Force Participation Rate</b>	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Two or more races	74.3%	73.0%	66.6%	68.0%	70.9%	69.3%	68.7%	70.2%	73.0%	73.2%	74.7%
Hispanic or Latino	76.7%	75.0%	76.3%	75.1%	73.1%	75.5%	76.2%	76.4%	76.7%	76.3%	76.6%
Foreign-born	71.5%	73.0%	73.4%	71.0%	71.7%	71.8%	72.9%	72.7%	72.3%	72.8%	71.4%
<b>Unemployment Rate</b>	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
White	4.7%	4.2%	7.4%	7.5%	6.7%	5.4%	4.5%	3.9%	3.5%	3.2%	3.1%
Black or African American	15.4%	15.8%	19.8%	18.7%	19.9%	17.7%	15.1%	13.3%	10.1%	10.7%	8.3%
American Indian	20.2%	14.9%	18.1%	19.4%	17.8%	19.2%	16.7%	13.1%	12.5%	12.8%	14.5%
Asian	5.6%	5.9%	10.6%	9.9%	8.3%	6.7%	6.4%	5.6%	5.6%	3.9%	4.2%
Some other race	7.6%	7.0%	6.3%	15.7%	11.4%	12.1%	11.4%	6.9%	9.4%	5.5%	4.4%
Two or more races	12.9%	10.4%	15.8%	13.7%	16.6%	11.5%	14.0%	9.9%	7.9%	8.0%	6.4%
Hispanic or Latino	8.1%	8.5%	9.8%	11.2%	11.0%	10.8%	8.8%	8.2%	7.4%	6.4%	5.4%
Foreign-born	6.3%	6.4%	10.3%	9.3%	9.9%	8.6%	8.3%	6.2%	5.9%	5.7%	4.9%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey

This will be especially important in Greater Minnesota, which has an older population than the Twin Cities, with 18.2 percent of the population aged 65 years and over, compared to 14.0 percent in the metro area. Greater Minnesota also has a lower percentage of people in their prime working years, as well as much less racial diversity than the Twin Cities. While every region in the state saw an increase in the number of jobs held by people of color or indigenous people over the past 20 years, only about 8 percent of jobs in Greater Minnesota are held by people of color or indigenous people, compared to over 18 percent in the Twin Cities. Outside the metro area, the most diverse workforces are found in the Southeast and Southwest regions of the state, while the Northeast has the least diverse workforce overall. However, the racial disparities in unemployment are found in every region throughout the state, making it an opportunity for growth regardless of location. In sum, the data show that current population and aging trends will lead to a tight labor market over the next decade - with some local areas already experiencing labor force declines.

The challenges our state will face over the next 15 years are so great that we'll need to tackle them with a multi-pronged approach to attract and retain workers of all demographic

characteristics. Retaining older workers beyond traditional retirement age, attracting and retaining young talent, removing barriers faced by workers of all abilities, welcoming immigrants from other countries, and educating and training the workers we do have are all necessary to overcome these challenges. Because people of color, indigenous and immigrant populations in Minnesota will continue to grow faster than the white native-born population, particularly in the younger working age populations, the labor force will continue to diversify rapidly.

Recognizing that the rapidly increasing share of existing workers are people of color, it becomes obvious that we must address this problem of persistent racial disparities directly. If these disparities continue unabated, disadvantaged groups won't be the only ones who suffer. Businesses and the economic well-being of every resident of our state also will be affected. Developing and implementing meaningful solutions to close these racial gaps between our state's white population and its populations of color is not only the right thing to do, it's the necessary thing to do if we're to provide our economy and its employers with the workforce necessary for success. As the face of Minnesota's workforce continues to change, employers across Minnesota will need to adapt their recruitment and retention strategies and the state will have a role to play in helping businesses do just that.

1. EXISTING DEMAND INDUSTRY SECTORS AND OCCUPATIONS Provide an analysis of the industries and occupations for which there is existing demand.
2. II. EMERGING DEMAND INDUSTRY SECTORS AND OCCUPATION Provide an analysis of the industries and occupations for which demand is emerging.
3. III. EMPLOYERS' EMPLOYMENT NEEDS With regard to the industry sectors and occupations identified in 1 and 2 above, provide an assessment of the employment needs of employers, including a description of the knowledge, skills, and abilities required, including credentials and licenses.

As noted, there are hundreds of occupations in demand in Minnesota with a wide variety of knowledge, skills, and abilities required, including several that require credentials and licenses. Included below is a list of the top 10 occupations with existing demand in 2019 and projected 10-year demand as of 2019, and educational requirement information for each occupation.

**Top 10 Occupations in Existing Demand in Minnesota, 2019, and Projected 10-year Demand**

SOC Code	Job Title	Current Demand Rank	Median Wage	Projected 10-year Growth Rate	Education Requirements
291141	<u>Registered Nurses</u>	1	\$79,297	+11.1%	<u>Associate's degree</u>
533032	<u>Heavy &amp; Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers</u>	2	\$48,723	+6.4%	<u>High school diploma or equiv.</u>
412031	<u>Retail Salespersons</u>	3	\$25,746	-1.0%	<u>Less than high school</u>
399021	<u>Personal Care Aides</u>	4	\$26,574	+33.6%	<u>Less than high school</u>

SOC Code	Job Title	Current Demand Rank	Median Wage	Projected 10-year Growth Rate	Education Requirements
353021	<u>Combined Food Prep &amp; Serving Workers</u>	5	\$24,064	+12.0%	<u>Less than high school</u>
412011	<u>Cashiers</u>	6	\$24,384	-0.4%	<u>Less than high school</u>
311014	<u>Nursing Assistants</u>	7	\$34,418	+5.8%	<u>Postsec. non-degree award</u>
411011	<u>First-Line Supervisors of Retail Workers</u>	8	\$41,640	+2.6%	<u>High school diploma or equiv.</u>
537062	<u>Laborers &amp; Stock &amp; Material Movers</u>	9	\$34,454	+5.5%	<u>Less than high school</u>
311011	<u>Home Health Aides</u>	10	\$29,582	+30.7%	<u>Less than high school</u>

Source: DEED Occupations in Demand, 2019

Here is an example of how a job seeker would train for the occupation and receive a credential or license for one of those in-demand occupations: a job seeker who is interested in becoming a Registered Nurse would require an associate's or bachelor's degree as well as a license in the state of Minnesota. Job seekers can find a list of Registered Nursing programs at Minnesota colleges and universities through DEED's [Career & Education Explorer tool](#). Through 2019, there were 79 programs in the state, ranging from two-year programs at community and technical colleges to four-year programs at universities. Once they have graduated with a degree in Registered Nursing, job seekers would also need to pass a licensing exam to practice as a Registered Nurse in the state. The list of licenses needed in Minnesota are available through [CareerOneStop](#), which includes a link to the [Minnesota Board of Nursing](#) website. The full process for [applying for an RN license by examination](#) requires an application fee, a confirmation of program completion from the school of nursing, and then successful passage of the National Council Licensure Examination (NCLEX). Job seekers will then be qualified to work as a Registered Nurse in Minnesota.

## B. WORKFORCE ANALYSIS

The Unified or Combined State Plan must include an analysis of the current workforce, including individuals with barriers to employment, as defined in section 3 of WIOA<sup>4</sup>. This population must include individuals with disabilities among other groups<sup>5</sup> in the State and across regions identified by the State. This includes—

[4] Individuals with barriers to employment include displaced homemakers; low-income individuals; Indians, Alaska Natives, and Native Hawaiians; individuals with disabilities, including youth who are individuals with disabilities; older individuals; ex-offenders; homeless individuals, or homeless children and youths; youth who are in or have aged out of the foster care system; individuals who are English language learners, individuals who have low levels of literacy, and individuals facing substantial cultural barriers; farmworkers (as defined at section 167(i) of WIOA and Training and Employment Guidance Letter No. 35-14); individuals within 2 years of exhausting lifetime eligibility under the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families

program; single parents (including single pregnant women); and long-term unemployed individuals.

[5] Veterans, unemployed workers, and youth, and others that the State may identify.

#### I. EMPLOYMENT AND UNEMPLOYMENT

Provide an analysis of current employment and unemployment data, including labor force participation rates, and trends in the State.

#### II. LABOR MARKET TRENDS

Provide an analysis of key labor market trends, including across existing industries and occupations.

#### III. EDUCATION AND SKILL LEVELS OF THE WORKFORCE

Provide an analysis of the educational and skill levels of the workforce.

#### IV. SKILL GAPS

Describe apparent 'skill gaps'.

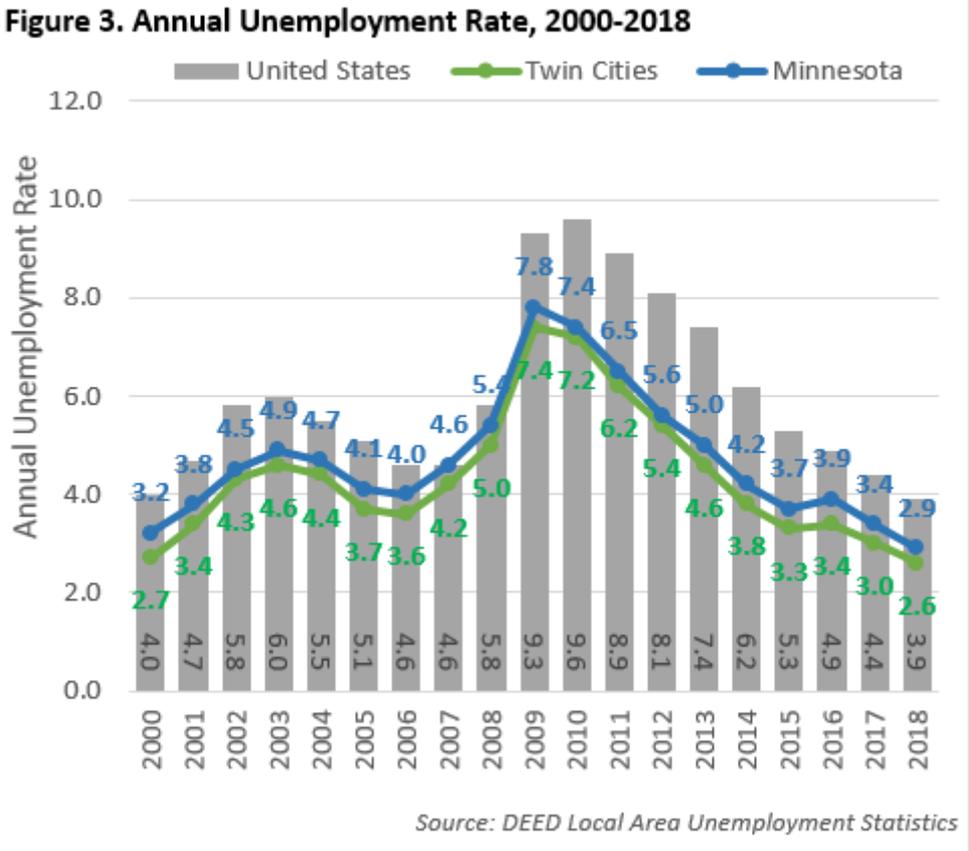
### **B. WORKFORCE ANALYSIS**

The Unified or Combined State Plan must include an analysis of the current workforce, including individuals with barriers to employment, as defined in section 3 of WIOA.[1] This population must include individuals with disabilities among other groups[2] in the State and across regions identified by the State.

**EMPLOYMENT AND UNEMPLOYMENT** Provide an analysis of current employment and unemployment data, including labor force participation rates, and trends in the State.

1. **LABOR MARKET TRENDS** Provide an analysis of key labor market trends, including across existing industries and occupations.
2. **EDUCATION AND SKILL LEVELS OF THE WORKFORCE** Provide an analysis of the educational and skill levels of the workforce.
3. **SKILL GAPS**

Minnesota has consistently reported lower unemployment rates than the United States as a whole. According to the Local Area Unemployment Statistics program, Minnesota's unemployment rate hovered just below the national rate from 2005 to 2008, before rising as high as 7.8 percent in 2009, then dropping back to pre-recession levels by 2014. Minnesota's 2018 unemployment rate was 2.9 percent, compared to 3.9 percent in the U.S (see Figure 3).



Within the state, the Twin Cities, Southeast and Southwest had the lowest rates in 2018, while the highest rates have consistently been found in Northern Minnesota.

Minnesota has much higher labor force participation rates than the United States, ranking second highest in the nation in July of 2019. By age, Minnesota has higher labor force participation rates than the nation in all but the oldest age group, but also had lower unemployment rates for all age groups. While participation rates are dropping slightly overall, most notably in the 16 to 54 year old age groups, rates in the older age cohorts will likely see increases over the next 10 years.

One-year estimates from the 2017 American Community Survey show that unemployment rates in Minnesota were also higher for younger people, especially those from 16 to 24 years of age, and for people with lower educational attainment. In 2017, people with less than a high school diploma had an unemployment rate of 8.0 percent, compared to high school graduates at 3.9 percent, people with some college or associate's degrees at 3.1 percent, and workers with a bachelor's degree or higher, at just 1.8 percent (see Table 6).

**Table 6. Employment Status by Selected Characteristics, 2017**

	Minnesota	Minnesota	Minnesota	United States	United States	United States
	In Labor Force	Labor Force Participation Rate	Unemp. rate	In Labor Force	Labor Force Participation Rate	Unemp. rate

	Minnesota	Minnesota	Minnesota	United States	United States	United States
Population 16 years and over	3,073,870	69.5%	3.6%	164,676,605	63.2%	5.3%
<b>BY AGE GROUP</b>						
16 to 19 years	153,862	52.8%	12.1%	6,650,454	38.3%	17.3%
20 to 24 years	299,708	84.9%	5.2%	16,418,641	74.8%	9.4%
25 to 29 years	332,004	88.8%	3.7%	19,115,033	82.8%	6.1%
30 to 34 years	340,277	88.4%	3.6%	18,116,595	82.8%	5.0%
35 to 44 years	622,609	88.8%	2.9%	33,881,154	82.4%	4.2%
45 to 54 years	614,620	86.7%	2.6%	34,118,750	80.6%	3.7%
55 to 59 years	314,797	79.8%	3.0%	15,736,228	72.3%	3.6%
60 to 64 years	231,519	65.0%	2.1%	11,545,117	57.0%	3.3%
65 to 74 years	139,466	28.3%	1.9%	7,670,824	25.8%	3.2%
75 years and over	24,162	6.6%	2.4%	1,433,701	6.8%	3.2%
<b>BY RACE AND HISPANIC OR LATINO ORIGIN</b>						
White alone	2,605,255	69.2%	3.1%	120,718,424	62.8%	4.5%
Black or African American alone	179,530	72.6%	8.3%	20,174,322	62.5%	9.5%
American Indian & Alaska Native	24,595	56.9%	14.5%	1,195,629	57.5%	10.2%
Asian alone	145,166	69.8%	4.2%	9,759,029	64.9%	4.2%
Some other race alone	57,769	76.1%	4.4%	8,448,722	69.3%	6.3%
Two or more races	61,132	74.7%	6.4%	4,206,383	67.0%	8.1%
Hispanic or Latino (of any race)	149,129	76.6%	5.4%	28,493,543	67.4%	6.0%
<b>BY DISABILITY STATUS</b>						
With any disability	153,416	52.0%	7.4%	8,385,320	42.2%	11.5%
<b>BY EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT</b>						

	Minnesota	Minnesota	Minnesota	United States	United States	United States
Population 25 to 64 years	2,455,310	84.1%	3.0%	132,597,941	77.8%	4.3%
Less than high school graduate	117,035	64.6%	8.0%	11,240,656	60.2%	8.0%
High school graduate (inc. GED)	501,766	77.9%	3.9%	31,921,729	72.2%	5.7%
Some college or associate's degree	836,250	85.3%	3.1%	40,248,811	79.2%	4.3%
Bachelor's degree or higher	1,001,366	89.9%	1.8%	49,128,230	86.6%	2.6%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2017 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates

Minnesota also has higher labor force participation rates than the nation for every race group except for American Indians, and higher rates for workers with disabilities and at every level of educational attainment. However, several of these groups have large unemployment rate disparities, which could be a potential source of workers if rates continue to improve for all groups.

About 295,000 Minnesotans aged 16 years and over have disabilities. Of those, nearly 153,500 people with disabilities are in the labor market. However, their rate of unemployment, at 7.4 percent, far exceeds the overall unemployment rate in Minnesota (the comparable number was 3.6% for the same time period). People with disabilities also have a much lower labor force participation rate than the general population, at 52 percent compared to 69.5 percent overall. Helping workers with disabilities find and retain employment is a great opportunity for Minnesota employers (see Table 7).

**Table 7. Minnesota Labor Force Participation and Unemployment Rate for Workers with Disabilities, 2007-2017**

	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Labor force participation rate	53.4%	56.8%	53.6%	52.0%	51.6%	49.4%	52.4%	49.8%	52.7%	52.2%	52.0%
Unemployment rate	12.6%	9.9%	15.0%	15.3%	17.0%	14.7%	11.8%	10.6%	9.6%	8.0%	7.4%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey

Another source of new workers are people with criminal records. According to Census data, there were just over 20,000 adults living in correctional facilities in Minnesota, with about two-thirds residing in state and federal prisons, and the other third held in local jails. Nearly all will be released into the community after serving their sentence with many still under correctional supervision, which often comes with a condition of securing and maintaining employment. Over 111,000 adult offenders are supervised in the community statewide by Community Corrections, County Probation Agents and DOC agents. However, many of these individuals struggle to find employment. In a recent study of employment outcomes for people leaving Minnesota Correctional Facilities, 23 percent were employed during the first 12 months after release from prison. Whether ex-offenders worked in the year prior to their most recent admission to prison

had a significant impact on whether they found work after release: of the 12 percent that worked in the year before coming to prison, 87 percent found a job in the first year after release. Of the adults in Minnesota Correctional Facilities, 28 percent have not completed high school or GED; 71 percent have.

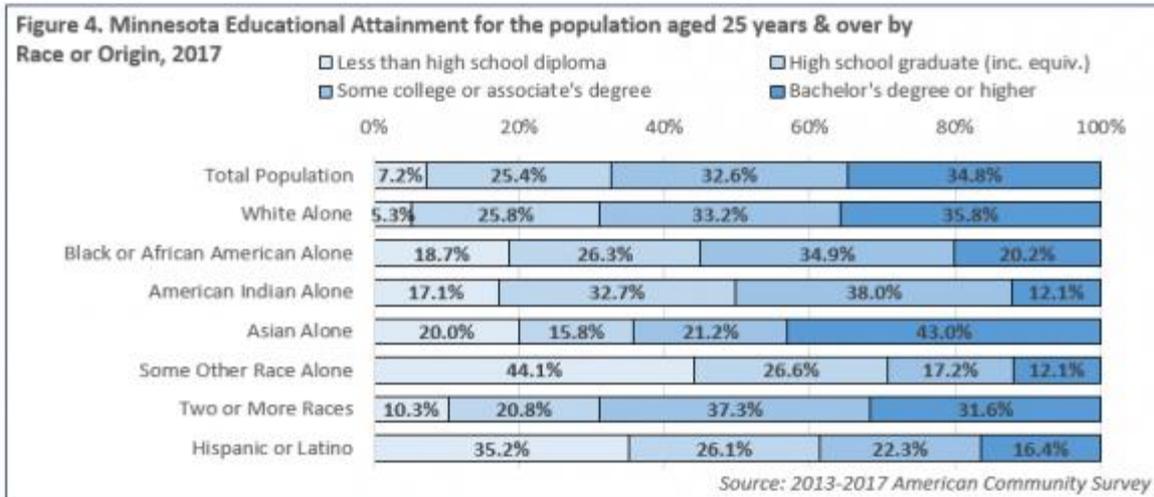
With about 93 percent of adults having a high school diploma or higher, Minnesota has the highest educational attainment in the U.S. We also rank 10<sup>th</sup> for the percent of people with a bachelor’s degree or higher, suggesting a highly skilled workforce available for employers. Through 2017, about 42.7 percent of adults aged 18 years and over had earned a college degree, either associate’s, bachelor’s, or advanced degree (see Table 8). And educational attainment rates were increasing for younger age groups, who are making the most out of opportunities that may not have been as available to older age groups.

**Table 8. Educational Attainment for the Adult Population, 2017, Minnesota**

	Number	Percent
Total Population, 18 years & over	4,204,388	100.0%
Less than high school	328,702	7.8%
High school graduate (incl. equiv.)	1,076,746	25.6%
Some college, no degree	1,001,402	23.8%
Associate's degree	446,232	10.6%
Bachelor's degree	912,289	21.7%
Advanced degree	439,017	10.4%

Source: *2013-2017 American Community Survey*

Like participation and unemployment rates, educational attainment varies significantly by race and ethnicity in Minnesota. Over one-third of Hispanic or Latino residents or people of Some Other Race had less than a high school diploma, compared to just 5.3 percent of white residents. However, over one-third of black or African Americans, American Indians, and people of Two or More Races have attended some college or earned an associate’s degree, and 43 percent of Asian residents had a bachelor’s degree or higher, which was in line with the white population (see Figure 4). Data from the American Community Survey show that educational attainment rates were going up across the board, especially for populations of people of color.



## SKILL GAPS

During the past few years, there has been a great deal of discussion about the issue of workforce alignment in Minnesota—specifically, a phenomenon known as skill gaps. Recent studies and popular press articles warn us that employers cannot find an adequate supply of workers to meet the demands of the jobs they have: workers may lack the skills, experience, or education needed to adequately carry out job duties. Policymakers and educators in Minnesota are concerned about these deficiencies, and are motivated to ensure that workers’ skills align properly with what’s needed in the labor market. Skills mismatches—that is, deficiencies in the workforce supply—become especially salient and problematic during the hiring process. If too few job applicants have the right skills, knowledge, or experience to qualify for the job (or if too few people apply for the position, period), then that is consistent with the interpretation that there is a gap, or mismatch, between workers’ skills (supply) and the skills needed to perform the job (demand). On the other hand, it is important to realize that there are a variety of reasons an employer may have hiring difficulties, and that many of these have nothing to do with the available supply. Characteristics of the firm and/or the job itself could reduce the likelihood that candidates will choose to apply for or accept any given position. Some of the most basic “demand-side” factors include the wage offered, the hours of work, and the location of the work.

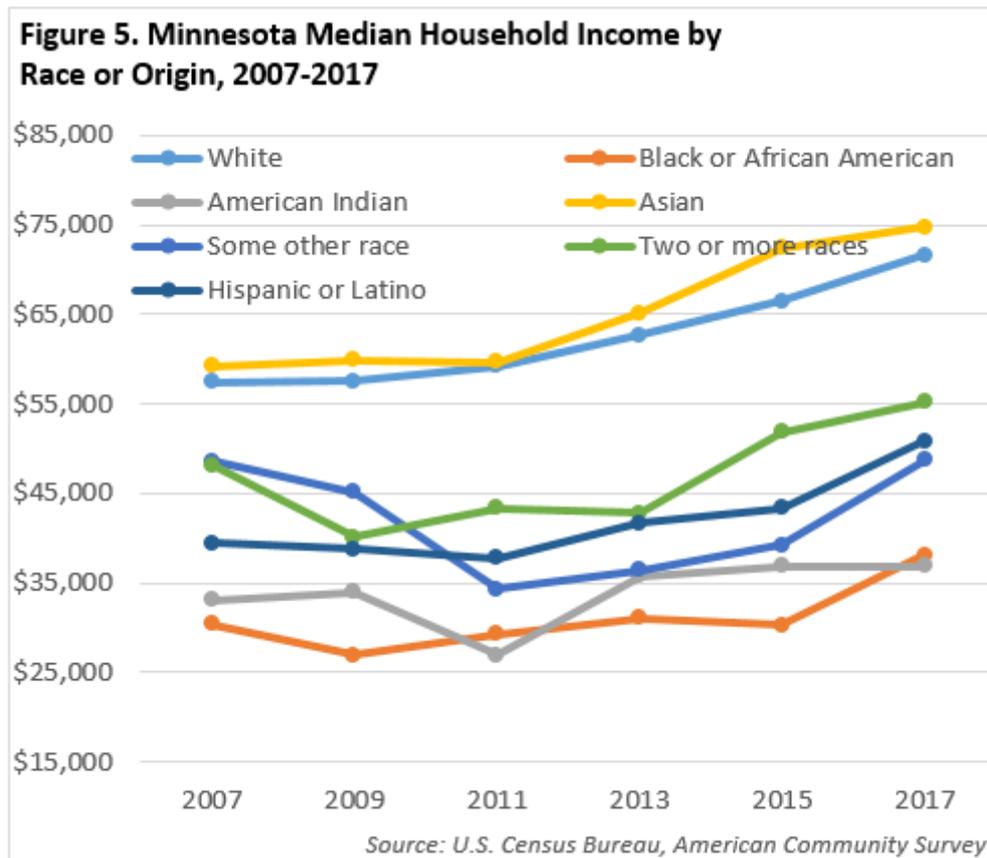
Minnesota is working to help job seekers lacking necessary skills attain them for fulfilling employment. Career seekers participating in skills training programs for in-demand occupations would also be assessed for gaps in support needs, such as child care, transportation and other basic needs. The fundamental basis for the design of our career pathways was initiated in the FastTRAC program. This design continues in Minnesota’s Pathways to Prosperity program. The goal is to provide the shortest successful path to educational/credential attainment and transition into occupations in demand.

## HOUSEHOLD INCOMES, WAGES AND COST OF LIVING

Not only hard working, Minnesotans are also high earning. At \$68,388, Minnesota's median household income is higher than the nation's, at \$60,336, according to data from the American Community Survey (ACS) 2017 1-Year Estimates. Approximately 36 percent of households in Minnesota had incomes below \$50,000 in 2017, compared to about 42 percent nationwide. Another one-third (32.5%) of households in Minnesota earned between \$50,000 and \$100,000, compared to 30 percent nationally. Lastly, another one-third of households (31.6%) in

Minnesota earn more than \$100,000 per year, compared to 28 percent of households in the nation.

While Minnesota enjoys higher median household incomes than the nation overall, there again are disparities present between the state's racial and ethnic populations. Overall, household incomes were lower for people of color and indigenous people. For example, those reporting as black or African American had a median household income of \$38,147 in 2017, just over half the median household income reported by the state's white population, at \$71,547. Those reporting as Asian were the only non-white group to have a higher median income than white households, at \$74,766 (see Figure 5).



The gaps have persisted over time, though incomes were rising across the board. From 2007 to 2017, median household incomes increased around 25 percent for white, black, Asian, and Hispanic or Latino households, and between 10 and 15 percent for American Indians and households of two or more races. More recently, median household incomes climbed faster for black or African American households, households of some other race, and Hispanics or Latinos than for white or Asian households in the past two years (see Figure 4).

Along with income, it is important to know the cost of living in the State of Minnesota. DEED's Cost of Living tool provides a yearly estimate of the basic needs cost of living in Minnesota, for individuals and families, by county, region, and statewide. Using the state's average family size - which consists of one full-time working adult, one part-time working adult, and one child - the basic needs cost of living in Minnesota is \$55,548. As such, each adult worker would need to earn \$17.80 to meet the state's basic needs budget for a typical family of three; while the cost of living is lower for a single individual with no children. Estimates vary widely across the state, and different household sizes, work arrangements, and locations provide different costs of

living and wage requirements, ranging from a low of \$44,952 in Southwest Minnesota to a high of \$60,864 in the Twin Cities (see Table 9).

**Table 9. Basic Needs Cost of Living Estimates in Minnesota, 2018**

Single Adult (working full-time), 0 children	Single Yearly Cost of Living	Hourly Wage Required	Monthly Child Care Costs	Monthly Food Costs	Monthly Health Care Costs	Monthly Housing Costs	Monthly Transportation Costs	Other Monthly Costs	Monthly Taxes
Central Minnesota	\$31,212	\$15.01	\$0	\$326	\$137	\$727	\$698	\$323	\$390
Northeast Minnesota	\$28,656	\$13.78	\$0	\$329	\$138	\$642	\$637	\$298	\$344
Northwest Minnesota	\$27,864	\$13.40	\$0	\$329	\$138	\$581	\$660	\$280	\$334
Southeast Minnesota	\$28,020	\$13.47	\$0	\$329	\$138	\$612	\$632	\$289	\$335
Southwest Minnesota	\$26,724	\$12.85	\$0	\$332	\$138	\$577	\$590	\$279	\$311
Twin Cities Metro Area	\$32,640	\$15.69	\$0	\$339	\$136	\$860	\$611	\$368	\$406
State of Minnesota	\$30,900	\$14.86	\$0	\$335	\$137	\$759	\$629	\$336	\$379
<b>Typical Family: 2 Adults (1 working full-time, 1 part-time), 1 child</b>	<b>Family Yearly Cost of Living</b>	<b>Hourly Wage Required</b>	<b>Monthly Child Care Cost</b>	<b>Monthly Food Cost</b>	<b>Monthly Health Care Cost</b>	<b>Monthly Housing Cost</b>	<b>Monthly Transportation Cost</b>	<b>Other Monthly Costs</b>	<b>Monthly Taxes</b>
Central Minnesota	\$53,076	\$17.01	\$358	\$745	\$487	\$939	\$815	\$517	\$562
Northeast Minnesota	\$48,540	\$15.56	\$278	\$751	\$496	\$839	\$740	\$488	\$453
Northwest Minnesota	\$47,136	\$15.11	\$246	\$752	\$496	\$772	\$768	\$468	\$426
Southeast Minnesota	\$49,332	\$15.81	\$346	\$753	\$496	\$822	\$733	\$484	\$477

Single Adult (working full-time), 0 children	Single Yearly Cost of Living	Hourly Wage Required	Monthly Child Care Costs	Monthly Food Costs	Monthly Health Care Costs	Monthly Housing Costs	Monthly Transportation Costs	Other Monthly Costs	Monthly Taxes
Southwest Minnesota	\$44,952	\$14.41	\$228	\$759	\$496	\$750	\$681	\$463	\$369
Twin Cities Metro Area	\$60,864	\$19.51	\$685	\$775	\$476	\$1,110	\$706	\$579	\$741
State of Minnesota	\$55,548	\$17.80	\$511	\$764	\$484	\$986	\$729	\$537	\$618

*Source: DEED Cost of Living tool*

The median hourly wage for all occupations in Minnesota was \$20.95 in 2019, according to data from DEED’s Occupational Employment Statistics program. In fact, median hourly wages for all regions were higher than the wage required to meet a basic needs budget for a typical family. However, like cost of living, wages varied by region with the lowest wages reported in Southwest and Northwest Minnesota, and the highest wages offered in the Twin Cities metro area (see Table 10). The difference in median wages between the Twin Cities and Greater Minnesota works out to about \$4.14 an hour, or the equivalent of \$8,615 over the course of a full-time work year (40 hours per week, or 2,080 per year).

**Table 10. Occupational Employment Statistics by Planning Region, 2019**

	Median Hourly Wage	Estimated Regional Employment
Central Minnesota	\$18.94	286,270
Northeast Minnesota	\$18.57	144,430
Northwest Minnesota	\$18.09	223,830
Southeast Minnesota	\$19.28	241,540
Southwest Minnesota	\$18.02	176,430
Twin Cities Metro Area	\$22.78	1,793,870
State of Minnesota	\$20.95	2,867,700

*Source: DEED Occupational Employment Statistics*

Not surprisingly, the lowest-paying jobs are concentrated in food prep and serving; personal care and service; building, grounds cleaning and maintenance; sales and related; farming, fishing and forestry; and health care support, all of which have lower median hourly wages than what would be required to meet the basic needs cost of living described above. For the most part, the gap in pay between Greater Minnesota and the Twin Cities is also much lower in these jobs. In contrast, the highest paying jobs are found in management, computer and mathematical, architecture and engineering, legal, health care practitioners, business and financial operations, and life, physical, and social science occupations, which all need higher levels of education and

experience, including many that require postsecondary training (see Table 11). The pay gaps between Greater Minnesota and the Twin Cities are much bigger in these occupations.

**Table 11. Minnesota Occupational Employment Statistics, 2019**

Occupational Group	Median Hourly Wage	Estimated Employment	Share of Total Employment
Total, All Occupations	\$20.95	2,867,700	100.0%
Office & Administrative Support	\$19.10	405,970	14.2%
Sales & Related	\$14.97	277,070	9.7%
Food Preparation & Serving Related	\$11.90	242,170	8.4%
Production	\$18.68	214,230	7.5%
Health Care Practitioners & Technical	\$35.79	190,720	6.7%
Transportation & Material Moving	\$18.48	177,580	6.2%
Management	\$51.26	171,250	6.0%
Education, Training & Library	\$24.22	166,300	5.8%
Business & Financial Operations	\$33.03	164,510	5.7%
Personal Care & Service	\$12.90	144,070	5.0%
Construction & Extraction	\$28.07	100,510	3.5%
Installation, Maintenance & Repair	\$23.13	100,030	3.5%
Computer & Mathematical	\$40.96	96,020	3.3%
Building, Grounds Cleaning & Maint.	\$14.97	85,820	3.0%
Health Care Support	\$16.82	83,380	2.9%
Community & Social Service	\$22.73	57,870	2.0%
Architecture & Engineering	\$37.53	56,070	2.0%
Protective Service	\$21.52	44,390	1.5%
Arts, Design, Entertainment & Media	\$24.35	39,670	1.4%
Life, Physical & Social Science	\$33.54	26,210	0.9%
Legal	\$36.50	19,870	0.7%
Farming, Fishing & Forestry	\$16.51	3,980	0.1%

Source: DEED Occupational Employment Statistics, Qtr. 1 2019

## JOB VACANCIES, OCCUPATIONS IN DEMAND, EMPLOYMENT PROJECTIONS

Employers in Minnesota reported nearly 137,000 job vacancies in the fourth quarter of 2018, which is the highest ever recorded, and more than five times the number posted during the Great Recession in 2009. As such, there were now just 0.6 unemployed persons for each vacancy, which is tied for the lowest ratio on record and suggests that the labor market remains tight as baby boomers retire and job growth continues at a moderate pace. Regionally, 76,500 of statewide job vacancies (55.9%) were reported in the Seven-County Twin Cities Metro Area, with the remaining 60,400 vacancies (44.1%) reported in Greater Minnesota. Over the past five years, between the second quarters of 2014 and 2018, the number of job vacancies increased by 55 percent in the Metro Area and by 52 percent in Greater Minnesota. After averaging annual job vacancy increases of 15 percent between 2013 and 2017, this latest over-the-year increase of 18 percent suggests continued employment growth and increased retirements are leading to the accelerated need for workers. Barring any recession, this increased need for workers may continue well into the next decade, if not further into the future.

The median hourly wage offer was \$15.01 across all occupations, but ranged from a low of around \$12.00 per hour for protective service, food prep and serving, and personal care and services workers, to more than \$30 per hour or more for management, computer and mathematical, legal, and architecture and engineering occupations. Reflecting heightened demand for occupations and for the workers to fill the openings, wage offers were increasing across occupational groups.

Overall, 37 percent of the openings were part-time, which is down slightly compared to previous years. Likewise, only 35 percent of current openings required postsecondary education, while 45 percent required a year or more of experience. Interestingly, postsecondary educational requirements in the state have been stable or declining over the past 5 years, while work experience requirements were rising (see Table 12).

**Table 12. Minnesota Job Vacancy Survey Results, 4<sup>th</sup> Qtr. 2018**

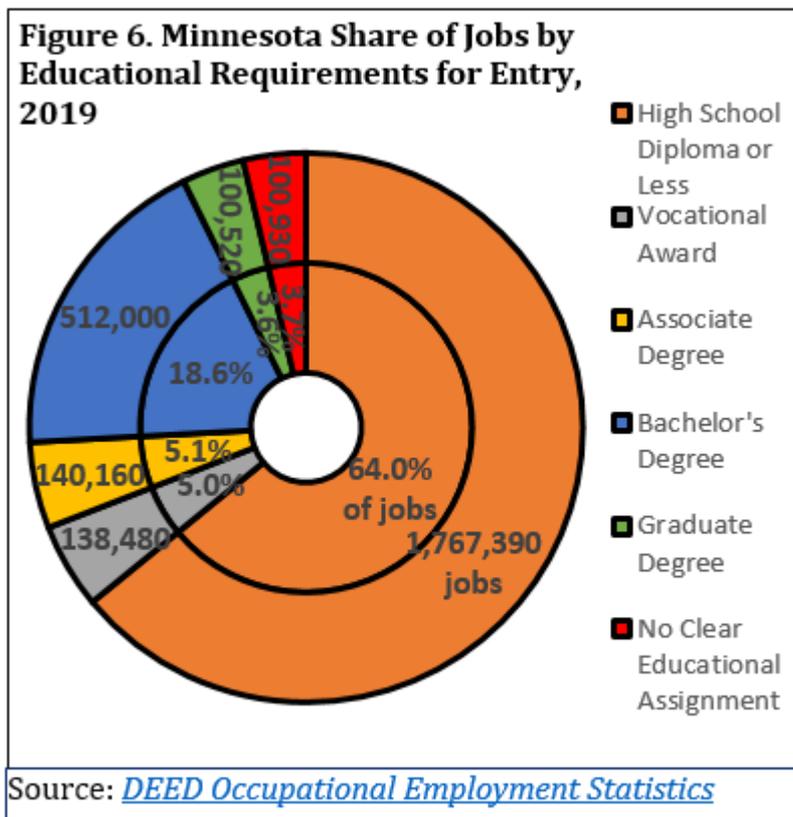
	Number of Total Vacancies	Percent Part-time	Percent Temporary or Seasonal	Requiring Post-Secondary Education	Requiring 1 or More Years of Experience	Requiring Certificate or License	Median Hourly Wage Offer
Total, All Occupations	136,917	37%	9%	35%	45%	35%	\$15.01
Food Preparation & Serving Related	18,761	62%	7%	7%	19%	11%	\$11.88
Sales & Related	16,427	43%	9%	12%	37%	8%	\$13.20
Personal Care & Service	12,420	62%	5%	24%	29%	51%	\$12.00
Office & Administrative Support	10,131	33%	4%	14%	46%	8%	\$14.72

	Number of Total Vacancies	Percent Part-time	Percent Temporary or Seasonal	Requiring Post-Secondary Education	Requiring 1 or More Years of Experience	Requiring Certificate or License	Median Hourly Wage Offer
Transportation & Material Moving	9,931	35%	13%	13%	46%	71%	\$15.52
Production	9,439	7%	8%	13%	37%	7%	\$15.98
Health Care Practitioners & Technical	8,818	42%	2%	92%	60%	93%	\$25.75
Building, Grounds Cleaning & Maint.	7,071	39%	30%	4%	20%	15%	\$14.86
Health Care Support	5,350	57%	2%	35%	19%	75%	\$13.48
Education, Training & Library	4,888	45%	27%	85%	68%	83%	\$15.92
Installation, Maintenance & Repair	4,634	6%	2%	46%	71%	40%	\$20.77
Management	4,602	3%	1%	88%	96%	22%	\$40.31
Business & Financial Operations	4,285	8%	2%	83%	92%	22%	\$28.83
Computer & Mathematical	4,093	1%	1%	85%	97%	10%	\$34.92
Construction & Extraction	3,447	16%	41%	39%	59%	46%	\$20.67
Community & Social Service	2,761	25%	6%	88%	76%	66%	\$19.40
Architecture & Engineering	2,608	0%	3%	83%	89%	25%	\$30.35
Protective Service	2,394	64%	4%	15%	30%	71%	\$11.45
Arts, Design, Entertainment & Media	1,276	35%	7%	54%	63%	17%	\$17.47

	Number of Total Vacancies	Percent Part-time	Percent Temporary or Seasonal	Requiring Post-Secondary Education	Requiring 1 or More Years of Experience	Requiring Certificate or License	Median Hourly Wage Offer
Life, Physical & Social Sciences	1,125	7%	3%	82%	78%	32%	\$24.66
Legal	458	4%	2%	94%	90%	60%	\$30.95

Source: *DEED Job Vacancy Survey, 4th Qtr. 2018*

Similar to Job Vacancy Survey results, data from DEED's Occupational Employment Statistics program shows that only about 36 percent of jobs in the state require postsecondary education for entry. The other 64 percent can be started with a high school diploma or less and some amount of on-the-job training (See Figure 6).



Certain careers – such as dentists, lawyers, and teachers – require a college education, while other jobs – including cost estimators, sales representatives, and correctional officers – do not. College is an excellent way to move up career ladders and open windows of opportunity to fields that would otherwise be closed, such as nursing or engineering. Many of these occupations offer high wages and are in high demand in the marketplace.

While education is typically a worthwhile investment, college can be expensive – with average annual expenses ranging between \$14,500 and almost \$50,000 per year in Minnesota. For those who go to college, choice of major matters – different programs lead to different jobs that earn

different amounts of money. Students and job seekers can use labor market data to make more informed career decisions.

In light of increased vacancies and increased demand for workers, DEED's Occupations in Demand (OID) tool sheds light on those occupations showing the most current need. These occupations are spread across different sectors in each region, but are typically concentrated in major industries. For example, retail salespersons, food prep workers, personal care aides, truck drivers, customer service representatives, registered nurses, computer user support specialists, software developers, industrial engineers, and elementary and secondary school teachers are among the top occupations in demand based on the consistent need for workers in these fields. Much of the current demand is found in health care, accommodation and food services, retail trade, and manufacturing (see Table 13).

**Table 13. Minnesota Top Occupations in Demand by Education Requirements, 2019**

Less than High School	High School or Equivalent	Some College or Assoc. Degree	Bachelor's Degree or Higher
Retail Salespersons (\$25,746)	Heavy & Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers (\$48,723)	Registered Nurses (\$79,297)	Software Developers, Applications (\$96,880)
Personal Care Aides (\$26,574)	First-Line Supervisors of Retail Sales Workers (\$41,640)	Nursing Assistants (\$34,418)	Computer Systems Analysts (\$91,593)
Combined Food Prep & Serving Workers (\$24,064)	First-Line Supervisors of Food Prep & Serving Workers (\$37,134)	Licensed Practical Nurses (\$47,706)	Web Developers (\$79,235)
Cashiers (\$24,384)	Secretaries & Administrative Assistants (\$41,019)	Automotive Service Techs. & Mechanics (\$40,865)	Financial Analysts (\$87,604)
Laborers & Freight, Stock & Material Movers, Hand (\$34,454)	Office Clerks, General (\$37,244)	Electricians (\$72,471)	Medical & Health Services Managers (\$102,024)
Home Health Aides (\$29,582)	Sales Representatives, Wholesale & Manufacturing (\$65,395)	Machinists (\$50,640)	Elementary School Teachers (\$62,904)
Cooks, Restaurant (\$29,730)	Maintenance & Repair Workers, General (\$43,740)	Computer User Support Specialists (\$54,704)	Industrial Engineers (\$88,112)
Waiters & Waitresses (\$23,072)	Customer Service Representatives (\$38,589)	Electrical & Electronics Engineering Techs. (\$62,198)	Secondary School Teachers (\$62,643)

Less than High School	High School or Equivalent	Some College or Assoc. Degree	Bachelor's Degree or Higher
Maids & Housekeeping Cleaners (\$26,889)	Childcare Workers (\$24,920)	CNC Machine Tool Programmers (\$61,624)	Management Analysts (\$79,926)
Counter Attendants, Cafeteria & Concession (\$23,059)	Pharmacy Technicians (\$37,437)	Industrial Machinery Mechanics (\$55,991)	Human Resources Specialists (\$61,520)

Source: DEED Occupations in Demand

In addition to current demand, it is also important to understand future demand. According to employment projections, Minnesota is expected to see job growth of 5.9 percent from 2016 to 2026. That's equivalent to 181,600 net new jobs, with nearly 128,000 slated for the Twin Cities Metro Area and the remaining 53,600 net new jobs set to be gained in Greater Minnesota. Zooming in, Central Minnesota is anticipated to be the fastest growing region within Minnesota, with a projected growth rate of 8.6 percent between 2016 and 2026, followed closely by the Twin Cities at 6.8 percent. Southeast and Northwest are projected to grow by 4.6 percent and 4.2 percent, respectively, while Northeast and Southwest both expected to grow around 1 percent. In addition, Minnesota is projected to have 1,480,027 labor force exit openings, due to current workers retiring or otherwise leaving their occupation. These replacement openings outpace new jobs in every case, meaning that many jobs will be available and in demand, even without seeing projected growth (see Table 14).

**Table 14. Minnesota Employment Projections by Occupational Group, 2016-2026**

Occupational Group	2016 Estimate	2026 Projection	2016-2026 Percent Change	Total Job Growth Change	Labor Force Exit Openings
Total, All Occupations	3,097,300	3,278,900	+5.9%	+181,600	+1,480,027
Office & Administrative Support	423,742	420,508	-0.8%	-3,234	+215,579
Sales & Related	295,312	300,901	+1.9%	+5,589	+171,482
Food Preparation & Serving Related	240,410	253,705	+5.5%	+13,295	+188,240
Management	236,316	249,678	+5.7%	+13,362	+76,453
Production	224,787	220,282	-2.0%	-4,505	+92,681
Health Care Practitioners & Technical	183,794	206,612	+12.4%	+22,818	+52,477
Transportation & Material Moving	188,103	196,338	+4.4%	+8,235	+95,838

Occupational Group	2016 Estimate	2026 Projection	2016-2026 Percent Change	Total Job Growth Change	Labor Force Exit Openings
Personal Care & Service	161,950	192,106	+18.6%	+30,156	+135,610
Business & Financial Operations	177,222	192,016	+8.3%	+14,794	+54,002
Education, Training, & Library	172,960	184,770	+6.8%	+11,810	+75,921
Construction & Extraction	119,141	129,151	+8.4%	+10,010	+43,767
Computer & Mathematical	100,985	110,159	+9.1%	+9,174	+17,971
Installation, Maintenance, & Repair	103,306	109,973	+6.5%	+6,667	+36,967
Health Care Support	88,928	104,062	+17.0%	+15,134	+55,746
Building, Grounds Cleaning & Maint.	95,789	103,753	+8.3%	+7,964	+61,229
Community & Social Service	63,422	69,174	+9.1%	+5,752	+26,725
Architecture & Engineering	55,330	59,926	+8.3%	+4,596	+14,513
Arts, Design, Entertainment, & Media	54,952	56,941	+3.6%	+1,989	+23,067
Protective Service	46,716	48,695	+4.2%	+1,979	+23,119
Life, Physical, & Social Science	26,096	28,789	+10.3%	+2,693	+6,812
Legal	21,531	23,406	+8.7%	+1,875	+5,543
Farming, Fishing, & Forestry	16,508	17,955	+8.8%	+1,447	+6,285

Source: DEED 2016-2026 Employment Outlook

Only two occupational groups are expected to see declines through 2026, but they are both among the five largest occupational groups in the state. Office and administrative support is expected to see a small decline in total jobs, but will still have the largest number of total openings due to a huge number of labor force exit openings. Likewise, production occupations are projected to decline by 2 percent, but will still have nearly 93,000 openings due to retirements or other labor force exits. In contrast, the occupations that are expected to see the most new job growth include personal care and service, health care practitioners and health care support, and business and financial operations occupations. Food preparation and serving

and sales and related occupations are projected to see the most openings due to turnover and labor force exits (see Table 14).

#### INDUSTRY TRENDS, PROJECTIONS, AND WORKFORCE DEMOGRAPHICS

Statewide, Minnesota was home to 175,211 business establishments providing 2,881,140 jobs through 2018, with a total payroll of just over \$167 billion. Just over 60 percent of the state's employment is located in the Twin Cities metro region. Central and Southeast are the next largest regions, while Northeast is the smallest region in terms of employment. Average annual wages were \$58,015 across the state, but ranged from a low of \$39,268 in Northwest to a high of \$64,722 in the Twin Cities. Employers in the state added nearly 189,000 jobs over the past five years, with 75 percent of that growth occurring in the Twin Cities metro area, though all six planning regions saw employment growth during that time frame (see Table 15).

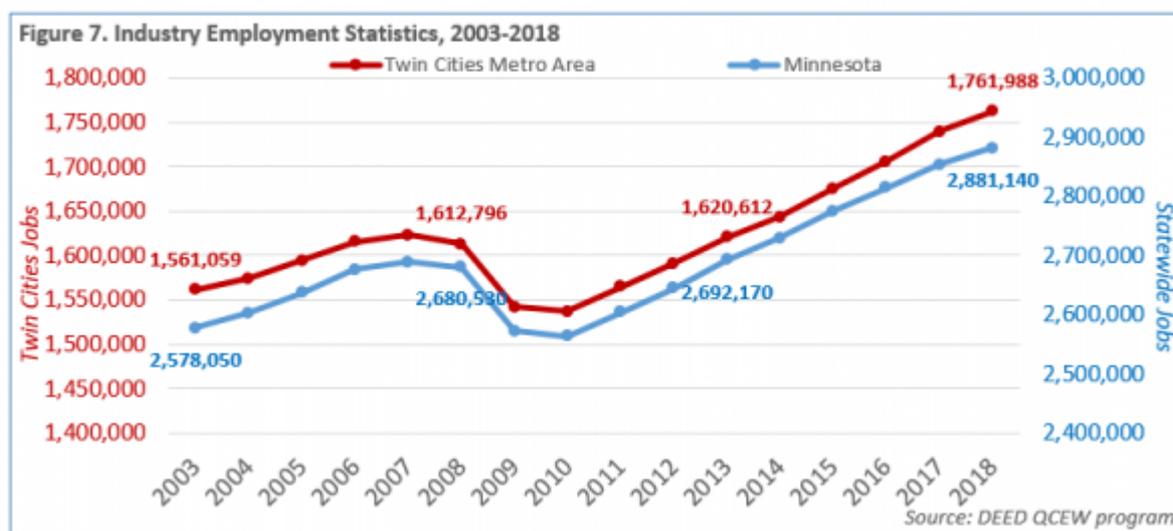
**Table 15. Minnesota Employment Statistics, 2018**

	2018 Annual Data Number of Firms	2018 Annual Data Number of Jobs	2018 Annual Data Total Payroll	2018 Annual Data Avg. Annual Wages	2013-2018 Change in Jobs	2013-2018 Percent Change	2017-2018 Change in Jobs	2017-2018 Percent Change
Central Minnesota	17,925	276,393	\$12,090,968,947	\$43,746	+17,590	+6.8%	+1,466	+0.5%
Northeast Minnesota	8,846	143,638	\$6,488,391,239	\$45,172	+3,317	+2.4%	+276	+0.2%
Northwest Minnesota	16,572	221,341	\$8,691,524,714	\$39,268	+7,612	+3.6%	0	0.0%
Southeast Minnesota	12,543	244,597	\$12,785,765,212	\$52,273	+9,437	+4.0%	+1,845	+0.8%
Southwest Minnesota	12,307	177,006	\$7,395,247,152	\$41,780	+2,703	+1.6%	-437	-0.2%
Twin Cities Metro Area	83,451	1,761,988	\$114,039,835,209	\$64,722	+141,376	+8.7%	+22,432	+1.3%
State of Minnesota	175,211	2,881,140	\$167,150,262,669	\$58,015	+188,970	+7.0%	+27,136	+1.0%

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

Minnesota ended 2018 with over 200,600 more jobs than it had in 2008. Employers in the state regained all of the jobs lost during the Great Recession by 2013, and have since provided steady employment growth. Between the annual low of 2,563,391 jobs following the Great Recession in 2010 and the new peak reached in 2018, Minnesota employers had added about 317,750 jobs for a growth rate of 12.4 percent. The Twin Cities Metro Area was the fastest-growing region of Minnesota between 2013 and 2018, although Central Minnesota was just behind it, growing by 6.8 percent during that time. Northwest and Southeast Minnesota both grew by about 4 percent

over the past five years, while Northeast and Southwest saw smaller amounts of growth. Southwest was the only region that lost jobs in the past year, while the Twin Cities again led the state in growth ((see Table 15 and Figure 7).



With almost 500,000 jobs, health care and social assistance is the largest employing industry in Minnesota, accounting for 17.2 percent of the state's total employment. With 321,836 jobs, manufacturing is Minnesota's second largest-employing industry, accounting for 11.2 percent of the state's total jobs. With 298,489 jobs, retail trade rounds out Minnesota's top-three largest employing industries, accounting for 10.4 percent of the state's total employment. Altogether, these three industries account for nearly 40 percent of the state's total employment.

Other large and important industries include accommodation and food services, educational services, professional and technical services, finance and insurance, administrative support and waste management services, public administration, wholesale trade, construction, and transportation and warehousing. Minnesota's economy is diverse, and there is strength in these numbers.

Not surprisingly, health care and social assistance added the most jobs between 2013 and 2018, gaining just over 50,000 jobs. Professional, scientific, and technical services added the second most jobs during this period of time, up about 26,600 jobs, growing by 19.5 percent. Coming in third, construction added 21,405 jobs, growing by 19.9 percent, making it the fastest-growing industry in Minnesota since 2013. Overall, 16 of 20 industry sectors witnessed employment growth in Minnesota between 2013 and 2018, with only information and real estate, rental and leasing seeing major declines. Fifteen industries gained jobs in the past year, again led by health care and social assistance (see Table 16).

**Table 16. Minnesota Industry Employment Statistics, 2018**

NAICS Industry Title	2018 Annual Data Number of Firms	2018 Annual Data Number of Jobs	2018 Annual Data Total Payroll (\$1,000s)	Avg. Annual Wage	2013-2018 Change in Jobs	2013-2018 Percent Change	2017-2018 Change in Jobs	2017-2018 Percent Change
Total, All Industries	175,211	2,881,140	\$167,150,263	\$58,015	+188,970	+7.0%	+27,136	+1.0%

NAICS Industry Title	2018 Annual Data Number of Firms	2018 Annual Data Number of Jobs	2018 Annual Data Total Payroll (\$1,000s)	Avg. Annual Wage	2013-2018 Change in Jobs	2013-2018 Percent Change	2017-2018 Change in Jobs	2017-2018 Percent Change
Health Care & Social Assistance	16,803	496,832	\$26,294,030	\$52,923	+50,059	+11.2%	+9,436	+1.9%
Manufacturing	8,477	321,836	\$21,594,320	\$67,097	+14,612	+4.8%	+2,833	+0.9%
Retail Trade	18,649	298,489	\$9,163,946	\$30,701	+11,547	+4.0%	-516	-0.2%
Accommodation & Food Services	12,050	233,422	\$4,708,319	\$20,171	+16,439	+7.6%	+1,600	+0.7%
Educational Services	4,275	230,907	\$11,586,261	\$50,177	+12,513	+5.7%	+2,206	+1.0%
Professional & Technical Services	22,225	163,394	\$15,471,603	\$94,689	+26,639	+19.5%	+3,311	+2.1%
Finance & Insurance	9,594	144,053	\$15,265,879	\$105,974	+4,146	+3.0%	+1,964	+1.4%
Admin. Support & Waste Mgmt. Svcs.	8,321	135,504	\$5,529,146	\$40,804	+808	+0.6%	+381	+0.3%
Public Administration	3,382	134,417	\$7,814,295	\$58,135	+10,595	+8.6%	+2,356	+1.8%
Wholesale Trade	13,406	130,952	\$11,058,667	\$84,448	+392	+0.3%	-1,460	-1.1%
Construction	16,651	128,769	\$8,637,814	\$67,080	+21,405	+19.9%	+2,202	+1.7%
Transportation & Warehousing	5,649	108,377	\$5,869,789	\$54,161	+15,044	+16.1%	+1,598	+1.5%
Other Services	17,084	90,246	\$3,091,239	\$34,253	+4,813	+5.6%	+93	+0.1%
Management of Companies	1,471	81,229	\$10,339,223	\$127,285	+4,281	+5.6%	+1,138	+1.4%
Arts, Entertainment, & Recreation	3,314	53,023	\$1,913,410	\$36,086	+4,015	+8.2%	+1,074	+2.1%
Information	4,045	52,849	\$4,063,308	\$76,885	-4,184	-7.3%	-1,184	-2.2%
Real Estate & Rental & Leasing	6,289	35,329	\$1,857,795	\$52,586	-4,429	-11.1%	+385	+1.1%

NAICS Industry Title	2018 Annual Data Number of Firms	2018 Annual Data Number of Jobs	2018 Annual Data Total Payroll (\$1,000s)	Avg. Annual Wage	2013-2018 Change in Jobs	2013-2018 Percent Change	2017-2018 Change in Jobs	2017-2018 Percent Change
Agriculture, Forestry, Fish & Hunting	2,854	21,855	\$860,239	\$39,361	+1,251	+6.1%	-327	-1.5%
Utilities	457	13,772	\$1,487,105	\$107,980	-631	-4.4%	-91	-0.7%
Mining	216	5,880	\$543,876	\$92,496	-343	-5.5%	+133	+2.3%

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

As noted, Minnesota's economy is expected to grow by 5.9 percent between 2016 and 2026, a gain of 181,600 jobs. The largest and fastest growing industry is projected to be health care and social assistance, which is anticipated to account for over 43 percent of total growth between 2016 and 2026. The state is also projected to see continued rapid job growth in professional and technical services and construction. Even agriculture and mining are expected to see job expansions. These industries will need to focus on recruiting new workers to meet their workforce needs. The state is expected to see small job cuts in manufacturing and information. While these industries are projected to decline through 2026, there will be the need for replacement workers (see Table 17).

**Table 17. Minnesota Industry Employment Projections, 2016-2026**

	Estimated Employment 2016	Projected Employment 2026	Percent Change 2016-2026	Numeric Change 2016-2026
Total, All Industries	3,097,300	3,278,900	+5.9%	+181,600
Health Care & Social Assistance	462,083	540,500	+17.0%	+78,417
Manufacturing	317,411	312,018	-1.7%	-5,393
Retail Trade	298,041	298,920	+0.3%	+879
Educational Services	241,732	253,880	+5.0%	+12,148
Accommodation & Food Services	222,202	233,880	+5.3%	+11,678
Public Administration	178,492	185,800	+4.1%	+7,308
Professional & Technical Services	158,194	180,210	+13.9%	+22,016
Finance & Insurance	142,355	149,300	+4.9%	+6,945
Administrative & Waste Services	135,918	143,320	+5.4%	+7,402
Wholesale Trade	131,844	135,500	+2.8%	+3,656

	Estimated Employment 2016	Projected Employment 2026	Percent Change 2016- 2026	Numeric Change 2016- 2026
Other Services, Ex. Public Admin	124,776	128,493	+3.0%	+3,717
Construction	115,986	126,315	+8.9%	+10,329
Transportation & Warehousing	102,244	107,389	+5.0%	+5,145
Management of Companies	78,473	82,000	+4.5%	+3,527
Arts, Entertainment, & Recreation	54,812	57,830	+5.5%	+3,018
Information	50,170	49,580	-1.2%	-590
Real Estate & Rental & Leasing	34,577	35,800	+3.5%	+1,223
Agriculture, Forestry, Fish & Hunt	24,206	26,790	+10.7%	+2,584
Utilities	12,513	12,590	+0.6%	+77
Mining	5,364	5,780	+7.8%	+416

Source: DEED 2016-2026 Employment Outlook

According to DEED's Quarterly Employment Demographics (QED) program, the workforce in the state was aging over the past 10 years. Through 2018, over one fifth (21.5%) of workers in the state were 55 years or older, compared to just 15.7 percent one decade earlier. The percent of the workforce in their prime working years, from 25 to 54 years of age, dropped from 65.2 percent in 2008 to 62 percent in 2018. In contrast, the percentage of young workers was falling over time, and while wages were going up, the number of hours worked was going down. Overall, wages were climbing across the board for all workers due to rising demand and a tight labor market. While wages were still lowest for the youngest and oldest workers who tend to fill lower-skilled, less-than-full-time jobs, these two age groups enjoyed the fastest percentage increase in wages from 2008 to 2018. Wages were highest for workers between 45 and 64 years of age, and males worked more hours than females, though the gap was narrowing over time (see Table 18).

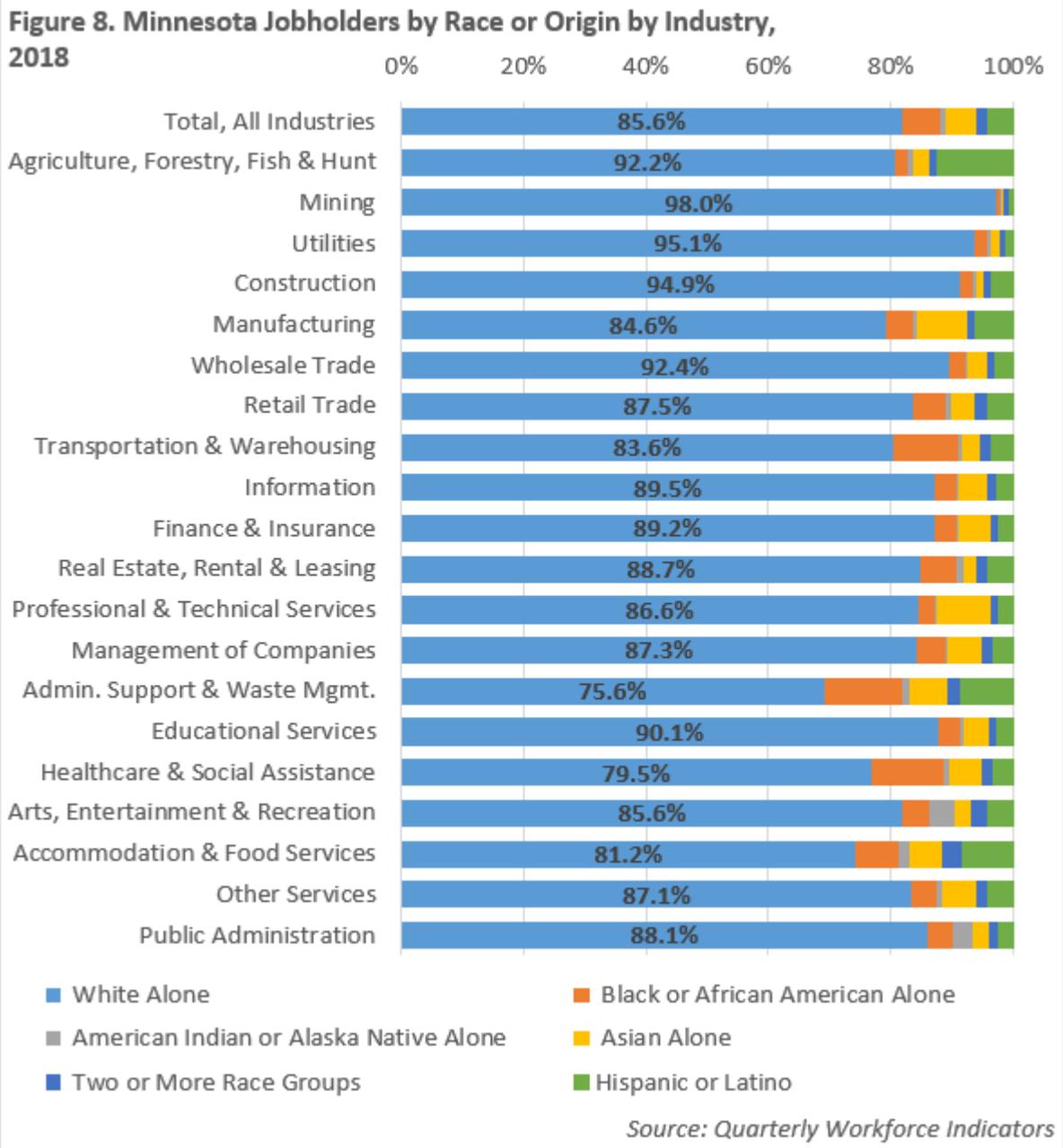
**Table 18. Minnesota Workforce Demographics by Age Group and Gender, Total of All Industries, 2008-2018**

	Percentage of Workers 2018	Percentage of Workers 2008	Median Hourly Wage 2018	Median Hourly Wage 2008	Median Hours Worked (Per Qtr.) 2018	Median Hours Worked (Per Qtr.) 2008
Total, all ages	100.0%	100.0%	\$19.80	\$15.64	425	426

	Percentage of Workers 2018	Percentage of Workers 2008	Median Hourly Wage 2018	Median Hourly Wage 2008	Median Hours Worked (Per Qtr.) 2018	Median Hours Worked (Per Qtr.) 2008
19 years & under	6.1%	7.5%	\$10.75	\$7.69	112	118
20 to 24 years	10.3%	11.6%	\$14.27	\$11.00	255	265
25 to 44 years	42.9%	42.7%	\$22.15	\$17.85	465	472
45 to 54 years	19.1%	22.5%	\$25.68	\$20.28	480	480
55 to 64 years	16.7%	12.6%	\$24.17	\$19.10	480	480
65 years & over	4.8%	3.1%	\$16.57	\$12.19	247	217
Male	49.1%	49.0%	\$22.28	\$17.92	480	480
Female	50.9%	51.0%	\$18.75	\$14.52	388	376

*Source: DEED Quarterly Employment Demographics*

In addition to aging demographics, the racial diversity of the state's workforce has also been changing over time. According to the Quarterly Workforce Indicators dataset, the number of white jobholders across all industries increased by 2.2 percent from 2008 to 2018, while the number of jobholders of some other race jumped by 46.9 percent. In fact, people of color or indigenous people filled 71 percent of the jobs added in the state between 2008 and 2018. By industry sector, people of color or indigenous people were most likely to hold jobs in administrative and support services, health care and social assistance, and accommodation and food services, which are all lower-wage industries. People of color were underrepresented in mining, utilities, construction, wholesale trade, agriculture, and educational services, most of which are higher-wage industries. Increasing the diversity of workers within moderate and high paying industries could improve earnings and incomes for people of color and indigenous people (see Figure 8).



Eight industries saw a decline in the number of white jobholders, with the biggest declines experienced in manufacturing and retail trade. Only one industry – real estate, rental and leasing – saw a decline in the number of workers who are people of color or indigenous. In contrast, the fastest increase in workers who are people of color or indigenous was in health care and social assistance, educational services, professional and technical services, and transportation and warehousing, which all saw a more than 75 percent increase. Though 95 percent of workers are still white, the number of workers who are people of color or indigenous in the construction industry jumped 57 percent.

Of the 90,320 workers who gained jobs in health care and social assistance from 2008 to 2018, over 58 percent – or 52,789 jobholders – were workers who are people of color or indigenous. That was far and away the largest increase in any industry, followed by accommodation and food services, which added nearly 17,000 workers who are people of color or indigenous,

educational services, which gained over 15,000 workers who are people of color or indigenous, and retail trade and manufacturing, which both added about 12,000 additional workers who are people of color or indigenous. Administrative support and waste management services has long been the most racially diverse industry, and added about 5,800 workers who are people of color or indigenous from 2008 to 2018.

#### NONEMPLOYERS AND FARMS

Minnesota was home to 409,860 self-employed businesses or “nonemployers” in 2017, which are defined by the U.S. Census Bureau as “businesses without paid employees that are subject to federal income tax, originating from tax return information of the Internal Revenue Service (IRS).” Minnesota saw a small increase in nonemployers over the past decade, though it was not consistent across the state. Only the Twin Cities metro area and Southeast added nonemployers, while Central, Northeast, and Northwest saw big declines. In sum, the state added about 23,000 nonemployers from 2007 to 2017, a 5.9 percent increase. These nonemployers generated sales receipts of over \$19.3 billion in 2017 (Table 19).

**Table 19. Nonemployer Statistics, 2017**

	2017 Number of Firms	2017 Receipts(\$1,000s)	2007-2017 Change in Firms	2007-2017 Percent Change
Central Minnesota	48,809	\$2,281,655	-1,738	-3.4%
Northeast Minnesota	20,508	\$793,393	-1,667	-7.5%
Northwest Minnesota	43,223	\$1,955,979	-1,160	-2.6%
Southeast Minnesota	32,757	\$1,498,088	+243	+0.7%
Southwest Minnesota	27,444	\$1,243,769	-77	-0.3%
Twin Cities Metro Area	237,119	\$11,597,606	+27,275	+13.0%
State of Minnesota	409,860	\$19,370,490	+22,876	+5.9%

Source: U.S. Census, Nonemployer Statistics program

Though DEED is not a great source of data on farms, agriculture is also a key industry in Minnesota, including 68,822 farms producing just under \$18.4 billion in the market value of products sold in 2017 according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture. As farms continue to get larger, the number of farms in the state declined over the past 5 years. The Northwest and Southwest regions had the largest presence of farms, followed by Central and Southeast Minnesota. In contrast, Northeast and the Twin Cities did not have very many farms or much reliance on agriculture (see Table 20).

**Table 20. Census of Agriculture, 2017**

	Number of Farms	Change in Farms, 2012-2017 Number	Change in Farms, 2012-2017 Percent	Market Value of Products Sold
Central Minnesota	13,540	-1,246	-8.4%	\$2,939,547,000
Northeast Minnesota	2,362	+55	+2.4%	\$55,215,000
Northwest Minnesota	19,380	-2,589	-11.8%	\$4,173,089,000
Southeast Minnesota	11,478	-601	-5.0%	\$2,857,846,000
Southwest Minnesota	18,319	-832	-4.3%	\$7,758,272,000
Twin Cities Metro Area	3,743	-507	-11.9%	\$611,422,000
State of Minnesota	68,822	-5,720	-7.7%	\$18,395,390,000

Source: *2017 Census of Agriculture*

Regional profiles have been made available to each of the workforce development regions. Additional information and analysis will be provided to each region as requested.

[1] Individuals with barriers to employment include displaced homemakers; low-income individuals; Indians, Alaska Natives, and Native Hawaiians; individuals with disabilities, including youth who are individuals with disabilities; older individuals; ex-offenders; homeless individuals, or homeless children and youths; youth who are in or have aged out of the foster care system; individuals who are English language learners, individuals who have low levels of literacy, and individuals facing substantial cultural barriers; farmworkers (as defined at section 167(i) of WIOA and Training and Employment Guidance Letter No. 35-14); individuals within 2 years of exhausting lifetime eligibility under the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families program; single parents (including single pregnant women); and long-term unemployed individuals.

[2] Veterans, unemployed workers, and youth, and others that the State may identify.

## 2. WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT, EDUCATION AND TRAINING ACTIVITIES ANALYSIS

The Unified or Combined State Plan must include an analysis of the workforce development activities, including education and training in the State, to address the education and skill needs of the workforce, as identified in (a)(1)(B)(iii) above, and the employment needs of employers, as identified in (a)(1)(A)(iii) above. This must include an analysis of—

### A. THE STATE'S WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES

Provide an analysis of the State's workforce development activities, including education and training activities of the core programs, Combined State Plan partner programs included in this plan, and required <sup>6</sup> and optional one-stop delivery system partners.<sup>7</sup>

[6] Required one-stop partners: In addition to the core programs, the following partner

programs are required to provide access through the one-stops: Career and Technical Education (Perkins), Community Services Block Grant, Indian and Native American programs, HUD Employment and Training programs, Job Corps, Local Veterans' Employment Representatives and Disabled Veterans' Outreach Program, National Farmworker Jobs program, Senior Community Service Employment program, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) (unless the Governor determines TANF will not be a required partner), Trade Adjustment Assistance programs, Unemployment Compensation programs, and YouthBuild.

[7] Workforce development activities may include a wide variety of programs and partners, including educational institutions, faith- and community-based organizations, and human services.

#### B. THE STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES OF WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES

Provide an analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of the workforce development activities identified in (A), directly above.

#### C. STATE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT CAPACITY

Provide an analysis of the capacity of State entities to provide the workforce development activities identified in (A), above.

### **2. WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT, EDUCATION AND TRAINING ACTIVITIES ANALYSIS.**

The Unified or Combined State Plan must include an analysis of the workforce development activities, including education and training in the State, to address the education and skill needs of the workforce, as identified in (a)(1)(B)(iii) above, and the employment needs of employers, as identified in (a)(1)(A)(iii) above. This must include an analysis of

#### **A. THE STATE'S WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES**

Provide an analysis of the State's workforce development activities, including education and training activities of the core programs, Combined State Plan partner programs included in this plan, and required and optional one-stop delivery system partners.[1]

Minnesota's Combined State WIOA Plan serves as a guide for Minnesota for continuous improvement of the state's workforce development system. This plan and its implementation seek to address challenges to the workforce development system and capitalize on opportunities. Challenges include: labor force availability; a skills gap; disparities in employment and educational outcomes for populations experiencing workforce system challenges;[2] and the need to remain relevant and useful to job seekers and employers, given their rapidly changing capacities and expectations.

Under WIOA, the activities of the workforce development system are categorized within three areas: 1) Career Services; 2) Training Services and 3) Business Services. The following is a high-level description of these three categories of services, as they are provided in the state of Minnesota and represent all core programs, Combined State Plan programs and optional one-stop delivery system partners.

Career Services — WIOA has 11 required elements for career services, all which support customers to make informed decisions about their career choices and to understand the resources needed and available to assist them with pursuing their goals. Minnesota's system focuses on providing career information, job seeker services and connections to support services that help individuals find and retain employment.

System partners provide a robust range of workshops, e-learning, one-on-one meetings and other resources to help people prepare for a successful job search. Minnesota's career services are supported by nationally-recognized labor market information systems and a "Creative Job Search" curriculum, as well as workshops designed for a wide range of needs — including career planning, skills assessment, resume writing, interviewing and how to use social media in your job search. Minnesota's Unemployment Insurance (UI) division also has laid the groundwork for moving services to the web by creating e-learning courses based on the Creative Job Search curriculum. Resource referrals are also a critical component in connecting job seekers with needed resources. These services are provided throughout the system at CareerForce locations, partner sites and are often augmented by services through non-required titles/partners, such as the public library system.

DEED provides required and optional training to all core program, Combined State Plan programs and optional one-stop delivery system partners to ensure consistent approaches and quality services for all job seekers. All core programs with the exception of Title II, participate in career services to the fullest extent possible through collocation at CareerForce locations and other locations determined necessary for serving job seekers. Title II works closely with CareerForce locations to coordinate career services and referrals among the programs for seamless transition for customers. Having a "career and work oriented" context for much of their instruction, including computer literacy, provides strong support for job seekers to transition to services at the CareerForce locations. All other Combined State Plan programs also have direct connections to career services provided to job seekers and program participants through the CareerForce locations. As an example, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) services are currently accessible in a majority of CareerForce locations across Minnesota. Post-secondary Perkins V is the only non-direct individual service provider in the Combined State Plan, but the work they produce aligns with the building of career services that support career pathway thinking.

Training Services — Since WIOA implementation, Minnesota has broaden the system's approach to training services, placing greater emphasis on recognition of work-based and experiential- learning; portable and stackable credentials which lead to a career pathway that supports family sustaining wages. One of the key entry points for many adults and youth is Adult Basic Education, which focuses on a range of educational needs, such as basic literacy and English as a second language; GED preparation; and "bridge" programming that combines basic skills education contextualized for career pathways and preparation for post-secondary training.

As employers are forced by the workforce shortage to hire more people with less experience, they are seeking more support and assistance with providing training on the job to provide existing employees with the opportunity to learn new skills. The state's Incumbent Worker Training program helps provide employers with these training opportunities.

Minnesota's post-secondary options are abundant and varied. These opportunities include traditional education; customized training; private training providers; all levels of credentialing; registered apprenticeships and other work-based learning options. With funding dedicated for education and training, system partners use Minnesota's federal and state training resources, including the state's general and Workforce Development Fund, which helps retrain dislocated workers and has funded career pathways programing, increasing the access through community-based organizations who serve targeted populations and returning veterans.

All core programs participate in training services, as allowed by their federal title rules and regulations. Title I-B and Title IV programs support Youth, Adult, Dislocated Workers and

individuals with disabilities, often coordinated with state funding and other community-based services to ensure successful alignment and outcomes of educational and employment goals. Title II provides services to Minnesota's most diverse population of any plan partner and plays a strategic role in basic skills attainment and preparation for postsecondary education. Title III, which doesn't allow for occupational training activities, often serves as a first point of entry for the referral process for low income adults, Dislocated Workers and other targeted populations. Additionally, other Titles and UI refer customers to the career planning services offered by Title III.

As allowed by their federal title rules and regulations, partners in the Combined State Plan participate in the provision of training services. Most of these programs have greater restrictions on the provision of training services, but provide the opportunity for co-enrollment and greater reliance on more traditional sources of financial aid for college or other opportunities. Postsecondary Perkins, as a non-direct service provider, is more embedded in the design of postsecondary education, supporting the development of new education and training for emerging occupations and emphasizing nontraditional occupations, to name a few aspects of their role.

Business Services — Minnesota's WIOA Plan continues emphasis on providing services to businesses and has developed performance metrics for these activities. The primary service provided to employers is to help them find workers. MinnesotaWorks.net, the state's online job bank, allows businesses to post openings with no fee. At any given time, it has more than 75,000 job postings and more than 25,000 active resumes from job seekers and has the capacity for businesses to be recognized as "veteran friendly", supporting civilian workforce re-entry for Minnesota veterans.

The state and its partners assist with recruiting and other workforce planning strategies, such as training or skill assessments and labor market information so employers understand competitive factors impacting their ability to attract and retain a highly skilled workforce. All core programs participate and benefit from business services activities.

Although Title III provides a strong basis for all business services activities, all of the other core programs utilize and coordinate resources to support this activity. Title I-B programs utilize this information and engage in supplemental activities such as focus groups and specialized career fairs to engage employers and inform the local boards. Title II business services activities serves to inform curriculum context and direction, to ensure that the basic education being provided serves a broader need of those needing or seeking more immediate employment. Title IV also has business outreach staff to support and promote expanding opportunities for individuals with disabilities.

All other Combined State Plan partners benefit in similar ways from the business services activities. Some of these programs, like postsecondary Perkins V, have business engagement requirements that assist them with program planning and other aspects of training development. Minnesota also has had great success with the veterans program and strategies that tap into the business services activities. All optional partners have connections to the One-Stop system's career services, training services, and business services through a variety of options. These options include co-location, sharing recruitment information, participating in referral networks, and participating in strategy or service-related activities. These options are designed based on regional presence and access to the services.

Minnesota has worked to enhance focus on business and industry. Employer Navigator duties have been assigned to specific staff at all CareerForce locations. These staff are adept at working

with business to meet workforce needs. Regional Workforce Strategy Consultants and Veteran Service's LVERS, both described in greater detail later in this narrative, also serve as resources to employers. The Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED) has formed an internal committee to streamline employer services as well as interdepartmental committees with a charge of workforce system alignment.

## **B. THE STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES OF WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES.**

Provide an analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of the workforce development activities identified in (A), directly above.

Minnesota's strengths and weaknesses analysis of the activities provided under WIOA will be looked at through the lens of a career pathways system and how the six elements identify and support the gap analysis of what the current system offers and what the future system needs to deliver.

Career Services Strengths:

- From entry into the system through One-Stops, to the partnerships with community-based organizations, customers receive career services that are regional or localized to individual labor markets. This is achieved through constant input from regional and local employers through employer engagement and cross-sector partnerships developed primarily through the work of the local workforce development boards.
- Minnesota's workforce development system providers also represent the growing diversity of our state's population, with community engagement by local providers enhancing and expanding services to assist with target populations experiencing disparate outcomes based on race, disability, gender or disconnected youth. The employer and community engagement also contribute to the customer-focused design, offering individualized or culturally-appropriate approaches. Community engagement efforts in the state have been led primarily by community based organizations with experience working with communities facing systemic barriers to employment.
- Minnesota also oversees several key workforce development programs that seek to address the state's economic disparities including:
  - Competitive Grants: Competitive grant programs support nonprofit organizations that provide business assistance to targeted groups including women, People of Color, indigenous people, rural residents, innovative startups, entrepreneurs, inventors and people with disabilities.
  - Pathways to Prosperity: The program uses a career pathway design in meeting the skills needs of businesses and individuals. The program's innovative approach helps educationally under-prepared adults succeed in well-paying careers by integrating basic skills education and training in fields where these skills are in-demand.
  - Youth at Work: Provides job training and placement to Minnesota's youth population, in addition to access to networks and problem-solving skills, to support their long-term careers.
  - The CareerForce Partnership: The new CareerForce brand was developed through a partnership MAWB (representing the 16 local workforce boards), GWDB, and DEED. This unified brand, while continuing to be further developed

and implemented, helps alleviate confusion around programs and services for employers and jobseekers.

#### Career Services Weaknesses:

A career pathways approach to Career Services presents several opportunities for improving our services.

Career Services most significant weaknesses, which we are working to address, are:

- Focus on finding a job and meeting job seekers “where they are at” – we want to help people who need family sustaining employment to focus on finding a career pathway that best meets their interests and skills.
- Need for greater focus on employers – we want to develop tools that assist employers in tapping overlooked job seekers while we increase awareness of our services. We want to help all Minnesota meet their workforce needs, but many employers are not aware of our services.
- Need for more diverse, culturally aware service – the makeup of our staff and workforce development boards need to reflect the diverse populations we serve. We need greater outreach to populations experiencing disparities in education and employment outcomes.
- MinnesotaWorks.net, the required federal labor exchange, is outdated and not integrated with CareerForceMN.com. This integration is a priority for state staff in 2020 as it will help provide more seamless service online for career services and for employers.

The strategies and actions for addressing these weaknesses in the system will be led by the regional partnerships and the local workforce development boards. Through the regional planning process, each region identifies in-demand occupations and specific populations experiencing inequities in educational and employment outcomes, and then creates business-led sector partnerships that provide the necessary input for the local boards to direct and guide the workforce development system investments in their region that contribute to the foundation of career services.

System management approaches and tools are also needed to help monitor and measure the impact of new strategies and tools. There is no universal data collection system in Minnesota for all workforce development programs, particularly between federally funded and state funded, which contributes to cumbersome intake processes for service providers and can lead to delays in providing seamless services to customers.

The strategies and actions for addressing these weaknesses in the system will be led by the GWDB and State Agencies that oversee the programs participating in the State Combined Plan. Minnesota continues to experience shifts in funding and resources. This, combined with expanding approaches to career services under WIOA, will require innovative approaches and stronger coordination of efforts through policy and program updates. Technology solutions through system management approaches will be key to bridging existing divides that exist within career services.

### Training Services Strengths:

- Alignment with career pathways model: Minnesota's training services reflect the key elements of a career pathways system. Based on the BEST model from the state of Washington, Minnesota modeled its Pathways to Prosperity initiative on a career pathways approach. Pathways to Prosperity grants draw heavily upon employer and community engagement for identifying the initial career pathways and targeting specific populations. The grants include person centered design and offer a career navigator to assist with coordinating supports required to elevate completion and employment rates, with an ultimate goal of a career and family sustaining wages.
- Many of the career pathway projects have specifically addressed services for target populations experiencing disparate outcomes based on race, disability, gender or disconnected youth. . This work is aimed at creating better outcomes through more relevant approaches. It is based on Minnesota's commitment to address systemic barriers for targeted populations and continues to evolve Minnesota's two-year postsecondary education institutions and adult basic education also draw heavily on employer engagement to ensure curriculum and skill requirements remain relevant. This process is leveraged by multiple partners, such as the department of corrections, and serves a strong base for meeting the training needs of employers.
- Minnesota's Pathways to Prosperity grants demonstrate the need for and potential success of a person-centered design and approach. Success requires providing career navigators to assist with the coordination of support services and an alternative to scheduling and instructional approaches. Minnesota's experience implementing Pathways to Prosperity and other career pathway initiatives, the state has gained a better understanding of how to broaden the scalability in moving the system statewide. This is one of, if not the most critical element for broader success of implementing WIOA and a career pathway system.
- Minnesota also has strengths in the area of funding and resources. State, local and philanthropic support for workforce development makes a substantial contribution to the state's workforce development system. Strong performance by the local boards and service providers has led to the awarding of WIA incentive funds and competitive grants; state appropriations that support additional youth services; services to individuals with disabilities; dislocated and incumbent workers; and adult basic education. Most of these resources augment the activities under WIOA. There are also significant resource coordination activities related to training activities, such as the Youth Practitioners Network, the local workforce development boards and efforts by CBO coalitions.
- Activities have further support through changes or creation of new policy and programming development specific to career pathways projects serving low-income adult populations. Minnesota has strong working relationships between the agencies that oversee the WIOA titles and the Department of Human services, which oversees the TANF and SNAP E&T programs. Perkins V, also contributes to the policy discussions, through the mapping of career pathways and their understanding of articulation and matriculation needs to align with postsecondary institutional requirements. The majority of the special programming in career pathway pilots have included or required these types of partnerships which will contribute to policy and program changes.

- These efforts also support work in the area of System Management, currently anchored, from a data perspective, within Workforce One. This system supports data management and sharing across WIOA titles I and IV; TANF and SNAP E&T, including all of the local partners delivering the related services. This system is also moving toward having participant documents stored electronically, streamlining administrative activities and monitoring.

#### Training Services Weaknesses:

Weaknesses in Training Services that we have identified include:

- Room for improvement in coordination between K-12 and postsecondary education to provide accurate guidance to students and prepare them for in-demand occupations.
- Need for broader recognition of the value of a range of education and training options, including work-based learning.
- Better aligning the skills and interests of job seekers with approaches that meet their individual needs. This includes ensuring culturally relevant training and training for job seekers who have experienced significant workforce challenges.
- Broader use of customer-focused services including coordination of housing, childcare, transportation and other support services. Unemployment Insurance funding, for example, can only cover an individual for up to 26 weeks but courses or programs that they could be helped by may last much longer than that funding. This may deter some individuals from participating in programs, while others may start a program but withdraw once UI funding ends.
- Businesses on the state and local boards have indicated a need for more short-term programming where individuals can select from a wide variety of “stackable” training programs needed by their current employer or employers in the region, gradual and incremental benefits can be seen by those participating, and participants can eventually obtain industry-recognized credentials.

The strategies and actions for addressing these weaknesses in the system will be led by the regional partnerships and the local workforce development boards. Through the regional planning process, each region identifies in-demand occupations and specific populations experiencing inequities in educational and employment outcomes, and then creates business-led sector partnerships that provide the necessary input for the local boards to direct and guide the workforce development system investments in their region that contribute to the delivery of training services in a more accessible and usable way for populations experiencing inequities in educational and employment outcomes.

Funding and resources strategies should also support developing new approaches to training services. Examples of needs in this area are the small number of career counselors in high schools, serving youth who do not finish high school or connect to postsecondary education, and serving students requiring additional education prior to starting a postsecondary field of study.. Through better alignment, programs and policies can guide changes in the system’s approach to education and life-long learning.

Improving system management will require a coordinated effort of state agencies, state agency boards, local workforce development and school boards, and service providers across the

system. Stemming from a shared vision and an understanding of outcomes and common measures, efforts need to focus on developing better approaches to measuring system processes and outcomes that validate a career pathway system and support the needs of a high-quality workforce.

The strategies and actions for addressing these weaknesses in the system will be led by the GWDB and State Agencies that oversee the programs participating in the State Combined Plan. Minnesota continues to experience shifts in funding and resources. This, combined with expanding approaches to training services under WIOA, will require innovative approaches and stronger coordination of efforts through policy and program updates. Minnesota is fast becoming a State funding dominated system in relation to federal funding for workforce development and the associated programs in the Combined Plan. This phenomenon will require a thoughtful approach to charting the future of workforce development in Minnesota.

#### Business Services Strengths:

Strengths in Business Services that we have identified include:

- Incumbent Worker and On-the-Job training programs are heavily sought after by employers.
- Employer-led sector initiatives are leading innovative efforts across the state, particularly those focused on a particular local area or region.
- Ongoing growth of community engagement activities to work with employers to address employment and economic disparities, as well as workshops and developing other resources for employers to engage with communities often seeing the greatest disparities.
- Local board staff have deep connections with businesses in their areas.

#### Business Services Weaknesses:

The following Business Services weaknesses were identified:

- One-on-one services and consultations for businesses would be useful in helping businesses navigate the services available.
- Employer engagement is occurring, but could be done in a far more purposeful and targeted way. Employer outreach could be more effective in raising awareness or dispelling misperceptions about services and programs available.
- Need for a better connection with economic development. Online resources for employers need further development, while the MinnesotaWorks.net labor exchange needs updating. The relationship between MinnesotaWorks.net and the CareerForceMN.com platform is unclear to some.
- Smaller employers might find the system of programs and services difficult to navigate, while the duration of many programs might be more difficult for smaller or newer businesses to plan around (while larger and/or more established employers have more predictable funding and resources available).

The GWDB and State Agencies will work to develop more tools and materials for businesses, while DEED and the GWDB will be exploring more opportunities for workforce development and economic development efforts to be aligned. The integration of content between MinnesotaWorks.net and the online CareerForce platform will also be addressed. GWDB staff will convene members of the GWDB from business to help focus efforts on the needs of industry.

### **C. STATE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT CAPACITY**

Provide an analysis of the capacity of State entities to provide the workforce development activities identified in (A) above.

DEED's programs and services are delivered through our 50 CareerForce locations, online services and eligibility-based programs. DEED also partners with certified service providers, non-profits, and the Minnesota State college and universities system, and Adult Basic Education programs to deliver workforce development programs to all Minnesotans.

Minnesota has a long history of successful participation in national and state initiatives to expand workforce development activities through cross-agency and systems collaboration. Here are just a few recent examples:

- National Governors Association (NGA) Talent Pipeline Policy Academy is a cross-agency leadership team that is working to institute shared goals and strategies across the state's education and training pipeline. The GWDB was responsible for convening meetings and coordinating the activities of the policy academy, with technical assistance provided by the NGA. The team members involved in the policy academy were instrumental in launching an ongoing committee of the GWDB, the Career Pathways Partnership (CPP).
- Minnesota received a U.S. Department of Labor Workforce Innovation Fund (WIF) Grant to ensure that our public workforce system evolves to continue serving the needs of job seekers and businesses in innovative ways by delivering services more efficiently. Minnesota's new online platform offers a "no wrong door" approach to curated and customized information for job seekers and employers, including digital connections to ensure warm hand-off of customers to service providers.
- Minnesota received an Educate for Opportunity grant from the National Governors Association and Strata Education Network to support training initiatives for adult learning. The Minnesota team will receive technical assistance from NGA over the course of 18 months to refine their data-driven approaches to anticipating and meeting future workforce needs.

Minnesota also has strong internal supports from offices that support workforce development activities through the dissemination of information or evaluation to guide decision-making. These include:

- DEED's Labor Market Information Office and its regional analysts continue to collaborate with local Workforce Boards, DEED staff, and others to provide data and analysis for grant applications, career information tools for customers, and meaningful analysis on the state and regional economies.

- DEED’s Performance Management Office, which works throughout the agency to facilitate results-based accountability that is client-focused, impartial, and transparent. The office informs strategic direction by providing data-driven analysis and context to those who use, deliver, and fund the Minnesota economic and workforce development systems.

[1] Required one-stop partners: In addition to the core programs, the following partner programs are required to provide access through the one-stops: Career and Technical Education (Perkins), Community Services Block Grant, Indian and Native American programs, HUD Employment and Training programs, Job Corps, Local Veterans’ Employment Representatives and Disabled Veterans’ Outreach Program, National Farmworker Jobs program, Senior Community Service Employment program, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) (unless the Governor determines TANF Page 35 will not be a required partner), Trade Adjustment Assistance programs, Unemployment Compensation programs, and YouthBuild.

[2] Populations experiencing disparities based on race, disability, gender, or being a disconnected youth.

## B. STATE STRATEGIC VISION AND GOALS

The Unified or Combined State Plan must include the State’s strategic vision and goals for developing its workforce and meeting employer needs in order to support economic growth and economic self-sufficiency. This must include—

### 1. VISION

Describe the State’s strategic vision for its workforce development system.

### 2. GOALS

Describe the goals for achieving this vision based on the analysis in (a) above of the State’s economic conditions, workforce, and workforce development activities. This must include—

(A) Goals for preparing an educated and skilled workforce, including preparing youth and individuals with barriers to employment<sup>8</sup> and other populations.<sup>9</sup>

(B) Goals for meeting the skilled workforce needs of employers.

[8] Individuals with barriers to employment include displaced homemakers; low-income individuals; Indians, Alaska Natives, and Native Hawaiians; individuals with disabilities, including youth who are individuals with disabilities; older individuals; ex-offenders; homeless individuals, or homeless children and youths; youth who are in or have aged out of the foster care system; individuals who are English language learners, individuals who have low levels of literacy, and individuals facing substantial cultural barriers; eligible migrant and seasonal farmworkers (as defined at section 167(i) of WIOA and Training and Employment Guidance Letter No. 35-14); individuals within 2 years of exhausting lifetime eligibility under the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families Program; single parents (including single pregnant women); and long-term unemployed individuals.

[9] Veterans, unemployed workers, and youth and any other populations identified by the State.

## 3. PERFORMANCE GOALS

Using the tables provided within each Core Program section, include the State's expected levels of performance relating to the performance accountability measures based on primary indicators of performance described in section 116(b)(2)(A) of WIOA. (This Strategic Planning element only applies to core programs.)

#### 4. ASSESSMENT

Describe how the State will assess the overall effectiveness of the workforce development system in the State in relation to the strategic vision and goals stated above in sections (b)(1), (2), and (3) and how it will use the results of this assessment and other feedback to make continuous or quality improvements.

#### **B. STATE STRATEGIC VISION AND GOALS.**

The Unified or Combined State Plan must include the State's strategic vision and goals for developing its workforce and meeting employer needs in order to support economic growth and economic self-sufficiency. This must include

##### 1. VISION

Describe the State's strategic vision for its workforce development system.

As described in the economic and workforce analysis above, Minnesota's future economic prosperity requires a workforce development system that provides greater employment opportunity for those experiencing barriers to employment and meets the skill needs of employers. As our state faces the reality of a shrinking and diversifying labor force, along with currently low unemployment rates, we must fully utilize the talents, skills, and experience of more people in the workforce. We need "all hands on deck" at a time when we are leaving too many Minnesotans behind. Minnesota's 2020 WIOA Vision remains unchanged from 2018. That vision continues to be supported by the programs and services of WIOA:

Our vision for Minnesota is a healthy economy where every Minnesotan has meaningful employment and a family-sustaining wage, and where all employers are able to fill jobs in demand.

Inherent in this vision is the reality that employment must be more than a job. Employment must have a career focus aimed at meeting the needs of both job seekers and employers. Our vision is for meaningful careers at higher wages for all Minnesotans including those who have faced significant challenges. Our vision focuses on placing people on the path to in-demand careers within growing industry sectors while paying attention to industry trends forecasting future growth. We realize that progress toward this vision will rely on its alignment with the Governor's priorities, attention to the changing needs of job seekers and employers, and well-executed implementation strategies. As we look to future modifications to the One Minnesota WIOA Combined State Plan, we see an opportunity to explore innovations in our workforce system in a number of areas:

- Prioritizing Diversity, Inclusion, and Equity
- Equitable Systems
- Creating an Age-Friendly State
- Preparing for Future of Work

##### 2. GOALS

Describe the goals for achieving this vision based on the above analysis of the State's economic conditions, workforce, and workforce development activities. This must include—

A. GOALS FOR PREPARING AN EDUCATED AND SKILLED WORKFORCE, INCLUDING PREPARING YOUTH AND INDIVIDUALS WITH BARRIERS OF EMPLOYMENT[1] AND OTHER POPULATIONS.[2]

**B. GOALS FOR MEETING THE SKILLED WORKFORCE NEEDS OF EMPLOYERS.**

In order to realize our vision for a stronger workforce development system, Minnesota's WIOA Plan continues its focus on two primary goals:

1. Reduce educational, skills training, and employment disparities based on race, disability, gender, or disconnected youth.
2. Build employer-led industry sector partnerships that expand the talent pipeline to be inclusive of race, disability, gender, and age to meet industry demands for a skilled workforce.

Minnesota is committed to addressing the needs of individuals who have faced challenges to employment by identifying the disparities based on the data presented in this plan. Regardless Minnesota's ongoing tight labor market and extremely low unemployment rates overall, there are populations experiencing two to three times the average unemployment rate. Minnesota's will continue to address the disparity gaps within targeted populations to improve outcomes of education attainment and employment outcomes. As outlined in plan modifications in 2018, Minnesota chose to include gender as an additional focus to reduce workforce disparities. This addition was based on community input as well as workforce and economic analysis. Minnesota recognizes that these target populations are not unique but intersect and that it is often at these intersections where disparities in outcomes are the greatest.

Additionally, through the business-led sector partnerships, a greater focus will be placed on access to career opportunities for disparately impacted populations as included in goal 2 For the One Minnesota 2020 WIOA State Plan, age has been added to our list. Governor Walz has prioritized making Minnesota an Age-Friendly state. There are one million older adults in Minnesota and that figure is growing rapidly. In 2020, the number of older adults in Minnesota over age 65 will exceed the number of children under age 18. Employment is one of the challenges that many older adults face. Many older adults want to stay in the workforce, volunteer, and give back to their communities. Given Minnesota's tight labor market, employers stand to benefit from the skills and expertise of older workers.

The career pathways system is grounded through the vision and goals of this plan. The commitment to career pathways is evident at multiple levels; state, regional, and local areas. Minnesota continues to build upon our experience to develop strategies beyond our local areas to become embedded throughout the six established regions within the state. Each of the six regions within Minnesota have approved regional plans and strategies to support the goals of our state plan. These plans build upon existing career pathways with a focus on serving individuals with the greatest barriers to employment. The plans identify a minimum of two industry sectors to establish or develop additional capacity through employer-led partnerships. Less than two years has passed since the regional plans have been approved but all six regions have demonstrated significant progress. The regions have developed a regional governance structure, made significant progress in their community outreach, established employer-led partnerships and are in the process of developing career pathways models to meet the needs of the individuals served and establishing benchmarks to measure their outcomes. Minnesota's state investment (\$35M) in the equity grants in 2016 and its subsequent investment in

successor grants provides further investment for training for youth, communities of color, and individuals with other barriers to employment. Minnesota's vision to meet the needs of these individuals as well as the needs of industry will be our goals for the next four years. In 2016, the GWDB adopted this plan as their four year strategic plan. The board has established two additional standing committees to address and identify strategies, policies and oversight to support the goals. The Racial Equity and Disability Equity Committees represent board members and stakeholders at state, regional and local levels. The GWDB continues to provide oversight, technical assistance, and communication around best practices within the regional plans.

Over the past two years the Career Pathways Partnership completed extensive research around career pathways models, policies to support a career pathways system, and submitted recommendations to the GWDB. This committee relies heavily on the private sector members of the board all of whom represent key industry sectors and representative of the six regions. These private sector leaders are core to the development of industry recognized credentials, supporting career pathways, offering work-based learning experiences and identify gaps within their sectors and regions of the state. The identification of industry sectors in the six regions requires strong partnerships and understanding of their communities and industries.

The GWDB has made it a priority to address gender opportunity gaps. Workforce participation by gender in some of the industry sectors identify significant gaps. Addressing these gaps and focusing on populations with the greatest barriers will continue to move individuals forward to earning a family sustaining wage. Developing strategies that address these gaps will include intentionality and focus around race, disability, disconnected youth, and gender. Additionally, the workforce development system should be helping to ensure that environments where services for job seekers are provided, along with the workplaces that they are being placed into, are welcoming of all gender identities.

The six regions are instrumental in the implementation of strategies while informing the GWDB and the respective committees of their challenges and successes. Together they will identify best practices, examine the barriers and collectively make recommendations for solutions toward achieving our goals. Over the next two years the priorities will continue to focus on developing career pathways based on building the competencies and skills needed to fill occupations in demand within our growing sectors. The priority will be focused on developing industry recognized credentials that move individuals along a career path that fulfills the demands of industry while providing opportunity for employment and livable wages. Minnesota will continue to focus on industry sectors in; construction, health care, manufacturing, natural resources and professional and business services. These sectors have multiple occupations that allow individuals to continue to develop their skills while moving out of poverty into livable wage occupations.

The combined state plan partners are instrumental in identifying and leveraging resources to support these innovative approaches at local and regional levels. The health care sector across the state and their partnerships, have developed training models (Career Pathways) that support individuals at all levels but also developed the training that allow for individuals to get off and on the "ramps" to skill development which lead to credential and/or degree attainment. The CPP membership represents all partners of this combined plan with three sub- groups being led by Adult Basic Education, CTE, DLI, and Dept. of Human Services (TANF/Snap E & T). In addition, community-based organizations play a major role by identifying the needs of their communities whether it be transportation, childcare, housing, remedial education or ESL, or culture differences. This partnership is able to identify the needs of all individuals served

through the program partners but also opportunities for incumbent workers whom provide opportunities for entry level positions for someone entering the workforce. A successful career pathway model allows for individuals, even out of school youth, to move into employment, receive the necessary training leading to credential attainment, receive support services, and provide future opportunity for forward growth in other occupations by building on previous experience and credentials. This partnership supported by the GWDB is one example of supporting this plan in addition to sector partnerships and regional partnerships being established through the six regional plans. To ensure alignment, transparency, and progress, the GWDB will be holding meetings or workshops for members representing business to better establish policies and directions moving forward. Additionally, the GWDB utilizes each of its full board meetings to have discussions that are synthesized into a memo and sent to the Governor's Office to advise the governor on a particular topic or issues.

### 3. PERFORMANCE GOALS.

Using the table provided in Appendix 1, include the State's expected levels of performance relating to the performance accountability measures based on primary indicators of performance described in section 116(b)(2)(A) of WIOA. (This Strategic Planning element only applies to core programs.)

#### Effectiveness in Serving Employers

The USDOL requires us to report on the "Effectiveness for Serving Employers" annually. Below, find the final numbers SFY 2019 (or WIOA Program Year 2018) that we supplied in our WIOA Annual Report Narrative.

Employer Services	Establishment Count PY18	Establishment Count PY17
1. Employer Information and Support Services	3,070	2,464
2. Workforce Recruitment Assistance	8,546	8,819
3. Strategic Planning/Econ Devt Activities	240	736
4. Untapped Labor Pools Activities	372	163
5. Training Services	160	152
5b. Incumbent Worker Training Services	148	73
6. Rapid Response/Business Downsizing Assistance	188	121
6b. Planning Layoff Response	26	25
Employer Penetration	6.4%	6.7%
Total (De-duplicated)	11,510	11,646
QCEW (2018 Q1)	179,665	173,534

Employer Services	Establishment Count PY18	Establishment Count PY17
Retention with Same Employer	56.8%	58.0%
Same employer Q2 Q4	16,133	5,781
Employed Q2	28,389	9,962

#### 4. ASSESSMENT.

Describe how the State will assess the overall effectiveness of the workforce development system in the State in relation to the strategic vision and goals stated above in sections (b)(1), (2), and (3) and how it will use the results of this assessment and other feedback to make continuous or quality improvements.

The performance goals are based on individuals with barriers to employment including Minnesota's communities of color. Under the direction of the Operations Committee of the GWDB, DEED's Performance Management staff prepared a WIOA State Plan Dashboard to provide transparency and accountability towards its state plan goals; <https://mn.gov/deed/performance>. This dashboard includes information on activities and employment outcomes by program, year, and participant demographics and is sortable by program, program year, state region, gender and disability status. For example, sorting for all programs and state regions for all genders and disability levels, 69.4% of all program participants, 57% of all American Indian/Alaska Native participants, 72% of all Asian participants, 71% of all Black participants, 70% of all Hispanic/Latino participants, 70% of all White participants and 62% of all multi-race/unidentified race or ethnic group were employed in the 2nd quarter.

This dashboard shows program activities and employment outcomes by program, by year, and by a variety of participant demographics. It includes participants who have exited WIOA Title I, III and IV programs. The dashboard also shows progress towards developing and maintaining Industry Sector Partnerships across the state.

As detailed in this State Plan narrative regarding coordination with State Plan programs, the WIOA Implementation Team will meet on an ongoing basis to review One Minnesota WIOA State Plan execution. That Team will be charged with creating assessment plans related to the State Plan vision, mission, goals, and strategies. The Team will present and evaluate data and determine strategies for quality and continuous improvement. The work of this Team will be informed by performance data collected through individual WIOA and combined programs, community engagement input, and input from MAWB and the GWDB. In quarterly presentations to the GWDB Operations Committee, the Team will discuss assessment results relative to the overall workforce development system.

Minnesota's Department of Management & Budget supports state agencies with the implementation of Results Based Accountability (RBA) to evaluation and improvement of state services and outcomes. MMB staff served as facilitators of several sub-committee, including members of the GWDB, local boards and stakeholders from across the system, charged with the development of the dashboard to ensure a transparency and sensitivity to the various challenges faced by targeted populations.

DEED has received national inquiries about its WIOA State Plan Dashboard, including a presentation to the NASWA Equal Opportunity Committee meeting in 2018.

[1] Individuals with barriers to employment include displaced homemakers; low-income individuals; Indians, Alaska Natives, and Native Hawaiians; individuals with disabilities, including youth who are individuals with disabilities; older individuals; ex-offenders; homeless individuals, or homeless children and youths; youth who are in or have aged out of the foster care system; individuals who are English language learners, individuals who have low levels of literacy, and individuals facing substantial cultural barriers; eligible migrant and seasonal farmworkers (as defined at section 167(i) of WIOA and Training and Employment Guidance Letter No. 35-14); individuals within 2 years of exhausting lifetime eligibility under the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families Program; single parents (including single pregnant women); and long-term unemployed individuals.

[2] Veterans, unemployed workers, and youth and any other populations identified by the State.

### C. STATE STRATEGY

The Unified or Combined State Plan must include the State's strategies to achieve its strategic vision and goals. These strategies must take into account the State's economic, workforce, and workforce development, education and training activities and analysis provided in Section (a) above. Include discussion of specific strategies to address the needs of populations provided in Section (a).

1. DESCRIBE THE STRATEGIES THE STATE WILL IMPLEMENT, INCLUDING INDUSTRY OR SECTOR PARTNERSHIPS RELATED TO IN-DEMAND INDUSTRY SECTORS AND OCCUPATIONS AND CAREER PATHWAYS, AS REQUIRED BY WIOA SECTION 101(D)(3)(B), (D). "CAREER PATHWAY" IS DEFINED AT WIOA SECTION 3(7) AND INCLUDES REGISTERED APPRENTICESHIP. "IN-DEMAND INDUSTRY SECTOR OR OCCUPATION" IS DEFINED AT WIOA SECTION 3(23)

2. DESCRIBE THE STRATEGIES THE STATE WILL USE TO ALIGN THE CORE PROGRAMS, ANY COMBINED STATE PLAN PARTNER PROGRAMS INCLUDED IN THIS PLAN, REQUIRED AND OPTIONAL ONE-STOP PARTNER PROGRAMS, AND ANY OTHER RESOURCES AVAILABLE TO THE STATE TO ACHIEVE FULLY INTEGRATED CUSTOMER SERVICES CONSISTENT WITH THE STRATEGIC VISION AND GOALS DESCRIBED ABOVE. ALSO DESCRIBE STRATEGIES TO STRENGTHEN WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES IN REGARD TO WEAKNESSES IDENTIFIED IN SECTION II(A)(2)

### C. STATE STRATEGY.

The Unified or Combined State Plan must include the State's strategies to achieve its strategic vision and goals. These strategies must take into account the State's economic, workforce, and workforce development, education and training activities and analysis provided in Section (a) above. Include discussion of specific strategies to address the needs of populations provided in Section (a).

**1. DESCRIBE THE STRATEGIES THE STATE WILL IMPLEMENT, INCLUDING INDUSTRY OR SECTOR PARTNERSHIPS RELATED TO IN-DEMAND INDUSTRY SECTORS AND OCCUPATIONS AND CAREER PATHWAYS, AS REQUIRED BY WIOA SECTION 101(D)(3)(B), (D). "CAREER PATHWAY" IS DEFINED AT WIOA SECTION 3(7) AND INCLUDES**

**REGISTERED APPRENTICESHIP. “IN-DEMAND INDUSTRY SECTOR OR OCCUPATION” IS DEFINED AT WIOA SECTION 3(23).**

As noted above, the One Minnesota Combined WIOA State Plan will continue its focus on two primary goals:

1. Reduce educational, skills training, and employment disparities based on race, disability, gender, and disconnected youth to provide greater opportunity for all Minnesotans.
2. Build employer-led industry sector partnerships that expand the talent pipeline to be inclusive of race, disability, gender, disconnected youth, and age to meet industry demand for a skilled workforce.

Minnesota will seek to achieve these goals by continuing to build a robust career pathway system driven by six common elements of successful career pathways:

1. Business Engagement
2. Community Engagement
3. Customer-Focused Design
4. Funding and Resource Needs
5. Policy and System Alignment
6. System Management

In 2016, the GWDB adopted the definition and six key elements of career pathways to define work in partnership with providers and funders. This process has helped align WIOA and other Combined Plan partner resources with existing state and philanthropic resources that have been key drivers of career pathways programming. Career pathways programming has continued to grow to best meet the unique situations of the populations being served.

The following narrative lays out a high level overview of the strategies that Minnesota is pursuing as we make progress toward our goals. Between 2020 and 2022, we plan to evaluate our progress and incorporate appropriate revisions reflecting ongoing coordination and alignment work with workforce development partners.

**Strategic Element 1 - Business Engagement**

Create business-led sector partnerships to guide the development of career pathways in occupations in demand that support family sustaining wages

Business engagement focuses on creating business-led sector partnerships that utilize the 7 principles of Industry Partnerships, published by The National Fund for Workforce Solutions. Based on regularly updated regional Labor Market Information (LMI) data, each region develops sector partnerships that are business—led. The outcome of this effort is Career Pathway models that lay out a clear route to attaining jobs for occupations in demand that pay family-sustaining wages. Components include identifying the demand for each occupation; establishing the technical skill requirements tied to a postsecondary credential that are recognized by the industry; and conducting an analysis of workforce make-up as it relates to employment levels of populations experiencing disparate impact.

The primary responsibility for this strategy lies with the GWDB, local workforce development boards, within the regional plans, and DEED.

## **Strategic Element 2 - Community Engagement**

Community engagement focuses on reaching out to communities experiencing inequalities in education and employment outcomes. In order to best design programs that meet their needs. It also includes outreach to service providers to review current practices around existing career pathway programs funded by federal, state, private and philanthropic organizations.

Minnesota has a diverse provider network with many community-based organizations offering specialized approaches to serving the populations experiencing inequities in education and employment outcomes, including communities of color, individuals with disabilities, disconnected youth and people experiencing homelessness. The priority is to develop a more coordinated and more inclusive support network among providers.

The second area is to more fully engage communities experiencing disparate impact with educational and employment outcomes. This includes the tribal governments serving the seven Anishinaabe and four Dakota communities. Local Workforce Development Boards, within their respective regions, will be required to engage stakeholders in the development of their regional strategies and program development. DEED employs a Tribal Liaison who will assist local areas in outreach to Tribal nations. The outcome of this effort will be to build stronger connections with these communities and specialized service providers to increase access and improve outcomes for individuals who have experienced employment challenges.

Additionally, gender opportunity gaps exist that hamper a robust talent pipeline for many of the sectors and occupations in demand that have been selected by the six regions. This impedes business growth and negatively impacts job seekers who need high quality information about the full array of family sustaining wage pathways available to them. Occupational segregation needs to be overcome to create the most robust talent pipeline available to all job seekers and employers.

The state funded Women's Economic Security Act (WESA), passed in 2014, provides resources and support to address gender opportunity gaps. The Minnesota Legislature has continued appropriations for WESA grants in 2016, 2017, and 2019. Of women enrolled in WESA grants since their inception, 55% have been nonwhite.

The primary responsibility for this strategy is the local boards within the six workforce development regions. The regional plans call for local boards to actively engage communities experiencing disparate impacts in education and employment outcomes; gender opportunity gaps; and to engage with service providers who have specialized skills in working with the identified populations. This engagement will play a role in strengthening services, connections among providers, and the accessibility of services for impacted populations.

State agencies will provide data and other analysis to assist local boards with this process, providing demographic and programmatic information, as well as ensuring that all system providers are known by the local boards, as many funding efforts, particularly from direct appropriations from the state legislature, have not been aligned specifically with the state, regional, or local workforce development plans.

### **Strategic Element 3 - Customer-Focused Design**

Customer-focused design requires ongoing commitment to assessing and addressing the needs of businesses and job seekers. This strategic element is directly tied to the first two elements: business and community engagement. Viewing the workforce development system from the lens of our customers enhances our ability to achieve greater success. Customer-focused design is also strategically important to improve services for communities experiencing disparities. Outcomes will continue to include more customer driven programming for job seekers needing multiple services and “on-ramps” to be successful and career pathway opportunities based on needs of employers.

The primary responsibility for this strategy will be coordinated by the state board in partnership with the state agencies and the local boards. Existing practices of current career pathway initiatives will be reviewed and assessed for successful elements that can be replicated and brought to scale. These efforts will contribute to establishing a framework that allows for regional and local flexibility, based on available resources and partners to deliver services.

This Strategic Element will build upon the efforts already underway through the state’s Pathways to Prosperity program, which in SFY 2020-21 will provide nearly \$11 million in grants to career pathways partnerships putting job seekers with barriers to employment on the path to high-demand careers with training and employer-valued credentials.

### **Strategic Element 4 - Funding and Resource Needs**

Minnesota’s existing career pathway programs and initiatives are funded and supported by a variety of federal, state and philanthropic resources. As funding and resources have expanded and brought new opportunities to service providers and job seekers, so has the broadening of career pathway approaches. Minnesota reviews and assesses various models to disseminate best practices. The outcome from this effort will result in more efficient use of resources and an understanding of the resources needed for continued development of the system that achieves our vision and goals of this plan.

### **Strategic Element 5 - Policy and System Alignment**

Minnesota recognizes the need to continue adapting state and local policies and the potential need for federal waivers to better align our career pathway system around equity and economic employment demand. The outcome of these efforts include stronger alignment of system components and more efficient use of resources, especially performance and outcome metrics. Alignment work across secondary education, postsecondary education, state agencies involved in WIOA programs, and the local administrators and providers is ongoing since the initial passage of WIOA.

The primary responsibility for this strategy is with the state agencies. Policy and program alignment strategies is coordinated by each agency responsible for specific programs, as is coordination with the local boards and system partners. The GWDB and staff will support efforts for federal and state legislative rule changes, waivers, or system policy changes that help ensure compliance, continuous improvement, and measurable results.

This Strategic Element will build upon the efforts already underway between DEED and local workforce board leaders, who have been meeting monthly to redesign system program policy.

Beginning in 2020, the GWDB will be utilizing task forces to hone in on a narrower issue or set of issues where specific deliverables can be identified, developed, and assessed.

### **Strategic Element 6 - System Management**

Develop an approach that supports the common measures and work of all system partners, including interim measures and end measures.

Minnesota created a WIOA State Plan Dashboard to provide transparency and accountability toward two goals – reducing educational, skills training and employment disparities based on race, disability, disconnected youth or gender, and building employer-led industry sector partnerships. Through routine updates, the dashboard displays regional outcomes and allows users to filter by race and ethnic group, gender, and disability status.

The primary responsibility for this strategy is with the state board, in coordination with the state agencies and local boards. The state board oversaw the development and overall approach to the benchmarking system. State agencies and local boards will also support how the metrics are developed and applied within the regions and how the regional goals will be established and reported.

### **2. DESCRIBE THE STRATEGIES THE STATE WILL USE TO ALIGN THE CORE PROGRAMS, ANY COMBINED STATE PLAN PARTNER PROGRAMS INCLUDED IN THIS PLAN, REQUIRED AND OPTIONAL ONE-STOP PARTNER PROGRAMS, AND ANY OTHER RESOURCES AVAILABLE TO THE STATE TO ACHIEVE FULLY INTEGRATED CUSTOMER SERVICES CONSISTENT WITH THE STRATEGIC VISION AND GOALS DESCRIBED ABOVE. ALSO DESCRIBE STRATEGIES TO STRENGTHEN WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES IN REGARD TO WEAKNESSES IDENTIFIED IN SECTION II(A)(2).**

Two key goals identified by the GWDB to support the foundation from which the Combined Plan builds upon are addressing the disparities gap within education and addressing the disparities gap within employment. GWDB staff and members will work with leaders from DEED and other agencies to either strengthen or identify resources needed to support the overall goals of this plan through existing programs or the development of new programming. In addition, the Minnesota state legislature requires DEED to provide a “report card” of the overall performance of state funded workforce initiatives which can be found at: <https://mn.gov/deed/about/what-we-do/agency-results/performance-measures/report-card.jsp>. This report card also serves as a resources to make data-informed decisions on our performance and any policy recommendations or programming that result in better outcomes.

In addition to the report card, the GWDB asked that program performance as it relates to the two existing (and now modified) state goals in the WIOA State Plan be monitored. This is done on the DEED website on the WIOA State Plan Dashboard: <https://mn.gov/deed/about/what-we-do/agency-results/performance-measures/wioa/>.

DEED, including the new leaders across the agency working in workforce development or for the GWDB, are committed to equity measures being at the forefront of the work needed to see a more cohesive workforce development system actualized. Every team across DEED has developed specific equity related goals as part of a new agency-wide performance management system rooted in the objectives and key results (OKR) model. Additionally, DEED has hired new staff for the Office of Economic Opportunity that will focus on needed system improvements

relating to outreach, accessibility, and inclusion. The OEO team includes an American Indian Liaison that is working with teams across DEED to better improve relationships and partnerships with tribal nations and their workforce development entities.

Broadly speaking, the equity goals at DEED cover four main themes:

- - Increasing awareness of programs to reduce geographic and other targeted disparities.
  - Increasing the number of program participants served from under-represented communities.
  - Addressing achievement gaps for low-income and at-risk populations.
  - Improving relationship and partnership with Minnesota's 11 tribal nations.

Also at the state level, the members of the GWDB, MAWB, and DEED meet monthly to share best practices, progress on state, regional, and local plans, and discuss issues with regard to service delivery, resources, and any challenges with serving our customers. This venue provides an excellent opportunity to identify solutions and adjust strategies to meet our overall goals within the plan. DEED leadership and GWDB staff are also leading up regular meetings between program staff across agencies and monthly meetings between leadership at the agencies across the workforce development system.

The full GWDB meets on a quarterly basis and makes recommendations to the Governor focusing on the vision, goals and strategies outlined in the plan and overall recommendations for the system. Additionally, the GWDB Career Pathways Partnership and GWDB Operations Committee dive deeper into the State Plan and state strategies on behalf of the full board.

Minnesota's common data tracking system, Workforce One, serves as a resource for not only the tracking of data but also used as a system which shares information between programs and identifies individuals whom may be co-enrolled in several programs. DEED's staff serve as support to all users of this system and also provide recommendations for system improvements. Workforce One is Minnesota's primary tool for tracking program participant data and MinnesotaWorks.net, our labor exchange, also tracks data. MinnesotaWorks.net tracks the majority of the state's reportable individual activities, as well as Title III program participants and business services data.

Minnesota's core workforce development partners have a long and productive history of collaboration, both across programs and between the state and local areas. The chief conveners of Minnesota's core programs are DEED and the GWDB. As the state's primary workforce development agency, DEED oversees and strives to align all Title I, III, and IV; TAA, Jobs for Veterans Grant, and the Senior Community Service Employment Programs (SCSEP). Since the adoption of WIOA, DEED has also deepened its partnership with MDE, which oversees Adult Basic Education.

The Office of Higher Education (OHE) Budget included \$1 million for FY20-21 to support local partnership programs at Minnesota State Colleges and Universities. These partnerships must be comprised of campuses and local businesses and may also include K-12 school districts, trade associations, local chambers of commerce, and economic development authorities. Funds must be used to develop new and accelerate existing employer-led workforce exposure programs, technical education pathway programs, dual-training programs, internships, youth

skills training programs, and other industry-recognized programs in high-growth, high-demand industries.

The state has also established a Diversity and Inclusion Council, which seeks to improve the recruiting and retention of state employees from diverse backgrounds; improve the contracting process for businesses owned by Minnesotans from diverse backgrounds; and promote civic engagement for residents of Minnesota. The Council and its committees are tasked with identifying best practices, developing a legislative agenda and moving forward with an enterprise-wide diversity and inclusion strategic plan. Additionally, a statewide council on aging, to promote Minnesota becoming an “age friendly state”, was recently created and will include CareerForce staff from DEED. Additionally, GWDB members serve as members on other committees, such as the state-funded Minnesota Job Skills Partnership and the State Rehabilitation Council. Through collaborative and cross-agency efforts, policy changes and recommendations are discussed and vetted across the workforce development system.

### III. OPERATIONAL PLANNING ELEMENTS

The Unified or Combined State Plan must include an Operational Planning Elements section that supports the State’s strategy and the system-wide vision described in Section II(c) above. Unless otherwise noted, all Operational Planning Elements apply to Combined State Plan partner programs included in the plan as well as to core programs. This section must include—

#### A. STATE STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION

The Unified or Combined State Plan must include—

##### 1. STATE BOARD FUNCTIONS

Describe how the State board will implement its functions under section 101(d) of WIOA (i.e., provide a description of Board operational structures and decision making processes to ensure such functions are carried out).

### III. OPERATIONAL PLANNING ELEMENTS

The Unified or Combined State Plan must include an Operational Planning Elements section that supports the State’s strategy and the system-wide vision described in Section II(c) above. Unless otherwise noted, all Operational Planning Elements apply to Combined State Plan partner programs included in the plan as well as to core programs. This section must include

#### **A. STATE STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION. THE UNIFIED OR COMBINED STATE PLAN MUST INCLUDE**

##### **1. STATE BOARD FUNCTIONS. DESCRIBE HOW THE STATE BOARD WILL IMPLEMENT ITS FUNCTIONS UNDER SECTION 101(D) OF WIOA (I.E., PROVIDE A DESCRIPTION OF BOARD OPERATIONAL STRUCTURES AND DECISION MAKING PROCESSES TO ENSURE SUCH FUNCTIONS ARE CARRIED OUT).**

The state board will fulfill its functions under section 101(d) of WIOA through an Operations Committee. This committee has formulated its approach to the 12 functions of the board by categories its activities into four areas — administration, policy, information technology, and performance. The committee meets monthly and utilizes a work plan to guide their work, which includes working with staff to guide and oversee the preparation and submission of the WIOA State Plan, preparation and submission of an annual report, preparing and submitting a bi-

annual state legislative report, and other oversight functions. The Operations Committee also participates in the review and approval of the Regional Plans to ensure alignment with the state Combined Plan and works with GWDB staff to develop and maintain work plans for the board. Relating to policy changes, the GWDB can address both existing and new policies needed to support the better alignment of resources and services.

The information technology functions will focus on leveraging systems to avoid duplication, addressing the need for more responsive career information — tied to the eligible training provider list, and on data systems. This will drive better coordination of services across the system and support process and outcome metrics as part of the performance functions.

The performance functions will focus on continuous improvement and support the transparency of the system components and how they are contributing to achieving the goals of the state Combined Plan. The performance system will look at process and outcome measures focusing on interim gains and final outcomes related to the WIOA performance common measures and other areas as deemed necessary by the state board.

## 2. IMPLEMENTATION OF STATE STRATEGY

Describe how the lead State agency with responsibility for the administration of each core program or a Combined Plan partner program included in this plan will implement the State's Strategies identified in Section II(c). above. This must include a description of—

### A. CORE PROGRAM ACTIVITIES TO IMPLEMENT THE STATE'S STRATEGY

Describe the activities the entities carrying out the respective core programs will fund to implement the State's strategies. Also, describe how such activities will be aligned across the core programs and Combined State Plan partner programs included in this plan and among the entities administering the programs, including using co-enrollment and other strategies, as appropriate.

## **2. IMPLEMENTATION OF STATE STRATEGY. DESCRIBE HOW THE LEAD STATE AGENCY WITH RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE ADMINISTRATION OF EACH CORE PROGRAM OR A COMBINED STATE PLAN PARTNER PROGRAM INCLUDED IN THIS PLAN WILL IMPLEMENT THE STATE'S STRATEGIES IDENTIFIED IN II(C) ABOVE. THIS MUST INCLUDE A DESCRIPTION OF**

### **A. CORE PROGRAM ACTIVITIES TO IMPLEMENT THE STATE'S STRATEGY. DESCRIBE THE ACTIVITIES THE ENTITIES CARRYING OUT THE RESPECTIVE CORE PROGRAMS WILL FUND TO IMPLEMENT THE STATE'S STRATEGIES. ALSO, DESCRIBE HOW SUCH ACTIVITIES WILL BE ALIGNED ACROSS THE CORE PROGRAMS AND COMBINED STATE PLAN PARTNER PROGRAMS INCLUDED IN THIS PLAN AND AMONG THE ENTITIES ADMINISTERING THE PROGRAMS, INCLUDING USING CO-ENROLLMENT AND OTHER STRATEGIES, AS APPROPRIATE.**

The providers of activities under WIOA core Titles I, III and IV; TAA, the Jobs for Veterans Grant and Senior Community Services Employment will primarily implement the State strategies through services within the system and through special projects that support a career pathways system. The provision of career services will focus on how the information made available contributes to a person's knowledge of their career pathway opportunities. Career services continues its shift from primarily being about the "next job" or a specific skill needed for the next job, to one that helps provide a career trajectory for the individual job seeker.

Minnesota's six regions have identified at a minimum two industry sectors that represent opportunities for individuals with the greatest barriers to employment. Using relevant data and improved workforce planning, service providers have the resources to assist individuals in making informed career decisions leading to opportunities which in turn, address and impact the disparities gaps — race, disability, disconnected youth and gender. Staff and counselors delivering career services continue to receive training and access to professional development and current data. Individuals seeking training services work with counselors who have the most current tools to assist participants in making an informed choice and identify the necessary resources to ensure greater opportunities for successful completion of training and job placement. Partners in the workforce system at local, regional, and state levels continue to collaborate on opportunities to align and integrate programming and resources to achieve our goals.

The providers of activities under WIOA core Title II — Adult Basic Education, will continue to embed career pathways philosophy into their services and administrative capacities. Business engagement extends to pursuing work—based learning opportunities that support the contextualized learning approaches. There are 500 ABE locations throughout the state, all unique to the needs of the communities they serve and the resources they can leverage. Through their participation on sector partnerships and understanding of the sequence of educational requirements for eventual industry recognized credentials, curriculum will continue to be modified to contextualize learning for future educational needs that align with the goals of the individual. Resources will also be committed to continue professional and system staff development so that career pathways approaches allow Adult Basic Education providers to more flexibly meet the needs of regional sector strategies and the needs of targeted populations and their inherent learning styles. These local and regional partnerships have led and will continue to inform best practices serving disparate populations and result in skill attainment through career pathways and work-based learning strategies that meet the industry demands.

The Perkins V-funded programs and activities provide opportunities for stronger alignment of services to support a career pathways system. These activities include supporting work—based learning, which may expand upon how skills are recognized and credentialed. Teacher credentialing is another focus area which looks at how changes in industry needs impacts the skills and knowledge requirements of faculty. Perkins V-funded activities also promote conducting program feasibility studies, program approval and implementation, all of which are critical to ensure ongoing alignment and relevancy of educational and training opportunities.

The Minnesota Department of Corrections (DOC) has put grant funded career navigator positions in place within the state prisons to work with offenders ready for release. A team approach between CareerForce locations, Minnesota Department of Human Services (DHS), DOC Re-entry, parole, and DOC Career Technical Education staff work closely to coordinate their programs and career services to provide a seamless transition back into the communities. The DOC provides postsecondary Career Technical Education programming in many demand sectors, while providing portable and stackable credentials.

The majority of CareerForce locations in the system also include coordinated services provided by or in conjunction with DHS. Participants have access to resource rooms for job seeking, workshops for developing job seeking skills and referral opportunities for other needed services. The approved six regional plans all identify strategies to align and integrate services and programming to provide opportunities for participants building upon and leading to meaningful employment.

There are several opportunities for activities to be aligned and enhanced with the core programs. Training is needed for staff to understand the appropriate activities and career pathway opportunities for recipients within a system where job search and job placement have been primarily seen as the core activity. We need to continue to better understand how career pathways models including; work-based learning, apprenticeships, and skills training can be implemented to align with the needs of industry. Development of employer-led sector partnerships allow for opportunities for job seekers with a priority to address the disparities gaps in race, disability, disconnected youth, and gender opportunities. This being said, it has been critical for providers to understand the regional sectors in demand.

Another opportunity is to look at the scaling of on-ramps to training programs. This career pathway strategy is a good fit for individuals who need entry level credentials and the need for immediate employment. Such on ramp training programs could include forklift certification, MS office credentialing, CompTia, Paraprofessional training, and other entry level certifications that are feeders to occupations in demand that could allow for transition into further academic credentials such as diplomas or degrees.

Alignment across all required core programs and State Combined Plan partners that began with WIOA continues as career pathways activities are maintained and enhanced across the state workforce system through multiple state and federal programs. Identified as the Pathways to Prosperity program in Minnesota, this national strategy focuses on providing skilled career counselors, integrated developmental and skills training, application of appropriate sources and comprehensive placement assistance.

#### B. ALIGNMENT WITH ACTIVITIES OUTSIDE THE PLAN

Describe how the activities identified in (A) will be aligned with programs and activities provided by required one-stop partners and other optional one-stop partners and activities provided under employment, training (including Registered Apprenticeships), education (including career and technical education), human services and other programs not covered by the plan, as appropriate, assuring coordination of, and avoiding duplication among these activities.

**B. ALIGNMENT WITH ACTIVITIES OUTSIDE THE PLAN. DESCRIBE HOW THE ACTIVITIES IDENTIFIED IN (A) WILL BE ALIGNED WITH PROGRAMS AND ACTIVITIES PROVIDED BY REQUIRED ONE-STOP PARTNERS AND OTHER OPTIONAL ONE-STOP PARTNERS AND ACTIVITIES PROVIDED UNDER EMPLOYMENT, TRAINING (INCLUDING REGISTERED APPRENTICESHIPS), EDUCATION (INCLUDING CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION), HUMAN SERVICES AND OTHER PROGRAMS NOT COVERED BY THE PLAN, AS APPROPRIATE, ASSURING COORDINATION OF, AND AVOIDING DUPLICATION AMONG THESE ACTIVITIES.**

Program and activity alignment with core partners is primarily achieved through Minnesota's 50 CareerForce locations, the network of Adult Basic Education providers and community-based organizations who are contracted with through the local workforce development boards. All activities related to career services, training and business services are available through these established working relationships. Minnesota has approved six regional plans which is inclusive of the sixteen local workforce development areas and their respective local plans, and both local and regional plans will be developed and submitted in 2020. These six regions have all organized a regional governance structure which is representative of key stakeholders. Collectively, they continue to develop strong regional networks to address their needs with a

keen focus on addressing the disparities gaps — race disability, disconnected youth, and gender opportunities within industry sectors. Local boards have been asked to increase outreach to community groups and representatives of communities facing the greatest disparities during the development of their regional and local plans in 2020 and going forward. As mentioned previously, DEED’s Tribal Liaison can provide assistance to local boards, particularly in Greater Minnesota whose areas cover tribal nations or other high populations of American Indians.

One such example is the coordination between Adult Basic Education delivering ESL education and CareerForce locations delivering digital literacy education at CareerForce locations. In addition, all CareerForce locations are official Northstar Digital Literacy Assessment testing sites, so customers who successfully complete an assessment can earn a certificate verifying their competency in a variety of digital skills. Minnesota’s Apprenticeship Initiative funded under DOL is yet another example of building capacity through leveraging our CareerForce locations, the Department of Labor and Industry and industry leaders many of whom serve on the local and state board. The six regional plans have all identified and continue to develop new partnerships to align and integrate resources outside of this plan.

Program and activity alignment with training opportunities, inclusive of Registered Apprenticeships, occurs through the activities of the local boards, business partnerships and special grant and funding opportunities

Program and activity alignment with education, including career and technical education, is achieved through local board activities and involvement with special projects. Career and technical education resources through the Perkins V have become a central part of developing Minnesota’s Career Pathway model. Staff from Minnesota also participated in the design of the Career Pathways Toolkit and in developing the language for Minnesota’s State Combined Plan around the six elements of a Career Pathways System. Through Minnesota’s employer-led sector partnerships several best practices have emerged with the development of strategies around youth and developing regional industry recognized credentials. While the sector partnerships are not all at the same level of maturity, they continue to deliver promising practices to “customize” the training needs of individuals while meeting the skills needed for employers.

Program and activity alignment with human service agencies outside the purview of WIOA is a critical element to career pathways success in serving communities of color, individuals with disabilities and disconnected youth. Human services efforts around housing, transportation, health care, and child care have been identified in regional listening sessions and have been discussed most recently at that 2019 annual joint MAWB/GWDB meeting. This information will be used in interagency State Department meetings to best coordinate supportive services around workforce development. This is further outlined in the narrative under Coordination.

### C. COORDINATION, ALIGNMENT AND PROVISION OF SERVICES TO INDIVIDUALS

Describe how the entities carrying out the respective core programs, Combined State Plan partner programs included in this plan, and required and optional one-stop partner programs will coordinate activities and resources to provide comprehensive, high-quality, customer-centered services, including supportive services (e.g. transportation), to individuals, including those populations identified in section II(a)(1)(B), and individuals in remote areas. The activities described shall conform to the statutory requirements of each program.

### **C. COORDINATION, ALIGNMENT AND PROVISION OF SERVICES TO INDIVIDUALS. DESCRIBE HOW THE ENTITIES CARRYING OUT THE RESPECTIVE CORE PROGRAMS, COMBINED STATE PLAN PARTNER PROGRAMS INCLUDED IN THIS PLAN, AND REQUIRED AND OPTIONAL ONE-STOP PARTNER PROGRAMS WILL COORDINATE**

**ACTIVITIES AND RESOURCES TO PROVIDE COMPREHENSIVE, HIGH-QUALITY, CUSTOMER-CENTERED SERVICES, INCLUDING SUPPORTIVE SERVICES (E.G. TRANSPORTATION), TO INDIVIDUALS, INCLUDING THOSE POPULATIONS IDENTIFIED IN SECTION II(A)(1)(B), AND INDIVIDUALS IN REMOTE AREAS THE ACTIVITIES DESCRIBED SHALL CONFORM TO THE STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS OF EACH PROGRAM.**

Job seekers in Minnesota are served by the statewide network of CareerForce locations as well as by the myriad government, education, and nonprofit organization locations of one-stop partner programs. All CareerForce locations offer the full range of WIOA Title I-B, Wagner-Peyser, Veterans, TAA, and state-funded youth and Dislocated Worker services in a co-located model. Many CareerForce locations across the state include partners from other WIOA titles represented in this plan. All CareerForce locations serve customers of the public workforce system with highly-trained professional staff. Both job seekers and businesses have access to services designed to meet their specific needs. DEED developed a training program called the Reception and Resource Area Certification Program for staff who work at CareerForce location reception desks and resource areas.

DEED will continue to provide a leadership role in the development of training with the support of the GWDB and their relevant committees and the state program administrators in this plan. The CareerForce locations inclusive of several affiliate sites offer assistance to all individuals. All individuals are greeted by trained professional staff who gather information to best assess priority of service, urgency, and make the initial referral(s) to service(s). Individuals are then guided and assisted by program staff to identify all resources the individual may be eligible for, and identify opportunities for co-enrollment. All staff, including core and other combined partner staff and those not physically located within the CareerForce location, meet on a regular and ongoing basis to discuss program changes, eligibility, and activity. The communication ensures coordination, alignment, and leveraging of resources for better outcomes for the employer and the individual.

**Services to Laid-Off Adults**

- Unemployment Insurance — DEED houses the state’s Unemployment Insurance (UI) division. CareerForce locations provide co-location for UI staff members to coordinate reemployment initiatives for claimants and the long—term unemployed. The Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment (RESEA) engages UI claimants within the first weeks of their benefit payments to provide earlier engagement and increased services through CareerForce locations to expedite their return to work.
- Dislocated Worker Program — This program mitigates the negative impact to businesses, communities, and employees who are facing a layoff. It assists laid—off workers in returning to work with comparable wages and benefits and connects employers with skilled staff. The Rapid Response team is the first responder when a business has closed down or is planning to lay off workers. The team is trained to assess the situation and inform the affected workers of available services. Participants enrolled in the program can access career planning and counseling; job search and placement services; short—term training upon counselor approval; and support services for expenses such as child care and transportation upon counselor approval. Minnesota maintains both a federally and state— funded Dislocated Worker program.
- Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) — This program provides aid to workers who lose their jobs, or are at risk of losing their jobs, or whose hours of work and wages are

reduced as a result of foreign competition. TAA assists laid-off workers in returning to the workforce as quickly as possible by offering them help with work searches, relocation, job training, and weekly cash benefits. There are two major components, separately funded by the U.S. Department of Labor: Trade Readjustment Allowances (TRA), which are special extensions to unemployment insurance; and Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) which includes reimbursement of training costs, job search allowances, relocation allowances, and similar costs.

- Assessments for Job Seekers — Local areas use a variety of assessment instruments across the state, but the most commonly used are the DOL Career One Stop’s Interest, Skills and Work Value assessments. Interest and skills assessments have been made available on the CareerForceMN.com platform to assist job seekers. Minnesota also developed an “Employment Readiness Profile” assessment that is used across the state. This assessment allows staff to do a quick assessment of a job seeker’s Job Search Skills, Occupational Skills, Essential Work Skills, and Computer and Basic Skills. Commonly called the “Triage form” in CareerForce locations, this assessment was developed by Title I and Title III staff at the local level and was later distributed statewide after approval from local WDA directors and DEED executive management.

### **Services to Adults with Barriers to Employment**

- WIOA Adult — The program serves adults who are seeking greater participation in the labor force and prioritizes individuals who receive public assistance, individuals living with low incomes, and veterans. Minnesota is developing additional policy that leverage state resources to address the disparities gaps — race, disability, and disconnected youth which is a priority of this plan. Services include a preliminary assessment of skill levels, support services, occupational or on—the—job training or work-based learning, job search and placement assistance, access to apprenticeship opportunities, and career counseling. It also provides resource libraries providing access to employment— related services such as current job vacancies via MinnesotaWorks.net.net, local education and training service providers, and labor market information. WIOA Adult providers have been partnering with Adult Career Pathway programming to ensure individuals have access to career pathways that lead to family sustaining wages or beyond.
- Minnesota Pathways to Prosperity — Minnesota Pathways to Prosperity (P2P) is an innovative framework built on a Career Pathway programming model, which integrates basic skills education, competency-based skills training, support services, higher-level education for those who choose, employment placement and retention to meet the needs of adults. P2P projects are designed for adults who traditionally face multiple barriers to employment, and who are in need of enhanced educational and supportive services to be successful in securing long-term family sustaining wages. P2P provides opportunities for individuals to build their skills through several “on ramps” career pathways models that ultimately lead to employment in an industry sector that leads with family sustaining wages.

This competitively awarded grant program targets populations of color; individuals experiencing housing insecurity; individuals with a criminal record; those lacking a high school diploma or equivalent; individuals with disabilities; and those unemployed for 26 or more consecutive weeks. In addition, special consideration should be provided to veterans, those returning to work after receiving public assistance, low-

income, and older workers. Participating individuals obtain, retain, and advance in unsubsidized employment or complete training along an educational path, as demonstrated by annual wage increases, placement and retention in a job or education or training program, and completion of training leading to an industry-recognized credential. P2P is a state-funded, competitive grant program that leverages WIOA programming.

- **Minnesota Displaced Homemaker Program** — This program provides pre-employment services that empower participants to enter or re-enter the labor market after having been homemakers. Customers are women and men who have worked in the home for a minimum of two years caring for home and family but, due to separation, divorce, death, or disability of spouse or partner, or other loss of financial support, must now support themselves and their families. The participants need to identify, address and resolve multiple barriers before they can be competitive in the workforce. Often they are worried about basic needs such as facing eviction, having utilities services shut off, or caring for a spouse or child with a disability. Eligibility is based on income guidelines. Seven providers offer services covering 51 counties state-funded program.
- **Minnesota Family Investment Program (MFIP/TANF)** — This program helps families with children meet their basic needs, while helping parents move to financial stability through work. Parents are expected to work, and are supported in working with both cash and food assistance. Most families have a lifetime limit of 60 months on MFIP. DEED works with the DHS Economic Assistance and Employment Supports Division to ensure the program goals of MFIP are met.
- **SNAP Employment and Training Program (E&T)** — The Minnesota Department of Human Services (MN DHS) administers the state's SNAP Employment and Training Program (SNAP E&T) by supervising local counties and directly contracting with community agencies. Minnesota's SNAP E&T program is built on strong partnerships and offers multiple contracting options. Interested providers can contract through the DHS, Minnesota's Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED), and certain other Minnesota Counties. DHS contracts directly with agencies and organizations seeking to offer a range of jobs-driven employment support programs across the state. This includes organizations already receiving a portion of E&T funding through their local county. DHS is the contracting agency for all tribal contracts and other state agencies. DEED's SNAP E&T program is available as an enhancement to existing contracts for non-federal funding through DEED. Also, some counties elect to contract with organizations who provide a range of jobs-driven employment supports to low-income residents of the county.
- **Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP)** — The SCSEP program fosters economic self-sufficiency through community service activities for unemployed, low-income persons who are 55 years of age and older and have poor employment prospects. Program clients are Minnesotans with an income of less than 125 percent of the federal poverty levels, who want or need additional income. Service providers include five Local Workforce Development Areas, three community action agencies, three counties, two national sponsors, and one Native American tribe. Program operations are sub-granted to 11 local agencies that serve workers in 60 counties throughout the state; remaining 27 counties are served by national sponsors.
- **Women in High-Wage, High Demand Nontraditional Jobs Grant Program** — This program seeks to increase the number of women in high-wage, high-demand,

nontraditional occupations including those in the skilled trades, science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) occupations. Grant funds serve women, especially low-income women and women over 50 years of age. This is a state -funded grant program, which began in December 2014 and continues.

- Migrant and Seasonal Farmworkers — This program provides Migrant Seasonal Farm Workers with a full range of employment services and referrals to other community services. Migrant and other seasonal employees engaged in farm work that are legally eligible to work in the United States and of legal age to perform services for wages are eligible for services. The full range of services provided to Migrant Seasonal Farm Workers includes: job search assistance and placement, job counseling, training opportunities, and referrals to supportive services. The program is administered by the State Monitor Advocate and migrant labor representatives who are proficient in both English and Spanish, to better serve the predominantly Spanish-speaking clientele. Services include quality employment services and referrals, which are administered at the local level in multiple Local Workforce Development Areas.
- Services for Incarcerated Adults — DOC has put grant funded career navigator positions in place within the state prisons to work with offenders ready for release. A team approach between CareerForce locations, DHS, DOC Re-entry, parole, and DOC Career Technical Education staff work closely to coordinate their programs and career services to provide a seamless transition back into the communities. The DOC provides postsecondary Career Technical Education programming in many demand sectors, while providing portable and stackable credentials. DEED has four dedicated Offender Specialists whose sole job is to provide employment services to ex-offenders both prior to and after release.
- MN DOC Second Chance Act — This Second Chance Act Technology-Based Career Training Program grant, Technology-Based Career Education Supporting Successful Reintegration, is administered by DOC. Collaborative partners include Minnesota State College and University (Minnesota State), state business and industry experts, and community based organizations.

MN DOC Career technical programming will include jobs that are in high demand in Minnesota based on DEED data on industry growth jobs, and strongly on projected job vacancies. Training is provided by credentialed MN DOC instructors and includes programming in classroom and shop settings, and includes the completion of the nationally validated certifications. Participants will gain knowledge and hands on training of industry processes, critical industry functions, and with a partnership with Minnesota State will be awarded a Minnesota State transcript upon successful completion of the program.

Community-based organizations in partnership with MN DOC Career Navigators will provide; employment services pre- and post-release, mentoring services, apprenticeship opportunities, interview attire, and transportation assistance. MN DOC Career Navigators will ensure all participants receive individualized re-entry plans, linked community-based services and supports post-release, are provided case management services within the community, and will ensure the ability to collect and report data on participant post-program employment outcomes, and participant recidivism indicator data. MN DOC Career Navigators will provide training to employers on successful approaches to working with ex-offender participants of the training

programs. State agency partnerships will demonstrate leveraging of state and local resources to support and/or sustain the programs.

Target population consists of adult males and females assessed to be moderate to highest risk to recidivate. Geographic location to include: Minnesota Correctional Facilities and select Minnesota County jails. Participants will receive career technical training, employment services, career pathway counseling, re-entry support services, and apprenticeship opportunities. Employers will receive information and training in hiring ex-offenders and the value of the ex-offender workforce.

- Services for Ex-Offenders — DEED designed and offers a series of "New Leaf" workshops in 20 CareerForce locations across the state's Local Workforce Development Areas. This workshop is designed specifically for job seekers who are having a difficult time obtaining employment due to their barriers and/or records. This workshop combines DEED's Creative Job Search course with special strategies for overcoming barriers to employment, including how, when and why to disclose your record; addressing concerns from employers; answering tough interview questions; and provides state resources on the Work Opportunity Tax Credit, Federal Bonding and "Ban the Box" requirements. In addition, DEED's Veteran employment program has one DVOP working on a special project for Minnesota veterans that have been incarcerated
- Services for Homeless Minnesotans — In March 2016, Performance Management (PM) staff assessed these eligibility-based programs to determine which programs do and do not track whether a participant was homeless at the time of program enrollment. Currently, only one program does not track housing insecurity and two programs were found to not make mandatory a question assessing the participant's housing status. As part of ongoing broader efforts around data and performance measures, DEED staff are working on ways to disaggregate data pertaining to employment and wage outcomes for homeless participants to include in a future version of the Uniform Outcome Report Card.
- Southeast Asian Economic Disparities Relief Grant Program — This program was implemented in July of 2016 to address economic disparities in Southeast Asian communities through workforce recruitment and development, job creation, assistance to smaller organizations to increase capacity and outreach services. The Minnesota Legislature has funded this program every year since its inception.
- Adult support services — This competitive grant focuses on low-income communities, young adults from families with a history of intergenerational poverty, and communities of color to provide support services to individuals, such as job training, employment preparation, internships, job assistance to fathers, financial literacy, academic and behavioral interventions for low-performing students, and youth intervention. The Minnesota Legislature has funded this program every year since its inception.

## **Youth**

- WIOA Youth Program: Minnesota's WIOA Youth Program provides comprehensive employment and training services to opportunity youth, including work-based learning, an introduction to career pathways, attainment of recognized credentials and wrap-around support services. Participants are youth ages 16 - 24 who are not attending any

school, and in-school youth ages 14-21 who are low-income and at-risk. Minnesota serves a high percentage of youth who are most in need of services such as homeless youth and runaways, youth in foster care, youth with disabilities and youth from families on public assistance. Minnesota is serving youth who are under-represented in the workforce. For example, Native American youth are served at a level that is 3 times the national average. Minnesota supports partnerships with other State and federally-funded youth programs to increase the quality of services available to participants. WIOA Youth Programs provide youth with access to postsecondary training and credentials which reflect 21st century skill requirements. Examples of co-enrollment opportunities for WIOA Youth participants include: the Minnesota Family Investment Program (MFIP), Vocational Rehabilitation Services (VRS/Pre-ETS), Youth Disability Employment Initiative, Youthbuild, Adult WIOA, Adult Basic Education (ABE), Minnesota Youth Program (MYP), Youthbuild, Job Corps and Youth at Work Opportunity Grants. For more information, see the WIOA Youth Program webpage: <https://mn.gov/deed/programs-services/office-youth-development/youth-programs/wioa-youth.jsp>.

- Minnesota Youth Program (MYP): MYP serves low-income youth, ages 14 to 24, and is the only youth employment program available in all 87 counties. Over half of the youth served under MYP receive academic credit or service-learning credit for work-based learning. Other MYP services include: career exploration and counseling, labor market information on in-demand occupations, work readiness skills, financial literacy training, work experience and support services. MYP serves over 3,300 youth each year through individual, case managed services and another 20,000 youth through the Outreach to Schools component. MYP operates in coordination with WIOA, under oversight of Local Workforce Development Boards appointed by Local Elected Officials (business-led majority). Each \$1 of MYP funds leverages over \$4 of other federal, state and local resources. Youth may be co-enrolled in WIOA, MFIP, VRS, or Youthbuild as a result of strong local partnerships. Worksite supervisors/employers evaluate the contextual work readiness skills of youth on the MYP worksite using pre and post assessments. For more information, see the Minnesota Youth Program webpage: <https://mn.gov/deed/programs-services/office-youth-development/youth-programs/youth-program.jsp>.
- Youthbuild Program: The state-funded Youthbuild Program offers a construction career pathway for low-income, at-risk youth, ages 16-24, who have dropped out of school or are at-risk of dropping out. Youthbuild provides pre-apprenticeship training, industry-recognized credentials, contextual basic skills and work readiness soft skills; career exploration and counseling; mentoring and leadership development; and support services. Ten organizations provide services across Minnesota. Each \$1 of state Youthbuild funding is matched by two local dollars and state funds are used as match for federal YouthBuild resources. For more information, see the Youthbuild webpage at: <https://mn.gov/deed/programs-services/office-youth-development/youth-programs/youthbuild.jsp>.
- Youth at Work Opportunity Grants: provide workforce development and training opportunities for economically disadvantaged and at-risk youth with special consideration for youth from communities of color and youth with disabilities. Over 84% of the youth served are from communities of color. Experiential learning opportunities are designed for youth that promote mastery of work readiness competencies and 21st Century skills. Projects promote skill acquisition (academic and

work readiness) through project-based instruction and increase exposure to in-demand jobs important to regional economies. Youth at Work grants provide high-quality worksites and overall participant and employer satisfaction. These are two-year grants that emphasize innovation in serving youth. For more information, see the Youth Opportunity Grants webpage: <https://mn.gov/deed/programs-services/office-youth-development/special/grants/>.

- Disability Employment Initiative (DEI): Partners for Youth Career Pathways - Minnesota is managing a \$2.5 million, 42-month DEI grant funded through the U.S. DOL's Employment and Training Administration and the Office of Disability Employment Policy. This grant allows three of Minnesota's rural WDAs to strengthen partnerships and strategically align career pathways systems to effectively serve youth with disabilities through multiple entry and exit points. The federal DEI grant allowed Minnesota to expand the number of Employment Networks (ENs) in the state which increases services to Social Security disability beneficiaries.

The DEI helped Minnesota to build the capacity of rural WDA staff to increase the number of youth with disabilities participating in career pathways programs by implementing the Integrated Resource Team (IRT) approach and the Guideposts for Success best practices framework into service delivery. This success prompted the development of a guide on incorporating the Guideposts for Success into Minnesota's Personal Learning Plan (PLP) process. The guide was developed to assist WDA staff when working with youth with disabilities who have a Personal Learning Plan (PLP) or an Individualized Education Plan (IEP). The guide provides suggestions for integrating the Guideposts for Success into student ILP activities for both in-school and out-of-school youth. For more information on the DEI and the guide on incorporating the Guideposts for Success into Minnesota's PLP, see the Disability Employment Initiative weblink: <https://mn.gov/deed/programs-services/office-youth-development/special/disability-employment-initiative/>.

- DEED, DHS, and MAWB have worked in partnership since 2009 to serve teen parents receiving Minnesota Family Investment Program (MFIP) benefits or in TANF-eligible households. This partnership has leveraged over \$7.3 million of TANF funds to provide work experience and work-readiness training for over 4,200 teen parents who were receiving MFIP benefits or younger youth who were MFIP recipients. The partnership addresses disparities in MFIP outcomes, especially the Work Participation Rate, for African American and American Indian participants. Many of the participants have little or no previous work experience and they develop work readiness skills through their participation in the project. Participants are assigned a youth counselor/case manager and receive labor market information highlighting in-demand industries and educational opportunities available in the region. Co-enrollment in the WIOA Youth Program and the Minnesota Youth Program, when appropriate, has contributed to the success of these projects.

Some of the industries that are introduced to youth include information technology, manufacturing, transportation, child care, and health care. Person-centered planning is a major key to success. The work experiences that youth receive are targeted to their specific career interest areas as much as possible to provide hands-on exposure to a field that is intriguing to them. Career readiness skills are assessed on the worksite by the worksite supervisors, allowing the youth to gauge their skill level with regards to

industry-specific expectations and requirements. Financial literacy tools are used to help each youth navigate having a job and managing the earnings that follows. Co-enrollment in the WIOA Youth Program and/or the Minnesota Youth Program as appropriate has contributed to the success of these projects.

The TANF project has enabled young adults, many of whom have significant barriers to obtaining and maintaining employment, to explore educational opportunities and fulfilling careers that will set them and their families up for lifelong success. In 2018, the DHS conducted an evaluation of the TANF Youth Project to examine implementation of the project and the experiences of the youth and service providers involved, lessons learned and challenges faced, and to propose recommendations for the future. The evaluation report and other TANF Youth Innovation resources and participant success stories can be found on the project webpage: <https://mn.gov/deed/programs-services/office-youth-development/special/tanf/>.

## Veterans

- The state's system of CareerForce locations provides the full array of labor and employment services to veterans around the state. Disabled Veteran Outreach Program Specialists (DVOPs) provide eligible veterans with employment services such as job matching and referral to posted job openings, vocational and career guidance, labor market information, plus workshops on resume preparation and conducting effective job searches. DVOPs also refer eligible and qualified veterans to appropriate WIOA—funded training programs and discretionary initiatives, as well as registered apprenticeship programs throughout the state. Local Veteran Employment Representatives (LVER) specialize in promoting veterans to employers, educating one—stop partners on current law, changing regulations, and the value veterans bring to an employer. DEED has recently hired multiple new staff to help support and grow veterans services, including staff with experience working with women veterans and American Indian veterans. A mobile CareerForce center with similar services provided at the One-Stop locations will begin making trips around the state in 2020, particularly in efforts to support American Indian communities.
- Jobs for Veterans State Grants (JVSG) — DVOP and LVER staff are funded through the JVSG and fulfill all responsibilities mandated by the grant programs. Services include the provision of intensive case management services to Chapter 31 Veterans, disabled veterans, homeless veterans, economically or educationally disadvantaged veterans, and veterans with "significant barriers to employment" as defined by the Department of Labor.
- Additional Veterans Outreach — JVSG grant staff also serves other populations of veterans in the State through Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs). Those populations include:
- National Guard and Reserve members returning from overseas deployment. In particular, Virtual Job Fair Technology and social media are being utilized to connect and assist this group with veterans' resource sites, services accessed while they are still overseas, and actual virtual job fairs when they return to this country. Minnesota also stages an annual Veterans Career Fair each July, which is "Hire a Veteran" month as proclaimed by the Governor.

- Service-connected disabled veterans, who are identified through various Veterans Service Organizations (VSO) such as Disabled American Veterans and VFWs, as well as outreach activities at Veteran Centers, Veterans Administration Medical Centers, and Community Based Outpatient Clinics.
- Recently-separated veterans, who are identified at various reintegration events, job fairs, and through partner referrals.
- Wounded and injured veterans, who are identified through the outreach activities of our DVOPS, local VSO's, and partner staff in our local CareerForce location system.
- Incarcerated veterans, who are identified and contacted through "in-reach" activities conducted within correctional facilities managed by DOC, and community based "halfway houses" and similar facilities. Minnesota has dedicated DVOP staff that serve veterans being released from correctional facilities, and those with a criminal history via this special initiative.
- Homeless Veterans, who are served by DVOP Specialists, who work in partnership with the Homeless Veteran Reintegration Program to provide one-on-one employment assistance and supportive services to homeless veterans. These services may include resume and interviewing preparation, employment workshops, job clubs, job search assistance and job referrals.
- Community based "Beyond the Yellow Ribbon" organizations are engaged through DVOP/LVER participation in "Beyond the Yellow Ribbon" committees covering 63 National Guard Armory communities. DEED Veterans Employment Representatives are required partners in these organizations comprised of public and private resources designed to support all veterans in the community.

### **Individuals with Disabilities**

- Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Services — This program assists Minnesotans with significant disabilities to secure and maintain employment. Customers are people whose disabilities cause serious functional limitations in life, specifically in achieving an employment goal. More than 300 VR counselors, placement counselors, and VR techs work within the Minnesota CareerForce location System to deliver services that include: assessment, vocational evaluation, training, rehabilitation counseling, assistive technology, and job placement. Some customers may also receive post—employment assistance. Many of these services are delivered through collaborative partnerships between public and private providers. Coordination between programs will be supported by working and, as appropriate, formal partnership agreements with state community partners to create referral processes and jointly deliver services to customers, including customers from unserved and underserved populations. At the local level, VR will work with core and combined plan partners as well as other community resources, to reach out to unserved and underserved populations. The VR program receives both state and federal funding.
- Disability Employment Initiative (DEI) Career Pathways Disability Resources Coordinators work to strengthen partnerships with Vocational Rehabilitation, disability agencies, and employers and modify career pathway education and employment for

individual success. The GWDB Disability Equity Committee will continue to serve as an entity to help evaluate projects and develop recommendations based on their outcomes.

## **Adult Learners**

- Apprenticeship Programs —The Minnesota Department of Labor & Industry (DLI) is committed to supporting Minnesota’s economy by fostering and promoting work—based career development through registered apprenticeship programs that provide structured training, development and credentialing of highly skilled employees. o Minnesota Apprenticeship Initiative — In 2015, the U.S. Department of Labor awarded Minnesota a grant to expand registered apprenticeship into the industries of advanced manufacturing, agriculture, health care, information technology and transportation. DEED is administering the grant and DLI is engaging industry, labor, and community—based organizations to develop programs, including the creation of apprenticeships in 30 new occupations. o Private Investment, Public Education, Labor and Industry Experience (PIPELINE) Project —The PIPELINE Project was established by the Minnesota legislature in 2014 to expand dual—training and apprenticeship programs in Minnesota. DLI was appropriated one—time funds to convene industry experts, employers, higher—education institutions, and labor to develop competency standards acceptable to advanced manufacturing, health care services, information technology, and agriculture industries. o Labor Education Advancement Program (LEAP) — LEAP was established by DLI for the purposes of facilitating the participation of people of color, indigenous people and women in apprenticeship—able trades and occupations. Grants appropriated by the legislature are distributed annually to community—based organizations serving the targeted population.
- Construct Tomorrow Program — Partners with the state construction trades and Apprenticeship Coordinators Association bring to high schools a hands—on experience which exposes young women and men to opportunities in the construction trades.
- Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) — As the entity responsible for management and oversight of Title II funds, MDE works collaboratively with partners within the Combined State Plan to ensure effective and efficient career pathways for Minnesotans. ABE transition coordinators and Local Workforce Development Area directors have developed strong partnerships and continue to convene meetings, identify opportunities for collaboration and planning, and host discussions aimed at meeting regional needs. This work was initially funded, in part, by the WIA Incentive funding that Minnesota received. The state invested much of these earnings into WIOA implementation to achieve better alignment and leveraging of resources and opportunities within the six regions in Minnesota.

### **D. COORDINATION, ALIGNMENT AND PROVISION OF SERVICES TO EMPLOYERS**

Describe how the entities carrying out the respective core programs, any Combined State Plan partner program included in this plan, required and optional one-stop partner programs will coordinate activities and resources to provide comprehensive, high-quality services to employers to meet their current and projected workforce needs and to achieve the goals of industry or sector partners in the state. The activities described shall conform to the statutory requirements of each program.

**D. COORDINATION, ALIGNMENT AND PROVISION OF SERVICES TO EMPLOYERS. DESCRIBE HOW THE ENTITIES CARRYING OUT THE RESPECTIVE CORE PROGRAMS, ANY COMBINED STATE PLAN PARTNER PROGRAM INCLUDED IN THIS PLAN, REQUIRED AND OPTIONAL ONE-STOP PARTNER PROGRAMS WILL COORDINATE ACTIVITIES AND RESOURCES TO PROVIDE COMPREHENSIVE, HIGH-QUALITY SERVICES TO EMPLOYERS TO MEET THEIR CURRENT AND PROJECTED WORKFORCE NEEDS AND TO ACHIEVE THE GOALS OF INDUSTRY OR SECTOR PARTNERS IN THE STATE. THE ACTIVITIES DESCRIBED SHALL CONFORM TO THE STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS OF EACH PROGRAM.**

The GWDB has established the Career Pathways Partnership (CPP) with membership representing the core partners and combined partners included in this plan. In addition, this partnership includes: MN Department of Corrections, MN Department of Labor and Industry, community-based organizations, philanthropic organizations, labor, local and regional workforce service providers, and private sector GWDB members. Previous sub-groups focused on customers (characteristics), resources (asset mapping), and communication (developing common language with employers). In 2020 and beyond, the CPP will be focusing on industry-recognized credentialing and other alignment specific efforts.

Outreach, alignment, and coordination of services is generally determined by the local and regional boards. Additionally, several local workforce board members serve on the GWDB.

The GWDB, regional partnerships, and local boards continue to identify progress and share best practices through the GWDB committees, combined plan partners, and events or meetings held by or in collaboration with MAWB. While Minnesota's economic conditions have continued to remain stable and improve overall since the last recession, employers continue to search for the skilled labor they need while many communities – particularly those facing systemic or historical barriers to employment – face disproportionate rates of unemployment, underemployment, and disparities relating to wages, wealth, and education. Minnesota is committed to building innovative practices at local, regional, and state levels to help business fill positions in demand while creating economic opportunities for more Minnesotans. System alignment progress is needed for existing programs and functions carried out by state agencies and across both secondary and postsecondary education, while innovative approaches and increased collaboration are needed across sectors.

Minnesota has several industry associations and/or partnerships including Minnesota Precision Manufacturing Association (represented on the GWDB), Health Education Industry Partnership, Central MN Manufacturing Association, and Minnesota State College and Universities Centers of Excellence. These partnerships further outreach, coordination, and better alignment within workforce and education and are critical to identifying industry-recognized and valued credentials leading to meaningful employment. The six regional plans have identified industry sectors which are or have established employer-led sector partnerships. The DEED online dashboard collects information on the success of many of these partnerships. The GWDB will be facilitating opportunities for these partnerships to develop more substantive potential policy changes or program pilots.

DEED employs workforce strategy consultants that work with specific industry sectors and the six regions, while they work closely with designated Employer Navigators to best deliver employer services as well as communities and industries to support workforce attraction efforts, assist with larger job fair efforts, attend regional WIOA planning events, and help serve as a conduit between economic development and workforce development efforts. They also support access to labor exchange services.

The local boards are responsible for developing more specific strategies and approaches through their regional and local plans to guide their workforce development efforts. This local level coordination includes core programs, other state or federally required programs, economic development entities, and both secondary and postsecondary education. The strategies and approaches are aligned with and articulated through the six elements of a career pathways system and supported at the state level by each federal title administrator.

#### E. PARTNER ENGAGEMENT WITH EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

Describe how the State's Strategies will engage the State's community colleges and area career and technical education schools, as partners in the workforce development system to create a job-driven education and training system. WIOA section 102(b)(2)(B)(iv).

#### **E. PARTNER ENGAGEMENT WITH EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS DESCRIBE HOW THE STATE'S STRATEGIES WILL ENGAGE THE STATE'S COMMUNITY COLLEGES AND AREA CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION SCHOOLS, AS PARTNERS IN THE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM TO CREATE A JOB-DRIVEN EDUCATION AND TRAINING SYSTEM. WIOA SECTION 102(B)(2)(B)(IV).**

Minnesota has an established history of developing partnerships within education. Minnesota's Pathways to Prosperity program represents a strong partnership between Adult Basic Education, DEED, and other training institutions. This program demonstrates the coordination but also the alignment and leveraging of resources, including financial and human, to better serve individuals on a career path to academic achievement and employment. The Minnesota legislature initially funded P2P in State Fiscal Year 2016, and continued to appropriate funds for this program in 2017 and 2019. Since its inception, P2P has served over 5,500 participants. This model exemplifies the six elements of the career pathway system and moves new programming into innovative ways to help more Minnesotans develop skills and obtain credentials.

The Minnesota Department of Labor and Industry (DLI), DEED, MDE, and several state community colleges in the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities system have developed partnerships with industry to implement programs for youth and adults in dual-enrollment apprenticeship programs funded by state and federal funds (including non-traditional occupations in Minnesota's key industry sectors). The success of these strong partnerships are evidenced through the outcomes in Minnesota's Apprenticeship Grant, MAI, Pipeline project, DEI grants, and sector partnerships like the Healthcare Education Industry Partnership (HEIP).

#### **Educational Initiatives**

Minnesota is currently participating in several national grants and initiatives to align higher education and workforce needs:

Minnesota received an Educate for Opportunity grant from the National Governors Association and Strata Education Network to support training initiatives for adult learning. The Minnesota team will receive technical assistance from NGA over the course of 18 months to refine their data-driven approaches to anticipating and meeting future workforce needs. Core team participants include representatives from the Office of Governor Tim Walz, OHE, DEED, DLI, MDE and Minnesota State.

Minnesota was selected to participate in the State Higher Education Executive Officers Association (SHEEO) Communities of Practice to align postsecondary education and the workforce. This initiative will provide an opportunity for states to explore best practices to align educational output with workforce demand, define and measure credentials of value, and increase capacity to utilize linked postsecondary and workforce data. Participants include representatives from DEED, Minnesota State, the University of Minnesota and a private postsecondary institution.

Minnesota was also selected to participate in the WIOA Credential Attainment Cohort, a gathering of nine states receiving technical assistance from DOLETA, MDE's Rehabilitation Services Administration and Office of Career, Technical, and Adult Education. The cohort is aimed at enhancing state efforts to determine which degrees, certificates, certifications, and licenses qualify as credentials using the parameters established in federal guidance. Participants include representatives from all core WIOA titles in Minnesota.

### **Education and Workforce Alignment**

Minnesota has a fully interoperable, enterprise-level data collection, reporting and analysis system that stores student data from pre-kindergarten through completion of postsecondary and into the workforce. These systems include:

The Statewide Longitudinal Education Data System (SLEDS), which is led by OHE and brings together data from MDE, DEED and OHE;

The Early Childhood Longitudinal Data System (ECLDS), which is led by MDE and brings together data from MDE and the Minnesota Departments of Health (MDH) and Human Services (DHS).

SLEDS brings together data from education and workforce to identify the most viable pathways for individuals in achieving successful outcomes in education and work. It is used to inform decisions to support and improve education and workforce policy and assist in creating a more seamless education and workforce system for all Minnesotans. The general purpose of the SLEDS system is to identify and analyze the 4 P's of Minnesota's education and workforce systems:

**Pathways:** The movement of individual students between K-12, higher education, and workforce

**Progress:** The benchmarks transition points students meet or fail to meet

**Predictors:** The characteristics or patterns that help explain which students succeed and which do not

**Performance:** The alignment of education and workforce for individual success

In 2015, Minnesota received a 4-year national SLDS grant through the Institute for Education Sciences (IES) with a focus on early learning and college and career. The grant projects expanded SLEDS use to better inform and improve education programming, policies and resource allocation decisions. The projects supported increased use of SLEDS, improve key stakeholders' data literacy and added linkages to important additional data.

The cross-agency teams also submitted a 2019 SLDS grant proposal, with a focus on equity. Proposed projects would include the development of a cross-agency education and employment dashboard, the complete integration of WIOA Title III and Title IV data, new data sources to track and measure non-educational credentials

### **State Educational Attainment Goal**

In 2015, the Minnesota Legislature set in statute the goal of 70 percent or more of Minnesota residents ages 25 to 44 to hold a postsecondary degree or certificate by 2025. This law emphasized the importance of achieving comparable attainment rates across all race and ethnicity groups. OHE is tasked with reporting on progress towards this goal annually, with progress reports by race and ethnicity groups.

DEED serves as a key stakeholder in this effort to increase educational attainment levels because of our role in administering workforce training programs for adults and youth with barriers to entry, particularly those from communities of color. Approximately 37 percent of CareerForce customers do not have education beyond a high school diploma or GED. Providing customers access to education and training opportunities – including information on the education required for Minnesota’s current and future in-demand jobs – will support the state attainment goal.

### **Transparency of Educational Outcomes**

In 2015, the Minnesota Legislature also set in statute the higher education reporting requirements for institutions that participate in state financial aid programs administered by OHE. These requirements included enrollment and graduation data; financial aid information; cumulative debt of graduates by race and ethnicity, gender, and income; persistence and completion; and employment and wage outcomes.

DEED remains a key partner with OHE in this push towards transparency of educational outcomes. Data on institution-level employment and wage outcomes by program of study (i.e. major) are produced by DEED and displayed in the Graduate Employment Outcomes (<https://mn.gov/deed/geo>) tool, a product of the Labor Market Information Office.

#### **F. PARTNER ENGAGEMENT WITH OTHER EDUCATION AND TRAINING PROVIDERS**

Describe how the State’s Strategies will engage the State’s other education and training providers, including providers on the state’s eligible training provider list, as partners in the workforce development system to create a job-driven education and training system.

#### **F. PARTNER ENGAGEMENT WITH OTHER EDUCATION AND TRAINING PROVIDERS. DESCRIBE HOW THE STATE’S STRATEGIES WILL ENGAGE THE STATE’S OTHER EDUCATION AND TRAINING PROVIDERS, INCLUDING PROVIDERS ON THE STATE’S ELIGIBLE TRAINING PROVIDER LIST, AS PARTNERS IN THE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM TO CREATE A JOB-DRIVEN EDUCATION AND TRAINING SYSTEM.**

By design, the GWDB represents members from not only public postsecondary institutions but also private postsecondary, career technical education, and two “other” education/training

representatives (K-12 Superintendent and secondary/postsecondary vocational education) to be inclusive and ensure engagement.

The GWDB has a standing Operations Committee representing members of the board from education, labor, and community-based organizations to serve as the liaison and voice for these stakeholders. The Operations Committee is responsible for the oversight, review, evaluation, and approval of the education and training provider list. The Operations Committee also ensures the accessibility of the ETPL, and reviews the first draft of the WIOA State Plan and Annual Report before they are sent to the full GWDB

MAWB, representing the 16 local workforce development areas, holds Operations Committee meetings monthly for discussion, presentations, and opportunity sharing. These meetings provide an open forum to specifically address services to meet the education and training needs of individuals. MAWB has established committees to address service delivery, business services, equity, and legislative agendas. The committees also ensure alignment and transparency. Staff from DEED and GWDB attend most of these monthly meetings to provide updates and opportunities for state staff and local board staff to communicate regularly, while other core program partners also attend these monthly meetings at times.

All education and training providers are essential to providing a skilled workforce to meet the needs of employers. The goals and strategies for a Career Pathway system do not make a distinction in this area and apply to other education and training providers. Based on regional industry needs and the selected career pathway occupations, all related providers will be engaged. Additionally, these institutions may participate in the eligible training provider listing service if they meet the criteria.

#### G. LEVERAGING RESOURCES TO INCREASE EDUCATIONAL ACCESS

Describe how the State's strategies will enable the State to leverage other Federal, State, and local investments that have enhanced access to workforce development programs at the above institutions, described in section (E).

#### **G. LEVERAGING RESOURCES TO INCREASE EDUCATIONAL ACCESS**

DESCRIBE HOW THE STATE'S STRATEGIES WILL ENABLE THE STATE TO LEVERAGE OTHER FEDERAL, STATE, AND LOCAL INVESTMENTS THAT HAVE ENHANCED ACCESS TO WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS AT THE ABOVE INSTITUTIONS, DESCRIBED IN SECTION (E).

Minnesota has several initiatives underway that leverage multiple resources across programs and partners. Minnesota's FastTRAC program and, now, its P2P program, leverage and braid funding from federal, state, philanthropic, and local investments from DEED, Adult Basic Education, DHS, Minnesota State, and philanthropic funders. These programs align and leverage customized training programs and academic programming at Minnesota State community colleges across Minnesota. In addition, Minnesota State's Centers of Excellence in key industry sectors including agriculture, health care, IT, manufacturing, energy, and engineering are a referral network to workforce and the private sector and align resources to best serve individuals who may already be co-enrolled in a federal or state funded program. DEED and DLI are state agency partners in a DOL apprenticeship funded initiative that aligns and leverages resources within higher education and other workforce programs. DEED and DHS coordinate and leverage resources to better serve SNAP E & T recipients through career pathways models which build on career pathways opportunities within postsecondary.

Each of Minnesota's six workforce development regions developed Regional Plans most recently in 2018 during the revision of the last WIOA State Plan and corresponding local and regional updates. Each of the six regional plans identified key industry sectors and helped lay the groundwork for ongoing employer-led sector partnerships. These partnerships vary greatly across sectors and regions but they are vital in developing local and regional workforce strategies that are actually backed by industry leaders. For region-encompassing plans to be successful, the outcome of this work is also dependent on bringing together stakeholders from workforce development, education, economic development, philanthropic communities, and leaders from the private sector to become invested in the career pathways model and the local or regional implementation of such models.

The Minnesota Job Skills Partnership (MJSP) program provides state funding for low-wage workers and the incumbent workforce in key industry sectors. This funding is awarded to training and education providers. Program eligible individuals are co-enrolled in multiple programs to ensure successful outcomes for skill development and meaningful employment.

In 2017, the Minnesota State Legislature established funding for five Greater Minnesota Rural Career Counseling Coordinators, RC3, over two years. The RC3s provide a connection to businesses, secondary and higher education, and other workforce stakeholders. They provide services to job seekers through better coordination and access to resources. The impact of their efforts is reported to the Minnesota Legislature which includes their outcomes on the value of sector strategies, work-based learning opportunities, and how career pathways models are implemented in the region.

Early indicators of their impact is evident throughout the organizing and development of the six regional plans. These coordinators were able to prioritize the development and building the regional relationships. This work included bringing together key stakeholders in the regions to begin to develop strategies to focus on the six elements in this plan. This work continues to be focused on the first three elements in this plan — business and community engagement and customer-focused design. The outcomes of their efforts will provide a perspective on the successes of career pathways models to assist the state board, state agencies and local boards with understanding what the access issues are and how coordination could be improve. This effort focuses on greater Minnesota and is being overseen by the local workforce development boards.

The Minnesota Youth Program (MYP) provides short-term, contextualized and individualized training services for at-risk youth, ages 14 to 24. Coordinated at the local level by the Workforce Development Boards/Youth Committees, MYP eligibility criteria is more flexible (inclusive) than the WIOA Youth Program. MYP serves an extremely disadvantaged group of young men and women: participants have multiple challenges such as substance abuse, criminal records, mental health issues, and cognitive learning limitations, in addition to being poor. The Higher Education Career Advisors Pilot Project (HECAP) funded by the Minnesota State Legislature provides funding to focus on assistance to high schools through career exploration and helps students see connections between their education and future careers. HECAP builds on the work of local workforce development boards by using labor market information data and the connections to careers in demand industry sectors.

The eligible training provider list is another component to increasing access through better informed choice by job seekers. The ETPL provides job seekers and counselors with the information they need to make wise investments in training. The performance outcomes mirror the core WIOA Title I performance metrics: employment (second quarter after exit),

employment retention (fourth quarter after exit), median earnings (second quarter after exit), credential attainment, measurable skills gain and effectiveness in serving employers.

#### H. IMPROVING ACCESS TO POSTSECONDARY CREDENTIALS

Describe how the State's strategies will improve access to activities leading to recognized postsecondary credentials, including Registered Apprenticeship certificates. This includes credentials that are industry-recognized certificates, licenses or certifications, and that are portable and stackable.

#### **H. IMPROVING ACCESS TO POSTSECONDARY CREDENTIALS DESCRIBE HOW THE STATE'S STRATEGIES WILL IMPROVE ACCESS TO ACTIVITIES LEADING TO RECOGNIZED POSTSECONDARY CREDENTIALS, INCLUDING REGISTERED APPRENTICESHIP CERTIFICATES. THIS INCLUDES CREDENTIALS THAT ARE INDUSTRY-RECOGNIZED CERTIFICATES, LICENSES OR CERTIFICATIONS, AND THAT ARE PORTABLE AND STACKABLE.**

Minnesota's Department of Labor and Industry (DLI) is Minnesota's agency responsible for expanding registered apprenticeships in Minnesota. DEED is collaborating with the Department of Labor and Industry to align workforce needs along with other statewide workforce partners. DLI is the lead state agency in developing apprenticeships in non-traditional industry sectors in partnership with the core partners in this plan. In addition, DLI is also the lead agency in identifying and establishing apprenticeships that may lead to registered apprenticeships. Minnesota's MAI grant demonstrates the effectiveness of the development of apprenticeships in non-traditional sectors.

The Minnesota PIPELINE (Private Investment, Public Education, Labor and Industry Experience) Project was established by the Minnesota Legislature in 2014 to expand dual-training in Minnesota. In 2015, additional legislation was passed to create a grant program to help employers develop dual-training programs. Dual training is work-based career development training. Registered apprenticeship is a nationally recognized and state-approved type of dual-training overseen by DLI. Dual-training has three components: employment in a dual—training occupation; structured on-the-job training of occupation-specific competencies; and related instruction in industry-sector technical competencies.

The development of industry-recognized competency standards is a core component of the PIPELINE Project. The Legislature required DLI to develop competency standards in the following four industries: advanced manufacturing, agriculture, health care services, and information technology. DLI assists groups of industry-technical experts to develop occupational competency standards for the PIPELINE Industry Council identified occupations. Competency Councils review and validate the foundational competencies for each occupation including personal effectiveness, academic, workplace and industry-wide competencies using modified versions of the U.S. DOL occupational competency pyramids. Using their technical expertise, the members of the competency council identify Industry Sector Technical Competencies for each occupation. These competencies are typically those that will be provided during the related instruction component of dual-training.

Competency council members identify the occupation-specific competencies for each occupation. These competencies are typically gained during the on-the-job training component of dual—training. A critical component in the development of industry—valued competency standards is to acknowledge that each individual employer will also provide employer-specific

training to its employees. Each of the PIPELINE occupational competency standards templates (above, right) includes space for individual employers to reflect their own training needs as part of a broader industry-based dual-training program. All of the competencies developed by the competency councils are validated and used to develop baseline occupational competency standards templates.

More than 552 industry leaders are engaged in the PIPELINE Project at this time. Occupational competency standards are developed and validated for 22 occupations, including at least three occupations for each industry. There have been 346 dual training participants in the pipeline project. DLI is responsible for the oversight and reporting of the outcomes to the Minnesota Legislature. Employers, including dual-training grantees, are receiving technical assistance in the creation of new dual-training programs and registered apprenticeship programs. DLI has created a dual-training tool-kit available on its website at [www.dli.mn.gov/pipeline.asp](http://www.dli.mn.gov/pipeline.asp). Each industry council has begun the development of an outreach, exposure and awareness plan to promote dual-training to workers and students.

In early program year of 2015, Minnesota received \$5.75 million to support dislocated workers through the job-driven national Dislocated Worker grant program. A component of this grant is to award academic credit and—in many cases—credentials for completion of on-the-job, work-based, and apprenticeship training. DEED also received a \$5 million grant to serve 1000 apprentices. This funding serves as seed money. The employers bear the primary costs of training and salaries for apprentices. Further, Minnesota is looking for ways to award academic credit for the completion of steps of apprenticeship. Minnesota's policy of "WIOA certifying" only those training programs that result directly in an industry-recognized credential narrows the scope of training programs and ensures that participants receive training valued by employers.

Non-profits and community-based organizations that partner with DEED to support job seekers continue to design short-term credentialed training opportunities. Because training is less time intense, more job seekers are likely to complete the training. These workforce system partners have worked diligently with industry credentialing groups and academic institutions to ensure their shorter-term training results in portable, transferable, recognized credentials.

A major priority of the GWDB Career Pathways Partnership in 2020 will be to assist in helping develop standards, guidelines, or other recommendations related to increased development and expansion of industry recognized credentials. Additionally, the State of Minnesota was recently awarded the Educate for Opportunity grant through the National Governors Association and Strada to help with the development of an expanded credentialing system. Staff from the Governor's Office, OHE, DEED, Minnesota State Colleges and Universities, MDE, MN Office of Management and Budget, and the MN Department of Labor and Industry are all participating in the work of this grant and related credentialing efforts.

#### I. COORDINATING WITH ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES

Describe how the activities identified in (A) will be coordinated with economic development entities, strategies, and activities in the State.

**I. COORDINATING WITH ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES. DESCRIBE HOW THE ACTIVITIES IDENTIFIED IN (A) WILL BE COORDINATED WITH ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ENTITIES, STRATEGIES AND ACTIVITIES IN THE STATE.**

DEED oversees the state's workforce development system and is home to a majority of the programs within WIOA. The agency is also responsible for Minnesota's economic development initiatives, including business finance programs, business expansion incentive programs, export and trade promotion, and a variety of education and technical services for small businesses.

DEED's business development representatives located throughout the state provide assistance and solutions to businesses locating or expanding in Minnesota. These representatives work directly with business and identify and connect available resources including workforce solutions. These representatives work directly with DEED staff located in the CareerForce locations to identify potential resources to meet the employer needs. By state law all economic development projects funded by state resources must coordinate with a CareerForce location to post any new or vacant positions. The Minnesota Trade Office in addition to the business development representatives have expertise in key industry sectors. The staff understands the needs of these industries and markets specifically to attract and retain these businesses. The business development representatives serve as a liaison to support regional initiatives and strategies critical to their regional economies.

The Minnesota Jobs Skills Partnership (MJSP) program administered by DEED works strategically with businesses and educational institutions to train or retrain workers, expand work opportunities, and keep high—quality jobs in the state. The MJSP Board also has statutory authority over the state and federal Dislocated Worker Program (DWP), which provides training and services to laid-off Minnesota workers who meet specific eligibility requirements.

By state law, DEED is responsible for supporting the GWDB. The GWDB works in alignment with the MJSP board. Four of the GWDB members also serve on the MJSP board to ensure that we are meeting our goals and avoiding duplication in programming or investments.

In addition, the GWDB and DEED senior leaders meet regularly to discuss workforce challenges for Minnesota businesses and identify new opportunities to help companies. The Workforce Housing Development Program is an outgrowth of that collaboration. The program targets the lack of affordable housing in Greater Minnesota, which makes it difficult for businesses to attract the workers they need.

Many of DEED state-funded business financing programs address the common vision of workforce development of providing Minnesotans with meaningful employment at family-sustaining wages.

- **Minnesota Job Creation Fund** — This program encourages capital investment and high-wage job creation in key industries throughout the state. The program provides financial benefits to expanding business that spend at least \$500,000 in real property improvements with one year, create at least 10 new full-time positions that meet compensation requirements within two years, and possess expansion outside the state. In SFY 2015, \$11.65 million in state dollars were awarded, with 1,620 projected jobs created. All financing is performance-based and provided as business meet capital investment and job creation thresholds.
- **Minnesota Investment Fund** — This program provides financing that creates and retains high—quality jobs, with a focus on industrial, manufacturing, and technology-related industries, to increase the local and state tax base and improve economic vitality for all Minnesota citizens.
- Grants are awarded to local units of government who provide loans to assist new and expanding businesses. Cities, counties, townships and recognized Indian tribal

government are eligible. All projects must meet minimum criteria for private investment, number of jobs created or retained, and wages paid. In SFY 2015, \$7.9 million in state dollars were awarded, with an estimated 1,106 jobs created or retained.

Several state-funded business financing programs directly target communities of color in Minnesota:

- **Minnesota Angel Tax Credit Program** — Minnesota's Angel Tax Credit provides a 25-percent credit to investors or investment funds that make equity investments in startup companies focused on high technology, new proprietary technology, or a new proprietary product, process or service in specified fields. In 2019, \$5 of the total of \$10 million in funding is reserved for people of color, indigenous and women owned & managed businesses, and businesses located in Greater Minnesota
- **Launch Minnesota** Launch Minnesota Innovation Grants are targeted to the most promising innovative scalable technology businesses in Minnesota. The goal is to help reduce the risk for Minnesota technology startups and entrepreneurs, who are solving problems and growing our state's innovation ecosystem. The application process is now open for three types of Innovation Grants. Startups located in Greater Minnesota, as well as businesses owned by women, veterans, or people of color are given increased consideration.
- **Minnesota Indian Business Loan Program** — This program supports the development of Indian-owned and -operated businesses and promotes economic opportunities for Native American people throughout Minnesota. Eligible applicants must be enrolled members of a federally recognized Minnesota-based band or tribe. Each band or tribe is allocated funds from the program based on the number of enrolled members. DEED administers the program and services the loans, while the appropriate tribal council approves loan applications. In SFY 2019, 2 projects were approved, with \$85,766 in loan amounts. .
- **Minnesota Emerging Entrepreneur Loan Program** — This program supports the growth of businesses owned and operated by people of color or indigenous people, low-income persons, women, veterans and/or persons with disabilities. DEED provides grant funds to a network of nonprofit lenders which use these funds for loans to start-up and expanding businesses throughout the state. The program has additional goals of providing jobs for people of color, indigenous people and/or low-income persons, creating and strengthening business enterprises owned by people of color or indigenous people, and promoting economic development in low-income areas. In SFY 2019, 47 projects were approved with \$1.16M in loans granted.

The nine Regional Development Commissions (RDC) in Minnesota were established to provide technical assistance to the local units of government in their region. While RDCs perform a variety of unique services based on the needs of their region they intentionally align and collaborate with stakeholders in the workforce system and often serve as local workforce development board members.

Through the establishment of the six workforce development regions and approval of six regional plans, the coordination and alignment is also heightened. The six elements in this plan, in particular, the first three identify the opportunity and the need for local and regional economic development organizations to be aligned and integrated into the regional workforce

development plans. Regional economies are dependent on a future skilled workforce and strategies that develop the skills and training needed for industry to thrive. The coordination and leadership from economic development is evident in the regional governance structures and their participation in these plans.

The six workforce development regions, and their corresponding regional plans that are modeled after the WIOA State Plan, helps the coordination and alignment of programs and efforts between the state and regional levels. Local and regional workforce development board structures include members representing professional economic development, which helps ensure alignment between economic and workforce development. Additionally, leadership at DEED under the new administration has begun making structural changes to better align workforce and economic development, some of which remains to be determined.

## B. STATE OPERATING SYSTEMS AND POLICIES

The Unified or Combined State Plan must include a description of the State operating systems and policies that will support the implementation of the State strategy described in section **II Strategic Elements**. This includes—

Content deleted per federal reviewer.

### 1. THE STATE OPERATING SYSTEMS THAT WILL SUPPORT THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE STATE'S STRATEGIES. THIS MUST INCLUDE A DESCRIPTION OF—

#### A. STATE OPERATING SYSTEMS THAT SUPPORT COORDINATED IMPLEMENTATION OF STATE STRATEGIES (E.G., LABOR MARKET INFORMATION SYSTEMS, DATA SYSTEMS, COMMUNICATION SYSTEMS, CASE-MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS, JOB BANKS, ETC.)

#### **A. STATE OPERATING SYSTEMS THAT SUPPORT COORDINATED IMPLEMENTATION OF STATE STRATEGIES (E.G., LABOR MARKET INFORMATION SYSTEMS, DATA SYSTEMS, COMMUNICATION SYSTEMS, CASE-MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS, JOB BANKS, ETC.).**

DEED houses several data systems that work together to advance the statewide strategy, by providing necessary information to make data—driven decisions, monitor and track our interactions with employer and job-seeking customers, and to communicate effectively with external audiences.

#### **Labor Market Information**

The state's Labor Market Information (LMI) office gathers, analyzes, and disseminates economic data on Minnesota's business community, workforce, and job market. It also provides:

- Key economic indicators
- Employment projections
- Job vacancy data
- Regional and statewide industry and workforce analysis
- Information and tools to help individuals make informed career decisions

Key customers include businesses, job seekers, students, economic developers, education and training planners, workforce development professionals, policymakers, researchers and economists, government entities, media, and the general public.

For job seekers and career counselors specifically, the office has developed web tools that combine a range of data relevant to career decision-making:

- The My Goals and Experience feature on CareerForceMN.com provides a wide range of occupational information, including wages, current and future demand, education and training resources, and job opportunities. It also provides the Eligible Training Provider listings, including WIOA—certified trainings.
- The Regional and industry pages on CareerForceMN.com provide easier access to local and regional employment information. Regional pages provide local wage, demand and other information for each of Minnesota’s six regions, as well as workforce-related blog and news content specific to each region.
- The Graduate Employment Outcomes tool on mn.gov/deed shows how many Minnesota college graduates found jobs and at what wages. Outcomes are available at an institution and program of study level.
- The Cost of Living tool on mn.gov/deed provides a yearly estimate of the basic—needs cost of living in Minnesota by county, region, and statewide. The tool can be customized by family size and number of workers.

The Labor Market Information office’s telephone and email helpline respond to thousands of data and information requests per year. A team of six regional labor market analysts, stationed within Local Workforce Development Areas, give hundreds of public presentations every year on economic conditions, workforce issues and key industries to key internal and external stakeholders. They also provide analytical and grant-writing support on demographic and labor force topics, and customized support to organizations involved in regional planning.

To leverage existing career information tools — and to meet the requirements of WIOA to maintain and publish lists of eligible training providers and programs — DEED built an integrated Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL) database and an online Career and Education Explorer tool, which launched in 2016.

The ETPL Training Provider Portal is a secure database and data entry portal to house and maintain Minnesota’s official ETPL. This portal is available to training providers who meet the requirements for listing in Minnesota and it allows trainers to manage their own program listings. By policy, training providers will be required to validate the accuracy of their program data every two-years.

The Career and Education Explorer web tool allow the public to search for educational opportunities in Minnesota, including those that result in an industry-recognized credential. Enhanced labor market data is provided to allow users to explore occupations and to find related training opportunities.

### **Customer Data Systems**

MinnesotaWorks.net is currently DEED’s online system for helping job seekers find work and employers fill job vacancies. The MinnesotaWorks.net system collects data on employer and job seeker account characteristics, demographics, numbers of job openings and resumes, and web analytics. The data helps us better understand the needs of job seekers, businesses and industries and to guide the direction and focus of future outreach activities, developments and strategies. This data is also helping guide exploration of updating Minnesota’s labor exchange

system to be more mobile-friendly, accessible and secure. The MinnesotaWorks.net website was launched in 2007 and there have been significant advancements in technology in the intervening years. One option being explored is the integration of labor exchange and reporting functionality within the new DEED managed website, CareerForceMN.com. CareerForceMN.com was built thanks to funding provided by a federal Workforce Innovation Fund grant awarded in 2015.

The MinnesotaWorks.net quantitative performance data helps to inform the work of Workforce Strategy Consultants and other CareerForce staff, as well as Local Workforce Development Area leadership..

MinnesotaWorks.net is used by job seekers to register for services, by local CareerForce staff to create workshop listings for registration and track workshop attendance and other reportable customers services they have provided, and by management to create and analyze activity reports.

Customers using computers in CareerForce location log in to MinnesotaWorks.net, which captures volume and activity patterns in the Career Labs.

MinnesotaWorks.net is currently the sole source of this information that is needed to generate the federal Wagner—Peyser reports, gather data needed for cost allocation plans, and many other internal planning and performance activities. For instance, data on usage rates and customer characteristics are used to more effectively and efficiently plan for and provide appropriate customer service and connection to resources.

### **Customer Case Management Data System**

Workforce One (WF1) is a web-based case management application used by 2,000 state, city, county, and non-profit employees to track services to more than 100,000 customers across Minnesota's county offices, CareerForce locations, and Vocational Rehabilitation Services Offices. WF1 was created through a partnership of two Minnesota state agencies — the DHS and the DEED. State and federally-funded workforce training programs — including WIOA Adult, Dislocated Worker and Youth — track program participants in WF1.

Tracking customer services for participants in all employment and training programs in a single system helps to ensure consistency in service delivery and data collection. Case managers are able to view enrollments and services in some programs outside of those they work on, allowing them to target resources where customers need them most. Providers are able to closely monitor their customers' outcomes and deliver additional services when necessary to ensure the best outcome. Meeting federal and state employment and training reporting requirements is more efficient and less expensive because of standardized data collection and reporting within WF1.

For its business customers, DEED leverages Salesforce. The use and cost of Salesforce is shared by both internal users (Workforce Strategy Consultants, Veterans employment representatives, DEED's economic development programs, the Minnesota Trade Office, Communications, and the Rapid Response team) and some external users.

Salesforce allows these organizations to collaborate on business visits, to share information, and communicate to reduce duplication of services. Salesforce provides customized reports on business needs and services.

## **Communications Systems**

DEED makes a concerted effort to communicate job and training opportunities to job seekers through GovDelivery, our email marketing tool. Enhanced communications with employers and customers is supported by DEED's Communications Office.

In the last year, we have added 40,000 new subscribers to this email tool, with the total number of subscribers currently at 451,200 — most of those job seekers. And, in the last year, we sent a total of 1,867 bulletins to 73 different job seekers lists, broken down by geographical area, resulting in 27,027,220 potential bulletin views.

### **B. DATA-COLLECTION AND REPORTING PROCESSES USED FOR ALL PROGRAMS AND ACTIVITIES, INCLUDING THOSE PRESENT IN ONE-STOP CENTERS**

Data-collection and reporting processes used for all programs and activities, including those present in one-stop centers.<sup>10</sup>

[10] For the PY 2016 state plan, descriptions of data collection and reporting processes need only include currently known indicators.

### **B. DATA-COLLECTION AND REPORTING PROCESSES USED FOR ALL PROGRAMS AND ACTIVITIES, INCLUDING THOSE PRESENT IN ONE-STOP CENTERS.**

Enhanced program performance data is a key element of DEED's data—driven policy initiative to better address some of the most critical policy challenges. State law requires DEED to report performance outcomes for adult programs funded by the state's Workforce Development Fund. Programs include those administered by Local Workforce Development Areas, awarded by a competitive grant process, and direct appropriations to non- governmental organizations.

DEED must report the total number of people served in programs, the number who received training, the number who completed training and earned a credential, the number who found employment, and the average wages earned. This workforce program report card provides uniformly defined measures, allowing outcomes to be viewed and compared across different program models and by additional layers of disaggregation, including participants' educational level, race, gender and geography. The report card is available online and is updated quarterly at <https://mn.gov/deed/performance>.

DEED goes beyond the legislatively required demographic characteristics and identifying the percentage of program participants served who have a disability, are homeless at enrollment, as immigrants or refugees, and have a criminal record, among others characteristics. This shows the wide range of state-funded programs – as well as the WIOA Title I Adult and Dislocated Worker programs – which serve adults with barriers to employment. This ensures continued movement towards consistent and transparent performance tracking across the entire workforce development and training system, regardless of funding source.

State law also requires a workforce program net impact analysis to include the impact of workforce services on individual employment, earnings and public benefit usage outcomes and a cost-benefit analysis for understanding the monetary impacts of workforce services from the participant and taxpayer points of view. A pilot report was conducted in 2015 and found that WIA Adult and Dislocated Worker (both federal- and state-funded) programs were responsible for large net impacts on annual earnings and employment likelihood during the two periods

(2007-2008 and 2009-2010) examined. The 2017 analysis expanded the outcomes of previous cohorts and added adult career pathway programming. We also found that the monetary benefits outweigh the costs. This is true when taking into account not just the cost of the programs themselves, but the cost of increased public benefit usage among participants and the benefit of increased tax revenue when participants see a higher income as a result of participation.

Interestingly, the 2017 report also illustrated strong business cycle effects in program outcomes. One theory that could explain this would be that employers view workforce program participants more favorably during periods of economic downturns when unemployment is high and less favorably when the economy is good. Under this theory, enrolling in a workforce development program during economic downturns may introduce a signaling bias – or extra motivation to find a job – while enrolling during strong economic times may signal some barrier to employment. DEED tested this theory in a survey of employers asking them to consider hypothetical economic conditions and their willingness to hire program participants.

The next iteration of the report will further expand analysis to include DEED's newest equity focused grant programs. This report is due to the Minnesota Legislature in January 2021.

Overall, data confirms racial and occupational employment disparities exist among participants in workforce development programs administered by DEED and targeted to low-income and recently laid-off adults. This is particularly true among participants confronting such common barriers to employment as low educational attainment, criminal background, limited work experience, and limited English skills. While we can make tangible progress in serving people of color more intentionally and engaging with employers around how to successfully employ individuals with barriers, we must also find performance solutions to serving participants with barriers.

### **How services and referrals are made for programs within a compliant OSO and for programs not housed in a CareerForce Location. Specifically how Adult Education and VRS referrals work.**

Under the CareerForce re-branding we reinforced the ideas of “no wrong door approach” and “warm handoffs.” As a result we have developed training and guidance to ensure that anyone who comes into a CareerForce/One Stop/AJC receives a welcoming greeting, followed by an assessment of their needs. The CareerForce team will do everything they can to deliver those needs, however, if a referral is needed we will do a warm handoff. We define a warm handoff as one that will be lead by the CareerForce staff.

For example, if the referral is to ABE, which is not usually on-site, the staff will offer to reach out to ABE on the customer's behalf and ask that ABE contact the customer. This is essentially facilitating an introduction to the off-site partner. Of course, this would be in addition to providing the contact information to the customer which we see as the bare minimum for a referral.

The Minnesota Department of Education prioritizes and measures program quality through accountability expectations and activities that focus on both compliance and best practice according to research and experience. The expectations and activities include:

1. The state ABE Management Information System (MIS) data: Minnesota's MIS balances both program quality and program compliance with state and federal expectations. In addition to required reports, local providers can use the state MIS to analyze student

persistence, program outcomes, and other measures at the consortium, site, class and student level.

2. A state AEFLA grantee report card: The report card notes actual performance and ranks providers by key program data measures, including measurable skill gain by population, cost of programming per individual served, intensity of service provided, and percentage of population served.
3. A program improvement process: Programs will be identified for review based on rankings in the state AEFLA report card and will undergo a comprehensive review and monitored implementation of a program improvement plan that requires local providers to complete site visits, workshop activities, reports, and plans to strengthen program performance and quality. *(For more information on Program Improvement, see the response to (D) above.)*
4. Intensive program application cycle: On a five-year basis, ABE providers are required to complete an in-depth application as a method to adhere to state statute governing local ABE programs. In this intensive application, local providers describe their:
  - a. Consortium,
  - b. Program accountability procedures,
  - c. Professional development priorities and activities,
  - d. Proposed programming,
  - e. Local program governance,
  - f. Program collaboration with key stakeholders and partners,
  - g. Technology resources and integration,
  - h. Future plans, and
  - i. Performance.

These in-depth applications are reviewed and scored by a team of state staff from the Minnesota Department of Education and local AEFLA providers.

1. Local program monitoring site visits: All grantees are subject to monitoring site visits that focus on policy compliance and program quality through multiple methods:
  - a. Providers with low performance participate in site visits through the program improvement process;
  - b. All AEFLA grantees receive site visits on a rotating basis, at least once every five years, when the program participates in in-depth application process to continue receiving state ABE funding to comply with state statute;
  - c. Monitoring visits based on periodic desk review of provider data;
  - d. Local ABE providers that participate in state initiatives and/or receive special grants through state or federal funding typically receive site visits as part of their participation; and
  - e. Local providers request special technical assistance site visits as they face issues.

In addition, Vocational Rehabilitation Services uses an internal Reports Portal to disseminate production and performance outcomes by team and region as well as statewide. These reports are linked to our case management system, Workforce One, which is shared with Title I and state funded programs. In addition, caseload management and data quality review reports are built into Workforce One and used by counselors, technicians and rehabilitation area managers.

In 2019, representatives from Adult Basic Education, Title I Youth, Adult and Dislocated Worker, Title IV VRS General and SSB and Title III Wagner Peyser participated in a national ETA cohort group around maximizing the use of WIOA performance data. This group drafted an action plan for Minnesota which includes the following activities:

- Present all WIOA Titles Performance in the WIOA Annual Report Narrative
- Create a space for performance data information sharing
- Present WIOA performance data in a more integrated way to the public/stakeholders
- Create opportunities for local areas and locations to view and utilize their specific performance data

As always, the intent is that we make working with our system as simple and easy as possible without passing on the frustrations that accompany a system as complex as ours, to the customer.

2. THE STATE POLICIES THAT WILL SUPPORT THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE STATE'S STRATEGIES (E.G., CO-ENROLLMENT POLICIES AND UNIVERSAL INTAKE PROCESSES WHERE APPROPRIATE). IN ADDITION, PROVIDE THE STATE'S GUIDELINES FOR STATE-ADMINISTERED ONE-STOP PARTNER PROGRAMS' CONTRIBUTIONS TO A ONE-STOP DELIVERY SYSTEM

**2. THE STATE POLICIES THAT WILL SUPPORT THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE STATE'S STRATEGIES (E.G., CO-ENROLLMENT POLICIES AND UNIVERSAL INTAKE PROCESSES WHERE APPROPRIATE). IN ADDITION, PROVIDE THE STATE'S GUIDELINES FOR STATE-ADMINISTERED ONE-STOP PARTNER PROGRAMS' CONTRIBUTIONS TO A ONE-STOP DELIVERY SYSTEM.**

Under the Workforce Investment Act, DEED operated as the lead on writing, soliciting feedback, publishing, and enforcing policies. Under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, DEED will still perform many of these duties, but will engage partner state agencies to ensure continuity and shared awareness. The GWDB will provide high-level consultation on new draft policies that touch multiple core programs.

DEED plans to publish policies that address cross-agency program co-enrollment. In practice, most core programs use Workforce One, the state's client management information system, to encourage co-enrollment across programs. The allowable co-enrollment in this system serves as Minnesota's policy. DEED staff will follow-up to publish formal guidance on program co-enrollment. Currently there is co-enrollment activity between several federal programs with state programs. A prime example of how co-enrollment is considered involves dislocated workers. Depending upon the scenario, a dislocated worker may have options for federal and state dislocated worker support, such as a TAA grant, depending upon the type and category of lay-off that has occurred.

Universal intake processes have some layers in Minnesota. While all individuals who access job seeker support services via CareerForce and through Minnesota's Job Bank (currently MinnesotaWorks.net) are accessing programs funded through Wagner-Peyser, many of them seek deeper services with counselors that require program enrollment. In those cases, the majority of WIOA enrolled customers were also Wagner-Peyser customers, but the opposite is not true. Service providers in Minnesota will continue to work to make the program enrollment process as seamless as possible to the customer.

Minnesota fulfills its obligation to provide guidance on infrastructure cost allocation procedures to be reflected within the memorandums of understanding through an existing policy put in place in 2018. Also, DEED is currently facilitating discussion on a new IFA policy and procedure that will streamline and simplify the process for the one-stop system and all of its required partners.

Minnesota adheres to all current rules and regulations pertaining to the selection of one-stop operators as dictated by WIOA. Minnesota's one-stop system, the "CareerForce" system, has 51 locations. The infrastructure costs as well as the additional costs of operating these locations are allocated based on the infrastructure funding agreements attached to the memorandums of understanding in each of Minnesota's 16 local workforce development area.

## **Infrastructure Funding Agreements**

### **Summary**

An Infrastructure Funding Agreement (IFA) must be submitted at least every 3 years for each WorkForce Center (WFC) to ensure that all required WFC partners are equitably contributing to the costs of the Workforce Center System, as defined in WIOA. The IFA will be included in every Local Workforce Development Area's (LWDA) Memorandum of Understanding (MOU).

### **Relevant Laws, Rules, or Policies**

Federal Register/Vol. 66, No. 105

TEGL 17-16

2CFR 200

### **Effective Date**

4/1/2018

### **Last Updated**

11/1/2014

### **Contact**

Sean Bibus, sean.bibus@state.mn.us

**Tel** 651.259.7576

**Fax** 651.215.3842

### **Policy**

An IFA must be submitted at least every 3 years for each WFC to ensure that all required WFC partners are equitably contributing to the costs of the WorkForce Center System. The IFA recognizes the shared resources of key partners delivering workforce development and related services. Mutual consent and cooperation of all partners is an essential part of the IFA process.

The IFA must be completed and submitted to the Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED) for the WFC prior to the expiration date of the current IFA. For example, if the IFA covers the time period July 1, 2018 – June 30, 2021, the IFA needs to be submitted and fully approved before June 30, 2018. The IFA can be amended if a material change occurs during

the covered period.

If the IFA is not submitted and finalized in a timely manner as described above, the existing IFA may remain in place for 1 quarter. If the local board reports to DEED and the Governor's Workforce Development Board (GWDB) that an impasse cannot be resolved the State Funding Mechanism (SFM) replaces any operational cost sharing agreement in place at the WFC. The SFM is described in detail later in this policy.

## **Background**

Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) law as well as federal Department of Labor (DOL) and Office of Management and Budget (OMB) guidelines require that all actual and required partners in a WorkForce Center share benefitting expenses associated with operating the Center. This policy provides guidelines to allocate costs on the principle of "proportional benefit," or each partner receiving equal benefit to the amount of cost of an allocated expense. Minnesota's IFA policy recognizes the principles of proportionate benefit and applies it to all required WIOA titles, with different principles for co-located and non-co-located required partners. This policy details the approach and process for both scenarios. WIOA requires the following programs to contribute to infrastructure costs of the WorkForce Center system, regardless of location:

- WIOA Title I - Adult, Dislocated Worker, Youth and YouthBuild
- WIOA Title II – Adult Education and Family Literacy
- WIOA Title III – Wagner-Peyser
- WIOA Title IV – Vocational Rehabilitation Services/State Services for the Blind
- National Farmworker Jobs Program
- OAA, (Older Americans Act) Title V – SCSEP (Senior Community Service Employment Program)
- Temporary Assistance for Needy Families
- Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program E&T
- Career & Technical Education Programs (post-secondary)
- Trade Adjustment Assistance
- Jobs for Veterans State Grants
- Second Chance Act Grants
- Community Services Block Grant E&T
- Housing & Urban Development E&T
- Unemployment Compensation
- Job Corps \*\*
- Native American Programs (contribution is optional for Native American Programs. Additionally, they must be part of the MOU, but their participation in the IFA is optional)

## LOCAL FUNDING MECHANISM

### Co-Located Partners Procedure for Completing IFAs

WorkForce Center partners are required to follow this procedure in completing and submitting their IFAs:

1. DEED will pre-fill the IFA with Workforce One (WF1), Resource Room Customer Registration Data, and the previous IFA's space, FTE, and salary data. The pre-filled IFA will be sent to local partners no later than the first week of March prior to the IFA's effective program year date.
2. Local partners will complete, obtain all necessary local signatures on the IFA, and send the IFA either electronically or physically to DEED no later than the last week of May prior to the IFA's effective program year date.
3. DEED will obtain necessary central DEED signatures on the IFAs prior to its effective date. If central DEED authorities disagree with any aspect of an IFA and refuse to sign it, DEED will notify local partners of this no later than one week after the IFA has been submitted to DEED in order to allow adequate time for an agreement to be reached.

DEED will keep central records of all IFAs.

### Methodology Summary

Table 1 summarizes the categories of the IFA and the methodologies that will be used to allocate costs. Bulleted items indicate local discretion for selecting the methodology that most accurately reflects proportional benefit for the use of the item. Percentage items indicate universal methodology for all WFCs.

**TABLE 1: Methodologies for Allocating Costs**

Cost Being Allocated	Dedicated Space	Usage Logs/ Metering	FTEs	WF1 data	Resource Area Data	Total Dedicated and Shared Space	FTE Usage and/or Location
Dedicated Space	100%						
Shared Space							
Common Space						100%	
Reception Area Related Expenses			50%	50%			
Resource Area					100%		

Cost Being Allocated	Dedicated Space	Usage Logs/Metering	FTEs	WF1 data	Resource Area Data	Total Dedicated and Shared Space	FTE Usage and/or Location
Related Expenses							
MN.IT Internet Expenses							100%
Shared MN.IT Phone Expenses							100%
MN.IT MFD Expenses (printers)							100%
All Other Shared Expenses							
Security and/or Site Management Costs			33.33% (1/3)	33.33% (1/3)	33.33% (1/3)		

\*Note on MN.IT Internet Expenses- as of 7/1/2017 there is a special agreement on the allocation of these costs that is in effect that utilizes set-aside funds to subsidize MN.IT Internet in WFCs. The allocation of resource area computer costs will be evaluated annually.

\*Note on MN.IT resource area computers- as of 7/1/2017 there is a special agreement on the allocation of these costs that is in effect that utilizes set-aside funds to fully subsidize the computer's monthly cost. The allocation of resource area computer costs will be evaluated annually.

\*Note on situations of special space rental not reflected within the IFA- if any organization that is allocated space within an IFA wishes to rent some of their space to any other organization outside of the IFA, they may do so. The particulars of this agreement don't need to be tracked in the IFA as long as the space is accounted for within the IFA and allocated to the organization responsible for it.

\*Note on Security and/or Site Management Costs- some WFCs allocate "Site Management" costs. Site Managers take on the business of the facility they are located in and handle things such as communication with landlords on matters of snow removal, ordering supplies, and/or keeping usage logs of conference room space up to date. Some WFCs allocate "Security" costs such as the cost of security guards on site. Other security costs that could be allocated according to the above formula instead of directly to one program could include examples like the following: a new lock system in the front entrance of the facility; security cameras throughout the facility; a panic button and announcement system.

## Methodologies Described

**Dedicated Space.** Dedicated space is space that is used exclusively by a WFC partner. Examples could include office, meeting or storage space. The partner agrees to pay for their dedicated space 100% of the time, whether occupied or not, within the lease period.

**Usage Logs/Metering.** Usage logs are records of how space or items were used. Examples could include a sign-up sheet for shared meeting space. Partners agree to pay their percentage of total usage for the cost of the item being tracked in this manner.

FTEs. The number of full-time equivalents on site. Staff with office space at multiple sites may not be counted as more than one FTE, with fractions totaling one FTE being allocated across the multiple sites. Vacant or unfilled positions must be included in the FTE count.

**Workforce One Data (WF1).** Workforce One participant enrollments will be used for the allocation of 50% of a WFC's reception related expenses. A date is chosen near the beginning of the calendar year to count all active enrollees in WF1 in a WFC to populate the IFA with. DEED staff provide and pre-populate the IFAs with this data prior to them being sent to local WFC management.

**Exemptions** – Program exemptions from allocation of reception costs are allowed if the program can document/attest to the fact that these customers do not receive direct services out of their assigned (by WF1) WFC. Exemptions must be approved by DEED and included in this section of the IFA policy. Current exemptions include:

- Youth participants from Title IB and Title IV
- MFIP participants receiving services in non-WFC counties
- Title VII program of State Services for the Blind, (SSB"u" only, not SSB"w"), for visually impaired individuals

**Resource Area Data, (RAD).** RAD enrollments will be used for the allocation 100% of a WFC's resource area expenses. DEED staff provide and pre-populate the IFAs with the prior year's RRCRD before the IFAs are sent to local WFC management.

Non-program enrolled customer costs will be covered by Wagner-Peyser (WP), WIOA Title 1B Adult, and Dislocated Worker program providers as indicated in TEGl 19-16. One of the following three approaches must be selected:

1. A negotiated approach, where each title agrees to a percentage allocation of the costs;
2. An allocation based on the program's specific count of program-enrolled participants within the resource area data section of the IFA, (example on the next page);

Example	Title IB-Adult	Title IB-DW	Title III – Wagner-Peyser
Resource area data percentages of program-enrolled participants on IFA	10%	5%	5%
Ratio Calculation (of the total 20% in the example directly above)	10%/20%	5%/20%	5%/20%

Example	Title IB-Adult	Title IB-DW	Title III – Wagner-Peyser
Resulting allocation percentage of the non-program enrolled participants within the resource area data.	50.00%	25.00%	25.00%

3. An equal shares allocation.

When more than one agency serves customers in the same program, the agencies will be assigned their portion of costs based on Workforce One (WF1) enrollment percentages. If this becomes an impasse issue for the local board or rises to the State Board for resolution, options two or three will be chosen.

**Total Dedicated and Shared Space.** The sum of dedicated and shared space indicated on an IFA.

**FTE Usage and/or Location.** Staff PCs that use MN.IT internet are tracked as such on the IFA and attributed to the organization that uses them. Other PCs that use MN.IT internet are also tracked on the IFA and are allocated based on their location, (resource area PCs by resource area allocation %; shared space PCs by shared space allocation %). MN.IT phones are tracked in the same manner. MN.IT MFDs are not indicated on the IFA, but have their cost split by a combination of utilization reports and system-wide agreed methodology.

**Reconciliation**

On a bi-annual basis, the WF1, FTE and RAD data for all IFAs will be generated and reviewed for statistical fluctuations. Data will be shared with local partners. If any allocations deviate more than 5% during a review, this is considered to be a material change and adjusting reconciliation payments will be required. If the review identifies material changes during consecutive bi-annual reviews a new IFA must be completed within 3 months, and will be coordinated by DEED.

If all local partners agree that a new IFA is not needed or desired, then they can inform DEED of this decision and the current IFA will stay in effect for another year from the date of the request for a new IFA and the current IFA will stay in effect for another year. At the end of that year, one or more partners may again request a new IFA. If all partners agree, the existing IFA may be retained through the original ending date.

**IFA Amendments**

If a substantial change, (with “substantial change” generally interpreted as a more than 5% deviation of any allocation percentages within the IFA), as interpreted by local management, occurs within a WFC local partners can request that the IFA be amended to more accurately reflect the actual allocation of infrastructure costs in the location. Examples of how this could happen include but are not limited to: a number of staff either enter or exit the location; the size of the leased space decreases or increases; many computers that use MN.IT internet are installed at the location.

**Non-Co-Located Partners Procedure for Completing IFAs**

A non-co-located partner is defined as a partner who does not deliver services on a planned regular basis at one WorkForce Center per local area. Non-Co-Located Partners are required to participate in the costs of at least one WorkForce Center in each local area. Programs that have multiple providers within a local area are viewed as one program, requiring that only a single contribution be agreed to by the state agency that oversees that program.

Local Boards are encouraged to work with non-co-located partners to assess an appropriate contribution to the IFA, based on proportionate benefit of the use of the WorkForce Center system. These partners should produce some form of documentation to share with the board to make this determination.

If this can't be achieved, it is recommended that a process be applied that assumes proportionate benefit can be assessed based on the distribution of their program eligible individuals within each of the local areas and the recognition of total financial contributions equaling 1.5% of the State's total federal allocation for that program based on the current Federal fiscal year funding for the program. The following table illustrates this process to establish the required contribution within each local area.

Federal Title	Title's Total Federal Allocation	1.5% IFA Contribution
"X"	\$1,000,000	\$15,000

**Eligible Program Population by Local Workforce Development Area**

#1	#2	#3	#4	#5	#6	#7	#8	#9	#10
20%	3%	15%	10%	15%	10%	10%	5%	10%	2%
\$3,000	\$450	\$2,250	\$1,500	\$2,250	\$1,500	\$1,500	\$750	\$1,500	\$300

These contributions can be achieved in two ways – cash contributions or in-kind contributions.

**Cash Contributions**

Cash contributions must be documented and included in the IFA. Two examples of cash contributions are:

- Cash contributions to the local board to support local or regional plan strategies
- Cash payments for use/rental of space for the delivery of services

**In-Kind Contributions**

In-kind contributions can be made in lieu of cash contributions. Examples of these contributions include:

- Staff support for WFC or board activities beyond required participation
- Other services that leverage the expertise of the program or customize the work of the program
- Non-cash contributions are comprised of –

- (i) Expenditures incurred by one-stop partners on behalf of the WorkForce Center system; and
- (ii) Non-cash contributions or goods or services contributed by a partner program and used by the one-stop center.

In-kind contributions must be valued consistent with 2CFR 200.306 to ensure they are fairly evaluated and meet the partners' proportionate share. A short explanation of 2CFR 200.306 is as follows: the value of the donated non-cash contribution must be reasonable and the lesser of fair market value or book value per accounting records; for example, if a desk that is donated is 10 years old the value of the donation can't be its purchase price as if it was brand new; an additional example is if a donation is made of staff time for a WFC's reception desk, then the value of that staff-time donation must be what the donated staff time would normally cost the organization which is donating their staff's time.

### **Dispute Resolution**

If the partners are not able to reach agreement on an IFA, the local workforce development board will convene all partners and attempt to resolve the dispute. If an agreement still cannot be reached, the local workforce development board must notify DEED and the GWDB that an impasse has been reached. DEED and the GWDB will review the process and make a dispute resolution recommendation. If this is not successful and it has been more than 3 months since the expiration of the previous IFA, the SFM will take effect for that WFC, taking into consideration the distribution and allocation of services of all required partners within the local area.

### **THE STATE FUNDING MECHANISM (SFM)**

Consistent with sec. 121(h)(1)(A)(i)(II) of WIOA, if the Local WDB, chief elected official, and one-stop partners in a local area do not reach consensus agreement on methods of sufficiently funding the costs of infrastructure of one-stop centers for a program year, the State funding mechanism is applicable to the local area for that program year.

In the State funding mechanism, the Governor, subject to limitations, determines one-stop partner contributions after consultation with the chief elected officials, Local WDBs, and the State WDB. This determination involves:

- (1) The application of a budget for one-stop infrastructure costs as described in regulation Sec. 20 CFR 678.735, (all regulation numbers in this section pertain to Sec. 20 CFR), based on either agreement reached in the local area negotiations or the State WDB formula outlined in regulation 678.745;
- (2) The determination of each local one-stop partner program's proportionate use of the one-stop delivery system and relative benefit received, consistent with the Uniform Guidance at 2 CFR part 200, including the Federal cost principles, the partner programs' authorizing laws and regulations, and other applicable legal requirements described in regulation 678.736; and
- (3) The calculation of required statewide program caps on contributions to infrastructure costs from one-stop partner programs in areas operating under the State funding mechanism as described in regulation 678.738.

The Governor is limited to determining the infrastructure cost contributions for some one-stop partner programs under the State funding mechanism in the following situations:

(1) The Governor will not determine the contribution amounts for infrastructure funds for Native American program grantees described in regulation part 684. The appropriate portion of funds to be provided by Native American program grantees to pay for one-stop infrastructure must be determined as part of the development of the MOU described in 678.500 and specified in the MOU.

(2) In States in which the policy-making authority is placed in an entity or official that is independent of the authority of the Governor with respect to the funds provided for adult education and literacy activities authorized under title II of WIOA, postsecondary career and technical education activities authorized under the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act of 2006, or VR services authorized under title I of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (other than sec. 112 or part C), as amended by WIOA title IV, the determination of the amount each of the applicable partners must contribute to assist in paying the infrastructure costs of one-stop centers must be made by the official or chief officer of the entity with such authority, in consultation with the Governor.

Any duty, ability, choice, responsibility, or other action otherwise related to the determination of infrastructure costs contributions that is assigned to the Governor in regulation 678.730 through 678.745 also applies to this decision-making process performed by the official or chief officer described in paragraph in paragraph (2) above.

To initiate the State funding mechanism, a Local WDB that has not reached consensus on methods of sufficiently funding local infrastructure through the local funding mechanism as provided in regulation 678.725 must notify the Governor by the deadline established by the Governor in the IFA policy.

Once a Local WDB has informed the Governor that no consensus has been reached:

(1) The Local WDB must provide the Governor with local negotiation materials in accordance with regulation 678.735(a).

(2) The Governor must determine the one-stop center budget by either:

(i) Accepting a budget previously agreed upon by partner programs in the local negotiations, in accordance with regulation 678.735(b)(1); or

(ii) Creating a budget for the one-stop center using the State WDB formula (described in regulation 678.745) in accordance with regulation 678.735(b)(3).

(3) The Governor then must establish a cost allocation methodology to determine the one-stop partner programs' proportionate shares of infrastructure costs.

(4)(i) Using the methodology established in this policy, and taking into consideration the factors concerning individual partner programs listed in regulation 678.737(b)(2), the Governor must determine each partner's proportionate share of the infrastructure costs, and

(ii) In accordance with regulation 678.730(c), in some instances, the Governor does not determine a partner program's proportionate share of infrastructure funding costs, in which case it must be determined by the entities named under the limitation section of the IFA policy.

(5) The Governor must then calculate the statewide caps on the amounts that partner programs may be required to contribute toward infrastructure funding, according to the steps found in regulation 678.738(a)(1) through (4).

(6) The Governor must ensure that the aggregate total of the infrastructure contributions according to proportionate share required of all local partner programs in local areas under the State funding mechanism do not exceed the cap for that particular program. If the total does not exceed the cap, the Governor must direct each one-stop partner program to pay the amount determined toward the infrastructure funding costs of the one-stop center. If the total does exceed the cap, then to determine the amount to direct each one-stop program to pay, the Governor may:

(i) Ascertain whether the local partner or partners whose proportionate shares are calculated above the individual program caps are willing to voluntarily contribute above the capped amount to equal that program's proportionate share; or

(ii) Choose from the options provided in regulation 678.738(b)(2)(ii), including having the local area re-enter negotiations to reassess each one-stop partner's proportionate share and make adjustments or identify alternate sources of funding to make up the difference between the capped amount and the proportionate share of infrastructure funding of the one-stop partner.

(7) If none of the solutions given in paragraphs (b)(6)(i) and (ii) of IFA regulation prove to be viable, the Governor must reassess the proportionate shares of each one-stop partner so that the aggregate amount attributable to the local partners for each program is less than that program's cap amount. Upon such reassessment, the Governor must direct each one-stop partner program to pay the reassessed amount toward the infrastructure funding costs of the one-stop center.

If a local area has reached agreement as to the infrastructure budget for the one-stop centers in the local area, it must provide this budget to the Governor. If, as a result of the agreed upon infrastructure budget, only the individual programmatic contributions to infrastructure funding based upon proportionate use of the one-stop centers and relative benefit received are at issue, the Governor may accept the budget, from which the Governor must calculate each partner's contribution consistent with the cost allocation methodologies contained in the Uniform Guidance.

The Governor may also take into consideration the extent to which the partners in the local area have agreed in determining the proportionate shares, including any agreements reached at the local level by one or more partners, as well as any other element or product of the negotiating process provided to the Governor as required by paragraph (a) of this section.

If a local area has not reached agreement as to the infrastructure budget for the one-stop centers in the local area, or if the Governor determines that the agreed upon budget does not adequately meet the needs of the local area or does not reasonably work within the confines of the local area's resources in accordance with the Governor's one-stop budget guidance (which is required to be issued by WIOA Sec. 121(h)(1)(B) and under regulation 678.705), then in accordance with regulation 678.745, the Governor must use the formula developed by the State WDB based on at least the factors required under regulation 678.745, and any associated weights to determine the local area budget.

Once the appropriate budget is determined for a local area through either method described in regulation 678.735 (by acceptance of a budget agreed upon in local negotiation or by the Governor applying the formula in regulation 678.745), the Governor must determine the appropriate cost allocation methodology to be applied to the one-stop partners in such local area, consistent with the Federal cost principles permitted under 2 CFR part 200, to fund the infrastructure budget.

The Governor must use the cost allocation methodology—as determined under Sec. 678.736—to determine each partner’s proportionate share of the infrastructure costs under the State funding mechanism, subject to considering the factors described in paragraph (b)(2) of this section.

(2) In determining each partner program’s proportionate share of infrastructure costs, the Governor must take into account the costs of administration of the one-stop delivery system for purposes not related to one-stop centers for each partner (such as costs associated with maintaining the Local WDB or information technology systems), as well as the statutory requirements for each partner program, the partner program’s ability to fulfill such requirements, and all other applicable legal requirements. The Governor may also take into consideration the extent to which the partners in the local area have agreed in determining the proportionate shares, including any agreements reached at the local level by one or more partners, as well as any other materials or documents of the negotiating process, which must be provided to the Governor by the Local WDB and described in Sec. 678.735(a).

### **Determining Caps on Contributions**

(a) The Governor must calculate the statewide cap on the contributions for one-stop infrastructure funding required to be provided by each one-stop partner program for those local areas that have not reached agreement. The cap is the amount determined under paragraph (a)(4) of this section, which the Governor derives by:

(1) First, determining the amount resulting from applying the percentage for the corresponding one-stop partner program provided in paragraph (d) of this section to the amount of Federal funds provided to carry out the one-stop partner program in the State for the applicable fiscal year;

(2) Second, selecting a factor (or factors) that reasonably indicates the use of one-stop centers in the State, applying such factor(s) to all local areas in the State, and determining the percentage of such factor(s) applicable to the local areas that reached agreement under the local funding mechanism in the State;

(3) Third, determining the amount resulting from applying the percentage determined in paragraph (a)(2) of this section to the amount determined under paragraph (a)(1) of this section for the one-stop partner program; and

(4) Fourth, determining the amount that results from subtracting the amount determined under paragraph (a)(3) of this section from the amount determined under paragraph (a)(1) of this section. The outcome of this final calculation results in the partner program’s cap.

(b)(1) The Governor must ensure that the funds required to be contributed by each partner program in the local areas in the State under the State funding mechanism, in aggregate, do not exceed the statewide cap for each program as determined under paragraph (a) of this section.

(2) If the contributions initially determined under Sec. 678.737 would exceed the applicable cap determined under paragraph (a) of this section, the Governor may:

(i) Ascertain if the one-stop partner whose contribution would otherwise exceed the cap determined under paragraph (a) of this section will voluntarily contribute above the capped amount, so that the total contributions equal that partner’s proportionate share. The one-stop partner’s contribution must still be consistent with the program’s authorizing laws and regulations, the Federal cost principles in 2 CFR part 200, and other applicable legal requirements; or

(ii) Direct or allow the Local WDB, chief elected officials, and one-stop partners to: re-enter negotiations, as necessary; reduce the infrastructure costs to reflect the amount of funds that are available for such costs without exceeding the cap levels; reassess the proportionate share of each one-stop partner; or identify alternative sources of financing for one-stop infrastructure funding, consistent with the requirement that each one-stop partner pay an amount that is consistent with the proportionate use of the one-stop center and relative benefit received by the partner, the program’s authorizing laws and regulations, the Federal cost principles in 2 CFR part 200, and other applicable legal requirements.

(3) If applicable under paragraph (b)(2)(ii) of this section, the Local WDB, chief elected officials, and one-stop partners, after renegotiation, may come to agreement, sign an MOU, and proceed under the local funding mechanism. Such actions do not require the redetermination of the applicable caps under paragraph (a) of this section.

(4) If, after renegotiation, agreement among partners still cannot be reached or alternate financing cannot be identified, the Governor may adjust the specified allocation, in accordance with the amounts available and the limitations described in paragraph (d) of this section. In determining these adjustments, the Governor may take into account information relating to the renegotiation as well as the information described in Sec. 678.735(a).

(c) Limitations. Subject to paragraph (a) of this section and in accordance with WIOA Sec. 121(h)(2)(D), the following limitations apply to the Governor’s calculations of the amount that one-stop partners in local areas that have not reached agreement under the local funding mechanism may be required under Sec. 678.736 to contribute to one-stop infrastructure funding:

Program Title	Limitation	Program Title	Limitation
Title IB (Youth, Adult, DW)	3.00%	Temporary Asst. Needy Families	1.50%
Title II - AFLA	1.50%	Sup. Nut. Assistant Program E&T	1.50%
Title III – Wagner-Peyser	3.00%	Community Serv. Block Grant	1.50%
Title IV – VRS/SSB FY16	.75%	Jobs for Veterans State Grants	1.50%
Title IV – VRS/SSB FY17	1.00%	Trade Adjustment Assistance	1.50%
Title IV – VRS/SSB FY18	1.25%	Unemployment Compensation	1.50%
Title IV – VRS/SSB FY19	1.50%	Sr. Community Ser. Emp. Program	1.50%
Carl Perkins	1.50%	Native American Programs	1.50%
YouthBuild	1.50%	Housing & Urban Development	1.50%

Program Title	Limitation	Program Title	Limitation
Natl. Farmworker Jobs Program	1.50%	Second Chance Act Grants	1.50%
Job Corps	1.50%		

Federal direct spending programs. For local areas that have not reached a one-stop infrastructure funding agreement by consensus, an entity administering a program funded with direct Federal spending, as defined in Sec. 250(c)(8) of the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985, as in effect on February 15, 2014 (2 U.S.C. 900(c)(8)), must not be required to provide more for infrastructure costs than the amount that the Governor determined.

For programs for which it is not otherwise feasible to determine the amount of Federal funding used by the program until the end of that program’s operational year—because, for example, the funding available for education, employment, and training activities is included within funding for the program that may also be used for other unrelated activities—the determination of the Federal funds provided to carry out the program for a fiscal year may be determined by:

1. The percentage of Federal funds available to the one-stop partner program that were used by the one-stop partner program for education, employment, and training activities in the previous fiscal year for which data are available; and
2. Applying the percentage determined under paragraph (d)(1) of this section to the total amount of Federal funds available to the one-stop partner program for the fiscal year for which the determination under paragraph (a)(1) of this section applies.

In the State funding mechanism, infrastructure costs for WIOA title I programs, including Native American Programs described in part 684 of this chapter, may be paid using program funds, administrative funds, or both. Infrastructure costs for the Senior Community Service Employment Program under title V of the Older Americans Act (42 U.S.C. 3056 et seq.) may also be paid using program funds, administrative funds, or both.

In the State funding mechanism, infrastructure costs for other required one-stop partner programs (listed in Secs. 678.400 through 678.410) are limited to the program’s administrative funds, as appropriate.

In the State funding mechanism, infrastructure costs for the adult education program authorized by title II of WIOA must be paid from the funds that are available for local administration and may be paid from funds made available by the State or non-Federal resources that are cash, in-kind, or third-party contributions.

In the State funding mechanism, infrastructure costs for the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act of 2006 must be paid from funds available for local administration of postsecondary level programs and activities to eligible recipients or consortia of eligible recipients and may be paid from funds made available by the State or non-Federal resources that are cash, in-kind, or third-party contributions.

### **The State Formula**

The State WDB must develop a formula to be used by the Governor under Sec. 678.735(b)(3) in

determining the appropriate budget for the infrastructure costs of one-stop centers in the local areas that do not reach agreement under the local funding mechanism and are, therefore, subject to the State funding mechanism. The formula identifies the factors and corresponding weights for each factor that the Governor must use, which must include: the number of one-stop centers in a local area; the population served by such centers; the services provided by such centers; and any factors relating to the operations of such centers in the local area that the State WDB determines are appropriate. As indicated in Sec. 678.735(b)(1), if the local area has agreed on such a budget, the Governor may accept that budget in lieu of applying the formula factors.

The State Funding Formula will be based on the following analysis:

1. The number of WorkForce Centers in the local area and total operational costs of WFCs.
2. The total number and ratio of workforce participants, including disparately impacted populations included in the state plan using the WorkForce Centers.
3. The availability/accessibility of services by core and required programs.

The analysis of WFC costs will be used to establish the total budgeting level for the WFC in question. The budget determined by the State Board should not vary more than 15% from the originally submitted budget for local areas with only 1 WFC, or the average cost of all WFCs within the local area. Variances above that amount may require reclassification of the WFC or adjusting of IFA contributions, based on the analysis of #2 and #3.

### **Appeals of the SFM**

(a) The Governor must establish a process, described under sec. 121(h)(2)(E) of WIOA, for a one-stop partner administering a program described in Secs. 678.400 through 678.410 to appeal the Governor's determination regarding the one-stop partner's portion of funds to be provided for one-stop infrastructure costs. This appeal process must be described in the Unified State Plan.

(b) The appeal may be made on the ground that the Governor's determination is inconsistent with proportionate share requirements in Sec. 678.735(a), the cost contribution limitations in Sec. 678.735(b), the cost contribution caps in Sec. 678.738, consistent with the process described in the State Plan.

(c) The process must ensure prompt resolution of the appeal in order to ensure the funds are distributed in a timely manner, consistent with the requirements of Sec. 683.630 of this chapter.

(d) The one-stop partner must submit an appeal in accordance with State's deadlines for appeals specified in the guidance issued under Sec. 678.705(b)(3), or if the State has not set a deadline, within 21 days from the Governor's determination.

### **The IFA as Part of the MOU**

The MOU, fully described in Sec. 678.500, must contain the following information whether the local areas use either the local one-stop or the State funding method:

(a) The period of time in which this infrastructure funding agreement is effective. This may be a different time period than the duration of the MOU.

(b) Identification of an infrastructure and shared services budget that will be periodically reconciled against actual costs incurred and adjusted accordingly to ensure that it reflects a cost allocation methodology that demonstrates how infrastructure costs are charged to each partner in proportion to its use of the one-stop center and relative benefit received, and that complies with 2 CFR part 200 (or any corresponding similar regulation or ruling).

Identification of all one-stop partners, chief elected officials, and Local WDB participating in the infrastructure funding arrangement.

Steps the Local WDB, chief elected officials, and one-stop partners used to reach consensus or an assurance that the local area followed the guidance for the State funding process.

Description of the process to be used among partners to resolve issues during the MOU duration period when consensus cannot be reached.

Description of the periodic modification and review process to ensure equitable benefit among one-stop partners.

In addition to jointly funding infrastructure costs, one-stop partners listed in Secs. 678.400 through 678.410 must use a portion of funds made available under their programs' authorizing Federal law (or fairly evaluated in-kind contributions) to pay the additional costs relating to the operation of the one-stop delivery system. These other costs must include applicable career services and may include other costs, including shared services.

For the purposes of paragraph (a) of this section, shared services' costs may include the costs of shared services that are authorized for and may be commonly provided through the one-stop partner programs to any individual, such as initial intake, assessment of needs, appraisal of basic skills, identification of appropriate services to meet such needs, referrals to other one-stop partners, and business services. Shared operating costs may also include shared costs of the Local WDB's functions.

Contributions to the additional costs related to operation of the one-stop delivery system may be cash, non-cash, or third-party in-kind contributions, consistent with how these are described in Sec. 678.720(c).

The shared costs described in paragraph (a) of this section must be allocated according to the proportion of benefit received by each of the partners, consistent with the Federal law authorizing the partner's program, and consistent with all other applicable legal requirements, including Federal cost principles in 2 CFR part 200 (or any corresponding similar regulation or ruling) requiring that costs are allowable, reasonable, necessary, and allocable.

Any shared costs agreed upon by the one-stop partners must be included in the MOU.

### **Non-Required Co-Located Partners**

Any additional co-located partners at one stop centers are required to contribute toward infrastructure and other additional costs. The contributions from any additional partners shall

be based on proportionate use and relative benefit.

### **Additional Costs**

In addition to jointly funding infrastructure costs, one-stop must use a portion of funds made available under their programs' authorizing Federal law (or fairly evaluated in-kind contributions) to pay the additional costs relating to the operation of the one-stop delivery system. These other costs must include applicable career services and may include other costs, including shared services.

Shared services' costs may include the costs of shared services that are authorized for and may be commonly provided through the one-stop partner programs to any individual, such as initial intake, assessment of needs, appraisal of basic skills, identification of appropriate services to meet such needs, referrals to other one-stop partners, and business services. Shared operating costs may also include shared costs of the Local WDB's functions. Contributions to the additional costs related to operation of the one-stop delivery system may be cash, non-cash, or third-party in-kind contributions.

The shared costs must be allocated according to the proportion of benefit received by each of the partners, consistent with the Federal law authorizing the partner's program, and consistent with all other applicable legal requirements. Any shared costs agreed upon by the one-stop partners must be included in the MOU.

## **3. STATE PROGRAM AND STATE BOARD OVERVIEW**

### **A. STATE AGENCY ORGANIZATION**

Describe the organization and delivery systems at the State and local levels for the programs covered in the plan, including the organizational structure. Include an organizational chart.

## **3. STATE PROGRAM AND STATE BOARD OVERVIEW**

### **A. STATE AGENCY ORGANIZATION DESCRIBE THE ORGANIZATION AND DELIVERY SYSTEMS AT THE STATE AND LOCAL LEVELS FOR THE PROGRAMS COVERED IN THE PLAN, INCLUDING THE ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE. INCLUDE AN ORGANIZATIONAL CHART.**

The Deputy Commissioners of the Workforce and Economic Development divisions meet on a regular basis with the Commissioner to discuss overall department strategies and linkages between the two divisions. This supports stronger coordinated efforts in service delivery, particularly at the local level with serving business needs. Additionally, assistant commissioners or deputy commissioners from each of the state agencies involved in workforce development meet monthly at DEED to discuss programming and ways to collaborate.

Under the Deputy Commissioner of Workforce Development are WIOA titles I, III and IV, as well as unemployment insurance, TAA, veterans programs, displaced homemaker programs and the Senior Community Services Employment Program. The Director of the Governor's State board also reports to the Deputy Commissioner, as outlined in state statute.

Within the titles of WIOA, separate directors oversee each of the WIOA titles, including one for Vocational Rehabilitation Services and State Services for the Blind, under title IV. TAA is under

the WIOA DW program director and the displaced homemaker and SCSEP programs are under the WIOA Adult programs director. Unemployment Insurance has its individual director overseeing those activities.

The following is a list of leadership within the workforce development division:

- Department Commissioner: Steve Grove
- Deputy Commissioner - Workforce Development: Hamse Warfa
- GWDB: Ben Baglio
- Title IA: Marc Majors
- Title IB: Marc Majors
- Title II: Todd Wagner, MDE
- Title III: Lorrie Janatopoulos
- Title IV: Dee Torgerson, Vocational Rehabilitation; Natasha Jerde, State Services for the Blind
- Unemployment Insurance: Jim Hegman
- Veterans: Lorrie Janatopoulos
- Trade Adjustment, SCSEP, Displaced Homemaker: Marc Majors,

The Workforce and Economic Development divisions are supported by support divisions within DEED, including human resources; administrative and financial services; Office of Economic Opportunity; and communications, analysis and research division, which includes labor market information. Information technology needs are supported by the state agency known as MN-IT@DEED.

At the local level, Minnesota has 16 local workforce development areas overseen by Local Area Workforce Development Boards. In Greater Minnesota, the term used to describe areas of the state outside of the seven-county metropolitan area that includes Minneapolis and St. Paul, there are five regions that combine the efforts of two local area boards for regional planning purposes. The Twin Cities metropolitan area has six local workforce development areas and combines the efforts of six Local Area Boards for regional planning purposes. Additionally, the Greater Metropolitan Workforce Council works closely with local boards and staff in the metropolitan area to develop regional goals, projects, initiatives, and to provide support for WIOA regional planning efforts.

## B. STATE BOARD

Provide a description of the State Board, including—

### **B. STATE BOARD PROVIDE A DESCRIPTION OF THE STATE BOARD, INCLUDING—**

Under Section 101 (d) of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), the State Board shall assist the Governor in the development, implementation, and modification of the State plan through the review of statewide policies and programs; and of recommendations on

actions that should be taken by the State to align workforce development programs in a manner that supports a comprehensive and streamlined workforce development system, including the review and provision of comments on the State plans, if any, for programs and activities of one—stop partners that are not core programs. The GWDB is the state’s workforce development Board under WIOA, which seeks to improve the effectiveness of and streamline the governing structures of the public workforce system, empower elected officials and workforce Boards, establish structures for working with regional economies and engage the key stakeholders needed to lead the system to achieve the goals of WIOA.

The State Board was established prior to the passing of the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) in 1997 and the Board structure was grandfathered in under WIA. With the passing of WIOA, significant changes to the composition and role of the Board have taken place. The duties and structure of the board are laid out in Minnesota Statutes 116L.665.[1]

#### OPERATIONAL STRUCTURE

Membership to the GWDB is based on WIOA requirements, but does include additional members added in by the Minnesota Legislature. Members include:

- The Governor;
- Two local elected officials;
- A member from both the minority and majority parties from both the Minnesota House and the Minnesota Senate (four total);
- The Commissioner of DEED (on behalf of the majority of WIOA programs), along with an additional representative responsible for Title IV programming (Assistant Commissioner);
- Commissioners or Chancellors (or their designees) from MDE, DHS, Minnesota State Colleges and Universities, the University of Minnesota, and a private postsecondary institution;
- Six labor unions (one must have an apprenticeship program, although multiple do currently);
- Two community-based organizations;
- A voting membership made up of a majority of members coming from business (23 currently).

Additional non-voting members of the GWDB consist of the following: representative of Adult Basic Education (ABE); representative of Public Libraries; representative of the Women’s Economic Security Act (WESA), the Director of MAWB; Commissioner of the Department of Labor and Industry (DLI); Commissioner of OHE; Commissioner of the Department of Corrections (DOC); Commissioner of the Office of Management and Budget (MMB); two (2) representatives of community—based organizations; district superintendent of a public school district; representative of school—based service learning; and representatives of the Latino Affairs Council, the Council on Asian Pacific Islanders, Minnesotans of African Heritage, the MN Indian Affairs Council, and the MN Council on Disability.

The Governor appoints all members of the Board, with the exception of legislative members. State and local leadership, GWDB staff, and representatives of local areas encourage potential candidates from specific sectors, organizations and regions to apply for open positions in alignment with the state vision.

After several months of discussion during committee and full Board meetings, five (5) industries for private sector membership on the GWDB were identified, which align with the five priority industries identified by the GWDB:

- Health Care & Social Assistance
- Manufacturing
- Professional & Business Services
- Construction
- Natural Resources (including Agriculture and Mining)

[1] Minnesota Statutes 116L.665:

[https://www.revisor.mn.gov/statutes/2018/cite/116L.665?keyword\\_type=all&keyword=Governors+Workforce+Development+Board](https://www.revisor.mn.gov/statutes/2018/cite/116L.665?keyword_type=all&keyword=Governors+Workforce+Development+Board)

#### I. MEMBERSHIP ROSTER

Provide a membership roster for the State Board, including members' organizational affiliations.

##### i. MEMBERSHIP ROSTER

Name	Business or Organization	Member Type
Anderson, Carol	Anderson Dairy Farms	Business Representative
Bakken, Len	JBS	Business Representative
Barnes, Shirley	Crest View Senior Communities	Business Representative
Beeth, Laura	Fairview Health Services	Business Representative
Blake, Robert	Solar Bear Solar Installation Services	Business Representative
Boelter, Vance Dr.	Marathon-Speedway	Business Representative
Debevec, David	Ulland Brothers, Inc.	Business Representative
Duininck, Jason	Duininck, Inc.	Business Representative
Ferguson, Mary	Essentia Health	Business Representative
Hansen, Kelly	Park Industries	Business Representative
Husen, Abdiwadi	Minnesota Quality Care	Business Representative
Johnson, Valerie	Christenson Farms	Business Representative
Kalina, Steve	Minnesota Precision Manufacturing Association	Business Representative

Name	Business or Organization	Member Type
Lang, Jennifer	Minneapolis Glass	Business Representative
Lundmark, Katie	Ecumen	Business Representative
Morioka, Priya	Global Language and Staffing Connections	Business Representative
Nelson, Bill	Mille Lacs Health System	Business Representative
Nelson, Loren	Aurelius Manufacturing	Business Representative
Ramunno, Anthony	Great River Energy	Business Representative
Rodway, Ali	Caribou Coffee	Business Representative
Sweeney, Jerrilyn	Innovative Building Concepts	Business Representative
Theisen, Jennifer	DiaSorin	Business Representative
Trontvet, Rick	The Marvin Companies	Business Representative
Ditschler, Steve	Proact, Inc.	Community-Based Organization
Palmer, Tuleah	Northwest Indian Community Development Center	Community-Based Organization
Grove, Steve	Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development	Core Program Representative (Titles I and III)
Ricker, Mary Cathryn	Minnesota Department of Education	Core Program Representative (Title II)
Torgerson, Dee	Vocation Rehabilitation Services, DEED	Core Program Representative (Title IV)
Heimlich, Samuel	North Central States Regional Council of Carpenters	Labor Union
McCarthy, Bill	Minnesota AFL-CIO	Labor Union
Parker, Scott	International Union of Painters and Allied Trades	Labor Union
Reynoso, Ed	Teamsters Joint Council 32	Labor Union
Sayles, Laura	Minnesota Nurses Association	Labor Union
Looman, Jessica	Minnesota Building Trades	Labor Union
Berg, Councilmember Joshua	City of Elko-New Market	Local Elected Official
Kautz, Mayor Elizabeth	City of Burnsville	Local Elected Official

Name	Business or Organization	Member Type
Beyer-Kropuenske, Laurie	Minnesota Council on Disability	Non-Voting Member (required by State Statutes)
Fortney, Jeanna	Minnesota Association of Workforce Boards (MAWB)	Non-Voting Member (required by State Statutes)
Frans, Myron (MMB)	Minnesota Management & Budget	Non-Voting Member (required by State Statutes)
Fujitake, Les	Bloomington Public Schools	Non-Voting Member (required by State Statutes)
Geshick, Shannon	Minnesota Indian Affairs Council	Non-Voting Member (required by State Statutes)
Hughes, Nerita	Women's Economic Security Act (WESA) representative	Non-Voting Member (required by State Statutes)
Leppink, Nancy	Minnesota Department of Labor & Industry	Non-Voting Member (required by State Statutes)
Nesheim, Eric	Literacy Minnesota	Non-Voting Member (required by State Statutes)
Olson, Dennis	Minnesota Office of Higher Education	Non-Voting Member (required by State Statutes)
Penkert, Catherine	St. Paul Public Libraries	Non-Voting Member (required by State Statutes)
Prakash, Ekta	Council on Asian Pacific Islanders (CAPI)	Non-Voting Member (required by State Statutes)
Schnell, Paul	Minnesota Department of Corrections	Non-Voting Member (required by State Statutes)
Smith, Roy	Iron Range Resources & Rehabilitation Board	Non-Voting Member (required by State Statutes)
Terrell, Justin	Council for Minnesotans of African Heritage	Non-Voting Member (required by State Statutes)
Tock, Rosa	Minnesota Council on Latino Affairs	Non-Voting Member (required by State Statutes)
Pribbenow, Paul Dr.	Augsburg University	Other Member as Required by State Statute
Boyd, Jeffery Dr.	Rochester Community and Technical College	Other Member as Required by State Statute
Gabel, Joan	University of Minnesota	Other Member as Required by State Statute

Name	Business or Organization	Member Type
Harpstead, Jodi	Minnesota Department of Human Services	Other Member as Required by State Statute
Malhotra, Dr. Devinder	Minnesota State Colleges & Universities	Other Member as Required by State Statute
Hoffman, Senator John	Minnesota Senate	State Legislator
Nelson, Carla	Minnesota Senate	State Legislator
Haley, Rep. Barb	Minnesota House of Representatives	State Legislator
Howard, Rep. Michael	Minnesota House of Representatives	State Legislator

The regularly updated membership roster can also be found on the GWDB website at: <https://mn.gov/deed/gwdb/>.

## II. BOARD ACTIVITIES

Provide a description of the activities that will assist State Board members and staff in carrying out State Board functions effectively.

Provide a description of the activities that will assist State Board members and staff in carrying out State Board functions effectively.

### DECISION—MAKING PROCESSES

GWDB committees and functions as of January 2020 are as follows:

#### Executive Committee

The Executive Committee is a standing committee of the Governor’s Workforce Development Board (GWDB), and the membership is made up of the GWDB Chairperson (who also serves as the Chairperson of the Executive Committee), the GWDB Vice Chairperson, the Chairs of standing committees appointed by the Chairperson, a labor representative, an education representative, an at-large member, and each of the state agency officials that represent WIOA Titles I-IV on the GWDB (or their designees)

The Executive Committee is empowered to meet on an interim basis between regular full Board meetings and make emergency or time-sensitive decisions on behalf of the full GWDB membership when necessary as it relates to the explicit duties or responsibilities of the GWDB as the state’s designated state workforce development board under WIOA. Immediate notification to the full Board will take place if any action is ever taken by the Executive Committee without prior consent of the full Board. Actions taken by the Executive Committee on behalf of the GWDB that require official approval by the full board are brought forward for approval at the next regularly scheduled meeting of the board. The Executive Committee shall monitor the work of other Board committees and the Board staff, develop and approve agenda items for the full board’s meetings, work on legislative issues, and develop policy proposals for the full board to consider for approval.

#### Operations Committee

The Operations Committee is a standing committee of the GWDB, which reviews, recommends, and approves the necessary reports, information, and all requirements under the functions listed above. State agency staff members provide subject matter expertise, data, information, and recommendations to the committee. Committee members are members of the GWDB who represent business and industry, state agencies, education and community-based organizations. The Operations Committee works closely with state agency staff during the development of the WIOA State Plan and reports regularly to the Executive Committee and full board.

### Career Pathways Partnership

The Career Pathways Partnership (CPP) is an ongoing committee of the GWDB, formed to establish state leadership and an operational framework to support sector-based Career Pathways. It is a foundational group that provides an exchange of information and, through the development of short- and long-term goals, impacts Career Pathways programs and policies from a state, regional, and local perspective. The CPP is chaired by two members of the GWDB and includes a broad spectrum of members from all regions of the state, including business and industry, state agencies, education, higher education and community-based organizations.

The following are additional summaries of the work of the GWDB.

- Development of Minnesota’s Combined State Plan — The GWDB establishes a broad vision for workforce development in Minnesota, and this vision helps guide the development of Minnesota’s Combined State Plan.
- Workforce Development System Strategic Plan and Continuous Improvement — The Executive Committee of the GWDB is required to submit a report to the legislature regarding the performance and outcomes of Minnesota’s CareerForce locations in January of each odd—numbered year.
- Designation of Local Areas — The GWDB reviews and approves Local Workforce Development Area designations.
- Interagency Work: GWDB staff facilitate cross-agency meetings with program administrators from across the workforce development system and will be utilizing information and dialogue from these meetings to develop more robust recommendations around system alignment and program coordination. Additionally, the GWDB Director serves on an interagency working group – funded and coordinated through a grant from the National Governors Association and Strada called “Educate for Opportunity” – in order to provide the perspective of the GWDB in the group’s effort to better align workforce development and postsecondary education.
- Development of Allocation Formulas — The GWDB reviews and approves the allocation plans development by DEED for the distribution of funds for adult employment and training activities and youth activities to local areas.
- Preparation of the Annual Report to the Secretary of Labor — The GWDB provides input on the annual report to the Secretary of Labor.
- Statewide Employment Statistics System — The GWDB works closely with DEED’s LMI Office and program managers within the agency to ensure Minnesota’s statewide employment statistics system meets the needs of state— and local—level policy makers.

- Incentive Grants and Other Federal Grants — The GWDB plays an integral role in setting the vision for and the managing of the incentive grant application process. The GWDB convenes Board members, program partners and key stakeholders to identify how incentive funds can be used to meet the demands of employers and job seekers. The GWDB plays a similar role in the development of proposals for other federal grant opportunities, where appropriate.
- Sunshine Provision — The Board shall make available to the public, on a regular basis through electronic means and open meetings, information regarding the activities of the Board, including information regarding the State Plan, or a modification to the State Plan, prior to submission of the plan or modification of the plan, respectively, information regarding membership and, on request, minutes of formal meetings of the Board. The GWDB’s accessible web site includes notices of upcoming GWDB meetings, minutes and materials from past meetings and information on each of the GWDB committees.
- Conflict of Interest — A member of the Board may not vote on a matter under consideration by the Board regarding the provision of services by such member (or by an entity that such member represents); or that would provide direct financial benefit to such member or the immediate family of such member; or engage in any other activity determined by the Governor to constitute a conflict of interest as specified in the State Plan. A Conflict of Interest statement is to be signed by Board members at the time of their appointment and on an annual basis thereafter.
- Board Staff — The GWDB staff shall be attached to the Minnesota DEED (DEED) for administrative and staff purposes. The GWDB may ask for assistance from other units of state government as it requires in order to fulfill its duties and responsibilities.
- Legislative Report – As required by Minnesota state statutes, the GWDB prepares a biannual legislative report to the Minnesota Legislature which captures the insight and recommendations of the GWDB for consideration by the Legislature and state agencies.
- Committees, Task Forces, and Other Recommendations – The GWDB Executive Committee, Operations Committee, other standing committees, and any task forces or other working groups established by the GWDB Chairperson also meet throughout the calendar year in order to produce policy recommendations or reports to be considered by the full GWDB for approval.
- Funding — The DEED commissioner shall develop recommendations on a funding formula for allocating Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act funds to the GWDB with a minimum allocation of \$350,000 per year.

#### 4. ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION OF PROGRAMS AND ONE-STOP PROGRAM PARTNERS

##### A. ASSESSMENT OF CORE PROGRAMS

Describe how the core programs will be assessed each year based on State performance accountability measures described in section 116(b) of WIOA. This State assessment must include the quality, effectiveness, and improvement of programs broken down by local area or provider. Such state assessments should take into account local and regional planning goals.

#### 4. ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION OF PROGRAMS AND ONE-STOP PROGRAM PARTNERS.

**A. ASSESSMENT OF CORE PROGRAMS. DESCRIBE HOW THE CORE PROGRAMS WILL BE ASSESSED EACH YEAR BASED ON STATE PERFORMANCE ACCOUNTABILITY MEASURES DESCRIBED IN SECTION 116(B) OF WIOA. THIS STATE ASSESSMENT MUST INCLUDE THE QUALITY, EFFECTIVENESS, AND IMPROVEMENT OF PROGRAMS BROKEN DOWN BY LOCAL AREA OR PROVIDER. SUCH STATE ASSESSMENTS SHOULD TAKE INTO ACCOUNT LOCAL AND REGIONAL PLANNING GOALS.**

Each of the core programs will be assessed based on the performance accountability measures and other means to assess the quality, effectiveness and improvements of the programs by local area or provider. The performance accountability measures will continue to follow federal requirements which are pending within the approval of final regulations from the Department of Labor for WIOA Titles I and III and pending legislative changes from MDE for WIOA Titles II and IV. Based on the results of those negotiations, all of these efforts will be modified to take into consideration the local and regional planning goals once the local and regional plans are approved. At the time of this State Combined Plan submission, this process has not been completed.

Additionally, programs are assessed in various ways and through different methods. Each WIOA title has existing approaches to gauge the quality, effectiveness and improvements of programs that can be broken down by local area or provider. For the title I and III programs, the following methods are used.

- Mandated Reports to the Legislature for those programs funded by state workforce, general fund, and other special state funds.
- Annual Program Results/Reports for both federal and state programs, which often provide the federal negotiated performance goals and outcomes.
- Customer Satisfaction assessments for job seekers and employers.
- A Uniform Report Card for specific workforce development programs.
- For many programs, solicitations for services (requests for proposals) are posted on DEED's website and through the State Register in an effort to attract the best possible proposals.
- At the request of the GWDB in an attempt to monitor program performance towards meeting the two existing (and again revised) WIOA State Plan goals, Performance Management staff at DEED maintain the public WIOA State Plan Dashboard on the DEED website for Adult, Dislocated Worker, Wagner Peyser (Staff Assisted), Vocational Rehabilitation, and SSB programs.

Not only are programs assessed, sub-grantees and partners are analyzed in several ways, and the agency has standardized and consistent processes in place for conducting assessments.

Prior to awarding a grant, a DEED conducts a risk analysis. In addition, in the early part of each year sub-grantees complete an electronic assessment and a fiscal monitoring guide. These assessment tools provide a sweeping array of information, in such important areas as:

- How sub-grantees will serve and provide priority services to veterans

- Policies regarding sub-grantee conflict-of-interest processes
- The longevity of key directors and/or stakeholders
- Sub-grantee customer complaint processes and physical and program accessibility
- Sub-grantee accounting procedures, positive cash flow, third-party audit reports, review of debt ratio, including federal and state tax debt

For the duration of the each grant, sub-grantees are monitored to ensure they're complying with the provisions of the grant and meeting performance goals. Monitoring, which usually takes place on-site, consists of assessing appropriate expenditures, conducting financial reconciliations, assuring proper eligibility of customers, case management, equal opportunity, reviewing options of co-enrollment with other partners and programs, and reviewing monthly and quarterly financial reports. Technical assistance may be provided through monitoring, on-site visits, training of case managers and fiscal staff to ensure that state and federal regulations are being met.

Workforce One (WF1) is an important tool for monitoring and technical assistance, specifically case management. Most sub-grantees and programs are required to use WF1 to ensure a consistent method of tracking participants. In addition, many small, locally-operated employment and training grants use WF1. Nearly 2,000 state, city, county, and nonprofit employment and training providers use the web-based system to track employment and training services to more than 100,000 customers across Minnesota's one-stop network.

The WIOA Title II program is operated by the MDE, which prioritizes and measures program quality through accountability expectations and activities that focus on both compliance and best practice according to research and experience. The expectations and activities include:

- The state ABE Management Information System (MIS) data: Minnesota's MIS balances both program quality and program compliance with state and federal expectations. In addition to required reports, local providers can use the state MIS to analyze student persistence, program outcomes, and other measures at the consortium, site, class and student level.
- A state AEFLA grantee report card: The report card notes actual performance and ranks providers by key program data measures, including measurable skill gain by population, cost of programming per individual served, intensity of service provided, and percentage of population served.
- A program improvement process: Programs will be identified for review based on rankings in the state AEFLA report card and will undergo a comprehensive review and monitored implementation of a program improvement plan that requires local providers to complete site visits, workshop activities, reports, and plans to strengthen program performance and quality. (For more information on Program Improvement, see the response to (D) in the WIOA Title II program information.)
- Intensive program application cycle: On a five—year basis, ABE providers are required to complete an in—depth application as a method to adhere to Minnesota statute governing local ABE programs. In this intensive application, local providers describe their:

- Consortium
- Program accountability procedures
- Professional development priorities and activities
- Proposed programming
- Local program governance
- Program collaboration with key stakeholders and partners
- Technology resources and integration
- Future plans
- Performance
- These in-depth applications are reviewed and scored by a team of state staff from the MDE and local AEFLA providers.
- Local program monitoring site visits: All grantees are subject to monitoring site visits that focus on policy compliance and program quality through multiple methods:
  - Providers with low performance participate in site visits through the program improvement process;
  - All AEFLA grantees receive site visits on a rotating basis, at least once every five years, when the program participates in in—depth application process to continue receiving state ABE funding to comply with Minnesota statute;
  - Monitoring visits based on periodic desk review of provider data;
  - Local ABE providers that participate in state initiatives and/or receive special grants through state or federal funding typically receive site visits as part of their participation; and
  - Local providers request special technical assistance site visits as they face issues.

WIOA Title IV also has an extensive approach to measuring quality, effectiveness and improvement in services. In the area of quality there is a strong focus on staff development. The Comprehensive System of Personnel Development is the planning framework for recruiting, developing and retaining qualified staff to carry out the state’s vocational rehabilitation mission. Pursuant to Section 101 of the Rehabilitation Act, the plan addresses the following topics:

- The Need for Qualified Personnel
- Regional Higher Education for the Preparation of Vocational Rehabilitation Professionals
- Recruitment and Retention of Qualified Personnel
- Staff Training and Development
- Personnel to Address Individual Communication Needs

- Coordination with Personnel Development of the State’s Secondary Education System under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act

Specific to service provision, Title IV reviews and monitors how the state strategies will be implemented, including the following:

- Methods to expand and improve services
- Assistive technology availability and services
- Methods used to address and improve services and coordination to transition age youth
- Plans for establishing, developing or improving community rehabilitation programs
- Specific to supported employment, Title IV reviews and monitors how the state strategies will be implemented, including the following:
  - Identifying strategies that contribute to goal achievement
  - Identifying the factors that impede achievement of goals and priorities
  - Measuring the timing of transitions to extended services

These efforts are expressed in greater detail within the Title IV Program Requirements section of the State Combined Plan.

#### B. ASSESSMENT OF ONE-STOP PARTNER PROGRAMS

Describe how other one-stop delivery system partner program services and Combined State Plan partner programs included in the plan will be assessed each year. Such state assessments should take into account local and regional planning goals.

**B. ASSESSMENT OF ONE-STOP PROGRAM PARTNER PROGRAMS. DESCRIBE HOW OTHER ONE-STOP DELIVERY SYSTEM PARTNER PROGRAM SERVICES AND COMBINED STATE PLAN PARTNER PROGRAMS INCLUDED IN THE PLAN WILL BE ASSESSED EACH YEAR. SUCH STATE ASSESSMENTS SHOULD TAKE INTO ACCOUNT LOCAL AND REGIONAL PLANNING GOALS.**

Minnesota established several WIOA working committees to address the implementation of WIOA. The committee formed for the one-stop service delivery has members from the local workforce service areas, service delivery providers, and state agencies representing the combined plan partners in this plan. This One-Stop committee will continue to serve as the subject matter experts and will be responsible for the annual review of the one-stop delivery. This committee will provide an overview, analysis, and recommendations for improvement to the GWDB Operations Committee. The Operations Committee will use the framework established by the results-based accountability sub-committee to make data informed decisions and recommendations. The Operations Committee will make their recommendations to the GWDB for discussion and actions. The GWDB, in partnership and support from the Combined State Plan partners (whom serve as voting and non-voting members) will be responsible to the Governor by advising the Governor and/or Minnesota Legislature (bi-annually) on the one-stop delivery system with any recommendations for improvement.

Minnesota’s Combined State Plan will be under review the third quarter of the second year. The GWDB will be responsible for the review of the Combined Plan, Regional Plans, and Local Plans to allow for any economic changes or regional impacts on industry or populations served as a priority in this plan.

The assessment of the one-stop delivery system partner programs will be based on a combination of factors — including the service categories under WIOA and the six strategic elements of the career pathways system within the context of the local and regional plans. The development of this process will be based on a results-based accountability model which will be developed under the oversight of the GWDB. The following is an illustrative framework that will guide the process with the engagement of state agencies, local boards, service providers and disparately impacted populations.

	Quantity	Quality
<b>Effort</b>	<b>How much service did we deliver?</b>	<b>How well did we deliver it?</b>
—	Career Services	Reduced Duplication
—	Training Services	Better Coordination
—	Business Services	Effective Engagement
<b>Effect</b>	<b>How much change/effect did we produce?</b>	<b>What quality of change/effect did we produce?</b>
—	WIOA Performance Measures	Alignment of Services
—	Placements in Pathways to OID with Family Sustaining Wages	Maximizing Resources
—	Impact on Disparate Impact Populations	Greater System Output

### TANF Assessment

TANF services in the state are administered by the MN Department of Human Services, which helps ensure that TANF services are available on-site at 40 CareerForce locations where participants partake in FastTRAC/Pathways to Prosperity Initiatives in high-demand career fields (including the elder care workforce). These Initiatives provide grants to collections of local partners to operate as part of the state’s employment services system, and are available to low-income families on public assistance in order to comply with participants’ work requirements. Furthermore, DHS pulls directly from Workforce a monthly assessment report that counties use for their planning and decision-making (<https://edocs.dhs.state.mn.us/lfserver/Public/DHS-4014A-ENG>). In addition, an Employability Measure is a comprehensive assessment tool utilized by TANF in the state, based on information in the WorkforceOne database, and is utilized by employment counselors to assess and plan with participants on their journey to search for jobs, and for job retention/advancement.

### C. PREVIOUS ASSESSMENT RESULTS

Beginning with the state plan modification in 2018 and for subsequent state plans and state plan modifications, provide the results of assessments of the effectiveness of the core programs and other one-stop partner programs and Combined State Plan partner programs included in the Unified or Combined State plan during the preceding 2-year period (i.e. the 2-year period of the plan modification cycle). Describe how the State is adapting its strategies based on these assessments.

**C. PREVIOUS ASSESSMENT RESULTS. BEGINNING WITH THE STATE PLAN MODIFICATION IN 2018 AND FOR SUBSEQUENT STATE PLANS AND STATE PLAN MODIFICATIONS, PROVIDE THE RESULTS OF ASSESSMENTS OF THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE CORE PROGRAMS AND OTHER ONE-STOP PARTNER PROGRAMS AND COMBINED STATE PLAN PARTNER PROGRAMS INCLUDED IN THE UNIFIED OR COMBINED STATE PLAN DURING THE PRECEDING 2-YEAR PERIOD (I.E. THE 2-YEAR PERIOD OF THE PLAN MODIFICATION CYCLE). DESCRIBE HOW THE STATE IS ADAPTING ITS STRATEGIES BASED ON THESE ASSESSMENTS.**

Minnesota has several resources available to assess the effectiveness of its WIOA programs. First, Minnesota is required to report by Minnesota Statute 116L.98 to report employment and wage outcomes by state-funded workforce training programs by disaggregated population groups.

Participants in each of the state-funded adult workforce training programs, whether by competitive grant funding or by direct legislative appropriation that have been served since SFY14 are included in the report card. The report card also included the WIOA Title I Adult and Dislocated Worker programs, to serve as points of comparison. Outcomes are available by fiscal year, with quarterly updates.

Data points included in the report card include:

- Program enrollment includes all participants served at any point in the chosen timeframe. Enrollment in training includes participants who engaged in training through the program, including postsecondary certificates and degrees, occupational licenses, and industry recognized credentials.
- Measures of participants enrolled in training by occupational area and the industry of employment post-exit. By providing occupational and industrial information, we can identify how well the training received is related to the job the participant after exit.
- Comparisons of pre-enrollment work and earnings to post-exit measures are also important to identify the relative gain program participants receive. Pre-enrollment earnings are drawn from the second, third, fourth, and fifth quarters prior to program enrollment. Among all served participants, the median earnings calculation excludes those with no earnings. In other words, participants must have earned at least \$1 in the year prior to enrollment to be included in this calculation. This measure uses Unemployment Insurance wage detail, so it does not capture self-employment income or income earned in other states.
- Number of participants who exited in the chosen timeframe and those who completed training and who attained a credential, such as a postsecondary certificate or degree, occupational license, or industry-recognized credential.
- Measure of consistent employment in the third and eighth quarters after exit. This means the participant showed earnings in each of the quarters after exit. The number consistently employed is not comparable to the number exited, because employment outcome information is only available for a subset of exiters. Again these employment measures uses UI wage detail, so it does not capture self-employment or employment in other states.
- Median earnings only among participants who are employed in the first quarter after exit and then are consistently employed in the third and eighth quarter after exit.

Second, Minnesota developed a public-facing WIOA State Plan Dashboard to provide transparency and accountability toward the two goals in [Minnesota's Combined State Plan](#) for WIOA:

1. Reduce educational, skills training and employment disparities based on race, disability, gender or disconnected youth.
2. Build employer-led industry sector partnerships that expand the talent pipeline to be inclusive of race, disability, gender and age to meet industry demands for a skilled workforce.

The dashboard shows how the characteristics of participants who participate in Minnesota's WIOA Title I, III and IV programs compare to the population at large, specifically in our service to people of color and Native Americans and individuals with a disability. Users can filter program outcomes by gender and disability status to see measures of second quarter employment, credential attainment and change in income pre- and post-program participation.

The dashboard also records Minnesota's progress to the development of regional industry sector partnerships. We also provide labor market data on regional job vacancy rates by targeted industry and workforce statistics on the race/ethnic, gender and disability status composition of region's targeted industries. Finally, DEED's performance team also conducts unique analyses to inform our understanding the effectiveness of WIOA programs. One 2019 report studied the co-enrollment patterns among core WIOA titles, state-funded workforce programs, and other partners in Minnesota WIOA Combined State Plan. Currently, there is no formal co-enrollment policy and limited information about how and when referrals to other workforce programs occur. The analysis sought to inform stakeholders about the number and demographics of participants who are co-enrolled in selected programs and their employment and wage outcomes.

During Program Year 2016 and 2017, over 22,000 individuals – or a little less than 14% of all participants – participated in more than one of the workforce programs. Nearly 19,000 of those individuals, 85 percent, had some form of overlapping or contiguous enrollments.

The highest number of co-enrolled participants are in the Wagner-Peyser program and the Adult Basic Education (ABE), the two largest programs in terms of participation numbers. Wagner-Peyser provides a set of universal workforce services that do not have eligibility requirements, such as resume assistance and workshops; only participants are included, not those individuals who only post a resume to MinnesotaWorks.net. For this report, all ABE students are included, even those with a short amount of class time.

Rates of co-enrollment vary across programs – with the some of the highest rates of concurrent program enrollments including:

- Around 47% of Dislocated Worker and 25% of Veteran Services participants also enrolled in Wagner Peyser staff-assisted services
- About 40% of Pathways to Prosperity participants are enrolled in ABE.
- Nearly 11% of SNAP E&T participants are enrolled in ABE.

Overall, there seem to be early employment and wage benefits of co-enrollment. For the first quarter after the final program exit, median wages are \$5,959 for individuals with concurrent co-enrollment versus \$5,283 for all other participants. Employment rates for the first quarter

after final exit are similarly higher for those individuals with concurrent co-enrollment versus all others; 68.3% and 57.1% respectively.

### **Title II Assessment**

Minnesota's Title II program has met all negotiated performance goals in each of the two preceding fiscal years. In addition, Minnesota's Title II employment goal outcomes, for which negotiated targets have not yet been established exceeded the national average in PY 2018.

#### **D. EVALUATION**

Describe how the State will conduct evaluations and research projects on activities under WIOA core programs; how such projects will be coordinated with, and designed in conjunction with, State and local boards and with State agencies responsible for the administration of all respective core programs; and, further, how the projects will be coordinated with the evaluations provided for by the Secretary of Labor and the Secretary of Education under WIOA.

#### **D. EVALUATION. DESCRIBE HOW THE STATE WILL CONDUCT EVALUATIONS AND RESEARCH PROJECTS ON ACTIVITIES UNDER WIOA CORE PROGRAMS; HOW SUCH PROJECTS WILL BE COORDINATED WITH, AND DESIGNED IN CONJUNCTION WITH, STATE AND LOCAL BOARDS AND WITH STATE AGENCIES RESPONSIBLE FOR THE ADMINISTRATION OF ALL RESPECTIVE CORE PROGRAMS; AND, FURTHER, HOW THE PROJECTS WILL BE COORDINATED WITH THE EVALUATIONS PROVIDED FOR BY THE SECRETARY OF LABOR AND THE SECRETARY OF EDUCATION UNDER WIOA.**

Minnesota will conduct evaluations and research based on utilizing the data and processes from the uniform report card, results based accountability methods and the elements from the career pathways system design, as well as the federal initiatives around customer-focused design and the metrics for measuring business services. The final regulations will most likely impact the finer details of this process. Minnesota will provide a more formalized and detailed approach after the regulations are issued.

This process will be overseen by the GWDB and conducted in partnership with the state agencies overseeing the required partner federal titles of WIOA, the state association for local workforce boards, representatives from the provider network and impacted communities of color, individuals with disabilities and disconnected youth. Plans and updates will be routinely shared with Minnesota's federal program officer in the Chicago regional office and with other appropriate DOL representatives as determined by the national office. The efforts will most likely be funded by a portion of the 15% Governor's set aside. Minnesota will additionally seek resources from state funds, philanthropic organizations and DOL for these efforts.

#### **5. DISTRIBUTION OF FUNDS FOR CORE PROGRAMS**

Describe the methods and factors the State will use in distributing funds under the core programs in accordance with the provisions authorizing such distributions.

##### **A. FOR TITLE I PROGRAMS**

Provide a description of the written policies that establish the State's methods and factors used to distribute funds to local areas for—

##### **I. YOUTH ACTIVITIES IN ACCORDANCE WITH WIOA SECTION 128(B)(2) OR (B)(3)**

**5. DISTRIBUTION OF FUNDS FOR CORE PROGRAMS. DESCRIBE THE METHODS AND FACTORS THE STATE WILL USE IN DISTRIBUTING FUNDS UNDER THE CORE PROGRAMS IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE PROVISIONS AUTHORIZING SUCH DISTRIBUTIONS.**

**A. FOR TITLE I PROGRAMS FOR TITLE I PROGRAMS, PROVIDE A DESCRIPTION OF THE WRITTEN POLICIES THAT ESTABLISH THE STATE'S METHODS AND FACTORS USED TO DISTRIBUTE FUNDS TO LOCAL AREAS FOR—**

i. YOUTH ACTIVITIES IN ACCORDANCE WITH WIOA SECTION 128(B)(2) OR (B)(3),

**TITLE I — YOUTH**

Minnesota will obligate 85 percent of the WIOA Youth Formula allocation to local service providers.

1/3 is based on the WDA's relative share of the number of unemployed in areas with an unemployment rate of 6.5% or higher.

1/3 is based on the WDA's relative share of the number of unemployed in excess of 4.5% of the civilian labor force (in the WDA or in the areas of substantial unemployment within the WDA— whichever is higher).

1/3 is based on the WSA's relative share of the number of youth between the ages of 16 and 21 whose income or family income is at or below poverty or below 70 percent of the lower living standard income level. Since it is a designated as a Rural Concentrated Employment Program under section 107 of WIOA, Rural Minnesota CEP has a slightly different requirement for the number of persons in this category. Data is provided by DOL for this portion of the formula.

The state ensures that no WDA allocation falls below 90 percent of the previous two year's average share of youth allocations. Adjustments are made as necessary to maintain the 90 percent hold-harmless provision for impacted WDAs.

**II. ADULT AND TRAINING ACTIVITIES IN ACCORDANCE WITH WIOA SECTION 133(B)(2) OR (B)(3)**

ii. ADULT AND TRAINING ACTIVITIES IN ACCORDANCE WITH WIOA SECTION 133(B)(2) OR (B)(3),

**TITLE I — ADULT**

Minnesota will obligate 85 percent of its WIOA Adult program formula allocation to local service providers, reserving 15 percent for administration and "10 percent" allowable activities for statewide goals.

When distributing the remaining amount to local service providers, staff take into account the following elements by converting them into shares of Minnesota as a whole and weighted equally:

- The number of economically disadvantaged adults in each Local Workforce Development Area (LWDA)
- The total number of unemployed individuals

- The number of excess unemployed individuals (above the state average) in areas of substantial unemployment

Adjustments are made as necessary to maintain the 90 percent hold-harmless provision ensuring that no local area has less than 90 percent of their two year average.

### III. DISLOCATED WORKER EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING ACTIVITIES IN ACCORDANCE WITH WIOA SECTION 133(B)(2) AND BASED ON DATA AND WEIGHTS ASSIGNED

iii. DISLOCATED WORKER EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING ACTIVITIES IN ACCORDANCE WITH WIOA SECTION 133(B)(2) AND BASED ON DATA AND WEIGHTS ASSIGNED.

#### TITLE I — DISLOCATED WORKER

Minnesota will obligate 60 percent of its WIOA Dislocated Worker program formula allocation to local service providers using a combination of labor market information, census data and unemployment insurance information. DEED first reserves five percent of the total allocation for administration, ten percent for allowable statewide activities, and the fully allowable 25 percent for rapid response activity (grants to fund mass layoff projects and statewide rapid response staff).

Three factors to distribute the 60 percent are weighted equally, impacting the preliminary share to local providers:

131. The share of the state’s unemployed persons living in a WDA
132. The share of the state’s permanently separated unemployed persons living in that WDA
133. The share of statewide total weeks paid of UI to permanently separated claimants

Minnesota then adjusts the share by job and earnings density, measuring a LWDA’s standard deviation from the state average, and adjusts the dollars up or down accordingly. Finally, Minnesota includes a 90 percent hold—harmless provision as well as a 130 percent funding cap to minimize any significant changes in funding. This means that each local area is guaranteed to receive an allocation percentage per year that is no less than 90 percent of the average of the preceding two years’ allocations.

#### B. FOR TITLE II

### I. DESCRIBE HOW THE ELIGIBLE AGENCY WILL AWARD MULTI-YEAR GRANTS OR CONTRACTS ON A COMPETITIVE BASIS TO ELIGIBLE PROVIDERS IN THE STATE, INCLUDING HOW ELIGIBLE AGENCIES WILL ESTABLISH THAT ELIGIBLE PROVIDERS ARE ORGANIZATIONS OF DEMONSTRATED EFFECTIVENESS

#### **B. FOR TITLE II:**

i. Describe how the eligible agency will award multi-year grants or contracts on a competitive basis to eligible providers in the State, including how eligible agencies will establish that eligible providers are organizations of demonstrated effectiveness.

#### **TITLE II - AEFLA PROVIDER SELECTION AND FUNDING ALLOCATION PROCESS**

The MDE is the State's Eligible Agency for Adult Education and Literacy programs. MDE is responsible for administering funds and providing program/performance oversight to grantees.

Adult Education and Literacy eligible providers approved under Workforce Investment Act of 1998 requirements continued to receive funding through June 30, 2017, as long as they adhered to state and federal grant expectations, as measured through annual applications, financial reports, and program performance reports.

During grant year 2016–17, MDE implemented a competitive application process for all federal AEFLA funding that was based on the 13 considerations in Title II of WIOA and included additional state ABE priorities. As a result of that process, 41 providers from throughout Minnesota were selected to receive funding beginning July 1, 2017. Minnesota will conduct a new grant competition during the 2021-22 program year in order to identify grantees who will begin receiving federal ABE funds on July 1, 2022.

## TIMELINE

The following steps and timeline were followed in 2017 and will be used again for the 2021-22 WIOA AEFLA competition:

<b>February</b>	MDE publishes and promotes WIOA-aligned federal AEFLA grant application request for proposals (RFP)
<b>February</b>	MDE provides technical assistance to inquiries from eligible providers
<b>February-March</b>	MDE recruits reviewers to score and rate WIOA-aligned federally-funded AEFLA grant applications
<b>March</b> applications	Due date for WIOA-aligned federally-funded AEFLA grant applications
<b>March-April</b> grant applications	Reviewers score and rate WIOA-aligned federally-funded AEFLA grant applications
<b>April</b>	MDE decides which applicants will be approved as providers based on reviewer scores and ratings and application's response to the conditions and criteria in the RFP
<b>April-May</b>	MDE announces WIOA-aligned federally-funded AEFLA grant applicants that will receive funding
<b>July 1<sup>st</sup></b>	WIOA-aligned federally-funded AEFLA grant providers begin grant cycle, programming and funding

## ELIGIBLE PROVIDERS

An eligible local provider is an organization that has demonstrated effectiveness in providing adult education activities to eligible individuals and may include:

- A local education agency;
- Community-based or faith-based organization;
- Volunteer literacy organization;

- Institution of higher education;
- Public or private nonprofit agency;
- Library;
- Public housing authority;
- Nonprofit institution with the ability to provide adult education and literacy services;
- Consortium or coalition of agencies, organizations, institutions, libraries, or authorities described above; and
- A partnership between an employer and an entity described above.

**Multi-year grant competition will be held in accordance with 34 CFR Part 463, Subpart C**

During grant year 2016–17, the Minnesota Department of Education implemented a competitive application process for all federal AEFLA funding that was based on the 13 considerations in Title II of WIOA and included additional state ABE priorities. As a result of that process, 41 providers from throughout Minnesota were selected to receive funding beginning July 1, 2017. Minnesota will conduct a new grant competition during the 2021-22 program year in order to identify grantees who will begin receiving federal ABE funds on July 1, 2022.

*TIMELINE*

The following steps and timeline were followed in 2017 and will be used again for the 2021-22 WIOA AEFLA competition:

February	MDE publishes and promotes WIOA-aligned federal AEFLA grant application request for proposals (RFP)
February	MDE provides technical assistance to inquiries from eligible providers
February-March	MDE recruits reviewers to score and rate WIOA-aligned federally-funded AEFLA grant applications
March	Due date for WIOA-aligned federally-funded AEFLA grant applications
March-April	Reviewers score and rate WIOA-aligned federally-funded AEFLA grant applications
April	MDE decides which applicants will be approved as providers based on reviewer scores and ratings and application's response to the conditions and criteria in the RFP
April-May	MDE announces WIOA-aligned federally-funded AEFLA grant applicants that will receive funding
July 1 <sup>st</sup>	WIOA-aligned federally-funded AEFLA grant providers begin grant cycle, programming and funding

**ELIGIBLE PROVIDERS**

An eligible local provider is an organization that has demonstrated effectiveness in providing adult education activities to eligible individuals and may include:

- A local education agency;
- Community-based or faith-based organization;
- Volunteer literacy organization;
- Institution of higher education;
- Public or private nonprofit agency;
- Library;
- Public housing authority;
- Nonprofit institution with the ability to provide adult education and literacy services;
- Consortium or coalition of agencies, organizations, institutions, libraries, or authorities described above; and
- A partnership between an employer and an entity described above.

### **APPLICATION PROMOTION AND PUBLICATION**

In February 2017, the grant competition for the 2017-18 grant year was publicized in compliance with federal law, Minnesota statute, and Minnesota Department of Education policy in order to ensure that all eligible providers had direct and equitable access to apply and compete for grants. The process was fair and equitable and followed federal AEFLA grant funding requirements and other federal grant procedures. The Minnesota Department of Education published and promoted all grant opportunities on its website. Any eligible entity (described above) was able to submit a proposal. A similar process will be followed in 2022.

### **ALLOCATIONS**

The Minnesota Department of Education dedicates 82.5 percent of the state allocation of federal AEFLA funding to grants to eligible providers. This amount is allocated to grantees based on scope of service (number of prior year contact hours for eligible service), accountability aid, regional aid to help local programs implement AEFLA initiatives and aid to support services to participants with low incidence disabilities.

In addition, 12.5 percent of the state allocation is dedicated to Leadership supporting activities such as: professional development; volunteer recruitment and training; technology; serving students with disabilities; distance learning and digital literacy; program quality support; assessment training; and career pathway and other transitions-related collaborations.

### **13 CONSIDERATIONS**

The Minnesota Department of Education used the considerations specified in Section 231(e) of WIOA and listed below as the criteria for selecting and funding eligible providers in 2017 and will do so again in 2022. As part of the RFP process, agencies were/will be required to provide narrative detail describing how they will meet each consideration.

1. Needs Assessment: The degree to which the provider is responsive to (A) regional needs as identified in the local plan under Section 108; and (B) serving individuals in the community who are identified in such plan as most in need of adult education and literacy activities, including individuals who have low levels of literacy skills and who are English language learners.
2. Individuals with Disabilities: The degree to which the provider is able to serve eligible individuals with disabilities, including eligible individuals with learning disabilities.
3. Past Effectiveness: The degree to which the provider demonstrates past effectiveness in improving the literacy of eligible individuals, to meet State-adjusted levels of performance for the primary indicators of performance described in Section 116, especially with respect to eligible individuals who have low levels of literacy.
4. Alignment with One-stop Partners: The degree to which the eligible provider is responsive to, and demonstrates alignment between, proposed activities and services and the strategy and goals of the local plan under Section 108 as well as the activities and services of the one-stop partners.
5. Intensity, Quality, and Instructional Practices: The degree to which the eligible provider's program is of sufficient intensity and quality, and based on the most rigorous research available so that participants achieve substantial learning gains; and uses instructional practices that include the essential components of reading instruction.
6. Research Based Educational Practices: The degree to which the eligible provider's activities including reading, writing, speaking, mathematics, and English language acquisition instruction, are based on the best practices derived from the most rigorous research available and appropriate, including scientifically valid research and effective educational practice.
7. Effective Use of Technology: The degree to which the eligible provider's activities effectively use technology, services, and delivery systems, including distance education in a manner sufficient to increase the amount and quality of learning and how such technology, services, and systems lead to improved performance.
8. Integrated Education and Training: The degree to which the eligible provider's activities offer learning in context, including through integrated education and training, so that an individual acquires the skills needed to transition to and complete postsecondary education and training programs, obtain and advance in employment leading to economic self-sufficiency, and to exercise the rights and responsibilities of citizenship.
9. Qualified Staff: The degree to which the eligible provider's activities are delivered by well-trained instructors, counselors, and administrators who meet any minimum qualifications established by the state, where applicable, and who have access to high quality professional development, including through electronic means.

10. Partnerships and Development of Career Pathways: The degree to which the eligible provider's activities coordinate with other available education, training, and social service resources in the community, such as by establishing strong links with elementary schools and secondary schools, postsecondary educational institutions, institutions of higher education, local workforce development boards, one-stop centers, job training programs, and social service agencies, business, industry, labor organizations, community-based organizations, nonprofit organizations, and intermediaries, for the development of career pathways.
11. Flexible Schedules and Coordination with Support Services: The degree to which the eligible provider's activities offer flexible schedules and coordination with Federal, State, and local support services (such as child care, transportation, mental health services, and career planning) that are necessary to enable individuals, including individuals with disabilities or other special needs, to attend and complete programs information management system that has the capacity to report measurable participant outcomes (consistent with Section 116) and to monitor program performance.
12. Information management system: The expectation will be that the eligible provider will use the State-administered designated MIS for all grant-related data collection and reporting; and
13. English Language Acquisition and Civics Education: The degree to which the eligible provider has a demonstrated need for additional English language acquisition programs and civics education programs.

### **ADDITIONAL CRITERIA**

In addition to the above considerations, the grant application also required descriptions of applicants:

- Location, service area, the scope of the program, a description of the population to be served, fiscal management procedures, and audit history;
- Capacity to offer day, evening, and distance education programming including evidence of the organization's AEFLA-eligible activity services in the prior year.
- Budget, as well as programmatic information regarding statutory requirements;
- Coordination with other service providers to provide wrap-around services to participants (e.g., child care, transportation);
- A description of how the program will align activities to the Local Plan for WIOA providers and supportive services; and
- The ability to match federal funding with other funding from state, local, organizational or other sources that would directly go to providing AEFLA-eligible activities.

### **REVIEW PROCESS**

Proposals were rated and scored by teams of reviewers approved by the Minnesota Department of Education Grants Office. The review process for selecting successful applicants included formally scoring applications on their responses to each of the 13 considerations of WIOA, the

programming proposed and its alignment to the four instructional components, the articulated use of funds, and additional criteria listed above. The Minnesota Department of Education selected applicants for federal AEFLA funding based on proposals with the highest scores, noting also the additional criteria listed above. Applicants selected for federal AEFLA funding were notified in May-June and were eligible to start programming on July 1. The same process will be followed in 2022.

### **Annually**

All approved providers are required to comply with all state and federal regulations, policies and expectations for AEFLA grantees including:

1. Using the state AEFLA database system;
2. Reporting annual performance data; and
3. Additional requirements or reporting upon request by state and local agencies.

II. DESCRIBE HOW THE ELIGIBLE AGENCY WILL ENSURE DIRECT AND EQUITABLE ACCESS TO ALL ELIGIBLE PROVIDERS TO APPLY AND COMPETE FOR FUNDS AND HOW THE ELIGIBLE AGENCY WILL ENSURE THAT IT IS USING THE SAME GRANT OR CONTRACT ANNOUNCEMENT AND APPLICATION PROCEDURE FOR ALL ELIGIBLE PROVIDERS

**III. b. 5. B. ii. Describe how the eligible agency will ensure direct and equitable access to all eligible providers to apply and compete for funds and how the eligible agency will ensure that it is using the same grant or contract announcement and application procedure for all eligible providers**

#### APPLICATION PROMOTION AND PUBLICATION

In February 2017, the grant competition for the 2017-18 grant year was publicized in compliance with federal law, Minnesota statute, and MDE policy in order to ensure that all eligible providers had direct and equitable access to apply and compete for grants. The process was fair and equitable and followed federal AEFLA grant funding requirements and other federal grant procedures. MDE published and promoted all grant opportunities on its website. Any eligible entity (described above) was able to submit a proposal. A similar process will be followed in 2022.

#### ALLOCATIONS

MDE dedicates 82.5 percent of the state allocation of federal AEFLA funding to grants to eligible providers. This amount is allocated to grantees based on scope of service (number of prior year contact hours for eligible service), accountability aid, regional aid to help local programs implement AEFLA initiatives and aid to support services to participants with low incidence disabilities.

In addition, 12.5 percent of the state allocation is dedicated to Leadership supporting activities such as: professional development; volunteer recruitment and training; technology; serving students with disabilities; distance learning and digital literacy; program quality support; assessment training; and career pathway and other transitions-related collaborations.

## 13 CONSIDERATIONS

MDE used the 13 considerations specified in Section 231(e) of WIOA and listed in Section VI, Adult Education and Family Literacy, as the criteria for selecting and funding eligible providers in 2017 and will do so again in 2022. As part of the RFP process, agencies were/will be required to provide narrative detail describing how they will meet each consideration.

## ADDITIONAL CRITERIA

In addition to the 13 considerations, the grant application also required descriptions of applicants:

- Location, service area, the scope of the program, a description of the population to be served, fiscal management procedures, and audit history;
- Capacity to offer day, evening, and distance education programming including evidence of the organization's AEFLA-eligible activity services in the prior year.
- Budget, as well as programmatic information regarding statutory requirements;
- Coordination with other service providers to provide wrap-around services to participants (e.g., child care, transportation);
- A description of how the program will align activities to the Local Plan for WIOA providers and supportive services; and
- The ability to match federal funding with other funding from state, local, organizational or other sources that would directly go to providing AEFLA-eligible activities.

## REVIEW PROCESS

Proposals were rated and scored by teams of reviewers approved by the MDE Grants Office. The review process for selecting successful applicants included formally scoring applications on their responses to each of the 13 considerations of WIOA, the programming proposed and its alignment to the four instructional components, the articulated use of funds, and additional criteria listed above. MDE selected applicants for federal AEFLA funding based on proposals with the highest scores, noting also the additional criteria listed above. Applicants selected for federal AEFLA funding were notified in May-June and were eligible to start programming on July 1. The same process will be followed in 2022.

### Annually

All approved providers are required to comply with all state and federal regulations, policies and expectations for AEFLA grantees including:

1. Using the state AEFLA database system;
2. Reporting annual performance data; and
3. Additional requirements or reporting upon request by state and local agencies.

## C. VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION PROGRAM

In the case of a State that, under section 101(a)(2)(A)(i) of the Rehabilitation Act designates a State agency to administer the part of the Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan under which VR services are provided for individuals who are

blind, describe the process and the factors used by the State to determine the distribution of funds among the two VR agencies in the State.

**C. VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION PROGRAM: IN THE CASE OF A STATE THAT, UNDER SECTION 101(A)(2)(A)(I) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT DESIGNATES A STATE AGENCY TO ADMINISTER THE PART OF THE VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION (VR) SERVICES PORTION OF THE UNIFIED OR COMBINED STATE PLAN UNDER WHICH VR SERVICES ARE PROVIDED FOR INDIVIDUALS WHO ARE BLIND, DESCRIBE THE PROCESS AND THE FACTORS USED BY THE STATE TO DETERMINE THE DISTRIBUTION OF FUNDS AMONG THE TWO VR AGENCIES IN THE STATE.**

The distribution of Minnesota's allotment of VR110 funds between the General and Blind agencies is based upon a methodology submitted to the Rehabilitation Services Administration in 1975. This methodology, still being used today, distributes 82 percent of Minnesota's allotment to the General Agency and 18 percent to the Blind Agency. Funds are distributed to states based on a statutory formula that takes into account population and per capita income in determining the amount of Federal funds that are available to states for vocational rehabilitation program purposes.

## 6. PROGRAM DATA

### A. DATA ALIGNMENT AND INTEGRATION

Describe the plans of the lead State agencies with responsibility for the administration of the core programs, along with the State Board, to align and integrate available workforce and education data systems for the core programs, unemployment insurance programs, and education through postsecondary education, and to the extent possible, the Combined State Plan partner programs included in this plan. The description of the State's plan for integrating data systems should include the State's goals for achieving integration and any progress to date.

**I. DESCRIBE THE STATE'S PLANS TO MAKE THE MANAGEMENT INFORMATION SYSTEMS FOR THE CORE PROGRAMS INTEROPERABLE TO MAXIMIZE THE EFFICIENT EXCHANGE OF COMMON DATA ELEMENTS TO SUPPORT ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION**

## 6. PROGRAM DATA

**A. DATA ALIGNMENT AND INTEGRATION DESCRIBE THE PLANS OF THE LEAD STATE AGENCIES WITH RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE CORE PROGRAMS, ALONG WITH THE STATE BOARD, TO ALIGN AND INTEGRATE AVAILABLE WORKFORCE AND EDUCATION DATA SYSTEMS FOR THE CORE PROGRAMS, UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE PROGRAMS, AND EDUCATION THROUGH POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION, AND TO THE EXTENT POSSIBLE, THE COMBINED STATE PLAN PARTNER PROGRAMS INCLUDED IN THIS PLAN. THE DESCRIPTION OF THE STATE'S PLAN FOR INTEGRATING DATA SYSTEMS SHOULD INCLUDE THE STATE'S GOALS FOR ACHIEVING INTEGRATION AND ANY PROGRESS TO DATE.**

**i. DESCRIBE THE STATE'S PLANS TO MAKE THE MANAGEMENT INFORMATION SYSTEMS FOR THE CORE PROGRAMS INTEROPERABLE TO MAXIMIZE THE EFFICIENT EXCHANGE OF COMMON DATA ELEMENTS TO SUPPORT ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION.**

Currently, in Minnesota, four of the six required titles share the same customer management information system. This system is called Workforce One and is described in more detail in other Sections of this Combined State Plan. WIOA Title III (Wagner-Peyser) participant data are currently integrated into MinnesotaWorks.net, the State's labor exchange. WIOA Title II (Adult Basic Education) has a newly designed customer management information system that serves purposes beyond just participant data.

Performance management staff have full access to all data needed to support assessment and evaluation.

**II. DESCRIBE THE STATE'S PLANS TO INTEGRATE DATA SYSTEMS TO FACILITATE STREAMLINED INTAKE AND SERVICE DELIVERY TO TRACK PARTICIPATION ACROSS ALL PROGRAMS INCLUDED IN THIS PLAN**

**ii. DESCRIBE THE STATE'S PLANS TO INTEGRATE DATA SYSTEMS TO FACILITATE STREAMLINED INTAKE AND SERVICE DELIVERY TO TRACK PARTICIPATION ACROSS ALL PROGRAMS INCLUDED IN THIS PLAN.**

Currently, in Minnesota, seven of the 13 participating titles share the same management information system. This system is called Workforce One and is described in more detail in other Sections of this Combined State Plan. Minnesota will continue to explore the possibilities of additional titles sharing the same management information system.

**III. EXPLAIN HOW THE STATE BOARD WILL ASSIST THE GOVERNOR IN ALIGNING TECHNOLOGY AND DATA SYSTEMS ACROSS REQUIRED ONE-STOP PARTNER PROGRAMS (INCLUDING DESIGN AND IMPLEMENTATION OF COMMON INTAKE, DATA COLLECTION, ETC.) AND HOW SUCH ALIGNMENT WILL IMPROVE SERVICE DELIVERY TO INDIVIDUALS, INCLUDING UNEMPLOYED INDIVIDUALS**

**iii. EXPLAIN HOW THE STATE BOARD WILL ASSIST THE GOVERNOR IN ALIGNING TECHNOLOGY AND DATA SYSTEMS ACROSS REQUIRED ONE-STOP PARTNER PROGRAMS (INCLUDING DESIGN AND IMPLEMENTATION OF COMMON INTAKE, DATA COLLECTION, ETC.) AND HOW SUCH ALIGNMENT WILL IMPROVE SERVICE DELIVERY TO INDIVIDUALS, INCLUDING UNEMPLOYED INDIVIDUALS.**

The State Board, through its functions under WIOA, will lead the management information system study to ascertain to practicality and functionality of such a broad based system and make a recommendation to the Governor.

**IV. DESCRIBE THE STATE'S PLANS TO DEVELOP AND PRODUCE THE REPORTS REQUIRED UNDER SECTION 116, PERFORMANCE ACCOUNTABILITY SYSTEM. (WIOA SECTION 116(D)(2))**

**iv. DESCRIBE THE STATE'S PLANS TO DEVELOP AND PRODUCE THE REPORTS REQUIRED UNDER SECTION 116, PERFORMANCE ACCOUNTABILITY SYSTEM. (WIOA SECTION 116(D)(2)).**

Minnesota has dedicated program performance and information technology staff to develop and produce the reports required for performance accountability. All programs underwent a substantial review and revision to align data elements, data collection and reporting to the WIOA requirements.

This work continues, as need, when new USDOL guidance is provided.

Minnesota continues to offer program and local area performance tracking through a contract with Futureworks (FWS) for MN Performs.

## B. ASSESSMENT OF PARTICIPANTS' POST-PROGRAM SUCCESS

Describe how lead State agencies will use the workforce development system to assess the progress of participants who are exiting from core programs in entering, persisting in, and completing postsecondary education, or entering or remaining in employment. States may choose to set additional indicators of performance.

### **B. ASSESSMENT OF PARTICIPANTS' POST-PROGRAM SUCCESS DESCRIBE HOW LEAD STATE AGENCIES WILL USE THE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM TO ASSESS THE PROGRESS OF PARTICIPANTS WHO ARE EXITING FROM CORE PROGRAMS IN ENTERING, PERSISTING IN, AND COMPLETING POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION, OR ENTERING OR REMAINING IN EMPLOYMENT. STATES MAY CHOOSE TO SET ADDITIONAL INDICATORS OF PERFORMANCE.**

Under Minnesota statute 116L.98, the Minnesota legislature has required specific and long-term performance indicators of state-funded workforce training programs since 2014, known as the Uniform Outcome Report Card.

These indicators include:

- Employment and median wage prior to enrollment
- Program enrollment
- Training enrollment, occupation associated with training activity, and training completion
- Credential attainment
- Program exit and duration of time in program
- Consistent employment and median wages for three and eight quarters after program exit
- With comparisons available by participants' education level, race, gender, and geography

DEED's agency-wide performance staff has already integrated WIOA programs into the Uniform Outcome Report Card.

State law also requires a workforce program net impact analysis to include the impact of workforce services on individual employment, earnings and public benefit usage outcomes and a cost-benefit analysis for understanding the monetary impacts of workforce services from the participant and taxpayer points of view.

Finally, DEED submits workforce training and UI wage records to the Minnesota Statewide Longitudinal Education Data System (SLEDS), which links secondary and postsecondary education and workforce to identify the most viable pathways for individuals in achieving successful outcomes in education and work. Through access to a secure data mart, the performance management team at DEED is able to access more robust data on WIOA – and other state workforce – program participants who enter, persist and complete postsecondary education after exiting when program tracking typically commences.

### C. USE OF UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE (UI) WAGE RECORD DATA

Explain how the State will meet the requirements to utilize quarterly UI wage records for performance accountability, evaluations, and as a source for workforce and labor market information, consistent with Federal and State law. (This Operational Planning element applies to core programs.)

#### **C. USE OF UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE (UI) WAGE RECORD DATA EXPLAIN HOW THE STATE WILL MEET THE REQUIREMENTS TO UTILIZE QUARTERLY UI WAGE RECORDS FOR PERFORMANCE ACCOUNTABILITY, EVALUATIONS, AND AS A SOURCE FOR WORKFORCE AND LABOR MARKET INFORMATION, CONSISTENT WITH FEDERAL AND STATE LAW. (THIS OPERATIONAL PLANNING ELEMENT APPLIES TO CORE PROGRAMS.)**

DEED houses the state's Unemployment Insurance (UI) division, which makes access to state wage detail available for the completion of official performance reporting requirements as required by federal or state laws. Minnesota's dedicated program performance and information technology staff also coordinate the data extracts from WRIS/SWIS to develop and produce the reports required for performance accountability under WIOA.

As a part of the net impact analysis required under Minnesota State statute and described in more detail in the section prior, we were also able to leverage UI data in several ways. First, we were able to identify individuals who applied for UI benefits in the same period that our program participants, or treatment group, were entering programs to construct a nonparticipant control group. Second, we were able to use UI wage records to track both our treatment and control group participants longitudinally.

Under a data sharing agreement, DEED also supplies UI wage records to the Statewide Longitudinal Education Data System (SLEDS) for tracking student pathways from high school, postsecondary completion and into the work force. Public reporting on the SLEDS website shows aggregate outcomes for high school students who do not enter college in the first year after high school graduation, but instead enter the workforce. Expanded postsecondary employment and wage outcomes reporting is also available at the institution level by programs of study (i.e. major) and award type. DEED also leverages SLEDS postsecondary program completers and UI data linkages for Eligible Training Providers reporting.

DEED has studied relevant and timely issues on graduate employment and wage outcomes in Minnesota:

Racial disparities in wage and employment after graduation. This study provided qualitative evidence to help explain post-college wage disparities, including choice of major, industry of employment after graduation, time to degree completion and age of student at time of completion.

Labor market returns to higher education for older graduates. This study looked at work experience (continuous employment, interrupted employment, laid off from employment) to model the impact of additional education.

Regional economic factors in shaping high school graduate decisions to enroll in college following graduation or entering the workforce. This study looked at the longitudinal employment and wage trends of high school graduates entering the workforce instead of enrolling college during the year after their graduation.

## D. PRIVACY SAFEGUARDS

Describe the privacy safeguards incorporated in the State's workforce development system, including safeguards required by section 444 of the General Education Provisions Act (20 U.S.C. 1232g) and other applicable Federal laws.

### **D. PRIVACY SAFEGUARDS DESCRIBE THE PRIVACY SAFEGUARDS INCORPORATED IN THE STATE'S WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM, INCLUDING SAFEGUARDS REQUIRED BY SECTION 444 OF THE GENERAL EDUCATION PROVISIONS ACT (20 U.S.C. 1232G) AND OTHER APPLICABLE FEDERAL LAWS.**

DEED relies on data to operate its programs and provide services. The public has a right to know about DEED activities and to protect their own individual privacy. Federal and state data practices laws and rules balance these rights and responsibilities. Compliance with federal and state laws, including the Minnesota Government Data Practices Act, which govern the protection of private data on individuals is and remains a priority for DEED.

We, therefore, take the following safeguards:

- Participants who are asked to provide data about themselves that is not public will be given notice through a Tennessee Warning, with written consent required when we need to use or release private data for specific purposes not explicitly authorized by statute.
- Only staff responsible for delivering employment and training services are authorized recipients of nonpublic data, with access to systems to track, monitor or view program data containing personally-identifiable information restricted to those who have been determined by internal DEED staff to require access.
- Workforce One (WF1), which tracks WIOA programs, grants user permissions based on role in relation to data subjects, thereby preventing users from accessing data which does not belong to them or otherwise pertain to relevant clients.
- Use of UI wage detail for program performance reporting is allowable only for employment and training providers who have obtained informed consent from the individual.

As DEED submits both workforce training participant and Unemployment Insurance wage detail to Minnesota's Statewide Longitudinal Education Data System (SLEDS), we also fully understand and comply with confidentiality requirements as required by Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA).

Data on individuals intended for public use is reported in aggregate form, meaning outcomes are only disclosed for groups of 10 individuals or more. No personally identifiable data on individuals, including Social Security Numbers, are shared publicly.

## 7. PRIORITY OF SERVICE FOR VETERANS

Describe how the State will implement and monitor the priority of service provisions for veterans in accordance with the requirements of the Jobs for Veterans Act, codified at section 4215 of 38 U.S.C., which applies to all employment and training programs funded in whole or in part by the Department of Labor. States should also describe the referral process for veterans determined to have a significant barrier to employment to receive services from the Jobs for

Veterans State Grants (JVSG) program's Disabled Veterans' Outreach Program (DVOP) specialist.

**7. PRIORITY OF SERVICE FOR VETERANS. DESCRIBE HOW THE STATE WILL IMPLEMENT AND MONITOR THE PRIORITY OF SERVICE PROVISIONS FOR VETERANS IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE REQUIREMENTS OF THE JOBS FOR VETERANS ACT, CODIFIED AT SECTION 4215 OF 38 U.S.C., WHICH APPLIES TO ALL EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING PROGRAMS FUNDED IN WHOLE OR IN PART BY THE DEPARTMENT OF LABOR. STATES SHOULD ALSO DESCRIBE THE REFERRAL PROCESS FOR VETERANS DETERMINED TO HAVE A SIGNIFICANT BARRIER TO EMPLOYMENT TO RECEIVE SERVICES FROM THE JOBS FOR VETERANS STATE GRANTS (JVSG) PROGRAM'S DISABLED VETERANS' OUTREACH PROGRAM (DVOP) SPECIALIST.**

Veterans and eligible spouses receive priority of service in all Minnesota CareerForce locations. Also, veterans and eligible spouses who are also recipients of public assistance, other low-income individuals, or individuals who are basic skills deficient would receive first priority of services with the WIOA Adult formula funds.

Priority is given in the following order:

1. First, to veterans and eligible spouses who are also funded in the groups given statutory priority for WIOA Adult formula funds. This means that veterans and eligible spouses who are also recipients of public assistance, other low-income individuals, or individuals who are basic skills deficient would receive first priority of services with the WIOA Adult formula funds.
2. Second, to non-covered persons (that is, individuals who are not veterans or eligible spouses) who are included in the WIOA's priority groups.
3. Third, to veterans and eligible spouses who are not included in the WIOA's priority groups.
4. Fourth, to any other populations identified by the Governor or Local Board for priority.
5. Last, to non-covered persons outside the groups given priority under the WIOA.

Veterans and other eligible persons, defined as covered persons, are ensured Priority of Service (POS) upon entering the CareerForce System with the implementation of the following services:

- Identified at the point of entry to programs & services
- Made aware of priority of service
- Made aware of the full array of programs and services available to them
- Take precedence over non-covered person in accessing and obtaining services

**Veteran**

Veterans who have served at least **one day** in the active military, naval, or air service, who were discharged or released from service under any condition other than a condition classified as dishonorable, and who are otherwise eligible for participation in programming are included as

covered persons. This definition includes Reserve units and National Guard units activated for Federal Service.

### **Spouses of Veterans**

An “eligible spouse” means a spouse of any of the following:

- a. A spouse of any veteran who died of a service-connected disability;
- b. A spouse of any member of the Armed Forces serving on active duty who, at the time of application for the priority, is listed in one or more of the following categories and has been so listed for a total of more than 90 days;
  - i. Missing in action;
  - ii. Captured in the line of duty by a hostile force; or
  - iii. Forcibly detained or interned in the line of duty by a foreign government or power.
- c. A spouse of any veteran who has a total disability resulting from a service-connected disability, as evaluated by the Department of Veterans Affairs; or
- d. A spouse of any veteran who died while a disability was in existence.

### **Implementing and Monitoring Priority of Service Compliance**

Priority of Service to Covered Persons means when customers self-attest they are a veteran or an eligible spouse, they are given precedence over eligible non-covered persons for the receipt of employment, training, and placement services provided under new or existing qualified job training programs. Veterans or eligible spouses receive access to the services or resources before noncovered persons. If the service or resource is limited, the veteran or Covered Person receives access to the service or resource instead of or before the non-covered person. For example, this could mean:

- The Covered Person receives access to the service or resource earlier in time than the noncovered person; or
- If the service or resource is limited, the Covered person receives access to the service or
- resource before the non-covered person.

Priority of Service is monitored by the State Veterans Services Coordinator in collaboration with CareerForce to ensure priority of service is provided in all Minnesota CareerForce locations.

Monitoring activities include on-site visits, interviews with staff, and regular reviews of local office plans, and if available policies related specifically to “Priority of Service for Covered Persons.” USDOL will also conduct visits and federal audits, as scheduled. The JVSG staff submit Quarterly Managers Reports to the local office managers that identify Priority of Service for Covered Persons and will identify issues and resolutions to Priority of Service as necessary.

Local Veterans Employment Representatives (LVER) staff provides ongoing training to CareerForce staff and partners statewide to ensure a successful implementation and understanding of Priority of Service for Covered Persons.

In addition, LVER staff reviews how Priority of Service is being implemented within each of the Minnesota CareerForce locations in their respective regions and offers guidance on how/where

to improve Priority of Service efforts if necessary. The goal is to make certain that local CareerForce front desk personnel is fully versed on veteran priority of service.

**Point of Entry** — signage at all CareerForce locations advises Veterans and other eligible persons of Veterans Priority of Service (POS). Information on Priority of Service is also provided during various program orientations, from staff, and during workshops. LVER staff train and update local CareerForce staff and management on the provisions of POS and Public Law 107-288

**Questionnaire** — given to Veterans to assist reception to identify Veterans with significant barriers to employment. The Minnesota Veterans Questionnaire is given to Veterans to assist reception area staff to identify Veterans with significant barriers to employment. This questionnaire is also available online on the Veterans Resources landing page on the CareerForceMN.com website: <https://www.careerforcemn.com/veterans-resources>. We ask all customers that come to the CareerForce locations 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 to the questionnaire.

**Veterans with Significant Barriers to Employment (SBE)**— All veterans with SBE will be referred to and will receive assistance and individualized career services from a DVOP or in the absence of the DVOP, a designated intensive services provider. Veterans are eligible for DVOP services if they meet the criteria for having a significant barrier to employment or if they are designated as a special population. VPL 03-14, including changes 1 and change 2, and the companion TEGL 19-13 define the criteria for having significant barriers to employment (SBEs) and provide expansion and clarification of SBEs. Veterans Questionnaire needs to be assessed by non-JVSG staff only. Veterans with SBEs should be referred to a DVOP or identified intensive services providers when a DVOP is not available. New guidance identifies a distinction between LVERs and DVOPs; the term “Veteran Staff or Veterans Representative” is no longer acceptable per VPL 03-14 including change 2. You must identify DVOP or LVER staff per DOL refocusing.

**Referral Process** — All other non-SBE Veterans will be referred to a trained partner staff person within the CareerForce who will provide job search information/assistance, program information and priority referral to services and resources.

**Access to U.S. DOL funded programs** — Veterans and other eligible persons entitled to POS will be referred to U.S. DOL funded programs immediately. If a waiting list for the program exists, the Veteran will be put at the top of the list for service.

**Workshops** — all workshops available in the CareerForce through CareerForce will have open slots available to Veterans up to the day the workshop is scheduled

**State Job Bank** — Veterans and current and former Military members are able to identify themselves as such and are listed at the beginning of searches done by recruiters and employers. Employers are also able to self-designate as "Veterans Friendly Employer" so that Veterans can do keyword searches to find employers seeking Veterans for hire.

**Training of Partner Staff** — Non-DVOP staff is trained specifically as the point-of-contact for Veterans not receiving intensive services from DVOPs. To ensure that CareerForce reception staff is deeply familiar with the priority of service provisions for veterans, all staff participates in priority of service training provided by LVERs and via webinars provided by the JVSG program. Front desk CareerForce staff received WIOA JVSG Desk Reference flyer. Staff, particularly those who work at the reception desks, are encouraged to participate in the online

training and instructor-led training provided by the National Veterans Training Institute (NVTI) geared toward educating one-stop staff about the veterans service and priority of service.

Several processes will be used to monitor POS statewide and within each area of the State in which covered programs operate:

- Information provided by DVOP/LVER staff or customers,
- DVET onsite visits (including U.S. DOL—VETS audits with the State Director of Veterans Employment Programs,
- Managers Quarterly Reports.

Services are made available and provided within the CareerForce and through other service providers to eligible Veterans, transitioning service members, Chapter 31 participants, other eligible persons and other such groups targeted for special consideration, including Veterans with significant barriers to employment.

Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) has been developed with the VA Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (VR&E) and the Jobs for Vets Program in providing referrals and priority services for Veterans.

#### 8. ADDRESSING THE ACCESSIBILITY OF THE ONE-STOP DELIVERY SYSTEM FOR INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES

Describe how the one-stop delivery system (including one-stop center operators and the one-stop delivery system partners), will comply with section 188 of WIOA (if applicable) and applicable provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C. 12101 et seq.) with regard to the physical and programmatic accessibility of facilities, programs, services, technology, and materials for individuals with disabilities. This also must include a description of compliance through providing staff training and support for addressing the needs of individuals with disabilities. Describe the State's one-stop center certification policy, particularly the accessibility criteria.

**8. ADDRESSING THE ACCESSIBILITY OF THE ONE-STOP DELIVERY SYSTEM FOR INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES. DESCRIBE HOW THE ONE-STOP DELIVERY SYSTEM (INCLUDING ONE-STOP CENTER OPERATORS AND THE ONE-STOP DELIVERY SYSTEM PARTNERS), WILL COMPLY WITH SECTION 188 OF WIOA (IF APPLICABLE) AND APPLICABLE PROVISIONS OF THE AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT OF 1990 (42 U.S.C. 12101 ET SEQ.) WITH REGARD TO THE PHYSICAL AND PROGRAMMATIC ACCESSIBILITY OF FACILITIES, PROGRAMS, SERVICES, TECHNOLOGY, AND MATERIALS FOR INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES. THIS ALSO MUST INCLUDE A DESCRIPTION OF COMPLIANCE THROUGH PROVIDING STAFF TRAINING AND SUPPORT FOR ADDRESSING THE NEEDS OF INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES. DESCRIBE THE STATE'S ONE-STOP CENTER CERTIFICATION POLICY, PARTICULARLY THE ACCESSIBILITY CRITERIA.**

DEED meets its ongoing obligation not to discriminate on the basis of disability by developing system wide policy and procedure initiatives that comply with Section 188 of WIOA. These policies include physical and programmatic accessibility of facilities, programs, services, technology and materials to serve the needs of customers with disabilities.

The Determining the Location policy requires that the "The WFC location will be accessible to all populations including individuals with disabilities." The Office of Diversity and Equal

Opportunity is the final authority in determining if a location meets the accessibility criteria to be certified as a CareerForce location.

The Minnesota CareerForce location System Certification Standards policy provides guidance on the implementation standards for the equal access obligations under WIOA. CareerForce locations must be universally accessible to all populations including but not limited to various racial and ethnic groups, persons for which English is not their first language, ex— felons, people who are homeless, Veterans, various age groups, different genders, and individuals with disabilities.

All partners are covered by Title II of the ADA and the equal opportunity and nondiscrimination elements of Section 188 of WIOA and, therefore are subject to the same standards.

### **PROVIDE ARCHITECTURAL ACCESSIBILITY FOR INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES**

The CareerForce location System provides integrated program services through the development and maintenance of an accessible environment. All facilities open to the public as well as administrative offices must be accessible to and useable by the broadest population. All partners are covered by Title II of the ADA and the equal opportunity and nondiscrimination elements of Section 188 of WIOA and, therefore, are subject to the same set of standards.

The **Determining the Location policy** states, "DEED must ensure that all services are compliant with applicable laws, regulations and policies. DEED may therefore, withhold certification and/or funding from a location that does not meet the criteria established in this and related policies and laws." The Policy goes on to state, "the WFC location will be accessible to all populations including individuals with disabilities (see Site Selection document for guidance.)"

The Section of the Policy titled Minnesota CareerForce location System Certification Standards provides detailed information regarding the criteria and the process for selecting, remodeling or moving a CareerForce location. CareerForce locations must meet the standards set forth in the Policy.

The Policy identifies the tools used to assist in evaluating and determining access requirements. They include:

- The ADA Site Selection Criteria and Access Standards — The standards were developed to assess the accessibility of potential CareerForce location and identify the building elements that are critical to program access. The standards address the obligation by all WFC partners under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Section 188 of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA).
- The site and building element descriptions are intended to help determine if a site location has the most basic accessible features to ensure equal access to participants with disabilities. If the site does not have the required features, modifications can be made to create improved access. It is imperative that a review be conducted prior to lease negotiations so that access issues can be addressed and remediated.
- It is the responsibility of DEED and its partners to choose sites that are accessible to and usable by the broadest population. DEED, as the designated state agency for WIOA

implementation, is responsible for oversight and implementation of access standards regardless of the WIOA entity that holds the lease.

- During site reviews, the ADA Checklist for Existing Facilities is used. The checklist is based on the 2010 ADA Standards for Accessible Design. The Institute for Human Centered Design and the ADA National Network developed the checklists. Using the checklists, a comprehensive review is done on sites, including approach and entrance, access to goods and services, toilet rooms, and additional access.

DEED developed a review schedule for all Comprehensive CareerForce locations. Site visits for recertification of the 50 CareerForce locations are scheduled on a three—year cycle. Comprehensive CareerForce locations that are newly developed, remodeled or relocated are included in the review and are prioritized. There is generally an eighteen month lead time on remodeling or relocation.

Affiliate CareerForce locations are required to provide full access and opportunities to all job seekers including serving individuals with disabilities. Physical locations, services and programs must comply with Section 188 of WIOA and provisions of the American with Disabilities Act of 1990, as amended.

DEED will work closely with Affiliate CareerForce locations to have them provide an annual assessment on architectural and programmatic accessibility for individuals with disabilities. A review schedule for Affiliate CareerForce locations will occur during Program Monitoring Visits.

#### PROVIDE PROGRAMMATIC ACCESSIBILITY FOR INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES

All DEED and its partners CareerForce locations programs and activities must be programmatically accessible, which includes providing reasonable accommodations for individuals with disabilities, making reasonable modifications to policies, practices, and procedures, administering programs in the most integrated setting appropriate, communicating with individuals with disabilities as effectively as with others and providing appropriate auxiliary aids or services, including assistive technology devices and services, where necessary so individuals with disabilities have an equal opportunity to participate in, and enjoy the benefits of the program or activity.”

DEED has developed a variety of methods to ensure that its programs and activities are universally accessible to individuals with disabilities. They include:

- The Minnesota CareerForce location System Certification Standards described earlier identifies both physical and programmatic accessibility requirements. Customers with disabilities must be able to participate and benefit from the services available in the CareerForce location System, as do all customers. In addition to the site accessibility standards, the Policy identifies the following requirements:
- Development of an evacuation and safety plan
- Notice displayed and available in alternate formats upon request
- Inclusion of tag lines
- Identification of Minnesota Relay
- Availability of accommodation and modifications

- Staff knowledge of assistive technology
- Use of auxiliary aids and services
- Community resources
- Complaint processes.
- Technology standards have been developed for all CareerForce locations.

A variety of assistive technologies are available in CareerForce locations.

In 2014, DEED did an assistive technology upgrade in all the CareerForce locations. The JAWS software and Zoom Text was upgraded to the most recent version. In 2018, DEED reviewed the assistive technology in all the CareerForce locations. CareerForceMN.com is fully accessible for use with screen readers and other adaptive technology.

- DEED's Policy and Procedure Manual (PPM 215), Office Identification Policy includes requirements for interior signage. The policy provides information on character proportion, character height, raised/Brailed characters, contrast, placement height and pictorial symbols.
- All CareerForce location staff must be trained in and promote the use of Minnesota Relay or a customer's preferred relay service. A relay service is used to effectively communicate with individuals who have speech, hearing, or other disabilities.

#### ARE ABLE TO COMMUNICATE WITH INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES AS EFFECTIVELY AS WITH OTHERS

Public entities are required to ensure that applicants, participants and members of the public with disabilities have communication access that is equally as effective as that provided to people without disabilities.

All printed communications provide contact information for a person with a disability to request the information in an alternative format.

When developing, purchasing, maintaining, or using electronic and information technology, DEED and its partners must utilize electronic and information technologies, applications, or adaptations which: 1) Incorporate accessibility features; 2) Are consistent with modern accessibility standards, such as Section 508 Standards (36 CFR part 1194) and W3C's Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0 AA; and (3) Provide individuals with disabilities access to, and use of, information, resources, programs, and activities that are fully accessible, or ensure information provided by the electronic and information technologies are provided to individuals with disabilities in an equally effective and equally integrated manner.

MN.IT's Office of Accessibility provides services and technical support to the State of Minnesota executive branch. MN.IT has set standards for IT Accessibility. On their website a page is devoted to accessibility information for state agencies. It includes information on creating electronic documents, an information implementation toolkit for accessibility, and tools, training and testing information for creating accessible videos, podcast and webinars. The Chief Information Accessibility Officer is a dedicated position within MN.IT that is focused solely on assisting state agencies in identifying solutions to technology access issues.

Accessibility has been a central focus for the web development team. DEED's accessibility resources in the Vocational Rehabilitation Unit as well as staff at State Services for the Blind continue to be involved in any webpage updates ensuring accessibility for the blind and visually impaired, as well as users who are Deaf or hard-of-hearing, or who have mobility impairments, and those with cognitive and reading disorders. DEED's web development team strives for accessibility that extends beyond minimum compliance. If, however, users are unable to access information, they may request information in alternate formats and it will be provided in a timely manner.

## STAFF TRAINING AND SUPPORTS

DEED's Workforce Coordination Training Team is able to provide on-demand training for all CareerForce location staff and partners. These trainings can be in person or webinar based depending on the topic and need.

### 9. ADDRESSING THE ACCESSIBILITY OF THE ONE-STOP DELIVERY SYSTEM FOR INDIVIDUALS WHO ARE ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS

Describe how the one-stop delivery system (including one-stop center operators and the one-stop delivery system partners) will ensure that each one-stop center is able to meet the needs of English language learners, such as through established procedures, staff training, resources, and other materials.

### **9. ADDRESSING THE ACCESSIBILITY OF THE ONE-STOP DELIVERY SYSTEM FOR INDIVIDUALS WHO ARE ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS. DESCRIBE HOW THE ONE-STOP DELIVERY SYSTEM (INCLUDING ONE-STOP CENTER OPERATORS AND THE ONE-STOP DELIVERY SYSTEM PARTNERS) WILL ENSURE THAT EACH ONE-STOP CENTER IS ABLE TO MEET THE NEEDS OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS, SUCH AS THROUGH ESTABLISHED PROCEDURES, STAFF TRAINING, RESOURCES, AND OTHER MATERIALS.**

Minnesota's One-Stop system addresses the needs of ELL clients in a variety of ways:

- Each CareerForce location attempts to hire staff that reflect the local community, including non-English languages spoken in the area. For example, Somali-speaking staff are housed in the Minneapolis, St. Paul, St. Cloud, and Willmar CareerForce locations where Somali communities are growing. Every CareerForce location has an account with Language Line Translation Services. CareerForce locations are able to access translation services via phone, video remote, or on site in 240+ languages.
- Every CareerForce location is knowledgeable of community-based organizations who specialize in serving LEP learners. The local Adult Basic Education (ABE) provider offers English language classes in every region of the state and is often one of the first referral sources. There are also community-based organizations in larger communities that are an important partner and referral source for the One-Stops.
- DEED targets areas of the state with significant populations of LEP clients by investing existing resources in those areas. For example, additional Wagner Peyser funding is provided to the Minneapolis and St. Cloud CareerForce locations so they can employ Community Liaison Representatives who speak the local languages. DEED invested significant WIOA and Wagner Peyser resources into a new One-Stop in North Minneapolis that houses all WIOA programs, adult and K-12 education programming, and a community health care clinic to better serve the growing LEP population.
- Top-level content on CareerForceMN.com is translated into Somali and Spanish.

DEED and its partners already collect the preferred language of each applicant, registrant participant, and terminee, which is a requirement for all states. For languages spoken by a

significant number or portion of the population eligible to be served, or likely to be encountered, vital information will be translated into those languages and made readily available in hard copy, upon request, or electronically.

#### IV. COORDINATION WITH STATE PLAN PROGRAMS

Describe the methods used for joint planning and coordination among the core programs, and with the required one-stop partner programs and other programs and activities included in the Unified or Combined State Plan.

#### **IV. COORDINATION WITH STATE PLAN PROGRAMS.**

Describe the methods used for joint planning and coordination among the core programs, and with the required one-stop partner programs and other programs and activities included in the Unified or Combined State Plan.

##### Plan Development

A WIOA Implementation Team was created in September 2019 to plan for the coordinated and successful development of the One Minnesota WIOA State Plan 2020-2023. That team consisted of representatives from the Minnesota Association of Workforce Boards (MAWB), State Program Administrators from WIOA titles I-IV, as well as State Program Administrators from each of the combined partner programs including TANF, Perkins V, Department of Corrections, and Jobs for Veterans State Grant (JVSG). This team assisted in determining the strategic planning process for the development of the WIOA State Plan. Further planning sessions were conducted in November 2019 and February 2020 to review progress, address strengths and weaknesses of the workforce development system, and develop processes for ongoing implementation of the State Plan following implementation. In addition to this Implementation Team, the Department sought ongoing input on plan development from the MAWB Operations committee and the Governor's Workforce Development Board (GWDB) Operations Committee. The Implementation Team, as well as these stakeholders, had an opportunity to review and comment on the plan prior to publication for public comment. At its February 2020 meeting there was Implementation Team consensus on a recommendation to continue to meet regularly during implementation of the One Minnesota State Plan as outlined below. The GWDB Operations Committee agreed with this recommendation.

##### Implementation

Minnesota believes that coordination among state plan partners for implementation of the 2020 WIOA State Plan is critical to success in achieving its vision. To that end, the GWDB will create and monitor a dynamic community engagement plan for the WIOA Plan over the next four years. This will include interdepartmental State staff, businesses, local and regional workforce development boards, communities of color and indigenous people, people with disabilities, and community based organizations. During implementation activities, Minnesota will further identify areas of growth and development for strengthening the statewide workforce development system.

This coordination plan will be developed early following the adoption of the WIOA 2020 State Plan. Joint planning and coordination is anticipated to be inclusive of interested entities and multidimensional as indicated below:

- Input from community engagement sessions and public comment on the WIOA 2020 State Plan will be incorporated as a basis for implementation and initial identification of areas for growth.

- High-level monthly workforce development discussions including Deputy Commissioners from across Minnesota State Departments will be aligned with State Plan goals.
- State Program Administrators from across Minnesota State Departments and including representatives from the local boards will meet monthly to discuss implementation progress, identify areas for development and growth, and ensure agreement on impact measures.
- On-going state-wide community outreach and engagement will be implemented in partnership with businesses, local and regional boards, Community-based organizations, Tribal communities, refugee and immigrant communities, and other interested people and organizations.
- Results of the work will be presented to the GWDB Operations Committee on a quarterly basis.

### Timeline for Implementation

May-July 2020:

- Community Outreach and Engagement: The Director of the GWDB, the CareerForce Director, and the Director of the Equal Opportunity Office will develop a statewide community engagement plan with input from MAWB. This plan will focus on gaining input specifically tied to Minnesota's vision, goals, and strategies.
- The GWDB formalizes the One Minnesota State Plan coordination initiative and determines timeline for progress reports.
- Implementation Team meetings scheduled on bimonthly basis to be led by the Director of the GWDB.

July 2020-December 2020:

- WIOA Implementation Team meetings are scheduled on a bimonthly basis to review community input, discuss WIOA Plan Progress, and determine strategies for continuous improvement and growth.
- Quarterly updates regarding Implementation Team progress presented to the GWDB Operations Committee as well as MAWB Operations Committee.
- WIOA State Plan coordination strategies and alignment are shared with Deputy Commissioners from across Minnesota State Departments twice a year.

January 2021:

- WIOA Implementation Team, GWDB Operations Committee and MAWB Operations Committee will jointly create schedule for the year for ongoing One Minnesota WIOA State Plan 2020-2023 coordination work.

### V. COMMON ASSURANCES (FOR ALL CORE PROGRAMS)

The Unified or Combined State Plan must include assurances that:

The State Plan must include	Include
1. The State has established a policy identifying circumstances that may present a conflict of interest for a State Board or local board member, or the entity or class of officials that the member represents, and procedures to resolve such conflicts;	Yes
2. The State has established a policy to provide to the public (including individuals with disabilities) access to meetings of State Boards and local boards, and information regarding activities of State Boards and local boards, such as data on board membership and minutes;	Yes
3. The lead State agencies with optimal policy-making authority and responsibility for the administration of core programs reviewed and commented on the appropriate operational planning elements of the Unified or Combined State Plan, and approved the elements as serving the needs of the populations served by such programs;	Yes
4. (a) The State obtained input into the development of the Unified or Combined State Plan and provided an opportunity for comment on the plan by representatives of local boards and chief elected officials, businesses, labor organizations, institutions of higher education, the entities responsible for planning or administering the core programs, required one-stop partners and the other Combined Plan programs (if included in the State Plan), other primary stakeholders, including other organizations that provide services to individuals with barriers to employment, and the general public, and that the Unified or Combined State Plan is available and accessible to the general public; (b) The State provided an opportunity for review and comment on the plan by the State Board, including State agency official(s) for the Unemployment Insurance Agency if such official(s) is a member of the State Board;	Yes
5. The State has established, in accordance with WIOA section 116(i), fiscal control and fund accounting procedures that may be necessary to ensure the proper disbursement of, and accounting for, funds paid to the State through allotments made for the core programs to carry out workforce development activities;	Yes
6. The State has taken appropriate action to secure compliance with uniform administrative requirements in this Act, including that the State will annually monitor local areas to ensure compliance and otherwise take appropriate action to secure compliance with the uniform administrative requirements under WIOA section 184(a)(3);	Yes
7. The State has taken the appropriate action to be in compliance with WIOA section 188, Nondiscrimination, as applicable;	Yes
8. The Federal funds received to carry out a core program will not be expended for any purpose other than for activities authorized with respect to such funds under that core program;	Yes
9. The State will pay an appropriate share (as defined by the State board) of the costs of carrying out section 116, from funds made available through each of the core programs;	Yes
10. The State has a one-stop certification policy that ensures the physical and programmatic accessibility of all one-stop centers with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA);	Yes

The State Plan must include	Include
11. Service providers have a referral process in place for directing Veterans with Significant Barriers to Employment (SBE) to DVOP services, when appropriate; and	Yes
12. Priority of service for veterans and eligible spouses is provided in accordance with 38 USC 4215 in all workforce preparation, development or delivery of programs or services funded directly, in whole or in part, by the Department of Labor.	Yes

**VI. PROGRAM-SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS FOR CORE PROGRAMS**

The State must address all program-specific requirements in this section for the WIOA core programs regardless of whether the State submits either a Unified or Combined State Plan.

**PROGRAM-SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS FOR ADULT, DISLOCATED WORKER, AND YOUTH ACTIVITIES UNDER TITLE I-B**

The Unified or Combined State Plan must include the following with respect to activities carried out under subtitle B—

**A. GENERAL REQUIREMENTS**

**1. REGIONS AND LOCAL WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT AREAS**

**A. IDENTIFY THE REGIONS AND THE LOCAL WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT AREAS DESIGNATED IN THE STATE**

**VI. PROGRAM-SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS FOR CORE PROGRAMS**

The State must address all program-specific requirements in this section for the WIOA core programs regardless of whether the State submits either a Unified or Combined State Plan.

**PROGRAM-SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS FOR ADULT, DISLOCATED WORKER, AND YOUTH ACTIVITIES UNDER TITLE I-B**

The Unified or Combined State Plan must include the following with respect to activities carried out under subtitle B--

**A. ADULT, DISLOCATED WORKER, AND YOUTH ACTIVITIES GENERAL REQUIREMENTS**

**1. REGIONS AND LOCAL WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT AREAS**

**A. IDENTIFY THE REGIONS AND THE LOCAL WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT AREAS DESIGNATED IN THE STATE.**

The following is a list of the six regions created in Minnesota and the associated local workforce development areas:

- Region 1: LWDA 1 (NW MN Private Industry Council); LWDA 2 (Rural MN CEP);
- Region 2: LWDA 3 (NE MN Office of Job Training); LWDA 4 (City of Duluth);
- Region 3: LWDA 5 (Central MN Job & Training Service); LWDA 17 (Career Solutions);
- Region 4: LWDA 9 (suburban Hennepin and Carver Counties); LWDA 10 (Minneapolis Employment and Training); LWDA 12 (Anoka County Job Training Center); LWDA 14

(Dakota & Scott Counties); LWDA 15 (Ramsey County— Workforce Solutions); LWDA 16 (Washington County);

- Region 5: LWDA 6 (SW MN Private Industry Council); LWDA 7 (South Central Workforce Council/MN Valley Action Council)
- Region 6: LWDA 8 (SE MN Workforce Development, Inc.); LWDA 18 (Winona County Workforce Council)

B. DESCRIBE THE PROCESS USED FOR DESIGNATING LOCAL AREAS, INCLUDING PROCEDURES FOR DETERMINING WHETHER THE LOCAL AREA MET THE CRITERIA FOR “PERFORMED SUCCESSFULLY” AND “SUSTAINED FISCAL INTEGRITY” IN ACCORDANCE WITH 106(B)(2) AND (3) OF WIOA. DESCRIBE THE PROCESS USED FOR IDENTIFYING REGIONS AND PLANNING REGIONS UNDER SECTION 106(A) OF WIOA. THIS MUST INCLUDE A DESCRIPTION OF HOW THE STATE CONSULTED WITH THE LOCAL BOARDS AND CHIEF ELECTED OFFICIALS IN IDENTIFYING THE REGIONS

**B. DESCRIBE THE PROCESS USED FOR DESIGNATING LOCAL AREAS, INCLUDING PROCEDURES FOR DETERMINING WHETHER THE LOCAL AREA MET THE CRITERIA FOR “PERFORMED SUCCESSFULLY” AND “SUSTAINED FISCAL INTEGRITY” IN ACCORDANCE WITH 106(B)(2) AND (3) OF WIOA. DESCRIBE THE PROCESS USED FOR IDENTIFYING REGIONS AND PLANNING REGIONS UNDER SECTION 106(A) OF WIOA. THIS MUST INCLUDE A DESCRIPTION OF HOW THE STATE CONSULTED WITH THE LOCAL BOARDS AND CHIEF ELECTED OFFICIALS IN IDENTIFYING THE REGIONS.**

The following is a list of the six regions created in Minnesota and the associated local workforce development areas:

- Region 1: LWDA 1 (NW MN Private Industry Council); LWDA 2 (Rural MN CEP);
- Region 2: LWDA 3 (NE MN Office of Job Training); LWDA 4 (City of Duluth);
- Region 3: LWDA 5 (Central MN Job & Training Service);LWDA 17 (Career Solutions);
- Region 4: LWDA 9 (suburban Hennepin and Carver Counties);LWDA 10 (Minneapolis Employment and Training); LWDA 12(Anoka County Job Training Center); LWDA 14 (Dakota & ScottCounties); LWDA 15 (Ramsey County— Workforce Solutions);LWDA 16 (Washington County);
- Region 5: LWDA 6 (SW MN Private Industry Council); LWDA7 (South Central Workforce Council/MN Valley ActionCouncil)
- Region 6: LWDA 8 (SE MN Workforce Development, Inc.); LWDA 18(Winona County Workforce Council)

The designation of the local areas followed the requirements in WIOA. The State, through review and consultation with the Minnesota Association of Workforce Boards, which represents the chief elected officials and the private sector leadership of the local boards, accepted requests for initial designation of all 16 existing local areas, based on satisfactory performance and sustained fiscal integrity. Satisfactory performance was defined as meeting or exceeding performance standards for the two most recently completed program years. Sustained fiscal integrity was defined as having no audit exceptions for the two most recently completed program years. Documentation included published performance reports and audit letters issued by the State of Minnesota. Opportunities for public comment on the State plan specific to the

designation of local areas occurred at local area board meetings, a State board meeting, regional listening sessions and the 30 day public comment period published in the State Register.

The designation of regions followed the requirements in WIOA. The State, through review and consultation with the Minnesota Association of Workforce Boards, which represents the chief elected officials and the private sector leadership of the local boards, considered various options based on the criteria contained in WIOA law. Additional criteria included having one metropolitan statistical area in each region and the partnering of two or more local areas. Other considerations, based on feedback from local boards and economic development regions in the state, was to keep existing boundaries intact, as to not require local boards or existing regional economic development regions to engage in multiple regional planning efforts, stressing their resources and capacity to fully participate. The proposed regions were approved by the GWDB and MAWB and adopted in 2015. Opportunities for public comment on state plan specific to the designation of local areas occurred at local area board meetings, a state board meeting, regional listening sessions and the 30 day public comment period.

**C. PROVIDE THE APPEALS PROCESS REFERRED TO IN SECTION 106(B)(5) OF WIOA RELATING TO DESIGNATION OF LOCAL AREAS**

**C. PROVIDE THE APPEALS PROCESS REFERRED TO IN SECTION 106(B)(5) OF WIOA RELATING TO DESIGNATION OF LOCAL AREAS.**

Subsequent to initial designation, any local unit of government, including a combination of such units, may appeal the State's decision to not grant designation as a local area. The basis for not granting designation is presumed to be failure to satisfactorily perform or failure to not maintain sustained fiscal integrity. The State must provide technical assistance to the local area to address performance or fiscal integrity issues before such action can be taken.

Any local unit(s) of government may also be denied subsequent designation based on not meeting the State criteria for regional planning, as outlined in section 106(c)(1) in WIOA, as articulated in the State Combined Plan and any planning guidance issued to local areas. The State must provide technical assistance to the local areas within the region to address regional planning issues before such action can be taken.

Following the course of action that denies local designation, the appeals process will allow for the local unit(s) of government to present their appeal to the Governor's Workforce Development Board. The State Board will make a recommendation to the Governor. If the determination is not satisfactorily resolved with the Governor's decision, the local unit(s) of government may appeal to the Secretary of Labor.

**D. PROVIDE THE APPEALS PROCESS REFERRED TO IN SECTION 121(H)(2)(E) OF WIOA RELATING TO DETERMINATIONS FOR INFRASTRUCTURE FUNDING**

**D. PROVIDE THE APPEALS PROCESS REFERRED TO IN SECTION 121(H)(2)(E) OF WIOA RELATING TO DETERMINATIONS FOR INFRASTRUCTURE FUNDING.**

WIOA requires an infrastructure funding policy to support the CareerForce (One-Stop) delivery system. Minnesota has had such a policy in place since 2010 for operations of the 50 CareerForce Locations. This policy uses general customer, participant and staffing data to determine the proportional benefit that each title derives from the shared services now known as "Career Services" under WIOA. All infrastructure funding is borne by the local budgets of service providers. This policy includes a dispute resolution process based on regulation 678.700, allowing the local partners to appeal the infrastructure funding dispute to the

Governor's Workforce Development Board, who will review all documentation and recommend a resolution. If the resolution is not accepted, the state funding mechanism will be used.

## 2. STATEWIDE ACTIVITIES

### A. PROVIDE STATE POLICIES OR GUIDANCE FOR THE STATEWIDE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM AND FOR USE OF STATE FUNDS FOR WORKFORCE INVESTMENT ACTIVITIES

#### **A. PROVIDE STATE POLICIES OR GUIDANCE FOR THE STATEWIDE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM AND FOR USE OF STATE FUNDS FOR WORKFORCE INVESTMENT ACTIVITIES.**

DEED oversees the administration of the WIOA titles IB, III and IV. As the administrator of these titles, the department issues policy and guidance and maintains a publicly accessible database of policies at <https://apps.deed.state.mn.us/ddp/PolicyList.aspx>.

Policy and guidance covers all areas of department operated core partner titles and additional titles, and includes the following categories of policy: Equal Opportunity & Complaints; Administration & Operations; Multi-Program Administration Requirements; One-Stop Centers; WIOA Adult, Dislocated Worker and Youth; Wagner-Peyser; Vocational Rehabilitation Services; Displaced Homemaker; Foreign labor Certification; Migrant & Seasonal Farmworker; Senior Community Services Employment; Trade Adjustment Act; Work Opportunity Tax Credit; Minnesotaworks.net and new elements under WIOA.

These policies have been updated and several are in the process of continued review as TEGs are released and clarifying guidance is provided by DOL. Examples include board membership, both state and local; changes in the eligible training provider list requirements; transfers among Adult and Dislocated Worker programs; and training related activities.

The GWDB's Operations Committee has also played an integral role in supporting the implementation of WIOA through reviewing and approving pertinent policy and guidance issued by the department. This committee has been preparing for a complete system review of all policies for updates and other needed changes or additions. The basis for this review will come from state administrators who meet on a regular basis and will be focusing on policy alignment.

B. DESCRIBE HOW THE STATE INTENDS TO USE GOVERNOR'S SET ASIDE FUNDING. DESCRIBE HOW THE STATE WILL UTILIZE RAPID RESPONSE FUNDS TO RESPOND TO LAYOFFS AND PLANT CLOSINGS AND COORDINATE SERVICES TO QUICKLY AID COMPANIES AND THEIR AFFECTED WORKERS. STATES ALSO SHOULD DESCRIBE ANY LAYOFF AVERSION STRATEGIES THEY HAVE IMPLEMENTED TO ADDRESS AT RISK COMPANIES AND WORKERS

**B. DESCRIBE HOW THE STATE INTENDS TO USE GOVERNOR'S SET ASIDE FUNDING. DESCRIBE HOW THE STATE WILL UTILIZE RAPID RESPONSE FUNDS TO RESPOND TO LAYOFFS AND PLANT CLOSINGS AND COORDINATE SERVICES TO QUICKLY AID COMPANIES AND THEIR AFFECTED WORKERS. STATES ALSO SHOULD DESCRIBE ANY LAYOFF AVERSION STRATEGIES THEY HAVE IMPLEMENTED TO ADDRESS AT RISK COMPANIES AND WORKERS.**

Considerations for the use of Minnesota's set aside will include, but not limited to: Enhanced employer engagement and sustainability strategies, Development of career pathways and pre-apprenticeships, development and ongoing support of technology infrastructure and systems enhancements, comprehensive sector specific WIOA youth and adult program development and administration, Governor's Workforce Development Board and continued of support of local regional planning activities.

## RAPID RESPONSE

Federal law provides discretion to the Governor to develop specific policy. Minnesota's Rapid Response team has evolved since the implementation of WIOA, with the State working closely with regional and local partners to develop leading innovative and proactive local Rapid Response services. In addition, the WIOA requires States and Local Areas to include layoff aversion as an integral component of Rapid Response policy. Minnesota's Rapid Response team works closely with state and local partners to develop action plans in response to proposed layoffs and actual layoff activities. Local workforce development board staff and their partners play an integral part in maintaining active relationships with local employers and often serving as the first source of information about potential layoffs.

The primary purpose of Rapid Response, as stated in federal guidance, is to enable affected workers to return to work as quickly as possible following a layoff, or to prevent layoffs altogether. To accomplish this, the workforce development system must be coordinated, comprehensive, and proactive in communicating with business. This includes providing labor market and workforce information, integrating industry requirements into training strategies and career pathways, brokering relationships and job connections, making services efficient and easy to access, and coordinating with regional partners to reduce duplication.

A sound business engagement infrastructure should include early warning systems, which are necessary to ensure a timely response to worker dislocations. Early indicators can be recognized in a variety of ways, including through close communication with employer representatives, industry groups, organized labor, utilities, or through local media. Rapid Response also tracks labor market trends, increased Unemployment Insurance claims, public announcements through the Minnesota Worker Adjustment and Retraining Notification (WARN) Act notices, and analyzes economic data to assess the health of businesses. In each region, systems should be in place to regularly monitor all potential early warning indicators and notification channels, and employers must be informed about their legal responsibilities to issue advance notifications of layoffs and closures.

It is critical that regional workforce strategist consultants build relationships with employers, labor organizations, workforce and economic development agencies, training institutions, service providers and community-based organizations. Proactive business engagement systems rely on good intelligence. Their value to economic development efforts can be increased by providing ready access to information regarding available talent. Regions can gain a competitive edge when they can leverage accurate information about regional economic trends, labor markets, new business development, impending layoffs, regional assets, and education and training resources.

## LAY—OFF AVERSION

Lay—off aversion tactics are difficult to deploy. Holistic workforce planning and early communication with employers supports workers during times of transition and layoff. Minnesota also offers a shared work program through the Unemployment Insurance Division, which minimizes layoffs.

In addition, Minnesota offers Incumbent Worker (IW) training, and continues to develop policies to guide such work. As we fully implement WIOA, we plan to use a portion of DW program formula—allocated funding to work with companies to provide IW training, which strengthens the existing labor force and helps to prepare for retirement and other natural attrition. Minnesota also offers other types of IW training, including Minnesota Job Skills Partnership grants, which bring employers and training institutions together to support the existing labor force. This kind of training, in and of itself, strengthens the workforce, which helps to avert layoffs in an indirect manner.

**C. IN ADDITION, DESCRIBE THE STATE POLICIES AND PROCEDURES TO PROVIDE RAPID RESPONSES IN CASES OF NATURAL DISASTERS INCLUDING COORDINATION WITH FEMA AND OTHER ENTITIES**

**C. IN ADDITION, DESCRIBE THE STATE POLICIES AND PROCEDURES TO PROVIDE RAPID RESPONSES IN CASES OF NATURAL DISASTERS INCLUDING COORDINATION WITH FEMA AND OTHER ENTITIES.**

Natural disasters are covered under the Governor’s Executive Order which assigns emergency responsibilities to State agencies. Each agency has an Emergency Operations Plan that details their responsibilities and roles in coordinating with other state and federal agencies, as deemed necessary by the disaster event and declaration by the President to engage FEMA. The following is a high level description of the role DEED plays in a disaster response:

1. Disaster Unemployment Assistance (DUA) DUA helps unemployed workers and self-employed individuals who are unable to work as a direct result of a major disaster, and if the individual is not eligible for other unemployment insurance benefits. DUA is administered by the Unemployment Insurance Division. For DEED to initiate DUA, the President must issue a disaster declaration providing for individual assistance. Individuals can apply for unemployment insurance benefits at [www.uimn.org](http://www.uimn.org) or 1-877-898-9090.
2. National Dislocated Worker Grant (NDWG) A NDWG creates temporary employment to assist with clean-up on public land and infrastructure resulting from a natural disaster. Work under the NDWG program is administered by the Workforce Development Division’s Dislocated Worker Unit. For DEED to initiate a NDWG application, the President must declare a major disaster for public assistance. A NDWG is issued by the U.S. Department of Labor, lasts six months, and can provide up to \$12,000 to each eligible individual in wages. After a NDWG is awarded to DEED, Job Seeker Services sub-grants the funding to a local level project operator to implement activity within counties that had been designated by FEMA for public assistance. Individuals interested in employment through the NDWG would obtain information through their local CareerForce location.
3. Temporary CareerForce location (One If a disaster strikes a community and a DEED CareerForce location is not available within close proximity, a temporary center may be opened. Services provided at the location would be for answering questions related to Disaster Unemployment Insurance, Dislocated Worker Services and the National Dislocated Worker Grant temporary employment. The logistics of a temporary center

being opened would be handled in conjunction with Administrative and Financial Services' Facilities Coordinator. 2. Provide materials or representation at Disaster Recovery Centers (DRCs) and public meetings, as requested by the Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Management, to furnish information relative to disaster unemployment, dislocated worker, job training and applicable programs.

To fulfill the tasks outlined in provision above, DEED units provide the following programs.

1. Program Awareness & Materials Preparation DEED's Communications Analysis and Research Division (CARD) will assist in the development of materials and representing the department. The public information officer is the director of CARD who will work with graphic design and writing staff to develop materials and represent DEED. These individuals would work with personnel from DEED, including the Rapid Response Team to assist dislocated workers and other state/local agencies to collaboratively create and provide the necessary information. An additional responsibility of CARD is coordinating DEED information through the Minnesota Recovers Web site, [www.MinnesotaRecovers.org](http://www.MinnesotaRecovers.org), which is the state's clearinghouse for all information about federal, state and local government disaster-assistance efforts.
2. Representation at Disaster Recovery Centers (DRC's) For a FEMA - Disaster Recovery Center (DRC) to be opened, a Presidential declaration for Individual Assistance within several counties is required for the activation of these centers. However, HSEM through a state disaster declaration, may elect to open these centers before or in the absence of a federally declared disaster.

D. DESCRIBE HOW THE STATE PROVIDES EARLY INTERVENTION (E.G., RAPID RESPONSE) TO WORKER GROUPS ON WHOSE BEHALF A TRADE ADJUSTMENT ASSISTANCE (TAA) PETITION HAS BEEN FILED. (SECTION 134(A)(2)(A).) THIS DESCRIPTION MUST INCLUDE HOW THE STATE DISSEMINATES BENEFIT INFORMATION TO PROVIDE TRADE-AFFECTED WORKERS IN THE GROUPS IDENTIFIED IN THE TAA PETITIONS WITH AN ACCURATE UNDERSTANDING OF THE PROVISION OF TAA BENEFITS AND SERVICES IN SUCH A WAY THAT THEY ARE TRANSPARENT TO THE TRADE-AFFECTED DISLOCATED WORKER APPLYING FOR THEM (TRADE ACT SEC. 221(A)(2)(A) AND SEC. 225; GOVERNOR-SECRETARY AGREEMENT). DESCRIBE HOW THE STATE WILL USE FUNDS THAT HAVE BEEN RESERVED FOR RAPID RESPONSE TO PROVIDE SERVICES FOR EVERY WORKER GROUP THAT FILES A TAA PETITION.

**D. DESCRIBE HOW THE STATE PROVIDES EARLY INTERVENTION (E.G., RAPID RESPONSE) TO WORKER GROUPS ON WHOSE BEHALF A TRADE ADJUSTMENT ASSISTANCE (TAA) PETITION HAS BEEN FILED. (SECTION 134(A)(2)(A).) THIS DESCRIPTION MUST INCLUDE HOW THE STATE DISSEMINATES BENEFIT INFORMATION TO PROVIDE TRADE-AFFECTED WORKERS IN THE GROUPS IDENTIFIED IN THE TAA PETITIONS WITH AN ACCURATE UNDERSTANDING OF THE PROVISION OF TAA BENEFITS AND SERVICES IN SUCH A WAY THAT THEY ARE TRANSPARENT TO THE TRADE-AFFECTED DISLOCATED WORKER APPLYING FOR THEM (TRADE ACT SEC. 221(A)(2)(A) AND SEC. 225; GOVERNOR-SECRETARY AGREEMENT). DESCRIBE HOW THE STATE WILL USE FUNDS THAT HAVE BEEN RESERVED FOR RAPID RESPONSE TO PROVIDE SERVICES FOR EVERY WORKER GROUP THAT FILES A TAA PETITION.**

DEED provides Rapid Response events for 100% of all Trade-certified workers who live in Minnesota. Rapid Response events are triggered when a plant closing or mass layoff occurs, and includes TAA benefits and services information if a petition has been filed. When a small layoff

is identified as Trade-affected, Trade Adjustment Assistance takes the steps to petition USDOL for certification and then handles all other concerns regarding worker eligibility.

Additionally, Minnesota co-enrolls all TAA-eligible workers into the State or WIOA Dislocated Worker program in order to provide wrap-around case management and supportive services. Due to the in-depth approach for Rapid Response and TAA-eligible workers, eligible workers have the opportunity to learn about available services multiple times; including the initial Rapid Response event, TAA information meetings for each petition, and Dislocated Worker program enrollment meetings.

## B. ADULT AND DISLOCATED WORKERS PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

### 1. WORK-BASED TRAINING MODELS

If the State is utilizing work-based training models (e.g. on-the-job training, incumbent worker training, transitional jobs, and customized training) as part of its training strategy and these strategies are not already discussed in other sections of the plan, describe the State's strategies for how these models ensure high quality training for both the participant and the employer.

## **B. ADULT AND DISLOCATED WORKER PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS**

### **1. WORK-BASED TRAINING MODELS**

If the State is utilizing work-based training models (e.g. On-the-job training, Incumbent Worker training, Transitional Jobs, and Customized Training) as part of its training strategy and these strategies are not already discussed in other sections of the plan, describe the State's strategies for how these models ensure high quality training for both the participant and the employer.

The WIOA Adult and Dislocated Worker programs continue to work closely with local Workforce Development Areas to promote work-based training strategies, procedures, and technical assistance. State policies are established to ensure compliance with federal regulations and provide additional guidance to local areas. Many local areas have processes and key personnel assigned to perform employer outreach services in order to establish work based training models that best fit their customers' needs. Local areas continue to create partnerships with various stakeholders including training institutions and employers to ensure coordination efforts are best utilized and customers receive the services needed to obtain suitable employment.

MN Pathways to Prosperity (P2P) supports increased participation of enrollees in career pathway programming that increases career awareness, promotes acquisition of basic skills, provides skills-training and education that lead to credentials, and works with employers to place participants into positions in high growth, high demand industries that offer long-term employment at family-sustaining wages.

### 2. REGISTERED APPRENTICESHIP

Describe how the State will incorporate Registered Apprenticeship into its strategy for service design and delivery (e.g., job center staff taking applications and conducting assessments).

## **2. REGISTERED APPRENTICESHIP**

Describe how the State will incorporate Registered Apprenticeship into its strategy for service design and delivery (e.g., job center staff taking applications and conducting assessments).

Apprenticeship Minnesota at DLI supports Minnesota's economy by fostering and promoting employment-based career development through registered apprenticeship programs that provide structured on-the-job training and related classroom instruction to develop a highly skilled, diverse and inclusive workforce. Apprenticeship Minnesota is the State Apprenticeship Authority designated by the US Department of Labor. Registered apprenticeships have been governed by the Minnesota Apprenticeship Act since its inception in 1939.

Apprenticeship Minnesota's strategies include:

- Expand registered apprenticeship in Minnesota with a focus on high-growth industries as an effective employment-based tool to recruit, train and retain a highly skilled, diverse and inclusive 21st Century workforce.
- Deliver direct employer and industry engagement providing high-touch, program development services while overseeing training program administration to ensure integrity and quality that benefits apprentices.
- Promote workforce diversity and inclusion through registered apprenticeship programs, grants, and partnerships.
- Ensure portability and support of the career development continuum for youth, apprentices and graduates through outreach, engagement, and collaborations.

There are approximately 200 apprenticeship programs with more than 12,000 apprentices currently registered and active in the State of Minnesota. These numbers continue to grow as employers seek to address the growing wave of generation retirements and slowing workforce growth. The vast majority of apprentices and registered programs are primarily in the construction industry, but there are more than 100 programs in advanced manufacturing, health care, information technology, transportation, agriculture and utilities.

Registered Apprenticeships are considered a part of the continuum of training opportunities in the career pathways system providing a premier earn-as-you-learn model that provides employers a talent development and retention pipeline while ensuring apprentices obtain a nationally recognized credential when completing their apprenticeship.

Registered Apprenticeship is an important part of the sector strategies within the 6 WIOA regions in Minnesota. Apprenticeship Minnesota seeks opportunities to collaborate and align on the program development of occupations in-demand leading to good wages and career advancement. Registered Apprenticeships are also a part of the Eligible Training Provider List.

Apprenticeship Initiatives, Innovation & Investments include:

- Minnesota Apprenticeship Initiative (MAI) – DLI is the state of Minnesota registered apprenticeship administering authority. MAI performance numbers as of 1/10/2020: registered 922 new apprentices, 96 new employers participated and we created 37 new registered apprenticeship programs in 5 non-traditional industries.
- The State of Minnesota received a \$5M grant from the US Department of Labor to engage more than 100 employers in developing registered apprenticeship programs to recruit, train and retain 1,000 new apprentices in 30 occupations over the next five years in the following industries: advanced manufacturing, agriculture, health care, information technology and transportation. Employers are awarded grants to assist with the costs to develop registered apprenticeship programs. This helps off-set education costs,

apprentice supplies and materials, and infrastructure costs to establish a registered apprenticeship. The grant is a partnership between DEED and DLI.

- Apprenticeship Accelerator Grant Apprenticeship – Minnesota received a \$200,000 grant from the US DOL to accelerate the development and implementation of industry-driven competency-based registered apprenticeship programs. These funds were used to create tools and resources to enhance apprenticeship in Minnesota by assisting employers in their efforts to build apprenticeship programs, foster career continuum strategies such as career exposure, exploration, and readiness for youth, and better align community, industries, labor and education partners.
- Apprenticeship Expansion (APEX) Grant Apprenticeship – Minnesota received a \$1.5M to expand and support construction apprenticeship programs to facilitate greater diversity and inclusion, engage construction employers statewide about on-the-job training best practices on recruiting and retention. The grant supports pre-apprenticeships and career readiness pilot programs aligned with current registered apprenticeship programs. Grant funding is also being used to raise awareness about the registered apprenticeship model to employers, workers, youth and educators.
- Labor Education and Advancement Program Initiative Apprenticeship Minnesota – Grants \$100,000 per year to fund community-based efforts to facilitate the participation of people of color, indigenous people and women in registered apprenticeship. These grants are awarded annually to community-based partners who apply on a competitive request-for-proposal basis. Funds are used for training and services to remove barriers to apprenticeship opportunities.
- Private Investment, Public Education, Labor, and Industry Experience (PIPELINE) Program – DLI's PIPELINE Program is an innovative, industry-based, employer-driven approach to engaging and supporting employers in the development and expansion of dual-training through tools and technical support. Leveraging Minnesota's success in registered apprenticeship, PIPELINE engages employers, industry, education and other interested stakeholders to facilitate how employers can deliver workers the skills needed. Dual-training grants, administered by OHE, provide funding for employers to create new dual-training programs and provide dual-training opportunities.

### 3. TRAINING PROVIDER ELIGIBILITY PROCEDURE

Provide the procedure, eligibility criteria, and information requirements for determining training provider initial and continued eligibility, including Registered Apprenticeship programs (WIOA Section 122).

#### **3. TRAINING PROVIDER ELIGIBILITY PROCEDURE**

WIOA requires that a training program or course whose completion results in a recognized credential must be "WIOA-certified," in order to use WIOA training dollars and get credit for that credential. Program providers, interested training providers, and their partners should comply with this policy to ensure high-quality training experiences for WIOA program customers.

WIOA certification in Minnesota occurs in three steps:

1. Ensuring that the training institution is licensed, registered, or otherwise exempt by the Minnesota Office of Higher Education (OHE), or, depending on program, other appropriate state agency.

2. Entering and updating information on all programs and courses to be WIOA-certified on the state's eligible training provider list.
3. Submitting an WIOA certification application to DEED.

The ETPL and WIOA certification application for a program, course or Registered Apprenticeship collects the following information:

- Program code and title
- Description of program content and purpose
- Program delivery model
- If and how the program awards credit or contact hours (for non-credit program)
- Award type
- Tuition and fee costs to students
- CIP code of program
- Type of credential (if non-credit program)

In order to be eligible to be WIOA-certified, a training program or course must be delivered by an eligible training provider as defined above. The provider must provide an industry-recognized credential upon successful completion of that program or course. The receipt of the credential must depend on the successful completion of the certified program. Being an eligible provider is a necessary, but not sufficient, condition for offering WIOA-certified training.

When a program is certified, it gains initial eligibility, which lasts for one year. After that year, if providers would like the training to remain certified, training providers must work with DEED to ensure continued eligibility. DEED and OHE, as appropriate, will work with the providers of provisionally and permanently certified training programs and courses to acquire certain data, such as the wages of those who complete training and acquire employment.

After the year of initial eligibility is completed, training providers who provide the required information may be considered for continued eligibility. Programs certified under WIA will be grandfathered in under WIOA and will not be subject to initial eligibility, but providers will need to provide any required information for continued eligibility for these programs for participants (including tuition and fees), and information on the program completion rate of participants. DEED will generally acquire as much information (e.g., entered employment rate, wages) through existing data collection processes, without necessitating any paperwork from the training provider. DEED will leverage our inter-agency Minnesota State Longitudinal Data System (SLEDS) to meet the Workforce WIOA reporting requirements for the ETPL.

Only a training institution that has a physical location in Minnesota may apply for listing on Minnesota's ETPL - except for Registered Apprenticeship sponsors, who may apply even if located outside Minnesota. And only a training institution approved for listing on Minnesota's ETPL may request WIOA certification of its programs or sources. WIOA specifically requires training providers to apply for program or course certification.

Any Registered Apprenticeship sponsor in Minnesota whose program is registered with the Minnesota Department of Labor and Industry (DLI) can apply to DEED to be listed on Minnesota's ETPL. Any out-of-state Registered Apprenticeship sponsor whose program is

registered with the US Department of Labor can apply to DEED to be listed on Minnesota's ETPL.

Minnesota's ETPL will be embedded in a comprehensive Career and Education Explorer tool being developed by Minnesota's Labor Market Information Office and is intended to better meet the needs of the state's customers and counselors.

Finally, Minnesota has a dedicated staff person to oversee the state's ETPL and WIOA certification process. The State's policy of WIOA Certification for Training Programs that providers definitions, detailed procedures, general and performance reporting requirements, is available online.

To be listed on the state's eligible training provider list (ETPL), a training institution's programs must be licensed, registered, or otherwise legally exempt through the Minnesota Office of Higher Education. There are a few programs that are authorized by other state agencies (for example, nursing assistant training programs are authorized by the Minnesota Department of Health, not OHE).

If a training provider is not sure of their status, they are to contact OHE to obtain full information about what if anything, is required of them for full legal authorization.

The State is updating the Career Profile Tool to with WIOA (displaying required performance metrics, cost, completion rates, etc.) and to better meet the needs of the state's customers and counselors.

The State's policy of WIOA Certification for Training Programs that providers definitions, detailed procedures, general and performance reporting requirements, is available online.

4. DESCRIBE HOW THE STATE WILL IMPLEMENT AND MONITOR THE PRIORITY FOR PUBLIC ASSISTANCE RECIPIENTS, OTHER LOW-INCOME INDIVIDUALS, AND INDIVIDUALS WHO ARE BASIC SKILLS DEFICIENT IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE REQUIREMENTS OF WIOA SEC. 134(C)(3)(E), WHICH APPLIES TO INDIVIDUALIZED CAREER SERVICES AND TRAINING SERVICES FUNDED BY THE ADULT FORMULA PROGRAM

**4. DESCRIBE HOW THE STATE WILL IMPLEMENT AND MONITOR THE PRIORITY FOR PUBLIC ASSISTANCE RECIPIENTS, OTHER LOW-INCOME INDIVIDUALS, AND INDIVIDUALS WHO ARE BASIC SKILLS DEFICIENT IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE REQUIREMENTS OF WIOA SEC. 134(C)(3)(E), WHICH APPLIES TO INDIVIDUALIZED CAREER SERVICES AND TRAINING SERVICES FUNDED BY THE ADULT FORMULA PROGRAM.**

The State has a policy and procedure that provides guidance to local areas on serving public assistance recipients and other low-income individuals. This policy establishes a broad guideline for local judgment of those participants who are "most in need" and require a service plan and outreach process to serve this population. Local providers must establish a system of prioritizing the enrollment of participants and delivery of services in times of limited availability of State and/or Federal resources.

Local providers must write and implement a policy outlining a priority of service policy and include the criteria impacting this policy in annual planning documents required by DEED. The criteria should apply to all dislocated workers and adults served and ensure availability of program services throughout the program year for those who meet the local priority of service.

Local providers should determine priority on an individual basis. Staff members with the local provider may determine an individual's "most in need" status based on his/her unique factors

and barriers. Local providers should intervene early with eligible customers. DEED monitors these activities through our client data system to ensure this priority is addressed. The outcomes of these efforts become a part of monitoring reports.

The State (DEED) implements an annual monitoring schedule on all grants that are more than \$50,000.00 to ensure that local areas are following and implementing the required Federal and/or State policies relevant to the grants being executed. A part of the monitoring process is ensuring that local areas are enrolling participants based on priority of service. Local areas are also required to provide the State a copy of their priority of service policy. If they do not have one in place, they have the option to follow the DEED's Priority of Service Policy and inform the State of such decision.

During monitoring, monitors ensure that priority is given based upon the priority of service outlined in DEED's WIOA Adult Eligibility and Priority of Service Policy (<https://apps.deed.state.mn.us/ddp/PolicyDetail.aspx?pol=508>), with first priority going to Veterans and eligible spouses who are low income or recipients of public assistance or who are basic skills deficient.

#### 5. DESCRIBE THE STATE'S CRITERIA REGARDING LOCAL AREA TRANSFER OF FUNDS BETWEEN THE ADULT AND DISLOCATED WORKER PROGRAMS

#### **5. DESCRIBE THE STATE'S CRITERIA REGARDING LOCAL AREA TRANSFER OF FUNDS BETWEEN THE ADULT AND DISLOCATED WORKER PROGRAMS.**

The State's criteria is as follows -

- This policy provides the mechanism for transferring up to 100 percent of formula-allocated WIOA Title I-B Adult funds to WIOA Title I-B formula-allocated Dislocated Worker funds and vice versa.
- Background In accordance with WIOA Law, local workforce investment boards shall ensure the formula-based WIOA Dislocated Worker program, like all partners, contributes proportionally to one-stop core services' costs. Some providers have expressed a wish to use WIOA Law, Section 133(b)(4) to transfer funds between Dislocated Worker and Title I-B Adult to accomplish this.
- Procedures in accordance with WIOA Law, Section 133(b)(4), a local workforce council can, with state approval, transfer up to 100 percent of a program year allocation for Adult employment and training activities, and up to 100 percent of a program year allocation for Dislocated Worker employment and training activities, between the two programs. A local service provider cannot transfer funds to or from a WIOA Title I-B Youth Program.

In order for DEED to approve the request, the local provider will need to provide a rationale for the transfer in accordance with the request form given below.

A requesting provider must submit the following three documents:

167. a completed and signed form (Request to Transfer Funds: Adult/Dislocated Worker - attached);

168. a revised Dislocated Worker program budget and participant information forms (found in the Planning Guidelines); and

169. a revised Adult program budget and participant information forms (found in the Planning Guidelines)

C. WITH RESPECT TO YOUTH WORKFORCE INVESTMENT ACTIVITIES AUTHORIZED IN SECTION 129 OF WIOA—

With respect to youth workforce investment activities authorized in section 129 of WIOA—

1. IDENTIFY THE STATE-DEVELOPED CRITERIA TO BE USED BY LOCAL BOARDS IN AWARDING GRANTS OR CONTRACTS FOR YOUTH WORKFORCE INVESTMENT ACTIVITIES AND DESCRIBE HOW THE LOCAL BOARDS WILL TAKE INTO CONSIDERATION THE ABILITY OF THE PROVIDERS TO MEET PERFORMANCE ACCOUNTABILITY MEASURES BASED ON PRIMARY INDICATORS OF PERFORMANCE FOR THE YOUTH PROGRAM AS DESCRIBED IN SECTION 116(B)(2)(A)(II) OF WIOA IN AWARDING SUCH GRANTS OR CONTRACTS.[11]

[11] Sec. 102(b)(2)(D)(i)(V)

**C. YOUTH PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS**

With respect to youth workforce investment activities authorized in Section 129 of WIOA—

**1. IDENTIFY THE STATE-DEVELOPED CRITERIA TO BE USED BY LOCAL BOARDS IN AWARDING GRANTS OR CONTRACTS FOR YOUTH WORKFORCE INVESTMENT ACTIVITIES AND DESCRIBE HOW THE LOCAL BOARDS WILL TAKE INTO CONSIDERATION THE ABILITY OF THE PROVIDERS TO MEET PERFORMANCE ACCOUNTABILITY MEASURES BASED ON PRIMARY INDICATORS OF PERFORMANCE FOR THE YOUTH PROGRAM AS DESCRIBED IN SECTION 116(B)(2)(A)(II) OF WIOA IN AWARDING SUCH GRANTS OR CONTRACTS.**

All policies supporting Minnesota’s WIOA Youth program can be found at:

<https://mn.gov/deed/programs-services/office-youth-development/youth-programs/wioa-youth.jsp>

Request for Proposals (RFPs) issued by Local Workforce Development Boards (LWDBs) reflect the need to provide a connection to the WIOA indicators of youth program performance. See Minnesota’s Procurement of Youth Services Policy (Chapter 16) under WIOA: <https://mn.gov/deed/programs-services/office-youth-development/youth-programs/wioa-youth.jsp>.

The following criteria are used to measure the ability of youth service providers to meet primary indicators of performance.

Adult Support, Structure and Expectations (State WIOA youth policy Chapter 11 can be found at: [https://mn.gov/deed/assets/wioa-chapter11\\_tcm1045-283528.docx](https://mn.gov/deed/assets/wioa-chapter11_tcm1045-283528.docx))

- Strengthen and practice cultural competency while building youth’s ability to advocate for services and opportunities.
- Committed/skilled adults mentor youth and communicate high expectations for what youth can do and achieve.
- Youth and families assisted with accessing and learning how to use technology.

Connection to primary indicators of performance: These services support attainment of industry recognized credentials leading to placement and retention in high-growth jobs

important to regional economies. With adult support/mentoring, youth are better able to overcome barriers, attain credentials, enter employment and reach education goals.

Connection to the Guideposts for Success: These services are correlate with Guidepost three and five: Youth Development and Leadership and Family Involvement. Youth who participate in activities related to the Guidepost competencies are better prepared to successfully transition to adulthood.

Introduction to Career Pathways (State WIOA youth policy Chapter 9 can be found at: [https://mn.gov/deed/assets/wioa-chapter9\\_tcm1045-134291.docx](https://mn.gov/deed/assets/wioa-chapter9_tcm1045-134291.docx) and Chapter 13 can be found at: [https://mn.gov/deed/assets/wioa-chapter13\\_tcm1045-284385.docx](https://mn.gov/deed/assets/wioa-chapter13_tcm1045-284385.docx) )

- Career pathways aligned with industry-recognized credentials. Youth prepared to meet secondary and postsecondary education goals, including pre-apprenticeship opportunities.
- Career assessment and exploration strategies.
- Work-based learning and service-learning experiences.
- Career and technical education and other career related applied learning. Training that builds skills and knowledge needed to effectively use technology.

Connection to primary indicators of performance: These services promote youth employment in high growth jobs with wage increase potential. Youth learn necessary skills and develop expertise in specific occupational/industrial areas. A career pathways model leads to program retention as youth participants clearly see the relevance of what they are doing to overall labor market demands.

Connection to the Guideposts for Success: The services outlined under this policy are reinforced by Guidepost two: Career Preparation and Work-based Learning. Experiences related to Guidepost two supports youth in obtaining core competencies to succeed in the adult workforce.

A Combination of Guidance and Connections to the Workplace (State WIOA youth policy Chapter 11 can be found at: [https://mn.gov/deed/assets/wioa-chapter11\\_tcm1045-283528.docx](https://mn.gov/deed/assets/wioa-chapter11_tcm1045-283528.docx) )

- Use of readily accessible and understood Labor Market Information (LMI) to assess employment opportunities in high-growth industries and in-demand occupations.
- Activities demonstrate strong employer engagement, involvement of the business community.
- Activities that build career exploration skills that enable youth to identify how various career options match their interests, skills, and work experience.
- Activities support development of career-specific work skills and knowledge; and employability or soft skills such as communication, leadership, decision-making, and conflict management.

Connection to primary indicators of performance: These services facilitate the development of a path for youth to become economically and socially self-sufficient. Youth acquire credentials and develop skills and abilities to meet the demands of the local labor market.

Connection to the Guideposts for Success: Activities and services provided under this policy relate to Guideposts one: School-based Preparatory Experiences. These experiences provide youth with a solid educational foundation and exposure to in-demand and high-growth career fields.

Support and Follow-Up (State WIOA youth policy Chapter 11 can be found at: [https://mn.gov/deed/assets/wioa-chapter11\\_tcm1045-283528.docx](https://mn.gov/deed/assets/wioa-chapter11_tcm1045-283528.docx) )

- Services appropriate to youth needs, such as: English language instruction, childcare, financial literacy, transportation, housing or health care.
- Activities with strong built-in follow-up mechanisms to support strong participant outcomes.
- Effective case management skills that provide comprehensive guidance, counseling, and referrals to coordinate a progression of services and activities.
- Activities that engage parents, families, and other caring adults who are involved in the young person's life and can support their ability to achieve independence and self-sufficiency.

Connection to primary indicators of performance: These services lead to employment retention as youth understand that they have support following program exit. Problems on the job can be resolved working through the follow-up components, the employer, and the youth. These services will also lead to increased employer satisfaction with the youth programs leading to increased participation by the private sector.

Connection to Guideposts for Success: Services tied to this policy are supported by Guidepost four and five: Connecting Activities and Family Involvement. Youth and families that are aware of available support services and community opportunities help youth transition more successfully to adulthood.

Youth as a Resource (State WIOA youth policy Chapter 10 can be found here: [https://mn.gov/deed/assets/wioa-chapter10\\_tcm1045-271796.docx](https://mn.gov/deed/assets/wioa-chapter10_tcm1045-271796.docx) and Chapter 11 can be found here: [https://mn.gov/deed/assets/wioa-chapter11\\_tcm1045-283528.docx](https://mn.gov/deed/assets/wioa-chapter11_tcm1045-283528.docx))

- Peer to peer leadership activities that build critical thinking skills, conflict resolution skills and recognize young people as an important resource in improving their own lives.
- Self-advocacy skills that allow youth to make choices about and take an active role in setting education and career goals.
- Self-determination skills that enable youth to identify interests, skills and values.

Connection to primary indicators of performance: With the acquisition of self-advocacy skills by participants, youth will be more valuable assets to employers leading to greater program satisfaction by both employers and participants.

Connecting to the Guideposts for Success: The activities and services provided related to this policy are also described by Guidepost three: Youth Development and Leadership. Youth who have developed the skills to be advocate for their own needs as well as participate in leadership experiences are better prepared to contribute positively to their communities.

Implementation Quality: (State WIOA youth policy Chapter 10 can be found at: [https://mn.gov/deed/assets/wioa-chapter10\\_tcm1045-271796.docx](https://mn.gov/deed/assets/wioa-chapter10_tcm1045-271796.docx) )

- Well thought-out implementation strategies followed and tracked through a continuous improvement process.
- Flexible services that address regional needs and proven methodologies.
- Services that incorporate evaluation components that include customer input and satisfaction.
- Equality of opportunity for everyone, including nondiscrimination, individualization, inclusion and integration.

Connection to primary indicators of performance: These criteria support the WIOA Youth performance accountability measures. DEED's Youth Services Team provides customized training and peer to peer technical assistance to WDAs to support a continuous improvement process. The individualized WDA-level training on WIOA Youth performance and use of WorkForce One, serves as a first step in the local planning process and preparing the WDA to negotiate local performance goals. Minnesota WDAs serve high numbers of at-risk youth, including homeless youth, foster youth, youth with disabilities and youth on public assistance. These target groups are taken into consideration as WDAs work with DEED's Youth Services Team to negotiate the following local WIOA Youth performance goals:

- Education and Employment Rate- 2nd Quarter after Exit
- Education and Employment Rate- 4th quarter after exit
- Credential attainment

Connection to Guideposts for Success: Programmatic quality can be enhanced by connecting the Guideposts for Success to the 14 required program elements. Service providers can leverage existing partnerships including family members to support youth as they make the transition from youth settings to adult settings. The core competencies described in the Guideposts for Success have been identified as valuable for achieving goals related to economic success and participation in community life during adulthood.

**2. DESCRIBE THE STRATEGIES THE STATE WILL USE TO ACHIEVE IMPROVED OUTCOMES FOR OUT-OF-SCHOOL YOUTH AS DESCRIBED IN 129(A)(1)(B), INCLUDING HOW IT WILL LEVERAGE AND ALIGN THE CORE PROGRAMS, ANY COMBINED STATE PLAN PARTNER PROGRAMS INCLUDED IN THIS PLAN, REQUIRED AND OPTIONAL ONE-STOP PARTNER PROGRAMS, AND ANY OTHER RESOURCES AVAILABLE.**

**2. DESCRIBE THE STRATEGIES THE STATE WILL USE TO ACHIEVE IMPROVED OUTCOMES FOR OUT-OF-SCHOOL YOUTH AS DESCRIBED IN 129(A)(1)(B), INCLUDING HOW IT WILL LEVERAGE AND ALIGN THE CORE PROGRAMS, ANY COMBINED STATE PLAN PARTNER PROGRAMS INCLUDED IN THIS PLAN, REQUIRED AND OPTIONAL ONE-STOP PARTNER PROGRAMS, AND ANY OTHER RESOURCES AVAILABLE.**

Recruitment of out-of-school youth includes outreach to eligible youth ages 16-24 interested in pursuing occupational skill training and access to postsecondary education and credentials. Services to out-of-school youth requires a program mix that is flexible and varied enough to address a spectrum of individual needs and skill levels and has the means (through assessment) to identify those needs. Interagency partnerships are established between the WDA, local technical colleges, universities, adult basic education (ABE) and other workforce

development and education partners. The WDA's on-site presence at technical colleges and ABE Centers promotes communication with Financial Aid Officers who identify out-of-school youth who qualify for and could benefit from WIOA Youth services.

Out-of-school youth in need of occupational skills training and access to postsecondary training and credential are recruited from programs such as: Adult Basic Education (ABE), Vocational Rehabilitation Services (VRS), the Minnesota Family Investment Program (MFIP), and the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). Key staff in local school districts provide information on WIOA for students who drop out of school. Area Learning Centers (ALCs) include WIOA Youth applications in senior student portfolios.

Integrated Resource Teams (IRTs) develop action plans to serve out-of-school youth. IRT partners may include (but are not limited to): representatives from county social services foster care units, juvenile corrections, homeless youth service providers and drop-in centers, ABE service providers, mental health professionals, chemical dependency counselors, youth, parents, and community-based organizations.

WIOA Youth service providers receive referrals of out-of-school youth from: United Way, Lutheran Social Services, Catholic Charities, Salvation Army, Veterans Services staff, Community Action Agencies and local libraries.

All Local Workforce Development Boards/Youth Committees develop a Shared Vision for Youth Blueprint as part of their Local Youth Plans. The Blueprints depict local strategies and partners engaged in improving outcomes for youth served under WIOA. To view the Blueprints and the Local Youth Plans, please visit DEED's webpage: <https://mn.gov/deed/programs-services/office-youth-development/special/shared-vision/>

The Shared Vision for Youth Blueprints identify interagency projects underway at WDA level to improve transition outcomes for:

- Homeless youth and runaways;
- Dropouts and potential dropouts;
- Youth with disabilities; and
- Youth in foster care.

The five Guideposts for Success, a best practices framework developed by the National Collaborative on Workforce and Disability for Youth (NCWD), aligns closely with WIOA goals and outcomes in serving out-of-school youth. LWDBs and Youth Committees provide oversight. For example, Southwest WDA developed a new tool to improve local program quality: an Individual Service Strategy (ISS) which incorporates competencies outlined in the Guideposts and the 14 required elements under WIOA Youth, see: [https://mn.gov/deed/assets/swmn-chart\\_tcm1045-340517.docx](https://mn.gov/deed/assets/swmn-chart_tcm1045-340517.docx).

LWDB's co-enroll WIOA youth participants in other federally-funded programs outside of the Department of Labor (MFIP, VRS, ABE for example). Out-of-school youth may also be co-enrolled in the WIOA Adult program. Leveraging these additional resources increases the potential for shared positive outcomes in youth and adult programs at the state and local level.

3. DESCRIBE HOW THE STATE WILL ENSURE THAT ALL 14 PROGRAM ELEMENTS DESCRIBED IN WIOA SECTION 129(C)(2) ARE MADE AVAILABLE AND EFFECTIVELY IMPLEMENTED, INCLUDING QUALITY PRE-APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAMS UNDER THE WORK EXPERIENCE PROGRAM ELEMENT. [12]

[12] Sec. 102(b)(2)(D)(i)(I)

**3. DESCRIBE HOW THE STATE WILL ENSURE THAT ALL 14 PROGRAM ELEMENTS DESCRIBED IN WIOA SECTION 129(C)(2) ARE MADE AVAILABLE AND EFFECTIVELY IMPLEMENTED, INCLUDING QUALITY PRE-APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAMS UNDER THE WORK EXPERIENCE PROGRAM ELEMENT. (See: State WIOA youth policy Chapter 11 can be found at: [https://mn.gov/deed/assets/wioa-chapter11\\_tcm1045-283528.docx](https://mn.gov/deed/assets/wioa-chapter11_tcm1045-283528.docx))**

Each WDA develops a Local Youth Plan which identifies how the following 14 required program elements are available to WIOA youth participants. Local Youth Plans are posted on DEED's website, see: <https://mn.gov/deed/about/what-we-do/objectives-plans/wioa.jsp>

- Tutoring, study skills training, instruction, and dropout prevention services
- Alternative secondary school services or dropout recovery services
- Paid and unpaid work experience
- Occupational skill training
- Education offered with workforce preparation activities and training
- Leadership development activities
- Supportive services
- Adult Mentoring
- Follow-up Services
- Comprehensive guidance and counseling
- Financial literacy education
- Entrepreneurial skills training
- Labor market and employment information about in-demand industry sectors/occupations
- Postsecondary preparation and transition activities

LWDBs/Youth Committees provide oversight to assure program quality. For example, Southwest WDA developed a chart which summarizes the variety of partnerships involved in the provision of the 14 required program elements, see: [https://mn.gov/deed/assets/swmn-chart\\_tcm1045-340517.docx](https://mn.gov/deed/assets/swmn-chart_tcm1045-340517.docx).

DEED's desk review of the Local Youth Plans assures that each WDA describes how the 14 required program elements will be available to WIOA participants. On-site Program Monitoring by DEED confirms that the 14 required program elements are available at the WDA level (as described in the Local Youth Plans). DEED's Youth Program Monitoring Guide, includes a section on the required program elements, see: [https://mn.gov/deed/assets/youth-technical-training-guide\\_tcm1045-328369.docx](https://mn.gov/deed/assets/youth-technical-training-guide_tcm1045-328369.docx).

State and federally-funded Youthbuild programs offer a nationally-recognized model for pre-apprenticeship training. Co-enrolling out-of-school youth in WIOA Youth and federal Youthbuild programs is underway at the WDA level. The number of Youthbuild participants entering registered apprenticeship programs has increased through partnering. For more

information, see the Youthbuild webpage: <https://mn.gov/deed/programs-services/office-youth-development/youth-programs/youthbuild.jsp>.

4. PROVIDE THE LANGUAGE CONTAINED IN THE STATE POLICY FOR “REQUIRING ADDITIONAL ASSISTANCE TO ENTER OR COMPLETE AN EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM, OR TO SECURE AND HOLD EMPLOYMENT” CRITERION FOR OUT-OF-SCHOOL YOUTH SPECIFIED IN WIOA SECTION 129(A)(1)(B)(III)(VIII) AND FOR “REQUIRING ADDITIONAL ASSISTANCE TO COMPLETE AN EDUCATION PROGRAM, OR TO SECURE AND HOLD EMPLOYMENT” CRITERION FOR IN-SCHOOL YOUTH SPECIFIED IN WIOA SECTION 129(A)(1)(C)(IV)(VII). IF THE STATE DOES NOT HAVE A POLICY, DESCRIBE HOW THE STATE WILL ENSURE THAT LOCAL AREAS WILL HAVE A POLICY FOR THESE CRITERIA.

**4. PROVIDE THE LANGUAGE CONTAINED IN THE STATE POLICY FOR “REQUIRING ADDITIONAL ASSISTANCE TO ENTER OR COMPLETE AN EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM, OR TO SECURE AND HOLD EMPLOYMENT” CRITERION FOR OUT-OF-SCHOOL YOUTH SPECIFIED IN WIOA SECTION 129 (A)(1)(B)(III)(VIII) AND FOR “REQUIRING ADDITIONAL ASSISTANCE TO COMPLETE AN EDUCATION PROGRAM, OR TO SECURE AND HOLD EMPLOYMENT” CRITERION FOR IN-SCHOOL YOUTH SPECIFIED IN WIOA SECTION 129(A)(1)(C)(IV)(VII). IF THE STATE DOES NOT HAVE A POLICY, DESCRIBE HOW THE STATE WILL ENSURE THAT LOCAL AREAS WILL HAVE A POLICY FOR THESE CRITERIA.**

(See: State WIOA youth policy Chapter 2 can be found at: [https://mn.gov/deed/assets/wioa-chapter2\\_tcm1045-134284.docx](https://mn.gov/deed/assets/wioa-chapter2_tcm1045-134284.docx))

Minnesota’s Workforce Development Boards include in their Local Youth Plans their definition of “an individual who requires additional assistance to enter or complete an educational program or to secure or hold employment.” This definition must be reasonable, quantifiable, and based on evidence that the specific characteristic of the youth identified objectively requires additional assistance. Examples may include, but are not limited to: Migrant youth, incarcerated parent, behavior problems at school, family literacy problems, domestic violence, substance abuse, chronic health conditions, one or more grade levels below appropriate age, immigrant/refugee.

5. INCLUDE THE STATE DEFINITION, AS DEFINED IN LAW, FOR NOT ATTENDING SCHOOL AND ATTENDING SCHOOL AS SPECIFIED IN WIOA SECTION 129(A)(1)(B)(I) AND SECTION 129(A)(1)(C)(I). IF STATE LAW DOES NOT DEFINE “NOT ATTENDING SCHOOL” OR “ATTENDING SCHOOL,” INDICATE THAT IS THE CASE AND PROVIDE THE STATE POLICY FOR DETERMINING WHETHER A YOUTH IS ATTENDING OR NOT ATTENDING SCHOOL.

**5. INCLUDE THE STATE DEFINITION, AS DEFINED IN STATE LAW, FOR NOT ATTENDING SCHOOL AND ATTENDING SCHOOL AS SPECIFIED IN WIOA SECTION 129(A) (1)(B)(I) AND SECTION 129(A)(1)(C)(I). IF STATE LAW DOES NOT DEFINE “NOT ATTENDING SCHOOL” OR “ATTENDING SCHOOL” INDICATE THAT IS THE CASE AND PROVIDE THE STATE POLICY FOR DETERMINING WHETHER A YOUTH IS ATTENDING OR NOT ATTENDING SCHOOL.**

11 Sec. 102(b)(2)(D)(i)(V)

12 Sec. 102(b)(2)(D)(i)(I) See (State WIOA youth policy Chapter 2 can be found at: [https://mn.gov/deed/assets/wioa-chapter2\\_tcm1045-134284.docx](https://mn.gov/deed/assets/wioa-chapter2_tcm1045-134284.docx) )

In Minnesota, school is defined as a “public school, or nonpublic school, church or religious organization, or home school in which a child is provided instruction in compliance with Minnesota statute 120A.22, subdivision 4 (<https://www.revisor.mn.gov/statutes/?id=120A.22>)

and Section 120A.24 (<https://www.revisor.mn.gov/statutes/?id=120A.24>). The compulsory age of school attendance is 17 (Minnesota statute 120A.22.subdivision 5).

In Minnesota, the following are included in the definition of dropout/not attending any school: 1) students with 15 consecutive days of unexcused absences (excluding school breaks and official days off of school); 2) students who are "voluntary" withdrawals from school (as described in Minnesota statute 120A.22); 3) expelled students (as described in Minnesota statute 121A.45) (<https://www.revisor.mn.gov/statutes/?id=121A.45>)

6. IF USING THE BASIC SKILLS DEFICIENT DEFINITION CONTAINED IN WIOA SECTION 3(5)(B), INCLUDE THE STATE DEFINITION WHICH MUST FURTHER DEFINE HOW TO DETERMINE IF AN INDIVIDUAL IS UNABLE TO COMPUTE OR SOLVE PROBLEMS, OR READ, WRITE, OR SPEAK ENGLISH, AT A LEVEL NECESSARY TO FUNCTION ON THE JOB, IN THE INDIVIDUAL'S FAMILY, OR IN SOCIETY. IF NOT USING THE PORTION OF THE DEFINITION CONTAINED IN WIOA SECTION 3(5)(B), INDICATE THAT IS THE CASE.

**6. IF USING THE BASIC SKILLS DEFICIENT DEFINITION CONTAINED IN WIOA SECTION 3(5)(B), INCLUDE THE STATE DEFINITION WHICH MUST FURTHER DEFINE HOW TO DETERMINE IF AN INDIVIDUAL IS UNABLE TO COMPUTE OR SOLVE PROBLEMS, OR READ, WRITE, OR SPEAK ENGLISH, AT A LEVEL NECESSARY TO FUNCTION ON THE JOB, IN THE INDIVIDUAL'S FAMILY, OR IN SOCIETY. IF NOT USING THE PORTION OF THE DEFINITION CONTAINED IN WIOA SECTION 3(5)(B), INDICATE THAT IS THE CASE.**

The State of Minnesota uses the "basic skills deficient" definition as outlined in WIOA Section 681.290(a)(1) and Section 681.290(a)(2) of the DOL Final Rule. This definition is included in State Administrative Policy, on page 8, Chapter 2, Eligibility and Targeting. Local Workforce Development Boards include the definition of "basic skills deficient" in the Local Youth Plans.

The term "basic skills deficient" means, with respect to an individual, who is a youth:

- That the individual has English reading, writing, or computing skills at or below the 8th grade level on a generally accepted standardized test; or that the individual is unable to compete or solve problems or read, write, or speak English, at a level necessary to function on the job, in the individual's family or in society.

#### D. SINGLE-AREA STATE REQUIREMENTS

In States where there is only one local workforce investment area, the governor serves as both the State and local chief elected official. In such cases, the State must submit any information required in the local plan (WIOA section 106(d)(2)). States with a single workforce area must include—

1. ANY COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD THAT REPRESENT DISAGREEMENT WITH THE PLAN. (WIOA SECTION 108(D)(3).)
2. THE ENTITY RESPONSIBLE FOR THE DISBURSAL OF GRANT FUNDS, AS DETERMINED BY THE GOVERNOR, IF DIFFERENT FROM THAT FOR THE STATE. (WIOA SECTION 108(B)(15).)
3. A DESCRIPTION OF THE TYPE AND AVAILABILITY OF WIOA TITLE I YOUTH ACTIVITIES AND SUCCESSFUL MODELS, INCLUDING FOR YOUTH WITH DISABILITIES. (WIOA SECTION 108(B)(9).)

N/A

4. A DESCRIPTION OF THE ROLES AND RESOURCE CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE ONE-STOP PARTNERS.

N/A

5. THE COMPETITIVE PROCESS USED TO AWARD THE SUBGRANTS AND CONTRACTS FOR TITLE I ACTIVITIES.

N/A

6. HOW TRAINING SERVICES OUTLINED IN SECTION 134 WILL BE PROVIDED THROUGH INDIVIDUAL TRAINING ACCOUNTS AND/OR THROUGH CONTRACTS, AND HOW SUCH TRAINING APPROACHES WILL BE COORDINATED. DESCRIBE HOW THE STATE WILL MEET INFORMED CUSTOMER CHOICE REQUIREMENTS REGARDLESS OF TRAINING APPROACH.

N/A

7. HOW THE STATE BOARD, IN FULFILLING LOCAL BOARD FUNCTIONS, WILL COORDINATE TITLE I ACTIVITIES WITH THOSE ACTIVITIES UNDER TITLE II. DESCRIBE HOW THE STATE BOARD WILL CARRY OUT THE REVIEW OF LOCAL APPLICATIONS SUBMITTED UNDER TITLE II CONSISTENT WITH WIOA SECS. 107(D)(11)(A) AND (B)(I) AND WIOA SEC. 232.

N/A

8. COPIES OF EXECUTED COOPERATIVE AGREEMENTS WHICH DEFINE HOW ALL LOCAL SERVICE PROVIDERS WILL CARRY OUT THE REQUIREMENTS FOR INTEGRATION OF AND ACCESS TO THE ENTIRE SET OF SERVICES AVAILABLE IN THE ONE-STOP DELIVERY SYSTEM, INCLUDING COOPERATIVE AGREEMENTS WITH ENTITIES ADMINISTERING REHABILITATION ACT PROGRAMS AND SERVICES.

N/A

E. WAIVER REQUESTS (OPTIONAL)

States wanting to request waivers as part of their title I-B Operational Plan must include a waiver plan that includes the following information for each waiver requested:

1. IDENTIFIES THE STATUTORY OR REGULATORY REQUIREMENTS FOR WHICH A WAIVER IS REQUESTED AND THE GOALS THAT THE STATE OR LOCAL AREA, AS APPROPRIATE, INTENDS TO ACHIEVE AS A RESULT OF THE WAIVER AND HOW THOSE GOALS RELATE TO THE UNIFIED OR COMBINED STATE PLAN;
2. DESCRIBES THE ACTIONS THAT THE STATE OR LOCAL AREA, AS APPROPRIATE, HAS UNDERTAKEN TO REMOVE STATE OR LOCAL STATUTORY OR REGULATORY BARRIERS;
3. DESCRIBES THE GOALS OF THE WAIVER AND THE EXPECTED PROGRAMMATIC OUTCOMES IF THE REQUEST IS GRANTED;
4. DESCRIBES HOW THE WAIVER WILL ALIGN WITH THE DEPARTMENT'S POLICY PRIORITIES, SUCH AS:
  - A. SUPPORTING EMPLOYER ENGAGEMENT;
  - B. CONNECTING EDUCATION AND TRAINING STRATEGIES;
  - C. SUPPORTING WORK-BASED LEARNING;
  - D. IMPROVING JOB AND CAREER RESULTS, AND

E. OTHER GUIDANCE ISSUED BY THE DEPARTMENT.

5. DESCRIBES THE INDIVIDUALS AFFECTED BY THE WAIVER, INCLUDING HOW THE WAIVER WILL IMPACT SERVICES FOR DISADVANTAGED POPULATIONS OR INDIVIDUALS WITH MULTIPLE BARRIERS TO EMPLOYMENT; AND

6. DESCRIBES THE PROCESSES USED TO:

A. MONITOR THE PROGRESS IN IMPLEMENTING THE WAIVER;

B. PROVIDE NOTICE TO ANY LOCAL BOARD AFFECTED BY THE WAIVER;

C. PROVIDE ANY LOCAL BOARD AFFECTED BY THE WAIVER AN OPPORTUNITY TO COMMENT ON THE REQUEST;

D. ENSURE MEANINGFUL PUBLIC COMMENT, INCLUDING COMMENT BY BUSINESS AND ORGANIZED LABOR, ON THE WAIVER.

E. COLLECT AND REPORT INFORMATION ABOUT WAIVER OUTCOMES IN THE STATE'S WIOA ANNUAL REPORT.

7. THE SECRETARY MAY REQUIRE THAT STATES PROVIDE THE MOST RECENT DATA AVAILABLE ABOUT THE OUTCOMES OF THE EXISTING WAIVER IN CASES WHERE THE STATE SEEKS RENEWAL OF A PREVIOUSLY APPROVED WAIVER.

WAIVER REQUESTS are included here:

1. Use of Individual Training Accounts for In-School Youth.
2. Expanded Homeless Youth Waiver to Include Foster Youth.

**WIOA YOUTH WAIVER REQUEST: Use of Individual Training Accounts for In-School Youth.**

STATE OF MINNESOTA

MINNESOTA DEPARTMENT OF EMPLOYMENT AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

I. Identification of the statutory or regulatory requirements for which a waiver is being requested:

Minnesota is requesting a waiver to provide Minnesota WDAs with the flexibility to use Individual Training Accounts (ITAs) for in-school youth under WIOA Youth. The waiver impacts WIOA Regulation 20 CFR 681.550.

According to current WIOA Regulations, ITAs were established to provide individual customer choice in their education and training plans and provide flexibility to service providers. At present, only out of school youth, ages 18-24 can use ITAs. In school youth deserve the same flexible opportunities for support as out of school youth. Without this waiver, in-school youth would have to be closed and enrolled as out of school youth.

II. Goals that Minnesota and its Workforce Development Areas (WDAs) intend to achieve as a result of the waiver:

The goal of this is to allow WIOA youth service providers the option to use ITAs for in-school youth. Serving in school and out of school youth with the same ITA policy allows for continuity of services for all WIOA youth. All youth will be eligible to receive training services, connection to work-based learning and job search support. To better connect youth to work-based learning, both in school and out of school youth would be able to use the ETPL to find training programs that support individualized needs. The waiver would permit youth service providers to customize services to in school youth to match their interests and abilities.

### III. Relationship of Goals to the Minnesota State Plan:

Minnesota's State Plan describes how resources will be used to assist individuals who need assistance to become economic and socially self-sufficient. The populations targeted in Minnesota's plan are those for whom WIOA Youth Programs are critical. The State plan points out that Minnesota needs to diversify its labor force in order to grow economically:

In sum, the data show that current population and aging trends will lead to a tight labor market over the next two decades – with some local areas already experiencing labor force declines. The challenges our state will face over the next 15 years are so great that we'll need to tackle them with a multi-pronged approach to attract and retain workers of all demographic characteristics. Retaining older workers beyond traditional retirement age, attracting and retaining young talent, removing barriers faced by workers of all abilities, welcoming immigrants from other countries, and educating and training the workers we do have are all necessary to overcome these challenges.

Because minority populations in Minnesota continue to grow faster than the white population, particularly in the younger working age populations, the labor force will continue to diversify rapidly. Recognizing that the rapidly increasing share of existing workers are people of color, it becomes obvious that we must address this problem of persistent racial disparities directly.

If these disparities continue unabated, disadvantaged groups won't be the only ones who suffer. Businesses and the economic well-being of every resident of our state also will be affected. So, working on solutions to close these racial gaps between our state's white population and its populations of color is not only the right thing to do, it's the necessary thing to do if we're to provide our economy and its employers with the workforce necessary for success.

If approved, this waiver will positively impact disadvantaged populations: both in-school youth and out of school youth will be able to receive all WIOA youth program services. The waiver supports continuity of services without disruption for WIOA Youth.

### IV. Actions the State has undertaken to remove State or local statutory or regulatory barriers:

No State or local statutory or regulatory barriers exist that would prevent the implementation of this waiver.

### V. Detailed Goals of the Waiver and the Expected Programmatic Outcomes if the Request is Granted:

Goals of the waiver include:

- Supporting customer choice;
- Supporting employer engagement;
- Connecting education and training strategies;
- Supporting work-based learning; and
- Improving job and career results.

As Minnesota's ETPL grows, the choices available to in-school youth will grow as well. This waiver will allow the in-school student to participate in and benefit from the growth of the employment and training network.

Specific numeric goals are hard to set. However, we are indicating the following:

- 75 percent of in-school undertaking occupational training will have ITAs;
- The number of training providers serving youth will increase by at least 5% in the next 12 months and will be registered on the ETPL; and
- All ITAs will use training providers on the ETPL.

#### VI. Alignment with Department of Labor policy priorities

This waiver is in alignment with Department of Labor priorities as follows:

##### Connecting Education and Training Strategies

This waiver allows WIOA youth service providers to offer in school youth the flexible option to use ITAs to access training programs on the ETPL. The waiver expands the education and training opportunities for in school youth.

##### Improving Job and Career Results

Allowing both in school and out of school youth to use ITAs to find training opportunities that match their interest, support their learning styles and better prepare them for work-based learning and employment.

With the reduced administrative burden on youth service providers, there can be an increased effort on networking and partnering to assure that meet the needs of both eligible in-school and out of school youth and improve shared outcomes.

#### VII. Individuals Affected by the Waiver

In-school students (secondary school attendees) who meet the age requirements will be the individuals affected by the waiver, especially youth who are under-represented in the workforce. These youth have multiple barriers to employment requiring resources to become

self-sufficient. This waiver provides WIOA youth service providers with more flexibility to serve in-school youth who are most in need of services.

#### VIII. Monitoring/Local Comment

##### Monitoring

DEED's youth program staff will be responsible to ensure that the process to implement the waiver is accomplished as well as monitoring the progress to meet the goals indicated above. As required, DEED will report to DOL progress in achieving the waiver as well as any changes needed. Additionally, DEED will report information on the waiver and its outcome in Minnesota's WIOA Annual Report.

##### Local Comment

DEED will ensure through direct communications and through its website that local comment (local Workforce Development Boards, local business and organized labor is obtained on this waiver. Additionally, DEED staff will meet with local WDA staff to obtain comments. DEED will inform the Department of Labor of any comments received.

Submitted: August 15, 2019

### **WIOA YOUTH WAIVER REQUEST: Expanded Homeless Youth Waiver to Include Foster Youth.**

STATE OF MINNESOTA

MINNESOTA DEPARTMENT OF EMPLOYMENT AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

#### I. Identification of the statutory or regulatory requirements for which a waiver is being requested:

The State of Minnesota is requesting an expanded waiver (from the June 12, 2018 submittal) for Program Years 2019 and 2020 from the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Section 129(a)(4)(A) and the corresponding regulation at 20CFR 681.410 in which there is a requirement that at least 75 percent of WIOA youth funds be spent on "out-of-school youth." The State of Minnesota is requesting that Minnesota's current waiver be expanded to allow Workforce Development Areas (WDAs) to expend 60 percent of WIOA youth funds on out-of-school youth and 40 percent on in-school youth who meet either the U.S. Department of Labor's definition of homeless and/or foster youth.

A youth is considered a homeless if the individual:

Lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence; this includes an individual who:

- i. Is sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason;
- ii. Is living in a motel, hotel, trailer park or campground due to a lack of adequate alternative accommodations;
- iii. Is living in an emergency or transitional shelter;
- iv. Is abandoned in a hospital; or
- v. Is awaiting foster care placement.

Has a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not designed for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings, such as a car, park, abandoned building, bus or train station, airport, or camping ground;

Is a migratory child who in the preceding 36 months was required to move from one school district to another due to changes in the parent's or parent's spouse's seasonal employment in agriculture, dairy, or fishing work; or

Is under 18 years of age and absents himself or herself from home or place of legal residence without the permission of his or her family (e.g. runaway youth).

Note: this definition does not include an individual imprisoned or detained under an Act of Congress or State Law. An individual who may be sleeping in a temporary accommodation while away from home should not, as a result of that alone, be recorded as homeless.

A youth is in foster care if the individual:

Is in foster care or has aged out of the foster care system, a child eligible for assistance under section 477 of the Social Security Act (42 USC 677), or in an out of home placement

This waiver request is an expansion of the waiver granted to the State of Minnesota on June 12, 2018, in which the State was allowed to reduce its required out of school expenditure rate from 75 percent to 60 percent so that it could address a gubernatorial priority of serving homeless youth.

II. Goals that Minnesota and its Workforce Development Areas (WDAs) intend to achieve as a result of the waiver:

In the June 12, 2018 submittal, the State of Minnesota cited the fact that the authors of WIOA recognized the special needs of out-of-school youth, especially those disconnected from school and/or work and who need extraordinary attention to get them on the path to economic and social self-sufficiency. DOL approved Minnesota's Homeless In-School Waiver request recognizing the special needs of homeless youth. Youth transitioning out of foster care have similar needs and, unfortunately, many become homeless youth statistics.

Shalita O’Neale (Foster Focus magazine (Volume 5, Issue 3) indicated the following regarding foster youth in school:

“They (foster youth) move from home to home, foster family to foster family, and often from school system to school system, an average of twice a year. Often they are labeled with a behavioral disorder and prescribed medication upon the slightest of evidence that they may not be easily controlled due to their emotional reactions to being removed from their family. They are almost never allowed to feel and express the pain, frustration, and anger associated with being taken from the only ‘normality’ they have ever known. Often, child welfare professionals wait to start asking youth about ‘life skills’ until they’ve become teenagers with less than a few years to “age-out” when many have been in foster care multiple times since very young ages.”

Voices for Children, a California advocacy group, provides national data:

- 75 percent of children in foster care are working below grade level in school
- 50 percent of children in foster care will never graduate from high school or obtain a GED
- Only 15 percent of children in foster care will attend college, and fewer than 3 percent will earn a college degree
- Over 33 percent of all foster teen males will be incarcerated before age 21
- 25 percent of foster children experience PTSD and tend to suffer high rates of debilitating depression and low self-esteem
- After “aging out,” over 25 percent of foster teens will become homeless

DHS indicated in 2017, that over 16,500 Minnesota youth were in foster care (Minnesota Department of Human Services: “Minnesota’s Out-of-Home Care and Permanency Report, 2017.” November 2018) Specifically,

Youth between 12-14 Years of Age	Youth between 15-17 Years of Age	Youth at or above 18 Years of Age	Total Youth in Foster Care
2,291	2,865	529	16,593

DHS indicated that Native American children were 18.5 times more likely, African-American children 3.0 times, and those of two or more races were 4.8 times more likely than white children to experience foster care.

Many foster youths aging out of the system lack a source of income, access to housing, or healthy and reliable social supports. In examining the relationship between out of home placement and homelessness, the St. Paul based Wilder Foundation (Wilder Research: “Homelessness in Minnesota: Youth on their Own, Findings from the 2015 Minnesota Homeless Study,” April 2017) stated that 68 percent of homeless youth experience an “out of home placement,” either a social service or corrections placement. These movements were foster homes (most common), correctional facilities, and mental health institutions. Of those in a social service placement, 28 percent of the youth said they had run away from foster care, a

group home, or other out of home placement, and 10 percent had to leave placement because they became too old to stay.

The goal of expanding the waiver request to include foster youth is to improve high school graduation rates and the entrance into post-secondary education for this at-risk population. WIOA Youth Service providers in each Minnesota County will identify foster youth in their jurisdictions and offer services to address unmet needs and prevent homelessness.

The United States Department of Education (June 27, 2016) indicated that a “positive PK-12 education experience has the potential to be a powerful counterweight to the abuse, neglect, separation, impermanence and other barriers faced by youth in foster care. Attaining a postsecondary credential can enhance their well-being, help make successful transitions to adulthood, and increase the opportunity for personal fulfillment and economic self-sufficiency.

WIOA youth service providers in Minnesota will continue to coordinate with the various schools’ McKinney-Vento Program for the Homeless coordinators (see <http://education.state.mn.us/MDE/fam/home/> for information about the McKinney-Vento Program).

The approval of the expanded waiver allow Minnesota youth service providers to develop services to address specific needs of foster youth at a time when they are at the greatest risk of becoming homeless.

### III. Relationship of Goals to the Minnesota State Plan:

To repeat the justification cited in June 12, 2018 submittal, one of the major purposes of the State Plan is to describe how resources will be used to assist individuals who need assistance to become economic and socially self-sufficient. The populations cited in Minnesota’s plan are those for whom WIOA youth programs are essential. Minnesota’s plan points out that the State needs to diversify its labor force in order to grow economically:

In sum, the data show that current population and aging trends will lead to a tight labor market over the next two decades – with some local areas already experiencing labor force declines. The challenges our state will face over the next 15 years are so great that we’ll need to tackle them with a multi-pronged approach to attract and retain workers of all demographic characteristics. Retaining older workers beyond traditional retirement age, attracting and retaining young talent, removing barriers faced by workers of all abilities, welcoming immigrants from other countries, and educating and training the workers we do have are all necessary to overcome these challenges.

Because minority populations in Minnesota will continue to grow faster than the white population, particularly in the younger working age populations, the labor force will continue to diversify rapidly. Recognizing that the rapidly increasing share of existing workers are people of color, it becomes obvious that we must address this problem of persistent racial disparities directly.

If these disparities continue unabated, disadvantaged groups won’t be the only ones who suffer. Businesses and the economic well-being of every resident of our state also will be affected. So, working on solutions to close these racial gaps between our state’s white population and its

populations of color is not only the right thing to do, it's the necessary thing to do if we're to provide our economy and its employers with the workforce necessary for success.

This waiver allows Minnesota to target WIOA Youth resources to a population that is at-risk of homelessness, a group that is experiencing an opportunity gap.

IV. Actions that the State has undertaken to remove State or local statutory or regulatory barriers:

No State or local statutory or regulatory barriers exist that would prevent the implementation of this waiver.

V. Detailed Goals of the Waiver and the Expected Programmatic Outcomes if the Request is Granted:

Anticipated outcomes for youth targeted by this waiver (homeless in-school youth and youth in foster care):

- Increased school attendance rates
- Increased number of youths earning academic credit for work-based learning
- Increased high school graduation rates
- Increased number of youths entering post-secondary training
- Increased number of youths attaining credentials
- Increased number of youth who participate in work experience or internships in an in-demand/high growth regional occupation

Minnesota made a commitment to eliminate youth homelessness by the year 2020. Minnesota's commitment to serving foster youth is supported by the following data.

Program Year 2017: Serving Foster Youth

Minnesota: 6.5% of in-school youth participants; 4.4% of out of school youth participants

United States: 3.9% of youth participants

WIOA youth service providers maintain regular contact with youth shelters, youth opportunity centers, county social service agencies to recruit foster youth into WIOA. Minnesota's employment and training service to its foster youth population is further illustrated by the link below:

<https://mn.gov/deed/programs-services/office-youth-development/special/shared-vision/>

In Program Year 2017, Minnesota’s WIOA Youth Program served 112 foster youth. However, only 40 of these individuals were classified as in-school. The new 60 percent out-of-school expenditure rate would permit Minnesota’s youth service providers to increase services to foster youth who are in-school but most at risk of homelessness. This effort will reduce the current dropout rate and homelessness rate among the foster youth population.

The expanded waiver will further Minnesota’s needed efforts, as identified in the State Plan, to diversify its workforce given that the “in-school” foster youth population is becoming much more diverse.

Specific Goals for the Waiver:

Measure	PY 2020	PY 2021
Total Number of Foster Youth to be Served	135 (45 ISY)	140 (48 ISY)
Increased School Attendance Rate for Foster Youth	+10 Percent	+11 Percent
Increased Number of Foster Youth Earning Academic Credit for Work-Based Learning	+25 Foster Youth	+30 Foster Youth
Increased High School Graduation Rate for Foster Youth	+10 Percent	+11 Percent
Increased Number of Foster Youth Entering Post-Secondary Training	+15 Foster Youth	+20 Foster Youth
Increased Number of Foster Youth Attaining Industry Recognized Credentials	+20 Foster Youth	+22 Foster Youth
Increased Number of Foster Youth Who Participate in Work Experience or Internship in an In-Demand/High Growth Regional Occupation	+20 Foster Youth	+22 Foster Youth

Specific Services to be Given to Foster Students

WIOA youth service provide a comprehensive sets of youth employment and training and community-based services through the Integrated Resource Team (IRT) methodology. The IRTs bring together school and social service resources enhancing the ability of in-school youth to be successful in school and on the job. The IRT approach permits Minnesota to build the capacity of youth service providers to introduce targeted youth to career pathways and high growth/in demand jobs in regional economies. The waiver will enhance coordination with the foster care coordinators in each county and result in shared outcomes for partners serving youth who are most in need of services and at risk of homelessness.

VI. Alignment with Department of Labor policy priorities

This waiver is in alignment with Department of Labor priorities as follows:

#### Connecting Education and Training Strategies

The intent of the waiver is to provide coordinated services to foster youth who are in-school and at risk of homelessness. Education and training services will be provided based on individual need. Integrated Resource Teams (IRTs) and the Guideposts for Success are integral parts of this effort.

#### Supporting Work-Based Learning

The expanded waiver will increase the number of youth aging out of foster care who participate in work-based learning. Targeted youth have the opportunity to work in high growth/in-demand jobs in regional economies.

#### Improving Job and Career Results

WIOA youth services to targeted youth will result in an increase in the number of youth who earn academic credit for work-based learning and the number of youth who attain industry-recognized credentials and enter post-secondary education.

#### VII. Individuals Affected by the Waiver

Foster youth who are in-school but at risk of homelessness will be positively impacted by the expanded waiver. Youth from communities of color who are under-represented in the workforce are priorities in Minnesota's State Plan and they will be impacted by this waiver.

#### VIII. Monitoring/Local Comment

##### Monitoring

DEED's youth program staff will monitor the implementation of the waiver at the WDA level. As required, DEED will report to DOL progress in achieving the waiver as well as any changes needed. Additionally, DEED will report information on the waiver and its outcome in Minnesota's WIOA Annual Report.

##### Local Comment

DEED will ensure through direct communications and through its website that local comment (local Workforce Development Boards, Youth Committees, local business and organized labor) is obtained on this waiver. Additionally, DEED staff will meet with local WDA/LWDB staff to obtain comments. DEED will inform the Department of Labor of any comments received

Submitted: August 15, 2019

TITLE I-B ASSURANCES

The State Plan must include assurances that:

The State Plan must include	Include
1. The State has implemented a policy to ensure Adult program funds provide a priority in the delivery of training services and individualized career services to individuals who are low income, public assistance recipients and basic skills deficient;	Yes
2. The State has implemented a policy to ensure local areas have a process in place for referring veterans with significant barriers to employment to career services provided by the JVSG program's Disabled Veterans' Outreach Program (DVOP) specialist;	Yes
3. The State established a written policy and procedure that set forth criteria to be used by chief elected officials for the appointment of local workforce investment board members;	Yes
4. The State established written policy and procedures to ensure local workforce investment boards are certified by the governor every two years in accordance with WIOA section 107(c)(2);	Yes
5. Where an alternative entity takes the place of a State Board, the State has written policy and procedures to ensure the alternative entity meets the definition under WIOA section 101(e) and the legal requirements for membership;	Yes
6. The State established a written policy and procedure for how the individuals and entities represented on the State Workforce Development Board help to determine the methods and factors of distribution, and how the State consults with chief elected officials in local areas throughout the State in determining the distributions;	Yes
7. The State will not use funds received under WIOA Title I to assist, promote, or deter union organizing in accordance with WIOA section 181(b)(7);	Yes
8. The State distributes adult and youth funds received under WIOA equitably throughout the State, and no local area suffers significant shifts in funding from year-to-year during the period covered by this plan;	Yes
9. If a State Workforce Development Board, department, or agency administers State laws for vocational rehabilitation of persons 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;	Yes
10. The State agrees to report on the impact and outcomes of its approved waivers in its WIOA Annual Report.	Yes
11. The State has taken appropriate action to secure compliance with the Uniform Guidance at 2 CFR 200 and 2 CFR 2900, including that the State will annually monitor local areas to ensure compliance and otherwise take appropriate action to secure compliance with the Uniform Guidance under section WIOA 184(a)(3);	Yes

ADULT PROGRAM PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

**Performance Goals for the Core Programs**

Each state submitting a Unified or Combined State Plan is required to identify expected levels of performance for each of the primary indicators of performance for the first two years covered by the plan. The state is required to reach agreement with the Secretary of Labor, in conjunction

with the Secretary of Education, on state-negotiated levels of performance for the indicators for each of the first two years of the plan.

For Program Year (PY) 2016-2019 plans, the Departments used the transition authority under section 503(a) of WIOA to designate certain primary indicators of performance as “baseline” indicators to ensure an orderly transition from the requirements of the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 to those under WIOA. A “baseline” indicator was one for which states did not propose an expected level of performance and did not come to agreement with the Departments on negotiated levels of performance because sufficient data was not available to establish such performance levels. As a result, “baseline” indicators were not used in the end of the year adjustment of performance levels and were not used to determine failure to meet adjusted levels of performance for purposes of sanctions. The Departments designated indicators as “baseline” based on the likelihood of a State having insufficient data with which to make a reasonable determination of an expected level of performance.

For PYs 2020-2023 Plans, Title I programs (Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth) and the Title II program (Adult Education and Family Literacy Act) will have two full years of data available to make reasonable determinations of expected levels of performance for the following indicators for PY 2020 and PY 2021:

- Employment (Second Quarter after Exit);
- Employment (Fourth Quarter after Exit);
- Median Earnings (Second Quarter after Exit);
- Credential Attainment Rate; and
- Measurable Skill Gains

The Wagner-Peyser Act Employment Service program, authorized under the Wagner-Peyser Act, as amended by title III of WIOA, will have two full years of data available to make a reasonable determination of expected levels of performance for the following indicators for PY 2020 and PY 2021:

- Employment (Second Quarter after Exit);
- Employment (Fourth Quarter after Exit); and
- Median Earnings (Second Quarter after Exit)

The Credential Attainment Rate and Measurable Skill Gains indicators do not apply to the Wagner-Peyser Act Employment Service program; therefore, this program will not submit expected levels of performance for these indicators.

For the first two years of PYs 2020-2023 Plans, the Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) program, authorized under title I of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended by title IV of WIOA, will have two full years of data available for the Measurable Skill Gains indicator only. Therefore, the Departments will designate the following indicators as “baseline” for the VR program for PY 2020 and PY 2021:

- Employment (Second Quarter after Exit);
- Employment (Fourth Quarter after Exit);
- Median Earnings (Second Quarter after Exit); and

- Credential Attainment Rate

VR agencies must continue to collect and report on all indicators, including those that have been designated as “baseline, pursuant to section 116(d) of WIOA.” The actual performance data reported by these programs for indicators designated as “baseline” for PY 2020 and PY 2021 will serve as baseline data in future years. The Departments will require VR agencies to submit expected levels of performance for these indicators for PY 2022 and PY 2023.

The Departments determined that the Effectiveness in Serving Employers indicator will be measured as a shared outcome across all six core programs within each state to ensure a holistic approach to serving employers. The Departments will continue piloting approaches for measuring this indicator for the first two years of PY 2020-2023 plans. Therefore, states are not required to submit an expected level of performance for the Effectiveness in Serving Employers indicator for PY 2020 and PY 2021. However, core programs are expected to collect data and report on this indicator for PY 2020 and PY 2021 as they did for PYs 2016-2019 plans.

Each core program must submit an expected level of performance for all of the other indicators, as applicable, with the exception of the four indicators designated as “baseline” for the VR program in PY 2020 and PY 2021. The Departments will work with states during the negotiation process to establish negotiated levels of performance for each of the primary indicators for the core programs not listed as “baseline.” Each state must update its plan to include the agreed-upon negotiated levels of performance before the Departments approve a state’s plan.

States may identify additional indicators in the plan, including additional approaches to measuring Effectiveness in Serving Employers, and may establish levels of performance for each of the state indicators. Please identify any such state indicators under Additional Indicators of Performance.

Performance Indicators	PY 2020 Expected Level	PY 2020 Negotiated Level	PY 2021 Expected Level	PY 2021 Negotiated Level
Employment (Second Quarter After Exit)	79.4%	79.4%	79.4%	79.4%
Employment (Fourth Quarter After Exit)	72.5%	75.5%	72.5%	75.5%
Median Earnings (Second Quarter After Exit)	\$6,350	7,200	\$6,350	7,300
Credential Attainment Rate	73.0%	73.0%	73.0%	74.0%
Measurable Skill Gains	57.2%	57.2%	57.2%	57.2%
Effectiveness in Serving Employers	Not Applicable <sup>1</sup>	Not Applicable <sup>1</sup>	Not Applicable <sup>1</sup>	Not Applicable <sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>

*“Effectiveness in Serving Employers” is still being piloted and this data will not be entered for 2020 State Plans.*

#### DISLOCATED PROGRAM PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

#### Performance Goals for the Core Programs

Each state submitting a Unified or Combined State Plan is required to identify expected levels of performance for each of the primary indicators of performance for the first two years covered by the plan. The state is required to reach agreement with the Secretary of Labor, in conjunction with the Secretary of Education, on state-negotiated levels of performance for the indicators for each of the first two years of the plan.

For Program Year (PY) 2016-2019 plans, the Departments used the transition authority under section 503(a) of WIOA to designate certain primary indicators of performance as “baseline” indicators to ensure an orderly transition from the requirements of the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 to those under WIOA. A “baseline” indicator was one for which states did not propose an expected level of performance and did not come to agreement with the Departments on negotiated levels of performance because sufficient data was not available to establish such performance levels. As a result, “baseline” indicators were not used in the end of the year adjustment of performance levels and were not used to determine failure to meet adjusted levels of performance for purposes of sanctions. The Departments designated indicators as “baseline” based on the likelihood of a State having insufficient data with which to make a reasonable determination of an expected level of performance.

For PYs 2020-2023 Plans, Title I programs (Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth) and the Title II program (Adult Education and Family Literacy Act) will have two full years of data available to make reasonable determinations of expected levels of performance for the following indicators for PY 2020 and PY 2021:

- Employment (Second Quarter after Exit);
- Employment (Fourth Quarter after Exit);
- Median Earnings (Second Quarter after Exit);
- Credential Attainment Rate; and
- Measurable Skill Gains

The Wagner-Peyser Act Employment Service program, authorized under the Wagner-Peyser Act, as amended by title III of WIOA, will have two full years of data available to make a reasonable determination of expected levels of performance for the following indicators for PY 2020 and PY 2021:

- Employment (Second Quarter after Exit);
- Employment (Fourth Quarter after Exit); and
- Median Earnings (Second Quarter after Exit)

The Credential Attainment Rate and Measurable Skill Gains indicators do not apply to the Wagner-Peyser Act Employment Service program; therefore, this program will not submit expected levels of performance for these indicators.

For the first two years of PYs 2020-2023 Plans, the Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) program, authorized under title I of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended by title IV of WIOA, will have two full years of data available for the Measurable Skill Gains indicator only. Therefore, the Departments will designate the following indicators as “baseline” for the VR program for PY 2020 and PY 2021:

- Employment (Second Quarter after Exit);

- Employment (Fourth Quarter after Exit);
- Median Earnings (Second Quarter after Exit); and
- Credential Attainment Rate

VR agencies must continue to collect and report on all indicators, including those that have been designated as “baseline, pursuant to section 116(d) of WIOA.” The actual performance data reported by these programs for indicators designated as “baseline” for PY 2020 and PY 2021 will serve as baseline data in future years. The Departments will require VR agencies to submit expected levels of performance for these indicators for PY 2022 and PY 2023.

The Departments determined that the Effectiveness in Serving Employers indicator will be measured as a shared outcome across all six core programs within each state to ensure a holistic approach to serving employers. The Departments will continue piloting approaches for measuring this indicator for the first two years of PY 2020-2023 plans. Therefore, states are not required to submit an expected level of performance for the Effectiveness in Serving Employers indicator for PY 2020 and PY 2021. However, core programs are expected to collect data and report on this indicator for PY 2020 and PY 2021 as they did for PYs 2016-2019 plans.

Each core program must submit an expected level of performance for all of the other indicators, as applicable, with the exception of the four indicators designated as “baseline” for the VR program in PY 2020 and PY 2021. The Departments will work with states during the negotiation process to establish negotiated levels of performance for each of the primary indicators for the core programs not listed as “baseline.” Each state must update its plan to include the agreed-upon negotiated levels of performance before the Departments approve a state’s plan.

States may identify additional indicators in the plan, including additional approaches to measuring Effectiveness in Serving Employers, and may establish levels of performance for each of the state indicators. Please identify any such state indicators under Additional Indicators of Performance.

Performance Indicators	PY 2020 Expected Level	PY 2020 Negotiated Level	PY 2021 Expected Level	PY 2021 Negotiated Level
Employment (Second Quarter After Exit)	82.9%	83.7	82.9%	83.9
Employment (Fourth Quarter After Exit)	74.4%	79.0	74.4%	79.5
Median Earnings (Second Quarter After Exit)	\$8,960	10,500	\$8,960	11,000
Credential Attainment Rate	61.3%	72.0	61.3%	72.5
Measurable Skill Gains	53.5%	53.5	53.5%	53.5
Effectiveness in Serving Employers	Not Applicable <sup>1</sup>	Not Applicable <sup>1</sup>	Not Applicable <sup>1</sup>	Not Applicable <sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>

*“Effectiveness in Serving Employers” is still being piloted and this data will not be entered for 2020 State Plans.*

## YOUTH PROGRAM PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

### Performance Goals for the Core Programs

Each state submitting a Unified or Combined State Plan is required to identify expected levels of performance for each of the primary indicators of performance for the first two years covered by the plan. The state is required to reach agreement with the Secretary of Labor, in conjunction with the Secretary of Education, on state-negotiated levels of performance for the indicators for each of the first two years of the plan.

For Program Year (PY) 2016-2019 plans, the Departments used the transition authority under section 503(a) of WIOA to designate certain primary indicators of performance as “baseline” indicators to ensure an orderly transition from the requirements of the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 to those under WIOA. A “baseline” indicator was one for which states did not propose an expected level of performance and did not come to agreement with the Departments on negotiated levels of performance because sufficient data was not available to establish such performance levels. As a result, “baseline” indicators were not used in the end of the year adjustment of performance levels and were not used to determine failure to meet adjusted levels of performance for purposes of sanctions. The Departments designated indicators as “baseline” based on the likelihood of a State having insufficient data with which to make a reasonable determination of an expected level of performance.

For PYs 2020-2023 Plans, Title I programs (Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth) and the Title II program (Adult Education and Family Literacy Act) will have two full years of data available to make reasonable determinations of expected levels of performance for the following indicators for PY 2020 and PY 2021:

- Employment (Second Quarter after Exit);
- Employment (Fourth Quarter after Exit);
- Median Earnings (Second Quarter after Exit);
- Credential Attainment Rate; and
- Measurable Skill Gains

The Wagner-Peyser Act Employment Service program, authorized under the Wagner-Peyser Act, as amended by title III of WIOA, will have two full years of data available to make a reasonable determination of expected levels of performance for the following indicators for PY 2020 and PY 2021:

- Employment (Second Quarter after Exit);
- Employment (Fourth Quarter after Exit); and
- Median Earnings (Second Quarter after Exit)

The Credential Attainment Rate and Measurable Skill Gains indicators do not apply to the Wagner-Peyser Act Employment Service program; therefore, this program will not submit expected levels of performance for these indicators.

For the first two years of PYs 2020-2023 Plans, the Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) program, authorized under title I of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended by title IV of WIOA, will have two full years of data available for the Measurable Skill Gains indicator only. Therefore, the

Departments will designate the following indicators as “baseline” for the VR program for PY 2020 and PY 2021:

- Employment (Second Quarter after Exit);
- Employment (Fourth Quarter after Exit);
- Median Earnings (Second Quarter after Exit); and
- Credential Attainment Rate

VR agencies must continue to collect and report on all indicators, including those that have been designated as “baseline, pursuant to section 116(d) of WIOA.” The actual performance data reported by these programs for indicators designated as “baseline” for PY 2020 and PY 2021 will serve as baseline data in future years. The Departments will require VR agencies to submit expected levels of performance for these indicators for PY 2022 and PY 2023.

The Departments determined that the Effectiveness in Serving Employers indicator will be measured as a shared outcome across all six core programs within each state to ensure a holistic approach to serving employers. The Departments will continue piloting approaches for measuring this indicator for the first two years of PY 2020-2023 plans. Therefore, states are not required to submit an expected level of performance for the Effectiveness in Serving Employers indicator for PY 2020 and PY 2021. However, core programs are expected to collect data and report on this indicator for PY 2020 and PY 2021 as they did for PYs 2016-2019 plans.

Each core program must submit an expected level of performance for all of the other indicators, as applicable, with the exception of the four indicators designated as “baseline” for the VR program in PY 2020 and PY 2021. The Departments will work with states during the negotiation process to establish negotiated levels of performance for each of the primary indicators for the core programs not listed as “baseline.” Each state must update its plan to include the agreed-upon negotiated levels of performance before the Departments approve a state’s plan.

States may identify additional indicators in the plan, including additional approaches to measuring Effectiveness in Serving Employers, and may establish levels of performance for each of the state indicators. Please identify any such state indicators under Additional Indicators of Performance.

Performance Indicators	PY 2020 Expected Level	PY 2020 Negotiated Level	PY 2021 Expected Level	PY 2021 Negotiated Level
Employment (Second Quarter After Exit)	72.0%	75.0	72.0%	76.0
Employment (Fourth Quarter After Exit)	68.0%	73.0	68.0%	74.0
Median Earnings (Second Quarter After Exit)	\$3,700	\$3,700	\$3,700	\$3,700
Credential Attainment Rate	57.0%	62.0	57.0%	62.5
Measurable Skill Gains	49.0%	49.0	49.0%	49.0

Performance Indicators	PY 2020 Expected Level	PY 2020 Negotiated Level	PY 2021 Expected Level	PY 2021 Negotiated Level
Effectiveness in Serving Employers	Not Applicable <sup>1</sup>	Not Applicable <sup>1</sup>	Not Applicable <sup>1</sup>	Not Applicable <sup>1</sup>

1

*“Effectiveness in Serving Employers” is still being piloted and this data will not be entered for 2020 State Plans.*

## PROGRAM-SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS FOR WAGNER-PEYSER PROGRAM (EMPLOYMENT SERVICES)

All Program-Specific Requirements provided for the WIOA core programs in this section must be addressed for either a Unified or Combined State Plan.

### A. EMPLOYMENT SERVICE STAFF

1. DESCRIBE HOW THE STATE WILL STAFF THE PROVISION OF LABOR EXCHANGE SERVICES UNDER THE WAGNER-PEYSER ACT, SUCH AS THROUGH STATE EMPLOYEES, INCLUDING BUT NOT LIMITED TO STATE MERIT STAFF EMPLOYEES, STAFF OF A SUBRECIPIENT, OR SOME COMBINATION THEREOF.

### **WAGNER-PEYSER ACT PROGRAM (Employment Services)**

#### **A. EMPLOYMENT SERVICE (ES) STAFF**

**1. DESCRIBE HOW THE STATE WILL STAFF THE PROVISION OF LABOR EXCHANGE SERVICES UNDER THE WAGNER PEYSER ACT, SUCH AS THROUGH STATE EMPLOYEES, INCLUDING BUT NOT LIMITED TO STATE MERIT STAFF EMPLOYEES, STAFF OF A SUBRECIPIENT, OR SOME COMBINATION THEREOF. (NOTE - STATES NOT SEEKING TO UTILIZE THE STAFFING FLEXIBILITY IN THE FINAL RULE AS PART OF THE 2020 STATE PLAN SUBMISSION CAN ANSWER THIS QUESTION BY ENTERING THAT THE STATE WILL CONTINUE TO UTILIZE STATE MERIT STAFF EMPLOYEES).**

The State of Minnesota will continue to utilize state merit staff employees to provide labor exchange services under the Wagner Peyser Act. The Job Service unit shall oversee these employees and ensure all services are provided as outlined under WIOA.

2. DESCRIBE HOW THE STATE WILL UTILIZE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES FOR EMPLOYMENT SERVICE STAFF TO ENSURE STAFF IS ABLE TO PROVIDE HIGH QUALITY SERVICES TO BOTH JOBSEEKERS AND EMPLOYERS

**2. DESCRIBE HOW THE STATE WILL UTILIZE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES FOR EMPLOYMENT SERVICE STAFF TO ENSURE STAFF IS ABLE TO PROVIDE HIGH QUALITY SERVICES TO BOTH JOB SEEKERS AND EMPLOYERS.**

The state will use several professional development activities for Job Service staff:

- State-wide staff training on the provisions of Career Services to job seekers started in December of 2017 and will continue throughout 2020 and 2021 with monthly webinars.
- All staff who serve job seekers in are required to complete the Reception and Resource Area Certification Program.

- Classroom presentation skills training based on the state's Creative Job Search workshop will continue to be offered to all employees who facilitate workshops.
- Training specific to each employee is documented in the employee's Individual Development Plan and supervisory file.
- Ongoing training in the areas of dealing with diverse populations, accessibility, safety, and financial literacy will continue to be offered to all employees.
- Training will continue to be provided in specific program areas such as Migrant Seasonal Farmworkers and Trade Adjustment Assistance.
- The goal of these training activities is to ensure that staff and managers are able to effectively assist job seekers with improving their job search skills, obtaining the best job possible, and progressing in a career pathway. These training activities will also provide employers with access to qualified candidates and strengthen their business. The delivery methods of these trainings will include on—the—job training, conference calls, and web based technology such as Skype and WebEx.

In order to improve demand-driven workforce services to our businesses on both a state and regional level, seven Regional Workforce Strategy Consultants coordinate activities to serve employers in the state by coordinating, leading, and delivering demand-driven regional and statewide business services relating to attracting, retaining, and developing talent for the regional economy.

This work includes developing workforce planning strategies with businesses, emphasizing talent pipeline development for key regional industries through collaboration and employer-led sector partnerships. The strategy consultants specifically focus on working with business leaders in targeted industry, high growth sectors to help determine their workforce planning needs including talent attraction, and retention, hiring, succession planning, equity, workforce development and job growth. In addition to working directly with businesses, they also initiate and build partnerships with community organizations, industry associations, education partners, and in addition to helping businesses get connected to available resources they also help serve as a bridge between the work of the workforce development and economic development divisions at DEED. These staff also assist stakeholders in implementation of the regional plan and by designing tools and resources to support businesses developing strategic workforce solutions.

**3. DESCRIBE STRATEGIES DEVELOPED TO SUPPORT TRAINING AND AWARENESS ACROSS CORE PROGRAMS AND THE UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE (UI) PROGRAM AND THE TRAINING PROVIDED FOR EMPLOYMENT SERVICES AND WIOA STAFF ON IDENTIFICATION OF UI ELIGIBILITY ISSUES AND REFERRAL TO UI STAFF FOR ADJUDICATION**

**3. DESCRIBE STRATEGIES DEVELOPED TO SUPPORT TRAINING AND AWARENESS ACROSS CORE PROGRAMS AND THE UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE (UI) PROGRAM, AND THE TRAINING PROVIDED FOR EMPLOYMENT SERVICES AND WIOA STAFF ON IDENTIFICATION OF UI ELIGIBILITY ISSUES AND REFERRAL TO UI STAFF FOR ADJUDICATION.**

The state's Reception and Resource Area Certification Program is available for all state and local partners in the CareerForce locations and includes basic training on core programs as well as the Unemployment Insurance program. Modules that are included in this training program areas:

- - Unemployment Insurance basics, how to file a claim and claim benefits
  - Assessing and referring the UI customer
  - WIOA and State programs and services offered through the CareerForce system
  - Career Planning Process
  - Job Searching Process
  - Adaptive Technology
  - MinnesotaWorks.net (i.e. the state's online labor exchange system)
  - Equal Opportunity
  - WIOA complaint process
  - Data Privacy
  - Customer Service
  - Population Awareness
  - Business Services
  - "Language Line" translation services

**B. EXPLAIN HOW THE STATE WILL PROVIDE INFORMATION AND MEANINGFUL ASSISTANCE TO INDIVIDUALS REQUESTING ASSISTANCE IN FILING A CLAIM FOR UNEMPLOYMENT COMPENSATION THROUGH ONE-STOP CENTERS, AS REQUIRED BY WIOA AS A CAREER SERVICE**

**B. EXPLAIN HOW THE STATE WILL PROVIDE INFORMATION AND MEANINGFUL ASSISTANCE TO INDIVIDUALS REQUESTING ASSISTANCE IN FILING A CLAIM FOR UNEMPLOYMENT COMPENSATION THROUGH ONE-STOP CENTERS, AS REQUIRED BY WIOA AS A CAREER SERVICE.**

Most aspects of Minnesota's Unemployment Insurance program are operated centrally by DEED through an online portal and a call center. Although only about two percent of all UI customers access services through the one—stops, customers who request assistance in a CareerForce location are offered one or more of the following:

- - Free computers to access the online UI portal to file a claim, file an appeal, and/or claim benefits. The UI portal is bookmarked on every CareerForce career lab computer.
  - Phones for calling the UI call center.
  - Printed materials containing detailed information about UI benefit eligibility and the process for filing claims, appeals, and collecting benefits.
  - Staff assistance on the computers when needed.

As mentioned in the "training" Sections of this plan, the state's Reception and Resource Area Certification Program contains modules on UI including:

- - Introduction to UI
  - Assessing and Referring UI Customers
  - UI Basic Information and Researching UI
  - Data Security and Passwords
  - UI Website and Online Application Process

Overview Handouts for staff that are part of this training include:

- - Answering UI Questions: Phone Tree English
  - Answering UI Questions: Phone Tree Hmong
  - Answering UI Questions: Phone Tree Somali
  - Answering UI Questions: Phone Tree Spanish
  - How to Apply for UI Benefits
  - Language Line Quick Reference Guide

**C. DESCRIBE THE STATE'S STRATEGY FOR PROVIDING REEMPLOYMENT ASSISTANCE TO UI CLAIMANTS AND OTHER UNEMPLOYED INDIVIDUALS**

**C. DESCRIBE THE STATE'S STRATEGY FOR PROVIDING REEMPLOYMENT ASSISTANCE TO UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE CLAIMANTS AND OTHER UNEMPLOYED INDIVIDUALS.**

Minnesota's strategy is centered on the Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment (RESEA) program. It's important to note that due to the state's low unemployment rate, ALL UI claimants who are seeking work (i.e. not attached to a job) are called in to RESEA sessions at CareerForce locations. This helps ensure that the Wagner-Peyser program will have direct contact with all UI applicants in the state who are not attached to a job.

Minnesota's strategy in this area will be as follows:

- - A Job Service staff person will attend every RESEA session that UI offers across the state. The UI program plans on offering RESEA sessions to all UI claimants who are not attached to a job.
  - The RESEA and Job Service staff will conduct a quick assessment of every UI claimant to determine who will most likely need additional services from the CareerForce location.
  - The Job Service staff person will conduct an orientation to CareerForce services either 1:1 or in a group setting (depending on the size of the group) that includes

information on how to register for the state's labor exchange system, i.e. MinnesotaWorks, and information about programs such as the Dislocated Worker program that they may be eligible for.

- The Job Service staff person will assist the RESEA customer with creating an initial registration and enrolling in the Creative Job Search workshop. Creative Job Search is typically the first job finding/job placement service that is offered to UI applicants. The workshop consists 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.
- Job Service will follow up with UI applicants who are not enrolled in a program to ensure that they have a complete registration and resume in MinnesotaWorks, and that they are taking advantage of job placement services.

Wagner-Peyser services will also be available to all other unemployed individuals. Anyone can enroll in the job search classes offered to UI claimants, can access 1:1 staff assistance to obtain job search assistance, career guidance, labor market information, etc., and can use MinnesotaWorks.net to search for jobs. One of the strategies employed by Wagner-Peyser that is marketed and offered to all citizens are onsite hiring events and career fairs. These events have grown in popularity and will continue to be used as a vehicle to connect all job seekers with employers.

**D. DESCRIBE HOW THE STATE WILL USE W-P FUNDS TO SUPPORT UI CLAIMANTS, AND THE COMMUNICATION BETWEEN W-P AND UI, AS APPROPRIATE INCLUDING THE FOLLOWING:**

1. COORDINATION OF AND PROVISION OF LABOR EXCHANGE SERVICES FOR UI CLAIMANTS AS REQUIRED BY THE WAGNER-PEYSER ACT;

**D. DESCRIBE HOW THE STATE WILL USE W-P FUNDS TO SUPPORT UI CLAIMANTS, AND THE COMMUNICATION BETWEEN W-P AND UI, AS APPROPRIATE, INCLUDING THE FOLLOWING:**

**1. COORDINATION OF AND PROVISION OF LABOR EXCHANGE SERVICES FOR UI CLAIMANTS AS REQUIRED BY THE WAGNER-PEYSER ACT;**

The UI program strongly encourages all UI applicant participants to register with the state's labor exchange system, MinnesotaWorks.net, and create a resume. Once registered, job seekers have access to all of the online features such as searching for jobs and making their resume viewable by employers registered in the system. As described in the previous Section, RESEA participants, who represent ALL UI applicants who are not attached to a job, also receive information on Wagner-Peyser services, information and referrals to eligibility-based programs (such as WIOA Dislocated Worker), orientations to CF services, and workshop enrollments.

Planning is in process to move the labor exchange system into the newly created CareerForceMN.com website. Integrating these two websites into one system will bring additional value and resources to UI claimants.

Other unemployed individuals as well as universal customers have access to the same re-employment services. Staff-assisted services such as job search workshops, assistance registering with MinnesotaWorks.net, resume writing assistance, provision of labor market

information, referral to veteran services, and referral to education, training, and supportive services are offered to all job seekers.

2. REGISTRATION OF UI CLAIMANTS WITH THE STATE'S EMPLOYMENT SERVICE IF REQUIRED BY STATE LAW;

**2. REGISTRATION OF UI CLAIMANTS WITH THE STATE'S EMPLOYMENT SERVICE IF REQUIRED BY STATE LAW;**

State law does not require UI claimants to register with MinnesotaWorks.net, however UI requires registration for RESEA program participants. As described earlier, Wagner-Peyser staff attend every RESEA workshop and provide follow up services with the intent of having every participant create a viewable resume in MinnesotaWorks.net.

3. ADMINISTRATION OF THE WORK TEST FOR THE STATE UNEMPLOYMENT COMPENSATION SYSTEM, INCLUDING MAKING ELIGIBILITY ASSESSMENTS (FOR REFERRAL TO UI ADJUDICATION, IF NEEDED), AND PROVIDING JOB FINDING AND PLACEMENT SERVICES FOR UI CLAIMANTS; AND

**3. ADMINISTRATION OF THE WORK TEST FOR THE STATE UNEMPLOYMENT COMPENSATION SYSTEM, INCLUDING MAKING ELIGIBILITY ASSESSMENTS (FOR REFERRAL TO UI ADJUDICATION, IF NEEDED), AND PROVIDING JOB FINDING AND PLACEMENT SERVICES FOR UI CLAIMANTS; AND**

Wagner-Peyser staff in Minnesota are not involved in administration of the work test or making eligibility assessments. The UI program administers the work test and does all eligibility assessments. Please refer to previous Sections for the description on how job finding and placement services are provided to UI applicants. As noted earlier, ALL UI applicants who are not attached to a job are required to attend a RESEA session, which means that all UI applicants are receiving the work test and getting an eligibility assessment.

4. PROVISION OF REFERRALS TO AND APPLICATION ASSISTANCE FOR TRAINING AND EDUCATION PROGRAMS AND RESOURCES.

**4. PROVISION OF REFERRALS TO AND APPLICATION ASSISTANCE FOR TRAINING AND EDUCATION PROGRAMS AND RESOURCES.**

All UI claimants who are not attached to employment are provided information about the availability of training and education programs at the RESEA session. This includes an explanation of how the UI claimant, if eligible, can collect benefits and receive training.

Customers who would like further information about training are assisted either by Job Service staff to gain more information and application assistance, or by program staff if the customer is eligible for a WIOA or state funded program. This same information is provided to all other unemployed individuals and the universal customer by either self-service (information provided at the CareerForce location or online links to training programs) or with staff assistance.

E. AGRICULTURAL OUTREACH PLAN (AOP). EACH STATE AGENCY MUST DEVELOP AN AOP EVERY FOUR YEARS AS PART OF THE UNIFIED OR COMBINED STATE PLAN REQUIRED UNDER SECTIONS 102 OR 103 OF WIOA. THE AOP MUST INCLUDE AN ASSESSMENT OF NEED. AN ASSESSMENT NEED DESCRIBES THE UNIQUE NEEDS OF FARMWORKERS IN THE AREA BASED ON PAST AND PROJECTED AGRICULTURAL AND FARMWORKER ACTIVITY IN THE STATE.

SUCH NEEDS MAY INCLUDE BUT ARE NOT LIMITED TO: EMPLOYMENT, TRAINING, AND HOUSING.

1. ASSESSMENT OF NEED. PROVIDE AN ASSESSMENT OF THE UNIQUE NEEDS OF FARMWORKERS IN THE AREA BASED ON PAST AND PROJECTED AGRICULTURAL AND FARMWORKER ACTIVITY IN THE STATE. SUCH NEEDS MAY INCLUDE BUT ARE NOT LIMITED TO: EMPLOYMENT, TRAINING, AND HOUSING.

**1. PROVIDE AN ASSESSMENT OF THE UNIQUE NEEDS OF FARMWORKERS IN THE AREA BASED ON PAST AND PROJECTED AGRICULTURAL AND FARMWORKER ACTIVITY IN THE STATE. SUCH NEEDS MAY INCLUDE BUT ARE NOT LIMITED TO: EMPLOYMENT, TRAINING, AND HOUSING.**

Migrant labor participation was concentrated between the months of May to October, based on the growing or harvesting of the particular crops and the arrival of farmworkers attempting to secure housing for the season. The use of mechanization and chemicals in the state has reduced the number of farmworkers needed per acre in fieldwork. Many migrant farmworkers have continued to take advantage of other longer-term employment opportunities in vegetable, meat and poultry processing companies. Farmers have also opted to use more of the H-2A foreign workers to ensure that they are able to obtain the needed workers and that the workers will remain throughout the period needed by the employer. As a result, there have been less opportunities for domestic workers to obtain farm work that includes housing that is not H-2A housing. Migrant farmworkers tend to travel with their families, including young children, and lack of housing for their families results in fewer migrant families traveling to Minnesota in search of farm work.

Because some workers return to areas where they have established relationships, they do not seek the services of the CareerForce locations. Therefore, it is difficult to provide an exact number of migrant farmworkers in this state. The 2017 Census of Agriculture released in April 2019 reports that there were 3,044 migrant farmworkers, in Minnesota, reported by farmers using their payroll records. This number is from self-reporting and may not reflect the number of farmworkers that work in food processing, smaller farms and operations, and farmworkers that were not counted due to non-participation of farmers in the 2017 Census of Agriculture. The best estimate of farmworkers for Minnesota is 5000 to 6000 migrant farmworkers residing in Minnesota during the peak season. The total number of registered Migrant and Seasonal Farmworkers in the last full program year, PY18, was 490.

Minnesota is expecting an increase in Hemp farming and an increase for farmworker labor in this newer industry. The Minnesota Department of Agriculture (MDA) has seen this industry more than triple in size since the beginning of their pilot program in 2016. It is expected that the harvesting of hemp for CBD oil will be the crop that generates the need for more farmworkers as this is the more labor intense product for hemp farming.

Currently, the majority of the agricultural employers in Minnesota include: Southern Minnesota Beet Sugar Cooperative (SMBSC), Lakeside Foods, Seneca Foods, and Bird's Eye Foods. Smaller agricultural employers include potato farmers, strawberry farmers, Syngenta (seed company), farmers who hire for rock pickers, smaller vegetable farmers (cucumber, cabbage, zucchini), apple farmers, and nurseries who hire seasonal workers. A concern heard from the majority of these agricultural employers is the difficulty in obtaining farmworkers due to the lack of housing in their rural areas. Small farmers and larger agricultural employers are not generally willing to provide housing for domestic workers. Larger employers that have used H-2A

workers are leading the industry in Minnesota when it comes to providing housing to H-2A workers but only within the H-2A program. A need for farmworker housing for domestic workers is a need that has not been met by our state.

2. AN ASSESSMENT OF THE AGRICULTURAL ACTIVITY IN THE STATE MEANS: 1) IDENTIFYING THE TOP FIVE LABOR-INTENSIVE CROPS, THE MONTHS OF HEAVY ACTIVITY, AND THE GEOGRAPHIC AREA OF PRIME ACTIVITY; 2) SUMMARIZE THE AGRICULTURAL EMPLOYERS' NEEDS IN THE STATE (I.E. ARE THEY PREDOMINANTLY HIRING LOCAL OR FOREIGN WORKERS, ARE THEY EXPRESSING THAT THERE IS A SCARCITY IN THE AGRICULTURAL WORKFORCE); AND 3) IDENTIFYING ANY ECONOMIC, NATURAL, OR OTHER FACTORS THAT ARE AFFECTING AGRICULTURE IN THE STATE OR ANY PROJECTED FACTORS THAT WILL AFFECT AGRICULTURE IN THE STATE

**2. AN ASSESSMENT OF THE AGRICULTURAL ACTIVITY IN THE STATE: 1) IDENTIFYING THE TOP FIVE LABOR-INTENSIVE CROPS, THE MONTHS OF HEAVY ACTIVITY, AND THE GEOGRAPHIC AREA OF PRIME ACTIVITY; 2) SUMMARIZE THE AGRICULTURAL EMPLOYERS' NEEDS IN THE STATE (I.E. ARE THEY PREDOMINANTLY HIRING LOCAL OR FOREIGN WORKERS, ARE THEY EXPRESSING THAT THERE IS A SCARCITY IN THE AGRICULTURAL WORKFORCE); AND 3) IDENTIFYING ANY ECONOMIC, NATURAL, OR OTHER FACTORS THAT ARE AFFECTING AGRICULTURE IN THE STATE OR ANY PROJECTED FACTORS THAT WILL AFFECT AGRICULTURE IN THE STATE.**

Minnesota has 68,822 farms totaling 25,516,982 million acres of the state's 50 million acres. The average farm size is 371 acres. Minnesota's growing season varies depending on where you are in the state: 100 days in the north to 150 days in the south. The Agricultural and Food Industry is the 2nd largest employer in Minnesota with (2/3) two-thirds of all agricultural jobs are off-farm, in processing, distribution, supply and service sectors. This type of employer hires domestic workers who travel, primarily, from the southern portion of the U.S., specifically, Texas, and work seasonally for this industry. There is not a shortage of workers for this industry. Minnesota has seen an increase in the implementation of H-2A workers in the more traditional farm work and nursery type work and dairy industry. Employers implementing the H-2A program, in these industries, report they have some shortage of workers and thus, turn to H-2A for labor. Minnesota is a top producer of frozen and canned vegetables. Corn is the state's most valuable crop followed by soybeans. Minnesota's leading fruit crop are apples. Minnesota leads the nation in producing sugar beets, turkeys, oats, and sweet corn and green peas for processing. The state is second only to California in wild rice production. Minnesota is unique in the production of wild rice with it being cultivated paddy wild rice and traditional Native American hand harvested wild rice. The state is also a major producer of spring wheat, canola, hogs, dry beans and milk cows.

Minnesota is a leading state in annual farm income. It ranks at 5 among the states, generating about 4% of the nation's total agricultural receipts. In terms of revenue generated Minnesota's top five agricultural products are corn for grain, hogs, soybeans, dairy products, and cattle and calves. Livestock and livestock products account for about half of the state's farm income. The most valuable livestock products are hogs, accounting for 18% of the state's total agricultural revenues.

The top crops and months of heavy activity include:

Sugar beets NW/SW MN June- October

Vegetables SE MN April-October

Potatoes Statewide March-October

Corn Central/Southern June-September

Soybeans Central/Southern June-August

Apples SE/Metro July -October

3. AN ASSESSMENT OF THE UNIQUE NEEDS OF FARMWORKERS MEANS SUMMARIZING MIGRANT AND SEASONAL FARM WORKER (MSFW) CHARACTERISTICS (INCLUDING IF THEY ARE PREDOMINANTLY FROM CERTAIN COUNTRIES, WHAT LANGUAGE(S) THEY SPEAK, THE APPROXIMATE NUMBER OF MSFWs IN THE STATE DURING PEAK SEASON AND DURING LOW SEASON, AND WHETHER THEY TEND TO BE MIGRANT, SEASONAL, OR YEAR-ROUND FARMWORKERS). THIS INFORMATION MUST TAKE INTO ACCOUNT DATA SUPPLIED BY WIOA SECTION 167 NATIONAL FARMWORKER JOBS PROGRAM (NFJP) GRANTEES, OTHER MSFW ORGANIZATIONS, EMPLOYER ORGANIZATIONS, AND STATE AND/OR FEDERAL AGENCY DATA SOURCES SUCH AS THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR (DOL) EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING ADMINISTRATION

3. AN ASSESSMENT OF THE UNIQUE NEEDS OF FARMWORKERS MEANS SUMMARIZING MIGRANT AND SEASONAL FARM WORKER (MSFW) CHARACTERISTICS (INCLUDING IF THEY ARE PREDOMINANTLY FROM CERTAIN COUNTRIES, WHAT LANGUAGE(S) THEY SPEAK, THE APPROXIMATE NUMBER OF MSFWs IN THE STATE DURING PEAK SEASON AND DURING LOW SEASON, AND WHETHER THEY TEND TO BE MIGRANT, SEASONAL, OR YEAR-ROUND FARMWORKERS). THIS INFORMATION MUST TAKE INTO ACCOUNT DATA SUPPLIED BY WIOA SECTION 167 NATIONAL FARMWORKER JOBS PROGRAM (NFJP) GRANTEES, OTHER MSFW ORGANIZATIONS, EMPLOYER ORGANIZATIONS, AND STATE AND/OR FEDERAL AGENCY DATA SOURCES SUCH AS THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR (DOL) EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING ADMINISTRATION.

Minnesota had 490 registered MSFWs for PY18 and 98% of those MSFWs identified as a person of Hispanic or Latino ethnicity. The number of registered MSFWs were identified during the high-peak season. Gender breakdown showed 50% reporting male gender and 49.80% reporting female gender. Data records show that 92% of MSFWs identified as migrant farmworkers versus seasonal farmworker. The majority of the MSFWs registered identified a language barrier for a total of 64%. The primary language identified for 78% of the MSFWs was Spanish and 68% of registered MSFWs identified as having dropped out of high school.

Migrant labor participation is concentrated in the months between May-October based on the growing or harvesting of the particular crops. The use of mechanization and Roundup Ready chemicals in the state has greatly reduced the number of farm workers needed in fieldwork. Many farm workers have continued to take advantage of other longer-term employment opportunities in vegetable, meat and poultry processing companies.

Since some workers return seasonally to areas where they have established employer relationships, they do not seek the services of the local one-stop CareerForce location. Therefore, it is difficult to provide an actual number of migrant farm workers in this state. The best estimate of 5,000 to 6,000 migrant and seasonal farm workers residing in Minnesota during the peak season (May-October) with most being recruited and contracted at their permanent home base, for hire by the Food Processing and the Turkey & Poultry company recruiters/contractors. These employers offer on-site housing to the hired workers. The majority of this housing is for single adult workers. The farmworkers working in Minnesota are

primarily employed by food processing companies. Food processing companies recruit the workers in Texas every spring. The migrant food processing workers arrive to the work sites in Montgomery, Glencoe, Blue Earth, Brooten, Owatonna, and Plainview, MN. Minnesota has experienced the recent closing of two food processing plants, Seneca Foods in Rochester, Minnesota, and Del Monte in Sleepy Eye, Minnesota. The number of migrant and seasonal workers affected by these closures is estimated to be almost 600. Some of the workers affected had been working, seasonally, with these employers for 15-20 years. These closures occurred in 2018 for Seneca Foods and in 2019 for Del Monte.

The period of lowest MSFW activity in Minnesota is between the months of January – March. Migrant farmworkers begin to arrive in Minnesota in late April to attempt to secure their housing and this is oftentimes weeks prior to when their seasonal farm work begins.

The migrant farmworker stream in Minnesota continues to evolve with workers only wanting to assist with seasonal crop production and returning home in the off-season. Employment opportunities have shifted from actual field work to more food processing, thus changing the dynamics that makes employment more predictable based on the growth season. Workers are recruited prior to seasons, as producers recruit in Texas. Farmworkers are less interested in staying in Minnesota for training, due to family members elsewhere and climate reasons.

The majority of farmworker housing is dedicated to contracted adult workers or is severely limited in availability for migrant families. The inability to pay for housing in non-farmworker housing results in fewer migrant workers remaining in Minnesota which has caused employers to struggle with their farmworker labor needs.

Seasonal farmworkers are more likely to consider training for other occupations and to take advantage of the services provided at the AJCs due to their established residence in Minnesota. Migrant farmworkers are faced with high cost for housing, language barrier, and limited family roots in Minnesota. This affects the level of interest in committing to training opportunities in Minnesota. Short-term training opportunities provided by Motivation Education & Training (MET), NFJP partner, are more attractive to migrant farmworkers because they are able to take advantage of those opportunities in their state of residence and not necessarily just in Minnesota.

#### 4. OUTREACH ACTIVITIES

The local offices outreach activities must be designed to meet the needs of MSFWs in the State and to locate and contact MSFWs who are not being reached through normal intake activities. Describe the State agency's proposed strategies for:

**4. OUTREACH ACTIVITIES. THE LOCAL OFFICES OUTREACH ACTIVITIES MUST BE DESIGNED TO MEET THE NEEDS OF MSFWs IN THE STATE AND TO LOCATE AND CONTACT MSFWs WHO ARE NOT BEING REACHED THROUGH NORMAL INTAKE ACTIVITIES. DESCRIBE THE STATE AGENCY'S PROPOSED STRATEGIES FOR:**

**A. CONTACTING FARMWORKERS WHO ARE NOT BEING REACHED BY THE NORMAL INTAKE ACTIVITIES CONDUCTED BY THE EMPLOYMENT SERVICE OFFICES.**

When the Migrant Labor Representative (MLR) is conducting outreach, the MSFW Program (bilingual) Resource Guide provides local staff and agency contact information to the MSFWs. The information is important and sometimes crucial to MSFWs, whether they are seeking agricultural or non-agricultural employment and services. The MLRs post contact information with local businesses and agencies that are frequented by the MSFWs and this information includes tear-off tabs with their names and phone numbers. These postings are written in

English and Spanish. This is consistent with our commitment to universal access to labor exchange services and the requirement to ensure that all job seekers with LEP and/or little or no computer knowledge or access to computer-based labor exchange services will be provided services and assistance.

The MLRs target early outreach efforts prior to the high-peak season at its highest point. This is to make contact with MSFWs during a time when they not yet started working and to be able to connect them to support services in the area and to review AJC services information and provide farmworker rights and complaint process information. Once the MSFWs begin working they are difficult to meet with as their work schedules become a priority. Having access to farmworkers prior to the peak-season allows the MLRs to invite the farmworkers into the AJCs so that they become more familiar and comfortable with seeking services available at the AJCs. This includes job seeking services and training opportunities.

Outreach activity is concentrated in the summer and fall months when MSFW activity is at its peak. The majority of the workers that the outreach staff make contact with are food processor workers that are recruited and contracted in Texas by employers. They arrive to work in three 8 to 14 hour shifts during (June-October) the peak season.

There are four one-stop CareerForce locations with significant MSFW activity in Minnesota. These CareerForce locations include a bilingual Spanish/English MLR, all of whom are bilingual / bicultural, have farmworker backgrounds and a strong commitment to their work. The MLR outreach staff perform outreach activities during the peak time of the season including scheduling and coordinating outreach efforts with the other service providers. The outreach staff provide the farmworkers and employers with information, presentations, and handouts related to employment rights and protections, job referrals and job search services. The majority of MSFWs encountered by the MLRs and other service providers (Migrant Health, Legal Services, NFJP) indicated that they are limited-English (LEP) or non-English speakers. The outreach staff assist MSFWs with translation, program registrations, the Unemployment compensation application process if needed, and provide and inform workers of all employment services to those who qualify. The staff provides informational resource guides that include eligibility information for all agency partners, and local community resources. Services will be actively promoted to farm workers as described above under the local outreach plan

Collaborating with partner agencies and organizations that provide service to MSFWs is a vital key to serving MSFWs in Minnesota. MLRs are available to attend parent meetings at Tri-Valley Opportunity Council, Inc. (migrant schools) throughout Minnesota. These meetings are held in the evenings and begin as early as 3:00 p.m. or as late as 6:00 p.m. and run for 2 to 3 hours. These meetings are scheduled to accommodate the work schedules of the MSFWs and are a perfect opportunity for MLRs to come into contact with farmworkers and present MSFW information and provide services, on-site.

Collaborative work also includes working with the Community Health staff and traveling to different locations to address the needs of the MSFWs who do not have medical coverage and cannot afford medical coverage. MLRs provide translation services for Community Health staff and are able to provide MSFW information and complete registrations for MSFWs, on-site. These collaborative efforts/events are scheduled at migrant housing camps and public parks where MLRs can strategically gain access to otherwise non-accessible farmworkers.

MLRs will often extend outreach invitations to enforcement agencies to these events and when appropriate. Employer owned housing is difficult to access and thus in those situations

outreach focuses on distributing the information for partner agencies/enforcement agencies to maintain a working relationship with the employers.

Local food shelves, churches and any other opportunities that arise for outreach are always considered in order for outreach workers to provide the required services to farmworkers. Attending local community meetings and providing information on the MSFW population is a key role for our outreach efforts.

The outreach staff in the four significant local offices develop a yearly outreach plan which, in part, describes the coordination and referral system with other local community MSFW service providers and partners. This includes setting goals and objectives on employer and worker contacts, registration number of workers, job referrals and following-up on referrals to record results, increasing the number of employer visits and making contacts for job development and making assessments of the needs of farmworkers and employers. These plans are monitored by the State Monitor Advocate (SMA) as part of the office review process to ensure that MSFWs and employers have full access to all CareerForce services.

Outreach workers (MLRs) work with the Rapid Response team when a food processing company is permanently closed. They coordinate with the Rapid Response team to be able to present information on the MSFW services provided by the MLRs and they are able to present this information in Spanish. MLRs also coordinate this type of event to include the NFJP partner and include them in the presentation provided to the workers.

**B. PROVIDING TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE TO OUTREACH WORKERS. TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE MUST INCLUDE TRAININGS, CONFERENCES, ADDITIONAL RESOURCES, AND INCREASED COLLABORATION WITH OTHER ORGANIZATIONS ON TOPICS SUCH AS ONE-STOP CENTER SERVICES (I.E. AVAILABILITY OF REFERRALS TO TRAINING, SUPPORTIVE SERVICES, AND CAREER SERVICES, AS WELL AS SPECIFIC EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES), THE EMPLOYMENT SERVICE AND EMPLOYMENT RELATED LAW COMPLAINT SYSTEM("COMPLAINT SYSTEM" DESCRIBED AT 20 CFR 658 SUBPART E), INFORMATION ON THE OTHER ORGANIZATIONS SERVING MSFWs IN THE AREA, AND A BASIC SUMMARY OF FARMWORKER RIGHTS, INCLUDING THEIR RIGHTS WITH RESPECT TO THE TERMS AND CONDITIONS OF EMPLOYMENT.**

Minnesota has hired a year-round full-time State Monitor Advocate (SMA) and four full-time Migrant Labor Representatives (MLRs). The SMA provides training for the outreach workers (MLRs) includes an orientation on the WF1 (MIS) system components and the integration of the MSFW Program within WF1 to effectively and efficiently ensure the documentation of the full range of employment, career and training services provided to the farmworkers. The SMA conducts an annual Pre-Season training for the MLRs and agencies such as the Department of Labor and Industry, Office of Attorney General, Agricultural Workers Project, Community Health, Tri-Valley Opportunity Council, Inc., and NFJP partner are presenters and/or attendees. UI staff are also invited to present and discuss the unique needs of the MSFW population as it applies to their UI benefits and the role of the outreach worker. Quarterly meetings are scheduled for MSFW staff to address any areas of concern and/or to review training materials received from federal trainings attended by the SMA. The SMA also provides technical assistance to AJC staff throughout Minnesota and to the MLRs, as needed. NFJP partner, MET staff, are invited to attend and provide input on the MSFW population that we both serve and how we can work together to provide services.

The MLRs also receive updated training on customer services, workshops on Dislocated Worker programs, Employer services, SNAP, MFIP, Job Fairs, and WIOA compliance. The MLR staff are invited to and do present at company's Employee Orientations for the food processors, facilitated by the food processing companies.

MLRs (outreach workers) were able to attend the National MAFO conference in May 2018 to receive training on issues concerning and affecting farmworkers. The National MAFO conference was also attended by the NFJP partner. This training opportunity also provided valuable networking opportunities with other outreach workers from across the U.S., and other SMAs, and the National Monitor Advocate and Regional Monitor Advocate. The SMA will continue to promote the attendance of MLRs to this valuable training opportunity.

MLRs are able to participate in DOL training opportunities and to contribute to the discussions on how to best meet the needs of MSFWs in our state.

#### C. INCREASING OUTREACH WORKER TRAINING AND AWARENESS ACROSS CORE PROGRAMS INCLUDING THE UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE (UI) PROGRAM AND THE TRAINING ON IDENTIFICATION OF UI ELIGIBILITY ISSUES.

Migrant Labor Representatives are also required to attend monthly training webinars. These are known as Job Service training webinars and feature regular updates about providing Career Services as defined in WIOA. Additionally, these trainings focus on additional resources, strategies and concepts. The focus is usually related to providing services funded by the Wagner Peyser Act. Furthermore, an annual update about Migrant and Seasonal Farm Worker program is featured on these training webinars.

UI staff are invited to the MSFW Pre-Season trainings in order to offer updates on UI and UI processes. UI informational brochures are available for distribution by MLRs in Spanish and other languages. This information is reviewed by the MLR with MSFWs to provide all information in the MSFWs native language. Current updates from UI include the information that the online UI application will be available to the public in the next two years. This will enable MSFWs to easily complete their applications for UI.

#### D. PROVIDING STATE MERIT STAFF OUTREACH WORKERS PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES TO ENSURE THEY ARE ABLE TO PROVIDE HIGH QUALITY SERVICES TO BOTH JOB SEEKERS AND EMPLOYERS.

To ensure that MLR staff provides professional, high quality services to employers and job seekers. The SMA provides technical assistance and support to the outreach staff on outreach for the MSFWs and related functions, including Pre-Season Trainings on topics related to the MSFW program including Complaint Process, MIC, state and federal regulations affecting the MSFW customer. The SMA provides onsite reviews of local services provided to MSFWs. The SMA and MLRs train local staff and provide technical assistance to enhance services to MSFWs (e.g. introducing migrants and other customers to office technology, and offering translation assistance within local communities). Additionally, the SMA performs the following required activities:

- Conducts annual State-level reviews of one-stop centers and career center services and protections provided to MSFWs

- Consults with State and local staff to ensure accurate reporting of MSFW-related information
- Compiles and reports on all statistical and other MSFW-related data reported by agricultural offices quarterly
- Reviews proposed State directives, manuals, and operating instructions that pertain to MSFWs
- Participates in federal monitoring reviews
- Prepares an annual summary report of statewide services

The outreach workers (MLRs) participate in the annual Pre and Post Season MSFW Program training, which is developed and facilitated by the State Monitor Advocate (SMA). The emphasis of the training include outreach efforts, coordination with other agencies, the Complaint Process and the rights and protections afforded to MSFWs by state and federal laws. The NFJP, Motivation, Education and Training (MET, Inc.) staff is always invited to attend and present at the annual trainings. The MET staff work in partnership and collaboration with the outreach staff to deliver services and community information and resources to MSFWs and employers.

The training also includes information on services and training provided by the local CareerForce locations and all agency partners. Enforcement agencies are also invited to attend and present at the post season training, including; Wage and Hour, OSHA, Labor & Industry, Human Rights, Legal Services, Dept. of Transportation, and EEOC. The information presented and obtained from these agencies is vital and important when providing agency referrals to the farmworkers.

#### E. COORDINATING OUTREACH EFFORTS WITH NFJP GRANTEES AS WELL AS WITH PUBLIC AND PRIVATE COMMUNITY SERVICE AGENCIES AND MSFW GROUPS.

Minnesota has a Memorandum of Understanding with Motivation, Education and Training, Inc. (MET) the NFJP grantee since 1997. The collaboration includes team outreach days to the farmworker camps, and informational meetings held for the workers. The NFJP staff is invited to attend and present at the SMA pre-season training.

MET, Inc. staff are invited and participate in conference call meetings and quarterly meetings with MSFW staff to provide input on current status of funding for training and support services offered to MSFWs by MET, Inc.

The following data is derived from the NFJP database of MET, Inc., who is an NFJP grantee for the state of Minnesota. The NFJP services and referrals were provided to farmworkers across a large area stretching from the counties of Kandiyohi, Brown, Blue Earth, Waseca, Steele and Olmsted in the southern half of the state. NFJP services were also provided in the western counties of Clay and Wilken.

- PY 2018 (7/1/2018 to 6/30/2019), the number of MSFW contacts by NFJP partner with Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED) reached 456 farmworkers.
- NFJP is a co-located partner in the Willmar CareerForce and the Monticello CareerForce locations and are also located in the Clay County Social Services building which is the

location of the Moorhead CareerForce. . Their main office is located in Waseca, Minnesota, which is located in the southeastern portion of Minnesota.

The outreach staff in the four significant local offices develop a yearly outreach plan which, in part, describes the coordination and referral system with other local community MSFW service providers and partners. This includes setting goals and objectives on employer and worker contacts, registration number of workers, job referrals and following- up on referrals to record results, increasing the number of employer visits and making contacts for job development and making assessments of the needs of farmworkers and employers. These plans are monitored by the State Monitor Advocate (SMA) as part of the office review process to ensure that MSFWs and employers have full access to all CareerForce services.

#### A. CONTACTING FARMWORKERS WHO ARE NOT BEING REACHED BY THE NORMAL INTAKE ACTIVITIES CONDUCTED BY THE EMPLOYMENT SERVICE OFFICES

#### A. CONTACTING FARMWORKERS WHO ARE NOT BEING REACHED BY THE NORMAL INTAKE ACTIVITIES CONDUCTED BY THE EMPLOYMENT SERVICE OFFICES.

When the Migrant Labor Representative (MLR) is conducting outreach, the MSFW Program (bilingual) Resource Guide provides local staff and agency contact information to the MSFWs. The information is important and sometimes crucial to MSFWs, whether they are seeking agricultural or non-agricultural employment and services. The MLRs post contact information with local businesses and agencies that are frequented by the MSFWs and this information includes tear-off tabs with their names and phone numbers. These postings are written in English and Spanish. This is consistent with our commitment to universal access to labor exchange services and the requirement to ensure that all job seekers with LEP and/or little or no computer knowledge or access to computer-based labor exchange services will be still be provided services and assistance.

The MLRs target early outreach efforts prior to the high-peak season at its highest point. This is to make contact with MSFWs during a time when they not yet started working and to be able to connect them to support services in the area and to review AJC services information and provide farmworker rights and complaint process information. Once the MSFWs begin working they are difficult to meet with as their work schedules become a priority. Having access to farmworkers prior to the peak-season allows the MLRs to invite the farmworkers into the AJCs so that they become more familiar and comfortable with seeking services available at the AJCs. This includes job seeking services and training opportunities.

Outreach activity is concentrated in the summer and fall months when MSFW activity is at its peak. The majority of the workers that the outreach staff make contact with are food processor workers that are recruited and contracted in Texas by employers. They arrive to work in three 8 to 14 hour shifts during (June-October) the peak season

There are four one-stop CareerForce locations with significant MSFW activity in Minnesota. These CareerForce locations include a bilingual Spanish/English MLR, all of whom are bilingual / bicultural, have farmworker backgrounds and a strong commitment to their work. The MLR outreach staff perform outreach activities during the peak time of the season including scheduling and coordinating outreach efforts with the other service providers. The outreach staff provide the farmworkers and employers with information, presentations, and handouts related to employment rights and protections, job referrals and job search services. The majority of MSFWs encountered by the MLRs and other service providers (Migrant Health, Legal Services, NFJP) indicated that they are limited-English (LEP) or non-English speakers. The outreach staff assist MSFWs with translation, program registrations, the Unemployment

compensation application process if needed, and provide and inform workers of all employment services to those who qualify. The staff provides informational resource guides that include eligibility information for all agency partners, and local community resources. Services will be actively promoted to farm workers as described above under the local outreach plan

Collaborating with partner agencies and organizations that provide service to MSFWs is a vital key to serving MSFWs in Minnesota. MLRs are available to attend parent meetings at Tri-Valley Opportunity Council, Inc. (migrant schools) throughout Minnesota. These meetings are held in the evenings and begin as early as 3:00 p.m. or as late as 6:00 p.m. and run for 2 to 3 hours. These meetings are scheduled to accommodate the work schedules of the MSFWs and are a perfect opportunity for MLRs to come into contact with farmworkers and present MSFW information and provide services, on-site.

Collaborative work also includes working with the Community Health staff and traveling to different locations to address the needs of the MSFWs who do not have medical coverage and cannot afford medical coverage. MLRs provide translation services for Community Health staff and are able to provide MSFW information and complete registrations for MSFWs, on-site. These collaborative efforts/events are scheduled at migrant housing camps and public parks where MLRs can strategically gain access to otherwise non-accessible farmworkers.

MLRs will often extend outreach invitations to enforcement agencies to these events and when appropriate. Employer owned housing is difficult to access and thus in those situations outreach focuses on distributing the information for partner agencies/enforcement agencies to maintain a working relationship with the employers.

Local food shelves, churches and any other opportunities that arise for outreach are always considered in order for outreach workers to provide the required services to farmworkers. Attending local community meetings and providing information on the MSFW population is a key role for our outreach efforts.

The outreach staff in the four significant local offices develop a yearly outreach plan which, in part, describes the coordination and referral system with other local community MSFW service providers and partners. This includes setting goals and objectives on employer and worker contacts, registration number of workers, job referrals and following-up on referrals to record results, increasing the number of employer visits and making contacts for job development and making assessments of the needs of farmworkers and employers. These plans are monitored by the State Monitor Advocate (SMA) as part of the office review process to ensure that MSFWs and employers have full access to all CareerForce services.

Outreach workers (MLRs) work with the Rapid Response team when a food processing company is permanently closed. They coordinate with the Rapid Response team to be able to present information on the MSFW services provided by the MLRs and they are able to present this information in Spanish. MLRs also coordinate this type of event to include the NFJP partner and include them in the presentation provided to the workers.

**B. PROVIDING TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE TO OUTREACH STAFF. TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE MUST INCLUDE TRAININGS, CONFERENCES, ADDITIONAL RESOURCES, AND INCREASED COLLABORATION WITH OTHER ORGANIZATIONS ON TOPICS SUCH AS ONE-STOP CENTER SERVICES (I.E. AVAILABILITY OF REFERRALS TO TRAINING, SUPPORTIVE SERVICES, AND CAREER SERVICES, AS WELL AS SPECIFIC EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES), THE EMPLOYMENT SERVICE AND EMPLOYMENT-RELATED LAW COMPLAINT SYSTEM (“COMPLAINT SYSTEM” DESCRIBED AT 20 CFR 658 SUBPART E), INFORMATION ON THE OTHER ORGANIZATIONS SERVING MSFWs IN THE AREA, AND A BASIC SUMMARY OF**

FARMWORKER RIGHTS, INCLUDING THEIR RIGHTS WITH RESPECT TO THE TERMS AND CONDITIONS OF EMPLOYMENT.

B. PROVIDING TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE TO OUTREACH WORKERS. TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE MUST INCLUDE TRAININGS, CONFERENCES, ADDITIONAL RESOURCES, AND INCREASED COLLABORATION WITH OTHER ORGANIZATIONS ON TOPICS SUCH AS ONE-STOP CENTER SERVICES (I.E. AVAILABILITY OF REFERRALS TO TRAINING, SUPPORTIVE SERVICES, AND CAREER SERVICES, AS WELL AS SPECIFIC EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES), THE EMPLOYMENT SERVICE AND EMPLOYMENT RELATED LAW COMPLAINT SYSTEM (“COMPLAINT SYSTEM” DESCRIBED AT 20 CFR 658 SUBPART E), INFORMATION ON THE OTHER ORGANIZATIONS SERVING MSFWs IN THE AREA, AND A BASIC SUMMARY OF FARMWORKER RIGHTS, INCLUDING THEIR RIGHTS WITH RESPECT TO THE TERMS AND CONDITIONS OF EMPLOYMENT.

Minnesota has hired a year-round full-time State Monitor Advocate (SMA) and four full-time Migrant Labor Representatives (MLRs). The SMA provides training for the outreach workers (MLRs) includes an orientation on the WF1 (MIS) system components and the integration of the MSFW Program within WF1 to effectively and efficiently ensure the documentation of the full range of employment, career and training services provided to the farmworkers. The SMA conducts an annual Pre-Season training for the MLRs and agencies such as the Department of Labor and Industry, Office of Attorney General, Agricultural Workers Project, Community Health, Tri-Valley Opportunity Council, Inc., and NFJP partner are presenters and/or attendees. UI staff are also invited to present and discuss the unique needs of the MSFW population as it applies to their UI benefits and the role of the outreach worker. Quarterly meetings are scheduled for MSFW staff to address any areas of concern and/or to review training materials received from federal trainings attended by the SMA. The SMA also provides technical assistance to AJC staff throughout Minnesota and to the MLRs, as needed. NFJP partner, MET staff, are invited to attend and provide input on the MSFW population that we both serve and how we can work together to provide services.

The MLRs also receive updated training on customer services, workshops on Dislocated Worker programs, Employer services, SNAP, MFIP, Job Fairs, and WIOA compliance. The MLR staff are invited to and do present at company’s Employee Orientations for the food processors, facilitated by the food processing companies.

MLRs (outreach workers) were able to attend the National MAFO conference in May 2018 to receive training on issues concerning and affecting farmworkers. The National MAFO conference was also attended by the NFJP partner. This training opportunity also provided valuable networking opportunities with other outreach workers from across the U.S., and other SMAs, and the National Monitor Advocate and Regional Monitor Advocate. The SMA will continue to promote the attendance of MLRs to this valuable training opportunity.

MLRs are able to participate in DOL training opportunities and to contribute to the discussions on how to best meet the needs of MSFWs in our state.

C. INCREASING OUTREACH WORKER TRAINING AND AWARENESS ACROSS CORE PROGRAMS INCLUDING THE UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE (UI) PROGRAM AND THE TRAINING ON IDENTIFICATION OF UI ELIGIBILITY ISSUES

C. INCREASING OUTREACH WORKER TRAINING AND AWARENESS ACROSS CORE PROGRAMS INCLUDING THE UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE (UI) PROGRAM AND THE TRAINING ON IDENTIFICATION OF UI ELIGIBILITY ISSUES.

Migrant Labor Representatives are also required to attend monthly training webinars. These are known as Job Service training webinars and feature regular updates about providing Career Services as defined in WIOA. Additionally, these trainings focus on additional resources, strategies and concepts. The focus is usually related to providing services funded by the Wagner Peysner Act. Furthermore, an annual update about Migrant and Seasonal Farm Worker program is featured on these training webinars.

UI staff are invited to the MSFW Pre-Season trainings in order to offer updates on UI and UI processes. UI informational brochures are available for distribution by MLRs in Spanish and other languages. This information is reviewed by the MLR with MSFWs to provide all information in the MSFWs native language. Current updates from UI include the information that the online UI application will be available to the public in the next two years. This will enable MSFWs to easily complete their applications for UI.

**D. PROVIDING STATE MERIT STAFF OUTREACH WORKERS PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES TO ENSURE THEY ARE ABLE TO PROVIDE HIGH QUALITY SERVICES TO BOTH JOBSEEKERS AND EMPLOYERS**

**D. PROVIDING STATE MERIT STAFF OUTREACH WORKERS PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES TO ENSURE THEY ARE ABLE TO PROVIDE HIGH QUALITY SERVICES TO BOTH JOB SEEKERS AND EMPLOYERS.**

To ensure that MLR staff provides professional, high quality services to employers and job seekers. The SMA provides technical assistance and support to the outreach staff on outreach for the MSFWs and related functions, including Pre-Season Trainings on topics related to the MSFW program including Complaint Process, MIC, state and federal regulations affecting the MSFW customer. The SMA provides onsite reviews of local services provided to MSFWs. The SMA and MLRs train local staff and provide technical assistance to enhance services to MSFWs (e.g. introducing migrants and other customers to office technology, and offering translation assistance within local communities). Additionally, the SMA performs the following required activities:

- Conducts annual State-level reviews of one-stop centers and career center services and protections provided to MSFWs
- Consults with State and local staff to ensure accurate reporting of MSFW-related information
- Compiles and reports on all statistical and other MSFW-related data reported by agricultural offices quarterly
- Reviews proposed State directives, manuals, and operating instructions that pertain to MSFWs
- Participates in federal monitoring reviews
- Prepares an annual summary report of statewide services

The outreach workers (MLRs) participate in the annual Pre and Post Season MSFW Program training, which is developed and facilitated by the State Monitor Advocate (SMA). The emphasis of the training include outreach efforts, coordination with other agencies, the Complaint Process and the rights and protections afforded to MSFWs by state and federal laws. The NFJP, Motivation, Education and Training (MET, Inc.) staff is always invited to attend and present at

the annual trainings. The MET staff work in partnership and collaboration with the outreach staff to deliver services and community information and resources to MSFWs and employers.

The training also includes information on services and training provided by the local CareerForce locations and all agency partners. Enforcement agencies are also invited to attend and present at the post season training, including; Wage and Hour, OSHA, Labor & Industry, Human Rights, Legal Services, Dept. of Transportation, and EEOC. The information presented and obtained from these agencies is vital and important when providing agency referrals to the farmworkers.

#### E. COORDINATING OUTREACH EFFORTS WITH NFJP GRANTEES AS WELL AS WITH PUBLIC AND PRIVATE COMMUNITY SERVICE AGENCIES AND MSFW GROUPS

#### E. COORDINATING OUTREACH EFFORTS WITH NFJP GRANTEES AS WELL AS WITH PUBLIC AND PRIVATE COMMUNITY SERVICE AGENCIES AND MSFW GROUPS.

Minnesota has a Memorandum of Understanding with Motivation, Education and Training, Inc. (MET) the NFJP grantee since 1997. The collaboration includes team outreach days to the farmworker camps, and informational meetings held for the workers. The NFJP staff is invited to attend and present at the SMA pre-season training.

MET, Inc. staff are invited and participate in conference call meetings and quarterly meetings with MSFW staff to provide input on current status of funding for training and support services offered to MSFWs by MET, Inc.

The following data is derived from the NFJP database of MET, Inc., who is an NFJP grantee for the state of Minnesota. The NFJP services and referrals were provided to farmworkers across a large area stretching from the counties of Kandiyohi, Brown, Blue Earth, Waseca, Steele and Olmsted in the southern half of the state. NFJP services were also provided in the western counties of Clay and Wilken.

- PY 2018 (7/1/2018 to 6/30/2019), the number of MSFW contacts by NFJP partner with Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED) reached 456 farmworkers.
- NFJP is a co-located partner in the Willmar CareerForce and the Monticello CareerForce locations and are also located in the Clay County Social Services building which is the location of the Moorhead CareerForce. . Their main office is located in Waseca, Minnesota, which is located in the southeastern portion of Minnesota.

The outreach staff in the four significant local offices develop a yearly outreach plan which, in part, describes the coordination and referral system with other local community MSFW service providers and partners. This includes setting goals and objectives on employer and worker contacts, registration number of workers, job referrals and following- up on referrals to record results, increasing the number of employer visits and making contacts for job development and making assessments of the needs of farmworkers and employers. These plans are monitored by the State Monitor Advocate (SMA) as part of the office review process to ensure that MSFWs and employers have full access to all CareerForce services.

#### 5. SERVICES PROVIDED TO FARMWORKERS AND AGRICULTURAL EMPLOYERS THROUGH THE ONE-STOP DELIVERY SYSTEM

Describe the State agency's proposed strategies for:

A. PROVIDING THE FULL RANGE OF EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING SERVICES TO THE AGRICULTURAL COMMUNITY, BOTH FARMWORKERS AND AGRICULTURAL EMPLOYERS, THROUGH THE ONE-STOP DELIVERY SYSTEM. THIS INCLUDES:

I. HOW CAREER AND TRAINING SERVICES REQUIRED UNDER WIOA TITLE I WILL BE PROVIDED TO MSFWS THROUGH THE ONE-STOP CENTERS

II. HOW THE STATE SERVES AGRICULTURAL EMPLOYERS AND HOW IT INTENDS TO IMPROVE SUCH SERVICES

A. PROVIDING THE FULL RANGE OF EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING SERVICES TO THE AGRICULTURAL COMMUNITY, BOTH FARMWORKERS AND AGRICULTURAL EMPLOYERS, THROUGH THE ONE-STOP DELIVERY SYSTEM. THIS INCLUDES:

i. HOW CAREER AND TRAINING SERVICES REQUIRED UNDER WIOA TITLE I WILL BE PROVIDED TO MSFWS THROUGH THE ONE-STOP CENTERS

ii. HOW THE STATE SERVES AGRICULTURAL EMPLOYERS AND HOW IT INTENDS TO IMPROVE SUCH SERVICES.

The MSFW Program (bilingual) Resource Guide provides staff and agency contact information to MSFWs. The information is important and sometimes crucial to MSFWs, whether they are seeking agricultural or non-agricultural employment. In addition to CareerForce services information the Resource Guide provides a listing of resources such as: education services, food shelf contact information, health services information, legal services information, labor and workplace resources, and government agencies information. This information is provided to each farmworker along with other resources that are specific to the region/area where the farmworker is located.

The MLRs post contact information with local businesses and agencies that are frequented by the MSFWs and this includes tear-off tabs with their names and phone numbers. These postings are written in English and Spanish. This is consistent with our commitment to universal access to labor exchange services and the requirement to ensure that all job seekers with LEP and/or little or no computer knowledge or access to computer-based labor exchange services will be still be provided services and assistance. There are 50 one-stop CareerForce locations throughout Minnesota. CareerForce programs are targeted to dislocated workers, low-income adults, disadvantaged youth, welfare-to-work participants, Veterans and low-income seniors.

However, any person who lives in Minnesota can use their services. The centers offer many different classes and workshops. "New Leaf" is a workshop designed for job seekers who must address a criminal record in their job search. "Career Exploration" is a workshop that allows participants to take several assessments to find matching career options. In "Networking Groups," job seekers discuss networking, job search techniques, job interviewing and other related topics. The centers also have services geared specifically for veterans, including veterans networking groups, job clubs and reintegration training.

Workshops to help with job search and career planning. Examples of workshops include:

- Interviewing skills
- Networking
- Internet job searches
- Completing job applications • Resumes and cover letters

The SMA and MLRs hold informational meetings throughout the high-peak season at the camps to provide information relevant to the MSFWs such as the Employment Service Complaint Process, the Unemployment Compensation application process and the full range of employment services available at the local one-stop centers. The meeting notice is posted in advance, and held in the evening and or a weekend day, to accommodate shift work schedules. Other MSFW service provider agencies attend and present regarding agency service eligibility, type of services and benefits available. The meetings are well attended by the workers and their families and provide the outreach workers an opportunity to exchange agency contact information with other agency staff. MLRs will also call or text MSFWs to let them know that they will be available to meet with MSFWs at their residence (housing camps) or location of outreach event.

The MLRs continue to contact farm workers at their work sites, living areas and gathering places. The MLRs collaborate with advocacy groups including County Social Service agencies (SNAP), Migrant Education centers, Health Service centers, local community agencies, Migrant Head Start, Migrant Legal Services and other service providers to enable them to provide outreach and locate farm workers that are missed through CareerForce outreach efforts. The cooperative referral arrangements with these agencies are based on long-standing agreements. Minnesota has a Memorandum of Understanding with Motivation, Education and Training, Inc. (MET) the NFJP grantee.

Outreach staff also contact agricultural and non-agricultural employers, providing them with information about the employment services available for employers such as posting jobs, viewing resumes, hiring priority targeted populations, apprentice programs, WOTC, tax credit program and local Job Fairs. We distribute informational pamphlets directed to agricultural and non-agricultural employers that include contact information for the local Workforce Strategy Consultants. The SMA visits communities with substantial farmworker activity to meet with workers, local agencies and employers, to assess their needs and determine the effectiveness of the CareerForce services. Also, promoting to employers the labor exchange system services website which contains information of particular importance to agricultural and non-ag-employers.

Agricultural and non-agricultural employers in the area are provided information on:

- The Agricultural Recruiting System (ARS)
- Posting their job orders, Job Fairs, Apprenticeship programs
- Federal and state employment compliance regulations
- The availability of presentations by compliance agencies to growers associations, and other affected groups and organizations
- Field and quality assessments
- Mediation/interpreter services
- Liaison between migrant service providers and employer

The State Monitor Advocate (SMA) visits communities with substantial MSFW activity to meet with employers, to review and assess their needs and determine the effectiveness of the CareerForce services provided. The SMA works with the MLR's to promote the labor exchange system and workforce system programs and services which contains information of particular importance to agricultural and non-ag-employers.

B. MARKETING THE EMPLOYMENT SERVICE COMPLAINT SYSTEM TO FARMWORKERS AND OTHER FARMWORKER ADVOCACY GROUPS

**B. MARKETING THE EMPLOYMENT SERVICE COMPLAINT SYSTEM TO FARMWORKERS AND OTHER FARMWORKER ADVOCACY GROUPS.**

The SMA and MLRs hold informational meetings throughout the peak-season at the camps to provide information relevant to the MSFWs such as the Employment Service Complaint Process, the Unemployment Compensation application process and the full range of employment services available at the local one-stop centers. The meeting notice is posted in advance, farmworkers are contacted by phone and via text messaging, partner agencies are made aware of outreach events so that they may promote the event with other agencies or workers, and the outreach events are held (usually) in the afternoons to accommodate shift work schedules. Other MSFW service provider agencies attend and present regarding agency service eligibility, type of services and benefits available. The meetings are well attended by the workers and their families and provide the outreach workers an opportunity to exchange agency contact information with other agency staff.

Collaborative outreach events will oftentimes include enforcement agencies who can review specific laws and regulations and address legal concerns from farmworkers. When conducting outreach to farmworkers the MLRs will review the complaint process with each farmworker and provide business cards for other enforcement agency contacts to assist farmworkers in obtaining legal action, when needed.

The MLRs play a significant role in assisting MSFWs with the Employment Service Complaint Process and the Unemployment Compensation application process. Farmworkers may be unfamiliar with timeframes for filing, the appeals process or deadlines for applications. The majority of these farmworkers are limited English speakers, and most are also illiterate, the wages earned in Minnesota are for the most part their total yearly earnings. LEP customers often lose their benefits because they do not understand nor respond to the information they receive. They are not aware to request that correspondence regarding services be written in their language. Many times these customer will have to reapply for a benefit/service or start over with the process, which can cost time and decrease the amount of benefits. Therefore, it is imperative that the MLRs identify these LEP customers in the registration process and inform them of their options for assistance including Language Line availability as well as translator assistance.

C. MARKETING THE AGRICULTURAL RECRUITMENT SYSTEM FOR U.S. WORKERS (ARS) TO AGRICULTURAL EMPLOYERS AND HOW IT INTENDS TO IMPROVE SUCH PUBLICITY.

**C. MARKETING THE AGRICULTURAL RECRUITMENT SYSTEM FOR U.S. WORKERS (ARS) TO AGRICULTURAL EMPLOYERS AND HOW IT INTENDS TO IMPROVE SUCH PUBLICITY.**

Outreach staff contact agricultural and non-agricultural employers, providing them with information about the employment services available for employers such as posting jobs, viewing resumes, hiring priority targeted populations, apprentice programs, WOTC, tax credit program and local Job Fairs. We distribute informational pamphlets on the MSFW program and resources (bilingual) directed to Agricultural and non-agricultural employers that include contact information for the local one- stop offices. The SMA visits communities with substantial farmworker activity to meet with workers, local agencies and employers, to assess their needs and determine the effectiveness of the CareerForce services. Also, promoting to employers is the labor exchange system services website which contains information of particular

importance to agricultural and non-ag-employers. Minnesota's online labor exchange system is called MinnesotaWorks.net.net

The Agricultural Recruitment System (ARS) is promoted to employers through in-person contact during outreach to employers or at the local AJC. An informational sheet is provided to employers which lists the services provided and the requirements for participating in ARS. An employer brochure titled, "Get Help Hiring Farm Workers", is also distributed to employers during outreach. Both the ARS informational sheet and the brochure are available in the local AJC for walk-in customers who may be employers.

Farmworkers also receive information on the ARS which explains how ARS functions. Contact information for the MLRs and the SMA is listed on the informational sheet. The MLRs promote the ARS to both the employers and the farmworkers.

Employers create an employer account in MinnesotaWorks.net.net, our online self-service labor exchange system, and once approved, they may enter job postings. Employers in search of workers may also contact the local offices staff for assistance in searching for candidates who match the employers' job categories and other requirements of the positions. In addition, the outreach staff is acquainted with employers in their prospective areas who repeatedly hire seasonal workers.

Agricultural and non-agricultural employers in the area are provided information on:

- The Agricultural Recruitment System (ARS)
- Posting job orders, Job Fairs, industry events, work-based learning opportunities including apprenticeships and other training programs
- Federal and state employment compliance regulations
- The availability of presentations by compliance agencies to growers associations, and other related groups and organizations
- Field and quality assessments
- Mediation/interpreter services
- Liaison between migrant service providers and employers

## 6. OTHER REQUIREMENTS

### A. COLLABORATION

Describe any collaborative agreements the state workforce agency (SWA) has with other MSFW service providers including NFJP grantees and other service providers. Describe how the SWA intends to build upon/increase collaboration with existing partners and in establishing new partners over the next four years (including any approximate timelines for establishing agreements or building upon existing agreements).

#### 4. OTHER REQUIREMENTS.

**A. COLLABORATION. DESCRIBE ANY COLLABORATIVE AGREEMENTS THE STATE WORKFORCE AGENCY (SWA) HAS WITH OTHER MSFW SERVICE PROVIDERS INCLUDING NFJP GRANTEES AND OTHER SERVICE PROVIDERS. DESCRIBE HOW THE SWA INTENDS TO BUILD UPON/INCREASE COLLABORATION WITH EXISTING PARTNERS AND IN ESTABLISHING NEW PARTNERS OVER THE NEXT FOUR YEARS (INCLUDING ANY**

## **APPROXIMATE TIMELINES FOR ESTABLISHING AGREEMENTS OR BUILDING UPON EXISTING AGREEMENTS).**

The SMA and MLRs hold informational meetings throughout the high-peak season at the camps to provide information relevant to the MSFWs. Other MSFW service provider agencies attend and present information regarding agency service eligibility, type of services and benefits available. The meetings are well attended by the workers and their families and provide the outreach workers an opportunity to exchange agency contact information with other agency staff.

The MLRs continue to contact farm workers at their work sites, living areas and gathering places. The MLRs collaborate with advocacy groups including County Social Service agencies (SNAP), Migrant Education centers, Health Service centers, local community agencies, Migrant Head Start, Migrant Legal Services and other service providers to enable them to provide outreach and locate farm workers that are missed through CareerForce outreach efforts. The cooperative referral arrangements with these agencies are based on long-standing agreements.

Minnesota has had Memorandum of Understanding with Motivation, Education and Training, Inc. (MET) the NFJP grantee since 1997. In May 2019, Minnesota developed an MOU with Tri-Valley Opportunity Council, Inc. (TVOC), in order to establish more co-enrollment opportunities and increase the area of coverage in Minnesota for providing MSFW services. It is hoped that this newer MOU will assist TVOC in their goal to increase their enrollments as well as increase registrations for MSFWs.

The outreach staff in the four significant local offices develop a yearly outreach plan which, in part, describes the coordination and referral system with other local community MSFW service providers and partners. This includes setting goals and objectives on employer and worker contacts, registration number of workers, job referrals and following-up on referrals to record results, increasing the number of employer visits and making contacts for job development and making assessments of the needs of farmworkers and employers. These plans are monitored by the State Monitor Advocate (SMA) as part of the office review process to ensure that MSFWs and employers have full access to all CareerForce services.

The State Monitor Advocate and the Migrant Labor Representatives maintain close contact with the following organizations in the interest of providing effective and inclusive service to their customers:

- Southern Minnesota Regional Legal Services
- Motivation Education and Training Inc. (MET)
- Migrant-Community Health Services, Inc.
- Tri-Valley Opportunity Council, Inc. (TVOC)

## **B. REVIEW AND PUBLIC COMMENT**

In developing the AOP, the SWA must solicit information and suggestions from NFJP grantees, other appropriate MSFW groups, public agencies, agricultural employer organizations, and other interested organizations. In addition, at least 45 calendar days before submitting its final AOP, the SWA must provide a proposed plan to NFJP grantees, public agencies, agricultural employer organizations, and other organizations expressing an interest and allow at least 30 days for review and comment. The SWA must: 1) Consider any comments received in

formulating its final proposed AOP; 2) Inform all commenting parties in writing whether their comments have been incorporated and, if not, the reasons therefore; and 3) Transmit the comments and recommendations received and its responses with the submission of the AOP.

The AOP must include a statement confirming NFJP grantees, other appropriate MSFW groups, public agencies, agricultural employer organizations and other interested employer organizations have been given an opportunity to comment on the AOP. Include the list of organizations from which information and suggestions were solicited, any comments received, and responses to those comments.

**B. REVIEW AND PUBLIC COMMENT. IN DEVELOPING THE AOP, THE SWA MUST SOLICIT INFORMATION AND SUGGESTIONS FROM NFJP GRANTEEES, OTHER APPROPRIATE MSFW GROUPS, PUBLIC AGENCIES, AGRICULTURAL EMPLOYER ORGANIZATIONS, AND OTHER INTERESTED ORGANIZATIONS. IN ADDITION, AT LEAST 45 CALENDAR DAYS BEFORE SUBMITTING ITS FINAL AOP, THE SWA MUST PROVIDE A PROPOSED PLAN TO NFJP GRANTEEES, PUBLIC AGENCIES, AGRICULTURAL EMPLOYER ORGANIZATIONS, AND OTHER ORGANIZATIONS EXPRESSING AN INTEREST AND ALLOW AT LEAST 30 DAYS FOR REVIEW AND COMMENT. THE SWA MUST: 1) CONSIDER ANY COMMENTS RECEIVED IN FORMULATING ITS FINAL PROPOSED AOP; 2) INFORM ALL COMMENTING PARTIES IN WRITING WHETHER THEIR COMMENTS HAVE BEEN INCORPORATED AND, IF NOT, THE REASONS THEREFORE; AND 3) TRANSMIT THE COMMENTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS RECEIVED AND ITS RESPONSES WITH THE SUBMISSION OF THE AOP.**

The AOP was posted and made available for public comment. The AOP was made available to the following MSFW groups: NFJP grantee, Motivation Education and Training, Inc., (MET), Community Health Services (CHS), Tri-Valley Opportunity Council, Inc. (TVOC), Southern Minnesota Rural Legal Services/Agricultural Worker's Program (SMRLS/AWP), and all State Agencies in Minnesota. The aforementioned advocacy groups were notified and no comments were received.

#### C. DATA ASSESSMENT

Review the previous four years Wagner-Peyser data reports on performance. Note whether the State has been meeting its goals to provide MSFWs quantitatively proportionate services as compared to non-MSFWs. If it has not met these goals, explain why the State believes such goals were not met and how the State intends to improve its provision of services in order to meet such goals.

**C. DATA ASSESSMENT. REVIEW THE PREVIOUS FOUR YEARS WAGNER-PEYSER DATA REPORTS ON PERFORMANCE. NOTE WHETHER THE STATE HAS BEEN MEETING ITS GOALS TO PROVIDE MSFWs QUANTITATIVELY PROPORTIONATE SERVICES AS COMPARED TO NON-MSFWs. IF IT HAS NOT MET THESE GOALS, EXPLAIN WHY THE STATE BELIEVES SUCH GOALS WERE NOT MET AND HOW THE STATE INTENDS TO IMPROVE ITS PROVISION OF SERVICES IN ORDER TO MEET SUCH GOALS.**

Minnesota has not consistently met the 5 Equity Ratio Indicators[1] over the past 4 years and specifically, they were not met for PY18. The loss of an outreach worker in the Fall of 2018 and the new SMA beginning in January 2018 resulted in decreased performance in the Equity Indicators. The replacement of the outreach worker in January 2019 and the continued permanent status of the SMA is expected to improve our Equity Ratio Indicators to compliance level. Continued training for outreach workers to ensure that all data is accurately recorded will also assist our state to be in compliance in this area.

The minimum of 4 of 7 Minimum Service Level Indicators have been met for PY2015 and PY18. Minnesota did not meet the minimum of 4 of 7 Minimum Service Level Indicators (for each quarter) for PY16 and PY17. During this time, the SMA was also conducting Foreign Labor Certification Coordinator duties, simultaneously. This affected the level of overview of the MSFW services and resulted in a decrease in performance. As of January 2018 the SMA only conducts monitoring duties and provides overview of outreach and technical training of outreach workers. This will ensure that our state will improve in the area of Minimum Service Level Indicators to the level of compliance.

Minnesota has surpassed the minimum of 5 contacts per outreach days, increasing to 12 contacts per outreach staff day.

[1] All State Workforce Agencies (SWAs) must provide MSFWs the full range of career services of the workforce development system on a basis which is qualitatively equivalent and quantitatively proportionate to services provided to non-MSFWs (TEGL 20-16). SWAs must meet the equity indicators which include: 1) Referral to Jobs, 2) Received Staff Assisted Services, 3) Referred to Support Services, 4) Career Guidance, and 5) Job Development Contact. Four of the five equity indicators must be met. To meet the equity performance standards the percentage of services provided to MSFWs must be equal to or greater than the percentage of services offered to non-MSFWs. For example, if there are 100 non-MSFWs and 50 MSFWs registered for services in the local ES office, and 50 of the non-MSFW participants are referred to employment, the local office must refer at least 25 (50%) of the MSFWs in order for that office to meet this equity ratio indicator (TEGL 20-16).

#### D. ASSESSMENT OF PROGRESS

The plan must include an explanation of what was achieved based on the previous AOP, what was not achieved and an explanation as to why the State believes the goals were not achieved, and how the State intends to remedy the gaps of achievement in the coming year.

#### **D. ASSESSMENT OF PROGRESS. THE PLAN MUST INCLUDE AN EXPLANATION OF WHAT WAS ACHIEVED BASED ON THE PREVIOUS AOP, WHAT WAS NOT ACHIEVED AND AN EXPLANATION AS TO WHY THE STATE BELIEVES THE GOALS WERE NOT ACHIEVED, AND HOW THE STATE INTENDS TO REMEDY THE GAPS OF ACHIEVEMENT IN THE COMING YEAR.**

As indicated above, Minnesota did not meet the 5 Equity Ratio Indicators in for PY18 and 4 of 7 Minimum Service Level equity indicators were not met for PY16 and PY17. Minnesota has surpassed the minimum of 5 contacts per outreach day and increased that to 12 contacts per day. Our plan is to continue to increase our efforts in every aspect of our program requirements as we will strive to improve the number of MSFW registrations, referrals to ESL/GED, referrals to job placements, and referrals for training. Continuing to be fully staffed to ensure that we are serving the MSFW population throughout our state and maintaining our full-time SMA will enable our state to maintain compliance level in all areas. As we continue to work in a

collaborative manner with our partners it will led to an increased number of placements in jobs and training for our customers.

Outreach was performed throughout the peak MSFW farm worker season concentrated in the summer and early fall months, The MLRs commitment to outreach has succeeded in increasing the number to 12 contacts per outreach day in PY18. In the first quarter of PY19, the average number of contacts per outreach day is 11. The expectation for outreach is to maintain and/or exceed the current 11 contacts per day as we move further into PY19.

In order to be in compliance, MLRs are expected to contact a minimum of 5 farmworkers per outreach day. In PY18, the number of 1856 contacts were conducted in 154 staff outreach days indicating 12 contacts per staff outreach day. In addition, there were 456 contacts made by cooperating partner agencies. The number of expected contacts in the PY20-PY23 will be in excess of 3,500. This will be accomplished through vigorous outreach efforts throughout the state.

Minnesota will be increasing the promotion of the Agricultural Recruitment System (ARS) to employers in order to make them aware of this system and the need to begin farmworker recruitment at the local level. The SMA will be working with the FLC in order to educate and guide employers in this process and provide the labor needs of the employers while providing the job opportunities to the U.S. workers prior to having employers recruit foreign workers. Promoting the ARS to farmworkers will also increase more opportunities to U.S. workers and our state will be complying with regulations in promoting and implementing ARS.

Minnesota will also be increasing the promotion of H-2A positions with MSFWs to make them aware of these job opportunities and this will increase the number of Field Checks conducted in our state.

**E. STATE MONITOR ADVOCATE**

The plan must contain a statement confirming the State Monitor Advocate has reviewed and approved the AOP.

**E. STATE MONITOR ADVOCATE. THE PLAN MUST CONTAIN A STATEMENT CONFIRMING THE STATE MONITOR ADVOCATE HAS REVIEWED AND APPROVED THE AOP.**

The State Monitor Advocate has been afforded the opportunity to review and comment and approves the AOP.

**WAGNER-PEYSER ASSURANCES**

The State Plan must include assurances that:

The State Plan must include	Include
1. The Wagner-Peyser Act 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 (sec 121(e)(3));	Yes
2. If the State has significant MSFW one-stop centers, the State agency is complying with the requirements under 20 CFR 653.111, State Workforce Agency staffing requirements;	Yes
3. If a State Workforce Development Board, department, or agency administers State laws for vocational rehabilitation of persons with disabilities, that board, department,	Yes

The State Plan must include	Include
or agency cooperates with the agency that administers Wagner-Peyser Act services, Adult and Dislocated Worker programs and Youth Programs under Title I; and	
4. SWA officials: 1) Initiate the discontinuation of services; 2) Make the determination that services need to be discontinued; 3) Make the determination to reinstate services after the services have been discontinued; 4) Approve corrective action plans; 5) Approve the removal of an employer's clearance orders from interstate or intrastate clearance if the employer was granted conditional access to ARS and did not come into compliance within 5 calendar days; 6) Enter into agreements with State and Federal enforcement agencies for enforcement-agency staff to conduct field checks on the SWAs' behalf (if the SWA so chooses); and 7) Decide whether to consent to the withdrawal of complaints if a party who requested a hearing wishes to withdraw its request for hearing in writing before the hearing.	Yes

#### WAGNER PEYSER PROGRAM PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

#### **Performance Goals for the Core Programs**

Each state submitting a Unified or Combined State Plan is required to identify expected levels of performance for each of the primary indicators of performance for the first two years covered by the plan. The state is required to reach agreement with the Secretary of Labor, in conjunction with the Secretary of Education, on state-negotiated levels of performance for the indicators for each of the first two years of the plan.

For Program Year (PY) 2016-2019 plans, the Departments used the transition authority under section 503(a) of WIOA to designate certain primary indicators of performance as "baseline" indicators to ensure an orderly transition from the requirements of the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 to those under WIOA. A "baseline" indicator was one for which states did not propose an expected level of performance and did not come to agreement with the Departments on negotiated levels of performance because sufficient data was not available to establish such performance levels. As a result, "baseline" indicators were not used in the end of the year adjustment of performance levels and were not used to determine failure to meet adjusted levels of performance for purposes of sanctions. The Departments designated indicators as "baseline" based on the likelihood of a State having insufficient data with which to make a reasonable determination of an expected level of performance.

For PYs 2020-2023 Plans, Title I programs (Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth) and the Title II program (Adult Education and Family Literacy Act) will have two full years of data available to make reasonable determinations of expected levels of performance for the following indicators for PY 2020 and PY 2021:

- Employment (Second Quarter after Exit);
- Employment (Fourth Quarter after Exit);
- Median Earnings (Second Quarter after Exit);

- Credential Attainment Rate; and
- Measurable Skill Gains

The Wagner-Peyser Act Employment Service program, authorized under the Wagner-Peyser Act, as amended by title III of WIOA, will have two full years of data available to make a reasonable determination of expected levels of performance for the following indicators for PY 2020 and PY 2021:

- Employment (Second Quarter after Exit);
- Employment (Fourth Quarter after Exit); and
- Median Earnings (Second Quarter after Exit)

The Credential Attainment Rate and Measurable Skill Gains indicators do not apply to the Wagner-Peyser Act Employment Service program; therefore, this program will not submit expected levels of performance for these indicators.

For the first two years of PYs 2020-2023 Plans, the Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) program, authorized under title I of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended by title IV of WIOA, will have two full years of data available for the Measurable Skill Gains indicator only. Therefore, the Departments will designate the following indicators as “baseline” for the VR program for PY 2020 and PY 2021:

- Employment (Second Quarter after Exit);
- Employment (Fourth Quarter after Exit);
- Median Earnings (Second Quarter after Exit); and
- Credential Attainment Rate

VR agencies must continue to collect and report on all indicators, including those that have been designated as “baseline, pursuant to section 116(d) of WIOA.” The actual performance data reported by these programs for indicators designated as “baseline” for PY 2020 and PY 2021 will serve as baseline data in future years. The Departments will require VR agencies to submit expected levels of performance for these indicators for PY 2022 and PY 2023.

The Departments determined that the Effectiveness in Serving Employers indicator will be measured as a shared outcome across all six core programs within each state to ensure a holistic approach to serving employers. The Departments will continue piloting approaches for measuring this indicator for the first two years of PY 2020-2023 plans. Therefore, states are not required to submit an expected level of performance for the Effectiveness in Serving Employers indicator for PY 2020 and PY 2021. However, core programs are expected to collect data and report on this indicator for PY 2020 and PY 2021 as they did for PYs 2016-2019 plans.

Each core program must submit an expected level of performance for all of the other indicators, as applicable, with the exception of the four indicators designated as “baseline” for the VR program in PY 2020 and PY 2021. The Departments will work with states during the negotiation process to establish negotiated levels of performance for each of the primary indicators for the core programs not listed as “baseline.” Each state must update its plan to include the agreed-upon negotiated levels of performance before the Departments approve a state’s plan.

States may identify additional indicators in the plan, including additional approaches to measuring Effectiveness in Serving Employers, and may establish levels of performance for each

of the state indicators. Please identify any such state indicators under Additional Indicators of Performance.

Performance Indicators	PY 2020 Expected Level	PY 2020 Negotiated Level	PY 2021 Expected Level	PY 2021 Negotiated Level
Employment (Second Quarter After Exit)	64.0%	66.0	64.0%	67.0
Employment (Fourth Quarter After Exit)	68.0%	69.0	68.0%	69.0
Median Earnings (Second Quarter After Exit)	\$6,400	7,000	\$6,400	7,100
Credential Attainment Rate	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
Measurable Skill Gains	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
Effectiveness in Serving Employers	Not Applicable <sup>1</sup>	Not Applicable <sup>1</sup>	Not Applicable <sup>1</sup>	Not Applicable <sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>

*“Effectiveness in Serving Employers” is still being piloted and this data will not be entered for 2020 State Plans.*

#### PROGRAM-SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS FOR ADULT EDUCATION AND FAMILY LITERACY ACT PROGRAMS

The Unified or Combined State Plan must include a description of the following as it pertains to adult education and literacy programs and activities under title II of WIOA, the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (AEFLA).

##### A. ALIGNING OF CONTENT STANDARDS

Describe how the eligible agency has aligned its content standards for adult education with State-adopted challenging academic content standards, as adopted under section 1111(b)(1) of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, as amended (20 U.S.C. 6311(b)(1)).

##### **ADULT EDUCATION AND FAMILY LITERACY ACT PROGRAM**

The Unified or Combined State Plan must include a description of the following as it pertains to adult education and literacy programs and activities under title II of WIOA, the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (AEFLA).

##### **A. ALIGNING OF CONTENT STANDARDS. DESCRIBE HOW THE ELIGIBLE AGENCY HAS ALIGNED ITS CONTENT STANDARDS FOR ADULT EDUCATION WITH STATE-ADOPTED CHALLENGING ACADEMIC CONTENT STANDARDS, AS ADOPTED UNDER SECTION 1111(B)(1) OF THE ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION ACT OF 1965, AS AMENDED (20 U.S.C. 6311(B)(1)).**

The content standards for the Minnesota Adult Basic Education (ABE) system comprise three components:

-

- The federally-developed College and Career Readiness Standards (CCRS) for Adult Education (<https://lincs.ed.gov/publications/pdf/CCRStandardsAdultEd.pdf>), which identify key English Language Arts/Literacy, Math, and Foundational Reading Skills;
- The Minnesota-developed Academic, Career and Employability Skills (ACES) Transitions Integration Framework (TIF) (<http://atlasabe.org/professional/transitions>), which identifies key professional or soft skills in the areas of Effective Communication, Learning Strategies, Critical Thinking, Self-Management, Developing a Future Pathway, Navigating Systems; and
- The Minnesota-developed Northstar Digital Literacy Standards (available at [www.digitalliteracyassessment.org](http://www.digitalliteracyassessment.org)), which identify key basic digital literacy skills needed to perform tasks on computers and online.

The CCRS for Adult Education are drawn from the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) and the Minnesota state-adopted K-12 standards for English Language Arts and Literacy and align with the CCSS. The current Minnesota state-adopted K-12 standards for Mathematics encompass some content that is beyond the scope of the CCSS, but are largely aligned with the CCSS.

As part of Minnesota’s 2017 federal grant competition, awardees were required to demonstrate that their curriculum, instruction, and assessment align to these MN ABE content standards and that their staff are trained on the use of the standards via the professional development as described in the following paragraph.

In order to ensure that all ABE practitioners are knowledgeable of the above listed standards and understand how to use them effectively to guide instruction and programming, the Minnesota ABE system has provided ongoing systematic professional development and other support to grantees including:

- - Face-to-face workshops and online trainings;
  - Training modules based on the College and Career Readiness Standards-in-Action training tools and processes;
  - Technical assistance to eligible providers focused on standards implementation;
  - Support for local Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) focused on standards implementation;
  - Online standards resource libraries; and
  - Support for the use of standards-aligned Open Educational Resources (OERs).

**NOTE: there does not appear to be a place in the portal for this information, so it is being included here to ensure that it is included in our state plan submission:**

**A. THE ALIGNMENT OF ADULT EDUCATION AND LITERACY ACTIVITIES WITH OTHER CORE PROGRAMS AND ONE-STOP PARTNERS, INCLUDING ELIGIBLE PROVIDERS, INCLUDING THE DEVELOPMENT OF CAREER PATHWAYS TO PROVIDE ACCESS TO**

## **EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING SERVICES FOR INDIVIDUALS IN ADULT EDUCATION AND LITERACY ACTIVITIES.**

MDE will work collaboratively with other core programs and partner agencies to align and coordinate services for program participants. State-level policy and planning bodies provide an opportunity for Minnesota's ABE system and local programs to partner with workforce development, human services, higher education and other key agencies. Leadership funds will be used to build the capacity of grantees to coordinate and align services. Specific areas of capacity building include intake/orientation, eligibility screening, and referral between partners, and other joint mechanisms developed through agency partnerships. In addition, the development of all components of career pathways will continue to be a priority with a focus on bridge programming and integrated education and training.

### **B. THE ESTABLISHMENT AND OPERATION OF HIGH QUALITY PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS TO IMPROVE THE INSTRUCTION PROVIDED PURSUANT TO REQUIRED LOCAL ACTIVITIES, INCLUDING INSTRUCTION INCORPORATING THE ESSENTIAL COMPONENTS OF READING INSTRUCTION AS SUCH COMPONENTS RELATE TO ADULTS, INSTRUCTION RELATED TO THE SPECIFIC NEEDS OF ADULT LEARNERS, INSTRUCTION PROVIDED BY VOLUNTEERS OR BY PERSONNEL, AND DISSEMINATION OF INFORMATION ABOUT MODELS AND PROMISING PRACTICES RELATED TO SUCH PROGRAMS.**

Minnesota supports a statewide ABE professional development (PD) advisory committee that meets quarterly to identify key present and future PD needs, develop PD plans and resources, identify and implement best practices in PD, and coordinate and align PD activities for an efficient and effective PD system. This advisory committee has approximately 25 members, and includes state ABE staff, PD providers and local ABE instructors and administrators.

The Minnesota PD system uses a data-driven planning process to identify PD needs and set priorities for each year. The results of an annual statewide PD needs assessment of local providers, along with evaluation data from previous PD efforts, research regarding best practices, and federal recommendations are used to inform PD priorities and the design and delivery of PD activities. Professional development activities are aligned to the MN ABE PD standards, which emphasize research-based features of effective professional development – longer-term, job-embedded activities with opportunities for collaborative participation and the application of new knowledge and skills. Both statewide and regional opportunities are provided for adult educators to develop and share their knowledge and skills in order to improve the quality of instruction delivered in local programs. These PD activities include professional learning communities, study circles, statewide and regional conferences, online courses, webinars, and others. Evaluation of PD outcomes, especially evidence of teacher change and quality of implementation of new knowledge and skills, is integrated into every initiative to ensure the effectiveness of PD activities.

State leadership funds will be used to support professional development activities that focus on a variety of areas of emphasis, including content standards implementation, evidence-based reading instruction (EBRI), adult learning, research-based instructional methodologies, volunteer training and management, effective program management, integrated education and

training, bridge programming, transition to postsecondary education, use of technology, distance education, universal design, serving students with disabilities, and volunteer training and recruitment.

The MDE-ABE office contracts for ABE professional development services related to research-based literacy, numeracy, English language instruction, content standards, and transitions. These PD activities include STAR training and technical assistance; EBRI study circles, online courses, and resource dissemination; and the implementation of content standards. More information regarding existing training provided may be viewed on the ATLAS (ABE Teaching and Learning Advancement System) homepage: [www.atlasabe.org](http://www.atlasabe.org).

In addition, the MDE-ABE office contracts to deliver professional development and technical assistance in the arena of serving adults with disabilities and to maintain a disabilities website <http://mn.abedisabilities.org>. The disabilities website has received considerable national attention and may be the leading model for adult education related disabilities web information in the United States. The disabilities service provider also provides training on using Universal Design for Learning principles and strategies to address the varied needs of adult learners. All disability-related activities are consistent with and contribute to implementation of Minnesota's Olmstead plan.

The MDE-ABE office contracts to provide statewide services in the areas of volunteer tutor training, volunteer management, and client referral services (a web-searchable Literacy Hotline and a phone hotline). The services are described in detail at: [www.mnliteracy.org](http://www.mnliteracy.org).

**C. THE PROVISION OF TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE TO ELIGIBLE PROVIDERS OF ADULT EDUCATION AND LITERACY ACTIVITIES RECEIVING FUNDS UNDER THIS TITLE, INCLUDING—**

- The development and dissemination of instructional and programmatic practices based on the most rigorous or scientifically valid research available and appropriate, in reading, writing, speaking, mathematics, English language acquisition programs, distance education, and staff training;
- The role of eligible providers as a one-stop partner to provide access to employment, education, and training services; and
- Assistance in the use of technology, including for staff training, to eligible providers, especially the use of technology to improve system efficiencies.

MDE will deliver technical assistance to eligible providers to enhance program effectiveness, increase the ability of providers to meet established performance standards, and fulfill obligations associated with being a one-stop partner. Specific areas of focus will include:

(1) Increasing the capacity of instructors and programs to provide quality instruction in the areas of reading, writing, speaking, mathematics, English language acquisition, and distance education via implementation of professional development activities and associated technical assistance such as:

- STAR training and Evidence-Based Reading Instruction study circles;
- EBRI and writing online courses;
- Annual Language and Literacy Institute;
- Low-literacy Adult ESL Study Circles;

- Minnesota Numeracy Initiative (MNI) cohort training;
- Annual Math Institute;
- Adult Career Pathway cohort training;
- Course Design cohorts;
- Contextualized instruction training;
- Distance learning professional development cohorts (DL 101 and DL 102);
- MN distance learning website
- Distance Learning Basics online course
- Online resource libraries in the areas of EBRI, STAR, writing, adult ESL, numeracy, writing, content standards, transitions, content standards, and project-based learning

(2) Enabling providers to establish, build upon, or maintain effective relationships with other core providers via training on referral systems, data sharing/reporting, integrating education with occupational training, and transition strategies for postsecondary enrollment or employment.

(3) Using technology to improve program effectiveness through training and technical assistance focused on preparing instructors and program administrators to identify and utilize technology to enhance instruction, programming, and distance education. MDE-ABE contracts to provide professional development in the area of technology through activities such as face-to-face and online training. More information about current technology training can be found at: <https://mnliteracy.org/techservices>. MDE-ABE contracts to provide online training in a variety of areas, including educational technology, digital literacy instruction, and distance learning. A list of current courses available can be found at: <http://online.themlc.org/>. Training and technical assistance around distance education and digital literacy is also offered through a contracted provider. More information about current training and resources can be found at: <http://www.mnabe-distancelearning.org/>

In addition, other training and technical assistance focuses on the effective use of the statewide data system to maintain accurate student data and continuously improve programming. This support is offered in a variety of formats and venues.

**D. THE MONITORING AND EVALUATION OF THE QUALITY OF, AND THE IMPROVEMENT IN, ADULT EDUCATION AND LITERACY ACTIVITIES AND THE DISSEMINATION OF INFORMATION ABOUT MODELS AND PROVEN OR PROMISING PRACTICES WITHIN THE STATE.**

MDE will provide grantee oversight to include data monitoring, site visits and a program improvement process for low performing grantees. The following strategies will be implemented:

- Data Reviews – The statewide MIS will be configured to facilitate ongoing review in the areas of assessment, attendance and compliance.

- Monitoring Visits – MDE will establish a monitoring system focusing on programs identified via data review. Visits will focus primarily on compliance related issues, but may be incorporated in the more extensive program review, and will result in development and monitored implementation of a local corrective action plan, called the program improvement process. (For more information on monitoring visits, please see the response to (f) below.)
- Program Improvement Process - Local providers that do not meet state and federal program performance targets and grant expectations will be subject to a program improvement process. Over the course of one year, a provider in program improvement will:
  - Host site visits from staff from MDE;
  - Participate in special workshops focusing on analyzing and improving local program results;
  - Develop a program improvement plan that will highlight key local challenges, ensure program compliance with state and federal policy, and identify strategies and timelines to improve program performance; and
  - Receive additional technical assistance from MDE and other adult education specialists, as needed.

The program improvement process will last at least one program year. At the end of the program year, the provider will complete the process as long as the provider’s annual grant performance reports meet state and federal targets and grant expectations. Local providers that continue to not meet state and federal targets and grant expectations will be subject to participate in program improvement again. Providers that do not meet state and federal targets and grant expectations 3 consecutive years, may be subject to a special review by MDE to determine if the provider should continue to receive AEFLA funding.

The MDE-ABE office and professional development providers will employ a variety of methods to ensure that information about proven or promising practices and models is disseminated to eligible providers and practitioners working in the ABE system. These will include activities such as:

- Local program site visits, as described in f.5 below;
- A weekly electronic professional development newsletter with information about training opportunities, high-quality resources, and promising practices for instruction and programming;
- Sessions at state and regional conferences showcasing promising practices and models;
- Webinars showcasing promising practices and models; and
- Job-embedded professional development activities, including professional learning communities, study circles and peer observations.

#### B. LOCAL ACTIVITIES

Describe how the State will, using the considerations specified in section 231(e) of WIOA, fund each eligible provider to establish or operate programs that provide any of the following adult education and literacy activities identified in section 203 of WIOA, including programs that

provide such activities concurrently. The Unified or Combined State Plan must include at a minimum the scope, content, and organization of these local activities.

#### ADULT EDUCATION AND LITERACY ACTIVITIES (SECTION 203 OF WIOA)

- Adult education;
- Literacy;
- Workplace adult education and literacy activities;
- Family literacy activities;
- English language acquisition activities;
- Integrated English literacy and civics education;
- Workforce preparation activities; or
- Integrated education and training that—
  1. Provides adult education and literacy activities, concurrently and contextually with both, workforce preparation activities, and workforce training for a specific occupation or occupational cluster, and
  2. Is for the purpose of educational and career advancement.

**Special Rule.** Each eligible agency awarding a grant or contract under this section shall not use any funds made available under this title for adult education and literacy activities for the purpose of supporting or providing programs, services, or activities for individuals who are under the age of 16 and are enrolled or required to be enrolled in secondary school under State law, except that such agency may use such funds for such purpose if such programs, services, or activities are related to family literacy activities. In providing family literacy activities under this title, an eligible provider shall attempt to coordinate with programs and services that are not assisted under this title prior to using funds for adult education and literacy activities under this title for activities other than activities for eligible individuals.

**B. LOCAL ACTIVITIES. DESCRIBE HOW THE STATE WILL, USING THE CONSIDERATIONS SPECIFIED IN SECTION 231(E) OF WIOA, FUND EACH ELIGIBLE PROVIDER TO ESTABLISH OR OPERATE PROGRAMS THAT PROVIDE ANY OF THE FOLLOWING ADULT EDUCATION AND LITERACY ACTIVITIES IDENTIFIED IN SECTION 203 OF WIOA, INCLUDING PROGRAMS THAT PROVIDE SUCH ACTIVITIES CONCURRENTLY. THE UNIFIED OR COMBINED STATE PLAN MUST INCLUDE AT A MINIMUM THE SCOPE, CONTENT, AND ORGANIZATION OF THESE LOCAL ACTIVITIES.**

#### **Adult Education and Literacy Activities (Section 203 of WIOA)**

- - Adult education;
  - Literacy;
  - Workplace adult education and literacy activities;

- Family literacy activities;
- English language acquisition activities;
- Integrated English literacy and civics education;
- Workforce preparation activities; or
- Integrated education and training that—

1. Provides adult education and literacy activities, concurrently and contextually with both, workforce preparation activities, and workforce training for a specific occupation or occupational cluster, and

2. Is for the purpose of educational and career advancement.

**Special Rule.** Each eligible agency awarding a grant or contract under this section shall not use any funds made available under this title for adult education and literacy activities for the purpose of supporting or providing programs, services, or activities for individuals who are under the age of 16 and are enrolled or required to be enrolled in secondary school under State law, except that such agency may use such funds for such purpose if such programs, services, or activities are related to family literacy activities. In providing family literacy activities under this title, an eligible provider shall attempt to coordinate with programs and services that are not assisted under this title prior to using funds for adult education and literacy activities under this title for activities other than activities for eligible individuals.

## **TITLE II - AEFLA PROVIDER SELECTION AND FUNDING ALLOCATION PROCESS**

MDE is the State's Eligible Agency for Adult Education and Literacy programs. MDE is responsible for administering funds and providing program/performance oversight to grantees.

Adult Education and Literacy eligible providers approved under Workforce Investment Act of 1998 requirements continued to receive funding through June 30, 2017, as long as they adhered to state and federal grant expectations, as measured through annual applications, financial reports, and program performance reports.

During grant year 2016–17, MDE implemented a competitive application process for all federal AEFLA funding that was based on the 13 considerations in Title II of WIOA and included additional state ABE priorities. As a result of that process, 41 providers from throughout Minnesota were selected to receive funding beginning July 1, 2017. Minnesota will conduct a new grant competition during the 2021-22 program year in order to identify grantees who will begin receiving federal ABE funds on July 1, 2022.

### **TIMELINE**

The following steps and timeline were followed in 2017 and will be used again for the 2021-22 WIOA AEFLA competition:

**February** MDE publishes and promotes WIOA-aligned federal AEFLA grant application request for proposals (RFP)

<b>February</b>	MDE provides technical assistance to inquiries from eligible providers
<b>February-March</b>	MDE recruits reviewers to score and rate WIOA-aligned federally-funded AEFLA grant applications
<b>March</b>	Due date for WIOA-aligned federally-funded AEFLA grant applications
<b>March-April</b>	Reviewers score and rate WIOA-aligned federally-funded AEFLA grant applications
<b>April</b>	MDE decides which applicants will be approved as providers based on reviewer scores and ratings and application's response to the conditions and criteria in the RFP
<b>April-May</b>	MDE announces WIOA-aligned federally-funded AEFLA grant applicants that will receive funding
<b>July 1st</b>	WIOA-aligned federally-funded AEFLA grant providers begin grant cycle, programming and funding

## **ELIGIBLE PROVIDERS**

An eligible local provider is an organization that has demonstrated effectiveness in providing adult education activities to eligible individuals and may include:

- - A local education agency;
  - Community-based or faith-based organization;
  - Volunteer literacy organization;
  - Institution of higher education;
  - Public or private nonprofit agency;
  - Library;
  - Public housing authority;
  - Nonprofit institution with the ability to provide adult education and literacy services;
  - Consortium or coalition of agencies, organizations, institutions, libraries, or authorities described above; and
  - A partnership between an employer and an entity described above.

## **APPLICATION PROMOTION AND PUBLICATION**

In February 2017, the grant competition for the 2017-18 grant year was publicized in compliance with federal law, Minnesota statute, and MDE policy in order to ensure that all eligible providers had direct and equitable access to apply and compete for grants. The process was fair and equitable and followed federal AEFLA grant funding requirements and other federal grant procedures. MDE published and promoted all grant opportunities on its website.

Any eligible entity (described above) was able to submit a proposal. A similar process will be followed in 2022.

## **ALLOCATIONS**

MDE dedicates 82.5 percent of the state allocation of federal AEFLA funding to grants to eligible providers. This amount is allocated to grantees based on scope of service (number of prior year contact hours for eligible service), accountability aid, regional aid to help local programs implement AEFLA initiatives and aid to support services to participants with low incidence disabilities.

In addition, 12.5 percent of the state allocation is dedicated to Leadership supporting activities such as: professional development; volunteer recruitment and training; technology; serving students with disabilities; distance learning and digital literacy; program quality support; assessment training; and career pathway and other transitions-related collaborations.

## **13 CONSIDERATIONS**

MDE used the considerations specified in Section 231(e) of WIOA and listed below as the criteria for selecting and funding eligible providers in 2017 and will do so again in 2022. As part of the RFP process, agencies were/will be required to provide narrative detail describing how they will meet each consideration.

1. **Needs Assessment:** The degree to which the provider is responsive to (A) regional needs as identified in the local plan under Section 108; and (B) serving individuals in the community who are identified in such plan as most in need of adult education and literacy activities, including individuals who have low levels of literacy skills and who are English language learners.
2. **Individuals with Disabilities:** The degree to which the provider is able to serve eligible individuals with disabilities, including eligible individuals with learning disabilities.
3. **Past Effectiveness:** The degree to which the provider demonstrates past effectiveness in improving the literacy of eligible individuals, to meet State-adjusted levels of performance for the primary indicators of performance described in Section 116, especially with respect to eligible individuals who have low levels of literacy.
4. **Alignment with One-stop Partners:** The degree to which the eligible provider is responsive to, and demonstrates alignment between, proposed activities and services and the strategy and goals of the local plan under Section 108 as well as the activities and services of the one-stop partners.
5. **Intensity, Quality, and Instructional Practices:** The degree to which the eligible provider's program is of sufficient intensity and quality, and based on the most rigorous research available so that participants achieve substantial learning gains; and uses instructional practices that include the essential components of reading instruction.
6. **Research Based Educational Practices:** The degree to which the eligible provider's activities including reading, writing, speaking, mathematics, and English language acquisition instruction, are based on the best practices derived from the most rigorous research available and appropriate, including scientifically valid research and effective educational practice.

7. **Effective Use of Technology:** The degree to which the eligible provider's activities effectively use technology, services, and delivery systems, including distance education in a manner sufficient to increase the amount and quality of learning and how such technology, services, and systems lead to improved performance.
8. **Integrated Education and Training:** The degree to which the eligible provider's activities offer learning in context, including through integrated education and training, so that an individual acquires the skills needed to transition to and complete postsecondary education and training programs, obtain and advance in employment leading to economic self-sufficiency, and to exercise the rights and responsibilities of citizenship.
9. **Qualified Staff:** The degree to which the eligible provider's activities are delivered by well-trained instructors, counselors, and administrators who meet any minimum qualifications established by the state, where applicable, and who have access to high quality professional development, including through electronic means.
10. **Partnerships and Development of Career Pathways:** The degree to which the eligible provider's activities coordinate with other available education, training, and social service resources in the community, such as by establishing strong links with elementary schools and secondary schools, postsecondary educational institutions, institutions of higher education, local workforce development boards, one-stop centers, job training programs, and social service agencies, business, industry, labor organizations, community-based organizations, nonprofit organizations, and intermediaries, for the development of career pathways.
11. **Flexible Schedules and Coordination with Support Services:** The degree to which the eligible provider's activities offer flexible schedules and coordination with Federal, State, and local support services (such as child care, transportation, mental health services, and career planning) that are necessary to enable individuals, including individuals with disabilities or other special needs, to attend and complete programs information management system that has the capacity to report measurable participant outcomes (consistent with Section 116) and to monitor program performance.
12. **Information management system:** The expectation will be that the eligible provider will use the State-administered designated MIS for all grant-related data collection and reporting; and
13. **English Language Acquisition and Civics Education:** The degree to which the eligible provider has a demonstrated need for additional English language acquisition programs and civics education programs.

#### **ADDITIONAL CRITERIA**

In addition to the above 13 considerations, the grant application also required descriptions of applicants:

- - Location, service area, the scope of the program, a description of the population to be served, fiscal management procedures, and audit history;
  - Capacity to offer day, evening, and distance education programming including evidence of the organization's AEFLA-eligible activity services in the prior year.

- Budget, as well as programmatic information regarding statutory requirements;
- Coordination with other service providers to provide wrap-around services to participants (e.g., child care, transportation);
- A description of how the program will align activities to the Local Plan for WIOA providers and supportive services; and
- The ability to match federal funding with other funding from state, local, organizational or other sources that would directly go to providing AEFLA-eligible activities.

## **REVIEW PROCESS**

Proposals were rated and scored by teams of reviewers approved MDE Grants Office. The review process for selecting successful applicants included formally scoring applications on their responses to each of the 13 considerations of WIOA, the programming proposed and its alignment to the four instructional components, the articulated use of funds, and additional criteria listed above. MDE selected applicants for federal AEFLA funding based on proposals with the highest scores, noting also the additional criteria listed above. Applicants selected for federal AEFLA funding were notified in May-June and were eligible to start programming on July 1. The same process will be followed in 2022.

### **Annually**

All approved providers are required to comply with all state and federal regulations, policies and expectations for AEFLA grantees including:

1. Using the state AEFLA database system;
2. Reporting annual performance data; and
3. Additional requirements or reporting upon request by state and local agencies.

### **Adult Basic Education Programming**

The focus of adult education instruction in Minnesota will be the above noted content standards contextualized to enhance readiness for employment, citizenship, postsecondary education and training provided through comprehensive services that meet the diverse educational needs of students.

In accordance with federal regulation, grantees receive adult education funding for the delivery of any of the following adult education and literacy activities:

- - adult education;
  - literacy;
  - workplace adult education and literacy activities;
  - family literacy activities;
  - English language and acquisition activities;

- integrated English literacy and civics education (IEL/Civics);
- workforce preparation activities; or
- integrated education and training, which

1. provides adult education and literacy activities, concurrently and contextually with both, workforce preparation activities, and workforce training for a specific occupation or occupational cluster, and

2. is for the purpose of educational and career advancement.

Eligible providers are required to implement such activities in accordance with the following federal definitions:

Adult education means academic instruction and education services below the postsecondary level that increase an individual's ability to read, write, and speak in English and perform mathematics or other activities necessary for the attainment of a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent; transition to postsecondary education and training; and obtain employment.

Literacy means an individual's ability to read, write, and speak in English, compute, and solve problems, at levels of proficiency necessary to function on the job, in the family of the individual, and in society.

Workplace adult education and literacy activities means adult education and literacy activities offered by an eligible provider in collaboration with an employer or employee organization at a workplace or an off-site location that is designed to improve the productivity of the workforce.

Family literacy activities means activities that are of sufficient intensity and quality to make sustainable improvements in the economic prospects for a family, and that better enable parents or family members to support their children's learning needs, and that integrate all of the following activities:

- A. Parent or family adult education and literacy activities that lead to readiness for postsecondary education or training, career advancement, and economic self-sufficiency.
- B. Interactive literacy activities between parents or family members and their children.
- C. Training for parents or family members regarding how to be the primary teacher for their children and full partners in the education of their children.
- D. An age-appropriate education to prepare children for success in school and life experiences.

#### Special Rule for Family Literacy

MDE will not use any funds made available under this title for adult education and literacy activities for the purpose of supporting or providing programs, services, or activities for individuals who are under the age of 16 and are enrolled or required to be enrolled in secondary school under State law, except that the agency may use such funds for such purpose if such programs, services, or activities are related to family literacy activities. In providing family literacy activities under this title, MDE will attempt to coordinate with programs and services that are not assisted under this title prior to using funds for adult education and literacy activities under this title for activities other than activities for eligible individuals.

English language acquisition program means a program of instruction designed to help eligible individuals who are English language learners achieve competence in reading, writing, speaking, and comprehension of the English language; and that leads to attainment of a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent; and transition to postsecondary education and training; or employment.

Integrated English literacy and civics education means education services provided to English language learners who are adults, including professionals with degrees and credentials in their native countries, that enables such adults to achieve competency in the English language and acquire the basic and more advanced skills needed to function effectively as parents, workers, and citizens in the United States. Such services shall include instruction in literacy and English language acquisition and instruction on the rights and responsibilities of citizenship and civic participation, and may include workforce training.

Workforce preparation activities means activities, programs, or services designed to help an individual acquire a combination of basic academic skills, critical thinking skills, digital literacy skills, and self-management skills, including competencies in utilizing resources, using information, working with others, understanding systems, and obtaining skills necessary for successful transition into and completion of postsecondary education or training, or employment.

Integrated education and training means a service approach that provides adult education and literacy activities concurrently and contextually with workforce preparation activities, and workforce training for a specific occupation or occupational cluster for the purpose of educational and career advancement.

All funded programs will be required to offer the above listed kinds of programming concurrently based on the needs of the population served and encouraged to blend as much programming as possible into coordinated occupational training, employment, and academic pathways as possible by addressing all standards (CCRS, ACES, and North Star) in all program components, contextualizing secondary credential programming and providing “navigation” support.

Federal funds may be used to increase the level of nonfederal funds that would be available in the absence of federal funds, and, in no case, replace those nonfederal funds. Federal funds must not be used for the purpose of supplanting, only for supplementing.

#### C. CORRECTIONS EDUCATION AND OTHER EDUCATION OF INSTITUTIONALIZED INDIVIDUALS

Describe how the State will establish and operate programs under section 225 of WIOA for corrections education and education of other institutionalized individuals, including how it will fund, in accordance with the requirements of title II subtitle C, any of the following academic programs for:

- Adult education and literacy activities;
- Special education, as determined by the eligible agency;
- Secondary school credit;
- Integrated education and training;
- Career pathways;
- Concurrent enrollment;

- Peer tutoring; and
- Transition to re-entry initiatives and other post release services with the goal of reducing recidivism.

Each eligible agency using funds provided under Programs for Corrections Education and Other Institutionalized Individuals to carry out a program for criminal offenders within a correctional institution must give priority to serving individuals who are likely to leave the correctional institution within 5 years of participation in the program.

**C. CORRECTIONS EDUCATION AND OTHER EDUCATION OF INSTITUTIONALIZED INDIVIDUALS. DESCRIBE HOW THE STATE WILL ESTABLISH AND OPERATE PROGRAMS UNDER SECTION 225 OF WIOA FOR CORRECTIONS EDUCATION AND EDUCATION OF OTHER INSTITUTIONALIZED INDIVIDUALS, INCLUDING HOW IT WILL FUND, IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE REQUIREMENTS OF TITLE II SUBTITLE C, ANY OF THE FOLLOWING ACADEMIC PROGRAMS FOR:**

- Adult education and literacy activities;
- Special education, as determined by the eligible agency;
- Secondary school credit;
- Integrated education and training;
- Career pathways;
- Concurrent enrollment;
- Peer tutoring; and
- Transition to re-entry initiatives and other post release services with the goal of reducing recidivism.

Each eligible agency using funds provided under Programs for Corrections Education and Other Institutionalized Individuals to carry out a program for criminal offenders within a correctional institution must give priority to serving individuals who are likely to leave the correctional institution within 5 years of participation in the program.

**Correctional Institution Programs**

MDE awards funds to carry out corrections education and education for other institutionalized individuals within correctional institutions in accordance with the requirements of section 225.

Each grantee that receives funds provided under section 225 to carry out a program for criminal offenders within a correctional institution shall give priority to serving individuals who are likely to leave the correctional institution within five years of participation in the program. Applicants must describe in their grant application how they give priority to individuals most likely to leave the correctional institution within five years of participation in the program.

Section 225(a) of WIOA states, “from funds made available under Section 222(a)(1) for a fiscal year, each eligible agency shall carry out corrections education or education for other

institutionalized individuals. The funds described shall be used to provide: (1) Adult education and literacy services, (2) Special education as determined by the eligible agency, (3) Secondary school credit, and (4) Integrated education and training; (5) Career pathways; (6) Concurrent enrollment; (7) Peer tutoring; and (8) Transition to re-entry initiatives and other post-release services with the goal of reducing recidivism.

MDE reserves no more than 20 percent of its federal grant received under WIOA to provide programs for corrections education and education for other institutionalized individuals as described in Section 225 and used the same application process being used for section 231 funds. A single applicant was approved to provide services to Minnesota's Department of Corrections system. County corrections facilities as well as other facilities such as state hospitals, rehabilitation centers, and limited retention facilities will be addressed by applicants competing for the service area in which they are located.

#### **D. INTEGRATED ENGLISH LITERACY AND CIVICS EDUCATION PROGRAM**

Describe how the State will establish and operate Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education programs under Section 243 of WIOA, for English language learners who are adults, including professionals with degrees and credentials in their native countries, including how the Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education program under section 243(a) of WIOA will be delivered in combination with integrated education and training activities.

Describe how the State will fund, in accordance with the requirements of title II, subtitle C, an Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education program and how the funds will be used for the program.

Describe how the Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education program under section 243(a) of WIOA will be designed to prepare adults who are English language learners for, and place such adults in, unsubsidized employment in in-demand industries and occupations that lead to economic self-sufficiency.

Describe how the Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education program under section 243(a) of WIOA will be designed to integrate with the local workforce development system and its functions to carry out the activities of the program.

#### **D. INTEGRATED ENGLISH LITERACY AND CIVICS EDUCATION PROGRAM.**

Describe how the State will establish and operate Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education programs under Section 243 of WIOA, for English language learners who are adults, including professionals with degrees and credentials in their native countries, including how the Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education program under section 243(a) of WIOA will be delivered in combination with integrated education and training activities.

Describe how the State will fund, in accordance with the requirements of title II, subtitle C, an Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education program and how the funds will be used for the program.

Describe how the Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education program will be delivered in combination with integrated education and training activities.

Describe how the program is designed to (1) prepare adults who are English language learners for, and place such adults in, unsubsidized employment in in-demand industries and

occupations that lead to economic self-sufficiency and (2) integrate with the local workforce development system and its functions to carry out the activities of the program.

#### Integrated English Literacy and Civics (IEL/Civics) Education

The goals of IEL/Civics Education are to:

(1) prepare adults who are English language learners for, and place such adults in, unsubsidized employment in in-demand industries and occupations that lead to economic self-sufficiency; and

(2) integrate with the local workforce development system and its functions to carry out the activities of the program.

All IEL/Civics grantees are required to provide all four instructional components as outlined in WIOA including:

1. English Literacy
2. Civics
3. Workforce Preparation
4. Work Training and Certification

Minnesota grantees are required to address the College and Career Ready Standards (CCRS), Minnesota's Academic, Career and Employability Standards (ACES) and North Star Digital Literacy Standards. In addition, grantees will be required to provide English instruction contextualized to both civics content and occupational training with the occupational training opportunities comprising both short-term certificate programs and well as more extended career pathways.

MDE continues to offer multi-year grants through a competitive request-for-proposal (RFP) process specifically for IEL/Civics Education (243) grant funds. The application RFP requires that applicants describe:

- The programming they would implement and how it incorporates the four instructional components as described above;
- How the grant funds will be used to fund the described programming; and
- Address the Title II 13 considerations.

Each application is scored by independent reviewers with grants of up to \$50,000 per site awarded to the highest scoring applicants as funds permit.

Eligible providers for IEL/Civics grants include local education agencies, community based organizations (including faith-based organizations), volunteer literacy organizations, institutions of higher education, public or private nonprofits, public housing authorities, libraries, and consortiums of the above.

A fair and equitable process is followed to allow all eligible entities the opportunity to apply for the IEL/Civics grant. MDE publishes all grant opportunities on its website. IEL/Civics proposals are rated and scored by teams of reviewers approved by the MDE Grants Office.

The review process for selecting successful applicants includes formally scoring applications on their responses to each of the 13 considerations of WIOA, the programming proposed and its

alignment to the four instructional components, and the articulated use of funds. IELCE grantees are also required to describe how their program comprises a clear pathway to occupational training that incorporates the IET model including: how the civics and literacy instruction relates to and prepares students for successful transition to and participation in the IET component of the pathway.

Grantees are also asked to describe how their program collaborates with other entities and aligns to workforce development regional needs including providing:

1. Evidence of alignment to local or regional needs as outlined by local workforce boards and/or partners in the workforce development plans, including how applicant will promote concurrent enrollment with programs in Title I.
2. Indications of alignment between proposed activities and services and the strategy and goals of the local plan under section 108 of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, as well as the activities and services of the one-stop partners.
3. Description of the program's flexible schedules and coordination with Federal, State, and local support services (such as child care, transportation, mental health services, and career planning) that are necessary to enable individuals, including individuals with disabilities or other special needs, to attend and complete programs.
4. How IELCE programming is developed in coordination and collaboration with other educational, training, and social service resources in the community. Partner entities could include elementary schools and secondary schools, postsecondary educational institutions, institutions of higher education, local workforce development boards, one-stop centers, job training programs, social service agencies, business, industry, labor organizations, community-based organizations, nonprofit organizations, and intermediaries.

Grantees receive considerable technical assistance from the MDE-ABE office and will be convened for targeted professional development that emphasizes current best-practices.

#### E. STATE LEADERSHIP

1. DESCRIBE HOW THE STATE WILL USE THE FUNDS TO CARRY OUT THE REQUIRED STATE LEADERSHIP ACTIVITIES UNDER SECTION 223 OF WIOA

#### **E. STATE LEADERSHIP.**

Describe how the State will use the funds to carry out the required State Leadership activities under section 223 of WIOA.

#### STATE LEADERSHIP

MDE uses funds made available under section 222(a)(2) to enhance the quality of programming in the adult education system. Not more than 12.5 percent of the grant funds made available are used to carry out State leadership activities under section 223.

A) The alignment of adult education and literacy activities with other core programs and one-stop partners, including eligible providers, including the development of career pathways to provide access to employment and training services for individuals in adult education and literacy activities.

The Minnesota Department of Education will work collaboratively with other core programs and partner agencies to align and coordinate services for program participants. State-level

policy and planning bodies provide an opportunity for Minnesota's ABE system and local programs to partner with workforce development, human services, higher education and other key agencies. Leadership funds will be used to build the capacity of grantees to coordinate and align services. Specific areas of capacity building include intake/orientation, eligibility screening, and referral between partners, and other joint mechanisms developed through agency partnerships. In addition, the development of all components of career pathways will continue to be a priority with a focus on bridge programming and integrated education and training.

B) The establishment and operation of high quality professional development programs to improve the instruction provided pursuant to required local activities, including instruction incorporating the essential components of reading instruction as such components relate to adults, instruction related to the specific needs of adult learners, instruction provided by volunteers or by personnel, and dissemination of information about models and promising practices related to such programs.

Minnesota supports a statewide ABE professional development (PD) advisory committee that meets quarterly to identify key present and future PD needs, develop PD plans and resources, identify and implement best practices in PD, and coordinate and align PD activities for an efficient and effective PD system. This advisory committee has approximately 25 members, and includes state ABE staff, PD providers and local ABE instructors and administrators.

The Minnesota PD system uses a data-driven planning process to identify PD needs and set priorities for each year. The results of an annual statewide PD needs assessment of local providers, along with evaluation data from previous PD efforts, research regarding best practices, and federal recommendations are used to inform PD priorities and the design and delivery of PD activities. Professional development activities are aligned to the MN ABE PD standards, which emphasize research-based features of effective professional development – longer-term, job-embedded activities with opportunities for collaborative participation and the application of new knowledge and skills. Both statewide and regional opportunities are provided for adult educators to develop and share their knowledge and skills in order to improve the quality of instruction delivered in local programs. These PD activities include professional learning communities, study circles, statewide and regional conferences, online courses, webinars, and others. Evaluation of PD outcomes, especially evidence of teacher change and quality of implementation of new knowledge and skills, is integrated into every initiative to ensure the effectiveness of PD activities.

State leadership funds will be used to support professional development activities that focus on a variety of areas of emphasis, including content standards implementation, evidence-based reading instruction (EBRI), adult learning, research-based instructional methodologies, volunteer training and management, effective program management, integrated education and training, bridge programming, transition to postsecondary education, use of technology, distance education, universal design, serving students with disabilities, and volunteer training and recruitment.

The MDE-ABE office contracts for ABE professional development services related to research-based literacy, numeracy, English language instruction, content standards, and transitions. These PD activities include STAR training and technical assistance; EBRI study circles, online courses, and resource dissemination; and the implementation of content standards. More information regarding existing training provided may be viewed on the ATLAS (ABE Teaching and Learning Advancement System) homepage: [www.atlasabe.org](http://www.atlasabe.org).

In addition, the MDE-ABE office contracts to deliver professional development and technical assistance in the arena of serving adults with disabilities and to maintain a disabilities website <http://mn.abedisabilities.org>. The disabilities website has received considerable national attention and may be the leading model for adult education related disabilities web information in the United States. The disabilities service provider also provides training on using Universal Design for Learning principles and strategies to address the varied needs of adult learners. All disability-related activities are consistent with and contribute to implementation of Minnesota's Olmstead plan.

The MDE-ABE office contracts to provide statewide services in the areas of volunteer tutor training, volunteer management, and client referral services (a web-searchable Literacy Hotline and a phone hotline). The services are described in detail at: [www.mnliteracy.org](http://www.mnliteracy.org)

C) The provision of technical assistance to eligible providers of adult education and literacy activities receiving funds under this title, including—

1. The development and dissemination of instructional and programmatic practices based on the most rigorous or scientifically valid research available and appropriate, in reading, writing, speaking, mathematics, English language acquisition programs, distance education, and staff training;
2. The role of eligible providers as a one-stop partner to provide access to employment, education, and training services; and
3. Assistance in the use of technology, including for staff training, to eligible providers, especially the use of technology to improve system efficiencies.

The Minnesota Department of Education will deliver technical assistance to eligible providers to enhance program effectiveness, increase the ability of providers to meet established performance standards, and fulfill obligations associated with being a one-stop partner. Specific areas of focus will include:

(1) Increasing the capacity of instructors and programs to provide quality instruction in the areas of reading, writing, speaking, mathematics, English language acquisition, and distance education via implementation of professional development activities and associated technical assistance such as:

- STAR training and Evidence-Based Reading Instruction study circles;
- EBRI and writing online courses;
- Annual Language and Literacy Institute;
- Low-literacy Adult ESL Study Circles;
- Minnesota Numeracy Initiative (MNI) cohort training;
- Annual Math Institute;
- Adult Career Pathway cohort training;
- Course Design cohorts;
- Contextualized instruction training;
- Distance learning professional development cohorts (DL 101 and DL 102);

- MN distance learning website
- Distance Learning Basics online course
- Online resource libraries in the areas of EBRI, STAR, writing, adult ESL, numeracy, writing, content standards, transitions, content standards, and project-based learning

(2) Enabling providers to establish, build upon, or maintain effective relationships with other core providers via training on referral systems, data sharing/reporting, integrating education with occupational training, and transition strategies for post-secondary enrollment or employment.

(3) Using technology to improve program effectiveness through training and technical assistance focused on preparing instructors and program administrators to identify and utilize technology to enhance instruction, programming, and distance education. MDE-ABE contracts to provide professional development in the area of technology through activities such as face-to-face and online training. More information about current technology training can be found at: <https://mnliteracy.org/techservices>. MDE-ABE contracts to provide online training in a variety of areas, including educational technology, digital literacy instruction, and distance learning. A list of current courses available can be found at: <http://online.themlc.org/>. Training and technical assistance around distance education and digital literacy is also offered through a contracted provider. More information about current training and resources can be found at: <http://www.mnabe-distancelearning.org/>

In addition, other training and technical assistance focuses on the effective use of the statewide data system to maintain accurate student data and continuously improve programming. This support is offered in a variety of formats and venues.

D) The monitoring and evaluation of the quality of, and the improvement in, adult education and literacy activities and the dissemination of information about models and proven or promising practices within the State.

The Minnesota Department of Education will provide grantee oversight to include data monitoring, site visits and a program improvement process for low performing grantees. The following strategies will be implemented:

- **Data Reviews** – The statewide MIS will be configured to facilitate ongoing review in the areas of assessment, attendance and compliance.
- **Monitoring Visits** – The Minnesota Department of Education will establish a monitoring system focusing on programs identified via data review. Visits will focus primarily on compliance related issues, but may be incorporated in the more extensive program review, and will result in development and monitored implementation of a local corrective action plan, called the program improvement process. *(For more information on monitoring visits, please see the response to (f) below.)*
- **Program Improvement Process - Local providers that do not meet state and federal program performance targets and grant expectations will be subject to a program improvement process. Over the course of one year, a provider in program improvement will:**
  - **Host site visits from staff from the Minnesota Department of Education;**
  - **Participate in special workshops focusing on analyzing and improving local program results;**

- Develop a program improvement plan that will highlight key local challenges, ensure program compliance with state and federal policy, and identify strategies and timelines to improve program performance; and
- Receive additional technical assistance from Minnesota Department of Education and other adult education specialists, as needed.

The program improvement process will last at least one program year. At the end of the program year, the provider will complete the process as long as the provider's annual grant performance reports meet state and federal targets and grant expectations. Local providers that continue to not meet state and federal targets and grant expectations will be subject to participate in program improvement again. Providers that do not meet state and federal targets and grant expectations 3 consecutive years, may be subject to a special review by the Minnesota Department of Education to determine if the provider should continue to receive AEFLA funding.

The MDE-ABE office and professional development providers will employ a variety of methods to ensure that information about proven or promising practices and models is disseminated to eligible providers and practitioners working in the ABE system. These will include activities such as:

- local program site visits, as described in f.5 below;
- a weekly electronic professional development newsletter with information about training opportunities, high-quality resources, and promising practices for instruction and programming;
- sessions at state and regional conferences showcasing promising practices and models;
- webinars showcasing promising practices and models; and
- job-embedded professional development activities, including professional learning communities, study circles and peer observations.

**2. DESCRIBE HOW THE STATE WILL USE THE FUNDS TO CARRY OUT PERMISSIBLE STATE LEADERSHIP ACTIVITIES UNDER SECTION 223 OF WIOA, IF APPLICABLE**

**E. STATE LEADERSHIP.**

Describe how the State will use the funds to carry out the required State Leadership activities under section 223 of WIOA.

Describe how the State will use the funds to carry out permissible State Leadership Activities under section 223 of WIOA, if applicable.

**STATE LEADERSHIP**

MDE uses funds made available under section 222(a)(2) to enhance the quality of programming in the adult education system. Not more than 12.5 percent of the grant funds made available are used to carry out State leadership activities under section 223. Funds will be used to support activities in the areas including: teacher professional development; volunteer training; training related to using technology including distance education; assessment and program information use training; building capacity to implement universal design and other disability-related services; and training regarding designing and implementing all aspects of career pathway programming.

## F. ASSESSING QUALITY

Describe how the eligible agency will assess the quality of providers of adult education and literacy activities under title II and take actions to improve such quality, including providing the activities described in section 223(a)(1)(B) of WIOA.

### **F. ASSESSING QUALITY.**

Describe how the eligible agency will assess the quality of providers of adult education and literacy activities under title II and take actions to improve such quality, including providing the activities described in section 223(a)(1)(B) of WIOA.

MDE prioritizes and measures program quality through accountability expectations and activities that focus on both compliance and best practice according to research and experience. The expectations and activities include:

**1. THE STATE ABE MANAGEMENT INFORMATION SYSTEM (MIS) DATA: Minnesota's MIS balances both program quality and program compliance with state and federal expectations. In addition to required reports, local providers can use the state MIS to analyze student persistence, program outcomes, and other measures at the consortium, site, class and student level.**

**2. A STATE AEFLA GRANTEE REPORT CARD: The report card notes actual performance and ranks providers by key program data measures, including measurable skill gain by population, cost of programming per individual served, intensity of service provided, and percentage of population served.**

**3. A PROGRAM IMPROVEMENT PROCESS: Programs will be identified for review based on rankings in the state AEFLA report card and will undergo a comprehensive review and monitored implementation of a program improvement plan that requires local providers to complete site visits, workshop activities, reports, and plans to strengthen program performance and quality. (For more information on Program Improvement, see the response to (D) above.)**

**4. INTENSIVE PROGRAM APPLICATION CYCLE: On a five-year basis, ABE providers are required to complete an in-depth application as a method to adhere to state statute governing local ABE programs. In this intensive application, local providers describe their:**

- a. Consortium,
- b. Program accountability procedures,
- c. Professional development priorities and activities,
- d. Proposed programming,
- e. Local program governance,
- f. Program collaboration with key stakeholders and partners,
- g. Technology resources and integration,
- h. Future plans, and

- i. Performance.

These in-depth applications are reviewed and scored by a team of state staff from MDE and local AEFLA providers.

**5. LOCAL PROGRAM MONITORING SITE VISITS: All grantees are subject to monitoring site visits that focus on policy compliance and program quality through multiple methods:**

- a. Providers with low performance participate in site visits through the program improvement process;
- b. All AEFLA grantees receive site visits on a rotating basis, at least once every five years, when the program participates in in-depth application process to continue receiving state ABE funding to comply with state statute;
- c. Monitoring visits based on periodic desk review of provider data;
- d. Local ABE providers that participate in state initiatives and/or receive special grants through state or federal funding typically receive site visits as part of their participation; and
- e. Local providers request special technical assistance site visits as they face issues.

**6. ASSESSING THE QUALITY OF PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS:**

- a. Minnesota will continue to implement Student Achievement in Reading (STAR) program. Evaluation of STAR training comprises both training participant surveys as well as analysis STAR classroom assessment results.
- b. Minnesota's Supplemental Services system, which is funded with a combination of state and federal leadership funds provides training the supports local programs in implementing program components needed to meet the wide range of needs of Minnesota's adult education participants including: distance education, use of technology for instruction as well as program management; services related to serving students with disabilities; instructional methodology including STAR and the Minnesota Numeracy Initiative; content standards including CCRS, ACES and North Star; IET, contextualization and career pathway programming; volunteer recruitment and training; assessment; partner collaborations including workforce, TANF and SNAP, etc. Information regarding the relevance, quality and success of each component is collected through an annual professional development survey. In addition, quarterly reporting regarding participation and locally collected participant evaluations are required of all Supplemental Services providers.
- c. The statewide Supplemental Services noted above are available to all paid and volunteer staff.
- d. Dissemination of information about models and promising practices are facilitated by Minnesota's Supplemental Services providers. Each provider maintains a website of related resources and all providers provide content for Minnesota's monthly PD Update newsletter. Minnesota also maintains a career pathway-related curriculum repository. Information regarding the success of the dissemination system is collected annually as part of the Professional Development Survey and via locally collected participant evaluations.

**ADULT EDUCATION AND FAMILY LITERACY ACT PROGRAM CERTIFICATIONS**

States must provide written and signed certifications that:

The State Plan must include	Include
1. The plan is submitted by the State agency that is eligible to submit the plan;	Yes
2. The State agency has authority under State law to perform the functions of the State under the program;	Yes
3. The State legally may carry out each provision of the plan;	Yes
4. All provisions of the plan are consistent with State law;	Yes
5. A State officer, specified by title in the certification, has authority under State law to receive, hold, and disburse Federal funds made available under the plan;	Yes
6. The State officer who is submitting the plan, specified by the title in the certification, has authority to submit the plan;	Yes
7. The agency that is submitting the plan has adopted or otherwise formally approved the plan; and	Yes
8. The plan is the basis for State operation and administration of the program;	Yes

**ADULT EDUCATION AND FAMILY LITERACY ACT PROGRAM ASSURANCES**

The State Plan must include assurances that:

The State Plan must include	Include
1. The eligible agency will expend funds appropriated to carry out title II of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) only in a manner consistent with fiscal requirements under section 241(a) of WIOA (regarding the supplement-not-supplant requirement);	Yes
2. The eligible agency will ensure that there is at least one eligible provider serving each local area, as defined in section 3(32) of WIOA;	Yes
3. The eligible agency will not use any funds made available under title II of WIOA for the purpose of supporting or providing programs, services, or activities for individuals who are not “eligible individuals” within the meaning of section 203(4) of WIOA, unless it is providing programs, services or activities related to family literacy activities, as defined in section 203(9) of WIOA;	Yes
4. Using funds made available under title II of WIOA to carry out a program for criminal offenders within a correctional institution, the eligible agency will give priority to serving individuals who are likely to leave the correctional institution within five years of participation in the program.	Yes
5. The eligible agency agrees that in expending funds made available under Title II of WIOA, the eligible agency will comply with sections 8301 through 8303 of the Buy American Act (41 U.S.C. 8301-8303).	Yes

**AUTHORIZING OR CERTIFYING REPRESENTATIVE**

**CERTIFICATION REGARDING LOBBYING**

Certification for Contracts, Grants, Loans, and Cooperative Agreements

The undersigned certifies, to the best of his or her knowledge and belief, that:

(1) No Federal appropriated funds have been paid or will be paid, by or on behalf of the undersigned, to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of an agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with the awarding of any Federal contract, the making of any Federal grant, the making of any Federal loan, the entering into of any cooperative agreement, and the extension, continuation, renewal, amendment, or modification of any Federal contract, grant, loan, or cooperative agreement.

(2) If any funds other than Federal appropriated funds have been paid or will be paid to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with this Federal contract, grant, loan, or cooperative agreement, the undersigned shall complete and submit Standard Form-LLL, "Disclosure of Lobbying Activities," in accordance with its instructions.

(3) The undersigned shall require that the language of this certification be included in the award documents for all subawards at all tiers (including subcontracts, subgrants, and contracts under grants, loans, and cooperative agreements) and that all subrecipients shall certify and disclose accordingly. This certification is a material representation of fact upon which reliance was placed when this transaction was made or entered into. Submission of this certification is a prerequisite for making or entering into this transaction imposed by section 1352, title 31, U.S. Code. Any person who fails to file the required certification shall be subject to a civil penalty of not less than \$10,000 and not more than \$100,000 for each such failure.

#### Statement for Loan Guarantees and Loan Insurance

The undersigned states, to the best of his or her knowledge and belief, that:

If any funds have been paid or will be paid to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with this commitment providing for the United States to insure or guarantee a loan, the undersigned shall complete and submit Standard Form-LLL, "Disclosure of Lobbying Activities," in accordance with its instructions. Submission of this statement is a prerequisite for making or entering into this transaction imposed by section 1352, title 31, U.S. Code. Any person who fails to file the required statement shall be subject to a civil penalty of not less than \$10,000 and not more than \$100,000 for each such failure.

Please download and sign the forms below. Please scan and return the forms to [wioa@ed.gov](mailto:wioa@ed.gov) at the same time you submit your State Plan via the portal.

1. SF424B - Assurances – Non-Construction Programs  
(<http://www2.ed.gov/fund/grant/apply/appforms/appforms.html>)
2. Grants.gov - Certification Regarding Lobbying  
(<http://www2.ed.gov/fund/grant/apply/appforms/appforms.html>)
3. SF LLL Form – Disclosure of Lobbying Activities (required, only if applicable)  
(<http://www2.ed.gov/fund/grant/apply/appforms/appforms.html>)

<b>APPLICANT'S ORGANIZATION</b>	<b>Enter information in this column</b>
Applicant's Organization	Minnesota Department of Education
<b>PRINTED NAME AND TITLE OF AUTHORIZED REPRESENTATIVE</b>	<b>Enter information in this column</b>
First Name	Mary Cathryn
Last Name	Ricker
Title	Commissioner, Minnesota Department of Education
Email	todd.wagner@state.mn.us

SECTION 427 OF THE GENERAL EDUCATION PROVISIONS ACT (GEPA)

In the text box below, describe the steps the applicant proposes to take to ensure equitable access to, and participation in, its Federally-assisted program for students, teachers, and other program beneficiaries with special needs provide the information to meet the requirements of Section 427 of the General Education Provisions Act (GEPA), consistent with the following instructions posted at <https://www2.ed.gov/fund/grant/apply/appforms/gepa427.doc>.

The Minnesota Department of Education Grants Office ensures that a fair and equitable process is followed that allows all eligible entities the opportunity to apply for the grant.

The Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) requires that Adult Basic Education grant applicants describe the race/ethnicity and other demographics of the student population served in comparison to the demographics of the geographic area served. In addition, applicants must describe how they plan to address equitable access to and participation in programming for all members of the communities they serve; how they will build a common understanding of equity among program staff; and what staff professional development regarding equity they will provide. MDE monitoring activities include reviewing: dis-aggregated enrollment data in comparison with K-12 Limited English Proficiency enrollment and local demographic data; agency outreach, intake and course placement practices; agency program course and progression structures; and implementation of the above noted plans.

The Minnesota Department of Education supports Adult Basic Education providers in addressing equity by providing both program supports and professional development through a several competitive state and federally (leadership) funded Supplemental Services grants. The Supplemental Service grants are competed every three years and include grants focused on providing services for students with disabilities; using instructional technology including distance/asynchronous learning; and instructional methodology including evidence-based practices in reading (STAR) and math; and ELL instructional best practice. Program supports provided by Supplemental Services grantees include: a web site focused on providing services to participants with disabilities, an accommodations resource lending library, outreach materials, and statewide access to technical assistance from specially trained staff. Professional development opportunities available to all Adult Basic Education program staff include Universal Design, inclusive programming, cultural competency, mental health, shared programming, career pathway development, course design and other topics. The Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) requires that Adult Basic Education grant applicants describe the racial and other demographics of the student population served in comparison to the demographics of the geographic area served. In addition, applicants must describe how they

plan to address equitable access to and participation in programming for all members of the communities they serve; how they will build a common understanding of equity among program staff; and what staff professional development regarding equity they will provide. MDE monitoring activities include reviewing: dis-aggregated enrollment data in comparison with K-12 Limited English Proficiency enrollment and local demographic data; agency outreach, intake and course placement practices; agency program course and progression structures; and implementation of the above noted plans. The Minnesota Department of Education supports Adult Basic Education providers in addressing equity by providing both program supports and professional development through a several competitive state and federally (leadership) funded Supplemental Services grants. The Supplemental Service grants are competed every three years and include grants focused on providing services for students with disabilities; using instructional technology including distance/asynchronous learning; and instructional methodology including evidence-based practices in reading (STAR) and math (Minnesota Numeracy Initiative); and ELL instructional best practice. Program supports provided by Supplemental Services grantees include: a web site focused on providing services to participants with disabilities, an accommodations resource lending library, outreach materials, and statewide access to technical assistance from specially trained staff. Professional development opportunities available to all Adult Basic Education program staff include Universal Design, inclusive programming, cultural competency, mental health, shared programming, career pathway development, course design and other topics.

#### ADULT EDUCATION AND LITERACY PROGRAM PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

##### **Performance Goals for the Core Programs**

Each state submitting a Unified or Combined State Plan is required to identify expected levels of performance for each of the primary indicators of performance for the first two years covered by the plan. The state is required to reach agreement with the Secretary of Labor, in conjunction with the Secretary of Education, on state-negotiated levels of performance for the indicators for each of the first two years of the plan.

For Program Year (PY) 2016-2019 plans, the Departments used the transition authority under section 503(a) of WIOA to designate certain primary indicators of performance as “baseline” indicators to ensure an orderly transition from the requirements of the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 to those under WIOA. A “baseline” indicator was one for which states did not propose an expected level of performance and did not come to agreement with the Departments on negotiated levels of performance because sufficient data was not available to establish such performance levels. As a result, “baseline” indicators were not used in the end of the year adjustment of performance levels and were not used to determine failure to meet adjusted levels of performance for purposes of sanctions. The Departments designated indicators as “baseline” based on the likelihood of a State having insufficient data with which to make a reasonable determination of an expected level of performance.

For PYs 2020-2023 Plans, Title I programs (Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth) and the Title II program (Adult Education and Family Literacy Act) will have two full years of data available to make reasonable determinations of expected levels of performance for the following indicators for PY 2020 and PY 2021:

- Employment (Second Quarter after Exit);
- Employment (Fourth Quarter after Exit);
- Median Earnings (Second Quarter after Exit);

- Credential Attainment Rate; and
- Measurable Skill Gains

The Wagner-Peyser Act Employment Service program, authorized under the Wagner-Peyser Act, as amended by title III of WIOA, will have two full years of data available to make a reasonable determination of expected levels of performance for the following indicators for PY 2020 and PY 2021:

- Employment (Second Quarter after Exit);
- Employment (Fourth Quarter after Exit); and
- Median Earnings (Second Quarter after Exit)

The Credential Attainment Rate and Measurable Skill Gains indicators do not apply to the Wagner-Peyser Act Employment Service program; therefore, this program will not submit expected levels of performance for these indicators.

For the first two years of PYs 2020-2023 Plans, the Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) program, authorized under title I of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended by title IV of WIOA, will have two full years of data available for the Measurable Skill Gains indicator only. Therefore, the Departments will designate the following indicators as “baseline” for the VR program for PY 2020 and PY 2021:

- Employment (Second Quarter after Exit);
- Employment (Fourth Quarter after Exit);
- Median Earnings (Second Quarter after Exit); and
- Credential Attainment Rate

VR agencies must continue to collect and report on all indicators, including those that have been designated as “baseline, pursuant to section 116(d) of WIOA.” The actual performance data reported by these programs for indicators designated as “baseline” for PY 2020 and PY 2021 will serve as baseline data in future years. The Departments will require VR agencies to submit expected levels of performance for these indicators for PY 2022 and PY 2023.

The Departments determined that the Effectiveness in Serving Employers indicator will be measured as a shared outcome across all six core programs within each state to ensure a holistic approach to serving employers. The Departments will continue piloting approaches for measuring this indicator for the first two years of PY 2020-2023 plans. Therefore, states are not required to submit an expected level of performance for the Effectiveness in Serving Employers indicator for PY 2020 and PY 2021. However, core programs are expected to collect data and report on this indicator for PY 2020 and PY 2021 as they did for PYs 2016-2019 plans.

Each core program must submit an expected level of performance for all of the other indicators, as applicable, with the exception of the four indicators designated as “baseline” for the VR program in PY 2020 and PY 2021. The Departments will work with states during the negotiation process to establish negotiated levels of performance for each of the primary indicators for the core programs not listed as “baseline.” Each state must update its plan to include the agreed-upon negotiated levels of performance before the Departments approve a state’s plan.

States may identify additional indicators in the plan, including additional approaches to measuring Effectiveness in Serving Employers, and may establish levels of performance for each

of the state indicators. Please identify any such state indicators under Additional Indicators of Performance.

Performance Indicators	PY 2020 Expected Level	PY 2020 Negotiated Level	PY 2021 Expected Level	PY 2021 Negotiated Level
Employment (Second Quarter After Exit)	38.0%	38.0	39.0%	39.0
Employment (Fourth Quarter After Exit)	34.0%	34.0	34.0%	34.0
Median Earnings (Second Quarter After Exit)	\$5660.00	5660.0	\$5670.0	5670.0
Credential Attainment Rate	23.0%	23.0	24.0%	24.0
Measurable Skill Gains	43.0%	43.0	44.0%	44.0
Effectiveness in Serving Employers	Not Applicable <sup>1</sup>	Not Applicable <sup>1</sup>	Not Applicable <sup>1</sup>	Not Applicable <sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>

*“Effectiveness in Serving Employers” is still being piloted and this data will not be entered for 2020 State Plans.*

#### PROGRAM-SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS FOR VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION (COMBINED OR GENERAL)

The Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Services Portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan [13] must include the following descriptions and estimates, as required by section 101(a) of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended by title IV of WIOA:

[13] Sec. 102(b)(2)(D)(iii) of WIOA

##### A. INPUT OF STATE REHABILITATION COUNCIL

All agencies, except for those that are independent consumer-controlled commissions, must describe the following:

1. INPUT PROVIDED BY THE STATE REHABILITATION COUNCIL, INCLUDING INPUT AND RECOMMENDATIONS ON THE VR SERVICES PORTION OF THE UNIFIED OR COMBINED STATE PLAN, RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE COUNCIL'S REPORT, THE REVIEW AND ANALYSIS OF CONSUMER SATISFACTION, AND OTHER COUNCIL REPORTS THAT MAY HAVE BEEN DEVELOPED AS PART OF THE COUNCIL'S FUNCTIONS;

#### **VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION (GENERAL)**

The State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) provides ongoing input and recommendations to VRS.

The SRC made several recommendations to the designated state unit, which fell into four broad categories:

1. **Accessibility of information**

- Conduct focus groups with youth on the waiting list to determine the best modes of communications and where to focus efforts (what are they using; where are they looking). Results may vary significantly between geographic regions.
- Consider accessibility for those individuals who do not live near a CareerForce location and those who do not have the financial resources to go to a CareerForce location for information
- Have set times in the CareerForce locations when individuals on the waiting list can connect with a counselor if they need assistance.

#### 1. **Communication**

- Leverage multi-platform social media directed to individuals with disabilities in Minnesota, such as a live FaceBook page with real-time information, e.g. “There’s a job fair in your locale.” Other ideas include connecting with FaceBook support groups, YouTube, having an Instagram presence, and texting information to individuals.
- VRS and the SRC should share resources/information/opportunities with CTICs (Community Transition Interagency Committees) to get information out.

#### 1. **Inter-agency collaboration**

- Include MOU training for county workers so everyone is receiving the same information.
- Clarify roles within the process.
- Identify who pays for what, when, and how family members access, especially if both entities have the ability to fund a service. Who should be approached so that the process isn’t delayed?
- Identify who initiates the process, regardless of who will be paying. (Schools think the county will do it, counties think VR will do it, etc.). What’s the first step in the process?
- Identify how disagreements or disputes under this arrangement will be resolved.
- There needs to be better inter-agency coordination for individual cases. Recommend having a case manager at the meeting level, identifying who is responsible for what and who is going to communicate across agencies.
- Collaborate with DHS to build Disability Hub capacity.

#### 1. **Building long-term relationships with employers**

- Coordinate efforts with other agencies to create one system to connect individuals with employers. There are many websites and resources out there, but employers don’t know where to go.
- Create a deliverable for employers outlining what VRS can do and who to contact.
- The SRC also continues to monitor available funds and category status for possible action if needed. They revisit the review of changing Order of Selection criteria annually.

Additionally, the SRC was active in the hiring process for a replacement VRS director through discussions about what characteristics are important to them in a director. The council chair also served on the interview panel.

## 2. THE DESIGNATED STATE UNIT'S RESPONSE TO THE COUNCIL'S INPUT AND RECOMMENDATIONS; AND

The Director of Vocational Rehabilitation Services, the Director of Public Affairs and the Field Operations Director attended most meetings of the SRC and responded to questions from the council. The director has reviewed the recommendations put forth by the council and agrees to maintain transparency with the council and keep recommendations at the forefront in decisions regarding the broad categories identified in this report.

Responses to specific recommendations:

1. Accessibility of information - Vocational Rehabilitation Services has not conducted focus groups with youth at this point but will do so on a small scale in the next two years to determine the best modes of communication for this group. VRS continually strives to ensure accessibility for individuals to its services, including those who don't have easy access to CareerForce locations. VR is currently working on a protocol for an appropriate hand-off between partners in the CareerForce locations. All staff and partners will receive training on how to serve people on the waiting list.
1. Communication - Vocational Rehabilitation Services maintains a close collaboration with the communications office of the designated state agency (the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development – DEED). Communications and social media staff routinely disseminate information and notifications specific to the VR program and its activities, and VRS regularly leverages that capacity to provide public information in a timely and efficient manner. We anticipate that collaboration will continue to expand. We have plans to communicate and share information and resources with the CTICs once we have a complete list that is currently being compiled by PACER Center.
1. Inter-agency collaboration: One of the key elements that VR has already discussed is joint training in person (not webinar) for lead agency staff, provider staff, DHS and VR staff so everyone is hearing the same message at the same time, followed by strategies to engage and provide ongoing support. - DEED/DHS have developed work groups consisting of DEED Field Managers, Specialists to develop process of how services, funding and staffing work together to support a person receiving waiver services who wants to move forward in achieving CIE. To create an effective, informed employment services process for persons on a waiver, the DEED/DHS Steering Team plans to create an Interagency Employment First Advisory Committee. This committee will include persons with disabilities, family members, advocacy organizations, Disability Law Center, Community Partners and other key voices that will provide essential feedback and guidance as the DEED-DHS MOU moves from a signed document to a living, breathing process that supports people become employed in CIE.
1. Building long-term relationships with employers: Previously known as Placement Partnerships, DEED-VRS now is promoting Business Engagement Networks (BENs) which bring together the efforts of DEED-VRS Placement Coordinators, Specialists, Community Rehabilitation Providers (CRPs) and School District Work Coordinators to identify a talent pool of candidates that meet the needs of business at a local, regional and statewide level. The BENs are led at the local level by DEED-VRS staff who

coordinate with CRPs and school districts to create a Single Point of Contact approach with Businesses. Additionally the Business Engagement Networks are the opportunity to coordinate Pre-ETS services with DEED-VRS Pre-ETS Representatives, Transition Counselors, CRPs and Business. DEED-VRS Placement staff seek to develop a long-term relationship with business, regard them as an essential customer, meet their hiring needs as well as provide consultation and support in their efforts to hiring talent with disabilities.

### 3. THE DESIGNATED STATE UNIT'S EXPLANATIONS FOR REJECTING ANY OF THE COUNCIL'S INPUT OR RECOMMENDATIONS.

There were no formal recommendations made to VRS that were rejected by the designated state unit.

#### B. REQUEST FOR WAIVER OF STATEWIDENESS

When requesting a waiver of the statewideness requirement, the designated State unit must identify the types of services to be provided by the program on a non-statewide basis. The waiver request must also include written assurances that:

1. A LOCAL PUBLIC AGENCY WILL PROVIDE THE NON-FEDERAL SHARE OF COSTS ASSOCIATED WITH THE SERVICES TO BE PROVIDED IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE WAIVER REQUEST;

VRS has no waivers of statewideness at this time.

2. THE DESIGNATED STATE UNIT WILL APPROVE EACH PROPOSED SERVICE BEFORE IT IS PUT INTO EFFECT; AND

VRS has no waivers of statewideness at this time.

3. REQUIREMENTS OF THE VR SERVICES PORTION OF THE UNIFIED OR COMBINED STATE PLAN WILL APPLY TO THE SERVICES APPROVED UNDER THE WAIVER.

VRS has no waivers of statewideness at this time.

#### C. COOPERATIVE AGREEMENTS WITH AGENCIES NOT CARRYING OUT ACTIVITIES UNDER THE STATEWIDE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM

Describe interagency cooperation with and utilization of the services and facilities of agencies and programs that are not carrying out activities through the statewide workforce development system with respect to:

1. FEDERAL, STATE, AND LOCAL AGENCIES AND PROGRAMS;

Following is a discussion of Vocational Rehabilitation Services' collaborative arrangements with federal, state and local agencies and with private entities that are not formal components of the statewide workforce investment system.

#### A. OLMSTEAD SUBCABINET

The Department of Employment and Economic Development is active on the Governor's subcabinet to implement the Olmstead Plan that was approved by the U.S. District Court on September 29, 2015. The subcabinet "embraces the Olmstead decision as a key component of achieving a better Minnesota for all Minnesotans, and strives to ensure Minnesotans with disabilities will have the opportunity, both now and in the future, to live close to their families and friends, to live more independently, to engage in productive employment and to participate

in community life" (2013 vision statement). The employment section of the plan listed two population-level indicators: 1) Increase the employment rate of persons with disabilities so that it is comparable to the employment rate of persons without disabilities and 2) Increase the employment earnings of persons with disabilities so that they are comparable to the earnings of persons without disabilities.

#### **B. MINNESOTA AUTISM INTERAGENCY COMMITTEE**

Representatives from Minnesota's Departments of Education, Human Services, Health, and Employment and Economic Development meet monthly to share information, departmental innovation, and the ongoing needs of individuals and families affected by autism.

#### **C. MINNESOTA EMPLOYMENT CENTER FOR INDIVIDUALS WHO ARE DEAF OR HARD-OF-HEARING**

Provides VRS-funded short-term employment services and state-funded long-term employment support services for individuals who are deaf or hard-of-hearing. Awarded \$498,231.00 for ongoing employment supports through June 30, 2020 to support five locations statewide. Services include supporting businesses and employers with education and training in how to work with employees who are deaf or hard-of-hearing, as well as supporting employees themselves.

#### **D. CAREER VENTURES, INC.**

Program provides transition services to students who are deaf or hard-of-hearing from identified schools in the seven-county Twin Cities metropolitan area. Awarded \$161,735 to serve students through June 30, 2020. Students are offered opportunities to try work experiences, develop resumes, fill out applications and practice interviews while conducting career interest surveys.

#### **E. COOPERATIVE AGREEMENTS WITH THE WHITE EARTH NATION TRIBAL VR PROGRAM AND THE RED LAKE NATION TRIBAL VR PROGRAM**

VRS and State Services for the Blind provide information, technical assistance, training opportunities, and support to the state's two tribal VR programs. A formal process is in place for referral and transfer of cases in accordance with best practices ensuring choice. Although not a part of the formal written agreement, the Social Security Administration's Area Work Incentive Coordinator plays a crucial role in providing technical assistance on benefits planning.

#### **F. U.S. DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION AND EMPLOYMENT SERVICES**

Memorandum of Understanding to enhance work opportunities for veterans with disabilities by sharing information, coordinating activities, and offering complementary services.

#### **G. TICKET TO WORK EMPLOYMENT NETWORKS**

In the past, VRS, State Services for the Blind and SSA have co-hosted periodic meetings of the Employment Networks to provide staff training, updates on Ticket to Work procedural changes, and to promote Partnership Plus job retention services after VRS/SSB case closure. They plan to resume these meetings.

#### **H. PROFESSIONAL VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION COUNSELING ORGANIZATIONS**

Active participation relating to ongoing professional development for staff and to counselor recruitment takes place through well-established working relationships with and memberships

on the boards of the Minnesota Rehabilitation Association, including the Minnesota Rehabilitation Counseling Association chapter.

#### **I. PERFORMANCE-BASED FUNDING FOR PLACEMENT SERVICES PROVIDED BY COMMUNITY REHABILITATION PROGRAMS AND LIMITED-USE VENDORS**

Placement providers receive milestone and outcome payments for facilitating successful outcomes for VR customers. The first milestone is payable when the Placement Plan is developed, the second milestone is paid when the first employment shift is completed, and a final outcome payment is paid with successful placement closure. Beginning July 1, 2017, VRS included Placement and Retention Services information in both VRS Policy and Guidance as well as an electronic link to that same guidance within the Professional/Technical Contract for all Community Rehabilitation Providers (CRP) and Limited Use Vendors (LUV). Guidance includes guidance on Performance Based Agreement (PBA) milestones and outcomes as well as definitions and Service Types and Titles. VRS staff and Community Rehabilitation Providers express that the consistent guidance has reduced confusion and is leading to better common understanding about PBA milestones, invoicing and payments.

#### **J. INTERAGENCY AGREEMENT WITH MINNESOTA DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES MINNESOTA STATE OPERATED COMMUNITY SERVICES (DHS-MSOCS)**

Beginning May 15, 2019, DEED-VRS developed an interagency agreement with DHS Minnesota State Operated Community Services to coordinate Trainers and Mentors for the Minnesota Customized Employment Training (MNCE). The agreement lays out the expectations of both DEED & DHS staff who will ensure that training and mentoring services are available for MNCE students and auditors. The agreement also makes plain how funding generated from the training will be split between the two agencies. The funds generated by the training are intended to only cover the costs of the MN CE Trainers and Mentors.

#### **2. STATE PROGRAMS CARRIED OUT UNDER SECTION 4 OF THE ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY ACT OF 1998;**

The Minnesota STAR (System of Technology to Achieve Results) Program: The STAR Program, a program within the Minnesota Department of Administration, is funded by the Department of Health and Human Services in accordance with the Assistive Technology Act of 1998, as amended. Vocational Rehabilitation often refers people to STAR for a device demonstration. This allows consumers to compare benefits and features of a particular device or category of devices. Once a decision on a device is made, the person can borrow the device for 30 days to make sure it meets their needs before VR purchases the item. VR also maintains an agreement with STAR to provide VR assistive technology specialists with commonly used devices for use in doing assessments with consumers.

#### **3. PROGRAMS CARRIED OUT BY THE UNDER SECRETARY FOR RURAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE;**

There currently is no formalized working relationship between the Department of Agriculture and Vocational Rehabilitation Services. Historically, a Memorandum of Understanding existed between the USDA's AgrAbility Project and Vocational Rehabilitation Services field offices under which consumers accessed programs funded by USDA Rural Development in support of their employment plans. However, the provider which held that grant did not get refunded and have closed down. The Minnesota USDA Rural Development Office does use technical economic and forecasting information provided by DEED to develop and market its services.

#### **4. NON-EDUCATIONAL AGENCIES SERVING OUT-OF-SCHOOL YOUTH; AND**

The designated state unit maintains a close working relationship with the local Workforce Development Boards' Youth Programs, including the Youth Disability Employment Initiative. One of the service providers has become an Employment Networks so they can continue benefits planning and job retention services after WIOA services have ended.

VECTOR Youth Project for Deaf/DeafBlind: VRS managed state funding provides support for enhanced transition services to youth who are deaf, hard-of-hearing, or DeafBlind in Minnesota. Enhanced services include work readiness classes, college preparation classes, driver's education, community-based work experiences, and paid internships in competitive employment. For students who transition to college, high school instructors work with the college for the first semester to make sure all needed accommodations are in place and students are supported.

#### 5. STATE USE CONTRACTING PROGRAMS.

Since the mid-1990s, Minnesota state agencies have been legislatively encouraged to purchase goods and services from small businesses operated by individuals with disabilities. In 2007, the Legislature enacted a set-aside program, providing that 19 percent of the total value of all state janitorial contracts be awarded to community rehabilitation organizations approved by VRS as service providers under the VRS Extended Employment Program. During the 2010 legislative session, the set-aside program was expanded to include document imaging, document shredding, mailing, collating, and sorting services. Further, the amount of each contract awarded under this section may exceed the estimated fair market price for the same goods and services by up to 6 percent.

#### D. COORDINATION WITH EDUCATION OFFICIALS

Describe:

##### 1. THE DESIGNATED STATE UNIT'S PLANS, POLICIES, AND PROCEDURES FOR COORDINATION WITH EDUCATION OFFICIALS TO FACILITATE THE TRANSITION OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES FROM SCHOOL TO THE RECEIPT OF VR SERVICES, INCLUDING PRE-EMPLOYMENT TRANSITION SERVICES, AS WELL AS PROCEDURES FOR THE TIMELY DEVELOPMENT AND APPROVAL OF INDIVIDUALIZED PLANS FOR EMPLOYMENT FOR THE STUDENTS

Vocational Rehabilitation Services (VRS), State Services for the Blind (SSB), and MDE have a memorandum of understanding (MOU) to achieve better coordination between schools and VR services and create a bridge from the school to VRS or SSB prior to school exit. The intent of the agreement is to:

- Provide consultation and technical assistance to Local Education Agencies (LEA)s in planning for the transition of students with disabilities from school to post-school activities including postsecondary education, training, competitive integrated employment and independent living.
- Provide secondary transition planning by personnel of DEED's VRS alongside secondary special education and career and college readiness staff through the delivery of pre-employment transition services and vocational rehabilitation services under the Rehabilitation Act and transition services under the IDEA.
- Define the roles and responsibilities, including financial responsibilities, of each agency, including provisions for pre-employment transition services, vocational rehabilitation services and IDEA transition services.

- Designate procedures for outreach to and identification of students with disabilities who are in need of pre-employment transition services and/or vocational rehabilitation services. Outreach to students should occur as early as age 14.
- Outline services and documentation requirements set forth in section 511 of the Rehabilitation Act, as added by the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), with regard to youth with disabilities who are seeking subminimum wage employment.
- Provide assurance that neither the SEA nor the LEA will enter into an arrangement with an entity holding a special wage certificate under section 14(c) of the Fair Labor Standards Act for the purpose of operating a program under which a youth with a disability is engaged in work at a subminimum wage.

#### **A. COORDINATED SERVICES FOR YOUTH IN SPECIAL EDUCATION**

Minnesota law mandates a coordinated system of services for youth, birth to 21, who are involved in special education. The Minnesota System for Interagency Collaboration (MnSIC) was formed to develop and implement this system. VRS is represented on MnSIC, and VRS staff participate on subcommittees that develop service strategies for students and recommendations for governance and coordination of state and local collaborative efforts.

#### **B. PERSONAL LEARNING PLANS (PLPS)**

Minnesota statute 120B.125, "Planning for Students' Successful Transition to Postsecondary Education and Employment" requires Minnesota school districts to assist all students by no later than age 14 to explore their educational, college, and career interests, aptitudes, and aspirations and develop a plan for a smooth and successful transition to postsecondary education or employment. VRS staff work with students and schools to ensure that VRS pre-employment transition services and transition services align with and contribute to each student's Personal Learning Plan.

#### **C. COMMUNITY TRANSITION INTERAGENCY COMMITTEE (CTIC)**

CTICs promote statewide interagency coordination to remove system barriers and expand community services. CTICs are regional groups that include parents, students, advocacy groups, local businesses, county government, postsecondary education, vocational education, community education, corrections, SSA health care, and other local service providers. VRS staff serve on all CTICs, thereby helping to improve and expand vocational services that result in employment outcomes.

#### **D. REHABILITATION COUNSELORS ASSIGNED TO HIGH SCHOOLS**

VR counselors are assigned to all public, private, and charter high schools in Minnesota. They are active participants on transition planning teams so that each VR eligible student with a disability can access VR and Pre-Employment Transition services and establish a written VR plan before leaving school. Outreach efforts include working with school nurses, guidance counselors, case managers, principals, social workers, 504 personnel, community agencies and work experience coordinators to identify students with disabilities who are not in special education programs. Referrals of students with disabilities that might benefit from VR is sought as soon as possible so that employment services can begin well before the student leaves school.

#### **E. PRE-EMPLOYMENT TRANSITION SERVICES REHABILITATION REPRESENTATIVES ASSIGNED TO HIGH SCHOOLS**

There is one Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) Rehabilitation Representative assigned to each of VRS' 23 teams. Their role is to provide outreach and Pre-ETS to potentially eligible students in all schools within their team's geographic area. Their outreach is similar to what is explained in the counselor's outreach described above. They provide Pre-ETS to students with disabilities age 14 through age 21.

## **F. INTERAGENCY AGREEMENT TO PURCHASE USED ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY DEVICES**

When a student with a disability transitions into a work environment or postsecondary program, VRS may purchase any assistive technology device that the student's former school district purchased on his or her behalf.

### **2. INFORMATION ON THE FORMAL INTERAGENCY AGREEMENT WITH THE STATE EDUCATIONAL AGENCY WITH RESPECT TO:**

#### **A. CONSULTATION AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE TO ASSIST EDUCATIONAL AGENCIES IN PLANNING FOR THE TRANSITION OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES FROM SCHOOL TO POST-SCHOOL ACTIVITIES, INCLUDING VR SERVICES;**

- DEED's VRS and MDE's Special Education and Career and College Success Divisions will work together to ensure that consultation and technical assistance, which could include video conferences and conference calls, is provided to LEA staff in planning for the transition of students with disabilities to post-school activities. This includes implementing a structure for ensuring pre-employment transition services and vocational rehabilitation services are made available statewide for those who need these services.
- DEED's VRS and MDE's Special Education and Career and College Success Divisions will collaborate and promote transition to adult services through participation in existing councils, committees, and other work groups within respective agencies.
- DEED's VRS will ensure that a counselor(s) is assigned to each school district and charter school in the state who will provide consultation and technical assistance to LEA staff on an as-needed basis related to the transition of students with disabilities from school to post-school activities.
- MDE's Special Education and Career and College Success Divisions in consultation with DEED's VRS will develop training and communication tools for the LEA staff regarding WIOA and how it intersects with IDEA and the schools.

#### **B. TRANSITION PLANNING BY PERSONNEL OF THE DESIGNATED STATE AGENCY AND EDUCATIONAL AGENCY THAT FACILITATES THE DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THEIR INDIVIDUALIZED EDUCATION PROGRAMS;**

1. DEED's VRS and SSB and MDE's Special Education and Career and College Success staff will provide technical assistance and consultation regarding these five required pre-employment transition services made available to students with disabilities who need them, ages 14 through age 21 statewide:

- Job exploration counseling to assist students with disabilities in understanding their work-related strengths and interests and what career possibilities there are;
- Work-based learning experiences, which may include in-school or after school opportunities, or experience outside the traditional school setting (including

internships), that is provided in an integrated environment in the community to the maximum extent possible;

- Counseling on opportunities for enrollment in comprehensive transition or postsecondary educational programs at institutions of higher education;
- Workplace readiness training to develop social skills and independent living; and
- Instruction in self-advocacy (including instruction in person-centered planning), which may include peer mentoring (including peer mentoring from individuals with disabilities working in competitive integrated employment).

2. DEED's VRS counselors will attend meetings for the development of Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) when invited. Counselors will use the IEPs with students to assist in developing the individualized plans for employment (IPE).

- DEED's VRS and MDE's Special Education and Career and College Success Divisions agree to share responsibility for ensuring that schools are aware of and how to use the tools to support students with disabilities to receive current information about their strengths, interests and preferences in order to make informed choices about competitive integrated employment prior to leaving school.
- DEED's VRS and MDE's Special Education and Career and College Success Divisions agree to share responsibility for ensuring that schools which serve students with disabilities receive information about the benefits of providing career information.

#### C. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES, INCLUDING FINANCIAL RESPONSIBILITIES, OF EACH AGENCY, INCLUDING PROVISIONS FOR DETERMINING STATE LEAD AGENCIES AND QUALIFIED PERSONNEL RESPONSIBLE FOR TRANSITION SERVICES;

DEED's VRS assists students with disabilities in making informed choices to prepare for, obtain, maintain, advance in, or regain competitive integrated employment. Services include the provision of pre-employment transition services for students who are eligible or potentially eligible for VR services. They also include assessing an individual's VR needs, developing and implementing an IPE, and assisting in the achievement of the employment goals for the individuals that have applied for VR services, have been found eligible and are in an open priority category.

MDE's Special Education Division is responsible for ensuring that local education agencies provide special education and related services as documented in students' IEPs.

DEED's VRS and MDE's Special Education and Career and College Success Division are responsible for coordination necessary to satisfy documentation requirements set forth in WIOA and 34 CFR 397.10 (b)(i) and (ii) with regard to students and youth with disabilities who are seeking subminimum wage employment.

DEED's VRS and MDE's Special Education and Career and College Success Divisions are financially responsible for the services they provide under their own laws and rules. Nothing will be construed to reduce the obligation under IDEA of a local educational agency or any other agency to provide or pay for any transition services that are also considered special education or related services and that are necessary for ensuring a free appropriate public education to children with disabilities within Minnesota.

DEED's VRS and MDE's Special Education and Career and College Success Divisions are responsible to ensure that neither the LEA nor VR agencies may shift the burden for providing a

service, for which it otherwise would be responsible, to the other entity. Decisions related to which entity will be responsible for providing transition, pre-employment transition services or vocational rehabilitation services that can be considered both a special education and a VR service will be made at the state and local level as part of the collaboration between the VR agencies, SEAs, and LEAs.

Considerations in making funding decisions could include:

- The purpose of the service: Is it related to outcomes for employment or education?
- Which agency customarily provides the service?
- Is the student eligible for transition services under the IDEA and/ or pre-employment transition services or vocational rehabilitation services under the Rehabilitation Act?

#### D. PROCEDURES FOR OUTREACH TO AND IDENTIFICATION OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES WHO NEED TRANSITION SERVICES.

##### **Outreach and Identification:**

1. DEED's VRS and MDE's Special Education and Career and College Success Divisions will work together to develop outreach tools related to competitive integrated employment for students with disabilities, parents or representatives of students with disabilities, school personnel, and other community agencies. Materials will include a description of the purpose of the VR programs, application procedures, eligibility requirements, priority for services, and scope of services that may be provided to eligible individuals.

2. DEED's VRS and MDE's Special Education and Career and College Success will work together with LEAs to ensure that outreach and identification of students in need of/ who could benefit from pre-employment transition services takes place statewide.

3. To provide information to students and their families/guardians about pre-employment transition services and/or vocational rehabilitation services, DEED's VRS will be allowed to receive "directory information" from LEAs. In accordance with Minnesota (M.S. 13.32) and federal (20 U.S.C.A. 1232g (5)(A)) laws, "directory information" is defined, in part, as the student's name, address, telephone listing, and date of birth.

4. DEED's VRS and MDE's Special Education and Career and College Success will work together with LEAs to ensure outreach to: students receiving special education services under IDEA; students receiving accommodations under section 504; students receiving school psychological, health, nursing, or social work services; and other students who have disabilities as defined in Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, but who do not receive IDEA services nor have a 504 plan.

5. DEED's VRS will provide outreach to the following school staff to identify students in need of pre-employment transition services and/ or vocational rehabilitation services: teachers/case managers, work coordinators, guidance counselors, school nurses, 504 coordinators, school social workers, alternative learning center staff, principals, school mental health coordinators, and school psychologists.

##### **Coordination and documentation requirements under WIOA Section 511 and 34 CFR 397, Limitations on use of subminimum wage**

1. DEED's VRS, in collaboration with MDE's Special Education and Career and College Success Divisions will work together with LEAs to ensure that students with disabilities have

meaningful opportunities to prepare for, obtain, maintain, advance in, or regain competitive integrated employment, including supported or customized employment.

2. DEED's VRS and MDE's Special Education and Career and College Success Divisions will work together with LEAs to ensure that outreach and identification of students with disabilities who are seeking subminimum wage employment in order for them to receive counseling and information and referral related to competitive integrated employment.

3. DEED's VRS will ensure, as appropriate, that students with disabilities who are seeking subminimum wage employment and who have applied for VR services are determined eligible or ineligible for VR services; have an approved IPE; receive pre-employment transition services; and receive appropriate reasonable accommodations and appropriate supports and services, including supported and customized employment services, that assist in obtaining and maintaining a competitive integrated employment outcome.

4. DEED's VRS and MDE's Special Education and Career and College Success Divisions will provide LEAs the required processes and forms to document the required actions specified under WIOA for all students with disabilities who are seeking subminimum wage employment.

5. MDE's Special Education and Career and College Success Divisions will work with LEAs to ensure that documentation of completed IDEA transition services is provided to DEED's VRS within 30 calendar days of the completion of the IDEA transition services for students who are seeking subminimum wage employment and have applied for VR services.

6. DEED's VRS and MDE's Special Education and Career and College Success Divisions will work together with LEAs to ensure that in the event a student with a disability or, as applicable, the youth's parent or guardian, refuses, through informed choice, to participate in the actions required under WIOA, the refusal is documented. LEA staff will provide this documentation to VRS or within 5 calendar days of the refusal and VRS or staff will provide the documentation to students within 10 calendar days of the refusal.

7. DEED's VRS will ensure that all students with disabilities who are seeking subminimum wage employment receive documentation of the required actions specified under WIOA within 45 calendar days of completion of the required actions.

#### **Assurance related to WIOA Section 511 and 34 CFR 397, Limitations on use of subminimum wage**

In accordance with 34 CFR 397.31, MDE's Special Education and Career and College Success Divisions, through the MDE Career Technical Education Program approval and expense approval process, will ensure that neither the SEA nor LEAs enter into a contract with an entity, as defined in WIOA 34 CFR 397.5(d) for the purpose of operating a program under which a student with a disability is engaged in work compensated at a subminimum wage.

#### **E. COOPERATIVE AGREEMENTS WITH PRIVATE NONPROFIT ORGANIZATIONS**

Describe the manner in which the designated State agency establishes cooperative agreements with private non-profit VR service providers.

VRS purchases services such as vocational evaluation, skill training, internships, job development and job placement, on-the-job training, and time-limited job coaching. Services must be consistent with an employment plan developed between counselor and customer, based on the consumer's informed choices and offered in integrated settings.

#### **1. Written Assurances**

Providers must provide written assurances about their organizational missions, operations (including audits and lines of authority), staff development and qualifications, services, fees, populations served, standards of professional practice, and adherence to customers' employment plans. They must also provide written assurance regarding vendor compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, Minnesota Human Rights Act and other employment law on individual rights, accessibility, occupational health and safety, and data privacy.

## 2. Two Categories of Providers

Minnesota distinguishes between two categories of vendor: the limited use provider and the unlimited use community rehabilitation program (CRP). This arrangement permits wide selection of services and system flexibility and emphasizes the use of providers accredited by the national Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF). CRPs include providers who are 245D licensed to deliver Medicaid funded services.

## 3. Limited Use Providers

Limited use providers (those without CARF accreditation) introduce competition to the rehabilitation marketplace and provide an entry point for new providers in response to an unmet or emerging service need. They are typically small organizations with small caseloads, limited to a narrow range of specialized services such as intensive job placement or job coaching for individuals with a particular disability. Some are private, for-profit entities. VRS uses the services of 42 limited-use providers. Contracts are limited to \$20,000 annually or \$40,000 over two years for most limited-use vendor providers. The provider limit for a Center for Independent Living (authorized Under Title VII, Chapter I, Part C of the Rehabilitation Act, as amended by the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) of 2014) or an entity that received a VRS Pre-ETS grant between 2017-2019 is \$150,000 per year, or \$300,000 over two years.

## 4. CARF-accredited CRPs

An unlimited use CRP must be accredited by CARF for the services they provide. Professional/Technical Contracts, detailing services and specific fee schedules, are negotiated, with the engagement of VRS area managers and their staff. VRS management reviews the agreement for approval or modification. VRS currently has 60 Professional/Technical Contracts with CRPs statewide. VRS employs a program specialist to help maintain a mutually supportive professional relationship and to negotiate modifications to agreements with CRPs. VRS and CRPs work together to promote mutually held goals, including:

1. Develop and maintain choices for consumers.
2. Meet workforce needs identified by the state's employers.
3. Ensure that services are provided in integrated settings.
4. Facilitate state-level planning and coordination of training needs of CRP staff.
5. Facilitate communication between VRS and CRP staff at the administrative level.
6. Increase CRP awareness of vocational rehabilitation issues at state and national levels.
7. Identify and provide training for CRP and VRS staff.

VRS has an active CRP Advisory Committee to assist in achievement of these common goals. Priority topics discussed in 2017 included discussion of Performance Based Agreement redesign and definitions for inclusion in DEED-VRS Professional and Technical Contracts,

expanding Customized Employment capacity in Minnesota, Funding Customized Employment, Strategies for continued system transformation, DHS new Waiver Services discussion, WIOA Section 511, Developing and Retaining Placement Professionals.

#### F. ARRANGEMENTS AND COOPERATIVE AGREEMENTS FOR THE PROVISION OF SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES

Describe the designated State agency's efforts to identify and make arrangements, including entering into cooperative agreements, with other State agencies and other appropriate entities in order to provide supported employment services and extended employment services, as applicable, to individuals with the most significant disabilities, including youth with the most significant disabilities.

##### 1. Statewide Collaboration

VRS collaborates with MDE, DHS, and county and local service providers to offer statewide supported employment services. VRS is a partner in several state-level agreements that provide long-term supports. During development of an employment plan, VRS counselors and other service team members help consumers to select supported employment services that meet their needs. They identify which services will be provided by VRS, as well as the source of long-term supports in the community. VRS provides time-limited supports for up to 24 months, but an employment plan may be amended if additional time is needed to achieve job stability. The primary funding resources for long-term supports in the community following VRS case closure are county case managers, the VRS Extended Employment Program, DHS Medicaid-waiver funded services, and the Social Security Administration's Impairment-Related Work Expense exclusions and Ticket to Work funding for persons on SSI and/or SSDI.

##### 2. State-funded VRS Extended Employment Program

Minnesota's Extended Employment Program, administered by VRS, provides ongoing employment support services for individuals to maintain and advance in employment. The direct services are delivered by CARF-accredited CRPs under performance-based contracts with VRS-EE. These collaborations contribute significantly to the quality, scope, and effectiveness of the state's supported employment efforts.

The VRS Extended Employment Program augments Minnesota's supported employment resources. It provides a \$15.825 million a year to CRPs to provide ongoing employment support services. VRS coordinates both vocational rehabilitation and extended employment services to maximize the impact of both time-limited and extended services. In state fiscal year 2019, the VRS Extended Employment program provided ongoing work supports to about 4,000 individuals working in the community, about half of whom had previously received time-limited VR services. The Extended Employment Program is governed by state rule.

##### 3. Individuals with Serious Mental Illness and Individuals Who Are Deaf or Hard-of-Hearing

Minnesota VR has been a leader in implementing the Evidence Based Practice of Supported Employment for persons with serious and persistent mental illness known as Individual Placement and Support (IPS). IPS receives \$2.55 million in dedicated state funding, which is used for grants to local partnerships of mental health programs and employment providers (Community Rehabilitation Programs). These funds provide ongoing supports to persons with serious mental illness who are receiving community mental health services. Minnesota's programs utilize the IPS fidelity scale (2008) to guide program development and implementation as well as program evaluation and outcome measurement. Another

appropriation provides up to \$1,000,000 annually to provide long-term supported employment services for persons who are deaf, deaf blind or hard-of-hearing.

## G. COORDINATION WITH EMPLOYERS

Describe how the designated State unit will work with employers to identify competitive integrated employment and career exploration opportunities in order to facilitate the provision of:

### 1. VR SERVICES; AND

Excellence in job placement and retention services is fundamental to more fully living into DEED's vision statement of "a healthy economy, where all Minnesotans have or are on a path to meaningful employment and a family sustaining wage, and employers are able to fill their "in demand" jobs. Coordination with employers is also key to VRS' priority to embrace employers as key customers resulting in increased employment outcomes.

VRS has developed three updated strategic priorities and measures related to coordination with employers. These priorities replace the priorities listed under Goal 4: Employer Engagement in Section (P) Evaluation and Reports of Progress.

A. Develop and implement a VR client talent pool structural framework within the electronic case management system. The talent pool will be developed to gather and tap information to facilitate matching VRS clients to employment opportunities.

Metric: Secure approval and resources to develop the client talent pool structural framework as part of a larger rewrite of the case management system.

Minnesota's electronic case management system has capacity to identify talent pool. VRS staff input key talent pool identification data which greatly enhances the ability for Placement staff to identify pools of candidates based on employer needs. VRS staff will benefit from training to correctly utilize the talent pool refinement tools available in WF1.

B. Develop and implement low risk Hiring and Retention Options designed to increase employment outcomes and workforce diversity.

Metric: Track the VRS client participation and employment outcomes in low risk hiring and retention options on a quarterly basis. Options include On-the-Job Training, Job Try Outs, Internships, Connect 700 program and Schedule A hiring.

DEED-VRS updated the process, policies guidance and definitions for an array of low risk hiring and retention options which are referred to as On-the-Job Work & Training Options in Policy and Guidance Manuals. This information, along with the Connect 700 hiring initiative was shared with Community Rehabilitation Partners through statewide training to ensure consistency of understanding and application. VRS developed a series of new marketing materials for use by VRS and community partner providers to promote these programs with businesses (Internship, On-the-Job Training and Job Tryout brochures).

Metric: Create and deliver training to help employers identify, develop and sustain natural supports for employees with disabilities in the workplace.

C. VRS will lead and convene Placement Partnerships focused on meeting the needs of business by providing a talent pool of candidates that can meet the needs of business utilizing a Single

Point of Contact (SPOC) coordinated approach with VRS, Community Rehabilitation Providers, and Special Education Work Coordinators.

Metric: WIOA Common Performance Measure 6 (effectiveness in serving employers) will be developed and addressed in an annual report. Following is a report of progress on the revised priorities:

1. The Disability Employment Resource (DER) was developed to support business engagement. The initiative helps businesses meet their workforce goals by employing people with disabilities in competitive integrated positions, while employment professionals learn more about how to align their placement goals with business needs. The DER curriculum improves business engagement by delivering information to bridge the gap between business and human services, dispelling myths that can prevent employers from considering people with disabilities, helping human service professionals understand the business perspective, providing tools for starting and building relationships, and connecting businesses with information and resources to help them succeed.

2. Minnesota continues to support Placement Partnerships throughout the state to provide a Single Point of Contact (SPOC) to meet the needs of business and to enhance the skills of placement professionals. Placement Partnerships reflect the needs of business representing urban, metro and rural areas of the state. In addition to supporting joint training to maintain qualified staff, the placement partnerships share job leads, plan events that connect job seekers to employers as well as other community events.

3. Placement 101 is a two-day training focused on Placement and Retention Services for Professionals serving VRS clients. VRS is partnering with the Minnesota Rehabilitation Association's (MRA) Job Placement and Development (JPD) staff who provide most of the training of Placement 101 going forward. VRS Placement Specialists worked closely with JPD staff to update Placement 101 Training, VRS developed Minnesota Customized Employment Training and are pursuing ACRE (Association for Community Rehabilitation Educators) certification for the training participants. This training will include hands on learning opportunities for Discovery Assessment and Job Development portions of Customized Employment. Each participant will also receive mentoring from VRS & CRP staff who are certified by one of the key CE training entities that provide certification. The goal of MNCE Training is to assist placement professionals develop an understanding of CE and demonstrate proficiency in providing Discovery and Job Development services. The training is also essential for Program Managers, Rehabilitation Area Managers who supervise staff who are providing CE services.

## 2. TRANSITION SERVICES, INCLUDING PRE-EMPLOYMENT TRANSITION SERVICES, FOR STUDENTS AND YOUTH WITH DISABILITIES.

The need for Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) is assessed for all eligible students, age 14 through age 21, whom VRS serves. From there, the needed Pre-ETS are added to the employment plan and delivered either through one-on-one counseling sessions with the VRS counselor, the student's school, an internal VRS placement coordinator, or funds can be authorized to have them delivered via community rehabilitation programs, centers for independent living, etc. VRS staff work with local school districts to discuss how Pre-ETS are already available to students and where gaps are that VRS might be able to fill.

VRS also has Pre-ETS available statewide to students who are “potentially eligible” for VRS. There is one Pre-ETS Rehabilitation Representative assigned to each of VRS’ 23 teams. Their role is to provide outreach and Pre-ETS to potentially eligible students in all schools within their team’s geographic area. Once a student submits a signed application for Pre-Employment Transition Services, the Pre-ETS Representative meets with the student to assess their needs for Pre-ETS. From there, needed Pre-ETS are provided directly by the Pre-ETS Representative or through a DEED-VRS contracted provider.

VRS works with schools and contracted providers across the state to identify career exploration and competitive integrated employment opportunities to provide transition services, including pre-employment transition services, for students and youth with disabilities. This work is organized through regional Business Engagement Networks (BENs). BENs consist of VRS staff, contracted provider staff, and school work coordinators who work collaboratively to coordinate outreach and services to businesses on behalf of the students, youth, and adults that we all serve. They designate one person who understands business needs and interests in job hires and work-based learning opportunities to be the single point of contact with businesses. That point of contact then shares this information with all members of the BEN so that student, youth, or adult matches can be made with appropriate businesses.

#### H. INTERAGENCY COOPERATION

Describe how the designated State unit will collaborate with the State agency responsible for administering each of the following programs to develop opportunities for competitive integrated employment, to the greatest extent practicable:

##### 1. THE STATE MEDICAID PLAN UNDER TITLE XIX OF THE SOCIAL SECURITY ACT;

The State Medicaid plan under Title XIX of the Social Security Act; Medical Assistance, the state’s Medicaid program, is administered by the DHS Disability Services Division (DHS-DSD). Vocational Rehabilitation Services (VRS) and State Services for the Blind (SSB) collaborate closely with DHS in the provision of services for individuals who are on home and community-based waivers.

In September 2019, DHS-DSD, VRS, and SSB signed a Memorandum of Understanding. The terms of the MOU are specific to individuals on a Medicaid waiver who want to pursue competitive, integrated employment. Employment First and Person-Centered principles form the basis of the shared vision for how our agencies can provide employment services for people with disabilities in a coordinated manner. The goal is to align systems so that common customers – those who receive home and community-based service disability waivers and vocational rehabilitation services from VRS or SSB – can get seamless and timely supports to make informed choices and meet their competitive integrated employment goals. The full implementation of the MOU is planned for January 2021 to allow time for communication, stakeholder involvement, and training.

Under the MOU, the following coordination of services occurs:

##### **Payment of Services**

DEED-VRS/SSB is the primary payer for job-related services (services supporting job development, placement and employment stability) for common customers. DHS-DSD may fund services offered by VRS/SSB only when DHS-DSD documents that those services are not available through VRS/SSB. Once employment stability is established, DHS-DSD will continue to pay for long-term supports to maintain employment for customers of all ages. DHS-DSD will also

pay for services that assist people in making informed choices and developing informed employment goals.

### **Interagency Planning and Policy Development**

DHS-DSD and VRS/SSB will use strategic planning, troubleshooting, consultation and technical assistance to ensure successful implementation of this agreement. Key areas include goal setting, systems development, coordination of services, quality assurance and stakeholder involvement. We will:

- Establish an interagency steering committee to provide MOU oversight, set goals, review program services and financing options, identify promising practices and resolve disputes
- Identify program liaisons from VRS/SSB and DHS-DSD to coordinate joint efforts in communication, quality assurance, training, and coordination of services, policies and procedures
- Create work groups as needed to provide advice and share expertise regarding practice enhancements
- Hold periodic staff meetings across agencies to ensure coordinated communication and address policy issues
- Establish an advisory committee that includes stakeholders from VRS/SSB, DHS-DSD, lead agency, and providers of both vocational rehabilitation services and waiver services to discuss progress and challenges with the MOU
- Jointly meet with stakeholders to collect feedback and identify areas for improvement
- Understand employment outcomes in our respective programs and develop a shared understanding of outcome measures and reporting procedures
- Promote the use of evidence-based practices and/or promising approaches to create a more closely aligned employment service system, increase quality and gather shared data on employment outcomes
- Identify common customers and practices that support positive employment outcomes

### **Eligibility, Referrals, and Customer Flow**

We will establish a shared understanding of when and how eligibility will be determined by each agency and we will communicate eligibility requirements to stakeholders. This includes community rehabilitation partners, lead agency staff, waiver employment service providers, VRS/SSB staff, DHS-DSD staff, and the people served by our programs and their families.

We will develop a shared referral process and provide clear instructions for referrals between programs when 1) a person indicates an interest to explore competitive, integrated employment through Minnesota's Career Counseling Information and Referral Conversation in accordance with the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA – 511 process), 2) a person receiving HCBS waiver services decides to pursue competitive, integrated employment and 3) when a person receiving vocational rehabilitation services achieves stable employment and needs supports to maintain employment.

We will define a benefits planning model, determine how and when the model will be embedded into provided services, develop and coordinate training, and coordinate implementation through designated agency staff and a community of practice.

We will develop guidance on how and when services may be provided as people move between programs and funding sources and when dual services are allowed. We agree that people may receive VRS/SSB and waiver services at the same time as long as those services are needed and not duplicative.

### **Service Provider Networks**

We will work together to increase our statewide, shared network of employment service providers to improve access, support seamless transitions, and expand individuals' choices to high quality employment services. As part of this work, we agree to:

- Evaluate strategies for a common employment service provider pool. We will explore options for creating a shared job search service provider pool to support seamless service delivery and prevent unnecessary interruptions as people move between supports funded by VRS/SSB and supports funded by DHS-DSD.
- Encourage dual enrollment of employment service providers. While DHS and DEED will continue to maintain separate employment service provider licensure/accreditation standards, we will make it easier for providers to understand our respective standards and develop strategies to provide ongoing communication and technical assistance to those interested in enrolling.
- Align and streamline process and efforts. We will explore opportunities to better align and streamline each agency's business processes and requirements to create consistency and efficiencies for dually enrolled employment service providers.
- Coordinate communications and training. We will coordinate service provider communications and training to maintain consistent messaging and increase understanding of each agency's respective system and the shared customer flow outlined in this agreement.
- Measure and promote provider performance. We will explore methods to assess and provide information on service provider performance to people with disabilities and their families to support informed selection of service providers.
- Develop new providers. We will analyze data, set goals and collaborate on the development of employment service providers in underserved populations and areas of the state.

## **2. THE STATE AGENCY RESPONSIBLE FOR PROVIDING SERVICES FOR INDIVIDUALS WITH DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES; AND**

The primary agency responsible for services for individuals with disabilities is DHS. In Minnesota, the Governor's Council on Developmental Disabilities serves to advocate for all persons with developmental disabilities by carrying out activities in major areas of emphasis.

Minnesota's Olmstead Plan supports freedom of choice and provides a framework and a series of key activities that must be achieved to ensure Minnesotans with disabilities have the opportunity to live, learn, work, and enjoy life in the most integrated setting desired by the

person. Former Governor Mark Dayton appointed an Olmstead Subcabinet to develop and implement this plan. The Subcabinet consists of representatives of the MnSIC agencies listed above, the Housing Finance Agency, the Department of Transportation, the ombudsman for mental health and developmental disabilities, and the executive director of the Governor's Council on Developmental Disabilities.

VRS is involved in the following joint projects with the above agencies:

A. Minnesota Customized Employment Training:

Customized Employment (CE) is an evidenced-based alternative for helping people with significant disabilities to become successfully employed. At the foundation of CE is Discovery, which is a process for uncovering a person's strengths, interests and the conditions under which they will be successful in employment. DEED-VRS and DHS-Minnesota State Operated Community Services developed an Association of Community Rehabilitation Educator (ACRE) certified Customized Employment curriculum and training. It also includes mentoring supports to DEED, Community Rehabilitation Partner, School District staff to learn how to deliver Customized Employment Services that is sustainable, ongoing and cost effective for the state disability employment system.

B. SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) Employment and Training

The Departments of Human Services and Employment and Economic Development are currently studying opportunities to blend SNAP funds with other anti-poverty funding to help move more people out of poverty.

### 3. THE STATE AGENCY RESPONSIBLE FOR PROVIDING MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES.

DHS is responsible for coordinating mental health services for adults and youth.

Minnesota's Mental Health system is a state mandated, county operated system. The State Mental Health Authority is responsible for ensuring that Minnesota's 87 counties, the local mental health authority, provide an array of community mental health services including: Basic clinical services, community services and supports, hospitalization and residential treatment. Funding for Minnesota's mental health system comes from health care insurance, including Medicaid, private Insurance and MinnesotaCare as well as county local tax levy funds, state mental health funds and Federal Block grant funds.

Minnesota's Mental Health and Drug and Alcohol Divisions are merging to provide a combined state administration for adult and children's mental health and alcohol and drug abuse. The emphasis is on moving to integrated care approaches.

The Minnesota-General program has a long history of innovative collaboration with the State Mental Health Authority. This includes VR representation on the State Mental Health Planning Council and the newly formed State Behavioral Advisory Council.

The two agencies have also collaborated to implement, sustain and expand the evidence-based practice of supported employment, Individual Placement and Support. Starting with 4 local partnerships between mental health and employment providers in 2006, the IPS provider network in Minnesota, funded in part with state appropriations dedicated to IPS, has expanded to 29 IPS programs (partnerships between mental health agencies and employment services agencies) in 47 of Minnesota's 87 counties. Minnesota VR and Mental Health agencies are partners in the National IPS Learning Community.

## I. COMPREHENSIVE SYSTEM OF PERSONNEL DEVELOPMENT; DATA SYSTEM ON PERSONNEL AND PERSONNEL DEVELOPMENT

Describe the designated State agency's procedures and activities to establish and maintain a comprehensive system of personnel development designed to ensure an adequate supply of qualified State rehabilitation professional and paraprofessional personnel for the designated State unit, including the following:

### 1. SYSTEM ON PERSONNEL AND PERSONNEL DEVELOPMENT

#### A. QUALIFIED PERSONNEL NEEDS

Describe the development and maintenance of a system for collecting and analyzing on an annual basis data on qualified personnel needs with respect to:

##### I. THE NUMBER OF PERSONNEL WHO ARE EMPLOYED BY THE STATE AGENCY IN THE PROVISION OF VR SERVICES IN RELATION TO THE NUMBER OF INDIVIDUALS SERVED, BROKEN DOWN BY PERSONNEL CATEGORY;

In Program Year 2018, VRS served 16,151 consumers and ended the year with an active caseload of 10,411 individuals. In Program Year 2017, we served 16,680 consumers, ending the year with an active caseload of 10,954; an average case load for counselors of 67. U.S. Census Bureau data on the geographic distribution of Minnesotans with disabilities has been used to determine the distribution of staff. The metro region has 133 field positions, the northern region has 98 field positions, and the southern region has 107 field positions.

##### II. THE NUMBER OF PERSONNEL CURRENTLY NEEDED BY THE STATE AGENCY TO PROVIDE VR SERVICES, BROKEN DOWN BY PERSONNEL CATEGORY; AND

The Vocational Rehabilitation Services leadership team consists of a director and nine managers.

Direct supervision of field staff is provided by rehabilitation area managers and supervisors. Rehabilitation specialists and other administrative specialists support the work of both administrative and field staff by providing technical assistance, training, and consultation.

Direct service to VR consumers is provided by rehabilitation counselors, augmented by rehabilitation representatives, job placement coordinators, community liaison representatives, and Occupational Communication Specialists (sign language interpreters); vocational rehabilitation technicians and clerical staff provide support to both field and administrative offices.

##### III. PROJECTIONS OF THE NUMBER OF PERSONNEL, BROKEN DOWN BY PERSONNEL CATEGORY, WHO WILL BE NEEDED BY THE STATE AGENCY TO PROVIDE VR SERVICES IN 5 YEARS BASED ON PROJECTIONS OF THE NUMBER OF INDIVIDUALS TO BE SERVED, INCLUDING INDIVIDUALS WITH SIGNIFICANT DISABILITIES, THE NUMBER OF PERSONNEL EXPECTED TO RETIRE OR LEAVE THE FIELD, AND OTHER RELEVANT FACTORS.

VRS had 9 retirements in calendar year 2019. There were 5 voluntary resignations. The number of voluntary resignations has remained consistent (between 2-3%) over the past five years. Between 2019 and 2024, 20% of VRS staff, 14% of counselors and 25% of managers and supervisors will be eligible to retire.

VRS program director/managers (Admin)

- Total filled positions: 10

- Current vacancies: 1
- Projected vacancies over the next 5 years: 3

#### Rehabilitation Area Managers/supervisors (field)

- Total filled positions: 23
- Current vacancies: 0
- Projected vacancies over the next 5 years: 5

#### Rehabilitation Specialists

- Total filled positions: 26
- Current vacancies: 1
- Projected vacancies over the next 5 years: 6

#### Rehabilitation Counselors

- Total filled positions: 157
- Current vacancies: 6
- Projected vacancies over the next 5 years: 20

#### Rehabilitation Representatives

- Total filled positions: 41
- Current vacancies: 2
- Projected vacancies over the next 5 years: 0

#### Job Placement/Business Services

- Total filled positions: 28
- Current vacancies: 2
- Projected vacancies over the next 5 years: 2

#### Vocational Rehabilitation Technicians

- Total filled positions: 60
- Current vacancies: 3
- Projected vacancies over the next 5 years: 19

#### Clerical Support

- Total filled positions: 18
- Current vacancies: 2
- Projected vacancies over the next 5 years: 4

#### Other Admin/Field

- Total filled positions: 8
- Current vacancies: 2
- Projected vacancies over the next 5 years: 5

**TOTAL**

- Total filled positions: 371
- Current vacancies: 19
- Projected vacancies over the next 5 years: 64

**B. PERSONNEL DEVELOPMENT**

Describe the development and maintenance of a system for collecting and analyzing on an annual basis data on personnel development with respect to:

**I. A LIST OF THE INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION IN THE STATE THAT ARE PREPARING VR PROFESSIONALS, BY TYPE OF PROGRAM;**

Three area graduate programs award master's degrees that prepare individuals to work as vocational rehabilitation counselors:

- Minnesota State University at Mankato. This program, however, will be closing once the current classes are complete.
- St. Cloud State University
- University of Wisconsin – Stout. This program will only be offering virtual courses going forward.

VRS maintains a collegial relationship with these programs, recruiting for internships and filling counselor positions from among graduates. The section below displays current enrollment and the number of rehabilitation counseling graduates available through these programs.

**II. THE NUMBER OF STUDENTS ENROLLED AT EACH OF THOSE INSTITUTIONS, BROKEN DOWN BY TYPE OF PROGRAM; AND**

**Minnesota State University - Mankato**

- Students enrolled: 16
- Employees sponsored by agency and/or RSA: 1
- Graduates sponsored by agency and/or RSA: 0
- Graduates from the previous year: 5

**St. Cloud State University**

- Students enrolled: 40
- Employees sponsored by agency and/or RSA: 1
- Graduates sponsored by agency and/or RSA: 13
- Graduates from the previous year: 19

## University of Wisconsin - Stout

- Students enrolled: 69
- Employees sponsored by agency and/or RSA: 4
- Graduates sponsored by agency and/or RSA: 17
- Graduates from the previous year: 23

### III. THE NUMBER OF STUDENTS WHO GRADUATED DURING THE PRIOR YEAR FROM EACH OF THOSE INSTITUTIONS WITH CERTIFICATION OR LICENSURE, OR WITH THE CREDENTIALS FOR CERTIFICATION OR LICENSURE, BROKEN DOWN BY THE PERSONNEL CATEGORY FOR WHICH THEY HAVE RECEIVED, OR HAVE THE CREDENTIALS TO RECEIVE, CERTIFICATION OR LICENSURE.

Five graduates from Mankato State University and two graduates from University of Wisconsin-Stout received master's degrees in Rehabilitation Counseling. Ten graduates from St. Cloud State received master's degrees in Rehabilitation Counseling Education and nine received master's degrees in Rehabilitation and Addiction Counseling.

#### 2. PLAN FOR RECRUITMENT, PREPARATION AND RETENTION OF QUALIFIED PERSONNEL

Describe the development and implementation of a plan to address the current and projected needs for qualified personnel including, the coordination and facilitation of efforts between the designated State unit and institutions of higher education and professional associations to recruit, prepare, and retain personnel who are qualified, including personnel from minority backgrounds and personnel who are individuals with disabilities.

Internships commonly lead to permanent counseling positions. The staff development manager/specialist devotes approximately 5% time as the point of contact for managers, professors, interns, supervising counselors, and Human Resources to coordinate intern placement and supervision, and for counselor recruitment. Other activities include presentations to students and informing university personnel of counselor vacancies.

The VRS staff development manager is an active member of graduate counseling advisory committees at the University of Wisconsin - Stout and Minnesota State University and communicates regularly with counseling program directors.

VRS provides tuition support for staff pursuing graduate degrees in rehabilitation counseling. Employees in the St. Cloud program and UW - Stout online program also had access to RSA stipends to assist with some tuition costs.

Media advertisement: VRS posts its vacancies at the State of Minnesota personnel openings website and the MinnesotaWorks.net job bank, as well as online job sites.

Minnesota post retirement option: The post retirement option, which permits a state retiree to work up to half time without losing insurance or retirement benefits, is a component of VRS retention and succession planning strategies.

As a key strategy for staff retention, VRS pays close attention to organizational vitality and staff morale. VRS works to maintain a high level of employee engagement through statewide staff communication about the vision, mission, values, strategic goals and agency achievements, and a robust training and development program. VRS completed an Organizational Vitality survey in fall 2018. Survey response rate was 78% this year. Findings indicate strong employee

engagement on the key indicators measured. For example, 93% agreed that the VRS mission makes them feel their job is important, 80% agreed that they have the necessary training to do their job well, and 78% agreed that they were informed of decisions and issues that affect them and their work. Staff also provided suggestions for specific changes that would increase job satisfaction; response themes included enhancing organization communications, re-implementing external training opportunities, increasing recognition and feedback, and workload adjustment. VRS plans to repeat the survey annually as a measure of employee engagement and as a tool to identify needed improvements in organizational effectiveness.

Counselors and other staff are recruited and hired under Minnesota's competitive civil service system, including affirmative action to recruit and hire individuals with disabilities and members of the state's diverse cultural and ethnic populations. Voluntary disclosure of ethnic and cultural status provides the following PY 2018 data: 10% of VRS employees identify themselves as American Indian, Asian, Black or Hispanic/Latino, 87% identify themselves as White, and 3% are non-specified or undisclosed. At present, 18% of VRS employees voluntarily disclose a disability. This is up 3% since 2017.

The New Americans team, based in the Twin Cities, offer vocational rehabilitation services to refugees who recently immigrated to Minnesota from countries such as Somalia, Ethiopia, Jamaica, Turkey, Congo, Guyana, Iraq, Nigeria, Egypt, Pakistan, Sudan and Eritrea. The New Americans team consists of a lead rehabilitation counselor and two community liaison representatives. They are themselves refugees from East African countries. Each member of the New Americans team is multi-lingual and provides intensive supports from application through employment closure to the VRS consumers they serve.

Coordination with professional associations: VRS staff serve on the board of the Minnesota Rehabilitation Association (MRA) and serve on MRA conference planning committees. A significant number of staff attend MRA conferences each year. VRS encourages staff membership in professional associations, and many serve as officers and work on association committees.

### 3. PERSONNEL STANDARDS

Describe the State agency's policies and procedures for the establishment and maintenance of personnel standards consistent with section 101(a)(7)(B) to ensure that designated State unit professional and paraprofessional personnel are adequately trained and prepared, including:

- A. STANDARDS THAT ARE CONSISTENT WITH ANY NATIONAL OR STATE-APPROVED OR -RECOGNIZED CERTIFICATION, LICENSING, REGISTRATION, OR OTHER COMPARABLE REQUIREMENTS THAT APPLY TO THE PROFESSION OR DISCIPLINE IN WHICH SUCH PERSONNEL ARE PROVIDING VR SERVICES; AND

Vocational rehabilitation counselors and other professional staff are hired through competitive examination under the Minnesota civil service system. The current rehabilitation counselor candidate examination was developed by a work group that comprises staff from VRS, State Services for the Blind, and the department's Office of Human Resources.

Qualifications for counselors are based on both educational preparation and professional work experience. The academic degree standard for Rehabilitation Counselors is the Master's Degree in Rehabilitation Counseling or a Master's Degree in a closely related field and evidence of completion of a graduate level course in counseling theories/techniques.

- B. THE ESTABLISHMENT AND MAINTENANCE OF EDUCATION AND EXPERIENCE REQUIREMENTS, IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 101(A)(7)(B)(II) OF THE REHABILITATION

ACT, TO ENSURE THAT THE PERSONNEL HAVE A 21ST CENTURY UNDERSTANDING OF THE EVOLVING LABOR FORCE AND THE NEEDS OF INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES.

**Rehabilitation Counselors**

- Master's degree in Rehabilitation Counseling; or
- A degree in a closely related field with evidence of completion of graduate level coursework in counseling theory/techniques.
- All of the agency's vocational rehabilitation counselors meet the state's standard.

**Rehabilitation Representative**

- Bachelor's degree in rehabilitation counseling or in a related social services field; or
- Bachelor's degree in any field, plus two years of experience providing employment related services for persons with disabilities.

**Placement Coordinator**

- One year professional experience in which the primary focus was the provision of vocational services to persons with disabilities; or
- Master's degree in behavioral science, counseling, vocational evaluation, job placement, vocational rehabilitation, or a closely related degree; or
- Three years of paraprofessional experience in which the primary focus was the provision of vocational services to persons with disabilities. A Bachelor's degree substitutes for half of the experience requirement.

**Vocational Rehabilitation Technician**

- A minimum of one year of experience in an organization whose mission includes the provision of services to persons who are injured or disabled so that an understanding and sensitivity toward people with disabilities has been obtained
- Customer service skills sufficient to perform intake, assist with forms, and to develop positive relationships with the consumers
- Keyboarding skills sufficient to create documents and complete data entry, and
- English sufficient to interview consumers and employers, present job-seeking skills training, and to draft correspondence or complete forms.

**4. STAFF DEVELOPMENT**

Describe the State agency's policies, procedures, and activities to ensure that, consistent with section 101(a)(7)(C) of the Rehabilitation Act, all personnel employed by the designated State unit receive appropriate and adequate training in terms of:

A. A SYSTEM OF STAFF DEVELOPMENT FOR PROFESSIONALS AND PARAPROFESSIONALS WITHIN THE DESIGNATED STATE UNIT, PARTICULARLY WITH RESPECT TO ASSESSMENT, VOCATIONAL COUNSELING, JOB PLACEMENT, AND REHABILITATION TECHNOLOGY, INCLUDING TRAINING IMPLEMENTED IN COORDINATION WITH ENTITIES CARRYING OUT STATE PROGRAMS UNDER SECTION 4 OF THE ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY ACT OF 1998; AND

The staff development director is a member of the VRS management team and one of his direct reports is responsible for the Comprehensive System of Personnel Development. The staff development team coordinates training, develops training programs to meet identified needs, and coordinates internships and other recruitment activities.

Staff development and training needs are assessed through interviews with field staff, reports from area managers and recommendations from staff groups and committees. Case review yields training needs information. Staff Development and field managers meet regularly, as does the Policy Learning Team, to develop and guide staff development activity.

The comprehensive staff training and development plan describes core training curriculum for staff, identifies competencies required of each VRS position along with training strategies and resource information for each competency, and identifies specialized competencies for serving transition age youth. Annual performance reviews between supervisor and employee include a review of training and development needs of the employee.

### **2020 Training Plan**

Required training for new employees includes: VRS New Employee Orientation (2 day training including an VRS Orientation and Person Centered Foundations, 2 times per year), Data Practices eLearning course, VRS Data Security eLearning course, Mandated Reporting eLearning course, Ethics eLearning course, VRS Process in MN eLearning course, Appeals eLearning course, Violence and Behavior Policy eLearning course, New Counselor Training (with a mentor), Motivational Interviewing Introduction, Transition 101 (for Transition Counselors), Ethics Training for VRS, Vocational Assessment Services (VAS) Interpretation, Psychometrist Training for VAS, Mental Health First Aid, Various Policy trainings, Introduction to WF1 (Case Management and Reports Portal), VRS Purchasing Training, DB101 (Disability Benefits, Labor Market Resources and Updates, and Creative Job Search. Our Purchasing staff also are required to participate in specific State and DEED Procurement Training and a Diversity and Inclusion training.

### **Other L&D Training (in addition to those above)**

- Employee Onboarding (training provided through first 3-6 months of employment)
- Putting It All Together (part of and a follow up to Onboarding)
- Person Centered Practices Refresher
- Basics of Assistive Technology
- Autism 101
- MI Managers Training
- MI Refresher
- Customized Employment
- Safe Space Training
- Pre-ETS Flexibilities
- Professional and Technical (P/T) Contract Providers Pre-ETS Webinar
- Regional Pre-ETS Rep and RAM Meeting/Training

- Statewide All Transition Staff Meetings/Training
- Caddie U
- VirtualJobShadow.com
- MCIS
- eTrac
- Microsoft OneDrive and Teams
- Microsoft OneNote
- Charting the LifeCourse
- Psychiatric Disabilities eLearning
- Placement and Retention Services
- ADA and Employing People with Disabilities
- On the Job Work and Training Options
- CareerScope
- Caseload Management

### **Policy**

- Case Note Fundamentals
- Supportive Employment
- Credential and MSG Review
- Closures and Exits
- Data Points
- MN Statute 16A.15
- Data Practices

### **2021 Training Plan**

Required training for new employees includes: VRS New Employee Orientation (2 day training including an VRS Orientation and Person Centered Foundations, 2 times per year), Data Practices eLearning course, VRS Data Security eLearning course, Mandated Reporting eLearning course, Ethics eLearning course, VRS Process in MN eLearning course, Appeals eLearning course, Violence and Behavior Policy eLearning course, New Counselor Training (with a mentor), Motivational Interviewing Introduction, Transition 101 (for Transition Counselors), Ethics Training for VRS, Vocational Assessment Services (VAS) Interpretation, Psychometrist Training for VAS, Mental Health First Aid, Various Policy trainings, Introduction to WF1 (Case Management and Reports Portal), VRS Purchasing Training, DB101 (Disability Benefits, Labor Market Resources and Updates, and Creative Job Search. Our Purchasing staff also are required to participate in specific State and DEED Procurement Training and a Diversity and Inclusion training.

### **Other L&D Training (in addition to those above)**

- Employee Onboarding (training provided through first 3-6 months of employment)
- Putting It All Together (part of and a follow up to Onboarding)
- Charting the LifeCourse
- EQ Training
- Autism 101
- MCIS
- Basics of Assistive Technology
- MI Managers Training
- MI Refresher
- Customized Employment
- Ongoing Pre-ETS Trainings
- Psychiatric Disabilities eLearning
- ADA and Disclosure
- CareerScope

### **Policy**

- Mandated Reporter Review
- Eligibility
- Priority For Services
- Post Secondary Policy
- Small Business
- Credential and MSG Updates

### **B. PROCEDURES FOR THE ACQUISITION AND DISSEMINATION OF SIGNIFICANT KNOWLEDGE FROM RESEARCH AND OTHER SOURCES TO DESIGNATED STATE UNIT PROFESSIONALS AND PARAPROFESSIONALS.**

- Autism 101 training is planned on mental health diagnosis, what strengths and limitations individuals might demonstrate; behavioral aspects of autism and strategies for addressing the needs of individuals with autism.
- Assistive Technology - the basics of principles and practice is being developed by a work group lead by an Assistive Technology Specialist.
- Cyber Security – develop an eLearning module training on common data breaches and actions that minimize the risk of a data breach, handling suspicious emails, retaining and sending private data, proper laptop transporting and where to report a data breach.

- Facilitation skills - develop training for both field and admin staff to build skills for conversational processes to facilitate and host space to bring out ideas and perspectives, to positively engage and invite individuals to step in and take charge of the challenges facing them, build consensus and reach a shared agreement.
- Person-Centered Practices - strengthen field leaders and staff ability to use Person-Centered practices. Understand and embed person-centeredness into all policy, guidance and training. Draw out values-based work and instill a culture of continuous improvement to our services. Be connected to the U of M Institute on Community Integration expertise as well as community partners on their journey to become person-centered organizations.
- Psychiatric Disabilities eLearning - continue to develop eLearning courses specific to VR and Individual Placement and Support (IPS) services, and navigating the Minnesota Mental Health system.
- Vocational Assessment Usage and Interpretation: A survey was completed with VRS staff to indicate their use and understanding of the Assessment tools currently available to them. Training will be determined from the findings of the survey.

#### 5. PERSONNEL TO ADDRESS INDIVIDUAL COMMUNICATION NEEDS

Describe how the designated State unit has personnel or obtains the services of other individuals who are able to communicate in appropriate modes of communication with or in the native language of applicants or eligible individuals who have limited English speaking ability.

VRS ensures that personnel and methods are available so that staff may communicate with consumers in a preferred language or other means of communication. Substantial numbers of VRS consumers use languages other than English, including: Cambodian, Lao, Vietnamese, Somali, Spanish, and American Sign Language. Translation of forms, information brochures and the ready availability of purchased interpreter services or a multilingual staff member ensures effective communication statewide.

Deaf and Hard of Hearing services are provided by highly qualified VRS staff including one State Coordinator for Deaf Services and 24 staff who are conversationally competent in American Sign Language. To be exact, we have three VRS managers/supervisors, fifteen counselors, three placement specialists, two VR technicians, a Rehabilitation Representative, an Office and Administrative Specialist, and two Occupational Communication Specialists (who are also certified sign language interpreters). Deaf and hard of hearing specialists in ten locations are using a video remote interpreting platform called Stratus VRI to supplement the use of onsite interpreting services and provide more options for accessibility. Counselors are also using videophones, FaceTime, Microsoft Lync and texting to communicate with people and providers who use our services.

#### 6. COORDINATION OF PERSONNEL DEVELOPMENT UNDER THE INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES EDUCATION ACT

As appropriate, describe the procedures and activities to coordinate the designated State unit's comprehensive system of personnel development with personnel development under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.

Under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act VRS has a collaborative agreement with MDE, Minnesota's secondary education system. This is augmented by MDE representation on the State Rehabilitation Council and VRS participation on the

Minnesota State Interagency Coordinating Team, with staff support by VRS program specialists for transition services and services for people with autism.

## J. STATEWIDE ASSESSMENT

### 1. PROVIDE AN ASSESSMENT OF THE REHABILITATION NEEDS OF INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES RESIDING WITHIN THE STATE, PARTICULARLY THE VR SERVICES NEEDS OF THOSE:

#### A. WITH THE MOST SIGNIFICANT DISABILITIES, INCLUDING THEIR NEED FOR SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES;

The most recent Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment was completed with SRC input and submitted to RSA in 2017. The information below is based on that assessment with updated data which shows a continuation of trends. VRS is currently working on a new CSNA, which will be submitted by the end of the Program Year.

The American Community Survey estimates that 615,846 non-institutionalized Minnesotans, or 11.2% of the state's population, has a disability. This compares to 12.7% nationally. Males are slightly more likely to have a disability than females (11.6% versus 10.7%). Cognitive and ambulatory disabilities are the two most common types of disability.

The availability of long-term supports continues to be an issue, especially supported employment services for individuals with serious mental illness, traumatic brain injury, autism spectrum disorder and deaf/hard of hearing. In addition to traditional long-term supports, consumers and supported employment providers identified a need for additional support services including personal support for life issues, how to disclose a disability if not done at time of hire, how to quit a job, how to make yourself visible and promotion-worthy within a company and understanding the job appraisal purpose and process.

#### B. WHO ARE MINORITIES;

According to the American Community Survey, individuals who are Black/African American represent 5.5% of the state population, compared with 13.1% of VR participants accepted for service. Individuals who are Hispanic/Latino represent 5.0% of the state population, and 5.8% of VR participants accepted for service. American Indians represent 1.0% of the state population, and 3.7% of VR participants accepted for service. Asians represent 4.4% of the state population, and 4.8% of VR participants accepted for service. Research suggests blacks and American Indians experience disability at a significantly higher rate than other cultural/ethnic groups. VRS needs to continue active outreach to people of color and indigenous people to assure equal access to the benefits of VR services.

#### C. WHO HAVE BEEN UNSERVED OR UNDERSERVED BY THE VR PROGRAM;

Several underserved populations have been identified. According to the Minnesota Labor Market Information Office, the share of Minnesotans 65 and older in the workforce has increased nearly 63 percent since 2003. Many of these people have disabilities.

Ex-offenders constitute a growing population. According to a special report on Disabilities Among Prison and Jail Inmates, 2011-12, released in December 2015 by the Bureau of Justice Statistics, the prevalence of inmates reported at least one of six disability types: hearing, vision, cognitive, ambulatory, self-care, and independent living. When compared to the general population, jail inmates were about 2.5 times more likely to report an ambulatory and independent living disability, more than 3 times more likely to report a visual and hearing

disability, and 6.5 times more likely to report a cognitive disability. VRS currently provides training to VR offices and community partners on best practices in working with ex-offenders as well as maintaining resources for ex-offenders on the state's Career One Stop web page, but additional work is needed on how to develop soft skills needed for employment.

**D. WHO HAVE BEEN SERVED THROUGH OTHER COMPONENTS OF THE STATEWIDE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM; AND**

People with disabilities are served in all components of the workforce development system, both as universal customers and in eligibility-based programs. The Governor's Workforce Development Board has established a Disability Equity Committee to address any disparities for individuals with disabilities in training and employment, with an emphasis on people on the VRS Waiting List.

**E. WHO ARE YOUTH WITH DISABILITIES AND STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES, INCLUDING, AS APPROPRIATE, THEIR NEED FOR PRE-EMPLOYMENT TRANSITION SERVICES OR OTHER TRANSITION SERVICES.**

The most recent data from MDE (2019) shows that there were 44,015 students age 14-21 (the age for transition services in Minnesota) who received special education. (Note that there are not accurate numbers for those that receive 504 accommodations or have a 504 plan).

The need for Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) is assessed for all students, age 14 through age 21, that VRS serves. From there, the needed Pre-ETS are added to the employment plan and delivered either through one-on-one counseling sessions with the VRS counselor, the student's school, an internal VRS placement coordinator, or funds can be authorized to have them delivered via community rehabilitation programs, centers for independent living, etc. VRS staff discuss with local school districts how Pre-ETS are already available to students and where gaps are that VRS might be able to fill.

**2. IDENTIFY THE NEED TO ESTABLISH, DEVELOP, OR IMPROVE COMMUNITY REHABILITATION PROGRAMS WITHIN THE STATE; AND**

The largest unmet need has been finding transportation options for people working in individual sites in the community. Many of the existing options provide transportation between group homes and center-based programs or enclaves, but there are very limited options for transportation to and from individual integrated worksites. We also identified the need for more funding for ongoing employment supports. As a part of providing technical assistance to the state's two tribal VR programs, there is limited culturally appropriate services available on the reservations. Services in neighboring cities are difficult to access and services are not culturally specific.

This is consistent with the most recent CSNA, submitted in 2017, and prior approval requests.

**3. INCLUDE AN ASSESSMENT OF THE NEEDS OF INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES FOR TRANSITION CAREER SERVICES AND PRE-EMPLOYMENT TRANSITION SERVICES, AND THE EXTENT TO WHICH SUCH SERVICES ARE COORDINATED WITH TRANSITION SERVICES PROVIDED UNDER THE INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES EDUCATION ACT**

MDE, several local school districts, the Title 1 Youth programs, and VRS are currently assessing how to provide cost effective coordinated transition career services and pre-employment

transition services. The pilot activities are described in the section on youth with disabilities (g.2.).

#### K. ANNUAL ESTIMATES

Describe:

##### 1. THE NUMBER OF INDIVIDUALS IN THE STATE WHO ARE ELIGIBLE FOR SERVICES

#### **K. ANNUAL ESTIMATES. DESCRIBE:**

There are approximately 296,481 Minnesotans between the ages of 18 and 64 with one or more long-lasting disabilities (2018 American Community survey summary tables).

##### 2. THE NUMBER OF ELIGIBLE INDIVIDUALS WHO WILL RECEIVE SERVICES UNDER:

###### A. THE VR PROGRAM;

Vocational Rehabilitation Services (VRS) anticipates serving about 16,200 individuals in FFY2020 and 15,320 individuals in FFY2021 under Title I of the Rehabilitation Act, all of whom will be individuals with either a significant disability or a most significant disability under Minnesota's administrative rule for vocational rehabilitation.

It is estimated that about 15,876 (98 percent) in FFY2020 and 15,013 in FFY2021 will be persons who have a most significant disability, and about 324 (2 percent) in FFY 2020 and 306 in FFY2021 will be persons with a significant disability.

###### B. THE SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM; AND

It is estimated that 430 individuals will receive employment supports in FFY 2021 under Title VI Part B, Supported Employment Services Program. The approximate cost of purchased services for these individuals will be \$450,000. Under the administrative rule enacted to establish Minnesota's order of selection, all persons receiving supported employment services must be found to have three or more serious functional limitations (priority category one).

###### C. EACH PRIORITY CATEGORY, IF UNDER AN ORDER OF SELECTION.

In FFY 2021, it is estimated that about 15,000 persons with serious limitations in three or more functional areas (priority category one) will be served at an approximate case service cost of \$17.9 million; about 280 persons will be served who have serious limitations in two functional areas (priority category two) at an approximate case service cost of \$311,000; and about 40 persons will be served who have a serious limitation in one functional area (priority category three) at an approximate case service cost of \$27,000.

##### 3. THE NUMBER OF INDIVIDUALS WHO ARE ELIGIBLE FOR VR SERVICES, BUT ARE NOT RECEIVING SUCH SERVICES DUE TO AN ORDER OF SELECTION; AND

As of October 1, 2019, the total waiting list under the current order of selection is 1,426 people. Vocational Rehabilitation Services has four categories under the order of selection. Category One (three or more substantial functional limitations) is currently open. Category Two (two substantial functional limitations) is closed with a waiting list of 983 people. Category Three (one functional limitation) is closed with a waiting list of 491 people, and Category Four (no identified substantial functional limitations) has a waiting list of 28 people.

##### 4. THE COST OF SERVICES FOR THE NUMBER OF INDIVIDUALS ESTIMATED TO BE ELIGIBLE FOR SERVICES. IF UNDER AN ORDER OF SELECTION, IDENTIFY THE COST OF SERVICES FOR EACH PRIORITY CATEGORY.

In FFY 2021, approximately 2,900 individuals will obtain an integrated competitive outcome that is approved by the U.S. Secretary of Education. All of these will be individuals with significant or most significant disabilities.

Priority Category One: Open

- Estimated Funds: \$17,989,000
- Estimated Number to be Served: 15,000
- Average Cost of Services: \$1,199

Priority Category Two: Closed

- Estimated Funds: \$311,000
- Estimated Number to be Served: 280
- Average Cost of Services: \$1,109

Priority Category Three: Closed

- Estimated Funds: \$27,000
- Estimated Number to be Served: 40
- Average Cost of Services: \$683

Priority Category Four: Closed

- Estimated Funds: \$0
- Estimated Number to be Served: 0
- Average Cost of Services: \$0

Totals

- Estimated Funds: \$18,327,000
- Estimated Number to be Served: 15,320
- Average Cost of Services: \$1,196

#### L. STATE GOALS AND PRIORITIES

The designated State unit must:

1. IDENTIFY IF THE GOALS AND PRIORITIES WERE JOINTLY DEVELOPED AND AGREED TO BY THE STATE VR AGENCY AND THE STATE REHABILITATION COUNCIL, IF THE STATE HAS A COUNCIL, AND JOINTLY AGREED TO ANY REVISIONS

VRS and the State Rehabilitation Council have jointly developed the following Goals and Priorities to promote the continuous improvement of the VR program.

2. IDENTIFY THE GOALS AND PRIORITIES IN CARRYING OUT THE VR AND SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT PROGRAMS

#### **GOAL 1. PROVIDE QUALITY SERVICES TO YOUTH AND ADULTS WITH DISABILITIES FOR EXPLORATION, DEVELOPMENT AND ADVANCEMENT IN CAREERS**

Objectives:

A. Quality pre-employment transition services are provided to potentially eligible students

Key Results:

1. Pre-ETS Representative data reports demonstrate that outreach is provided to every school district/charter school in Minnesota

2. Students and families are satisfied with the services they receive

3. Baseline is established and annual goals are established and met for numbers of students served

B. Annual goals for numbers of students served are established Quality VR Services are provided to eligible participants

Key Results:

1. Compliance standards are established/defined via case reviews

2. Participants are satisfied with the services they receive

3. Baseline is established and annual goals set for post-secondary education/training and obtainment of measurable skills gains

4. A system for measuring career advancement is established and annual goals are established and met

5. Goals are established and met for statewide employment outcomes and job retention

C. Quality services are provided to participants of state appropriated programs (State Extended Employment program, Individual Placement and Supports grants, Centers for Independent Living grants, Deaf and Hard of Hearing grants)

Key Results:

Satisfaction criteria are established and annual goals are established and met

## **GOAL 2. STRENGTHEN BUSINESS ENGAGEMENT**

Objectives:

A. Connect VRS participants to competitive integrated employment

Key Results:

1. Increased competitive integrated employment outcomes

B. Connect students with disabilities to work experiences

Key Results:

1. A mechanism for tracking work-based experiences is established and baseline data is collected.

C. Develop and facilitate a disability employment collaborative to meet the needs of businesses

Key Results:

1. Competitive work-based learning opportunities for students with disabilities
2. Increased awareness about the benefits of hiring people with disabilities

**GOAL 3. BUILD A HEALTHY ORGANIZATION IN ORDER TO ACHIEVE OUR MISSION**

Objectives:

A. Fiscal stability

Key Results:

1. Reduction in purchasing violations (MS16)
2. Fiscal dashboards created and monitored to make decisions
3. Full 15% of Federal award is spent on Pre-ETS
4. Actual spending reasonably tracks budgeted amounts

B. Employee Engagement

Key Results:

1. Staff burden is reduced through technology development
2. Staff are trained in conflict resolution

C. Build collaboration within VRS and across DEED

Key Results:

1. A project management tool (Monday.com) is used to track and report progress on projects to enable collaboration between units

D. Build human resource capital

Key Results:

1. Plan developed to expand recruitment of qualified staff
2. Reduction in staff turnover
3. Counselors have effective and professional counseling skills
4. Counselors are proficient in aspects of disabilities for frequently served populations

**GOAL 4. STRENGTHEN COLLABORATION THROUGH PARTNER ENGAGEMENT**

Objectives:

A. Coordinate and align services

Key Results:

1. Map of providers and services
2. Referral and funding decision tree (who should pay for the service)

B. Timely and relevant communication and training

Key Results:

1. Fewer contract related inquiries and issues
  2. More resources (FAQs, etc.) available to partners
  3. Partners are trained in delivering Pre-Employment Transition Services and report satisfaction
- C. Engage State Rehabilitation Council for input and feedback

Key Result:

1. Input and feedback provided to VRS leadership after each meeting for dissemination to VRS staff as needed.
2. VRS regularly reports back to the SRC on how the council's feedback is utilized

3. ENSURE THAT THE GOALS AND PRIORITIES ARE BASED ON AN ANALYSIS OF THE FOLLOWING AREAS:

A. THE MOST RECENT COMPREHENSIVE STATEWIDE ASSESSMENT, INCLUDING ANY UPDATES;

The goals and priorities are based on an analysis of the most recent comprehensive statewide assessment (completed December 2017), feedback from community partners, and public forums.

B. THE STATE'S PERFORMANCE UNDER THE PERFORMANCE ACCOUNTABILITY MEASURES OF SECTION 116 OF WIOA; AND

Vocational Rehabilitation Services continues to review and revise goals to align with the updated performance accountability measures of Section 116 of WIOA. VRS updated the goals and priorities in early 2020 and will continue to refine annually.

C. OTHER AVAILABLE INFORMATION ON THE OPERATION AND EFFECTIVENESS OF THE VR PROGRAM, INCLUDING ANY REPORTS RECEIVED FROM THE STATE REHABILITATION COUNCIL AND FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FROM MONITORING ACTIVITIES CONDUCTED UNDER SECTION 107.

VRS and the State Rehabilitation Council considered Goals and Priorities established by other public VR agencies, and input from the State Council on Disability and people with disabilities.

M. ORDER OF SELECTION

Describe:

1. WHETHER THE DESIGNATED STATE UNIT WILL IMPLEMENT AND ORDER OF SELECTION. IF SO, DESCRIBE:

A. THE ORDER TO BE FOLLOWED IN SELECTING ELIGIBLE INDIVIDUALS TO BE PROVIDED VR SERVICES

**Eligibility for VR Services**

A person is eligible for vocational rehabilitation services from the general VR agency when they have a physical or mental impairment that constitutes or results in a substantial impediment to

employment, and they require vocational rehabilitation services to prepare for, secure, retain, or regain employment.

### **Qualifications for VR Services**

A person is qualified for vocational rehabilitation services from the General VR agency when they are eligible and found to have serious functional limitations due to a severe impairment and wish to obtain, retain, or regain employment.

### **Service Priority Categories**

Persons are served according to their priority category. When priority categories must be closed, lower priority categories are closed before higher categories. Persons leave their waiting list according to the priority of their category and their date of application for VR services.

- Priority Category One (first priority for service) includes all individuals with a most significant disability, that is, persons whose condition results in serious limitations in three or more functional areas.
- Priority Category Two (second priority for service) includes all individuals with a significant disability that results in serious functional limitations in two functional areas.
- Priority Category Three (third priority for service) includes all individuals with a significant disability that results in a serious functional limitation in one functional area.
- Priority Category Four (fourth priority for service) includes all other eligible customers. These customers have a disability that makes them eligible for service but they do not have a serious limitation in a functional area. This category has essentially been closed since 1993.

### **Waiting List**

When annual program resources are insufficient to serve qualified new applicants and to serve all current customers through the end of the fiscal year, a priority category may be closed. New applicants who qualify in a closed category are then placed on a statewide waiting list for that category. Closing a category slows the rate of increase in the number of persons being served. It conserves resources so that obligations to persons who are already being served may continue to be met.

### **Functional Areas**

Serious limitations in life skills in one or more of the following areas, as defined:

- Communication: the ability to effectively give and receive information through words or concepts, such as reading, writing, speaking, listening, sign language, or other adaptive methods
- Interpersonal skills: the ability to establish and maintain personal, family, and community relationships as it affects, or is likely to affect, job performance and security.
- Mobility: the physical and psychological ability to move about from place to place inside and outside the home, including travel to and from usual destinations in the community for activities of daily living, training, or work.

- Self-care: the skills needed to manage self or living environment, such as eating, toileting, grooming, dressing, money management, and management of special health or safety needs, including medication management, as they affect an individual's ability to participate in training or work—related activities.
- Self-direction: the ability to independently plan, initiate, organize, or carry out goal-directed activities or solve problems related to working.
- Work skills: (1) the ability to do specific tasks required to carry out job functions; and (2) the capacity to benefit from training in how to perform tasks required to carry out job functions.
- Work tolerance: the capacity or endurance to effectively and efficiently perform jobs requiring various levels of physical demands, psychological demands, or both.

### **Serious Limitation**

A serious limitation in a functional area means that, due to a severe physical or mental impairment, the individual's functional capacities in the specific area are restricted to the degree that they require services or accommodations not typically made for other individuals in order to prepare for, enter, engage in, or retain employment. Accommodations are defined as special working conditions, job re-engineering, rehabilitation technology, or substantial support and/or supervision.

### **List of Physical or Mental Disabilities**

Physical or mental disabilities resulting from amputation, arthritis, autism, blindness, burn injury, cancer, cerebral palsy, cystic fibrosis, deafness, head injury, heart disease, hemiplegia, hemophilia, respiratory or pulmonary dysfunction, intellectual disabilities, mental illness, multiple sclerosis, muscular dystrophy, musculoskeletal disorders, neurological disorders including stroke and epilepsy, paraplegia, quadriplegia, and other spinal cord conditions, sickle cell anemia, specific learning disability, and end-stage renal disease, or another disability or combination of disabilities determined on the basis of an assessment for determining eligibility and priority for services to cause comparable serious functional limitation.

## **B. THE JUSTIFICATION FOR THE ORDER**

Minnesota Vocational Rehabilitation Services implemented an Order of Selection in 1993, setting forth who will be served first when the program cannot serve all eligible individuals. Determination of eligibility and qualification for service is based on the applicable Minnesota administrative rule and the Minnesota Vocational Rehabilitation Policy and Procedure Manual.

Annual State and Federal resources allocated for Minnesota's Vocational Rehabilitation Services program continue to not be sufficient to serve all Minnesotans who are eligible for services. Conclusions regarding capacity of the Minnesota vocational rehabilitation program in any given year are based on:

- An analysis of resources available for annual operation of the vocational rehabilitation program,
- expenditures required to implement employment plans approved prior to commencement of the fiscal year,
- the anticipated costs for determining eligibility and qualification for service of new applicants during the fiscal year,

- the anticipated costs of implementing approved vocational rehabilitation plans for new applicants during the fiscal year, and
- reasonable and necessary costs related to administration of the vocational rehabilitation services program.

Program expenditures have for several years exceeded annual program resources, requiring the agency to use carryover funds from previous years to meet all financial obligations. The budget forecast for FFYs 2020 and 2021 indicate a continuing trend in deficit spending. This fiscal situation has required the agency to implement several budget reduction measures, including the closing of Priority Categories Two and Three (which have been closed since October 14, 2013). Priority Category Four (individuals who have a disability that makes them eligible for service but do not have a serious limitation in a functional area) has been closed since 1993.

The State Rehabilitation Council continues to receive monthly updates on the budget situation.

As of October 1, 2019, there were 1,426 individuals on the waiting list: 28 on Priority Category Four, 491 on Priority Category Three, and 983 on Priority Category Two. We anticipate being able to start taking some individuals off the waiting list during calendar year 2020, beginning with those in Category Two who have been on the list the longest. We do not anticipate being able to re-open any of the currently closed categories. Individuals on the waiting list are provided information and referral to other programs that may meet the person's needs.

#### C. THE SERVICE AND OUTCOME GOALS

In FFY2021, under the order of selection currently in effect, approximately 15,320 individuals will be served. Approximately 2,900 individuals will achieve employment outcomes in FFY2021.

(Although Category 1 is the only priority for service category currently open, a small number of individuals in Categories 2 and 3 were enrolled and receiving services from the VR program prior to closing those categories. Individuals who were identified in Categories 2 and 3 prior to closure continue to have open case files and are receiving services. Their numbers are reflected in the estimates below.)

#### D. TIME WITHIN WHICH THESE GOALS MAY BE ACHIEVED FOR INDIVIDUALS IN EACH PRIORITY CATEGORY WITHIN THE ORDER; AND

##### **Category 1**

- Number of individuals to be served: 15,000
- Estimated number of individuals who will exit with employment: 2,800
- Estimated number of individuals who will exit without employment: 2,300
- Estimated time within which goals may be achieved: 20 months
- Cost of Services: \$17,989,000

##### **Category 2**

- Number of individuals to be served: 280
- Estimated number of individuals who will exit with employment: 55
- Estimated number of individuals who will exit without employment: 40

- Time within which goals are to be achieved: 30 months
- Cost of services: \$311,000

### **Category 3**

- Number of individuals to be served: 40
- Estimated number of individuals who will exit with employment: 8
- Estimated number of individuals who will exit without employment: 5
- Time within which goals are to be achieved: 48 months
- Cost of services: \$27,000

### **Category 4**

- Number of individuals to be served: 0
- Estimated number of individuals who will exit with employment: 0
- Estimated number of individuals who will exit without employment: 0
- Time within which goals are to be achieved: 0
- Cost of services: 0

#### **E. HOW INDIVIDUALS WITH THE MOST SIGNIFICANT DISABILITIES ARE SELECTED FOR SERVICES BEFORE ALL OTHER INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES**

Service Priority: The order of selection establishes service priority based on the number of functional areas in which a person has significant limitations to employment. Persons with limitations in more functional areas are deemed to have more significant disability. It is intended by the order of selection that persons with the most significant disabilities will be served first when all persons who are eligible cannot be served.

#### **2. IF THE DESIGNATED STATE UNIT HAS ELECTED TO SERVE ELIGIBLE INDIVIDUALS, REGARDLESS OF ANY ESTABLISHED ORDER OF SELECTION, WHO REQUIRE SPECIFIC SERVICES OR EQUIPMENT TO MAINTAIN EMPLOYMENT**

Vocational Rehabilitation Services has elected to not exempt individuals who require specific services or equipment to maintain employment from the Order of Selection.

#### **N. GOALS AND PLANS FOR DISTRIBUTION OF TITLE VI FUNDS**

##### **1. SPECIFY THE STATE'S GOALS AND PRIORITIES FOR FUNDS RECEIVED UNDER SECTION 603 OF THE REHABILITATION ACT FOR THE PROVISION OF SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES**

#### **N. GOALS AND PLANS FOR DISTRIBUTION OF TITLE VI FUNDS.**

##### **Estimate of the Number of Persons to Be Served**

During Program Year 2019, about 2,560 individuals will be served with Title VI, Part B funds supplemented by Title I funds, at a purchased service cost of about \$450,000. Under the administrative rule that sets forth Minnesota's priority-for-service categories, all persons receiving supported employment have three or more serious functional limitations.

##### **The Contribution of State Funding**

Title VI B funds are used to provide supports after placement and before closure. The VRS Extended Employment Program (VRS-EE) provides ongoing employment supports using state funding of \$15.825 million annually that flows to community rehabilitation programs. More than 80 percent of this state funding provides extended services for persons in competitive employment with supports. The VRS-EE program serves all disability groups. An additional state appropriation of \$2,555,000 is dedicated to extended supported employment services for persons with serious mental illness since it has been historically difficult to obtain ongoing support services for this population. Another appropriation provides \$1,000,000 annually to provide long-term supported employment services for persons who are deaf, deaf blind or hard-of-hearing.

### **System Complexity and Limited Capacity**

Funding for supported employment, within which Title VI Part B funds play a relatively small part, is governed by myriad federal and state laws and rules covering many categories of services. For example, a network of private, not-for-profit organizations, licensed by the DHS Disability Services Division, provides day training and habilitation services that may include supported employment. People with mental illness may receive work-related support through the State Comprehensive Mental Health Act. In these instances, each county determines the level of service that will be provided.

Title VI B supported employment funds are distributed on a fee-for-service basis under fee schedules developed with service providers. VRS collaborates with the Departments of Education and Human Services and county and local service providers to facilitate access to other funding and service resources. During development of a vocational rehabilitation employment plan, the vocational rehabilitation participant and the service team design a supported employment framework that best meets the participant's needs. Planning for eventual long-term supports in the community is a crucial part of planning during VRS' time-limited period of service

### **Strategic Goal for Effective Partnerships**

In Program Year 2019, under the designated state unit's strategic goal for effective partnerships, VRS will expand our collaboration with other employment and disability services system partners to better coordinate and align services and assist business partners in building inclusive workplaces and developing best practices for recruitment and retention for individuals with disabilities requiring workplace supports.

#### **2. DESCRIBE THE ACTIVITIES TO BE CONDUCTED, WITH FUNDS RESERVED PURSUANT TO SECTION 603(D), FOR YOUTH WITH THE MOST SIGNIFICANT DISABILITIES, INCLUDING:**

##### **A. THE PROVISION OF EXTENDED SERVICES FOR A PERIOD NOT TO EXCEED 4 YEARS; AND**

Extended services means ongoing support services, including customized employment, and other appropriate services that are needed to support and maintain an individual with a most significant disability, including a youth with a most significant disability in supported employment, organized or made available, singly or in combination, in such a way as to assist an individual in maintaining supported employment, based on the needs of an eligible individual, as specified in the Supported Employment Plan, provided by a private nonprofit organization, employer, or any other appropriate resource, after an individual has made the transition from time limited support from Vocational Rehabilitation Services, provided to a youth with a most significant disability by Vocational Rehabilitation Services for a period not to exceed four years or at such time that a youth reaches age 25 and no longer meets the definition of a youth with a

disability, whichever occurs first. Vocational Rehabilitation Services must not provide extended services to an individual with a most significant disability who is not a youth with a most significant disability.

Extended services can be provided by any appropriate qualified resource, including natural supports, but must be funded by a source other than Vocational Rehabilitation Services funds except in limited circumstances where VRS funds are necessary to fill a funding gap for extended services required by a youth with a most significant disability to maintain competitive integrated employment. For example, a funding gap can occur when a youth with a most significant disability is in the process of applying for waived services through the DHS to cover costs for extended services and there are no county funds available to fill the gap. In this circumstance, VRS can provide funding for the extended services to fill the “gap” while the application for waived services is in process. In this example, VRS funding for extended services must end when waived services funding is in place, when the person turns 25 or when VRS has funded extended services for four years, whichever occurs first.

#### B. HOW THE STATE WILL LEVERAGE OTHER PUBLIC AND PRIVATE FUNDS TO INCREASE RESOURCES FOR EXTENDED SERVICES AND EXPANDED SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES FOR YOUTH WITH THE MOST SIGNIFICANT DISABILITIES.

VRS has promulgated changes to the State rule governing the Extended Employment program, ending employment supports to individuals in non-integrated and sub-minimum wage jobs, capping employment supports to individuals in other non-integrated employment and prioritizing this state funding for employment supports to individuals in competitive, integrated employment.

#### O. STATE'S STRATEGIES

Describe the required strategies and how the agency will use these strategies to achieve its goals and priorities, support innovation and expansion activities, and overcome any barriers to accessing the VR and the Supported Employment programs (See sections 101(a)(15)(D) and (18)(B) of the Rehabilitation Act and section 427 of the General Education Provisions Act (GEPA)):

##### 1. THE METHODS TO BE USED TO EXPAND AND IMPROVE SERVICES TO INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES

Innovation and Expansion activities are developed in response to needs identified in the Comprehensive Statewide Assessment of Need, with a focus on ensuring equal access to services regardless of specific disability, impediment to employment, economic status, public assistance status, race, national origin, gender, sexual orientation or age.

This activity specifically addresses program access, and adherence to the employment non-discrimination principles requirements of Section 427 of the General Education Provisions Act. VRS seeks partnerships with other public and private entities to increase access to vocational rehabilitation services and other employment services.

The State Rehabilitation Council plays a crucial role in identifying the needs of citizens with disabilities. The council conducts 10 meetings annually, along with public forums and numerous committee meetings to carry out its consultative and participative roles in the work of Vocational Rehabilitation Services. In 2019, the council participated in discussions about updating the comprehensive needs assessment, engaged in strategic planning, reviewed the policies and practices that guide the delivery of VRS services, and assisted in identifying program evaluation needs.

The employment section of the Olmstead Plan, approved by the U.S. District Court on September 29, 2015, establishes two goals: 1) Increase the employment rate for people with disabilities so that it is comparable to the employment rate of people without disabilities, and 2) increase the earnings of people with disabilities so that it is comparable to people without disabilities.

There are three specific strategies that VRS played or will play an active role in:

- Promulgated changes to the State Rule governing Extended Employment, ending admissions to non-integrated and sub-minimum wage programs and shifting the state funding to integrated employment;
- Provide technical assistance to non-integrated employment programs to design new business models that lead to competitive employment in the most integrated setting; and
- Provide information about effective employment strategies, such as supported and customized employment, that make competitive employment possible for individuals with complex and significant disabilities.

VRS continues to clarify policy to ensure that all vocational rehabilitation services are provided in the most integrated setting appropriate for the person.

In Program Year 2018, VRS utilized \$1,744,003 in funding for innovation and expansion activities. This includes funding for the State Rehabilitation Council, salaries for rehabilitation specialists focused on service innovation and program evaluation, and state funds for the Minnesota Employment Center for Individuals who are Deaf/Hard of Hearing.

## 2. HOW A BROAD RANGE OF ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY SERVICES AND DEVICES WILL BE PROVIDED TO INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES AT EACH STAGE OF THE REHABILITATION PROCESS AND ON A STATEWIDE BASIS

A rehabilitation technology specialist provides onsite assistive technology assistance to staff and consumers. He also coordinates with MDE to promote inclusion of assistive technology in transition plans. The specialist is supported by three regional liaisons and a local liaison on each VR team. Placement coordinators assist employers in using rehabilitation technology to resolve employment barriers. The VRS website has an assistive technology page with links to nationally recognized websites. VRS coordinates closely with the STAR Program which operates an equipment loan program that allows consumers to try the assistive technology for 30 days before VRS purchases the equipment.

## 3. THE OUTREACH PROCEDURES THAT WILL BE USED TO IDENTIFY AND SERVE INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES WHO ARE MINORITIES, INCLUDING THOSE WITH THE MOST SIGNIFICANT DISABILITIES, AS WELL AS THOSE WHO HAVE BEEN UNSERVED OR UNDERSERVED BY THE VR PROGRAM

VRS continues to expand services to people of color and indigenous people. The New Americans VRS office in St. Paul employs multi-lingual staff of East African descent to provide outreach and services to recent immigrants, primarily from Somalia, who are not fluent in English. Other VRS offices hire bilingual staff as opportunities arise.

The current estimate is that 5.4 percent of the Minnesota adult population, or at least 203,540 adults, have serious mental illness. VRS collaborates with the DHS Adult Mental Health Division and with community partners to build supports and services for persons with serious mental illness (SMI), who in PY2018 comprised 30.7 % of the VR caseload and 36.8 % of employment

outcomes. Individual Placement and Support (IPS) is the evidenced based practice of supported employment for persons with serious mental illness. IPS helps people in community mental health treatment services to become part of the competitive labor market. Research indicates that IPS is nearly three times more effective than other vocational approaches in helping people with mental illness to work competitively. Research also shows that people who obtain competitive employment through IPS have increased income, improved self-esteem, improved quality of life and reduced symptoms. Approximately half of the people who enroll in IPS become steady workers and remain competitively employed a decade later.

Historically, VRS provided state funding to the Minnesota Employment Center (MEC) for Individuals who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing, using an annual pass-through appropriation. VRS time limited services and MEC supported employment services have been closely coordinated to enhance employment opportunities for people who are deaf or have significant hearing loss. However, a legislative change in 2013 redirected the direct appropriation into a competitive grant pool. MEC has successfully competed for the available \$1,000,000 funding.

About 39 percent of VRS applicants receive SSA benefits. VRS worked closely with DHS to develop a Benefits Coaching Training and certification which focuses on providing essential, accurate information to VRS clients receiving SSI/SSDI benefits so they can make informed choices about their employment goals. DEED-VRS philosophy is deeply rooted in Employment First and that work will almost always financially benefit the person receiving SSA benefits AND that offering benefits coaching or planning prior to employment plan development as well as during the course of the individual's time working with VRS can result in individuals charting a course to get off of SSA benefits and earn a family sustaining wage.

SSA, VRS and State Services for the Blind have attended periodic meetings of the Employment Networks. In addition to providing in-service training, the meetings provide an opportunity to learn more about the services offered by each Employment Network to assist consumers make informed choices when selecting a vendor for employment services and/or on-going job retention services. The current focus of this group is to expand the use of Ticket to Work funding to provide ongoing job retention supports, to promote the use of PASS Plans, and to ensure the continuation of benefits planning services as people transition from VRS services to job retention services.

#### 4. THE METHODS TO BE USED TO IMPROVE AND EXPAND VR SERVICES FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES, INCLUDING THE COORDINATION OF SERVICES DESIGNED TO FACILITATE THE TRANSITION OF SUCH STUDENTS FROM SCHOOL TO POSTSECONDARY LIFE (INCLUDING THE RECEIPT OF VR SERVICES, POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT, AND PRE-EMPLOYMENT TRANSITION SERVICES)

VRS has a counselor assigned to each high school in the state to provide outreach and services to students who are eligible for the program. Starting the 2019-20 school year VRS changed its model for providing outreach and services to students who are potentially eligible from having contracted community agencies to now having internal Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) Rehabilitation Representatives who are assigned to each high school to ensure that Pre-ETS are available statewide. Counselors and Pre-ETS Representatives go into schools together to explain the two types of services available. Both counselors and Pre-ETS Representatives authorize for VR and/or Pre-ETS to be provided to students by agencies that contract with VRS, as needed.

Strategies to improve and expand services include the following:

- VRS will be monitoring the successes and challenges of the new Pre-ETS Representatives in order to provide enhancements as needed. Monthly meetings with the Pre-ETS Representatives and their managers will assist in sharing best practices and keeping a pulse on how things are progressing.
- VRS collaborates with MDE and DHS on a Minnesota Olmstead Plan strategy called the Employment Capacity Building Cohort (ECBC). In 2019-20 there are 25 school districts (along with their local VRS and county partners) participating. One goal is to improve competitive integrated employment outcomes for students with Developmental Cognitive Disabilities who are between the ages of 19-21. Another goal this year is to choose among one of the four strategies aimed at improving outcomes for all students with disabilities:
  - Quality transition planning within the Individualized Education Program (IEP) process
  - Family Engagement through Person Centered Planning processes
  - Embedding Customized Employment strategies into schools
  - Improving interagency business engagement strategies

The hope is to expand to more communities in the coming years.

- The Minnesota State Interagency Council (MnSIC) Interagency Person-Centered IEP pilot project focuses on coordinating the VRS employment plan and other interagency service providers' plans with the IEP in three school districts. A fidelity model is being tested with the hope to also expand this initiative to other communities in the coming years.

##### 5. IF APPLICABLE, PLANS FOR ESTABLISHING, DEVELOPING, OR IMPROVING COMMUNITY REHABILITATION PROGRAMS WITHIN THE STATE

Program access to CRPs is monitored by reviewing compliance with CARF policies on program access, and by continuously monitoring the geographical coverage provided by the network of 60 CRPs. VRS has an active CRP Advisory Committee to assist in achievement of common goals. The Advisory Committee is also engaged in defining CRP quality measures that will support VRS' goals and priorities.

Minnesota Customized Employment: Beginning in 2018, VRS collaborated with community partners to develop a Customized Employment training curriculum that meets the training needs of Minnesota's disability employment professionals. Utilizing "The Essential Elements of Customized Employment" as its foundation, the MN-CE curriculum provides a framework of training and mentoring support offering students the opportunity to become competent practitioners of Customized Employment services following the conclusion of the MN-CE training. Additionally, the training provides clear, consistent information about CE to auditors, typically CE referral sources such as VRS Counselors, county case managers or families which is also key to the support and adoption of Customized Employment practices and demand. The training is person centered, consistent, and continuously available throughout the state. The goal is to help transform the disability employment system to support individuals with significant disabilities plan for a future that includes competitive, integrated employment. MN-CE curriculum is nationally accredited through the Association of Community Rehabilitation Educators (ACRE) and is the first CE curriculum approved by ACRE. It is also the first CE training that has been developed by a government entity.

Students: VRS continues to be a leader in Minnesota in promoting competitive, integrated employment for students with disabilities. Given the new role of providing pre-employment transition services to students, Minnesota has partnered on the state level with the Minnesota Department of Education and at the local level with local school districts to provide more students with access to the tools needed to be successful in competitive, integrated employment.

Community Partners: VRS continues to provide resources to community partners to improve their ability to provide supported employment services to students and individuals who may not have considered competitive, integrated employment in the past. Providing services and supports to these individuals requires new and innovative approaches. Minnesota VRS continues to seek out and share those new and innovative approaches.

#### 6. STRATEGIES TO IMPROVE THE PERFORMANCE OF THE STATE WITH RESPECT TO THE PERFORMANCE ACCOUNTABILITY MEASURES UNDER SECTION 116 OF WIOA

Performance, five-year trends, and specific strategies utilized to improve the agency's performance in meeting the evaluation standards and performance indicators, are included in Section (P).

#### 7. STRATEGIES FOR ASSISTING OTHER COMPONENTS OF THE STATEWIDE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM IN ASSISTING INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES

CareerForce locations serve a significant number of people with disabilities beyond the customers served by VRS and SSB. However, the CareerForce locations need to articulate and better disseminate information about their program access. VRS provides consultation to the CareerForce Disability Employment Initiative (DEI) federal grant to serve youth in transition and adults. The Governor's Workforce Development Board has established a committee to explore how the CareerForce locations can best serve individuals on the VRS waiting list.

#### 8. HOW THE AGENCY'S STRATEGIES WILL BE USED TO:

##### A. ACHIEVE GOALS AND PRIORITIES BY THE STATE, CONSISTENT WITH THE COMPREHENSIVE NEEDS ASSESSMENT;

##### **Need for long-term supports:**

DEED-VRS is actively working with the Medicaid Agency on ensuring that individuals on waivers receive long-term employment supports paid via the waiver. The Minnesota VR & Medicaid Waiver interagency work plan will make very clear to DEED-VRS staff, Lead Agency staff (Counties) and Community Rehabilitation Partners (Providers) that individuals on Medicaid Waivers get long-term supports and is funded via the Medicaid waiver. For individuals who do not have waivers, Extended Employment services are available to employees with disabilities with three functional limitations or more. Additionally, DEED-VRS will develop updated Supported Employment Training for staff to ensure that there is understanding regarding long-term employment funding supports. The training will make clear that if the VRS client requires long-term employment supports and they are unavailable, DEED-VRS will not proceed with writing an employment plan.

##### **Need for active outreach to people of color and indigenous people to assure equal access:**

Specific activities currently planned and already underway include:

- The New Americans Project: a team based in St. Paul consisting of multi-lingual immigrant staff whose mission is to provide employment related VR services to recent immigrants and refugees with disabilities. This project continues to grow and expand its reach every year since its inception in 2007.
- Creation of a new statewide American Indian Liaison position in 2020 specifically to do outreach and address the VR needs of Minnesota's large American Indian population – a population that has been historically underserved by VRS.
- Make all VRS informational materials (both in print and online) available in multiple languages to reach the growing population of Minnesotans with disabilities who use languages other than English.

### **Reaching underserved populations:**

#### **Individuals 65 and older:**

VRS has seen a significant increase in the number of individuals 65 and older who are applying for and receiving VR services. There is no need to do additional outreach at this time.

#### **Ex-offenders:**

VRS has an Ex-Offender expert who serves as a single point of contact for VRS staff. He provides Ex-Offender Training on varying relevant topics to VRS teams, Business Engagement Networks, and to Community Rehabilitation Providers in the metro and greater Minnesota. Proposed activities to expand awareness of DEED-VRS services to Ex-Offenders could include the following:

- 1) Transition Coalition: Sponsored by Department of Corrections, this coalition meets on a monthly basis regionally (Metro, South, West and North) to share resources, training and create opportunities for ex-offenders transitioning from prison to the community.
- 2) Partner with "New Leaf" Career Force Presentations (Luis Brown Pena) to introduce DEED-VRS services for individuals accessing New Leaf training.

Serving individuals served through other components of the statewide workforce development system:

#### **Serving Youth:**

VRS is working to ensure that Pre-ETS are available statewide to students who are "potentially eligible" for services. VRS has a counselor assigned to each high school in the state to provide outreach and services to students who are eligible for the program. Starting the 2019-20 school year, VRS changed its model for providing outreach and services to students who are potentially eligible from having contracted community agencies to now having internal Pre-ETS Rehabilitation Representatives who are assigned to each high school to ensure that Pre-ETS are available statewide. Counselors and Pre-ETS Representatives go into schools together to explain the two types of services available. Both counselors and Pre-ETS Representatives authorize for VR and/or Pre-ETS to be provided to students by agencies that contract with VRS, as needed.

### **B. SUPPORT INNOVATION AND EXPANSION ACTIVITIES; AND**

Individual Placement and Supports: Minnesota has a state-funded appropriation which provides for Individual Placement and Support (IPS) programs for persons with serious and persistent mental illness. VRS and the DHS Mental Health Division collaborate on IPS projects to promote innovation in service delivery, including supported employment services, for this population.

Minnesota Customized Employment: Beginning in 2018, VRS collaborated with community partners to develop a nationally accredited Customized Employment Curriculum. It is the first CE training that has been developed by a government entity and accredited through the Association of Community Rehabilitation Educators (ACRE) The training is person centered, consistent, and continuously available throughout the state. The goal is to help transform the disability employment system to support individuals with significant disabilities plan for a future that includes competitive, integrated employment.

Virtual and Remote Services: VRS has begun to explore virtual and remote ways of interacting and providing services to VR participants outside of the traditional office setting. Online platforms for virtual meetings, social media platforms, and protocols for after-hours and non-office meetings are being developed, tested, and employed with promising results.

#### C. OVERCOME IDENTIFIED BARRIERS RELATING TO EQUITABLE ACCESS TO AND PARTICIPATION OF INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES IN THE STATE VR SERVICES PROGRAM AND THE STATE SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES PROGRAM.

As a division within the Minnesota designated state agency, the Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED), VRS adheres to the DSA's equity goals. One of DEED's department-wide objectives in its strategic plan is to "reduce the disparities faced by populations with barriers to employment." To get there, DEED has created annual equity goals for every program area across DEED, focused on reducing disparities based on 1) race, 2) ability level, or 3) geography.

As the DSU, VRS has the following as its primary objective: Broaden the representation among applicants to VRS to ensure underrepresented Minnesotans with disabilities have access to VRS services. Key Result: Increase the proportion of applicants to VRS from People of Color and Indigenous communities by 5% over last year.

Specific activities currently planned and already underway include:

- The New Americans Project: a team based in St. Paul consisting of multi-lingual immigrant staff whose mission is to provide employment related VR services to recent immigrants and refugees with disabilities. This project continues to grow and expand its reach every year since its inception in 2007.
- Creation of a new statewide American Indian Liaison position in 2020 specifically to do outreach and address the VR needs of Minnesota's large American Indian population – a population that has been historically underserved by VRS.
- Make all VRS informational materials (both in print and online) available in multiple languages to reach the growing population of Minnesotans with disabilities who use languages other than English.

#### P. EVALUATION AND REPORTS OF PROGRESS: VR AND SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT GOALS

Describe:

1. AN EVALUATION OF THE EXTENT TO WHICH THE VR PROGRAM GOALS DESCRIBED IN THE APPROVED VR SERVICES PORTION OF THE UNIFIED OR COMBINED STATE PLAN FOR THE MOST RECENTLY COMPLETED PROGRAM YEAR WERE ACHIEVED. THE EVALUATION MUST:

A. IDENTIFY THE STRATEGIES THAT CONTRIBUTED TO THE ACHIEVEMENT OF THE GOALS

The State Rehabilitation Council and VRS are committed to a disciplined process for making decisions that shape and guide VRS as an organization. Consumers, stakeholders and VRS staff contributed insights over many months to the planning process, resulting in the five goals. A strategic planning process is never finished. Changing consumer needs, as reflected by the Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment, program evaluation and ever-changing social, legal and economic circumstances, prompts an annual review of the goals and progress measures.

**Goal 1: Increasing the number of Minnesotans with the most significant disabilities working in competitive, integrated employment**

VRS and the VR community are committed to expanding job opportunities and improving employment outcomes for Minnesotans with the most significant disabilities.

Strategic Priorities

A. Increase consumer engagement and satisfaction

Action: Survey customer engagement and satisfaction after plan development and at case closure

Action: Conduct customer focus groups on an annual basis

Progress achieved: To increase consumer engagement and satisfaction, we have implemented statewide person-centered training and strategies.

To fully implement the WIOA mandated Pre-employment transition services statewide, VRS has significantly increased our staffing in the schools to engage potentially eligible students. This has enabled VR to engage students at a younger age and students with disabilities who would not have otherwise received services.

In 2017, DEED administered a randomized statewide participant satisfaction survey of Vocational Rehabilitation Services participants who had completed an individualized employment plan as part of their program activities. Funding did not allow for annual administration of the survey, which has high associated costs. We have also had significant turnover in our data unit and haven't had an opportunity to build out the department, which has delayed the ability to measure engagement and satisfaction.

B. Increase the number of employment outcomes

Metric: The number of successful employment outcomes per federal fiscal year

Progress achieved:

In Program year 2018, 2,605 VR participants obtained employment. Despite efforts, employment outcomes have decreased steadily since PY2015. Since the passage of WIOA, specifically the implementation of Section 511 requirements, individuals referred to VR have more significantly impacting disabilities. Individuals who may have previously been "tracked" into subminimum wage situations are now seeking competitive integrated employment through VR services. Minnesota continues to have three of four service categories closed on its order of selection.

C. Increase education, credentials, and skill gains

Action: Establish baselines for secondary and postsecondary credentials and for measurable skill gains

Metric: WIOA Common Performance Measure 4: The percentage of participants who obtained a recognized postsecondary credential or a secondary school diploma, or its recognized equivalent during participation in or within 1 year after exit from the program

Metric: WIOA Common Performance Measure 5: The percentage of participants who are in an education or training program that leads to a recognized postsecondary credential or employment and who are achieving measurable skill gains

Progress achieved: The agency continues to develop strategies for measuring and recording credentials and skill gains. The case management system to record credentials and skill gains has been updated, and staff training to capture the data accurately has recently been completed.

D. Increase job retention

Action: Establish a job retention baseline

Metric: WIOA Common Performance Measure 1: The percentage of participants who are in unsubsidized employment during the second quarter after exit from the program

Metric: WIOA Common Performance Measure 2: The percentage of participants who are in unsubsidized employment during the fourth quarter after exit from the program

Metric: WIOA Common Performance Measure 3: Median earnings of participants who are in unsubsidized employment during the second quarter after exit from the program

Progress achieved: Data Element 392, Retention with the Same Employer in the Second Quarter and the Fourth Quarter – Fourth Quarter After Exit Quarter will become available for our review in PY19, as it is the first year that this data element is fully reportable in the RSA 911.

**Goal 2: Increasing Pre-Employment Transition Services: VRS, schools, and the VR community will focus on increasing vocational exploration and work-based learning experiences for high school students with disabilities.**

Strategic Priorities

A. Develop strategies to implement the Pre-ETS requirements stipulated in WIOA

Action: Track required and authorized services and monitor expenditures and fiscal impact

Progress achieved: VRS has delivered pre-employment transition services (Pre-ETS) through counseling staff (VR eligible persons) and contracts (VR potentially eligible persons). An Employment Plan is developed, and services are tracked.

In 2019, VRS also hired Pre-ETS Rehabilitation Representatives, assigned to each of the 23 VRS teams, whose roles are to arrange for and provide Pre-ETS for students with disabilities who may be “potentially eligible.” Specifically, they conduct outreach to schools and recruit students for Pre-ETS services; identify student needs and provide Pre-ETS services to students; refer students to Pre-ETS contractors for Pre-ETS services, as needed; refer students for VR intensive services, as needed; implement Pre-ETS Coordination Services; and provide follow up with students, as needed.

B. Increase VRS outreach on the responsibilities under WIOA to provide pre-employment transition services for students with disabilities

Action: Develop and implement a WIOA pre-employment transition services communication and outreach plan designed for school staff.

Action: Track the number of schools with VRS time and expenditures devoted to WIOA required and authorized pre-employment transition services.

Progress achieved: Counseling staff have been assigned to every school district in the state, including private schools. Time spent providing Pre-ETS services is tracked through the statewide payroll accounting system. Within the statewide accounting system, there are designated account codes for Pre-ETS expenses. In addition, separate project codes are required to differentiate work hours between required activities and coordinating activities. VRS is currently not spending funds on authorized services.

Each month, program accounting staff run a budget report to determine the percentage of federal funds that have been spent on Pre-ETS activities.

C. Increase the number of work-based learning experiences prior to graduation for VR eligible students in high school

Action: Establish a baseline and track the number of VR students with paid and unpaid work-based learning experience prior to graduation.

Progress achieved: Service codes have been developed and implemented to track Pre-ETS purchased services.

**Goal 3: Enhancing Organizational Vitality VRS will hire, develop and retain staff who will provide the best possible services to Minnesotans with the most significant disabilities.**

Strategic Priorities

A. Develop staff skills and competencies in serving Minnesotans with the most significant disabilities

Action: Provide relevant training for VRS staff, including training on person-centered thinking and planning

Progress achieved: Person-Centered Thinking and Person-Centered Planning has been a top strategic goal since 2017. Staff are all trained in client centered practices. To further knowledge, skills and abilities in Person-Centered practices, a Community of Practice consisting of VRS staff was formed to create a culture of continuous improvement, construct processes, policy and guidance that are person-centered, and utilize online coursework available through the University of Minnesota for ongoing training.

Additional trainings provided to staff in the past two years included:

- Assessment of VR Needs Part 1
- Collaborative Discussions
- Common Performance Measures with a focus on Credentials
- Customized Employment Competency Review
- Disability Waiver 101
- Employment Plan
- Enhancing Everyday Resilience for Admin Staff
- Ethics

- Initial Interview
- Measurable Skills Gains
- Mental Health First Aid
- MI for Managers
- MN Customized Employment Training
- Motivational Interviewing (Intro and Refresher)
- Pre-ETS 511 Update
- Pre-ETS Modules
- Pre-ETS Reps Kick Off
- Purchasing Training
- Social Security Presumption and Verification
- Transition 101
- Understanding Autism and Autism 101
- Vehicle Modifications
- WF1 and Purchasing for Pre-ETS Reps
- The following trainings are in development:
- Case Documentation (January 2020)
- Common Performance Measures Review
- Data Practices
- Supported Employment
- Trial Work Review

**B. Maintain a leadership development program for current and emerging leaders**

Action: VRS will conduct a leadership development program for approximately 10-15 current and emerging leaders on a biannual basis

Action: VRS will evaluate the participant experience in the leadership development program to inform program design

Progress achieved: WIOA priorities have and still are driving our staff development initiatives.

**C. Develop strategies for increasing the diversity and cultural competence of VRS staff**

Action: Provide cultural competence training for VRS staff

Action: Develop strategies to increase diversity in staff hiring and retention

Progress achieved: All managers and supervisors completed training on Building an Inclusive Workplace offered through the Minnesota State Enterprise Learning Management office. DEED has implemented a monthly Diversity Spotlight series as part of the Governor's and DEED's

initiative to create a more diverse and inclusive workforce, ODEO is hosting sessions on a variety of diversity topics that directly affect how we treat employees in the workplace and how we serve our customers through our programs.

In 2019, VRS finalized Day Two New Employee Orientation, Person-Centered Foundations with cultural competence components, and launched quarterly Warm Up Exercises for field staff. This is a series of exercises for managers to lead at each month's team meetings. There is a diversity exercise option in each quarter's exercises.

D. Strengthen organizational communication internally and with system partners

Action: Provide monthly VRS organizational updates to staff

Action: Communicate rationale for major policy and practice decisions internally and/or with system partners

Progress achieved: VRS utilizes a regularly featured communication on the internal SharePoint site to highlight changes to policy and practice, messages from the VRS Leadership Team, updates on training and staff development opportunities, and team profiles, etc.

#### **Goal 4: Leveraging Partnerships**

VRS will provide leadership in convening and strengthening system-wide collaborative partnerships that expand and fully use resources to serve Minnesotans with the most significant disabilities.

Strategic Priorities

A. Engage the State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) for input and feedback on the vocational rehabilitation service delivery model for Minnesota

Action: The SRC works in partnership with the DSU to develop and review state goals and priorities and assists with the development of the State Plan and Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment

Action: The SRC produces an annual report, conducts public forums, and coordinates its activities with other councils

Action: The SRC provides input on substantive VR policy changes

Action: The SRC works collaboratively with the designated state agency to measure customer satisfaction

Progress achieved: The State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) provides ongoing input and recommendations to VRS.

B. Maintain and build our partnerships with community-based rehabilitation providers and advocacy organizations

Action: Continue to convene and leverage the VRS CRP Advisory Committee

Action: Convene statewide meetings of community partners on an annual basis

Action: Maintain collaborative agreements with the Centers for Independent Living (CILs)

Action: Collaborate with advocacy organizations to advance mutual agendas

Progress achieved: 2019 included discussions of service provider contracts and processing, strategies for providing pre-employment transition services, adapting to the changing VR landscape, Strategies for continued system transformation, DHS new Waiver Services discussion, WIOA Section 511, Developing and Retaining Placement Professionals

C. Expand our collaboration with other system partners to better align and fulfill the requirements of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) and Minnesota's Olmstead Plan

Action: Expansion of key partnership work with DHS, MDE, the Olmstead Plan interagency efforts, counties, local school districts, and CareerForce Center System partners

Progress achieved: The Department of Employment and Economic Development is active on the Governor's subcabinet to implement the Olmstead Plan that was approved by the U.S. District Court on September 29, 2015. VRS has developed a memorandum of understanding with DHS and MDE on how to better coordinate WIOA services and to develop a federal waiver request to use Medicaid funding for long-term supports.

D. Expand access to ongoing employment supports through county, state and federal programs

Action: Partner with DHS, counties, and Medicaid providers to increase resources for support of integrated, competitive employment

Action: Partner with VRS Extended Employment (EE) providers to transition and increase state resources for support of integrated, competitive employment

Progress achieved: VRS worked closely with DHS to develop a federal waiver request to use Medicaid funding for long-term supports. Additionally, the Extended Employment program rewrote the EE rule to shift funding from segregated employment to competitive integrated employment with supports. The new rule took effect in February 2019.

### **Goal 5: Engaging Employers**

VRS and the VR community will continue to embrace employers as key customers, resulting in increased employment outcomes for Minnesotans with disabilities

Strategic Priorities

A. Develop a robust system to assist VRS staff in matching qualified VR job seekers with competitive, integrated employment opportunities. Leverage the Workforce One case management and/or Minnesota's internet-based labor exchange system rewrite initiatives to fund, develop, and implement the system

Action: Secure approval and resources for a VR client talent pool structural framework as part of future application development priorities for the WorkForce One system and/or other Minnesota systems

Progress achieved: Minnesota's electronic case management system now includes Talent Pool search tools. VRS counselors and placement staff can input key information that can be used to identify job seekers looking for work in specific sectors or regions in the state and the specific training they have that employers are seeking.

B. Develop and implement Low Risk Hiring and Retention options designed to increase employment outcomes and workforce diversity

Action: Track participation and employment outcomes in low risk hiring and retention options on a quarterly basis. Options are anticipated in include On the Job Training, Job Try Outs, Internships, Connect 700 Program, and Schedule A hiring

Action: Create and deliver training designed to help employers identify, develop and sustain natural workplace supports for employees with disabilities

Progress achieved: DEED-VRS has policy and guidance, including definitions, for On the Job Work & Training Options. These options include Job Shadows, Employer Tours, Internship, On the Job Training, and Job Try Out. Policy, Guidance and Training for the On the Job Work and Training Options have been provided to VRS staff and webinars will support the training of Community Partners.C. VRS will lead and convene Placement Partnerships focused on developing, maintaining and strengthening relationships among VRS, VR Community Partners and Employers

Action: The VRS Placement Specialist team will develop and disseminate a quarterly report on the major activities and outcomes for active placement partnerships

Action: Work with partners to implement WIOA Common Performance Measure 6 focused on effectiveness in serving employers

Progress achieved: Minnesota has developed Business Engagement Networks throughout the state to provide a single point of contact for employers and to enhance the skills of placement professionals. In addition to the single point of contact approach for employers, Business Engagement Networks host opportunities to connect employers and qualified job seekers and reflect employer needs and interests from urban, metro and rural areas. In addition to supporting joint training to maintain qualified staff, the placement partnerships share job leads, host job fairs and other community events.

Minnesota Customized Employment training is developed and is now ACRE certified. This training includes hands-on learning opportunities for Discovery Assessment and Job Development portions of Customized Employment. Each participant also receives mentoring from VRS & CRP staff who are certified by one of the key CE training entities that provide certification. The goal of this Customized Employment Training is to assist placement professionals to develop an understanding of CE and demonstrate proficiency in providing Discovery and Job Development. The training is also essential for Program Managers and Rehabilitation Area Managers who supervise staff who are providing CE services.

## B. DESCRIBE THE FACTORS THAT IMPEDED THE ACHIEVEMENT OF THE GOALS AND PRIORITIES

Significant progress was made on most of the goals and priorities from the most recently approved State Plan. The strategic goals were updated in April 2018 but not submitted to RSA as an amendment to the State Plan. Uncertain funding was a contributing factor in completing all of the goals. We also had to reconsider some of the regulations because of early misunderstanding or misinterpretation. VRS leadership transitions between fall 2018 and fall 2019 were also factors that impeded the achievement of the goals and priorities.

## 2. AN EVALUATION OF THE EXTENT TO WHICH THE SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM GOALS DESCRIBED IN THE SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SUPPLEMENT FOR THE MOST RECENT PROGRAM YEAR WERE ACHIEVED. THE EVALUATION MUST:

### A. IDENTIFY THE STRATEGIES THAT CONTRIBUTED TO THE ACHIEVEMENT OF THE GOALS

Goal: Under the designated state unit's strategic goal for effective partnerships, VRS will continue to facilitate a statewide planning collaboration to better understand Minnesota's supported employment needs, revise the VRS-EE State Rule to shift more state dollars to integrated competitive supported employment work sites, address current service capacity and gaps, particularly those related to the development needs of community rehabilitation programs, the needs of transition-age youths, and the needs of underserved populations

VRS and DHS continue to work collaboratively to sequence VR, Extended Employment, Medicaid waiver and County dollars to serve more people in need of long-term supports.

The Memorandum of Understanding developed between VRS and the Medicaid agency made clear that LEAs and VRS are responsible for providing services while students are still in school.

Minnesota revised the rule that governs the Extended Employment program in Minnesota to prioritize providing supports to individuals working in competitive, integrated employment. The primary strategy used to make this successful was to engage stakeholders in developing the transition to the new model. An advisory committee including individuals representing DEED, Community Rehabilitation Providers (CRPs), advocacy organizations for individuals with disabilities, DHS, and counties was established to identify and consider policy issues and opportunities impacting individuals who receive EE services and EE providers.

VRS has provided clear revised guidance and policy, along with training, so counselors can utilize the option to provide extended services to youth, per requirements under 363.4(2).

#### B. DESCRIBE THE FACTORS THAT IMPEDED THE ACHIEVEMENT OF THE GOALS AND PRIORITIES

There were challenges at the state level in trying to carry out conflicting Federal regulations between VR and the Medicaid agency. Changes in agency leadership also contributed to loss of momentum and focus.

Beginning more than 20 years ago, Minnesota built an ecosystem of day treatment and habilitation (DT&H) centers, which use sub-minimum wage as their business model. Very few of these agencies have transformed, resulting in a great deal of resistance from providers and family members in the transition from sub-minimum wage environments to competitive integrated employment.

#### 3. THE VR PROGRAM'S PERFORMANCE ON THE PERFORMANCE ACCOUNTABILITY INDICATORS UNDER SECTION 116 OF WIOA

The following performance accountability factors are based on Program Year 2018 and includes only employment that was reported to Minnesota Wage Detail. VRS does not currently have access to wage detail for people employed by the federal government, placed in employment in other states, or individuals employed by employers not required to report wages.

- The percentage of program participants who are in unsubsidized employment during the second quarter after exit from the program: 55.8%
- The percentage of program participants who are in unsubsidized employment during the fourth quarter after exit from the program: This measure is based on Q4, or 1 year after exit and will be reported in PY19 per federal guidelines.
- The median earnings of program participants who are in unsubsidized employment during the second quarter after exit from the program: Quarterly median earnings was \$3,079.

- The percentage of program participants who obtain a recognized postsecondary credential, or a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent, during participation in or within 1 year after exit from the program: This measure is based on Q4, or 1 year after exit and will be reported in PY19 per federal guidelines.
- The percentage of program participants who, during a program year, are in an education or training program that leads to a recognized postsecondary credential or employment and who are achieving measurable skill gains toward such credential or employment: Counselors work with each person to develop a plan that includes individualized services of which postsecondary and vocational training services are provided when needed. Training can include traditional degree programs such as AA, BA, BS, etc. and also may include other training opportunities such as OJT, continuing education, apprenticeships, etc. In PY18, the MSG rate was 35%.
- The indicators of effectiveness in serving employers: VRS reports to our Title I and III partners who are responsible for the joint report on Effectiveness Serving Employers to USDOL. Joint state measures include “Retention with the Same Employer” and “Employer Penetration Rate”.

#### 4. HOW THE FUNDS RESERVED FOR INNOVATION AND EXPANSION (I&E) ACTIVITIES WERE UTILIZED

About 3.5 percent of Minnesota’s VR appropriation in Program Year 2018 (\$1,764,003) was used for innovation and expansion activities to improve and increase services to historically underserved populations with the most severe disabilities. These activities represent program response to identified need.

Minnesota Customized Employment: Beginning in 2018, VRS collaborated with community partners to develop a Customized Employment training curriculum that meets the training needs of Minnesota’s disability employment professionals. Utilizing “The Essential Elements of Customized Employment” as its foundation, the MN-CE curriculum provides a framework of training and mentoring support offering students the opportunity to become competent practitioners of Customized Employment services following the conclusion of the MN-CE training. Additionally, the training provides clear, consistent information about CE to auditors, typically CE referral sources such as VRS Counselors, county case managers or families which is also key to the support and adoption of Customized Employment practices and demand. The training is person centered, consistent, and continuously available throughout the state. The goal is to help transform the disability employment system to support individuals with significant disabilities plan for a future that includes competitive, integrated employment. MN-CE curriculum is nationally accredited through the Association of Community Rehabilitation Educators (ACRE) and is the first CE curriculum approved by ACRE. It is also the first CE training that has been developed by a government entity.

State Rehabilitation Council: Ten monthly meetings of the SRC, committee meetings, and public forums are where council members carry out their consultative and participative roles in the work of VRS. Primary contributions are annual participation in development of the VR Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment and State Plan; study of consumer satisfaction, VRS strategic planning, and review of the policies and practices that guide the delivery of services.

Statewide Independent Living Council: VRS staff provide support for SILC activities, VR funding supports communications, printing, postage, etc. for SILC operations and activities.

Persons with Mental Illness: Collaborative activity at state and local levels between VRS, DHS Mental Health Division, and community partners continues to build supports and services for persons with serious mental illness (SMI), who in Program Year 2018 comprised 32% percent of the VR program's total caseload and 33.5 percent of employment outcomes. Innovative projects developed with dedicated state funds are increasing the quality of services and outcomes for this population in urban and rural Minnesota.

SSDI and SSI Beneficiaries: Ticket-to-Work funding is used to supplement Supported Employment funding or to provide continued job retention services beyond the 90 days VRS typically provides.

Rehabilitation Technology: Rehabilitation technology, also referred to as assistive technology, enhances employment outcomes, leading to better employment outcomes including higher paying jobs. VRS continues to provide training and coaching to increase the use of rehabilitation technology by both experienced and new staff. Implementation of the VR Rehabilitation Technology Services Plan has involved widespread staff participation, brought focus to rehabilitation technology activity, and honored the work of VR program counselors serving as a technology liaison to their own VR teams.

Minorities with Most Significant Disabilities: State demographic data indicates Minnesota's populations of people of color are growing at a much higher rate than the white, non-Hispanic population. Minnesota has the largest Somali refugee population in the United States. The New Americans office in St. Paul specializes in addressing the needs of Somali and other East African immigrants who lack fluency in English. Since its inception in 2007, the New Americans Project has served over 240 participants.

VECTOR Youth Project for Deaf/Deaf Blind: Enhanced transition services for youth who are deaf, hard of hearing, or deaf blind in Minnesota supported primarily by school district funding and supplemented with \$315,000 in VRS managed state funding. Enhanced services include work readiness classes, college preparation classes, driver's education, community-based work experiences, and paid internships in competitive employment. For students who transition to college, high school instructors work with the college for the first semester to make sure all needed accommodations are in place and the person is making adequate progress. Ninety percent of VECTOR students are either working or enrolled in college at time of high school graduation.

Minnesota Employment Center (MEC): a unique collaborative program that is supported by two Community Rehabilitation Programs, provides ongoing supported employment services statewide. These services are funded through a grant supported by state legislative dollars and are offered only to people who are deaf, hard of hearing or deaf blind. Currently housed in five different cities and staffed by people fluent in American Sign Language (ASL), this program has provided services for over twenty years. Services aim to help people who are deaf, hard of hearing or deaf blind retain their jobs and secure advancement in competitive employment settings. MEC also provides education and training for employers in how to support their employees who are deaf, hard of hearing or deaf blind.

#### Q. QUALITY, SCOPE, AND EXTENT OF SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES

Include the following:

## 1. THE QUALITY, SCOPE, AND EXTENT OF SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES TO BE PROVIDED TO INDIVIDUALS WITH THE MOST SIGNIFICANT DISABILITIES, INCLUDING YOUTH WITH THE MOST SIGNIFICANT DISABILITIES

Supported employment services promote the integration of people with the most significant disabilities into the Minnesota workplace. The use of funds from Title VI Part B of the Rehabilitation Act initially allowed for expansion of supported employment services and outcomes. Vocational Rehabilitation Services (VRS) continues to work cooperatively with consumers, family members, advocates, employers, service providers and State, county, and local agencies to improve and expand the use of supported employment services statewide.

The state's major challenge regarding supported employment is one of consumer access to extended ongoing supports when they are needed. Agency structures and funding systems for extended support are governed by myriad federal and State laws and rules, each governing a specific piece of the categorical funding available to people with disabilities.

The agency's coordination of vocational rehabilitation services with its extended employment services contributes significantly to the quality, scope, and effectiveness of the State's overall Supported Employment efforts. When developing a customer's employment plan, the consumer and VR counselor identify the time-limited services to be provided by VRS, the expected ongoing supports needed, and the source of those supports. This may include natural supports. VRS is a partner in several state level agreements that facilitate provision of these services.

### **Vocational Rehabilitation Supported Employment**

Minnesota's PY 2018 award for Title VI, Part B Supported Employment was \$246,000. VRS uses all federal funds authorized under Title VI, Part B in addition to Title I funds to purchase services for supported employment for individuals on a fee for service basis. Approximately 2,750 vocational rehabilitation consumers were served in PY 2018 with both Title I and Title VI, Part B funds. Local Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors purchase needed services for those consumers with a vocational goal that requires ongoing supports. Supported employment expenditures are administered and tracked separately in accordance with federal requirements.

### **Minnesota's Medicaid Agency**

DEED-VRS/SSB has entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the DHS Disability Services Division (DHS-DSD) as of September 23, 2019. As part of the MOU, DHS-DSD is the primary payer for ongoing supports to maintain employment.

As highlighted in the MOU, DEED & DHS have agreed to "work together to align our systems so that common customers who receive home and community-based service (HCBS) disability waivers and vocational rehabilitation services (VRS) from DEED-VRS or SSB get seamless and timely supports to make informed choices and meet competitive integrated employment goals." DEED & DHS have developed a work plan that will guide our work in preparing for MOU implementation which is due to occur July, 2021. In advance of MOU implementation, DEED & DHS utilize DHS' Home and Community Based Services (HCBS) Waiver for Employment Services Interim Guidance. In regards to Supported Employment funding, the Interim Guidance states: IDEA and VRS/SSB do not provide ongoing support services beyond job stabilization services. The lead agency can authorize employment support services for people on a waiver who need ongoing supports to maintain employment."

### **Minnesota's Extended Employment Program**

Minnesota has a unique state-only funding appropriation to providing ongoing employment supports to individuals with disabilities called the Extended Employment program. VRS, through this state-funded Extended Employment program, provides ongoing work supports to approximately 3,500 individuals.. Many of these individuals received time-limited vocational rehabilitation services prior to entering supported employment.

### **Minnesota’s Funding for Individual Placement and Support Projects**

Minnesota also has a separate state-only funding appropriation which provides for Individual Placement and Support programs for persons with serious and persistent mental illness. VRS and the DHS Mental Health Division collaborate on Individual Placement and Support (IPS) projects to promote innovation in service delivery, including supported employment services, for this population. The projects are designed to provide functional assessment, individualized career planning, job skill acquisition, job placement, job development, and non-time-limited supports necessary to maintain and advance in employment. All recipients of grants under these projects are required to demonstrate collaboration with counties, the local community support program, VRS, and providers of employment services such as CRPs, regional treatment centers, and community mental health centers.

## **2. THE TIMING OF TRANSITION TO EXTENDED SERVICES**

The timing of the transition to extended services is highly individualized based on the needs of the person. The need for extended services is usually identified during the assessment of VR needs, and the consumer makes an informed choice of vendor for long term supports as a part of Individualized Plan for Employment development. However, the need can be identified at any point in time, and the plan can be amended. The consumer will frequently select the same vendor to serve as their placement provider and extended services provider to reduce the stress of changing providers.

The transition to extended services typically starts when training is completed and the person has stabilized on the job for 60 days. Both VR and the Extended Services provider provides joint services for at least 30 days to ensure the transition has been successful. As needed, VR can continue supports for a period of up to 24 months for individuals with the most significant disabilities eligible for supported employment services, and extended services may be funded for youth with the most significant disabilities for a period of up to four years or until the youth turns 25 years old following the provision of supported employment services (34 C.F.R. § 361.5(c)(18) and 34 C.F.R. § 363.4(a)(2)). If the person becomes ready for job promotion VR may re-engage to provide additional training to ensure the person’s success in their career-laddering efforts.

### **VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION (COMBINED OR GENERAL) CERTIFICATIONS**

States must provide written and signed certifications that:

1. THE (ENTER THE NAME OF DESIGNATED STATE AGENCY OR DESIGNATED STATE UNIT, AS APPROPRIATE,) IS AUTHORIZED TO SUBMIT THE VR SERVICES PORTION OF THE UNIFIED OR COMBINED STATE PLAN UNDER TITLE I OF THE REHABILITATION ACT OF 1973 (REHABILITATION ACT), AS AMENDED BY WIOA[14], AND ITS SUPPLEMENT UNDER TITLE VI OF THE REHABILITATION ACT[15];

ENTER THE NAME OF DESIGNATED STATE AGENCY OR DESIGNATED STATE UNIT, AS APPROPRIATE

Department of Employment and Economic Development, DEED

2. AS A CONDITION FOR THE RECEIPT OF FEDERAL FUNDS UNDER TITLE I OF THE REHABILITATION ACT FOR THE PROVISION OF VR SERVICES, THE (ENTER THE NAME OF DESIGNATED STATE AGENCY)[16] AGREES TO OPERATE AND ADMINISTER THE STATE VR SERVICES PROGRAM IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE VR SERVICES PORTION OF THE UNIFIED OR COMBINED STATE PLAN[17] , THE REHABILITATION ACT, AND ALL APPLICABLE REGULATIONS[18] , POLICIES, AND PROCEDURES ESTABLISHED BY THE SECRETARY OF EDUCATION. FUNDS MADE AVAILABLE UNDER SECTION 111 OF THE REHABILITATION ACT ARE USED SOLELY FOR THE PROVISION OF VR SERVICES AND THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE VR SERVICES PORTION OF THE UNIFIED OR COMBINED STATE PLAN;

ENTER THE NAME OF DESIGNATED STATE AGENCY

Vocational Rehabilitation Services (VRS)

3. AS A CONDITION FOR THE RECEIPT OF FEDERAL FUNDS UNDER TITLE VI OF THE REHABILITATION ACT FOR SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES, THE DESIGNATED STATE AGENCY AGREES TO OPERATE AND ADMINISTER THE STATE SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES PROGRAM IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE SUPPLEMENT TO THE VR SERVICES PORTION OF THE UNIFIED OR COMBINED STATE PLAN[19] , THE REHABILITATION ACT, AND ALL APPLICABLE REGULATIONS[20] , POLICIES, AND PROCEDURES ESTABLISHED BY THE SECRETARY OF EDUCATION. FUNDS MADE AVAILABLE UNDER TITLE VI ARE USED SOLELY FOR THE PROVISION OF SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES AND THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE SUPPLEMENT TO THE VR SERVICES PORTION OF THE UNIFIED OR COMBINED STATE PLAN;

4. THE DESIGNATED STATE AGENCY AND/OR THE DESIGNATED STATE UNIT HAS THE AUTHORITY UNDER STATE LAW TO PERFORM THE FUNCTIONS OF THE STATE REGARDING THE VR SERVICES PORTION OF THE UNIFIED OR COMBINED STATE PLAN AND ITS SUPPLEMENT;

5. THE STATE LEGALLY MAY CARRY OUT EACH PROVISION OF THE VR SERVICES PORTION OF THE UNIFIED OR COMBINED STATE PLAN AND ITS SUPPLEMENT.

6. ALL PROVISIONS OF THE VR SERVICES PORTION OF THE UNIFIED OR COMBINED STATE PLAN AND ITS SUPPLEMENT ARE CONSISTENT WITH STATE LAW.

7. THE (ENTER THE NAME OF AUTHORIZED REPRESENTATIVE BELOW) HAS THE AUTHORITY UNDER STATE LAW TO RECEIVE, HOLD, AND DISBURSE FEDERAL FUNDS MADE AVAILABLE UNDER THE VR SERVICES PORTION OF THE UNIFIED OR COMBINED STATE PLAN AND ITS SUPPLEMENT;

ENTER THE NAME OF AUTHORIZED REPRESENTATIVE BELOW

Dee Torgerson

8. THE (ENTER THE TITLE OF AUTHORIZED REPRESENTATIVE BELOW) HAS THE AUTHORITY TO SUBMIT THE VR SERVICES PORTION OF THE UNIFIED OR COMBINED STATE PLAN AND THE SUPPLEMENT FOR SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES;

ENTER THE TITLE OF AUTHORIZED REPRESENTATIVE BELOW

Director, Vocational Rehabilitation Services

9. THE AGENCY THAT SUBMITS THE VR SERVICES PORTION OF THE UNIFIED OR COMBINED STATE PLAN AND ITS SUPPLEMENT HAS ADOPTED OR OTHERWISE FORMALLY APPROVED THE PLAN AND ITS SUPPLEMENT.

FOOTNOTES

[14] Public Law 113-128.

[15] Unless otherwise stated, "Rehabilitation Act" means the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended by WIOA, signed into law on July 22, 2014.

[16] All references in this plan to "designated State agency" or to "the State agency" relate to the agency identified in this paragraph.

[17] No funds under title I of the Rehabilitation Act may be awarded without an approved VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan in accordance with section 101(a) of the Rehabilitation Act.

[18] Applicable regulations, in part, include the Education Department General Administrative Regulations (EDGAR) in 34 CFR parts 76, 77, 79, 81, and 82; 2 CFR part 200 as adopted by 2 CFR part 3474; and the State VR Services program regulations.

[19] No funds under title VI of the Rehabilitation Act may be awarded without an approved supported employment supplement to the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan in accordance with section 606(a) of the Rehabilitation Act.

[20] Applicable regulations, in part, include the citations in footnote 6.

CERTIFICATION SIGNATURE

Signatory information	TEST
Name of Signatory	Dee Torgerson
Title of Signatory	Director, Vocational Rehabilitation Services
Date Signed	2/25/2020

ASSURANCES

The designated State agency or designated State unit, as appropriate and identified in the State certifications included with this VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement, through signature of the authorized individual, assures the Commissioner of the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA), that it will comply with all of the requirements of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement, as set forth in sections 101(a) and 606 of the Rehabilitation Act. The individual authorized to submit the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement makes the following assurances: **The State Plan must provide assurances that:**

The State Plan must include	Include
1. Public Comment on Policies and Procedures: The designated State agency assures it will comply with all statutory and regulatory requirements for public participation in the VR Services Portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan, as required by section 101(a)(16)(A) of the Rehabilitation Act.	
2. Submission of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and Its Supplement: The designated State unit assures it will comply with all requirements	

The State Plan must include	Include
pertaining to the submission and revisions of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement for the State Supported Employment Services program, as required by sections 101(a)(1), (22), (23), and 606(a) of the Rehabilitation Act; section 102 of WIOA in the case of the submission of a unified plan; section 103 of WIOA in the case of a submission of a Combined State Plan; 34 CFR 76.140.	
3. The designated State agency or designated State unit, as appropriate, assures it will comply with the requirements related to: Administration of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan:	
3.a. The establishment of the designated State agency and designated State unit, as required by section 101(a)(2) of the Rehabilitation Act	
3.b. The establishment of either a State independent commission or State Rehabilitation Council, as required by section 101(a)(21) of the Rehabilitation Act. The designated State agency or designated State unit, as applicable (A or B must be selected):	
3.b.(A) "is an independent State commission" (Yes/No)	No
3.b.(B) "has established a State Rehabilitation Council" (Yes/No)	Yes
3.c. Consultations regarding the administration of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan, in accordance with section 101(a)(16)(B) of the Rehabilitation Act	
3.d. The financial participation by the State, or if the State so elects, by the State and local agencies, to provide the amount of the non-Federal share of the cost of carrying out the VR program in accordance with section 101(a)(3)	
3.e. The local administration of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan, in accordance with section 101(a)(2)(A) of the Rehabilitation Act. Select yes or no, as appropriate, to identify if the designated State agency allows for the local administration of VR funds (Yes/No)	No
3.f. The shared funding and administration of joint programs, in accordance with section 101(a)(2)(A)(ii) of the Rehabilitation Act. Select yes or no, as appropriate, to identify if the designated State agency allows for the shared funding and administration of joint programs (Yes/No)	No
3.g. Statewideness and waivers of statewideness requirements, as set forth in section 101(a)(4) of the Rehabilitation Act. Is the designated State agency requesting or maintaining a waiver of statewideness for one or more services provided under the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan? (Yes/No) See Section 2 of this VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan	No
3.h. The descriptions for cooperation, collaboration, and coordination, as required by sections 101(a)(11) and (24)(B); and 606(b) of the Rehabilitation Act	
3.i. All required methods of administration, as required by section 101(a)(6) of the Rehabilitation Act	

The State Plan must include	Include
3.j. The requirements for the comprehensive system of personnel development, as set forth in section 101(a)(7) of the Rehabilitation Act	
3.k. The compilation and submission to the Commissioner of statewide assessments, estimates, State goals and priorities, strategies, and progress reports, as appropriate, and as required by sections 101(a)(15), 105(c)(2), and 606(b)(8) of the Rehabilitation Act	
3.l. The reservation and use of a portion of the funds allotted to the State under section 110 of the Rehabilitation Act for the development and implementation of innovative approaches to expand and improve the provision of VR services to individuals with disabilities, particularly individuals with the most significant disabilities	
3.m. The submission of reports as required by section 101(a)(10) of the Rehabilitation Act	
4. Administration of the Provision of VR Services: The designated State agency, or designated State unit, as appropriate, assures that it will:	
4.a. Comply with all requirements regarding information and referral services in accordance with sections 101(a)(5)(D) and (20) of the Rehabilitation Act	
4.b. Impose no duration of residence requirement as part of determining an individual's eligibility for VR services or that excludes from services under the plan any individual who is present in the State in accordance with section 101(a)(12) of the Rehabilitation Act	
4.c. Provide the full range of services listed in section 103(a) of the Rehabilitation Act as appropriate, to all eligible individuals with disabilities in the State who apply for services in accordance with section 101(a)(5) of the Rehabilitation Act? (Yes/No)	No
4.d. Determine whether comparable services and benefits are available to the individual in accordance with section 101(a)(8) of the Rehabilitation Act	
4.e. Comply with requirements regarding the provisions of informed choice for all applicants and eligible individuals in accordance with section 102(d) of the Rehabilitation Act	
4.f. Comply with requirements regarding the provisions of informed choice for all applicants and eligible individuals in accordance with section 102(d) of the Rehabilitation Act	
4.g. Provide vocational rehabilitation services to American Indians who are individuals with disabilities residing in the State, in accordance with section 101(a)(13) of the Rehabilitation Act	
4.h. Comply with the requirements for the conduct of semiannual or annual reviews, as appropriate, for individuals employed either in an extended employment setting in a community rehabilitation program or any other employment under section 14(c) of the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938, as required by section 101(a)(14) of the Rehabilitation Act	

The State Plan must include	Include
4.i. Meet the requirements in sections 101(a)(17) and 103(b)(2) of the Rehabilitation Act if the State elects to construct, under special circumstances, facilities for community rehabilitation programs	
4.j. With respect to students with disabilities, the State,	
4.j.i. Has developed and will implement,	
4.j.i.I. Strategies to address the needs identified in the assessments; and	
4.j.i.II. Strategies to achieve the goals and priorities identified by the State, to improve and expand vocational rehabilitation services for students with disabilities on a statewide basis; and	
4.j.ii. Has developed and will implement strategies to provide pre-employment transition services (sections 101(a)(15) and 101(a)(25))	
5. Program Administration for the Supported Employment Title VI Supplement:	
5.a. The designated State unit assures that it will include in the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan all information required by section 606 of the Rehabilitation Act	
5.b. The designated State agency assures that it will submit reports in such form and in accordance with such procedures as the Commissioner may require and collects the information required by section 101(a)(10) of the Rehabilitation Act separately for individuals receiving supported employment services under title I and individuals receiving supported employment services under title VI of the Rehabilitation Act	
5.c. The designated state unit will coordinate activities with any other State agency that is functioning as an employment network under the Ticket to Work and Self-Sufficiency program under Section 1148 of the Social Security Act	
6. Financial Administration of the Supported Employment Program:	
6.a. The designated State agency assures that it will expend no more than 2.5 percent of the State's allotment under title VI for administrative costs of carrying out this program; and, the designated State agency or agencies will provide, directly or indirectly through public or private entities, non-Federal contributions in an amount that is not less than 10 percent of the costs of carrying out supported employment services provided to youth with the most significant disabilities with the funds reserved for such purpose under section 603(d) of the Rehabilitation Act, in accordance with section 606(b)(7)(G) and (H) of the Rehabilitation Act	
6.b. The designated State agency assures that it will use funds made available under title VI of the Rehabilitation Act only to provide supported employment services to individuals with the most significant disabilities, including extended services to youth with the most significant disabilities, who are eligible to receive such services; and, that such funds are used only to supplement and not supplant the funds provided under Title I of the Rehabilitation Act, when providing supported employment services specified in the individualized plan for employment, in accordance with section 606(b)(7)(A) and (D), of the Rehabilitation Act	

The State Plan must include	Include
7. Provision of Supported Employment Services:	Yes
7.a. The Designated State Agency Assures That it Will Provide Supported Employment Services as Defined in Section 7(39) of the Rehabilitation Act	
7.b. The designated State agency assures that:	
7.b.i. The comprehensive assessment of individuals with significant disabilities conducted under section 102(b)(1) of the Rehabilitation Act and funded under title I of the Rehabilitation Act includes consideration of supported employment as an appropriate employment outcome, in accordance with the requirements of section 606(b)(7)(B) of the Rehabilitation Act	
7.b.ii. An individualized plan for employment that meets the requirements of section 102(b) of the Rehabilitation Act, which is developed and updated with title I funds, in accordance with sections 102(b)(3)(F) and 606(b)(6)(C) and (E) of the Rehabilitation Act	

#### VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION PROGRAM PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

##### **Performance Goals for the Core Programs**

Each state submitting a Unified or Combined State Plan is required to identify expected levels of performance for each of the primary indicators of performance for the first two years covered by the plan. The state is required to reach agreement with the Secretary of Labor, in conjunction with the Secretary of Education, on state-negotiated levels of performance for the indicators for each of the first two years of the plan.

For Program Year (PY) 2016-2019 plans, the Departments used the transition authority under section 503(a) of WIOA to designate certain primary indicators of performance as “baseline” indicators to ensure an orderly transition from the requirements of the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 to those under WIOA. A “baseline” indicator was one for which states did not propose an expected level of performance and did not come to agreement with the Departments on negotiated levels of performance because sufficient data was not available to establish such performance levels. As a result, “baseline” indicators were not used in the end of the year adjustment of performance levels and were not used to determine failure to meet adjusted levels of performance for purposes of sanctions. The Departments designated indicators as “baseline” based on the likelihood of a State having insufficient data with which to make a reasonable determination of an expected level of performance.

For PYs 2020-2023 Plans, Title I programs (Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth) and the Title II program (Adult Education and Family Literacy Act) will have two full years of data available to make reasonable determinations of expected levels of performance for the following indicators for PY 2020 and PY 2021:

- Employment (Second Quarter after Exit);
- Employment (Fourth Quarter after Exit);
- Median Earnings (Second Quarter after Exit);
- Credential Attainment Rate; and
- Measurable Skill Gains

The Wagner-Peyser Act Employment Service program, authorized under the Wagner-Peyser Act, as amended by title III of WIOA, will have two full years of data available to make a reasonable determination of expected levels of performance for the following indicators for PY 2020 and PY 2021:

- Employment (Second Quarter after Exit);
- Employment (Fourth Quarter after Exit); and
- Median Earnings (Second Quarter after Exit)

The Credential Attainment Rate and Measurable Skill Gains indicators do not apply to the Wagner-Peyser Act Employment Service program; therefore, this program will not submit expected levels of performance for these indicators.

For the first two years of PYs 2020-2023 Plans, the Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) program, authorized under title I of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended by title IV of WIOA, will have two full years of data available for the Measurable Skill Gains indicator only. Therefore, the Departments will designate the following indicators as “baseline” for the VR program for PY 2020 and PY 2021:

- Employment (Second Quarter after Exit);
- Employment (Fourth Quarter after Exit);
- Median Earnings (Second Quarter after Exit); and
- Credential Attainment Rate

VR agencies must continue to collect and report on all indicators, including those that have been designated as “baseline, pursuant to section 116(d) of WIOA.” The actual performance data reported by these programs for indicators designated as “baseline” for PY 2020 and PY 2021 will serve as baseline data in future years. The Departments will require VR agencies to submit expected levels of performance for these indicators for PY 2022 and PY 2023.

The Departments determined that the Effectiveness in Serving Employers indicator will be measured as a shared outcome across all six core programs within each state to ensure a holistic approach to serving employers. The Departments will continue piloting approaches for measuring this indicator for the first two years of PY 2020-2023 plans. Therefore, states are not required to submit an expected level of performance for the Effectiveness in Serving Employers indicator for PY 2020 and PY 2021. However, core programs are expected to collect data and report on this indicator for PY 2020 and PY 2021 as they did for PYs 2016-2019 plans.

Each core program must submit an expected level of performance for all of the other indicators, as applicable, with the exception of the four indicators designated as “baseline” for the VR program in PY 2020 and PY 2021. The Departments will work with states during the negotiation process to establish negotiated levels of performance for each of the primary indicators for the core programs not listed as “baseline.” Each state must update its plan to include the agreed-upon negotiated levels of performance before the Departments approve a state’s plan.

States may identify additional indicators in the plan, including additional approaches to measuring Effectiveness in Serving Employers, and may establish levels of performance for each of the state indicators. Please identify any such state indicators under Additional Indicators of Performance.

Performance Indicators	PY 2020 Expected Level	PY 2020 Negotiated Level	PY 2021 Expected Level	PY 2021 Negotiated Level
Employment (Second Quarter After Exit)	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline
Employment (Fourth Quarter After Exit)	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline
Median Earnings (Second Quarter After Exit)	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline
Credential Attainment Rate	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline
Measurable Skill Gains	30.0%	30.0%	31.0%	31.0%
Effectiveness in Serving Employers	Not Applicable <sup>1</sup>	Not Applicable <sup>1</sup>	Not Applicable <sup>1</sup>	Not Applicable <sup>1</sup>

1

*“Effectiveness in Serving Employers” is still being piloted and this data will not be entered for 2020 State Plans.*

#### PROGRAM-SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS FOR VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION (BLIND)

The Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Services Portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan [13] must include the following descriptions and estimates, as required by section 101(a) of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended by title IV of WIOA:

[13] Sec. 102(b)(2)(D)(iii) of WIOA

##### A. INPUT OF STATE REHABILITATION COUNCIL

All agencies, except for those that are independent consumer-controlled commissions, must describe the following:

1. INPUT PROVIDED BY THE STATE REHABILITATION COUNCIL, INCLUDING INPUT AND RECOMMENDATIONS ON THE VR SERVICES PORTION OF THE UNIFIED OR COMBINED STATE PLAN, RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE COUNCIL'S REPORT, THE REVIEW AND ANALYSIS OF CONSUMER SATISFACTION, AND OTHER COUNCIL REPORTS THAT MAY HAVE BEEN DEVELOPED AS PART OF THE COUNCIL'S FUNCTIONS;

The Minnesota State Rehabilitation Council for the Blind (hereinafter “SRC-B”) is a council whose members are appointed by Governor Mark Dayton, consistent with the requirements of 34 CFR 361.17(b)(3) and related regulation. The SRC-B is an advisory council to Minnesota State Services for the Blind (hereinafter “SSB”), a division within the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development (hereinafter “DEED”). In formulating its input and recommendations for this state plan, the SRC-B reviewed a considerable amount of information, including, but not limited to: 1. information supplied to the SRC-B by SSB; 2. information supplied to the SRC-B by DEED; 3. information developed by the SRC-B; and 4. information and input received from the public at SRC-B meetings.

Input of State Rehabilitation Council Section A. This section was presented to the SRC-B on February 6, 2020 and was unanimously approved.

SSB Response: SSB agrees with the SRC-B.

Request for Waiver of Statewideness Section B. This section was presented to the SRC-B on February 6, 2020 and was unanimously approved.

SSB Response: SSB agrees with the SRC-B.

Cooperative Agreements with Agencies Not Carrying Out Activities Under the Statewide Workforce Development System Section C. This section was presented to the SRC-B on February 6, 2020 and was unanimously approved.

SSB Response: SSB agrees with the SRC-B.

Coordination with Education Section D. This section was presented to the SRC-B on February 6, 2020 and was unanimously approved.

SSB Response: SSB agrees with the SRC-B.

Cooperative Agreements with Private Nonprofits Section E. This section was presented to the SRC-B on February 6, 2020 and was unanimously approved.

SSB Response: SSB agrees with the SRC-B.

Arrangements and Cooperative Agreements Regarding Supported Employment Section F. This section was presented to the SRC-B on February 6, 2020 and was unanimously approved.

SSB Response: SSB agrees with the SRC-B.

Coordination with Employers Section G. This section was presented to the SRC-B on February 6, 2020 and was unanimously approved.

SSB Response: SSB agrees with the SRC-B.

Interagency Cooperation Section H. This section was presented to the SRC-B on February 6, 2020 and was unanimously approved.

SSB Response: SSB agrees with the SRC-B.

Comprehensive System of Personnel Development Section I. This section was presented to the SRC-B on February 6, 2020 and was unanimously approved.

SSB Response: SSB agrees with the SRC-B.

Statewide Assessment Section J. This section was presented to the SRC-B on February 6, 2020 and was unanimously approved.

SSB Response: SSB agrees with the SRC-B.

Annual Estimates Section K. This section was presented to the SRC-B on February 6, 2020 and was unanimously approved.

SSB Response: SSB agrees with the SRC-B.

Goals and Priorities Section L. The SRC-B has a standing “Customer Satisfaction and Goals & Priorities Committee” which reviews and makes recommendations regarding customer satisfaction, goals and priorities, and VR effectiveness. The committee reports quarterly to the full SRC-B. In preparing the strategies for the goals and priorities, the SRC-B committees submitted their recommendations to SSB. In 2019 SSB and the Customer Satisfaction and Goals & Priorities Committee reviewed the recommendations from the committees and jointly the developed goals and priorities for program year 2019. The draft Goals and Priorities were presented to the SRC-B at the December 5, 2019 meeting and they were presented to the February 6, 2020 meeting for approval and unanimously approved.

SSB Response: SSB agrees with the SRC-B.

Order of Selection Section M. This section was presented to the SRC-B on February 6, 2020 and unanimously approved.

SSB Response: SSB agrees with the SRC-B.

Goals for Title VI Part B Section N. This section was presented to the SRC-B on February 6, 2020 and unanimously approved.

SSB Response: SSB agrees with the SRC-B.

State’s Strategies Section O. The SRC-B has a standing “Customer Satisfaction and Goals & Priorities Committee” which reviews and makes recommendations regarding customer satisfaction, goals and priorities, and VR effectiveness. The committee reports quarterly to the full SRC-B. In preparing the strategies for the goals and priorities, the SRC-B committees submitted their recommendations to SSB. In 2019 SSB and the Customer Satisfaction and Goals & Priorities Committee reviewed the recommendations from the committees and jointly the developed goals and priorities for program year 2019. The draft Goals and Priorities were presented to the SRC-B at the December 5, 2019 meeting and they were presented to the February 6, 2020 and unanimously approved.

SSB Response: SSB agrees with the SRC-B.

Evaluation and Report of Progress Section P. The SRC-B has a standing “Customer Satisfaction and Goals & Priorities Committee” which reviews and makes recommendations regarding customer satisfaction, goals and priorities, and VR effectiveness. The committee reports quarterly to the full SRC-B. The preliminary report was presented to the SRC-B on October 3, 2019 and unanimously approved on February 6, 2020.

SSB Response: SSB agrees with the SRC-B.

Quality, Scope, and Extent of Supported Employment Services Section Q. This section was presented to the SRC-B on February 6, 2020.

SSB Response: SSB agrees with the SRC-B.

The frequency of conducting of the customer satisfaction survey (CSS) was changed in 2017 from quarterly to annually. The survey for PY 2018, conducted near the end of the program year, covers customers served during the period from February through July 2019. The survey includes only six months of data because the reliability of responses collected from experiences more than six months in the past decreases. The survey was conducted for the first time in electronic format and lower than normal response rates were experienced which could be a factor in the decrease in scores.

Summary	PY2018
Q1: How satisfied are you with the time it usually took to get your answer?	71%
Q2: Satisfied that counselor (staff) understood customer's needs	72%
Q3: Satisfied that customer given enough info to make good choices on employment plan	64%
Q4: Satisfied that customer had an active role in decisions about services	75%
Q5: Satisfied that services helped plan for/maintain employment	60%
Q11: Overall satisfaction with services provided	67%
Q12: Extent to which services have met expectations	72%
Q13: Comparison with "ideal" set of services	67%

SSB’s results on the Customer Satisfaction Survey are also computed by the Minnesota Department of Economic Development utilizing the Minnesota Customer Satisfaction Index (MnCSI). Simply put, this index summarizes overall satisfaction with services by applying a formula to the responses for Questions 11, 12, and 13 on the survey. Using the MnCSI makes it possible to compare the customer satisfaction ratings of SSB with those of other agencies in Minnesota and with industry in general

Customers Served	April 16-March 17	Jul 16-Jun 17	Oct 16-Sept 17	Mar 18-Aug 18**	Feb 19-July 19**
Average MnCSI Scores	76.4	75.7	75.6	73.5	63.9
N size	233	235	238	260	134

The committee continued to track the questions about assistive technology that began to be asked on the survey in the year ending 2015:

Responses	2015 4 Quarters	2016 4 Quarters	2017 4 Quarters	2018 Mar-Aug	Feb-Jul 19
Yes	72%	66%	65%	66%	69%
No	25%	31%	31%	31%	25%
Unsure	3%	3%	4%	3%	6%
DK/Refused	<1%	0%	0%	0%	0%
N Size	233	216	238	281	189
Responses	2015 4 Quarters	2016 4 Quarters	2017 4 Quarters	2018 Mar-Aug	Feb-Jul 19
Very Prepared	46%	37%	60%	55%	50%
Somewhat Prepared	37%	42%	32%	35%	37%
Not Very Well Prepared	12%	8%	5%	6%	7%
Not At All Prepared	4%	11%	3%	2%	5%
DK/Refused	1%	2%	1%	2%	2%
N Size	161	142	154	184	106
Responses	2015 4 Quarters	2016 4 Quarters	2017 4 Quarters	2018 Mar-Aug	Feb-Jul 19
Very Useful	75%	76%	75%	70%	67%
Somewhat Useful	22%	16%	20%	21%	22%
Not Very Useful	1%	2%	1%	3%	5%
Not At All Useful	2%	4%	1%	2%	1%
DK/Refused	1%	1%	2%	4%	5%
N Size	161	142	154	184	129

The members of the committee read the verbatim comments elicited by the following two survey questions to determine if trends or issues specific to SSB were apparent. No significant trends were identified from this data.

Q9. In your opinion, what is/was the most important part of the services you received from SSB?

Q10. If you could change one thing about the services you received, what would you change?

SSB and the SRC-B designed a customer survey to measure the satisfaction of Adjustment to Blindness (ATB) training participants with training completed through SSB ATB vendors. Customers are chosen to be surveyed from 30 to 90 days after they have completed ATB training or when their case is closed with SSB, whichever is earlier. Like the CSS, this survey has gone to an annual online survey. The Vendor Outcomes and Measures Committee of the SRC-B reviewed the report and presented it to the SRC-B. SSB and the SRC-B agree to review the survey instruments and protocols for improvements.

## 2. THE DESIGNATED STATE UNIT'S RESPONSE TO THE COUNCIL'S INPUT AND RECOMMENDATIONS; AND

All VR sections of the Combined State Plan were updated and presented to the Council on either October 3, 2019, December 5, 2019, or February 6, 2020. They were all unanimously approved and agreed upon by the Council and SSB. The SRC-B and SSB agree that the satisfaction surveys and method of administration need to be reviewed for improvements. SSB values the Councils' input and works collaboratively in carrying out the mission of SSB to facilitate the achievement of vocational and personal independence by Minnesotans who are blind, visually impaired or DeafBlind.

## 3. THE DESIGNATED STATE UNIT'S EXPLANATIONS FOR REJECTING ANY OF THE COUNCIL'S INPUT OR RECOMMENDATIONS.

All VR sections of the Combined State Plan were updated and presented to the Council on either October 3, 2019, December 5, 2019, or February 6, 2020. They were all unanimously approved and agreed upon by the Council and SSB. The SRC-B has approved all reports jointly developed with SSB including the Annual Report, Customer Satisfaction Survey Report, and Adjustment To Blindness Customer Satisfaction Survey. There has been no input or recommendations from the SRC-B rejected by SSB.

## B. REQUEST FOR WAIVER OF STATEWIDENESS

When requesting a waiver of the statewideness requirement, the designated State unit must identify the types of services to be provided by the program on a non-statewide basis. The waiver request must also include written assurances that:

### 1. A LOCAL PUBLIC AGENCY WILL PROVIDE THE NON-FEDERAL SHARE OF COSTS ASSOCIATED WITH THE SERVICES TO BE PROVIDED IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE WAIVER REQUEST;

This agency has not requested a waiver of statewideness.

### 2. THE DESIGNATED STATE UNIT WILL APPROVE EACH PROPOSED SERVICE BEFORE IT IS PUT INTO EFFECT; AND

This agency has not requested a waiver of statewideness.

### 3. REQUIREMENTS OF THE VR SERVICES PORTION OF THE UNIFIED OR COMBINED STATE PLAN WILL APPLY TO THE SERVICES APPROVED UNDER THE WAIVER.

This agency has not requested a waiver of statewideness.

### C. COOPERATIVE AGREEMENTS WITH AGENCIES NOT CARRYING OUT ACTIVITIES UNDER THE STATEWIDE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM

Describe interagency cooperation with and utilization of the services and facilities of agencies and programs that are not carrying out activities through the statewide workforce development system with respect to:

#### 1. FEDERAL, STATE, AND LOCAL AGENCIES AND PROGRAMS;

SSB continues to work in collaboration with the other designated state unit in Minnesota, Vocational Rehabilitation Services (VRS), and has arrangements for providing reciprocal referral services between SSB and VRS.

SSB has developed and implemented a formal cooperative agreement with representatives of the higher education system in the State: the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities (MNSCU) System. SSB also has formal interagency agreements with the American Indian VR programs in the State.

SSB has established working relationships with programs which provide services to minority populations such as the New Americans Program (a program within VRS) and the Hmong American Partnership (HAP) in the Minneapolis/St. Paul area.

#### 2. STATE PROGRAMS CARRIED OUT UNDER SECTION 4 OF THE ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY ACT OF 1998;

A System of Technology to Achieve Results (STAR) is located within the Minnesota Department of Administration. STAR's mission is to help all Minnesotans with disabilities gain access to and acquire the assistive technology they need to live, learn, work and play. The Minnesota STAR Program is federally funded by the Department of Health and Human Services, Administration For Community Living in accordance with the Assistive Technology Act of 1998, as amended (P.L. 108-364). SSB has a cooperative agreement with STAR effective February 2017.

#### 3. PROGRAMS CARRIED OUT BY THE UNDER SECRETARY FOR RURAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE;

SSB does not have a formal interagency agreement with the programs carried out by the Department of Agriculture's undersecretary for rural development, nor does it have formal agreements with other federal or State agencies, except as noted below. All qualified VR counselors have been provided a description of the programs provided by the USDA Minnesota Rural Development Offices and are able to access these services as needed.

#### 4. NON-EDUCATIONAL AGENCIES SERVING OUT-OF-SCHOOL YOUTH; AND

SSB does not have any cooperative agreements with agencies serving out-of-school youth.

#### 5. STATE USE CONTRACTING PROGRAMS.

SSB uses a Master Contract system managed by The Materials Management Division of the MN Administrative Department. Master contracts are used with all Community Rehabilitation Programs that SSB purchases Rehabilitation Services from.

### D. COORDINATION WITH EDUCATION OFFICIALS

Describe:

1. THE DESIGNATED STATE UNIT'S PLANS, POLICIES, AND PROCEDURES FOR COORDINATION WITH EDUCATION OFFICIALS TO FACILITATE THE TRANSITION OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES FROM SCHOOL TO THE RECEIPT OF VR SERVICES, INCLUDING PRE-EMPLOYMENT TRANSITION SERVICES, AS WELL AS PROCEDURES FOR THE TIMELY DEVELOPMENT AND APPROVAL OF INDIVIDUALIZED PLANS FOR EMPLOYMENT FOR THE STUDENTS

Vocational Rehabilitation Services (VRS), State Services for the Blind (SSB), and the Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) have had an agreement since 2016 to achieve better coordination between schools and VR services and creating a bridge from the school to VRS or SSB prior to school exit. The intent of the agreement is to:

1. Provide consultation and technical assistance to Local Education Agencies (LEA)s in planning for the transition of students with disabilities from school to post school activities including post-secondary education, training, competitive integrated employment and independent living.
2. Provide secondary transition planning by personnel of DEED's VRS and SSB alongside secondary special education and career and college readiness staff through the delivery of pre-employment transition services and vocational rehabilitation services under the Rehabilitation Act and transition services under the IDEA.
3. Define the roles and responsibilities, including financial responsibilities, of each agency, including provisions for pre-employment transition services, vocational rehabilitation services and IDEA transition services.
4. Designate procedures for outreach to and identification of students with disabilities who are in need of pre-employment transition services and/ or vocational rehabilitation services. Outreach to students should occur as early as grade nine.
5. Outline services and documentation requirements set forth in section 511 of the Rehabilitation Act, as added by the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), with regard to youth with disabilities who are seeking subminimum wage employment.
6. Provide assurance that neither the SEA nor the LEA will enter into an arrangement with an entity holding a special wage certificate under section 14(c) of the Fair Labor Standards Act for the purpose of operating a program under which a youth with a disability is engaged in work at a subminimum wage.

Coordinated Services for Youth in Special Education Minnesota law mandates a coordinated system of services for youth, birth to 21, who are involved in special education. The Minnesota System for Interagency Collaboration (MnSIC) was formed to develop and implement this system. VRS is represented on MnSIC and VRS staff participate on subcommittees that develop service strategies for students and recommendations for governance and coordination of state and local collaborative efforts. The Community Transition Interagency Committee (CTIC) promotes statewide interagency coordination to remove system barriers and expand community services. There are approximately 70 local CTICs and an update to the list has been planned for PY 20. CTICs include parents, students, advocacy groups, local businesses, county government, post-secondary education, vocational education, community education, corrections, SSA health care, and other local service providers. SSB staff serve on CTICs, thereby

helping to improve and expand vocational services that result in employment outcomes. SSB counselors serve all public, private, and charter high schools in Minnesota. They are active participants on transition planning teams so that each VR eligible student with a disability can access VR services and establish a written VR plan before leaving school. Outreach efforts include working with school nurses, guidance counselors, case managers, principals, social workers, 504 personnel, community agencies and work experience coordinators to identify students with disabilities who are not in special education programs. For SSB, connecting with students through teachers of the blind and visually impaired is a primary way to ensure that we are serving students. A referral of all potentially eligible students is sought as soon as possible so that employment services can begin well before the student leaves school. Interagency Agreement to Purchase used Assistive Technology Devices when a child with a disability transitions into a work environment or postsecondary program, VRS or SSB may purchase any assistive technology device that the child's former school district purchased on the child's behalf.

## 2. INFORMATION ON THE FORMAL INTERAGENCY AGREEMENT WITH THE STATE EDUCATIONAL AGENCY WITH RESPECT TO:

### A. CONSULTATION AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE TO ASSIST EDUCATIONAL AGENCIES IN PLANNING FOR THE TRANSITION OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES FROM SCHOOL TO POST-SCHOOL ACTIVITIES, INCLUDING VR SERVICES;

DEED's VRS and SSB and MDE's Special Education and Career and College Success Divisions will work together to ensure that consultation and technical assistance, which could include video conferences and conference calls, is provided to Local Education Agencies (LEA) staff in planning for the transition of students with disabilities to post-school activities. This includes implementing a structure for ensuring pre-employment transition services and vocational rehabilitation services are made available statewide for those who need these services.

DEED's VRS and SSB and MDE's Special Education and Career and College Success Divisions will collaborate and promote transition to adult services through participation in existing councils, committees, and other workgroups within respective agencies.

DEED's VRS and SSB will ensure that a counselor(s) is assigned to each school district and charter school in the state who will provide consultation and technical assistance to LEA staff on an as-needed basis related to the transition of students with disabilities from school to post-school activities.

MDE's Special Education and Career and College Success Divisions in consultation with DEED's VRS and SSB will develop training and communication tools for the LEA staff regarding WIOA and how it intersects with IDEA and the schools

### B. TRANSITION PLANNING BY PERSONNEL OF THE DESIGNATED STATE AGENCY AND EDUCATIONAL AGENCY THAT FACILITATES THE DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THEIR INDIVIDUALIZED EDUCATION PROGRAMS;

DEED's VRS and SSB and MDE's Special Education and Career and College Success staff will provide technical assistance and consultation regarding these five required pre-employment transition services made available to students with disabilities who need them age 14 through age 21 statewide:

- Job exploration counseling to assist students with disabilities in understanding their work related strengths and interests and what career possibilities there are;

- Work-based learning experiences, which may include in-school or after school opportunities, or experience outside the traditional school setting (including internships), that is provided in an integrated environment in the community to the maximum extent possible;
- Counseling on opportunities for enrollment in comprehensive transition or postsecondary educational programs at institutions of higher education;
- Workplace readiness training to develop social skills and independent living; and
- Instruction in self-advocacy (including instruction in person-centered planning), which may include peer mentoring (including peer mentoring from individuals with disabilities working in competitive integrated employment).

DEED's VRS and SSB counselors will attend meetings for the development of Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) when invited. Counselors will use the IEPs with students to assist in developing the individualized plans for employment (IPE).

DEED's VRS and SSB and MDE's Special Education and Career and College Success Divisions agree to share responsibility for ensuring that schools are aware of and how to use the tools to support students with disabilities to receive current information about their strengths, interests and preferences in order to make informed choices about competitive integrated employment prior to leaving school.

DEED's VRS and SSB and MDE's Special Education and Career and College Success Divisions agree to share responsibility for ensuring that schools which serve students with disabilities receive information about the benefits of providing career information.

#### C. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES, INCLUDING FINANCIAL RESPONSIBILITIES, OF EACH AGENCY, INCLUDING PROVISIONS FOR DETERMINING STATE LEAD AGENCIES AND QUALIFIED PERSONNEL RESPONSIBLE FOR TRANSITION SERVICES;

DEED's VRS and SSB assist students with disabilities in making informed choices to prepare for, obtain, maintain, advance in, or regain competitive integrated employment. Services include the provision of pre-employment transition services for students who are eligible or potentially eligible for VR services. They also include assessing an individual's VR needs, developing and implementing an Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE), and assisting in the achievement of the employment goals for the individuals that have applied for VR services, have been found eligible and are in an open priority category.

MDE's Special Education Division is responsible for ensuring that local education agencies provide special education and related services as documented in students' Individualized Education Plan (IEP).

DEED's VRS and SSB and MDE's Special Education and Career and College Success Division are responsible for coordination necessary to satisfy documentation requirements set forth in WIOA and 34 CFR 397.10 (b)(i) and (ii) with regard to students and youth with disabilities who are seeking subminimum wage employment.

DEED's VRS and SSB and MDE's Special Education and Career and College Success Divisions are financially responsible for the services they provide under their own laws and rules. Nothing will be construed to reduce the obligation under IDEA of a local educational agency or any other agency to provide or pay for any transition services that are also considered special education or related services and that are necessary for ensuring a free appropriate public education to

children with disabilities within Minnesota. For non-VR transition students (potentially eligible students with disabilities) who do not want to apply for services but express interest in any of the Pre-Employment Transition Services available from SSB, SSB will provide those services until the student graduates from high school. SSB currently has seven non-VR transition students participating in Pre-Employment Transition Services. All SSB hosted and sponsored transition events are marketed towards both VR and non-VR transition students. SSB has developed a case management system that will have better tracking abilities for non-VR transition students.

DEED's VRS and SSB and MDE's Special Education and Career and College Success Divisions are responsible to ensure that neither the LEA nor VR agencies may shift the burden for providing a service, for which it otherwise would be responsible, to the other entity. Decisions related to which entity will be responsible for providing transition, pre-employment transition services or vocational rehabilitation services that can be considered both a special education and a VR service will be made at the state and local level as part of the collaboration between the VR agencies, State Education Agencies (SEA), and LEAs.

Considerations in making funding decisions could include:

- The purpose of the service: Is it related to outcomes for employment or education?
- Which agency customarily provides the service?
- Is the student eligible for transition services under the IDEA and/ or pre-employment transition services or vocational rehabilitation services under the Rehabilitation Act

#### D. PROCEDURES FOR OUTREACH TO AND IDENTIFICATION OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES WHO NEED TRANSITION SERVICES.

DEED's VRS and SSB and MDE's Special Education and Career and College Success Divisions will work together to develop outreach tools related to competitive integrated employment for students with disabilities, parents or representatives of students with disabilities, school personnel, and other community agencies. Materials will include a description of the purpose of the VR programs, application procedures, eligibility requirements, priority for services, and scope of services that may be provided to eligible individuals.

DEED's VRS and SSB and MDE's Special Education and Career and College Success will work together with LEAs to ensure that outreach and identification of students in need of/ who could benefit from pre-employment transition services takes place statewide.

In order to provide information to students and their families/ guardians about pre-employment transition services and/or vocational rehabilitation services, DEED's VRS and SSB will be allowed to receive "directory information" from LEAs. In accordance with Minnesota (M.S. 13.32) and federal (20 U.S.C.A. 1232g (5)(A)) laws, "directory information" is defined, in part, as the student's name, address, telephone listing, and date of birth.

DEED's VRS and SSB and MDE's Special Education and Career and College Success will work together with LEAs to ensure outreach to:

- Students receiving special education services under IDEA;
- Students receiving accommodations under section 504;

- Students receiving school psychological, health, nursing, or social work services;
- Other students who have disabilities as defined in Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, but who do not receive IDEA services nor have a 504 plan.

DEED's VRS and SSB will provide outreach to the following school staff to identify students in need of pre-employment transition services and/ or vocational rehabilitation services: teachers/case managers, work coordinators, guidance counselors, school nurses, 504 coordinators, school social workers, alternative learning center staff, principals, school mental health coordinators, and school psychologists.

SSB uses the annual complete child count from the Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) to determine how many potentially eligible students with disabilities are not being served on an IPE or otherwise have not applied for services. That number is how many we are estimating potentially eligible students with a vision loss.

#### E. COOPERATIVE AGREEMENTS WITH PRIVATE NONPROFIT ORGANIZATIONS

Describe the manner in which the designated State agency establishes cooperative agreements with private non-profit VR service providers.

SSB holds master contracts with three full—time Community Rehabilitation Providers (CRPs) which focus on providing adjustment to blindness training as well as other services to blind, visually impaired, and DeafBlind customers. SSB discusses with providers during the development of master contracts the scope of services, programs and rates. After review by SSB staff, the Director of SSB approves all service costs charged by CRPs. As necessary, SSB staff answers questions and discusses any issues with each CRP. SSB has developed and implemented a comprehensive vendor monitoring system which utilizes SharePoint software for the overall management of the process. Vendors are reviewed in person on a three year cycle with reviews taking place throughout the year. Feedback to date has been positive from the vendors and is helping to create a better channel for communication and feedback about services delivered.

As required by statute, SSB contracts with CRPs to provide the minimum of six weeks intensive training under sleep shades from an adjustment to blindness center for Rehabilitation Counselors.

Contracts have also been developed with CRPs to provide transition programs to students. Services are meant to augment work done by school districts with activities on evenings and weekends. Additionally, SSB has implemented "Vendor Forums" twice per year as an opportunity to provide updates about agency happenings, discuss trends in findings from monitoring visits and provide training on pertinent topics such as data practices, navigating the state system for job placement and Customized Employment. Since October 2015, SSB has contracted with two Adjustment To Blindness training centers to provide transition programs to students meant to augment work done by school districts with activities on evenings and weekends. SSB has worked with a third CRP and in October of 2019, have begun offering their full/part time comprehensive Adjustment To Blindness training program modified with a transition curriculum.

## F. ARRANGEMENTS AND COOPERATIVE AGREEMENTS FOR THE PROVISION OF SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES

Describe the designated State agency's efforts to identify and make arrangements, including entering into cooperative agreements, with other State agencies and other appropriate entities in order to provide supported employment services and extended employment services, as applicable, to individuals with the most significant disabilities, including youth with the most significant disabilities.

State Services for the Blind (SSB) utilizes community rehabilitation programs (CRPs) that have master contracts versus operating agreements with the general rehabilitation Designated State Unit, Vocational Rehabilitation Services (VRS) or with SSB. Changes in Minnesota's new accounting system, shifted the operating agreements to master contracts in October of 2012. With this shift, there were additional requirements and as a result several vendors chose to no longer do business with SSB. New vendors have subsequently replaced those individuals, maintaining a high degree of choice and availability of services for customers. All Master Contracts were amended beginning in March 2019. To make the contracts consistent with WIOA, cancellation fees were removed, the conflict of interest requirements were changed to meet Federal Uniform Guidance 2 CFR 200, Pre-ETS services and language was added, and other required clauses were added to conform to state contracting procedures. Services to all supported employment program customers including youth have and will continue to be provided under fee-for-service contracts with CRPs. SSB's relationship with these CRPs is governed by master contracts with either SSB or VRS for the specific services required. The master contracts describe the services offered by the CRP and the agreed upon cost of each service. Information about each CRP is provided to each customer so that they can make an informed choice in the selection of their service provider. Extended services are secured via individual agreements with non-VR organizations, including a number of agreements with an array of counties in Minnesota.

## G. COORDINATION WITH EMPLOYERS

Describe how the designated State unit will work with employers to identify competitive integrated employment and career exploration opportunities in order to facilitate the provision of:

### 1. VR SERVICES; AND

SSB works with employers to identify employment and career exploration opportunities in competitive and integrated settings. SSB has four employment specialists who work with employers to identify their needs and match them with qualified candidates. Additional services provided to employers include education on the importance of a diverse work force, worksite analyses, training on the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), and job retention services for employees with a vision loss.

SSB employment specialists routinely attend networking events to promote disability awareness and sensitivity training as well as provide resources and technical assistance to potential employers in Minnesota and nationwide. SSB staff have given presentations to State of Minnesota Human Resources leaders on the advantages of hiring people who are visually

impaired, blind and DeafBlind and national companies like Land O' Lakes, Medtronic, and 3M. SSB has provided business services related to hiring and retention of people with disabilities to Ecolab, Traveler's Insurance, Hy-Vee Supermarket Company, and others. SSB educates employers about how qualified candidates can benefit their businesses by providing training to managers and employers on hiring and working with people with disabilities, which can include courtesy services like worksite assessments, connecting to resources, and technical assistance through free, on-site accessibility testing of employer computer systems and data bases in addition to information accessibility support. These business relationships further support and enhance the exchange of labor market information to assist in the development of individual plans for employment and self-employment decision making.

SSB actively participates and provides leadership and guidance to local and national groups devoted to connecting employers to qualified individuals with disabilities in cooperation with other DEED entities and title partners related directly to services to businesses. This is done through Minnesota Community Advisors on Recruitment and Retention Solutions (MnCARRS), the Council of State Administrators of Vocational Rehabilitation (CSAVR)/National Employment Team (NET), the Project Search Leadership Team and Statewide Placement Partnerships. In return, the state provides advance communication of employment opportunities, improved communications about the State's employment processes, assistance with mock interviews, and training to improve candidate performance in the hiring process. Various state agencies and MnCARRS partners participate in career fairs, community outreach events, job information sessions, training sessions, resource sharing, and more. SSB staff participated in the planning and implementation of statewide employer trainings with our other title partners.

The NET through CSAVR is comprised of one point of contact for each of the 78 rehabilitation programs nationwide. The sole purpose of this team is to connect with employers on a national level including private employers and federal partners. Through the NET, SSB can connect with approximately two to four new employers monthly and receives correspondence and job leads from approximately another dozen employers each month. Each year SSB has customers hired by employers through the NET connection. SSB also frequently acts as the subject matter expert and resource for other state programs that connect directly to employers across Minnesota. SSB utilizes the relationships with these business partners to supplement the efficiency of contracted Community Rehabilitation Providers, giving more than six one-on-one presentations with employers last year. SSB also provides training and presentations for businesses approximately four to six times annually, last year conducting seven trainings.

## 2. TRANSITION SERVICES, INCLUDING PRE-EMPLOYMENT TRANSITION SERVICES, FOR STUDENTS AND YOUTH WITH DISABILITIES.

The employment team at State Services for the Blind is comprised of four employment specialists, one support staff, a Transition Coordinator, and a Work Opportunities Navigator specifically serving students and youth.

SSB has implemented a model for transition called BRIDGE to Success that is implemented with all eligible and potentially eligible transition students. Within BRIDGE (as defined below), activities are embedded that connect students with mentors in career exploration, internships, work readiness training, and work based learning experiences Each of the core areas in BRIDGE highlights an essential component that teenagers need in order to succeed after high school:

- Basic Skills
- Role Models
- Initiative
- Discovery
- Goal Setting
- Experiences.

Through SSB, teens can explore each of these core components and cross the BRIDGE in to the future of work, study, and living independently. Activities that SSB is providing in coordination with employers are outlined below using the BRIDGE framework:

#### Basic Skills

All students receive assistance from the employment team to learn how to write a resume, interview, and other basic job seeking skills. The Work Opportunities Navigator provides more extensive one-on-one job seeking skills training to transition students statewide. Students participate in mock interviews where they interview with outside employers. They obtain feedback from those employers that helps them improve their skills. The employment team provides training to these same students around disclosure of disability in the employment process.

#### Role Models

SSB's 2nd Career Expo was held in April 2019, and it showcased blind, low vision, and DeafBlind professionals. Transition students went around to each professional and asked questions about the type of work they do and how they do the job with a vision loss. Over 90 individuals participated, including students who were not yet customers of SSB. The Spectacle (SSB's quarterly transition newsletter) highlights a different working professional every quarter.

#### Initiative

The Summer Transition Program (a two week program for students that is hosted by SSB and the Department of Education) has a component where students go to the radio station in the Communication Center and record their elevator speech for employers. Students are being asked to represent the sub-committees for the State Rehab Council.

#### Discovery

A big piece of the BRIDGE model is having students learn more about their skills and assets. This includes career exploration. At the Career Expo, there was an exhibit on labor market information. Students learned how to find more information on jobs they are interested in. Before they graduate from high school, students sit down with their counselor and assigned employment specialist to review labor market information. Students are connected with job shadowing and informational interviewing opportunities with employers in the community to find out more about different types of jobs. Every year, the Work Opportunities Navigator compiles a list of summer internship opportunities for students.

#### Goal Setting

All transition students are expected to have an Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE) that aligns with their Individualized Education Program (IEP). The job goal is one that is projected for the student. Work and career exploration must be part of the IPE. For potentially eligible

students with disabilities goal setting would fall under job exploration counseling as we help them explore the world of work.

## Experiences

Every single student is expected to have some sort of work experience or volunteer experience prior to graduation. Community Rehab Providers (CRPs) have added student work experiences to their contract with SSB to help us meet our goal of every student having a work experience. CRPs and SSB's placement staff have developed relationships with employers that will allow students to work for them. As part of the Summer Transition Program (STP), all students will participate in a two to four week work experience in a variety of areas developed by SSB's Work Opportunities Navigator. All these students will participate in a mock interview and have a resume complete by an employment specialist. Additionally, they all students will have a technology evaluation completed during STP. SSB has become an employer and opened up three paid student worker positions at the agency. The Senior Services unit has employed student workers to assist, the Business Enterprise Program (BEP) had one paid student worker position with a BEP operator, and a front desk reception intern was hired in the main office. Project Search is an internship program for students finishing their last year of high school. Instead of going to school they go to three, 10 week internship rotations with a business in the hopes that a job is offered after the 3rd rotation. This is a non-paid program and all students are in an integrated competitive employment situation. The Project Search Leadership team is a group of state directors that oversees school districts requests to start a Project Search program. SSB reviews their proposal and determine if it would be a good site to incorporate the program. There are over 250 Project Search sites around the world. There are five active sites in Minnesota, including Medtronic, Children's Hospital and Clinics, and Hennepin County Medical Center in Minneapolis, Avera Hospital in Marshall, and Fairview Lakes Medical Center in Wyoming, Minnesota. A total of five visually impaired customers have taken part, one of which was hired/ employed part-time at Minneapolis Children's Hospital.

SSB is an active representative on Project Search. SSB is an active representative on the Placement Partnerships and the National Employment Team (NET). We tap into businesses within the Placement Partnerships in order to establish student work opportunities.

## H. INTERAGENCY COOPERATION

Describe how the designated State unit will collaborate with the State agency responsible for administering each of the following programs to develop opportunities for competitive integrated employment, to the greatest extent practicable:

### 1. THE STATE MEDICAID PLAN UNDER TITLE XIX OF THE SOCIAL SECURITY ACT;

The State Medicaid plan under Title XIX of the Social Security Act; Medical Assistance, the state's Medicaid program, is administered by the Minnesota Department of Human Services Disability Services Division (DHS-DSD). Vocational Rehabilitation Services (VRS) and State Services for the Blind (SSB) collaborate closely with DHS in the provision of services for individuals who are on home and community based waivers.

In September 2019, DHS-DSD, VRS, and SSB signed a Memorandum of Understanding. The terms of the MOU are specific to individuals on a Medicaid waiver who want to pursue competitive, integrated employment. Employment First and Person-Centered principles form the basis of the shared vision for how our agencies can provide employment services for people with disabilities in a coordinated manner. The goal is to align systems so that common customers – those who receive home and community-based service disability waivers and

vocational rehabilitation services from VRS or SSB – can get seamless and timely supports to make informed choices and meet their competitive integrated employment goals. The full implementation of the MOU is planned for January 2021 to allow time for communication, stakeholder involvement, and training.

Under the MOU, the following coordination of services occurs:

#### *Payment of Services*

DEED-VRS/SSB is the primary payer for job-related services (services supporting job development, placement and employment stability) for common customers. DHS-DSD may fund services offered by VRS/SSB only when DHS-DSD documents that those services are not available through VRS/SSB. Once employment stability is established, DHS-DSD will continue to pay for long-term supports to maintain employment for customers of all ages. DHS-DSD will also pay for services that assist people in making informed choices and developing informed employment goals.

#### *Interagency Planning and Policy Development*

DHS-DSD and VRS/SSB will use strategic planning, troubleshooting, consultation and technical assistance to ensure successful implementation of this agreement. Key areas include goal setting, systems development, coordination of services, quality assurance and stakeholder involvement. We will:

- Establish an interagency steering committee to provide MOU oversight, set goals, review program services and financing options, identify promising practices and resolve disputes
- Identify program liaisons from VRS/SSB and DHS-DSD to coordinate joint efforts in communication, quality assurance, training, and coordination of services, policies and procedures
- Create work groups as needed to provide advice and share expertise regarding practice enhancements
- Hold periodic staff meetings across agencies to ensure coordinated communication and address policy issues
- Establish an advisory committee that includes stakeholders from VRS/SSB, DHS-DSD, lead agency, and providers of both vocational rehabilitation services and waiver services to discuss progress and challenges with the MOU
- Jointly meet with stakeholders to collect feedback and identify areas for improvement
- Understand employment outcomes in our respective programs and develop a shared understanding of outcome measures and reporting procedures
- Promote the use of evidence-based practices and/or promising approaches to create a more closely aligned employment service system, increase quality and gather shared data on employment outcomes
- Identify common customers and practices that support positive employment outcomes

#### *Eligibility, Referrals, and Customer Flow*

We will establish a shared understanding of when and how eligibility will be determined by each agency and we will communicate eligibility requirements to stakeholders. This includes community rehabilitation partners, lead agency staff, waiver employment service providers, VRS/SSB staff, DHS-DSD staff, and the people served by our programs and their families.

We will develop a shared referral process and provide clear instructions for referrals between programs when 1) a person indicates an interest to explore competitive, integrated employment through Minnesota's Career Counseling Information and Referral Conversation in accordance with the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA – 511 process), 2) a person receiving HCBS waiver services decides to pursue competitive, integrated employment and 3) when a person receiving vocational rehabilitation services achieves stable employment and needs supports to maintain employment.

We will define a benefits planning model, determine how and when the model will be embedded into provided services, develop and coordinate training, and coordinate implementation through designated agency staff and a community of practice.

We will develop guidance on how and when services may be provided as people move between programs and funding sources and when dual services are allowed. We agree that people may receive VRS/SSB and waiver services at the same time as long as those services are needed and not duplicative.

#### *Service Provider Networks*

We will work together to increase our statewide, shared network of employment service providers to improve access, support seamless transitions, and expand individuals' choices to high quality employment services. As part of this work, we agree to:

- Evaluate strategies for a common employment service provider pool. We will explore options for creating a shared job search service provider pool to support seamless service delivery and prevent unnecessary interruptions as people move between supports funded by VRS/SSB and supports funded by DHS-DSD.
- Encourage dual enrollment of employment service providers. While DHS and DEED will continue to maintain separate employment service provider licensure/accreditation standards, we will make it easier for providers to understand our respective standards and develop strategies to provide ongoing communication and technical assistance to those interested in enrolling.
- Align and streamline process and efforts. We will explore opportunities to better align and streamline each agency's business processes and requirements to create consistency and efficiencies for dually enrolled employment service providers.
- Coordinate communications and training. We will coordinate service provider communications and training to maintain consistent messaging and increase understanding of each agency's respective system and the shared customer flow outlined in this agreement.
- Measure and promote provider performance. We will explore methods to assess and provide information on service provider performance to people with disabilities and their families to support informed selection of service providers.

- Develop new providers. We will analyze data, set goals and collaborate on the development of employment service providers in underserved populations and areas of the state.

## 2. THE STATE AGENCY RESPONSIBLE FOR PROVIDING SERVICES FOR INDIVIDUALS WITH DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES; AND

The primary agency responsible for services for adults with disabilities is the Minnesota Department of Human Services. We share a common set of values and principles:

- Employment first. The values and guiding principles found in Minnesota's Employment First Policy will serve as the foundation for our work.
- Person centeredness. We will embed person-centered principles in our work to help people move toward meaningful work that builds on their unique interests, strengths and talents.
- Collaboration. We will build coordinated and consistent communication, training and support.
- Simplicity. We will develop a system that is easier to understand, implement and navigate.
- Continuous improvement. We will engage with stakeholders, leverage promising practices, and use data to adapt efforts and improve outcomes.
- Resource efficiency. We will use resources efficiently and within the bounds of federal guidelines and regulations.

The Minnesota State Interagency Committee (MnSIC) has the responsibility to develop and implement a coordinated, multidisciplinary service system for children and youth with disabilities ages three to 21. The Committee brings together the Minnesota Departments of Education, Employment and Economic Development, Commerce, Corrections, Health, Human Rights, and Human Services to develop needed policy change to reduce duplication of local effort and to improve local response to the needs of children and families by developing a coordinated, multidisciplinary service system.

Minnesota's Olmstead Plan supports freedom of choice and provides a framework and a series of key activities that must be achieved to ensure Minnesotans with disabilities have the opportunity to live, learn, work and enjoy life in the most integrated setting desired by the person. Governor Mark Dayton appointed an Olmstead Subcabinet to develop and implement this plan. The Subcabinet consists of representatives of the MnSIC agencies listed above, the Housing Finance Agency, the Department of Transportation, the ombudsman for mental health and developmental disabilities, and the Executive Director of the Governor's Council on Developmental Disabilities. VRS and SSB are involved in a joint project with the above agencies which is the Way to Work Project.

## 3. THE STATE AGENCY RESPONSIBLE FOR PROVIDING MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES.

The primary agency responsible for services for adults with disabilities is the Minnesota Department of Human Services. The Minnesota State Interagency Committee (MnSIC) has the responsibility to develop and implement a coordinated, multidisciplinary service system for children and youth with disabilities ages three to 21. The Committee brings together the Minnesota Departments of Education, Employment and Economic Development, Commerce, Corrections, Health, Human Rights, and Human Services to develop needed policy change to reduce duplication of local effort and to improve local response to the needs of children and families by developing a coordinated, multidisciplinary service system.

Minnesota's Olmstead Plan supports freedom of choice and provides a framework and a series of key activities that must be achieved to ensure Minnesotans with disabilities have the opportunity to live, learn, work and enjoy life in the most integrated setting desired by the person. Governor Mark Dayton appointed an Olmstead Subcabinet to develop and implement this plan. The Subcabinet consists of representatives of the MnSIC agencies listed above, the Housing Finance Agency, the Department of Transportation, the ombudsman for mental health and developmental disabilities, and the Executive Director of the Governor's Council on Developmental Disabilities. VRS and SSB are involved in a joint project with the above agencies.

## I. COMPREHENSIVE SYSTEM OF PERSONNEL DEVELOPMENT; DATA SYSTEM ON PERSONNEL AND PERSONNEL DEVELOPMENT

Describe the designated State agency's procedures and activities to establish and maintain a comprehensive system of personnel development designed to ensure an adequate supply of qualified State rehabilitation professional and paraprofessional personnel for the designated State unit, including the following:

### 1. SYSTEM ON PERSONNEL AND PERSONNEL DEVELOPMENT

#### A. QUALIFIED PERSONNEL NEEDS

Describe the development and maintenance of a system for collecting and analyzing on an annual basis data on qualified personnel needs with respect to:

#### I. THE NUMBER OF PERSONNEL WHO ARE EMPLOYED BY THE STATE AGENCY IN THE PROVISION OF VR SERVICES IN RELATION TO THE NUMBER OF INDIVIDUALS SERVED, BROKEN DOWN BY PERSONNEL CATEGORY;

Minnesota State Services for the Blind (SSB) takes a coordinated approach in utilizing policies and procedures to develop activities that maintain a comprehensive system of personnel development. This approach ensures there are staff as needed throughout the state and that all staff have access to ongoing development opportunities. SSB's intent is to provide the highest quality services to SSB customers who are blind, visually impaired or DeafBlind.

This comprehensive system of personnel development consists of:

- An annual review and analysis of data on current staffing and future needs, as well as a review of each vacancy when it occurs;
- Collaboration with institutions of higher education and communication regarding the number of students in the counseling graduate programs
- Policies and actions related to recruitment, preparation, and retention of qualified staff;
- Personnel standards in accordance with the Rehabilitation Act; and
- Personnel development including methods to assess individual and organizational staff training needs and the provision of in-service training.

SSB maintains data on the number of employees in each personnel category for all of its programs. This data is reviewed on an annual basis and each position is reviewed when a

vacancy occurs to determine whether a change in personnel category or services is necessary to meet the current needs of SSB customers. Personnel levels are also reviewed annually when the VR program budget is developed.

SSB's WorkForce Development Unit (WDU), the VR field unit, is made up of the following positions (excluding those assigned to the Randolph-Sheppard Program):

- 17 positions are currently earmarked for qualified VR counselors, three of whom focus on Pre-ETS. It is the intention of SSB to fill all counselor positions.
- 1 Pre-ETS Opportunity Navigator
- 1 Pre-ETS Coordinator
- 1 Quality Assurance Specialist
- 4 Employment Specialists
- 4 Supervisors
- 1 Data Analyst
- 1 General Support Person
- 2 Payers
- 5 Assistive Technology Specialists, one of whom focuses on Pre-ETS
- 2 Directors
- 9 Vocational Rehabilitation Technicians

## II. THE NUMBER OF PERSONNEL CURRENTLY NEEDED BY THE STATE AGENCY TO PROVIDE VR SERVICES, BROKEN DOWN BY PERSONNEL CATEGORY; AND

In light of Pre-ETS requirements, SSB has continued to adjust its staffing complement to better handle the work necessary to meet this area. An additional counselor has been hired to transition specific caseloads.

The Transition Core, made up of the Pre-ETS counselors, a general case counselor, an adult placement specialist, the Work Opportunity Navigator, the Coordinator, a supervisor, a vocational rehabilitation technician, and an assistive technology specialist, continue to plan and coordinate Pre-ETS statewide.

To achieve the best employment outcomes possible, the team model has shown the greatest promise for SSB. Teams are composed of a counselor, a vocational rehabilitation technician, an assistive technology specialist, a placement specialist, a supervisor, and the Work Opportunity Navigator and Transition Coordinator as needed. This approach establishes relationships between the customer and team members from the beginning of case services, thereby expanding the understanding of customer needs for both the placement and technology staff and increasing the odds for a successful employment outcome. In 2020, the WDU continues to assess the effectiveness of this model and to look for ways to improve its function.

SSB had implemented an orientation process for all people potentially interested in SSB services. The goal was to increase their awareness of what services are available and what expectations may be associated with some of the services, especially with the VR program, so that people can make an informed choice about whether to apply for or otherwise engage in SSB

services. This will continue as it has helped increase the level of active participation by participants and to decrease the dropout rate.

III. PROJECTIONS OF THE NUMBER OF PERSONNEL, BROKEN DOWN BY PERSONNEL CATEGORY, WHO WILL BE NEEDED BY THE STATE AGENCY TO PROVIDE VR SERVICES IN 5 YEARS BASED ON PROJECTIONS OF THE NUMBER OF INDIVIDUALS TO BE SERVED, INCLUDING INDIVIDUALS WITH SIGNIFICANT DISABILITIES, THE NUMBER OF PERSONNEL EXPECTED TO RETIRE OR LEAVE THE FIELD, AND OTHER RELEVANT FACTORS.

SSB has projected the number of new staff needed over the next five years to include 1 Deputy Director, 1 Field Operations Supervisor IV, 5 Qualified VR Counselors, 1 Placement Staff, 1 assistive technologist, 3 VR Technicians, 1 Support Staff, and 2 Central Office Administration Staff.

Data on the rate of blindness, visual impairments, and DeafBlindness indicators suggest the potential population of customers served will increase due to aging workers remaining in the workforce. SSB has a dedicated outreach staff member who is increasing marketing to potential customer groups through presentations and electronic information. Given these changes, SSB is working on revamping its structure to meet the increased needs over the next five years. An aging workforce is a factor in the estimated 14 positions turning over in the next five years.

As all public rehabilitation programs have experienced since the implementation of WIOA, we too have found it increasingly difficult to recruit and hire qualified rehabilitation counselors. We are exploring several different ideas that include: hiring staff who do not have rehabilitation counseling Master Degree to manage cases under a qualified counselor; re-tooling our Team Model to address the increased level of administrative burden and coverage demands that resulted from WIOA requirements and chronic staff turnover; and considering a more dedicated level of in-house onboarding and continuing training as staff with less experience or academic training in the field are brought in.

In addition to the above staff, SSB leadership is considering hiring a dedicated vocational rehabilitation training and development staff person to provide training to all new and current staff.

B. PERSONNEL DEVELOPMENT

Describe the development and maintenance of a system for collecting and analyzing on an annual basis data on personnel development with respect to:

I. A LIST OF THE INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION IN THE STATE THAT ARE PREPARING VR PROFESSIONALS, BY TYPE OF PROGRAM;

Minnesota will soon have one, not two, credentialed graduate programs in vocational rehabilitation counseling in addition to the University of Wisconsin Stout. Minnesota State University at Mankato (MSU-M) has announced that it is shutting down its program once the current classes are complete. The St. Cloud State University (SCSU) program continues, and Wisconsin Stout will only be offering virtual courses going forward. SSB management maintains contact with the Directors of the Vocational Rehabilitation Counseling graduate programs through direct one-on-one conversations and by serving on advisory committees. All graduates from these programs have the necessary credentials to qualify for national certification. All graduates meet the Minnesota standard for a qualified rehabilitation counselor. The changes in the number and manner of training is expected to have a significantly negative impact on the pool of qualified counselors who might meet the anticipated staffing needs of SSB.

For the time being, a WDU supervisor is an advisory committee member for two of the programs and WDU maintains a working relationship with all three.

## II. THE NUMBER OF STUDENTS ENROLLED AT EACH OF THOSE INSTITUTIONS, BROKEN DOWN BY TYPE OF PROGRAM; AND

The Minnesota State University – Mankato has 16 students enrolled, St. Cloud State University has 35, and the University of Wisconsin – Stout has 69 students enrolled.

## III. THE NUMBER OF STUDENTS WHO GRADUATED DURING THE PRIOR YEAR FROM EACH OF THOSE INSTITUTIONS WITH CERTIFICATION OR LICENSURE, OR WITH THE CREDENTIALS FOR CERTIFICATION OR LICENSURE, BROKEN DOWN BY THE PERSONNEL CATEGORY FOR WHICH THEY HAVE RECEIVED, OR HAVE THE CREDENTIALS TO RECEIVE, CERTIFICATION OR LICENSURE.

In the prior year, Minnesota State University at Mankato (MSU-M) graduated 5 students St. Cloud State University (SCSU) graduated 12 students University of Wisconsin at Stout graduated 23 students.

All graduates from these three programs have the necessary credentials to qualify for national certification. All graduates meet the Minnesota standard for a qualified rehabilitation counselor. This represents a significant pool of qualified counselors that meets the staffing needs of SSB at the moment although this has already begun changing. Minnesota will soon have one, not two, credentialed graduate programs in vocational rehabilitation counseling in addition to the University of Wisconsin Stout. Minnesota State University at Mankato (MSU-M) has announced that it is shutting down its program once the current classes are complete. The St. Cloud State University (SCSU) program continues, and Wisconsin Stout will only be offering virtual courses going forward. In addition to the shrinking pool of qualified applicants in Minnesota and nationally, it has become more difficult to recruit new personnel as more individuals are going to the private sector.

## 2. PLAN FOR RECRUITMENT, PREPARATION AND RETENTION OF QUALIFIED PERSONNEL

Describe the development and implementation of a plan to address the current and projected needs for qualified personnel including, the coordination and facilitation of efforts between the designated State unit and institutions of higher education and professional associations to recruit, prepare, and retain personnel who are qualified, including personnel from minority backgrounds and personnel who are individuals with disabilities.

SSB annually reviews and updates its plan to address current and projected needs for qualified personnel. This review looks at overall staffing patterns, expected customer demand and overall needs of the unit. SSB employs three main strategies for the recruitment and retention of qualified personnel.

1. Recruitment-As well as the more traditional forms of advertising for vacant positions, SSB utilizes social media and national search groups to help with attracting qualified candidates. Additionally, the close relationship established with the current three local universities helps with promoting openings and getting viable candidates. We will likely need to expand our relationship building with other academic institutions as one will no longer be training rehabilitation counselors.

2. Use of Internships-SSB offers paid internship opportunities to select students enrolled in Master's-level rehabilitation counselor education programs in Minnesota and throughout the nation. Use of internships continues to be one means to attract individuals, including those from

minority backgrounds and individuals with significant disabilities, to enroll in rehabilitation counselor education programs, have a positive experience with the public VR program, and increase the probability of their future employment in the public system.

3. Workplace Culture/Employer of choice-SSB strives to have a vibrant workplace culture and to being an employer of choice to help retain employees. From the point of onboarding employees to throughout their career SSB makes efforts to be inclusive, interactive and to utilize each employee's strengths to the fullest. SSB offers many internal and external training opportunities that are attractive to counselors wanting to maintain their CRC. This includes six weeks of adjustment to blindness training which gives a unique opportunity at full immersion into the blind visually impaired customer population, outside training options and internal training which is both contracted and online.

### 3. PERSONNEL STANDARDS

Describe the State agency's policies and procedures for the establishment and maintenance of personnel standards consistent with section 101(a)(7)(B) to ensure that designated State unit professional and paraprofessional personnel are adequately trained and prepared, including:

**A. STANDARDS THAT ARE CONSISTENT WITH ANY NATIONAL OR STATE-APPROVED OR -RECOGNIZED CERTIFICATION, LICENSING, REGISTRATION, OR OTHER COMPARABLE REQUIREMENTS THAT APPLY TO THE PROFESSION OR DISCIPLINE IN WHICH SUCH PERSONNEL ARE PROVIDING VR SERVICES; AND**

Policies and procedures are in place relating to the establishment and maintenance of standards to ensure personnel needed by SSB are appropriately and adequately prepared and trained. Such policies and procedures, including negotiated labor agreements with exclusive bargaining representatives, also cover the selection, retention, development, and termination of staff employed by SSB, and includes requirements of State law concerning the classification of SSB positions by Minnesota Management and Budget.

The academic degree standard for a vocational rehabilitation counselor at SSB is the Master's degree in rehabilitation counseling or a closely related field, with graduate-level coursework in each of the following: theories and techniques of counseling; medical/psycho-social aspects of disability; assessment; and occupational information or job placement.

SSB works closely with its Human Resources to ensure only those individuals who have earned a Master's degree in rehabilitation counseling, or a closely related field, qualify for placement on eligible lists for rehabilitation counselor. Therefore, all counselors fully meet the position standard and SSB does not have any expenditures for staff training to obtain a graduate degree in rehabilitation counseling. SSB does not anticipate any factors that would adversely affect the ability to hire qualified staff.

**B. THE ESTABLISHMENT AND MAINTENANCE OF EDUCATION AND EXPERIENCE REQUIREMENTS, IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 101(A)(7)(B)(II) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT, TO ENSURE THAT THE PERSONNEL HAVE A 21ST CENTURY UNDERSTANDING OF THE EVOLVING LABOR FORCE AND THE NEEDS OF INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES.**

New employees come to SSB with a variety of knowledge, skills and abilities. Nearly all need SSB to provide them with additional information and training to ensure they have the tools and resources to do their job. Minnesotans expect SSB to be "experts" in the field of blindness. We are the one public organization providing such services. Therefore, SSB has an obligation to train staff on the essential aspects of blindness, visual impairment, and DeafBlindness. To meet that expectation, SSB has a comprehensive training program consisting of:

- Introduction to Blindness and Visual Impairment —PHASE I. Responsibilities of SSB staff do vary, but there are minimum requirements for all positions and are part of this course which is required of all new employees.
- Introduction to Blindness and Visual Impairment —PHASE II. “Under the blindfold” and with simulators are training activities which will be required of some new staff as determined by SSB management.
- Continuing Education in Blindness and Visual Impairment —PHASE III. Training consists of specialized and ongoing training related to blindness and vision loss and will be required of staff as determined by SSB management.

#### 4. STAFF DEVELOPMENT

Describe the State agency's policies, procedures, and activities to ensure that, consistent with section 101(a)(7)(C) of the Rehabilitation Act, all personnel employed by the designated State unit receive appropriate and adequate training in terms of:

A. A SYSTEM OF STAFF DEVELOPMENT FOR PROFESSIONALS AND PARAPROFESSIONALS WITHIN THE DESIGNATED STATE UNIT, PARTICULARLY WITH RESPECT TO ASSESSMENT, VOCATIONAL COUNSELING, JOB PLACEMENT, AND REHABILITATION TECHNOLOGY, INCLUDING TRAINING IMPLEMENTED IN COORDINATION WITH ENTITIES CARRYING OUT STATE PROGRAMS UNDER SECTION 4 OF THE ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY ACT OF 1998; AND

Staff may request, for development purposes, additional or more advanced training activities that will be considered on a case-by-case basis, taking into account organizational needs and resources. All WDU staff members new to SSB will receive Introduction to Blindness —Phase 1 and Phase 2 training on the essential aspects of blindness and visual impairment within three months of hire and Minnesota statutory language requires all Rehabilitation Counselors to successfully complete a minimum of 6 weeks of intensive training under sleep shades from an adjustment to blindness center.

B. PROCEDURES FOR THE ACQUISITION AND DISSEMINATION OF SIGNIFICANT KNOWLEDGE FROM RESEARCH AND OTHER SOURCES TO DESIGNATED STATE UNIT PROFESSIONALS AND PARAPROFESSIONALS.

Our primary sources for acquiring and disseminating information include:

- The Technical Assistance Centers, including WINTAC
- National Trends in Disability Employment (nTide)
- Mississippi State University
- Workforce GPS
- National Clearinghouse of Rehabilitation Training Materials (NCRTM)
- CSAVR and NCSAB
- NFB and ACB

The Director and Deputy Director are subscribed to the various newsletters and list serves from the above groups, and they frequently review the websites for new and updated information. That information is disseminated to relevant and pertinent staff at a minimum monthly, but

often weekly. Training opportunities, important research, and evidence-based practices are stored in our SharePoint site for future access.

Staff who have a specialty or area of expertise are provided more specific research and information to support them in their roles. To identify those areas, SSB utilizes a collaborative model when looking at employee performance and creates a dialogue between supervisor and staff. Together, they create goals for the upcoming year and put plans into place that will help the individual reach those goals. A final component is completing a review of any essential professional and job-related training that is either desired by the employee or required by the employer. Ongoing in-service training offerings give employees a wide variety of options for enhancing and improving skills.

The Director, Deputy Director, and other staff as applicable attend the biannual CSAVR and NCSAB conferences. In addition, the Director and Quality Assurance Specialist attend the Program Evaluation and Quality Assurance conference each year. Other staff are encouraged to attend relevant conferences to enhance their skills, including CSUN, the NFB/ACB conventions, and transition conferences.

#### 5. PERSONNEL TO ADDRESS INDIVIDUAL COMMUNICATION NEEDS

Describe how the designated State unit has personnel or obtains the services of other individuals who are able to communicate in appropriate modes of communication with or in the native language of applicants or eligible individuals who have limited English speaking ability.

SSB assures that all materials are available to staff in the desired format. Print material is, as appropriate, made available to staff in braille and other alternate formats. SSB is fortunate to have Braille services onsite and is able to produce high quality Braille in short timeframes. Minnesota is also fortunate to have several spoken and written language and American Sign Language interpreter services available who contract with the State for use with non-English speaking individuals and/or DeafBlind individuals.

#### 6. COORDINATION OF PERSONNEL DEVELOPMENT UNDER THE INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES EDUCATION ACT

As appropriate, describe the procedures and activities to coordinate the designated State unit's comprehensive system of personnel development with personnel development under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.

We work closely with the PACER Center, which is the Minnesota Parent Training and Information Center, for all personnel development as it relates to IDEA. They provide ongoing training to all vocational rehabilitation staff on the IEP process, assistive technology, and advocacy.

SSB has also partnered with PACER to develop a toolkit to help our students and youth with disabilities, especially our Pre-ETS students. They created and sent out monthly newsletters with webinars, tips, and guidance for our staff, parents, and students.

We have partnered with the Minnesota Department of Education and local educational agencies for co-training activities, including DeafBlind best practices, person centered planning, motivational interviewing, and customized employment.

#### J. STATEWIDE ASSESSMENT

1. PROVIDE AN ASSESSMENT OF THE REHABILITATION NEEDS OF INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES RESIDING WITHIN THE STATE, PARTICULARLY THE VR SERVICES NEEDS OF THOSE:

A. WITH THE MOST SIGNIFICANT DISABILITIES, INCLUDING THEIR NEED FOR SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES;

The Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment (CSNA) was conducted jointly with the State Rehabilitation Council for the Blind (SRC-B). SSB has elected to complete a statewide assessment every two years and the most recent assessment was conducted in the fall of PY 2019 in preparation for state plan 20-21. SSB feels that with blind, visually impaired and DeafBlind individuals all of its customers can be viewed as having significant disabilities. Supported Employment services are provided to SSB customers as needed. With regards to youth, SSB is committed to providing all transition students work experiences with or without support employment services.

SSB has partnered with VRS and DHS to provide quarterly customized employment training to vendors and staff. The Minnesota Model for customized employment ensures that even with turnover, there will be staff and community partners skilled in provided CE to individuals who required it, especially those in need of supported employment services.

B. WHO ARE MINORITIES;

Although the population of Minnesota is 85% white, it is quite ethnically diverse. According to the American Community Survey, individuals who are Black/African American represent 5.5% of the state population, compared with 17.1% of SSB participants accepted for service. Individuals who are Hispanic/Latino represent 5.0% of the state population, and 1.8% of SSB participants accepted for service. American Indians represent 1.0% of the state population, and 1.1% of SSB participants accepted for service. Asians represent 4.4% of the state population, and 5.9% of SSB participants accepted for service. Research suggests blacks and American Indians experience disability at a higher rate than other cultural/ethnic groups. SSB needs to continue active outreach to people of color and indigenous people to assure equal access to the benefits of SSB services.

2018 Population Estimates from the U.S. Census Bureau show residents of color compose 21 percent of Minnesota's total population.

- Minnesota has seen 29 percent growth in its population of color since 2010 – ninth highest among states.
- In Minnesota, people of Color (those who identify as a race other than White alone, and/or those who are Hispanic or Latin(x)) make up 20% of the total population. Non-Hispanic White Minnesotans represent the remaining 80% of the statewide population.
- All race groups have grown recently in Minnesota, but between 2010 and 2018, the state has added five times as many People of Color as non-Hispanic White residents.

Populations of Color are distributed unevenly across the state, and are more likely to live in metro areas than rural areas.

- Between 2010 and 2018, the fastest growing racial group in Minnesota was the Black or African American population, which grew by 36%, adding more than 96,500 people. Second fastest was the Asian population, which grew by 32%, adding 69,800 people,

followed by the Hispanic or Latin(x) population, which grew by 24%, adding 59,000 people. (Black or African American and Asian race groups are that race "alone" and not Hispanic or Latin(x)).

(All data from 2018 Population Estimates, U.S. Census Bureau)

For reasons beyond the scope of this report, these groups experience higher unemployment, lower average income, and less education. Members of these groups who are blind, visually impaired, or deafblind face additional challenges which do fall into the scope of this report. In order to receive the services that are needed to help them reach their full potential as blind people, they must deal with agencies of the government when they may already come with a negative governmental experience. They must understand information about services and what is expected of them even though this information is written in a language that is new to them. Finally, even with the best efforts of everyone involved, cultural differences can be a barrier to rehabilitation. In many of these cultures, especially in Hmong, an individual with a disability is taken care of by the family and not expected to work. Therefore, we may face multiple barriers when working with customers from minority groups. Fortunately, Minnesota State Services for the Blind and other service providers in Minnesota have been aware of the existence of these barriers for some time now. A number of concentrated efforts have been made by State Services for the Blind over the past few years to reach blind persons in minority groups. Examples of such efforts include:

- Outreach to state Councils which advocate for minority communities in Minnesota
- Outreach to Wisdom Steps (state program in Native American Communities that promotes healthy living for seniors)
- Participation in three tribal Pow Wows
- Participation in Hmong Freedom Celebration and Sports Event (The two-day event draws thousands of Hmong families across Minnesota)
- Participation in Somali Freedom Day, Somali Health Fairs, American Indian Health Fair, Red Lake Senior Resource Fair, and Fond Du Lac Band Family Health Fair.

A Minority Outreach committee of the SRC-B has been in existence for some time, and has played an active advisory role in the developments of some of these efforts. Community Rehabilitation Programs have started to develop tailored programs to meet the needs of this population as well. Blind, Incorporated, for example, has worked for more than a decade to help those for whom English is new to learn the English Language while starting on the road to success as a blind person. There are not enough of these specialized programs available however to serve all these individuals. This is discussed in further detail later in the document.

### C. WHO HAVE BEEN UNSERVED OR UNDERSERVED BY THE VR PROGRAM;

The two groups that have emerged in this analysis that have been unserved or underserved include DeafBlind individuals and immigrants who are Blind or DeafBlind needing to learn English and Braille.

#### **DeafBlind**

Minnesota has a relatively large population of DeafBlind individuals and is well known for its excellent services. According to the 2013 ACS Public Use Microdata Sample, the total population of Minnesotans with vision and hearing difficulties is 29,849. SSB currently serves 56 DeafBlind individuals.

One of the biggest providers of services to DeafBlind individuals is DeafBlind Services Minnesota, LLC (DBSM). They are an LLC that is under the VLR non-profit. They provide Intervener, Support Service Providers (SSP) services, and Community Access for Disability Inclusion (CADI) Waiver case management services for individuals who are deaf-blind (they are one of the companies that the county can contract with).

In 2016 DBSM provided services to: 52 Interveners (Age 0-21); 83 Support Services Providers (Adults)\*46 under CADI Independent Living Skills; 2 Adult Intervener customers.

In 2017 DBSM provided services to: 57 Interveners (Age 0-21); 79 Support Services Providers (Adults)\*45 under CADI Independent Living Skills; 7 Adult Intervener customers.

In 2018 DBSM provided services to: 56 Interveners (Age 0-21); 71 Support Services Providers (Adults)\*42 under CADI Independent Living Skills; 5 Adult Intervener customers.

## **Service Definitions**

### **Intervener**

A trained professional who provides one-to-one support to a Deafblind child or youth by: providing access to environmental information; facilitating communication between the person and others; and developing and maintaining a trusting, interactive relationship that promotes social and emotional well-being.

### **Support Service Provider**

A trained professional who provides one-to-one support to a participant 18 years of age or older and who is Deafblind by providing visual and auditory information to the participant and by providing human guiding if necessary for safety, with the overall goal of maintaining and improving the participant's independence. They can help with grocery shopping, running errands, etc. DBSM, will do an assessment to determine how many hours of services are needed, which is generally provide about 20 hours/month. Minnesota is considered to have some of the best SSP services in the country, with stable state funding, and could always use more people to work as an SSP.

### **Adult Intervener**

A trained professional who provides one-to-one support to a Deafblind adult by: providing access to environmental information; facilitating communication between the person and others; and developing and maintaining a trusting, interactive relationship that promotes social and emotional well-being.

### **Community Access for Disability Inclusion (CADI) Waiver**

Program that provides home and community-based services to children and adults with disabilities who require the level of care provided in a nursing facility. These services are an alternative to institutionalization. They help a person live as independently as possible in community settings and promote optimal health, independence, safety and community integration.

### **Independent Living Skills (ILS)**

A trained professional who provides one-to-one support to an adult who is either Deafblind, deaf or blind by providing independent living skills instruction to the person with the overall goal of promoting and increasing independence.

Some of the barriers and gaps in services for DeafBlind customers include:

1. Mental health for customers- when you're adjusting to change in hearing or vision and there aren't very good mental health services available that can be a problem.
2. Funding for support groups- for an individual adjusting to a change in hearing or vision or DeafBlindness and dealing with isolation, support groups can be very important but the interpreting is expensive for these support groups.
3. More trainers who can directly communicate with customers- SSB does have a few contractors who can provide ATB training and job related services using American Sign Language (ASL) and a few who are have ASL skills but still use an interpreter with customers. It is best though if a trainer can connect directly with the customer and not have to go through an interpreter as things can get lost in translation. It would be beneficial to have more contracted trainers who can communicate with customers in ASL.
4. Need more services in rural areas. The majority of service providers are in the Twin Cities metro area and it can be difficult to find providers in greater Minnesota. In some cases, for example SSPs may need to work as job coaches.
5. Self-advocacy- helping DeafBlind people learn how to do things for themselves so they do not need to be dependent on staff.
6. Lack of peer to peer training/mentoring opportunities.
7. Isolation- Lack of community inclusion/volunteer opportunities.
8. Insufficient skills- Including computer and reading contracted braille at a fast enough pace to maintain productivity.
9. Need more services that aren't directly connected to employment. When a person is getting WDU services, they don't always get the support/ATB training they need to learn how to do things independently (learning bus system, learning how to get around in new house) and people may need more training as their hearing/vision changes.
10. Unable to get an accurate child count of children. The unduplicated child count that SSB receives from the Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) only includes those with a primary a disability of blindness or DeafBlindness. It is anticipated that we could be missing some children who may be coded as having some other disability as their primary and blindness or DeafBlindness as their secondary disability. If the count were able include primary and secondary reported disabilities, the unduplicated MDE count may be more accurate. Unfortunately, to change the way the count is done would require changes in legislature which is unlikely to happen.

### **ELL/Braille**

Minnesota has opened its doors to hundreds of thousands of immigrants seeking refuge from their homes. Many have come with visual impairments including deafblindness. Even many more needing to learn English as a first step of integration which would eventually lead to employment and self-sufficiency.

SSB serves an increasing number of Minnesota's immigrants that come with both the need for learning English and vocational rehabilitation services specific to their blindness or deafblindness. The latter requires specialized ELL teaching materials and teachers who know how to provide ELL lessons with visual impairment, hard of hearing, or deafblind skills or at least willing to try. Our ELL clients come from the countries of Somalia, Pakistan, Burma, Vietnam, Mexico, other countries of Africa, Middle Eastern countries, and numerous South American countries. Although our ELL customers come from a large range of countries and cultures, they require some adaptive daily independent living skills such as braille, adaptive computer skills, low-vision devices, and adaptive software.

As SSB's ELL population grows we are struggling to find public resources to provide these unique ELL services. Minnesota has a robust Adult Basic Education (ABE) program that includes ELL classes level 0 -7. However, in the metro Twin Cities area there is only one Minnesota ABE center that has one ELL class.

Minneapolis' Southside's ABE ELL class can only accept 16 students with disability accommodation needs including blind, visually impaired, and deafblind students who all must test at an ELL level of 2 or more. They have no beginner (levels 0 and 1) ELL classes for those who are blind, visually impaired, or deafblind. There are currently 4 students enrolled in ELL class. There are currently 20 students who are blind, visually impaired, or DeafBlind on the waitlist which is generally 7 months to 1 year depending on when students leave the program. Students may leave either because they complete ELL, obtain GED, or leave for other reasons such as illness, family issues, no childcare, employment, etc. However, often blind and visually impaired students are great attenders and keep coming to school until they finish their educational goal. It can take students many years to complete English as a Second Language classes. For some students who have never had an education in their country, it can take 6 to 7 years or it could take less depending on what degree of education they previously received. Students who start GED classes usually finish within 2-4 years.

There is a perpetual waitlist of these students needing ELL classes. Southside ABE ELL students has only one staff who was hired to handle all the accommodation needs of these 16 ELL students enrolled in class. According to this staff, she is responsible for making all the braille material for any of the students needing this accommodation, large print, set-up CCTVs, and make sure students can connect their adaptive software to the center's internet, Wi-Fi, etc.

The Minneapolis Adult Education Program provides adapted learning material (Braille, tactile graphics, enlargements, hands on material, models, 3D objects, manipulatives, enlarged print keyboards and calculators, talking calculators, some teachers provide audio recordings of reading passages ) and devices (CCTVs, dome magnifiers, large screen monitors, slate and stylus, colored cover sheets to minimize glare). Blind, visually impaired, and deafblind students receive 100% time extension on unit tests, quizzes, CASAS or TABE tests, pencil/paper test vs. computer test, private room, breaks, and volunteer readers/recorders. Students receive learning material in electronic version, so it is JAWS accessible. In addition to all of the above, blind and visually impaired students receive extra time to respond to class discussions; information that is being presented on a whiteboard is spoken aloud as it is being written; pictures and diagrams are clearly described; preferential seating; material printed on colored paper to reduce glare; unfinished classwork can be finished home and turned in the next day; Blind, visually impaired, and deafblind students receive an extra attention from floating volunteers, if they are available.

Some of the barriers these students face include not having sufficient computer skills, not being able to read braille at a faster pace and not being able to read contracted braille which will be a

skill they need for GED classes. Students can sometimes lack independence and rely on teachers too much. Classes are large and teachers cannot assist blind and visually impaired students at all times. Additionally, many of their students cannot be served by SSB because of their immigration status.

SSB ELL students often need to learn and know braille. This is a skill acquired while learning levels 0 and 1 of ELL. Currently only 1 Minnesota Adjustment To Blindness (ATB) center (Blind, Inc.) provides early beginner ELL classes along with braille a basic adaptive computer skills. There is only 1 ELL instructor who can only teach 10 to 12 students at any given time. Their ELL is an extensive program due to the nature of teaching these ATB skills while teaching non-English speaking students adaptive daily living skills necessary to move onto an ABE ELL center.

There are 2 other ATB centers in Minnesota but neither have instructors who can provide ELL classes for any blind, visually impaired, and deafblind students. According to these ATB centers, it would cost them to add this service to their ATB program. They would be required to research and apply for grant funding for adding ELL classes, and only if there are funding sources for these types of services.

Minnesota only has one Minnesota ABE center that provides ELL class for blind, visually impaired, and deafblind students with only 1 dedicated staff to provide all the accommodation needs to these students. Students travel from other cities to attend that program and as the waitlist grows, so does the need for more ELL programs for this population of customers. At the end of 2018 SSB could utilize 3 to 5 ELL programs that were willing and/or able to accommodate SSB's customers. However, before the end of 2019 two non-profit ELL programs closed down due to lack of funding and/or resources. Another one determined they could only handle 2 students as they are new to teaching blind students. They closed their enrollment to other blind students due to not knowing nor understanding the accommodation needs for these students. They also rely on community volunteers to teach ELL classes which includes those classes for blind students. These volunteers would need to be trained to teach blind students, learn how to use/provide accommodation materials, equipment, and set up special one-on-one lessons with blind students.

Minnesota's ELL centers/programs are very limited, under-funded, and in need to receive resources to learn, set-up, and provide accommodation, needs, and services to Minnesota's growing blind, visually impaired, and deafblind customers in need of ELL programs that can provide them the disability accommodations they need to be successful. The unique dual needs of learning ATB skills (adaptive way to access print) while learning levels 0 and 1 ELL skills is missing from 2 out of the 3 ATB centers offered in Minnesota. The need is great for students to continue learning adaptive daily skills while learning ELL skills. Blind, visually impaired, and deafblind customers in vocational rehabilitation services are proving to be an underserved population.

Another area of need in the future will be that of senior citizens. According to a Humphrey Institute report commissioned by State Services for the Blind, one in five Minnesotans will be senior citizens by the year 2030. Men and women reaching the age of 65 can expect to live to ages 81 and 84 respectively. The frequency of vision problems increases dramatically among persons of this age. It is estimated that 12% of those between the ages of 65 and 74 will experience significant vision loss, much higher than is experienced by younger people. While services to this population do not currently belong to vocational rehabilitation, longer life expectancy and the financial advantages to delaying the beginning of Social Security retirement benefits will almost certainly mean that there will be more seniors looking to remain employed or seek jobs after experiencing vision loss in the near future. The results of this trend will be a

new category of persons seeking services through the Vocational Rehabilitation system. How to best serve this future group of VR customers' needs to begin soon.

**D. WHO HAVE BEEN SERVED THROUGH OTHER COMPONENTS OF THE STATEWIDE  
WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM; AND**

Services through the local Career Force Locations (CFL) are available to individuals with disabilities throughout Minnesota. CFLs offer classes, workshops, and pre-employment services. A small percentage of those individuals who utilize the CFLs are blind, visually impaired, or DeafBlind.

SSB works with the CFL directors and Title III partners to keep Career Force staff trained in the etiquette and tips in working with blind, visually impaired, and DeafBlind individuals. Additionally, SSB assistive technologists assist in inventory and auditing of accessible computer systems in all CFLs.

Despite these efforts, individuals frequently do not feel comfortable utilizing the CFLs and choose to work with SSB directly. SSB staff are recognized as more knowledgeable in the area of blindness.

**E. WHO ARE YOUTH WITH DISABILITIES AND STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES, INCLUDING, AS  
APPROPRIATE, THEIR NEED FOR PRE-EMPLOYMENT TRANSITION SERVICES OR OTHER  
TRANSITION SERVICES.**

An important and unique group of possible customers for State Services are students and youth with disabilities. This category includes students between the ages of fourteen and twenty-one years of age, and youth through age twenty-four. We have identified three gaps that need to be filled; these gaps were identified in previous needs assessments and still are ongoing needs. As is generally the case, identifying gaps does not imply that nothing is currently being done in these areas. The intent here is, rather, to indicate that the need for more attention is a priority.

There is significant anecdotal evidence from Disability Services offices in colleges and universities that many students are not well-equipped to handle the requirements of college as they begin that phase of their education. This appears to be the case even though they have the necessary qualifications on paper to have been accepted. The trends that were identified among our student population include:

- Students were not clear on the purpose of the vocational rehabilitation program. They did not understand the role of the rehabilitation counselor or their own responsibilities and expectations. This resulted in a number of youth leaving the program without an employment outcome.
- Students lacked the necessary skills of blindness and DeafBlindness after leaving secondary school. While they had sufficient academic skills to get accepted into postsecondary school, they were often not successful in their program. They didn't have the technology skills to access the assignments or their textbooks; they didn't have the orientation and mobility skills to go to class; they didn't have the independent living skills to be safe in their dorm room. This resulted in an increase of students and youth dropping out of college.
- Students were not exposed to an assortment of assistive technology aids and devices early on. They were using outdated, old, and inefficient methods to read, write, access the computer, and access their environment. They often relied on one method for accessing print, and when that method failed or their vision changed, they were no longer able to continue what they were doing. This resulted in increased college dropout rates and loss of employment.

- The first time students were exposed to work was after they graduated from their final education program. They often had an unrealistic idea what work was, and they believed they would have the same level of support on the job as they did in high school and college. Students did not realize the level of independence they would need to sustain a career. They also did not realize the amount of responsibility and accountability placed on their shoulders. This resulted in a lot of fear, anger, and frustration that would lead to individuals leaving the vocational rehabilitation program.
- Career exploration meant hearing about a job and immediately thinking that was what they wanted to do, regardless of the economic outlook. SSB had some students who would go through four years of college and then realize they had no interest in that field of study.

There are many reasons for this, particularly wide variations between services available in school districts. Minnesota State Services for the Blind has been making significant efforts to reach transition-aged students to attempt to connect them with training and experience that will better equip students for the future. For a number of reasons, though, this continues to present challenges. Some students are located long distances from services that could be of help. Services may need to be provided in the evenings, on weekends, or by electronic methods in order to reach students. Transportation in rural away areas becomes less available as well. In other cases, students and parents do not realize the importance in thinking beyond high school graduation. Despite multiple attempts to engage students and parents, it is ultimately their choice to participate in VR Pre-ETS. If students have a primary and secondary disability other than vision loss and have vision loss as a tertiary disability, they may not be referred to SSB. In addition, their data will also not show up on the Unduplicated Child Count from the Minnesota Department of Education (MDE), which we use to determine the number of potentially eligible students.

Another gap is the challenge of spending the 15% set-aside. SSB continues to identify, develop, and implement creative effective approaches of spending this money. This has caused dollars that were being spent on the provision of other services to be diverted to services for transition-aged students.

To accurately outline and address solutions for the concerns highlighted above, SSB continues to develop a yearly Pre-Employment Transition Services Blueprint using the framework put into place by WIOA. The Pre-Employment Transition Services Blueprint outlines SSB's plans to address the five required activities and nine authorized activities as required by WIOA.

The five required activities are:

- 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 to develop social skills and independent living
- Instruction in self-advocacy, including peer mentoring

The nine authorized activities are:

- Implementing effective strategies to increase the likelihood of independent living and inclusion in communities and competitive integrated workplaces
- Developing and improving strategies for individuals with intellectual disabilities and individuals with significant disabilities to live independently, participate in postsecondary education experiences, and obtain and retain competitive integrated employment
- Providing instruction to vocational rehabilitation counselors, school transition personnel, and other persons supporting students with disabilities
- Disseminating information about innovative, effective, and efficient approaches to achieve the goals of this section
- Coordinating activities with transition services provided by local educational agencies under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (20 U.S.C. 1400 et seq.)
- Applying evidence-based findings to improve policy, procedure, practice, and the preparation of personnel, in order to better achieve the goals of this section
- Developing model transition demonstration projects
- Establishing or supporting multistate or regional partnerships involving States, local educational agencies, designated State units, developmental disability agencies, private businesses, or other participants to achieve the goals of this section
- Disseminating information and strategies to improve the transition to postsecondary activities of individuals who are members of traditionally unserved populations.

SSB has created a Transition Core Group in an effort to better address the increasing needs of transition aged youth and students. This is an internal, multi-disciplinary group that focuses solely on the provision of pre-employment transition services. That team is comprised of the following staff complement:

- Director
- Deputy Director of Program Services
- Workforce Development Unit Supervisor, who specializes in pre-employment transition services
- Pre-Employment Transition Services Coordinator, who is responsible for the statewide coordination of services provided under the BRIDGE to Success framework
- Pre-Employment Transition Services Work Opportunities Navigator, who is responsible for the statewide coordination of work-based learning experiences and workplace readiness training
- Pre-Employment Transition Services Rehabilitation Counselors, who have a caseload of only students with disabilities who are receiving pre-employment transition services
- Pre-Employment Transition Services Assistive Technologist, who is responsible for the assistive technology assessments and recommendations for all students statewide
- DeafBlind Rehabilitation Counselor, who provides consultation on pre-employment transition services for DeafBlind students

- Greater Minnesota Rehabilitation Counselor and Vocational Rehabilitation Technician, who provide consultation on pre-employment transition services for students living in rural Minnesota

To track and organize the plethora of activities the Transition Core Group has implemented or is involved in, a calendar of events and activities is maintained for the year.

Additionally, SSB has created transition programs to provide student work experiences and programming to augment work done by school districts by offering activities for students in the evening and/or on weekends. The goal of the program is to provide more opportunities for Minnesota students who are blind, visually impaired or DeafBlind to enhance their skills and readiness for post-secondary work and training.

The third gap in services is for those students who have multiple challenges. Those students might not initially be referred to SSB since their primary disability might create more barriers than vision loss. Once they are connected with SSB, the programs might not fit their individual needs. Because our expertise is in the area of blindness rather than other disabilities, we need to seek partners who can augment the programs with supports for those students. SSB has entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the State Medicaid Program (Department of Human Services-Disability Services Division). We are in the midst of working groups to implement this MOU, which will assist individuals who are receiving waiver services and vocational rehabilitation services have seamless referrals and service transitions.

In summary, there are three gaps that are related to students and youth with disabilities. They are reaching more students, dealing with the challenges of allocating and effectively spending 15% of federal dollars, and better serving students with multiple challenges. We know that Minnesota State Services for the Blind is already aware of these gaps and that they are working on addressing them. We continue to work to gain a better understanding of these efforts in the next year of this process. Finally, it has become apparent that DeafBlind customers of transition age are often very isolated. According to the "Unduplicated Child Count" available from the Minnesota Department of Education, there were 44 transition-aged students primarily identified as DeafBlind identified in 2018. 29 in 2017, 26 in 2015, and 32 in 2013. The total number of transition-aged students who were identified as visually impaired or DeafBlind in 2019 was 194. 154 in 2017, in 2015 was 158, and in 2013 was 137. Over the past four years, the percentage of DeafBlind transition-aged students was consistently between 20% and 25%. This is a small enough number, that when distributed throughout the state, would indicate that these students are most often not going to be in contact with other DeafBlind students. The DeafBlind Committee is working on the development of a mentoring program to provide contact with adults who can serve as role models and suggest ways of handling social and educational challenges. It seems likely that this might be an area into which some of the newly required 15% of federal dollars that must be used for transition customers could be directed.

## 2. IDENTIFY THE NEED TO ESTABLISH, DEVELOP, OR IMPROVE COMMUNITY REHABILITATION PROGRAMS WITHIN THE STATE; AND

The availability of Community Rehabilitation Programs (CRPs) varies by service and location within the state. There are currently 44 total CRPs that SSB contracts with to provide to Adjustment To Blindness (ATB) and Job Related services. Three of those CRPs are facilities that offer comprehensive ATB training with an optional residential component.

State Rule allows SSB to utilize the Master Contracts Vocational Rehabilitation Services (VRS) have developed with CRPs as well. This allows SSB more vendors to choose from which is especially needed in greater Minnesota where SSB and VRS has fewer contractors. ATB

contractors in rural Minnesota are becoming more difficult to access for reasons such as; retirement, wintering out of state, limited hours/evenings and weekends only, injury, or quit due to terms of contract (removal of cancellation fees).

With the greater emphasis being placed now on transition aged youth, the need for more transition programs has been identified. Contracts have also been developed with CRPs to provide transition programs to students. Services are meant to augment work done by school districts with activities on evenings and weekends. Since October 2015, SSB has contracted with two Adjustment To Blindness training centers to provide transition programs to students meant to augment work done by school districts with activities on evenings and weekends. SSB has worked with a third CRP and in October of 2019, have begun offering their full/part time comprehensive Adjustment To Blindness training program modified with a transition curriculum. Transition programs are reviewed annually to ensure that they continue to meet the needs of the students and adjust accordingly.

It would be beneficial to have more contractors who can communicate directly with customers in ASL and tactile ASL. SSB currently has a few contractors who can provide ATB training and job related services using American Sign Language (ASL) and a few who have ASL skills but still use an interpreter with customers. It is best though if a person can connect directly with the individual and not have to go through an interpreter as things can get lost in translation.

With the clarification and greater emphasis placed on Customized Employment (CE), SSB partnered with the Workforce Innovation Technical Assistance Center (WINTAC) to sponsor a CE training pilot for SSB staff and contracted vendors. SSB needed to have contractors trained and certified in CE. The pilot was conducted in conjunction with VRS and DHS and ran from January –June 2019. SSB sponsored 7 staff participants, 6 from contracted Community Rehabilitation Providers, and 4 from Education partners. It remains to be seen yet if our supply of certified CE providers will adequately meet our needs.

### 3. INCLUDE AN ASSESSMENT OF THE NEEDS OF INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES FOR TRANSITION CAREER SERVICES AND PRE-EMPLOYMENT TRANSITION SERVICES, AND THE EXTENT TO WHICH SUCH SERVICES ARE COORDINATED WITH TRANSITION SERVICES PROVIDED UNDER THE INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES EDUCATION ACT

Through surveys, conversations with students and their families, and program evaluations, we have been able to compile the various needs of individuals with disabilities as it relates to Pre-ETS and Transition. In addition, we have looked at existing data to determine if we are reaching all potentially eligible students.

In summary, the following needs were identified:

- We are unable to engage with approximately 60 potentially eligible students, despite our outreach efforts
- We need to continue expanding virtual and remote activities to reach Greater Minnesota students
- There needs to be additional motivators for students to participate in work experiences
- We have additional work to develop our partnerships with many of the school districts throughout the state.

SSB currently serves 133 out of the identified 194 blind, visually impaired and DeafBlind students by the Minnesota Department of Education and continues to work towards reaching all identified students. We send outreach materials to identified potentially eligible students in hopes they will engage with SSB.

SSB has created transition programs to provide student work experiences and programming to augment work done by school districts by offering activities for students in the evening and/or on weekends. The goal of the program is to provide more opportunities for Minnesota students who are blind, visually impaired or DeafBlind to enhance their skills and readiness for post-secondary work and training.

SSB's Transition Coordinator sits on the Site Council for the Minnesota State Academy for the Blind as well as the advisory committee to teachers of the blind/visually impaired through DE. Additionally, the coordinator provides training and education to Minnesota Teachers of the Blind and Visually Impaired on SSB services and how those services can supplement students Individual Employment Program (IEP) goals. SSB has a close relationship with the Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) Specialist for the Blind and Visually Impaired. The specialist is a member of the State Rehabilitation council for the Blind (SRC-B) and serves on its Transition Committee.

SSB and MDE is actively involved in one unique summer program focused on transition. The Summer Transition Program (STP) serves as many as 25 high school juniors and/or seniors each summer. It is housed at St. Thomas University in St Paul, Minnesota, and is designed to provide alternative skills training and career exploration activities for participating students. Staff members assist students with transition goals that may include informational interviews, job shadowing, and mentoring. This gives students a first-hand experience in the world of work. While living in the dorms at St. Thomas, students also participate in a variety of independent living activities with specific mobility, self-care, communication, leadership, and related goals. SSB placement staff assist during the experience with career assessment, resume writing, and interviewing skills.

We are offering more virtual activities. Our transition team is working with our rehab teacher to create virtual sessions in the area of self-advocacy. We plan to host weekly sessions with topics related to advocacy in the home, school, community, and work. Our counselors and work opportunities navigator are meeting with students individually through phone, zoom, or FaceTime options. In this way students are still doing informational interviews, going on virtual college visits, and crafting resumes. We are exploring how we can transition our "Blind & Socially Savvy" program to virtual sessions. We created a "How to Find a Job" class that happens via remote conferencing.

## K. ANNUAL ESTIMATES

Describe:

### 1. THE NUMBER OF INDIVIDUALS IN THE STATE WHO ARE ELIGIBLE FOR SERVICES

According to the 2017 U.S. Census Bureau's three year American Community survey, Minnesota has an estimated 45,198 citizens between the ages of 18 and 64 years who have visual difficulties. Between the ages of 64 and 74 years there is another 15,816 citizens reporting visual difficulties.

### 2. THE NUMBER OF ELIGIBLE INDIVIDUALS WHO WILL RECEIVE SERVICES UNDER:

#### A. THE VR PROGRAM;

Minnesota State Services for the Blind estimates approximately 450 individuals will receive case services under Title IV of WIOA in 20 and 450 in FFY 21. This is in alignment with the past three years trends.

#### B. THE SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM; AND

It is estimated 15 individuals will be served under the Supported Employment Program in FFY 20 and FFY 21.

#### C. EACH PRIORITY CATEGORY, IF UNDER AN ORDER OF SELECTION.

Minnesota State Services for the Blind implemented an order of selection October 1, 2015 and is not able to serve all eligible individuals.

It is estimated that in FFY20 the number of individuals served in Category 1 will be 400, Category 2 will be 125, Category 3 will be 90, and those in Category 4 will be 10.

It is estimated that in FFY21 the number of individuals served in Category 1 will be 425, Category 2 will be 140, Category 3 will be 100, and those in Category 4 will be 10.

#### 3. THE NUMBER OF INDIVIDUALS WHO ARE ELIGIBLE FOR VR SERVICES, BUT ARE NOT RECEIVING SUCH SERVICES DUE TO AN ORDER OF SELECTION; AND

There are currently 51 individuals on the waiting list. 28 individuals are in Category 2 (has 3 to 4 functional limitations), and 23 individuals are in Category 3 (1, or 2 functional limitations). SSB is in the process of contacting those individuals to remove them from the waiting list.

#### 4. THE COST OF SERVICES FOR THE NUMBER OF INDIVIDUALS ESTIMATED TO BE ELIGIBLE FOR SERVICES. IF UNDER AN ORDER OF SELECTION, IDENTIFY THE COST OF SERVICES FOR EACH PRIORITY CATEGORY.

For FY2020 the average estimated costs for Category 1 are \$5,500, Category 2 are \$4,800, Category 3 are \$5,250, and Category 4 are \$0.

For FY2021 the average estimated costs for Category 1 are \$5,900, Category 2 are \$5,000, Category 3 are \$5,000, and Category 4 are \$0.

Costs for case services provided under title I of the Act are estimated at \$4,800,000 which includes a \$1,360,000 Pre-ETS 15% set aside and \$27,000 for supported employment case services.

#### L. STATE GOALS AND PRIORITIES

The designated State unit must:

1. IDENTIFY IF THE GOALS AND PRIORITIES WERE JOINTLY DEVELOPED AND AGREED TO BY THE STATE VR AGENCY AND THE STATE REHABILITATION COUNCIL, IF THE STATE HAS A COUNCIL, AND JOINTLY AGREED TO ANY REVISIONS

This section outlines the strategies that will assist State Services for the Blind's (SSB) vocational rehabilitation program to achieve the goals and priorities for the vocational rehabilitation

program. The PY2019-2020 goals and priorities were jointly developed and were formally agreed to by SSB and the State Rehabilitation Council for the Blind (SRC-B).

## 2. IDENTIFY THE GOALS AND PRIORITIES IN CARRYING OUT THE VR AND SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT PROGRAMS

### FOCUS AREA: THE NEW AGE OF VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION

Priority: Competitive Integrated Employment

Strategies:

1. Evaluate the best methods of providing informed choice options when working with youth considering nonintegrated or subminimum wage employment.
2. Work towards implementation of the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the Department of Human Services (DHS)-Disability Services Division (DSD) and the Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED)-VRS/SSB.

(The MOU is meant to align systems so that common customers who receive home and community-based service (HCBS) disability waivers and vocational rehabilitation services (VRS) from DEED-VRS or SSB get seamless and timely supports to make informed choices and meet competitive integrated employment goals.)

1. Implement a model for coordinating employer services with DEED Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) partners, including :
  - a. Title I- Adult/Dislocated Worker; Youth
  - b. Title III- Job Seeker Services
  - c. Title IV- Vocational Rehabilitation Services
2. Implement ongoing training, tracking, and oversight of measurable skills gains and credential attainment in order to reach negotiated targets with the Rehabilitation Services Administration under new WIOA requirements.
3. In coordination with the Advisory Task Force on State Employment and Retention of Employees with Disabilities, develop and implement methods for the hiring and retention of blind, visually impaired, and deafblind customers into state government including using Connect 700 and Supported Worker programs.

Priority: Internal Controls and Quality Assurance

Strategies:

1. Enhance the case review process to allow for real time results that can be put in SharePoint and allow for trends and patterns that can shape training and accountability and policy process.
2. Create a data dashboard to allow for real-time reporting of performance and demographics.

Priority: Under-Represented Populations

Strategies:

1. Increase minority applicants for vocational rehabilitation services who otherwise would not have applied as a result of statewide outreach with the minority communities.
2. In coordination with partners and providers imbed exposure to work as part of ELL programming.
3. Research and develop avenues to bolster vendors to provide services to deafblind job seekers.

Priority: Transition and Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS)

Strategies:

1. Identify and encourage innovative Pre-ETS approaches around financial, social, and language literacy.
2. Develop a longitudinal study on all youth (ages 24 and younger) case closures. Identify factors that contribute to successful or unsuccessful outcomes.

Priority: Staff Training and Development

Strategy:

1. Identify the resources to hire a designated trainer to provide a comprehensive and structured training curriculum for new employee onboarding and ongoing staff training.
3. ENSURE THAT THE GOALS AND PRIORITIES ARE BASED ON AN ANALYSIS OF THE FOLLOWING AREAS:
  - A. THE MOST RECENT COMPREHENSIVE STATEWIDE ASSESSMENT, INCLUDING ANY UPDATES;

SSB has completely revamped the intake process so that applicants truly intend to achieve an employment outcome versus passive involvement. Once in the door, customers are engaged in a team model process designed to improve employment outcomes. With the implementation of WIOA as it relates to Pre-ETS, SSB is in a position to focus tremendous effort around Pre-ETS. Significant anecdotal evidence from disability offices in colleges and universities suggests that many students are not well equipped to handle the requirements of college as they begin that phase of their education. Providing training in alternative techniques will better prepare students for college and career. Comprehensive analysis was completed in the most recent CSNA (completed in the fall of PY 2019) of the needs of blind persons who are members of minority groups. The numbers and diversity of these groups has changed significantly over the past twenty-five years. According to 2018 Population Estimates, U.S. Census Bureau, Minnesota has seen 29% growth in its population of color since 2010 – ninth highest among states. Members of these groups who are blind face additional challenges. In order to receive the services that are needed to help them reach their full potential as blind people, they must deal with agencies of a government they may not trust. They must understand information about services and what is expected of them even though this information is written in a language that is new to them. Research has shown us that Minnesota’s ELL centers/programs are very limited, under-funded, and in need to receive resources to learn, set-up, and provide accommodations,

needs, and services to our growing blind, visually impaired and DeafBlind customers. Even with the best efforts, cultural differences can be a barrier to rehabilitation. There are compounded challenges faced by customers who in addition to blindness, are hard of hearing or deaf. Numerous gaps in services and areas of unmet needs were identified including available contractors, communication, and dealing with isolation experienced by DeafBlind customers. The ongoing employment disparity of people with disabilities is appalling. Part of SSB’s overall mission is to promote the increased placement of blind, visually impaired, and DeafBlind individuals.

**B. THE STATE’S PERFORMANCE UNDER THE PERFORMANCE ACCOUNTABILITY MEASURES OF SECTION 116 OF WIOA; AND**

The Program Year 2018 data is available for SSB’s common performance measures. The data includes employment retention in second quarter, median earnings in second quarter, and measurable skill gain. Data on the additional measures are not yet available.

Program Year 2018	
Employment Retention 2nd Quarter	42.6%
Median Earnings	\$4,316.37
Measurable Skill Gain Rate	31.6%

**C. OTHER AVAILABLE INFORMATION ON THE OPERATION AND EFFECTIVENESS OF THE VR PROGRAM, INCLUDING ANY REPORTS RECEIVED FROM THE STATE REHABILITATION COUNCIL AND FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FROM MONITORING ACTIVITIES CONDUCTED UNDER SECTION 107.**

The Office of the Legislative Auditor (OLA) conducted a review of SSB in the winter of 2018. This audit included new checklist elements as a result of WIOA. The only finding was regarding the timeframes used to pull financial information for the RSA-2 federal report. As a result, the DSA and DSU developed implementation procedures. RSA conducted a monitoring visit the summer of 2019; however, at the time of this Combined State Plan, the results have not been issued.

**M. ORDER OF SELECTION**

Describe:

**1. WHETHER THE DESIGNATED STATE UNIT WILL IMPLEMENT AND ORDER OF SELECTION. IF SO, DESCRIBE:**

**A. THE ORDER TO BE FOLLOWED IN SELECTING ELIGIBLE INDIVIDUALS TO BE PROVIDED VR SERVICES**

An assessment for determining assignment to a priority of services category shall be conducted with each individual determined eligible for vocational rehabilitation services. This assessment shall be based, to the degree possible, on data used to determine eligibility. To the extent necessary, additional information required for this assessment will be secured. Selection and placement in a priority category is based upon the severity of the eligible individual’s disability and the functional limitations, and is not based upon the type of disability, geographical area in which the individual lives, projected type of vocational outcome, age, sex, race, color, creed, religion, or national origin of the individual.

Each eligible individual will be assigned to one of the following priority of services categories:

Category 1: (also known as A) Individual with a most significant disability

An eligible individual who:

- Has a severe physical or mental impairment that results in serious limitations in terms of an employment outcome in five or more of the following functional areas: mobility, communication, self-care, self-direction, work skills, interpersonal skills or work tolerance;
- Is expected to require multiple VR services over an extended period of time; and
- Has a significant disability" under section 7(21) of the Rehabilitation Act. and meets the definition contained in "List of physical or mental disabilities."

Category 2 (also known as B): Individual with a more significant disability

An eligible individual who:

- Has a significant physical or mental impairment that results in serious limitations in terms of an employment outcome in three or four of the following functional areas: Mobility, communication, self-care, self-direction, work skills, interpersonal skills, or work tolerance; and
- Is expected to require multiple VR services over an extended period of time; and
- Meets the definition contained in "List of physical or mental disabilities."

Category 3 (also known as C): Individual with a significant disability

- Has a disability that makes them eligible for services and has a serious limitation in one or two functional areas. Physical or mental disabilities resulting from amputation, arthritis, autism, blindness, burn injury, cancer, cerebral palsy, cystic fibrosis, deafness, head injury, heart disease, hemiplegia, hemophilia, respiratory or pulmonary dysfunction, intellectual disability, mental illness, multiple sclerosis, muscular dystrophy, musculoskeletal disorders, neurological disorders including stroke and epilepsy, paraplegia, quadriplegia, and other spinal cord conditions, sickle cell anemia, specific learning disability, and end-stage renal disease, or another disability or combination of disabilities determined on the basis of an assessment for determining eligibility and priority for services to cause comparable serious functional limitation.

Category 4: (also known as D) Individual with no functional limitations

## B. THE JUSTIFICATION FOR THE ORDER

In FFY 2015, Minnesota State Services for the Blind (SSB), in consultation with the State Rehabilitation Council for the Blind (SRC-B), determined it cannot serve all individuals who are determined eligible for services. Effective October 1, 2015, SSB closed categories 3 and 4. SSB is exercising its discretion under section 101(a)(5)(D) of the Rehabilitation Act, as amended by WIOA, to serve eligible individuals, whether or not they are receiving vocational rehabilitation services, who require services and equipment to maintain employment.

The following information was taken into account when making that determination:

- The actual total costs of services and administration for FFY 2014 was \$12.8M (\$8.8M federal, \$2.4M state, \$1.6M program income). The FFY 2015 budget was \$11.7M; estimated costs of services and administration is projected at \$13.0M, of which \$1.2M is pre-employment transition services (\$8.5M federal, \$2.5M state, \$1.3M program income, \$0.7M reallocated federal). Out of the 1,015 individuals served in FFY 15, 406 did not have direct charges associated with their case.
- Looking at FFY 16 and the individuals receiving services, there will be more direct service provision resulting in spending at the same level as FFY 15. FFY 16 case service budget is \$5M (includes pre-employment transition services) and needs are \$6.2M. SSB is working to address overage by implementing Performance Based Agreements and fee schedules.
- There were some expenses during FFY 2015 that SSB absorbed and there are additional factors for FFY 2016. They are as follows:
  - •Necessary rewrite of the state’s case management system which incorporates changes needed to implement WIOA.
  - The budget projection for SSB’s share of the rewrite is \$897,000 in FFY 2016 and again in FFY 2017. The estimated cost for FFY 2015 is \$200,000.
  - Lower return on Social Security Administration (SSA) program income than expected. In FFY 2015 SSB had claims of \$3.7 million, received \$1.3 million and have pending claims of \$743,000.
  - WIOA required a 15% set-aside toward transition age students equaling \$1.27 million for FFY 2015. SSB has previously spent between \$100,000 and \$200,000 on transition aged youth. Spending \$1.27 million for students diverts funds previously available and necessary to serve adults.
  - Discontinuation in FFY 2016 of training grant funds will require SSB to redirect dollars needed to ensure staff training required by statute. For FFY 2015 this amount equaled \$60,000

It is the policy of SSB to provide rehabilitation services to eligible individuals under a statewide order of selection. SSB consults with the SRC-B regarding the: (1) Need to establish a (2) n order of selection, including any re-evaluation of the need; (3) Priority categories of the particular order of selection; (4) Criteria for determining individuals with the most severe disabilities; (5) Administration of the order of selection, and; (6) The decision to open or close priority categories.

SSB, in conjunction with the SRC-B, has implemented several strategies to reduce the need for order of selection. These strategies include:

- Increased supervisor oversight of authorizations and expenditures
- Time limited, monthly authorizations
- Monthly budget monitoring reports shared with all vocational rehabilitation staff
- 45 days to invoice requirement added to vendor contracts
- Adjusted staffing complement to ensure it matches the needs of the agency

- Strict policy adherence, including use of customer financial participation and fee schedules
- Increased monitoring of Ticket to Work recipients via a designated TTW specialist

SSB continues to operate on an order of selection however, as a result of those strategies, PY19 resulted in increased program income and carry forward dollars. While SSB has increased dollars to serve individuals, frequent staff turnover has become a concern. Regardless, SSB is currently in the process of removing the 52 individuals from the waiting list. We estimate that given the above implemented strategies remain consistent, SSB will be able to remain on order of selection with all categories open during PY 2020 and PY 2021.

#### C. THE SERVICE AND OUTCOME GOALS

For FFY2020, SSB has the following estimates for individuals served, expenditures, estimated closures:

- Individuals in Category 1: 400; Expenditures: \$2,200,000; Closures: 50
- Individuals in Category 2: 125; Expenditures: \$600,000; Closures: 30
- Individuals in Category 3: 90; Expenditures: \$525,000; Closures: 10
- Individuals in Category 4: 10; Expenditures: \$100,000; Closures: 5

For FFY2021, SSB has the following estimates for individuals served, expenditures, estimated closures:

- Individuals in Category 1: 425; Expenditures: \$2,300,000; Closures: 55
- Individuals in Category 2: 140; Expenditures: \$650,000; Closures: 35
- Individuals in Category 3: 100; Expenditures: \$550,000; Closures: 15
- Individuals in Category 4: 10; Expenditures: \$100,000; Closures: 5

#### D. TIME WITHIN WHICH THESE GOALS MAY BE ACHIEVED FOR INDIVIDUALS IN EACH PRIORITY CATEGORY WITHIN THE ORDER; AND

It is expected that the goal of 95 successful closures from individuals in all priority categories will be met by the end of FFY20 and 110 for FFY21.

#### E. HOW INDIVIDUALS WITH THE MOST SIGNIFICANT DISABILITIES ARE SELECTED FOR SERVICES BEFORE ALL OTHER INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES

Each eligible individual will be assigned to one of the priority of services categories. Priority Category 1 services individuals with the most significant disabilities. The SSB Director will notify SSB staff in writing when finances allow staff to begin serving wait listed customers. Customers with the most significant disabilities are to be served first based on application date. Once all customers who have a most significant disability are served first, then the next category can be served.

#### 2. IF THE DESIGNATED STATE UNIT HAS ELECTED TO SERVE ELIGIBLE INDIVIDUALS, REGARDLESS OF ANY ESTABLISHED ORDER OF SELECTION, WHO REQUIRE SPECIFIC SERVICES OR EQUIPMENT TO MAINTAIN EMPLOYMENT

SSB elects to serve individuals who require job retention services to maintain employment outside of the order of selection for services.

#### N. GOALS AND PLANS FOR DISTRIBUTION OF TITLE VI FUNDS

##### 1. SPECIFY THE STATE'S GOALS AND PRIORITIES FOR FUNDS RECEIVED UNDER SECTION 603 OF THE REHABILITATION ACT FOR THE PROVISION OF SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES

Minnesota State Services for the Blind's (SSB) goal and plan for Title VI, Part B funds, is to use them on an individualized, fee-for-service basis to purchase needed services for customers whose vocational rehabilitation goal is competitive employment with supports. All funds authorized under Title VI, Part B, less a maximum of 2.5% percent set-aside for administrative expenses, are distributed and authorized by VR counselors to purchase needed services for customers under a supported employment plan. The money is administered and tracked, in accordance with federal requirements, through SSB's electronic tracking system.

During PY2013, SSB provided services to 15 individuals under a plan for supported employment. In PY2016 that number was 35, in PY2017 it was 28, and in 2019 it was 14. The total Title VI Part B expenditures were \$89,063.78 in FFY2013; \$70,222 in FFY2014; \$75,259 in FFY2015; \$70,104 in FFY2016; \$36,766 in FFY2017; \$35,300 in FFY2018; and \$2,726 in FFY2019.

SSB purchases needed services from community rehabilitation programs. Those purchases are governed by operating agreements with either SSB or the General VR agency for the specific services required.

SSB has set a specific, measurable goal for supported employment for PY2020. This goal is set taking into account the number of individuals in a supported employment plan currently within counselor caseloads, where the individuals are in the process of completing their rehabilitation plan, when they are expected to be ready for employment, and the ongoing services available. SSB will assist 15 SSB customers to secure competitive employment with supports following the provision of supported employment services using Title VI Part B funds.

##### 2. DESCRIBE THE ACTIVITIES TO BE CONDUCTED, WITH FUNDS RESERVED PURSUANT TO SECTION 603(D), FOR YOUTH WITH THE MOST SIGNIFICANT DISABILITIES, INCLUDING:

###### A. THE PROVISION OF EXTENDED SERVICES FOR A PERIOD NOT TO EXCEED 4 YEARS; AND

SSB has allocated approximately \$13,500 in funds for PY2020 for youth with disabilities who require extended services. There are two supported employment youth populations within SSB: those youth who were already determined by SSB or the Department of Education to be competitively employable in an integrated setting who will/may require extended services, and those youth where in the past, shelter workshops, enclaves, and other non-competitive, segregated settings would have been identified as possible options. For all youth who are already identified as supported employment candidates, a supported employment plan is required. The plan identifies the extended services required for that youth and who would be providing those extended services. Collaboration with extended service providers occurs, and a negotiation happens with who picks up the cost and when. With four years allowed for the VR agency to provide those extended services, this allows time for the families to get set up with waiver programs and natural supports. The extended services activities that are provided by SSB (and subsequently the extended service provider when it becomes available) under the supported employment plan include:

- Customized employment, including job carving, employer negotiation

- Social skills training
- Job coaching
- Development of natural supports on the job
- Follow up services
- Ongoing assistive technology assessment and evaluation
- Ongoing adjustment to blindness training and other skills training

SSB is collaborating with the Department of Education, Vocational Rehabilitation Services, and the Department of Human Services on the Youth Competitive Integrated Employment Interagency Group to better assist youth in gaining competitive integrated supported employment, when in the past they would have went into sheltered work situations. With WIOA and the Olmstead Plan, there will be an increase in the number of youth with severe disabilities who will require extended services. These youth in the past may have immediately entered into sub-minimum wage type settings after graduation. SSB believes that all individuals have the right to try competitive integrated work if that is what the individual chooses.

**B. HOW THE STATE WILL LEVERAGE OTHER PUBLIC AND PRIVATE FUNDS TO INCREASE RESOURCES FOR EXTENDED SERVICES AND EXPANDED SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES FOR YOUTH WITH THE MOST SIGNIFICANT DISABILITIES.**

As part of Minnesota’s Olmstead plan, SSB serves on an interagency panel that is committed to increasing competitive integrated employment outcomes for individuals with the most significant disabilities. As part of this work, the panel is looking into ways funding can be blended and braided to ensure that more people with disabilities can achieve the vocational life they want. Currently, the DHS is working with their federal partner about funding for employment. This work will benefit all individuals including youth with the most significant disabilities. Additionally, SSB is partnering with MDE to coordinate employment opportunities for students with disabilities. One strategy is co-sponsoring the Summer Transition Program to provide students work experiences, skill building in alternative techniques of blindness, independent living skills, assistive technology, braille, and mobility.

**O. STATE'S STRATEGIES**

Describe the required strategies and how the agency will use these strategies to achieve its goals and priorities, support innovation and expansion activities, and overcome any barriers to accessing the VR and the Supported Employment programs (See sections 101(a)(15)(D) and (18)(B) of the Rehabilitation Act and section 427 of the General Education Provisions Act (GEPA)):

**1. THE METHODS TO BE USED TO EXPAND AND IMPROVE SERVICES TO INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES**

There are 5 specific areas that SSB is targeting to expand and improve services to individuals with disabilities. They are:

Competitive Integrated Employment. Methods used will include:

- Evaluate the best methods of providing informed choice options when working with youth considering nonintegrated or subminimum wage employment.

- Work towards implementation of the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the Department of Human Services (DHS)-Disability Services Division (DSD) and the Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED)-VRS/SSB.

(The MOU is meant to align systems so that common customers who receive home and community-based service (HCBS) disability waivers and vocational rehabilitation services (VRS) from DEED-VRS or SSB get seamless and timely supports to make informed choices and meet competitive integrated employment goals.)

- Implement a model for coordinating employer services with DEED Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) partners, including :
  - Title I- Adult/Dislocated Worker; Youth
  - Title III- Job Seeker Services
  - Title IV- Vocational Rehabilitation Services
  - Implement ongoing training, tracking, and oversight of measurable skills gains and credential attainment in order to reach negotiated targets with the Rehabilitation Services Administration under new WIOA requirements.
  - In coordination with the Advisory Task Force on State Employment and Retention of Employees with Disabilities, develop and implement methods for the hiring and retention of blind, visually impaired, and deafblind customers into state government including using Connect 700 and Supported Worker programs.

Internal Controls and Quality Assurance. Methods used will include:

- Enhance the case review process to allow for real time results that can be put in SharePoint and allow for trends and patterns that can shape training and accountability and policy process.
- Create a data dashboard to allow for real-time reporting of performance and demographics.

Under-Represented Populations. Methods used will include:

- Increase minority applicants for vocational rehabilitation services who otherwise would not have applied as a result of statewide outreach with the minority communities.
- In coordination with partners and providers to imbed exposure to work as part of ELL programming.
- Research and develop avenues to bolster vendors to provide services to deafblind job seekers.

Transition and Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS). Methods used will include:

- Identify and encourage innovative Pre-ETS approaches around financial, social, and language literacy.
- Develop a longitudinal study on all youth (ages 24 and younger) case closures. Identify factors that contribute to successful or unsuccessful outcomes.

Staff Training and Development

- Identify the resources to hire a designated trainer to provide a comprehensive and structured training curriculum for new employee onboarding and ongoing staff training.

## 2. HOW A BROAD RANGE OF ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY SERVICES AND DEVICES WILL BE PROVIDED TO INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES AT EACH STAGE OF THE REHABILITATION PROCESS AND ON A STATEWIDE BASIS

SSB's Assistive Technology (AT) Team is comprised of five assistive technologists who provide statewide services at each stage of the rehabilitation process. The general overview of the services they provide include:

- Provide on and off-site assistive technology assessments and recommendations to SSB customers, rehabilitation counselors, employers and other interested parties
- Provide technical expertise and follow-up assistance to employers so that effective and compatible applications technology and assistive technologies are utilized on the job
- Serve as resource to customers, counselors, employers, partners, and other interested parties in utilizing and adapting information systems and designing and developing assistive technology solutions for blind, visually impaired, and DeafBlind individuals
- Participate in SSB's Team Model process and follow customers throughout their services, providing customized assessment and recommendations for equipment purchase to the counselor to be written into their Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE)

The technologists at SSB provide a broad range of comprehensive assistive technology services and devices. This include:

- A technologist dedicated to serving SSB customers that are transition students ages 14-21 and their families across Minnesota, engaging in the following:
  - Technology assessments for all transition age students
  - Participation on SSB's Transition Committee
  - Technology demos of SSB's resource room for universities and transition events
  - Work with vision teachers and schools on assistive technology to assist students
  - Collaboration with SSB's Transition Coordinators
- A technologist dedicated to serving as the Resource Center Coordinator with duties that include:
  - Scheduling workstations for training, demonstrations to the public, or regular use
  - Regular maintenance on all the Resource Center technology and also coordinate incoming speakers presenting on technology and assistive topics to SSB Staff, assistive technology trainers and customers
  - Work with vendors to provide demo and loaned technology to our SSB Resource Center, which is available for customers to borrow from SSB
  - Technologists who are dedicated to providing short-term AT training for SSB customers
  - Writing training tests for evaluating and certifying contracted AT trainers

- Keeping current on newest AT software and hardware such as the EBot, LVI, Braille Edge, VarioUltra, Brailiant, etc. and latest computer operating systems and software such as Windows 10, Microsoft Office 2016, Apple software updates for Mac, iPhone and iPad, etc.
- Keeping current on latest techniques for evaluating websites, etc. for accessibility
- Completing job site assessments for customers
- Beta test existing and new technology
- Collaborate with Minnesota Management and Budget and VR in an effort to provide greater accessibility to our state employment application system for individuals with disabilities.
- Provide statewide consultation services to ensure appropriate access to current state employees.

### 3. THE OUTREACH PROCEDURES THAT WILL BE USED TO IDENTIFY AND SERVE INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES WHO ARE MINORITIES, INCLUDING THOSE WITH THE MOST SIGNIFICANT DISABILITIES, AS WELL AS THOSE WHO HAVE BEEN UNSERVED OR UNDERSERVED BY THE VR PROGRAM

Increase minority applicants for vocational rehabilitation services who otherwise would not have applied as a result of statewide outreach with the minority communities. This procedure is one of SSB's Objective and Key Results (OKR) around equity, which is part of One Minnesota, the strategic plan from MN Governor Walz and DEED. In coordination with partners and providers imbed exposure to work as part of ELL programming. Research and develop avenues to bolster vendors to provide services to deafblind job seekers.

### 4. THE METHODS TO BE USED TO IMPROVE AND EXPAND VR SERVICES FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES, INCLUDING THE COORDINATION OF SERVICES DESIGNED TO FACILITATE THE TRANSITION OF SUCH STUDENTS FROM SCHOOL TO POSTSECONDARY LIFE (INCLUDING THE RECEIPT OF VR SERVICES, POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT, AND PRE-EMPLOYMENT TRANSITION SERVICES)

Upon the implementation of WIOA, SSB put into a play a Transition Core team that designed a plan to improve and expand VR services for students with disabilities. The program model for service delivery that SSB utilizes is called BRIDGE to Employment. It is designed to help students develop the skills and experiences they need to gain successful employment after high school. BRIDGE functions as the following acronym, which guides the services and programs we provide:

**B** Basic Skills-these include skills outside of academics that are necessary for students who are blind, low vision, or DeafBlind. Specifically it includes knowledge of assistive technology, non-visual literacy, independent living, and orientation and mobility.

**R** Role Models-student need adult mentors who are employed so that they can learn the skills and techniques needed to be successful.

**I** Initiative developing-initiative includes problem-solving skills, confidence, and growth mindset.

**D** Discovery-In addition to exploring careers, students need to explore items related to other life experiences. College visits and job shadowing are two examples of helping students discover what follows high school.

**G** Goal setting-students work with teachers and others to develop goals with their IEP teams, and they also work with rehabilitation counselors to develop their IPE's.

**E** Experiences-students gain pre-employment experiences through volunteering or other paid work options.

#### A BLUEPRINT

SSB uses a blueprint for delivery of Pre-ETS. The blueprint outlines activities in each of the required and authorized areas. Updated annually, the blueprint is adapted to meet the needs of the students and changing regulations.

#### FIND THE STUDENTS

SSB has put considerable effort into finding and serving all blind, visually impaired, and DeafBlind students. In PY 2016, SSB served 104 students of 141 identified by the MDE master reporting count. In PY 2017, SSB served 136 of 183 students identified by MDE and an additional 34 postsecondary students were provided Pre-ETS services for a total of 170. In PY 2018, SSB served 190 out of 229 students from the MDE master report counts and in PY 2019 we served 137 of 195 students listed on the MDE Unduplicated Child Count Report as Blind, Visually Impaired or DeafBlind. SSB has a data sharing agreement with MDE per our Memorandum of Understanding that allows us to get directory information so we can target students and their families.

The Transition Coordinator reaches out to homeschool organizations, private and charter schools throughout the state in order to find the students we are not currently serving. SSB staff members also outreach by presenting at conferences which are attended by teachers, parents, and potentially eligible students.

#### PROVIDE OPPORTUNITIES

SSB has several strategies around building opportunities for students to improve skills and gain experience/exposure to what is possible. We believe "you don't know what you don't know." Prior to WIOA, SSB noted an alarming trend of students unprepared for life after high school. Students were having to stop post-secondary education to get the skills needed to successfully enter a career or schooling. SSB believed that high schools were providing more alternative techniques of blindness training (ATB) than they actually were. We saw this as an opportunity to provide ATB training for students outside of school. We developed a request for proposal for the purpose of developing programs that could provide year-round Pre-ETS. A Duluth and Metro provider were awarded contracts. SSB evaluated the first year end results with each provider and made adjustments for the second training year. Twenty students were involved in the inaugural program year and approximately the same number attend in the second year.

Another strategy is developing and facilitating summer activities for students to improve all manner of skills. SSB co-sponsors a Summer Transition Program (STP) with the Minnesota Department of Education. In PY 2017 and 2018 twelve students participated in this summer event. In PY 2019 there were thirteen students. Students lived on a local college campus, learned about transportation, travel, independent living, careers, braille, and ended the two weeks with a summer job experience. STP will be continued in 2020. Other providers also offer summer programs lasting from one to eight weeks which focus on improving similar skills. SSB expects providers to include a work experience in their programming.

To foster career exploration, SSB is coordinating a series of workshops called Career Connections based on the Minnesota Career Fields. These monthly workshops present labor

market information and panels of adults with vision loss and employers. Students are able to talk individually with the adults in order to learn about skills and strategies needed to become successfully employed.

The SSB Transition Team has created and implemented two experiences designed for high school students to learn how college is different from high school. “College 101” is a workshop for students in high school who are thinking about attending college or any other post-secondary education program. In this workshop, students hear from people who work in college disability offices and admissions offices to learn about college expectations. “College Shadow” is a pilot program which gives high school seniors a chance to shadow a student in college and learn firsthand about what to expect and how to handle college as a blind, visually impaired, or DeafBlind student.

Students with a combined hearing and vision loss have specific transition needs. SSB has contracted with a vendor to provide specific training in advocacy and pro-tactile instruction to students who are DeafBlind. These workshops are coordinated with Minnesota State Academies.

#### PROVIDE RESOURCES

A transition assessment tool guides counselors and teams about each student’s skill level in activities of daily living and identifies skill training needed for moving on to post-secondary life. This transition assessment has been instrumental in the development of concrete plans and strategies that can be woven into the students IPE and IEP. This results in a genuinely coordinated effort between schools and VR. Counselors are working with IEP teams to encourage the use of postsecondary options for students to take entry level college classes while still in high school. This gives students an opportunity to try out their technology, braille, and self- advocacy skills prior to attending college full time. Each fall, counselors work with students and their teams to determine who is graduating and going on to college. After that list is developed, the Assistive Technology Specialist completes a technology assessment with each student and determines the resources they need for college. Equipment is ordered and training is provided so students are ready with the resources, skills, and strategies to handle a college experience. An O & M assessment is also completed to ensure that students receive needed travel training prior to attending college. Minnesota has a state academy for the blind. Our Transition Coordinator meets with them on a regular basis and provides training that links common life skills to work. The Transition Coordinator has also met with the Disability Service Offices at two local colleges that are often attended by SSB customers. Issues about student’s lack of note —taking skills were brought to our attention. We have partnered to develop strategies that can be used for improving pre-college training while students are still in high school.

To provide an additional resource to parents of high school students, SSB has contracted with PACER, a parent advocacy group knowledgeable in the IEP and transition process. PACER advocates create materials, facilitate workshops for parents and students, and conduct surveys on parent satisfaction.

Additional resources that facilitate the transition of students from high school to college or employment include a bi-monthly newsletter, weekly posts to the teachers of the blind email list, and Blind Abilities podcasts. SSB contracted with Blind Abilities to create a specific series called “Success Stories”. This series features tips and strategies directly from students themselves.

## 5. IF APPLICABLE, PLANS FOR ESTABLISHING, DEVELOPING, OR IMPROVING COMMUNITY REHABILITATION PROGRAMS WITHIN THE STATE

SSB and two community rehabilitation programs who provide center based Adjustment To Blindness Training have developed year round transition programs for youth with disabilities. A third center has recently developed curriculum geared for transition students for their full/part time ATB training program. At the completion of the first year, review meetings were held to discuss changes needed and expansion of the programs to include more employment services. SSB is increasing its capacity to serve underserved areas of the state in technology training with our own assistive technology staff. The number of contractors providing Pre-ETS services has increased and is expected to continue increasing. SSB has also sponsored contractors in a pilot program to achieve certification in Customized Employment.

## 6. STRATEGIES TO IMPROVE THE PERFORMANCE OF THE STATE WITH RESPECT TO THE PERFORMANCE ACCOUNTABILITY MEASURES UNDER SECTION 116 OF WIOA

SSB has identified several strategies to improve the performance of the State in respect to the six common performance measures:

**Measurable Skill Gains and Credential Attainment:** Through the quality assurance process, it was identified that we are underreporting measurable skill gains and credentials. The first step to improve the performance is to implement a staff training curriculum around both of these performance measures, so they understand the requirements around tracking and reporting. Another struggle is getting the supporting documentation from customers to validate the MSG and credential. At the end 2020, Title IV will be getting a new case management app for customers to use, which will allow for better communication and documentation submission.

**Employment Retention 2nd and 4th Quarter After Exit; Median Earnings 2nd Quarter After Exit:** Data is just starting to come out around our employment retention measure. SSB will be analyzing the data to determine why individuals are leaving employment within one year of exit. SSB has been developing strategies around career pathways to help individuals get on a track where they can continue advancing in employment, either with or without vocational rehabilitation services. We have already implemented mandatory labor market information for all, so individuals are making informed decisions on the employment goal they are pursuing. The State of Minnesota is working on getting a signed Statewide Interagency Agreement (SWIS) to get employment data across state lines. SSB is also serving on a taskforce that is addressing the issue around the retention of individuals with disabilities who work in state government.

**Effectiveness in Serving Employers:** We have developed several strategies in coordination with Title I, II, and III to continue increasing our employer penetration numbers. Strategies include common implementation procedures around tracking and reporting, a newly formed workgroup that is developing recommendation better align and improve employment services to business, and finding a common reporting tool for all Title programs to submit employer information.

## 7. STRATEGIES FOR ASSISTING OTHER COMPONENTS OF THE STATEWIDE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM IN ASSISTING INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES

SSB provides outreach to the Workforce development system by meeting with the director to make the Career Force Locations ready for blind, visually impaired, and DeafBlind individuals. SSB assists with ensuring that the computer systems are accessible with up to date software and staff are trained to not automatically refer individuals to SSB. SSB was part of the taskforce for Minnesota Works which is the state's new job bank. A thorough review of the product was

completed by SSB along with a sit down with the product developers to discuss accessibility issues.

#### 8. HOW THE AGENCY'S STRATEGIES WILL BE USED TO:

##### A. ACHIEVE GOALS AND PRIORITIES BY THE STATE, CONSISTENT WITH THE COMPREHENSIVE NEEDS ASSESSMENT;

SSB will use the agency's strategies to achieve the goals and priorities which are based on WIOA requirements, especially Pre-ETS, the most recent Comprehensive Needs Assessment (CSNA) (completed in the fall of PY2019), and SSB's participation in Minnesota's Olmstead plan which promotes integrated living and working environments. The agency's strategies to achieve the goals and priorities are discussed in detail in description (l) State Goals and Priorities.

##### B. SUPPORT INNOVATION AND EXPANSION ACTIVITIES; AND

SSB does not have innovation and expansion activities planned for PY 2020 and PY 2021.

##### C. OVERCOME IDENTIFIED BARRIERS RELATING TO EQUITABLE ACCESS TO AND PARTICIPATION OF INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES IN THE STATE VR SERVICES PROGRAM AND THE STATE SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES PROGRAM.

SSB uses an intake process that has been designed to provide accurate and consistent information about all of SSB's services and better equip customers with the ability to understand information about services so they can make informed decisions. The intent is to promote an increased focus on the customer's needs and to better engage customers with the VR process from the start of services. There is one point of contact beginning at referral, to group orientation, and through individualized one on one intakes. This point of contact is also engaged in our minority outreach committee and so understands how to better engage and serve a dynamic customer population. This new process is streamlined and systematized but accommodates the unique needs of our customers resulting in better access to information and participation in the VR program.

##### P. EVALUATION AND REPORTS OF PROGRESS: VR AND SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT GOALS

Describe:

1. AN EVALUATION OF THE EXTENT TO WHICH THE VR PROGRAM GOALS DESCRIBED IN THE APPROVED VR SERVICES PORTION OF THE UNIFIED OR COMBINED STATE PLAN FOR THE MOST RECENTLY COMPLETED PROGRAM YEAR WERE ACHIEVED. THE EVALUATION MUST:

##### A. IDENTIFY THE STRATEGIES THAT CONTRIBUTED TO THE ACHIEVEMENT OF THE GOALS

The Goals, Priorities, and Strategies for PY 2018 include three main goals: increasing successful employment, increasing SSB's outreach, and increasing diversity.

The priorities for the first goal are increasing employment outcomes, increasing the awareness of potential SSB applicants, improving the opportunity for individuals who are Non-English speakers to make an informed choice, and ensure that Non-English speaking participants can effectively engage in and achieve their goals.

To increase competitive integrated employment outcomes by 3% from the previous year, SSB took the following strategies:

1. Annual review of customer base with counselors and develop targeted plans for those in “ready for employment” status.
2. Active participation in the Assistive Technology interagency workgroup as part of the Olmstead Planning. Serve as the Olmstead lead for employment and assistive technology strategies that will make the State of Minnesota a model employer for persons with disabilities.
3. Actively promote the Connect 700 and Supported Worker programs to SSB customers to help increase employment of people with disabilities in state government.
4. The SSB Employment Team will meet regularly to review those individuals in ready for employment, in employment and in employment status for over 90 days and will work with counselor to ensure steady case progression.

Results Summary. Through the team model, counselors, their supervisor, and their support team meet on a monthly or bimonthly schedule to review all customers on the caseload. Special attention is given when discussing those individuals in the ready for employment status. The WDU employment team was assigned a special project where they evaluated all customers who were ready for employment, in employment less than 90 days, and in employment over 90 days. They assisted counselors with getting those customers moving through the process and into a successful employment outcome. SSB customers seeking state employment are encouraged to participate in the Connect 700 and Supported Worker programs. Because it was a new program we didn't have any program data yet to review. SSB had 13 known customers who utilized the Connect 700 process during PY2019.

The Assistive Technology interagency workgroup completed its work by developing a statewide agency resource directory that includes training entities, resources for technology and equipment, and programs that provide support for individuals who are unable to afford assistive technology.

For potential SSB applicants to have an increased awareness of the vocational rehabilitation process including their responsibilities and intents to achieve an employment outcome SSB utilized the following strategies:

1. Continue using the new intake process, collect data and review in six months.
2. Complete a full analysis of closures by October 31, 2018 to determine the impact on unsuccessful closures using the analysis from 2017 which was too preliminary to draw any substantive conclusions.
3. Determine the viability of hiring a part time staff who is an East African language speaker to liaison and lead further community engagements with New Americans.
4. After reviewing the analysis, implement strategies as needed.

Results Summary. We have learned that by having potential applicants attend our intake process, at least one third make the informed choice to not make application.

We believe it is still too early to determine the impact on unsuccessful closure as most customers who enter in to services can spend up to several years in the program, and dropping out can happen at any point. We do see, however, that because individuals are making informed decisions at the front end, we have fewer customers who are dropping out sooner.

We have determined that it is not viable to hire a part time staff who is an East African language speaker. One reason is the cost, the second is that the staff who conducts our intakes is actively engaged in African culture and the State Rehabilitation Council – Blind’s Minority committee which focuses on outreach. That staff meets with non-English speaking customers individually with interpreters to ensure that focused communication occurs and that the purpose of the vocational rehabilitation program is fully explained and understood.

To improve the opportunity for individuals who are Non-English Language speakers to make an informed choice about whether there are SSB services that meet their blind, low vision, or DeafBlind rehabilitation needs, SSB has used the following strategies:

1. Determine the extent that language is a barrier during the SSB orientation and intake process for Non-English Language speakers in their fully understanding the concepts, requirements, and expectations of participating in the Vocational Rehabilitation or Independent Living programs and how to address that barrier.

- Engage with the DEED New American’s Project for technical assistance
- Review other states VR programs for best practices
- Survey language interpreter vendors and ethnic community resources for ways to ensure that communication with shared meaning is achieved.
- Engage with community leaders from New American-focused organizations for input and guidance.
- Determine the viability of hiring a part time staff who is an East African language speaker to liaison and lead further community engagements with New Americans.
- Based on the findings, develop and implement strategies to ensure Non-English Language speakers are provided with information that is complete, accurate, and understandable.

Results Summary. Based on the intake strategies in the preceding Priority, this priority was not utilized. We have determined that it is not viable to hire a part time staff who is an East African language speaker. One reason is the cost, the second is that the staff who conducts our intakes is actively engaged in African culture and the State Rehabilitation Council – Blind’s Minority committee which focuses on outreach.

To ensure that Non-English Language participants can effectively engage in and achieve their goals in either VR or IL program services, SSB has used the following strategies:

1. Research existing resources, entities, and programs, locally and nationally, for ideas on effective engagement with non-English Language participants.
2. Research methods for effective teaching and training to Non-English Language participants
3. Develop a model for effective engagement, teaching, and training Non-English Language participants.
4. Implement a pilot of the model and assess its effectiveness.

Results Summary. A meeting was held with the manager and a staff of the Minnesota Adult Basic Education Disability Specialists Physical and Nonapparent Disability Assistance (PANDA) group to discuss the feasibility of this priority as it applies to blind New Americans who do not read, write, or speak English. The thinking was that PANDA would be able to play a role in helping to establish a connection between available public Non-English Language programs and our customers. What became apparent is that the intent of PANDA is to support the reasonable accommodations of students in the classroom through Braille or technological access, for example. It does not have the capacity to address blind students who cannot speak English at some basic level and who do not have some method for accessing symbols or interpreting information as result of their vision loss. It is a very difficult situation. We conclude that the training developed by one of our CRP's to give Non-English Language learners the fundamental spoken and written (Braille) skills to prepare them for the Adult Basic Education environment is currently a best model for meeting this priority.

To increase the number of transition students receiving Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) from SSB to 80% of students identified by the Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) as blind, visually impaired or DeafBlind (Currently serving 130 of 193 students listed on the MDE Unduplicated Child Count Report as Blind, Visually Impaired or DeafBlind.) SSB took the following strategies:

1. Identify and communicate with all transition aged students who are blind, visually impaired or DeafBlind who are not currently engaged with SSB so they are informed of services.
2. Regular communication with teachers for Blind and Visually Impaired (BVI) students through the BVI listserv and targeted mailings about SSB opportunities for students so they can share this with families and encourage them to apply for services.
3. Utilize the data sharing agreement with MDE to obtain names and addresses of blind, visually impaired or DeafBlind students and target mailings specific to Pre-ETS and services SSB can provide.

Results Summary. In PY 2018 of 195 students that were identified by the MDE, 137 were served, meaning we did not reach our goal for students receiving services, in spite of utilizing the strategies. In part this may be due also to a clarification of our agreement with MDE in that MDE cannot provide us with names and addresses of students; they can only provide the number of students in a particular district. This means that we can only send a request to those districts to share information about SSB with the students and families, making us dependent upon school officials as to whether that actually happens or not. We will see if this effects the numbers for PY2020.

All Pre-ETS students will have required Pre-ETS activities identified. Strategies Include:

1. All potentially eligible students will have required activities identified on the Workforce One activity page.
2. All eligible students will have required activities identified on the IPE.
3. Promote and continually improve the year-round transition programs provided by Community Rehabilitation Providers.

4. Promote the pre-employment transition services and activities to students and families by increasing the distribution of promotional materials.
5. Annually review, update, and implement the SSB Pre-ETS Blueprint.

Results Summary. These strategies were all met. The two contracted year-round transition programs provided by Community Rehabilitation Providers continue to annually evaluate and improve upon their programs. One program added a stronger employment component after their evaluation. The programs are promoted in SSB's monthly newsletter "The Spectacle" as well as directly to students, families, schools, and teachers B/VI and DeafBlind.

To ensure during their senior year, 100% of transition aged students planning to attend college will complete technology and travel assessments and receive requisite equipment and training prior to graduation, the following strategies were used:

1. Each fall counselors identify students that are graduating.
2. Technology specialists complete a comprehensive assessment and procure required equipment.
3. Counselors and Assistive Technology Specialists will work with the students Individualized Education Plan team to discuss these strategies and the assessment results so a coordinated plan can be implemented.
4. Training is provided to students to build necessary skills for entering college.

Results Summary. These strategies were met and have become standard operating practice. SSB provides the College 101 workshop for students in high school who are thinking about attending college or any other post-secondary education program. In 2018, the workshop was offered in greater Minnesota. Training opportunities were also provided through the Summer Transition Program in 2018 and 2019. A panel on post-secondary readiness specifically is meant to prepare students for entering college. In PY2019, 12 students participated in these activities.

To provide services and training to customers and vendors to improve the employment outcomes for DeafBlind (DB) individuals, the following strategies were used:

- Focus on improving skills of vendors (state contractors) who are able to "directly" serve DB individuals.
- Work with HKNC and/or other professionals to train current and potential ATB trainers on specific techniques for DB individuals. ATB training areas of specific interest include technology and tasks of daily living, especially to include ProTactile techniques.
- Provide training to interpreters who frequently work with ATB vendors in Minnesota to improve on specific communication techniques, ex. ProTactile techniques and boundaries for DB individuals.
- Identify strategies to improve current transition services to address the specific needs of DeafBlind youth.
- Develop DB Foundational Skills document.

- improve communication between DB Committee and SSB Transition Coordinator
- Include DB youth in the content of messages about Transition services such as video, brochure, etc.
- Increase awareness of the DeafBlind community by collaborating with the DeafBlind consortium of agencies and participating in community events such as conferences/awareness day, panels, policy projects, presentations, etc.

Results Summary. SSB has met these strategies with the exception of a Foundational Skills document. We have also hired an employment specialist to work specifically with DeafBlind job seekers. This staff is proficient in signing and is engaged with the local DeafBlind community and brings knowledge and resources to our program that we expect to greatly benefit these customers.

To participate in 10 touchpoint activities throughout the year in order to increase existing ongoing outreach efforts within the five top minority communities in Minnesota so they are aware of and have access to information about SSB, the following strategies were used:

1. Strengthen the connection with the Red Lake and White Earth VR Services Projects for American Indians with Disabilities.
2. Each member of the SRCB's minority outreach committee will make contact with at least two organizations in a minority community and report back to the committee to be shared with the SRC-B.
3. Focus outreach efforts to locate more resources in the Somali community and the minority communities outside of the metropolitan area.

Results Summary. SSB'S staff liaison connected by phone to the VR directors in both communities of White Earth and Red Lake. The committee and SSB staff members staffed resource tables at the Red Lake Senior Fair, and the Native Health Fair in Minneapolis which included members of the Red Lake and White Earth tribes living in the Twin Cities.

To connect with community organizations, SRC-B minority outreach committee members made contact with organizations in person. They also developed a list of organizations and each committee member was responsible to call selected organizations on that list. Committee members also did cold calling organizations and while the committee didn't complete all of its calls, each member had two contacts in the course of the year.

SSB participated for the first time at a Somali health Fair in Dakota County and had a resource table at Ka-Joog, a large Somali Independence Day Festival in Minneapolis.

SSB will actively promote a culture that celebrates inclusion and diversity with the following strategies:

1. All SSB job postings have a preferred qualification of fluency in a second language.
2. SSB will participate in the Connect 700 Hour program for the State of Minnesota.
3. Work with the Minority Outreach Committee to develop an email distribution list of minority communities and communicate job openings to them.

4. All postings are sent to consumer and professional groups for broad dissemination.
5. Expand the Pre-ETS student worker program and develop opportunities in greater Minnesota.

Results Summary. These strategies have all been met. All SSB job postings now have a preferred qualification of fluency in a second language and SSB participates in the Connect 700 Hour Program. The Pre-ETS student worker program was expanded to include a student worker who worked with a BEP vendor in Greater Minnesota during the summer to learn about the vending business.

To determine if the number of SSB employees of diversity leaving SSB is disproportionate to the number of employees of non-diversity leaving the agency, the following strategies will be utilized:

1. Establish a baseline from data starting in 2016.
2. Collect and analyze data annually to calculate the numbers and review the reasons for SSB staff exiting the agency.

Results Summary. Exit interviews with staff exiting the agency have not been conducted in PY2018. Staff turnover has been high and this area did not get the attention it needs and will continue to be an area of focus.

#### B. DESCRIBE THE FACTORS THAT IMPEDED THE ACHIEVEMENT OF THE GOALS AND PRIORITIES

SSB was not able to meet the priority of increasing competitive integrated employment outcomes by 3% from the previous year. All four of the strategies were met. As we started PY18, our placement goal was 106. We finished the year with 89 successful closures.

SSB has not met the priority to ensure that Non-English Language participants can effectively engage in and achieve their goals in either VR or IL program services. SSB has researched existing resources, entities, and programs locally who can provide effective engagement with non-English Language participants. Our research has found that there are not enough ELL programs available to meet the specialized needs of our customers. Therefore, the training developed by one of our CRP's to give Non-English Language learners the fundamental spoken and written (Braille) skills to prepare them for the Adult Basic Education environment is currently a best model.

SSB has not met the priority to increase the number of transition students receiving Pre-ETS from SSB to 80% of students as identified by the Minnesota Department of Education as blind, visually impaired, or DeafBlind. Although we have not met this priority, we have accomplished all three strategies. In PY18, SSB served 130 of 190 students identified by MDE. The following factors prohibit us from reaching our goal of 80%:

- The data sharing agreement with MDE does not provide us with direct access to student contact information. Instead it provide us directory access requiring us to contact every school district so that we may target students, parents, and teachers.
- We believe some students may be aware of our program but are not interested in receiving services at this time.

- SSB does not have the capacity to assign a counselor available to each school district. There are 553 school districts that potentially have students who could receive Pre-ETS, while SSB only has 16 counselors throughout the state.
- We believe some students have significant disabilities and their goals after graduation may be for independent living versus employment. A large part of our continued outreach efforts is due in part to the monthly newsletter “The Spectacle,” which is created by SSB’s transition coordinator. Approximately 75 families receive the newsletter, in addition to over a dozen agencies and organizations.

With the required 15% set aside for Pre-ETS, SSB has been on Order of Selection since October 1, 2015 and this has certainly impeded the achievement of the goals and priorities. Currently only category A and Job Retention are open and it’s a challenge to be able to spend the Pre-ETS dollars appropriately.

Another factor that impeded the achievement of the goals and priorities was staff turnover. SSB has experienced a high turnover rate during PY18 with 6 VR Counselors and 2 VR Technicians leaving the agency. The hiring and onboarding of new staff requires a lot of time and training putting stress on remaining staff as they work to cover vacant positions. SSB continues to trend towards a high turnover rate in PY19.

**2. AN EVALUATION OF THE EXTENT TO WHICH THE SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM GOALS DESCRIBED IN THE SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SUPPLEMENT FOR THE MOST RECENT PROGRAM YEAR WERE ACHIEVED. THE EVALUATION MUST:**

**A. IDENTIFY THE STRATEGIES THAT CONTRIBUTED TO THE ACHIEVEMENT OF THE GOALS**

SSB set a Supported Employment Goal for PY 2018 of 25 and was unable to meet this goal. Through collaborative efforts with private placement and, as necessary, county supports 2 individuals gained employment in stable work settings.

**B. DESCRIBE THE FACTORS THAT IMPEDED THE ACHIEVEMENT OF THE GOALS AND PRIORITIES**

- Staff turnover in the VR program has been high, especially among counselors. In addition, it takes a long time to get new staff up and running.
- It is challenging to facilitate and set-up extended services for individuals who require on-going supports. The systems between VR and the state waiver program do not operate with consistent definitions or funding streams.
- Transportation in rural locations is a significant barrier for individuals. This limits job opportunities, access to resources, and supports.
- Lack of accessibility with systems and programs continue to be a significant barrier for individuals with a vision loss. Even in State government, for example, individuals are faced with challenging in applying for jobs due to an inaccessible labor exchange system.
- There are very limited resources available for individuals who are blind with no literacy skills. Only 1 or 2 specialists in the state have been successful in helping individuals learn English and Braille, but it takes several years and is very expensive.

**3. THE VR PROGRAM’S PERFORMANCE ON THE PERFORMANCE ACCOUNTABILITY INDICATORS UNDER SECTION 116 OF WIOA**

The Program Year 2018 data is available for SSB’s common performance measures. The data includes employment retention in second quarter, median earnings in second quarter, and measurable skill gain. Data on the additional measures are not yet available.

Program Year 2018	
Employment Retention 2nd Quarter	42.6%
Median Earnings	\$4,316.37
Measurable Skill Gain Rate	31.6%

**4. HOW THE FUNDS RESERVED FOR INNOVATION AND EXPANSION (I&E) ACTIVITIES WERE UTILIZED**

SSB used Title I funds for innovation and expansion in support of the State Rehabilitation Council for the Blind (SRC-B) meetings, for meetings of the Council committees and task forces, and in support of member travel to national rehabilitation meetings. The SRC-B expenditures for FFY2019 were projected at \$35,730 and the actual expenditures were \$17,145.61. SSB resources for support of the Statewide Independent Living Council come from Title VII rather than Title I funds. SSB will continue to use Title I funds for innovation and expansion in support of the SRC-B’s resource plan of \$35,730 for FFY 2020-21.

**Q. QUALITY, SCOPE, AND EXTENT OF SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES**

Include the following:

**1. THE QUALITY, SCOPE, AND EXTENT OF SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES TO BE PROVIDED TO INDIVIDUALS WITH THE MOST SIGNIFICANT DISABILITIES, INCLUDING YOUTH WITH THE MOST SIGNIFICANT DISABILITIES**

Supported employment services promoting the integration of people with the most severe disabilities into employment in Minnesota have become increasingly available. The scope and quality of supported employment services have improved as more entities become aware of the benefits of ongoing employment supports for individuals with the most significant disabilities. However, the demand for supported employment exceeds the capacity of systems in Minnesota to provide the necessary extended ongoing employment supports. In addition to the goals for Title VI Part B described in description (n), SSB will continue to engage in capacity building and technical assistance efforts with other state agencies and community service providers. For example, SSB is working with the Minnesota Department of Human Services regarding the need for ongoing employment supports for individuals who are DeafBlind. SSB counselors have had some success working with county social workers to obtain waiver funding for those ongoing supports.

**2. THE TIMING OF TRANSITION TO EXTENDED SERVICES**

When vocational rehabilitation services are completed, a customer transitions to extended services. That transition occurs when the individual achieves the goals set out in their supported employment IPE, when they reach stability on the job, and when a service provider agrees to begin providing the needed ongoing employment supports. In most cases, the transition from vocational rehabilitation services to extended services occurs within three

months. In Minnesota, the sources of ongoing support primarily include the counties, community rehabilitation programs or other private non—profit organizations.

#### VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION (BLIND) CERTIFICATIONS

States must provide written and signed certifications that:

1. THE (ENTER THE NAME OF DESIGNATED STATE AGENCY OR DESIGNATED STATE UNIT, AS APPROPRIATE,) IS AUTHORIZED TO SUBMIT THE VR SERVICES PORTION OF THE UNIFIED OR COMBINED STATE PLAN UNDER TITLE I OF THE REHABILITATION ACT OF 1973 (REHABILITATION ACT), AS AMENDED BY WIOA[14], AND ITS SUPPLEMENT UNDER TITLE VI OF THE REHABILITATION ACT[15];

ENTER THE NAME OF DESIGNATED STATE AGENCY OR DESIGNATED STATE UNIT, AS APPROPRIATE

Department of Employment and Economic Development, DEED

2. AS A CONDITION FOR THE RECEIPT OF FEDERAL FUNDS UNDER TITLE I OF THE REHABILITATION ACT FOR THE PROVISION OF VR SERVICES, THE (ENTER THE NAME OF DESIGNATED STATE AGENCY)[16] AGREES TO OPERATE AND ADMINISTER THE STATE VR SERVICES PROGRAM IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE VR SERVICES PORTION OF THE UNIFIED OR COMBINED STATE PLAN[17], THE REHABILITATION ACT, AND ALL APPLICABLE REGULATIONS[18], POLICIES, AND PROCEDURES ESTABLISHED BY THE SECRETARY OF EDUCATION. FUNDS MADE AVAILABLE UNDER SECTION 111 OF THE REHABILITATION ACT ARE USED SOLELY FOR THE PROVISION OF VR SERVICES AND THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE VR SERVICES PORTION OF THE UNIFIED OR COMBINED STATE PLAN;

ENTER THE NAME OF DESIGNATED STATE AGENCY

State Services for the Blind, SSB

3. AS A CONDITION FOR THE RECEIPT OF FEDERAL FUNDS UNDER TITLE VI OF THE REHABILITATION ACT FOR SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES, THE DESIGNATED STATE AGENCY AGREES TO OPERATE AND ADMINISTER THE STATE SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES PROGRAM IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE SUPPLEMENT TO THE VR SERVICES PORTION OF THE UNIFIED OR COMBINED STATE PLAN[19], THE REHABILITATION ACT, AND ALL APPLICABLE REGULATIONS[20], POLICIES, AND PROCEDURES ESTABLISHED BY THE SECRETARY OF EDUCATION. FUNDS MADE AVAILABLE UNDER TITLE VI ARE USED SOLELY FOR THE PROVISION OF SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES AND THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE SUPPLEMENT TO THE VR SERVICES PORTION OF THE UNIFIED OR COMBINED STATE PLAN;

4. THE DESIGNATED STATE AGENCY AND/OR THE DESIGNATED STATE UNIT HAS THE AUTHORITY UNDER STATE LAW TO PERFORM THE FUNCTIONS OF THE STATE REGARDING THE VR SERVICES PORTION OF THE UNIFIED OR COMBINED STATE PLAN AND ITS SUPPLEMENT;

5. THE STATE LEGALLY MAY CARRY OUT EACH PROVISION OF THE VR SERVICES PORTION OF THE UNIFIED OR COMBINED STATE PLAN AND ITS SUPPLEMENT.

6. ALL PROVISIONS OF THE VR SERVICES PORTION OF THE UNIFIED OR COMBINED STATE PLAN AND ITS SUPPLEMENT ARE CONSISTENT WITH STATE LAW.

7. THE (ENTER THE NAME OF AUTHORIZED REPRESENTATIVE BELOW) HAS THE AUTHORITY UNDER STATE LAW TO RECEIVE, HOLD, AND DISBURSE FEDERAL FUNDS MADE AVAILABLE UNDER THE VR SERVICES PORTION OF THE UNIFIED OR COMBINED STATE PLAN AND ITS SUPPLEMENT;

ENTER THE NAME OF AUTHORIZED REPRESENTATIVE BELOW

Natasha Jerde

8. THE (ENTER THE TITLE OF AUTHORIZED REPRESENTATIVE BELOW) HAS THE AUTHORITY TO SUBMIT THE VR SERVICES PORTION OF THE UNIFIED OR COMBINED STATE PLAN AND THE SUPPLEMENT FOR SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES;

ENTER THE TITLE OF AUTHORIZED REPRESENTATIVE BELOW

Director State Services for the Blind

9. THE AGENCY THAT SUBMITS THE VR SERVICES PORTION OF THE UNIFIED OR COMBINED STATE PLAN AND ITS SUPPLEMENT HAS ADOPTED OR OTHERWISE FORMALLY APPROVED THE PLAN AND ITS SUPPLEMENT.

FOOTNOTES

[14] Public Law 113-128.

[15] Unless otherwise stated, "Rehabilitation Act" means the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended by WIOA, signed into law on July 22, 2014.

[16] All references in this plan to "designated State agency" or to "the State agency" relate to the agency identified in this paragraph.

[17] No funds under title I of the Rehabilitation Act may be awarded without an approved VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan in accordance with section 101(a) of the Rehabilitation Act.

[18] Applicable regulations, in part, include the Education Department General Administrative Regulations (EDGAR) in 34 CFR parts 76, 77, 79, 81, and 82; 2 CFR part 200 as adopted by 2 CFR part 3474; and the State VR Services program regulations.

[19] No funds under title VI of the Rehabilitation Act may be awarded without an approved supported employment supplement to the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan in accordance with section 606(a) of the Rehabilitation Act.

[20] Applicable regulations, in part, include the citations in footnote 6.

CERTIFICATION SIGNATURE

Signatory information	Enter Signatory information in this column
Name of Signatory	Natasha N. Jerde
Title of Signatory	Director, State Services for the Blind
Date Signed	February 24, 2020

ASSURANCES

The designated State agency or designated State unit, as appropriate and identified in the State certifications included with this VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement, through signature of the authorized individual, assures the Commissioner of the

Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA), that it will comply with all of the requirements of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement, as set forth in sections 101(a) and 606 of the Rehabilitation Act. The individual authorized to submit the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement makes the following assurances: **The State Plan must provide assurances that:**

The State Plan must include	Include
1. Public Comment on Policies and Procedures: The designated State agency assures it will comply with all statutory and regulatory requirements for public participation in the VR Services Portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan, as required by section 101(a)(16)(A) of the Rehabilitation Act.	
2. Submission of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and Its Supplement: The designated State unit assures it will comply with all requirements pertaining to the submission and revisions of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement for the State Supported Employment Services program, as required by sections 101(a)(1), (22), (23), and 606(a) of the Rehabilitation Act; section 102 of WIOA in the case of the submission of a unified plan; section 103 of WIOA in the case of a submission of a Combined State Plan; 34 CFR 76.140.	
3. The designated State agency or designated State unit, as appropriate, assures it will comply with the requirements related to: Administration of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan:	
3.a. The establishment of the designated State agency and designated State unit, as required by section 101(a)(2) of the Rehabilitation Act	
3.b. The establishment of either a State independent commission or State Rehabilitation Council, as required by section 101(a)(21) of the Rehabilitation Act. The designated State agency or designated State unit, as applicable (A or B must be selected):	
3.b.(A) "is an independent State commission" (Yes/No)	No
3.b.(B) "has established a State Rehabilitation Council" (Yes/No)	Yes
3.c. Consultations regarding the administration of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan, in accordance with section 101(a)(16)(B) of the Rehabilitation Act	
3.d. The financial participation by the State, or if the State so elects, by the State and local agencies, to provide the amount of the non-Federal share of the cost of carrying out the VR program in accordance with section 101(a)(3)	
3.e. The local administration of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan, in accordance with section 101(a)(2)(A) of the Rehabilitation Act. Select yes or no, as appropriate, to identify if the designated State agency allows for the local administration of VR funds (Yes/No)	No
3.f. The shared funding and administration of joint programs, in accordance with section 101(a)(2)(A)(ii) of the Rehabilitation Act. Select yes or no, as appropriate, to identify if the designated State agency allows for the shared funding and administration of joint programs (Yes/No)	No

The State Plan must include	Include
3.g. Statewideness and waivers of statewideness requirements, as set forth in section 101(a)(4) of the Rehabilitation Act. Is the designated State agency requesting or maintaining a waiver of statewideness for one or more services provided under the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan? (Yes/No) See Section 2 of this VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan	No
3.h. The descriptions for cooperation, collaboration, and coordination, as required by sections 101(a)(11) and (24)(B); and 606(b) of the Rehabilitation Act	
3.i. All required methods of administration, as required by section 101(a)(6) of the Rehabilitation Act	
3.j. The requirements for the comprehensive system of personnel development, as set forth in section 101(a)(7) of the Rehabilitation Act	
3.k. The compilation and submission to the Commissioner of statewide assessments, estimates, State goals and priorities, strategies, and progress reports, as appropriate, and as required by sections 101(a)(15), 105(c)(2), and 606(b)(8) of the Rehabilitation Act	
3.l. The reservation and use of a portion of the funds allotted to the State under section 110 of the Rehabilitation Act for the development and implementation of innovative approaches to expand and improve the provision of VR services to individuals with disabilities, particularly individuals with the most significant disabilities	
3.m. The submission of reports as required by section 101(a)(10) of the Rehabilitation Act	
4. Administration of the Provision of VR Services: The designated State agency, or designated State unit, as appropriate, assures that it will:	
4.a. Comply with all requirements regarding information and referral services in accordance with sections 101(a)(5)(D) and (20) of the Rehabilitation Act	
4.b. Impose no duration of residence requirement as part of determining an individual's eligibility for VR services or that excludes from services under the plan any individual who is present in the State in accordance with section 101(a)(12) of the Rehabilitation Act	
4.c. Provide the full range of services listed in section 103(a) of the Rehabilitation Act as appropriate, to all eligible individuals with disabilities in the State who apply for services in accordance with section 101(a)(5) of the Rehabilitation Act? (Yes/No)	No
4.d. Determine whether comparable services and benefits are available to the individual in accordance with section 101(a)(8) of the Rehabilitation Act	
4.e. Comply with requirements regarding the provisions of informed choice for all applicants and eligible individuals in accordance with section 102(d) of the Rehabilitation Act	

The State Plan must include	Include
4.f. Comply with requirements regarding the provisions of informed choice for all applicants and eligible individuals in accordance with section 102(d) of the Rehabilitation Act	
4.g. Provide vocational rehabilitation services to American Indians who are individuals with disabilities residing in the State, in accordance with section 101(a)(13) of the Rehabilitation Act	
4.h. Comply with the requirements for the conduct of semiannual or annual reviews, as appropriate, for individuals employed either in an extended employment setting in a community rehabilitation program or any other employment under section 14(c) of the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938, as required by section 101(a)(14) of the Rehabilitation Act	
4.i. Meet the requirements in sections 101(a)(17) and 103(b)(2) of the Rehabilitation Act if the State elects to construct, under special circumstances, facilities for community rehabilitation programs	
4.j. With respect to students with disabilities, the State,	
4.j.i. Has developed and will implement,	
4.j.i.I. Strategies to address the needs identified in the assessments; and	
4.j.i.II. Strategies to achieve the goals and priorities identified by the State, to improve and expand vocational rehabilitation services for students with disabilities on a statewide basis; and	
4.j.ii. Has developed and will implement strategies to provide pre-employment transition services (sections 101(a)(15) and 101(a)(25))	
5. Program Administration for the Supported Employment Title VI Supplement:	
5.a. The designated State unit assures that it will include in the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan all information required by section 606 of the Rehabilitation Act	
5.b. The designated State agency assures that it will submit reports in such form and in accordance with such procedures as the Commissioner may require and collects the information required by section 101(a)(10) of the Rehabilitation Act separately for individuals receiving supported employment services under title I and individuals receiving supported employment services under title VI of the Rehabilitation Act	
5.c. The designated state unit will coordinate activities with any other State agency that is functioning as an employment network under the Ticket to Work and Self-Sufficiency program under Section 1148 of the Social Security Act	
6. Financial Administration of the Supported Employment Program:	
6.a. The designated State agency assures that it will expend no more than 2.5 percent of the State's allotment under title VI for administrative costs of carrying out this program; and, the designated State agency or agencies will provide, directly or indirectly through public or private entities, non-Federal contributions in an amount that is not less than 10 percent of the costs of carrying out supported employment services provided to	

The State Plan must include	Include
youth with the most significant disabilities with the funds reserved for such purpose under section 603(d) of the Rehabilitation Act, in accordance with section 606(b)(7)(G) and (H) of the Rehabilitation Act	
6.b. The designated State agency assures that it will use funds made available under title VI of the Rehabilitation Act only to provide supported employment services to individuals with the most significant disabilities, including extended services to youth with the most significant disabilities, who are eligible to receive such services; and, that such funds are used only to supplement and not supplant the funds provided under Title I of the Rehabilitation Act, when providing supported employment services specified in the individualized plan for employment, in accordance with section 606(b)(7)(A) and (D), of the Rehabilitation Act	
7. Provision of Supported Employment Services:	Yes
7.a. The Designated State Agency Assures That it Will Provide Supported Employment Services as Defined in Section 7(39) of the Rehabilitation Act	
7.b. The designated State agency assures that:	
7.b.i. The comprehensive assessment of individuals with significant disabilities conducted under section 102(b)(1) of the Rehabilitation Act and funded under title I of the Rehabilitation Act includes consideration of supported employment as an appropriate employment outcome, in accordance with the requirements of section 606(b)(7)(B) of the Rehabilitation Act	
7.b.ii. An individualized plan for employment that meets the requirements of section 102(b) of the Rehabilitation Act, which is developed and updated with title I funds, in accordance with sections 102(b)(3)(F) and 606(b)(6)(C) and (E) of the Rehabilitation Act	

#### VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION PROGRAM PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

#### Performance Goals for the Core Programs

Each state submitting a Unified or Combined State Plan is required to identify expected levels of performance for each of the primary indicators of performance for the first two years covered by the plan. The state is required to reach agreement with the Secretary of Labor, in conjunction with the Secretary of Education, on state-negotiated levels of performance for the indicators for each of the first two years of the plan.

For Program Year (PY) 2016-2019 plans, the Departments used the transition authority under section 503(a) of WIOA to designate certain primary indicators of performance as “baseline” indicators to ensure an orderly transition from the requirements of the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 to those under WIOA. A “baseline” indicator was one for which states did not propose an expected level of performance and did not come to agreement with the Departments on negotiated levels of performance because sufficient data was not available to establish such performance levels. As a result, “baseline” indicators were not used in the end of the year adjustment of performance levels and were not used to determine failure to meet adjusted levels of performance for purposes of sanctions. The Departments designated indicators as “baseline” based on the likelihood of a State having insufficient data with which to make a reasonable determination of an expected level of performance.

For PYs 2020-2023 Plans, Title I programs (Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth) and the Title II program (Adult Education and Family Literacy Act) will have two full years of data available to make reasonable determinations of expected levels of performance for the following indicators for PY 2020 and PY 2021:

- Employment (Second Quarter after Exit);
- Employment (Fourth Quarter after Exit);
- Median Earnings (Second Quarter after Exit);
- Credential Attainment Rate; and
- Measurable Skill Gains

The Wagner-Peyser Act Employment Service program, authorized under the Wagner-Peyser Act, as amended by title III of WIOA, will have two full years of data available to make a reasonable determination of expected levels of performance for the following indicators for PY 2020 and PY 2021:

- Employment (Second Quarter after Exit);
- Employment (Fourth Quarter after Exit); and
- Median Earnings (Second Quarter after Exit)

The Credential Attainment Rate and Measurable Skill Gains indicators do not apply to the Wagner-Peyser Act Employment Service program; therefore, this program will not submit expected levels of performance for these indicators.

For the first two years of PYs 2020-2023 Plans, the Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) program, authorized under title I of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended by title IV of WIOA, will have two full years of data available for the Measurable Skill Gains indicator only. Therefore, the Departments will designate the following indicators as “baseline” for the VR program for PY 2020 and PY 2021:

- Employment (Second Quarter after Exit);
- Employment (Fourth Quarter after Exit);
- Median Earnings (Second Quarter after Exit); and
- Credential Attainment Rate

VR agencies must continue to collect and report on all indicators, including those that have been designated as “baseline, pursuant to section 116(d) of WIOA.” The actual performance data reported by these programs for indicators designated as “baseline” for PY 2020 and PY 2021 will serve as baseline data in future years. The Departments will require VR agencies to submit expected levels of performance for these indicators for PY 2022 and PY 2023.

The Departments determined that the Effectiveness in Serving Employers indicator will be measured as a shared outcome across all six core programs within each state to ensure a holistic approach to serving employers. The Departments will continue piloting approaches for measuring this indicator for the first two years of PY 2020-2023 plans. Therefore, states are not required to submit an expected level of performance for the Effectiveness in Serving Employers

indicator for PY 2020 and PY 2021. However, core programs are expected to collect data and report on this indicator for PY 2020 and PY 2021 as they did for PYs 2016-2019 plans.

Each core program must submit an expected level of performance for all of the other indicators, as applicable, with the exception of the four indicators designated as “baseline” for the VR program in PY 2020 and PY 2021. The Departments will work with states during the negotiation process to establish negotiated levels of performance for each of the primary indicators for the core programs not listed as “baseline.” Each state must update its plan to include the agreed-upon negotiated levels of performance before the Departments approve a state’s plan.

States may identify additional indicators in the plan, including additional approaches to measuring Effectiveness in Serving Employers, and may establish levels of performance for each of the state indicators. Please identify any such state indicators under Additional Indicators of Performance.

Performance Indicators	PY 2020 Expected Level	PY 2020 Negotiated Level	PY 2021 Expected Level	PY 2021 Negotiated Level
Employment (Second Quarter After Exit)	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline
Employment (Fourth Quarter After Exit)	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline
Median Earnings (Second Quarter After Exit)	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline
Credential Attainment Rate	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline
Measurable Skill Gains	30.0%	30.0%	31.0%	31.0%
Effectiveness in Serving Employers	Not Applicable <sup>1</sup>	Not Applicable <sup>1</sup>	Not Applicable <sup>1</sup>	Not Applicable <sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>

*“Effectiveness in Serving Employers” is still being piloted and this data will not be entered for 2020 State Plans.*

## VII. PROGRAM-SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS FOR COMBINED STATE PLAN PARTNER PROGRAMS

States choosing to submit a Combined State Plan must provide information concerning the six core programs—the Adult program, Dislocated Worker program, Youth program, Wagner-Peyser Act program, Adult Education and Family Literacy Act program, and the Vocational Rehabilitation program—and also submit relevant information for any of the eleven partner programs it elects to include in its Combined State Plan. When a State includes a Combined State Plan partner program in its Combined State Plan, it need not submit a separate plan or application for that particular program. <sup>24</sup> If included, Combined State Plan partner programs are subject to the “common planning elements” in Sections II-IV of this document, where specified, as well as the program-specific requirements for that program.

[24] States that elect to include employment and training activities carried out under the Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) Act (42 U.S.C. 9901 et seq.) under a Combined State

Plan would submit all other required elements of a complete CSBG State Plan directly to the Federal agency that administers the program. Similarly, States that elect to include employment and training activities carried by the Department of Housing and Urban Development would submit all other required elements of a complete State Plan for those programs directly to the Federal agency that administers the program.

CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS AUTHORIZED UNDER THE 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) (TITLE 20, UNITED STATES CODE (20 U.S.C. 2301 ET  
SEQ.))

**NOTE:** Unless otherwise noted, statutory references in this section are to Pub. L. 115–224,—*The Strengthening Career and Technical Education for the 21st Century Act* (“Perkins V” or “the Act”). (20 U.S.C. 2301 et seq.) The term “the State” used throughout this section refers to the State Perkins Eligible Agency and “the State Plan” refers to the “Perkins State Plan”.

(OMB Control Number: 1830-0029)

A. PLAN DEVELOPMENT AND CONSULTATION

1. Describe how the State plan was developed in consultation with the stakeholders and in accordance with the procedures in section 122(c)(2) of Perkins V. See Text Box 1 for the statutory requirements for State plan consultation under section 122(c)(1) of Perkins V.
2. Consistent with section 122(e)(1) of Perkins V, each eligible agency must develop the portion of the State plan relating to the amount and uses of any funds proposed to be reserved for adult career and technical education, postsecondary career and technical education, and secondary career and technical education after consultation with the State agencies identified in section 122(e)(1)(A)-(C) of the Act. If a State agency, other than the eligible agency, finds a portion of the final State plan objectionable, the eligible agency must provide a copy of such objections and a description of its response in the final plan submitted to the Secretary. (Section 122(e)(2) of Perkins V)
3. Describe opportunities for the public to comment in person and in writing on the State plan. (Section 122(d)(14) of Perkins V)

Text Box 1: Statutory Requirements for State Plan Consultation

- (c) PLAN DEVELOPMENT.—
- (1) IN GENERAL.—The eligible agency shall—
  - (A) Develop the State plan in consultation with—
    - (i) Representatives of secondary and postsecondary career and technical education programs, including eligible recipients and representatives of 2-year minority serving institutions and historically Black colleges and universities and tribally controlled colleges or universities in States where such institutions are in existence, adult career and technical education providers, and charter school representatives in States where such schools are in existence, which shall include teachers, faculty, school leaders,

## Text Box 1: Statutory Requirements for State Plan Consultation

- specialized instructional support personnel, career and academic guidance counselors, and paraprofessionals;
- (ii) Interested community representatives, including parents, students, and community organizations;
  - (iii) Representatives of the State workforce development board established under section 101 of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (29 U.S.C. 3111) (referred to in this section as the “State board”);
  - (iv) Members and representatives of special populations;
  - (v) Representatives of business and industry (including representatives of small business), which shall include representatives of industry and sector partnerships in the State, as appropriate, and representatives of labor organizations in the State;
  - (vi) Representatives of agencies serving out-of-school youth, homeless children and youth, and at-risk youth, including the State Coordinator for Education of Homeless Children and Youths established or designated under section 722(d)(3) of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 11432(d)(3));
  - (vii) Representatives of Indian Tribes and Tribal organizations located in, or providing services in, the State; and
  - (viii) Individuals with disabilities; and
- (B) Consult the Governor of the State, and the heads of other State agencies with authority for career and technical education programs that are not the eligible agency, with respect to the development of the State plan.
- (2) **ACTIVITIES AND PROCEDURES.**—The eligible agency shall develop effective activities and procedures, including access to information needed to use such procedures, to allow the individuals and entities described in paragraph (1) to participate in State and local decisions that relate to development of the State plan. (3) **CONSULTATION WITH THE GOVERNOR.**—The consultation described in paragraph (1)(B) shall include meetings of officials from the eligible agency and the Governor’s office and shall occur—
    - (A) During the development of such plan; and
    - (B) Prior to submission of the plan to the Secretary.

(Section 122(c)(1) of Perkins V)

<https://minnstate.edu/system/cte/Strengthening-CTE/index.html> .

### A. Plan Development and Consultations

#### 1.

As the eligible agency for the administration of Career and Technical Education in the state, Minnesota State Colleges and Universities, or Minnesota State, works closely in partnership with the Minnesota Department of Education’s Career and College Success Division and local

consortia to administer Perkins V throughout the state. Local consortia consist of participating school districts and state colleges located within 26 distinct geographic areas encompassing the entire state. The three co-dependent partners collaborate to ensure the successful development of the state plan. Because of this partnership of three, career and technical education initiatives have historically been proactive in aligning activities between secondary and postsecondary CTE programs, promoting student success and seamless transitions from secondary to postsecondary educational opportunities. As an example of this alignment, Minnesota has a program of study rubric that promotes concurrent enrollment, articulation agreements, and demonstrated authentic work experiences between school districts and community colleges/technical colleges and community employers. Additionally, extensive professional development has been provided under Perkins IV and will be continued to support secondary and postsecondary partnerships, in particular for the development and continuous improvement of programs and Programs of Study, the recruitment and retention of educational professionals, and equity of access and services for every student.

One of the biggest challenges for Minnesota in the development of the 4-year Perkins V plan is providing the right timing and balance between the needs and requirements of the state and the needs of local consortia. To achieve that balance, Minnesota's Perkins V plan development and consultation is the result of a combination of state and local efforts. The primary components of the plan development consisted of an extensive collaboration among the state staff, secondary and postsecondary, business and industry, and community partners. Structurally, the work began with a facilitated broad-based planning group to set the vision, mission, principles, and identify five strategic work groups: Advancing CTE, Career-connected Learning, Integrated Network, Equity and Inclusion, and Knowledgeable Experts. All of the plan development and the strategic workgroups involved state executive leadership work, consultation with our consortia leaders, public meetings, and incorporation of local input.

While consultations occurred at the state level with interested community representatives, advisory groups, superintendents, postsecondary academic administrators, teachers and faculty, the governor's office through the educational liaison, the Tribal Nation Education Council, and business groups, both engagement and consultation also occurred at the regional and local level through the consortia completion of the comprehensive local needs assessment work. Again, frameworks, critical questions, continuous improvement rubrics, equity plans- required components of the Perkins V plan- were developed at the state level, with consultation and customization at the local level to address local students, community and workforce needs. To facilitate the consultation process, Minnesota began its Perkins V work with the development of that comprehensive local needs assessment.

The Advancing CTE strategic work group was charged with developing frameworks for the comprehensive local needs assessment (CLNA) and was also responsible for accountability, outreach, and for promoting the CTE story through awareness and communication. The Career Connected Learning group reviewed and revised the state's career pathways projects with a priority on development of shared standards and definitions of program quality and the integration of work-based learning. The career preparation aspects of career connected learning also fell into the work of the group. The integrated network group was intended to provide more intentionality in our relationships with the multiple federal, state, and local networks necessary for successful CTE work. Equity and Inclusion, an integral part of the work of all the strategic work groups, focused on service partnerships, providing resources, and data management. The Knowledgeable Experts group oversees the critical professional development and technical assistance role of the Act. Teacher licensure preparation programs and minimum

qualifications, the mentor/mentee project, consortia leadership, and responding to local requests are the tasks of this group.

Much research, stakeholder input and development went into the creation of Minnesota's Comprehensive Local Needs Assessment (CLNA) Guide and Framework. We view this needs assessment as one of the most significant lever for change introduced with Perkins V. Literally, the CLNA changes the dynamics and habits of Perkins IV with the requirement to base budget development on its outcomes. Aligning business priorities has always been an essential component of the Perkins work with an increasing need to make that connection through the comprehensive local needs assessment. The Comprehensive Local Needs Assessment Guide and Framework are available at <https://minnstate.edu/system/cte/Strengthening-CTE/index.html>.

Through day-long workshops, webinars, face-to-face meetings and virtual mentoring, professional development has been occurring since October of 2018 to prepare local consortia leaders and work-groups for the relevancy of, and work required, to complete the CLNA. The CLNA Guide provides Minnesota Perkins Consortia Leaders with context on how to conduct the CLNA and translates language of the law into concrete, actionable steps for conducting a rigorous needs assessment that meets the Strengthening Career and Technical Education for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Act requirements. When the CLNA is complete, a consortium will have findings that provides an accurate picture of local CTE programs and learners. It creates an incredible opportunity to:

better help students achieve career success,

- align Perkins budgets with priorities and ensure that programs are aligned with and validated by local/regional workforce needs and economic priorities,
- ensure that consortium programs are serving all learners equitably and to focus resources toward programs that lead to high-skill, high-wage, or in-demand occupations while addressing disparities or gaps in performance,
- build on other process improvement efforts such as ESSA, WIOA, World's Best Workforce and others, and
- provide a structured way to engage key stakeholders regularly around the quality and impact of consortium CTE programs and systems.

Ultimately, the local needs assessment process is about helping applicants make a formal shift from merely collecting and reporting information to using information strategically to drive decisions about consortium CTE programs that help create success for students, employers, and the community. The graphic below emphasizes the link from the CLNA to the actions developed at the local level to address opportunities and challenges. The actions, drawn from the CLNA there are reflected in the budget request of the applicant.

To mentor consortia in the implementation of the CLNA, Minnesota adopted a six-step process. Those six steps are to prepare, explore, assess, prioritize, communicate and evaluate. It is the intention of the Perkins state executive team to provide structure and processes so that local consortia can complete their work efficiently and effectively. The gathering of the stakeholder groups and the prioritization of local or regional work will come from these local efforts. From the CLNA data gathering and analysis, consortia will formulate actions to address gaps or enhance successes. Resources needed to implement those actions are the basis for the development of the local budget request.

After submission of the first round of the 2-year CLNA, May 1, 2020, the planning team will solicit input for needed changes in process, professional development and implementation of the CLNA in anticipation of the 2022 assessment.

The information obtained from both the CLNA and the full set of consortia applications includes the reflection of local consultations. This information will be reviewed by the state leadership team. Final strategies and actions for the work of the state will be finalized using feedback from that submission. With this information, final directions will be given to the Strategic Work Groups: Advancing CTE, Career Connected Learning, Integrated Network, Equity and Inclusion, and Knowledgeable Experts. The information will also inform state leadership regarding professional development and technical assistance needs.

The current cycle of having local applications submitted May 1 is problematic as the state leadership team needs to use the CLNA and application information to inform details of the state-level work plan. As the state plan, submitted with WIOA, is due in March, the opportunity to use local insights is limited. Future plans include moving the submission date for the 2-year local application to February 1.

1.

Minnesota has structured its implementation of federal Perkins funding through a three pronged model: Minnesota State Colleges and Universities, Minnesota Department of Education, and the local consortia. This model of governance and distribution of funds has provided a tradition of alignment of secondary and postsecondary partners that will continue with the *Strengthening Career and Technical Education for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Act* (Perkins V). Minnesota State Colleges and Universities, the eligible agency, will continue to oversee the administration and implementation of the state's Perkins grant with our Minnesota Department of Education partners. Through the Perkins V 4-year state plan, state staff have an opportunity to exercise a variety of leadership levers to advance Minnesota's vision for Career Technical Education (CTE). Those levers include the changes in the fiscal split secondary to postsecondary; increasing the incentive for innovation through the increase in reserve funding and the utilization of data-driven decisions through the CLNA process.

The major responsibility for postsecondary career and technical education resides with the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities (Minnesota State) Workforce Division of Academic and Student Affairs (ASA). The work is done in partnership with other ASA units, specifically, research, educational innovations, and student affairs. These ASA units support CTE work for such initiatives as early college opportunities, program approvals and transfer, data research and reporting, accessibility services, faculty credentialing, and financial aid--all essential for the success of our learners. The CTE unit also works closely with the Equity and Inclusion division of Minnesota State, especially in the execution of the federal OCR requirements and overall professional development committed to support, protect, and encourage inclusive opportunities through the system.

In a parallel manner, the Minnesota Department of Education, Career and College Success Division houses the work of Career and Technical Education for secondary education. The CTE unit advances educational initiatives in collaboration with other Divisions including Indian Education, School Support, Academic Standards and Instructional Effectiveness, Research and Assessment, Equity and Achievement, Early Learning and State Library Services. Initiatives have

included: Farm to Table Culinary Curriculum; CTE Safety Protocol development; collaboration with PELSB to implement the Tiered Licensing System; CTE Levy technical support for school districts; CTE curriculum framework development for all CTE program areas; Integration of quality program assessment measures in school district Program Approval processes; and data research reporting and analysis support for local school districts. The CTE Unit also participates as part of the Minnesota Department of Education Academic Success Team that is a team comprised of curriculum and instruction, school support, assessment, and other agency divisions.

Minnesota received approximately \$18 million in FY 2019-20. Minnesota State is the fiscal agent for the grant and, as such, utilizes 5% of the allocation for Administration.

Using Perkins V funding levers to help drive meaningful change, Minnesota's Perkins V plan demonstrates that the consortia model empowers equal partnerships to make joint decisions to collaboratively plan and implement CTE programs and services. The Perkins V state plan will reflect changes in the funding distribution model as follows:

1) Distribution of the 85% of the state allocation provided to the local consortia applicants:

**Basic** Revenue (decreased from 90% in Perkins IV): 85% (of the 85%) will be distributed utilizing the current formula process

**Reserve** Revenue (increased from 10% in Perkins IV): 15% (of the 85%) will be distributed between rural and high numbers of CTE concentrators

Secondary/postsecondary split: 50:50 in all calculations, basic and reserve

2) State Leadership: the secondary/postsecondary split of state leadership funds will be distributed as 42% secondary and 58 % postsecondary.

State Institutions and Nontraditional will continue to be part of the leadership funds allocated to postsecondary. Minnesota State also will continue to fund major state-wide work such as the annual conferences, communication and software supporting the local applications with that higher percentage of leadership funds.

While planning teams and Perkins state leadership researched and considered utilizing the RFP process to distribute the 15% reserve funding to provide potentially larger investments feedback gathered was not supportive of that change at this time. We will continue to work to review the feasibility of this potential change. The perception is that larger consortia would be at an advantage over smaller, rural consortia in an RFP process has polarized the discussion. Therefore, the state will continue the formula distribution model at this time. Any changes in the current distribution of funds formula will be submitted as part of a future revision to the Perkins V State Plan.

No comments, concerns, or objections were submitted relating to the amount and uses of any funds proposed to be reserved for adult career and technical education, postsecondary career and technical education, and secondary career and technical education after consultation with the State agencies identified in section 122(e)(1)(A)-(C) of the Act.

Opportunities for public comment in person and in writing were provided through face-to-face meetings and webpages with questions, state documents, and provisions to allow individuals to provide written comments. Multiple public meetings were held at various times and locations to provide a wide range of opportunities for individuals to attend. A neutral contractor was hired to facilitate the public hearings to avoid any perception of control of the discussion by state leadership. Comments were collected and routed to the state leadership team for actions. Direct comments were provided to state leadership through email correspondence. These were sent to the facilitator for inclusion in the feedback report.

Notifications of public hearings and the webpage address for input, including the performance indicators, were provided electronically to the following:

Adult Basic Education

Association of School District Homeless Liaisons

Business and Industry Groups:

Minnesota Precision Manufacturing Association

Minnesota Hospital Organization

Minnesota Construction

Hospitality Minnesota

Minnesota High Tech Association

Minnesota Bankers Association

General Public through Facebook, twitter ([www.minnstate.edu/CTEHearing](http://www.minnstate.edu/CTEHearing))

Minnesota Business Professionals of America (BPA) board

Minnesota Centers of Excellence: distribution to industry partners through the centers

Minnesota Chambers of Commerce

Minnesota Distributive Education Club (DECA)

Minnesota Governor's Office

Minnesota State Academic and Student Affairs personnel including:

Administrators

Faculty Development

Academic Advisors

Accessibility Coordinators

PSEO and concurrent enrollment directors

Veterans

Students

Minnesota State Board of Trustees

Minnesota Superintendents

Perkins consortium Leaders and coordinators  
 Professional Associations: MnACTE, MACTA  
 Secondary Teacher List by MDE specialists  
 SkillsUSA MN Board  
 Special Education Directors  
 Student Organization Advisors  
 Variety of community organizations and foundations  
 WIOA Partners:

- Department of Labor
- Department of Employment and Economic Development
- Department of Human Services
- Department of Corrections
- Adult Basic Education

In addition, the front banner of the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities webpage highlighted the public hearing and provided a space for general and specific comments.

The text provided is the following:

Minnesota State and Minnesota Department of Education invite you and the members of the community to attend and participate in public hearings to discuss the changes to the *Strengthening Career and Technical Education for the 21st Century Act* (Perkins V). The focus of Perkins V is the alignment of systems and program improvement (Section 122:(a)(3) State Plan requirement of The Act).

We are seeking your input on:

- proposed state determined performance levels,
- the alignment of programs of study to industry needs,
- financial distribution of funds
- increasing student access to high-quality education, and
- supporting the full continuum of offerings from career exploration through preparations to meet the changing needs of learners and employers.

Public Comment and Hearing Update
Thank you for participating in these public hearing sessions. We are still accepting general comments and feedback on performance levels through Nov. 30, 2019.
Submit general comments

Public Comment and Hearing Update
Submit comments on performance levels

During the public meetings, Minnesota State Staff provided an overview of the Perkins V plan and a neutral facilitator solicited feedback through a series of questions. Responses to the questions and an overview of discussion points have been collected in report form.

In addition to the series of public comment meetings, state staff met with Minnesota Tribal Nations Education Committee (TNEC) whose mission is to “strengthen, protect, and advance the overall education experiences and opportunities for all tribal (American Indian) students, families, and communities of Minnesota.” The notes of that discussion are included in the comment report attached. At the recommendation of that group, Tribal Nation contacts were cross-walked to current Perkins consortia so that Perkins leaders, in their CLNA work, would be inclusive of the Tribal Nation leadership.

**Stakeholder engagement for accountability factors occurred in a parallel but separate process, coming together in the public hearings and the posting of the full 4-year plan.**

**Secondary**

Secondary and postsecondary accountability involves a collaboration between two agencies; each with its own data systems and internal processes. Therefore, transition planning for secondary accountability required a dual decision-making process. The process for identifying and defining secondary performance indicators occurred in two phases.

Phase one included an extensive information gathering process as well as documenting feedback from internal state staff. The purpose was to thoughtfully compile information and identify meaningful and specific questions to pose to stakeholders during phase two. State CTE specialists attended five two-hour long in-person meetings in which they reviewed data files, policy documents, and ESSA requirements in addition to considering existing data collection system and other available data sources. Staff considered all information and materials they reviewed through the lens of our state’s recently updated mission and vision for Career and Technical Education as well as the following questions.

Does this data and information:

- 1) advance our statewide goals for CTE?
- 2) support *all* of our CTE students and approved programs?
- 3) support the needs of our Business and Industry partners as well as local communities?
- 4) align with the Perkins V legislation?
- 5) align with other existing state legislation?

Products from the phase one internal secondary CTE state staff meetings included a refined list of key decision-points, discussion questions to pose to the advisory group, and a list of materials and resources that would assist in building stakeholder capacity.

Phase 2 involved sharing the previously identified information with secondary stakeholders in order to collect and compile their recommendations. Representatives from each of the following categories were invited to participate in the “Perkins V Secondary Accountability: Technical

Advising Committee”: secondary consortia leaders, postsecondary partners, local CTE policy and advocacy groups, school counselors, work-based learning coordinators, high school teachers, principals, and superintendents from rural, suburban, and large metro districts, business and industry leaders from each sector of the CTE Career wheel, Workforce Center staff, and Tribal leaders. During spring 2019, approximately thirty advisory group members engaged in three four-hour in-person meetings. All resources and materials were made available within a secure site so stakeholders could access the information at any point. During the facilitated in-person meetings, advisory group members discussed data sources, reviewed simulated historical data, and considered policy and legislative documents in small groups. Advisory group members were asked to consider all information through the lens of the questions listed above as well as the following questions – are all performance indicators definitions/measures: valid, reliable, meaningful, and possess a high degree of integrity and transparency? Equitable across all student groups? Following each meeting, stakeholders were encouraged to discuss options and implications with their constituents and gather additional feedback that would ultimately inform their recommendations to the state.

Stakeholder recommendations for specific performance indicator definitions were collected using an online survey tool, recommendations for the CTE Concentrator definition and program quality measures were collected using paper and pencil so that stakeholders’ full thoughts and ideas could be documented. There were clear recommendations to the state regarding performance indicator definitions, updated CTE Concentrator definition, and the program quality indicator that was preferred.

Subsequent to the roll out of the full scope of the Perkins accountability system and performance level methodology, through listening to consortia leadership and conduction further analysis, recommendations made by the original work group came under review. Group members, district leaders, local partners and state leadership staff probed the implications of each potential program quality indicator. Further discussion and questions, data, and state level priorities were analyzed. These discussions resulted in MDE leadership carefully reviewing initial recommendations and making changes to the indicators. Original members of the stakeholder advisory group as well as all secondary consortia leaders were invited to provide feedback on whether the state should move forward with the previously recommended optional “Other” indicator or if other solutions should be considered at the state level. Additional comments and feedback were gathered regarding the optional program quality performance indicator via a survey tool. Results of that feedback survey prompted MDE leadership to make changes based on the deeper research. The new indicators were posted and the comment period extended to meet the 60-day requirements.

## **Postsecondary**

In developing postsecondary operational definitions and identifying data sources for participants, concentrators, and each indicator, the state created an accountability workgroup consisting of state research staff for secondary and postsecondary, the State Director of Career Technical Education, and the Interim Associate System Director of Career Technical Education. The workgroup met as needed, generally at least once a month, to provide updates regarding ongoing work, brainstorm solutions to issues that arose, and clarify any questions around process and timelines. Members of the workgroup then consulted with regional partners and determined our operational definitions and data sources were substantively similar. Consortia coordinators were given the opportunity to review and comment on legislative definitions and proposed operational definitions at the MACTA meeting in April (2019). Throughout May and June, as work on revising operational definitions, identifying data sources, and developing

datasets progressed, key consortia coordinators and institutional research staff were engaged in phone calls and online meetings to provide feedback. In July, at a meeting of all consortia coordinators, the final draft of definitions and data sources used to develop the accountability datasets was presented and discussed. Finally, consortia coordinators and institutional research staff were presented with the final details regarding the accountability indicators in September.

### **State Determined Performance Levels (Secondary and Postsecondary)**

In developing state determined performance levels, in addition to the regular workgroup meetings, we consulted with regional partners in June and August and determined our methodology for establishing performance levels is relatively similar. We also consulted with DEED throughout June specifically to better understand the statistical adjustment model used for the WIOA Performance Accountability System and discuss how it might apply to Perkins accountability indicators. An online meeting was held in September with consortia coordinators and institutional research staff where questions and feedback were discussed. In October, the state determined performance levels were presented at regional public hearings and published on the Minnesota State website, with a form that allows the public to submit comments. The state determined performance levels, with revision from the public comment, were presented at a meeting with all consortia coordinators in November.

Sensitive to the lack of public input, Minnesota also leveraged existing meetings and communications to solicit unstructured input such as:

CTE Consortia Leadership meeting

Governor's Policy Advisor

Governor's Workforce Development Board meeting

Local Program Advisory Committee meetings

Governor's Workforce Development Board meeting

State CTE staff planning meetings

Manufacturing Cluster meetings

Minnesota Centers of Excellence meetings

Minnesota State Academic and Students Affairs webinars, conferences, unit meetings

One-on-one outreach

Regional and local Comprehensive Local Needs group meetings

Regional Superintendents meetings

State CTE staff planning meetings,

WIOA State plan partnership meeting

Though multiple dates, times, and methodologies for input were presented, the State received few comments or suggestions. A neutral third party who also provided a summary overview of this consultation work collected. Three separate documents are available for review: Minnesota Perkins V, EXECUTIVE SUMMARY, Public Comment Report; Minnesota Perkins V Secondary & Post-Secondary Indicator Report Summary; and Complete Discussion Notes. These documents are posted [here](#):

<https://www.minnstate.edu/system/cte/Strengthening-CTE/index.html>. The conversation with the Tribal Nation Education Council did not follow the questions used in the public hearing but rather became a more general conversation about better communication and alignment with career and technical education initiatives.

## B. PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION AND IMPLEMENTATION

- 1. State's Vision for Education and Workforce Development
  - a. Provide a summary of State-supported workforce development activities (including education and training) in the State, including the degree to which the State's career and technical education programs and programs of study are aligned with and address the education and skill needs of the employers in the State identified by the State workforce development board. (Section 122(d)(1) of Perkins V)
  - b. Describe the State's strategic vision and set of goals for preparing an educated and skilled workforce (including special populations) and for meeting the skilled workforce needs of employers, including in existing and emerging in-demand industry sectors and occupations as identified by the State, and how the State's career and technical education programs will help to meet these goals. (Section 122(d)(2) of Perkins V)
  - c. Describe the State's strategy for any joint planning, alignment, coordination, and leveraging of funds between the State's career and technical education programs and programs of study with the State's workforce development system, to achieve the strategic vision and goals described in section 122(d)(2) of Perkins V, including the core programs defined in section 3 of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (29 U.S.C. 3102) and the elements related to system alignment under section 102(b)(2)(B) of such Act (29 U.S.C. 3112(b)(2)(B)); and for programs carried out under this title with other Federal programs, which may include programs funded under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 and the Higher Education Act of 1965. (Section 122(d)(3) of Perkins V)
  - d. Describe how the eligible agency will use State leadership funds made available under section 112(a)(2) of Perkins V for each of the purposes under section 124(a) of the Act. See Text Box 2 for the required uses of State leadership funds under section 124(a) of Perkins V. (Section 122(d)(7) of Perkins V)

### Text Box 2: Required Uses of State Leadership Funds

#### (a) GENERAL AUTHORITY.—

From amounts reserved under section 112(a)(2), each eligible agency shall—

- (1) Conduct State leadership activities to improve career and technical education, which shall include support for—

## Text Box 2: Required Uses of State Leadership Funds

- (A) Preparation for non-traditional fields in current and emerging professions, programs for special populations, and other activities that expose students, including special populations, to high-skill, high-wage, and in-demand occupations;
- (B) Individuals in State institutions, such as State correctional institutions, including juvenile justice facilities, and educational institutions that serve individuals with disabilities;
- (C) Recruiting, preparing, or retaining career and technical education teachers, faculty, specialized instructional support personnel, or paraprofessionals, such as preservice, professional development, or leadership development programs; and
- (D) Technical assistance for eligible recipients; and

(2) Report on the effectiveness of such use of funds in achieving the goals described in section 122(d)(2) and the State determined levels of performance described in section 113(b)(3)(A), and reducing disparities or performance gaps as described in section 113(b)(3)(C)(ii)(II).

(Section 124 of Perkins V)

- 2. Implementing Career and Technical Education Programs and Programs of Study
  - a. Describe the career and technical education programs or programs of study that will be supported, developed, or improved at the State level, including descriptions of the programs of study to be developed at the State level and made available for adoption by eligible recipients. (Section 122(d)(4)(A) of Perkins V)
  - b. Describe the process and criteria to be used for approving locally developed programs of study or career pathways (see Text Box 3 for the statutory definition of career pathways under section 3(8) of Perkins V), including how such programs address State workforce development and education needs and the criteria to assess the extent to which the local application under section 1321<sup>1</sup> will—
    - i. Promote continuous improvement in academic achievement and technical skill attainment;
    - ii. Expand access to career and technical education for special populations; and
    - iii. Support the inclusion of employability skills in programs of study and career pathways. (Section 122(d)(4)(B) of Perkins V)
  - c. Describe how the eligible agency will—
    - i. Make information on approved programs of study and career pathways (including career exploration, work-based learning opportunities, early college high schools, and dual or concurrent enrollment program opportunities) and guidance and advisement resources, available to students (and parents, as appropriate), representatives of secondary and postsecondary education, and special populations, and to the extent

practicable, provide that information and those resources in a language students, parents, and educators can understand;

- ii. Facilitate collaboration among eligible recipients in the development and coordination of career and technical education programs and programs of study and career pathways that include multiple entry and exit points;
- iii. Use State, regional, or local labor market data to determine alignment of eligible recipients' programs of study to the needs of the State, regional, or local economy, including in-demand industry sectors and occupations identified by the State board, and to align career and technical education with such needs, as appropriate;
- iv. Ensure equal access to approved career and technical education programs of study and activities assisted under this Act for special populations;
- v. Coordinate with the State board to support the local development of career pathways and articulate processes by which career pathways will be developed by local workforce development boards, as appropriate;
- vi. Support effective and meaningful collaboration between secondary schools, postsecondary institutions, and employers to provide students with experience in, and understanding of, all aspects of an industry, which may include work-based learning such as internships, mentorships, simulated work environments, and other hands-on or inquiry-based learning activities; and
- vii. Improve outcomes and reduce performance gaps for CTE concentrators, including those who are members of special populations. (Section 122(d)(4)(C) of Perkins V)

### Text Box 3: Statutory Definition of Career Pathways

The term 'career pathways' has the meaning given the term in section 3 of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (29 U.S.C. 3102)

(7) Career pathway.--The term "career pathway" means a combination of rigorous and high-quality education, training, and other services that—

- (A) Aligns with the skill needs of industries in the economy of the State or regional economy involved;
- (B) Prepares an individual to be successful in any of a full range of secondary or postsecondary education options, including apprenticeships registered under the Act of August 16, 1937 (commonly known as the "National Apprenticeship Act"; 50 Stat. 664, chapter 663; 29 U.S.C. 50 et seq.) (referred to individually in this Act as an "apprenticeship", except in section 171);
- (C) Includes counseling to support an individual in achieving the individual's education and career goals;
- (D) Includes, as appropriate, education offered concurrently with and in the same context as workforce preparation activities and training for a specific occupation or occupational cluster;

### Text Box 3: Statutory Definition of Career Pathways

- (E) Organizes education, training, and other services to meet the particular needs of an individual in a manner that accelerates the educational and career advancement of the individual to the extent practicable;
- (F) Enables an individual to attain a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent, and at least 1 recognized postsecondary credential; and
- (G) Helps an individual enter or advance within a specific occupation or occupational cluster. (Section 3(7) of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act [Public Law 113- 128])

### (Section 3(8) of Perkins V)

- d. Describe how the eligible agency, if it opts to do so, will include the opportunity for secondary school students to participate in dual or concurrent enrollment programs, early college high school, or competency-based education. (Section 122(d)(4)(D) of Perkins V)
- e. Describe how the eligible agency will involve parents, academic and career and technical education teachers, administrators, faculty, career guidance and academic counselors, local business (including small businesses), labor organizations, and representatives of Indian Tribes and Tribal organizations, as appropriate, in the planning, development, implementation, and evaluation of its career and technical education programs. (Section 122(d)(12) of Perkins V)
- f. Include a copy of the local application template that the eligible agency will require eligible recipients to submit pursuant to section 134(b) of Perkins V. See Text Box 4 for the statutory requirements for local applications under section 134(b) of Perkins V.
- g. Include a copy of the comprehensive local needs assessment template and/or guidelines that the eligible agency will require of eligible recipients to meet the requirements of section 134(c) of Perkins V. See Text Box 5 for the requirements for the comprehensive local needs assessment under section 134(c) of Perkins V.
- h. Provide the eligible agency's definition for "size, scope, and quality" that will be used to make funds available to eligible recipients pursuant to section 135(b) of Perkins V.

### Text Box 4: Statutory Requirements of Local Applications

- (b) CONTENTS.—The eligible agency shall determine the requirements for local applications, except that each local application shall contain—
- (1) A description of the results of the comprehensive needs assessment conducted under subsection (c);
- (2) Information on the career and technical education course offerings and activities that the eligible recipient will provide with funds under this part, which shall include not less than 1 program of study approved by a State under section 124(b)(2), including—
  - (A) How the results of the comprehensive needs assessment described in subsection (c) informed the selection of the specific career and technical education programs and activities selected to be funded;

#### Text Box 4: Statutory Requirements of Local Applications

- (B) A description of any new programs of study the eligible recipient will develop and submit to the State for approval; and
  - (C) How students, including students who are members of special populations, will learn about their school's career and technical education course offerings and whether each course is part of a career and technical education program of study;
- (3) A description of how the eligible recipient, in collaboration with local workforce development boards and other local workforce agencies, one-stop delivery systems described in section 121(e)(2) of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (29 U.S.C. 3151(e)(2)), and other partners, will provide—
  - (A) Career exploration and career development coursework, activities, or services;
  - (B) Career information on employment opportunities that incorporate the most up-to-date information on high-skill, high-wage, or in-demand industry sectors or occupations, as determined by the comprehensive needs assessment described in subsection (c); and
  - (C) An organized system of career guidance and academic counseling to students before enrolling and while participating in a career and technical education program;
- (4) A description of how the eligible recipient will improve the academic and technical skills of students participating in career and technical education programs by strengthening the academic and career and technical education components of such programs through the integration of coherent and rigorous content aligned with challenging academic standards and relevant career and technical education programs to ensure learning in the subjects that constitute a well-rounded education (as defined in section 8101 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965);
- (5) A description of how the eligible recipient will—
  - (A) Provide activities to prepare special populations for high-skill, high-wage, or in-demand industry sectors or occupations that will lead to self-sufficiency;
  - (B) Prepare CTE participants for non-traditional fields;
  - (C) Provide equal access for special populations to career and technical education courses, programs, and programs of study; and
  - (D) Ensure that members of special populations will not be discriminated against on the basis of their status as members of special populations;
- (6) A description of the work-based learning opportunities that the eligible recipient will provide to students participating in career and technical education programs and how the recipient will work with representatives from employers to develop or expand work-based learning opportunities for career and technical education students, as applicable;
- (7) A description of how the eligible recipient will provide students participating in career and technical education programs with the opportunity to gain postsecondary credit while still attending high school, such as through dual or concurrent enrollment programs or early college high school, as practicable;
- (8) A description of how the eligible recipient will coordinate with the eligible agency and institutions of higher education to support the recruitment, preparation, retention, and training, including professional development, of teachers, faculty, administrators, and specialized instructional support personnel and paraprofessionals who meet applicable State certification and licensure requirements

#### Text Box 4: Statutory Requirements of Local Applications

(including any requirements met through alternative routes to certification), including individuals from groups underrepresented in the teaching profession; and

- (9) A description of how the eligible recipient will address disparities or gaps in performance as described in section 113(b)(3)(C)(ii)(II) in each of the plan years, and if no meaningful progress has been achieved prior to the third program year, a description of the additional actions such recipient will take to eliminate those disparities or gaps.

(Section 134(b) of Perkins V)

#### Text Box 5: Statutory Requirements for Comprehensive Local Needs Assessment

- (c) COMPREHENSIVE NEEDS ASSESSMENT.—
- (1) IN GENERAL.—To be eligible to receive financial assistance under this part, an eligible recipient shall—
  - (A) Conduct a comprehensive local needs assessment related to career and technical education and include the results of the needs assessment in the local application submitted under subsection (a); and
  - (B) Not less than once every 2 years, update such comprehensive local needs assessment.
- (2) REQUIREMENTS.—The comprehensive local needs assessment described in paragraph
  - (1) Shall include each of the following:
    - (A) An evaluation of the performance of the students served by the eligible recipient with respect to State determined and local levels of performance established pursuant to section 113, including an evaluation of performance for special populations and each subgroup described in section 1111(h)(1)(C)(ii) of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965.
    - (B) A description of how career and technical education programs offered by the eligible recipient are—(i) sufficient in size, scope, and quality to meet the needs of all students served by the eligible recipient; and (ii)(I) aligned to State, regional, Tribal, or local in-demand industry sectors or occupations identified by the State workforce development board described in section 101 of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (29 U.S.C. 3111) (referred to in this section as the “State board”) or local workforce development board, including career pathways, where appropriate; or (II) designed to meet local education or economic needs not identified by State boards or local workforce development boards.
    - (C) An evaluation of progress toward the implementation of career and technical education programs and programs of study.
    - (D) A description of how the eligible recipient will improve recruitment, retention, and training of career and technical education teachers, faculty, specialized instructional support personnel, paraprofessionals, and career guidance and academic counselors, including individuals in groups underrepresented in such professions.
    - (E) A description of progress toward implementation of equal access to high-quality career and technical education courses and programs of study for all students, including— (i) strategies to overcome barriers that result in lower rates of access to, or performance gaps in, the courses and programs for special populations; (ii) providing programs that are designed to enable

#### Text Box 4: Statutory Requirements of Local Applications

special populations to meet the local levels of performance; and (iii) providing activities to prepare special populations for high-skill, high-wage, or in-demand industry sectors or occupations in competitive, integrated settings that will lead to self-sufficiency.

(Section 134(c) of Perkins V)

- 3. Meeting the Needs of Special Populations
  - a. Describe the eligible agency’s program strategies for special populations, including a description of how individuals who are members of special populations—
    - i. Will be provided with equal access to activities assisted under this Act;
    - ii. Will not be discriminated against on the basis of status as a member of a special population;
    - iii. Will be provided with programs designed to enable individuals who are members of special populations to meet or exceed State determined levels of performance described in section 113, and prepare special populations for further learning and for high-skill, high-wage, or in-demand industry sectors or occupations;
    - iv. Will be provided with appropriate accommodations; and
    - v. Will be provided instruction and work-based learning opportunities in integrated settings that support competitive, integrated employment. (Section 122(d)(9) of Perkins V)
- 4. Preparing Teachers and Faculty
  - a. Describe how the eligible agency will support the recruitment and preparation of teachers, including special education teachers, faculty, school principals, administrators, specialized instructional support personnel, and paraprofessionals to provide career and technical education instruction, leadership, and support, including professional development that provides the knowledge and skills needed to work with and improve instruction for special populations. (Section 122(d)(6) of Perkins V)

<sup>1</sup>Based on the context of this requirement, the reference to the local application process under “section 132” appears to be a typographical error in the Perkins V statute. The correct section for local applications in Perkins V is section 134. Therefore, eligible agencies should respond to this item using the provisions in section 134 of Perkins V.

#### **State’s Vision for Education and Workforce Development**

The State of Minnesota continues to support workforce development activities through the collaborative work led by the Governor’s Workforce Development Board (GWDB), the Minnesota Workforce Council Association (MWCA) and the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED) through the unified public workforce system

under the name CareerForce. In addition, specific grants through the Minnesota Department of Labor and Industry (DLI) and the Office of Higher Education support career pathways, teacher recruitment, and students directly. Both Minnesota State and the Minnesota Department of Education are also partners in this work. Below are examples of the most recent major activities.

1. CareerForce: In a collaborative effort led by the GWDB, MWCA, and DEED, a unified public workforce system is being created under the name CareerForce to unify Minnesota's workforce development services at the almost 50 CareerForce locations (formerly WorkForce Centers) around the state and the online labor exchange, career services and resources. CareerForceMN.com features innovative career planning tools, workforce development resources, and customized labor market information for career seekers, businesses, and workforce staff and partners. The site supports the CareerForce mission to facilitate thriving career solutions for individuals, employers, communities and Minnesota, promoting equitable access to prosperity for all. With a CareerForce MN account, users can set career goals; like, save, and share content; and initiate CareerForce Connections.
2. Governor's Workforce Development Board: GWDB heard the call to action in response to the current workforce shortage and submitted the following recommendations:
  - Prioritize funding in the 20-21 budget that reduces economic disparities and economic inequalities based on race, disability, disconnected youth or gender.
  - Continue funding from the Minnesota State Legislature to support individuals with the most significant disabilities who are eligible for services through Vocational Rehabilitation Services at DEED.
  - Align state education and skills training investments with the vision, goals and strategies of the GWDB's and Minnesota's Strategic Plan and the local and regional workforce development systems' plans for the federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) to ensure Minnesota remains a national leader in employment, skills training, education and economic growth.
  - Promote adult career pathways and career advancement strategies. Apprenticeships are a proven and affordable earn-while-you-learn skills training model leading to stable jobs, career advancement, and family sustaining wages and benefits. Apprenticeships help bridge racial, ethnic, gender and disability equity gaps within a growing span of industry sectors and in-demand occupations. Apprenticeship programs provide employers with skilled, credentialed and experienced workers.
  - Reskill and upskill incumbent workers to meet industry demands for new skills, higher overall skills levels, and advanced skills to prepare the workforce for technological advancements.
3. Workforce Development Scholarships: In the 2018-2019 academic year, nearly 400 Workforce Development Scholarships of \$2,500 were awarded to students entering Minnesota State colleges as part of a pilot program funded by a \$1 million appropriation from the Minnesota Legislature during the 2017 session. The scholarships were made available to new students entering associate degree, diploma, or certificate programs in high-demand sectors of Minnesota's economy at any of the 30 Minnesota State community and technical colleges. The

qualifying programs included advanced manufacturing, agriculture, health care, and information technology. The scholarships covered approximately half the cost of tuition and fees for the required credits.

To serve future students, legislation that came out of the 2019 legislative session substantially expands the \$1 million pilot program by making \$2 million available for FY2020 and a total of \$6 million for FY2021. With the additional funding, the number of available scholarships will increase to an estimated 668 in FY2020. The legislation also expanded the program to include two additional programs of study: early childhood education and transportation. In addition, the seven Minnesota State universities will be eligible to award scholarships for FY2021 to students who received scholarships from a Minnesota State college and transfer into a corresponding bachelor's program.

Referring to the workforce scholarships, Devinder Malhotra, chancellor of Minnesota State Colleges and Universities stated, "As I have traveled around the state, a theme that I consistently hear from employers is that Minnesota is facing a critical shortage of workers with the skills needed for high-demand occupations. Workforce Development Scholarships have proven to be an effective tool for attracting students into these fields and helping them find a path toward a satisfying and well-paying career. We are grateful to the Legislature and the Governor for this opportunity, and we look forward to awarding these scholarships to help meet Minnesota's workforce needs."

4. Continued support of the DEED Training Grant Programs: The Minnesota Jobs Skills Partnership (MJSP) provides short-term training for long-term employment and offsets training-related expenses. Grants include the Partnership Program, which provides up to \$400,000 to educational institutions that partner with businesses to develop job training or retraining for existing employees, and the Job Training Incentive Program which provides up to \$200,000 to new or expanding businesses (<https://mn.gov/deed/business/financing-business/training-grant/>).

5. Dual Training Grant: In support of the implementation of the Minnesota Dual-Training Pipeline administered by the MN Department of Labor and Industry (DLI), the 2015 Minnesota Legislature established the Dual Training Grant administered by the MN Office of Higher Education (OHE). The Dual Training Grant (Minnesota Statutes 136A.246) is a funding source that generates collaborative and strategic educational solutions between employers and related-instruction providers across Minnesota. It pairs on-the-job training with related instruction to generate a comprehensive platform for learning. Employers, or organizations of employers, may apply for grants to reimburse expenses related to instruction toward attaining an industry-recognized degree, certificate, or credential for their employees.

6. Concurrent Enrollment Grant Program: The Office of Higher Education administers the Concurrent Enrollment Grant Program for development of new concurrent enrollment courses and expansion of existing concurrent programs. Concurrent enrollment courses are college courses taught in high school by qualified high school teachers during the regular school day and offered through a partnership between a high school and a college or university.

The grant program was established by the 2015 Minnesota Legislature. The 2019 higher education omnibus bill provided \$225,000 each year of the 2020-2021 biennium to support development of new concurrent enrollment courses in career and technical education. It also provided \$115,000 each year for the expansion of existing concurrent enrollment programs by postsecondary institutions currently offering a concurrent enrollment course.

7. Get Ready Program: Get Ready helps students from low-income backgrounds, indigenous communities, and communities of color realize their aspirations through education and career advancement. Get Ready operates in middle and high schools across multiple districts in Minnesota. Get Ready is funded primarily by the U.S. Department of Education through a federal GEAR UP grant (Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs). The Program is administered by the Minnesota Office of Higher Education. The federal GEAR UP program has two objectives: 1) student graduation from high school, and 2) student transition into college (includes all types of postsecondary institutions) upon high school graduation. For more information about Get Ready, please visit: [www.GetReady.state.mn.us](http://www.GetReady.state.mn.us)

**b. Describe the State’s strategic vision and set of goals for preparing an educated and skilled workforce (including special populations) and for meeting the skilled workforce needs of employers, including in existing and emerging in-demand industry sectors and occupations as identified by the State, and how the State’s career and technical education programs will help to meet these goals. (Section 122(d)(2) of Perkins V)**

Preparing people for career and life success and meeting the skilled workforce needs of the state requires a close connection among the entities that recruit, support, educate, train, and develop youth and adults. It means ensuring that all individuals possess the knowledge and skills to enter the workforce and have options for strengthening these capabilities over the course of their careers. This preparation and support requires a network of educators, employers, and service providers to make up a local, regional, and state-wide network.

Formulated as part of the transition year’s work, Minnesota developed specific statements to guide the Perkins V work. The vision, mission and principles that were developed are in alignment with the State’s WIOA strategic vision, goals, and strategies. This underscores the partnership between the state agencies who are partners in this workforce development space.

Below are the vision, mission, principles and strategic directions for the Minnesota Perkins plan.

**Our Vision:** Advancing career and technical education empowers every learner to realize a rewarding career.

**Our Mission:** Quality career and technical education ensures every learner has equitable access to career-connected learning through a network of knowledgeable partners.

**Our Principles:** We are committed to ensuring:

- An equity lens for all decision-making
  - Inclusion of all stakeholders
  - Being bold, innovative, and focused on continuous improvement
  - Responsiveness to the evolving labor market
- The five strategic directions developed by Minnesota State, Minnesota Department of Education and the full planning team were validated by stakeholder groups and will direct the work of the Perkins V plan. These Work Groups have designed and implemented the frameworks, structure and guidance for the initial submission of the state 4-year plan as well as preparing and supporting the local applicants. Based on the input from the initial local 2-year applications, the work groups will customize their workplan to meet the challenges

and needs of the local consortia. The Strategic Directions are the following: **Advancing Career and Technical Education**

- Comprehensive Needs Assessment
- Accountability
- Outreach
- Awareness and Communication
  
- Career Pathways
  - Programs of Study
- Career Preparation
  - Work-based Learning
  
- Business and Industry
- State and federal programs; state agencies
- Educational Partners
- Consortia/Minnesota State/Minnesota Department of Education
  
- Service Partnerships
- providing resources
- Data/data management
  
- Professional development/technical assistance
- Licensure Preparation Programs
- Mentor/mentee relationships
- Consortia leadership

Minnesota is focused on increasing student success by:

- Providing high quality programs of study connected to high-skill, high-wage, in-demand careers
- Increasing the focus on service to special populations including the use of statewide Perkins leadership funds and an expansion of community partnerships
- Requiring data-informed decision making regarding local programs, services and spending

- Supporting local innovation and program of study improvement through increased reserve funding
- Providing focus and support to recruiting, training, and retaining educational professionals

Preparing students for post-high school graduation opportunities has long been the priority of school districts across the nation; however, the past few decades have generally aimed at “college for all,” with the assumption that “college” means a four-year degree. Our reality is now driven by global economic needs and the challenge to meet domestic and global workforce demands for jobs that require a combination of academic knowledge and technical skills. Of the careers requiring some type of education, a significant number of them are now requiring a two-year technical degree and/or credential or certification. Additionally, occupations need a workforce of life-long learners to keep abreast with technology and career area knowledge changes. Current trends are breaking down the silos in which education and workforce sectors often operate, thus leading the Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) to strengthen support to schools and districts in creating the World’s Best Workforce (WBWF).

MDE has identified the skills and accountability measures of the WBWF, Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), and Career and Technical Education (CTE) and crafted a new vision for career and college readiness with due emphasis on career readiness domains and competencies. This vision has guided the development of the Minnesota Career and College Readiness Resource Guide for schools, students and stakeholders to use to support student learning in this area.

Embracing a well-rounded view of education is needed to drive educational and workforce goals and policies. Taking many perspectives into consideration, along with stakeholder feedback, MDE developed a holistic vision of career and college readiness:

*A sufficiently prepared student is one who has the knowledge, skills, mindset, and experiences in the academic, workplace, and personal/social domains to keep learning and, beyond secondary school, to successfully navigate toward and adapt to an economically viable career.*

For the purposes of preparing an educated and skilled workforce, including special populations, and for meeting the skilled workforce needs of employers, including both existing and emerging in-demand industry sectors and occupations as identified by the State, the CCR Resource is one resource to guide schools and districts through holistic school or district program planning decisions. It can be used either as a systematic guide, or as individual pieces which best fit with the current phase of planning or improvement efforts. Four domains and competencies represent Minnesota’s vision of career and college readiness: Employability Skills, Mindsets and Social Awareness, Career Development and Transitional Knowledge.

MDE is committed to establishing coherence between Perkins, the state CTE Vision, the state CCR Vision, WBWF, and ESSA. For example, one can view the “big picture” of all students being prepared for education, training, and careers and where the secondary Perkins performance indicators fit within the identified CCR Resource career readiness indicators are measured in the secondary system. All of the measures are grounded in the commitment and subsequent measures of equity access, participation, representation, and outcomes for all students.

In summary, MDE recruits and prepares students in CTE through a progression of education opportunities for students, teachers, and support staff. Minnesota State continues that progression through the goals of Perkins V including providing support of the CLNA in the development of local or regional strategies to develop workforce solutions; support the recruitment, preparation, retention and training of educational professionals; provide

incentives for innovation and improvement of POS. These provisions and support are aligned with the recognition that rural consortia and consortia with high numbers of CTE students may need additional support to meet the state determined performance indicators and provide equity of access for the students.

**c. Describe the State's strategy for any joint planning, alignment, coordination and leveraging of funds between the State's career and technical education programs and programs of study with the State's workforce development system, to achieve the strategic vision and goals described in section 122(d)(2) of Perkins V, including core programs defined in section 3 of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (29 U.S.C. 3102) and the elements related to system alignment under section 102(b)(B) of such Act (29 U.S.C. 3112(b)(B)); and for programs carried out under this title with other Federal programs, which may include programs funded under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 and the Higher Education Act of 1965. (Section 122(d)(3) of Perkins V)**

As a partner of Minnesota's Combined State WIOA plan, CTE is actively engaged in workforce development planning, coordination and alignment activities with leadership from both Minnesota State and MDE serving on the Governor's Workforce Development Board (GWDB). The board has a responsibility to advise the Governor on Minnesota's workforce system and represents key leaders from business, education, labor, community-based organizations, and government. The GWDB has statutory responsibility under the federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), which provides leadership on opportunities and key workforce strategies for the state. The Board provides a venue for workforce stakeholders building on a shared vision and mission. The GWDB is mandated and funded by the federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) and further defined by Minn. Stat., Sect. 116L.665.

In addition, state staff serves on the career pathways, equity, and inclusion work groups. At the regional and local levels, there is cross planning, alignment and coordination with Perkins leaderships serving on workforce boards and regional workforce personnel serving on the Perkins leadership teams. These relationships are essential to effective and authentic work in the completion of the comprehensive local needs assessments. As a strong local-control state, that local or regional work will be essential in achieving the core programs and elements related to system alignment described in Perkins V and WIOA.

MDE's Office of Adult Education oversees services to learners who have left the education system without graduating from high school. Many Minnesota two-year colleges have been selected as providers for adult education programs, providing services that include supports to help learners transition into CTE programs upon attainment of their GED. It is anticipated that Adult Education completers are likely to continue with their postsecondary education in CTE programs available at postsecondary institutions.

Perkins V reinforces Minnesota State and MDE's shared common efforts when it comes to engaging with the State's Workforce Board (GWDB) and other partners to prepare learners to successfully transition to employment or postsecondary opportunities. . The Perkins V initiative along with other partners, including industry associations and business collations such as chambers of commerce and Minnesota State's Centers of Excellence, engage business and industry for work-based learning opportunities, participate in and expand sector partnership efforts championed by business and industry, assist with the design of career pathways, and support collaboration with business and industry to increase opportunities for industry recognized credentials. The shared interests and overlapping goals between CTE, ESSA ensure

responsibility for secondary student success is shared between the two federally funded programs. Additionally, Perkins V and WIOA share the goal of recognized postsecondary credential attainment for learners.

**d. Describe how the eligible agency will use State leadership funds made available under section 112(a)(2) of Perkins V for each of the purposes under section 124(s) of the Act.**

Minnesota will use leadership funds to support professional development and provide technical assistance aligned with the CLNA of local applications. Continuing best practice from prior CTE work and incorporating the Perkins V general authority, state leadership activities will include the required uses of funds of the Act.

Supporting preparation for non-traditional fields in current and emerging professions, programs for special populations, and other activities that expose students, including special populations, to high-skill, high-wage, and in-demand occupations will continue. Support will be offered in the form of professional development, technical assistance specific to consortia needs, and awarding incentive grants to eligible recipients with promising practice for addressing the success of our non-traditional and special populations students.

Building on the recent activities with juvenile justice facilities and our history working with correctional institutions, leadership funds will be used to support individuals in state institutions including juvenile justice facilities and correctional institutions. The award for the distribution of these funds will continue to be implemented through the request for proposal (RFP) process. Recipients will be encouraged to share promising practices at the CTE Work! state-wide conference.

Funds will be used for professional development and to recruit, prepare and retain career and technical education teachers, faculty, specialized instructional support personnel, or paraprofessionals. Initiatives will be conducted at the state-wide level through focused efforts to build additional venues for teachers to meet the CTE and work-based learning licensure and certification requirements. Perkins V leadership funds will also support other state and federal grant programs specifically designed to bring solutions to the critical challenge of meeting the state's needs for qualified CTE professionals. Minnesota State's Perkins team has been researching, incentivizing, and providing recommendations to meet the demand for CTE teachers. The current report *CTE Teacher Education Initiatives* [https://minnstate.edu/system/cte/professionaldevelopment/documents/MN\\_CTE\\_Teacher\\_Prep\\_Report-March2020.pdf](https://minnstate.edu/system/cte/professionaldevelopment/documents/MN_CTE_Teacher_Prep_Report-March2020.pdf) documents the state of our CTE teacher supply and demand equation and provides recommendations for initiatives moving forward. This work will require Perkins V leadership funds as well as state and local resources to make both a short-term and long-term impact on our teacher shortage. Minnesota aspires to replicate a full plan such as the national TEACH AG program.

Technical assistance will be provided as eligible recipients request and/or state staff predict the need in the implementation of Perkins V plans. The delivery of technical assistance will continue to be delivered virtually or with a physical site-visit as requested by consortia. As appropriate, the team of secondary and postsecondary state staff will respond to requests. Technical assistance needs will also be determined as the first round of local applications with CLNA are reviewed. High risk applications or challenges noted in multiple applications will trigger the needs for state support.

In addition, leadership funds will support staff time and resources to:

1. Provide templates, rubrics and technical assistance for the development or refinement of State Recognized POS
2. Support the development of frameworks, career exploration materials, guidance, and advisement activities for CTE
3. Facilitate work-based learning experience guides, models and training
4. Promote the integration of academic standards, relevant technical knowledge and skills, and employability skills
5. Provide programming and support to increase the ability of teachers, faculty and specialized instructional support personnel to stay current with industry standards and earn industry-recognized credentials as appropriate
6. Support state staff to establish or participate in existing statewide industry partnerships among local educational agencies, institution of higher education, adult education provides, Native Tribes and Tribal organizations, employers and community organizations.

Minnesota's Perkins V Plan will build on the solid foundation of development and review processes implemented through Perkins IV. Minnesota established a collaborative system focused on the assessment of technical skills in the State's high school and college Career and Technical Education programs. The current system is organized into 26 local consortia. The consortia model brings together secondary teachers and postsecondary faculty and staff along with business and industry partners, to guide the development, implementation, and continuous improvement of programs of study. At its implementation, this collaborative system put in place technical skills assessments (TSA) as a measure of program quality and a tool for teachers/faculty to improve curricula. The TSA has evolved into a benchmark for the individual student and has directed attention to industry recognized credentials and postsecondary credentials in general. Perkins V is an opportunity for our collaborative system to continue ensuring open communication lines between secondary and postsecondary institutions, as well as balancing the labor market needs of the community, region or State.

The diversity of Minnesota's economy is a success story. Analysis of current economic growth points to strengths across a number of sectors—from national competitiveness in agriculture and manufacturing to impressive growth in healthcare and professional business services. Minnesota's resilient economy provides momentum for continued support of career and technical education programs including programs of study in all 16 career clusters. The framework for this continued work includes:

- Marketing
- Business, Management and Administration
- Hospitality and Tourism
- Finance
- Agriculture, Food, and Natural Resources

- Arts, Audio/Video Technology, and Communication
- Information Technology
- Transportation, Distribution, and Logistics
- Architecture and construction
- Manufacturing
- Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics
- Health Science
- Education and Training
- Human Services
- Government and Public Administration
- Law, Public Safety, Corrections and Security.

Comprehensive local needs assessment will assist the local consortium in the prioritization and validation of the economic cluster and related programs of study that meet local or regional needs. These plans will be based on data-driven decisions made with their local and regional partners.

Minnesota has defined a Program of Study (POS) as a coordinated, non-duplicative sequence of academic and technical content at the secondary and postsecondary levels that:

- incorporates challenging State academic standards,
- includes both academic and technical knowledge and skills that are aligned with State-approved frameworks including employability skills,
- is aligned with local and regional needs of current and emerging occupations,
- progresses in specificity (beginning with all aspects of an industry or career cluster) and leads to more occupation-specific instruction,
- has multiple entry and exit points that incorporates credentialing, and
- culminates in the attainment of a recognized postsecondary credential.

The development and distribution of the career and college readiness guides, along with professional development resources provided by the state, is worthy of attention. In Minnesota, career and college readiness has been elevated as an educational support and vital component of programs of study. In March 2016, the Office of Career and College Success, in collaboration with the Regional Educational Laboratory (REL) Midwest and the Midwest Comprehensive Center (MWCC), brought together a group of stakeholders to articulate what career and college readiness means for Minnesota students.

Support for the development and implementation of programs of study at the local consortia level is provided through state-approved frameworks, career and college readiness resources, work-based learning guides, and intentional professional development with teacher, faculty and Perkins leadership. In addition, individual technical assistance is provided through state staff of Minnesota State and Minnesota Department of Education. Building on the considerable work of

Perkins IV in which each program of study was reviewed by teachers and faculty for competencies and appropriate technical skill assessment on a rotational basis, work will now have closer alignment with the timing of the secondary programs review scheduled by MDE. The first of this new continuous review process is set to begin January of 2020.

**b. Describe the process and criteria to be used for approving locally developed programs of study or career pathways (see Text Box 3 for the statutory definition of career pathways under section 3(8) of Perkins V), including how such programs address State workforce development and education needs and the criteria to assess the extent to which the local application under section 132 will—**

**i. promote continuous improvement in academic achievement and technical skill attainment;**

**ii. expand access to career and technical education for special populations; and iii. support the inclusion of employability skills in programs of study and career pathways. (Section 122(d)(4)(B) of Perkins V)**

Minnesota's school districts and the two-year colleges of Minnesota State were self-formed into Perkins consortia under Perkins IV to promote collaborative planning and implementation of Career and Technical education programs within their regions. Benefits of the consortia model include bringing all stakeholders together in a given region to ensure all voices are heard as decision are made to determine which programs of study would best address the workforce needs of the communities.

In identifying initial membership in the State's Perkins consortia, Career and Technical Education leaders were asked to consider the following for their region of the state:

- Career and Technical Education program improvement
- Anticipated Programs of Study
- Dual and concurrent enrollment opportunities
- Collaborative history and culture
- High school to college matriculation patterns
- Geographic proximity
- Continuation of effective collaborative activities that promote high school to college transition
- A decision-making model that would equitably and effectively address Career and Technical Education programming.

For the past several years under Perkins IV the consortia structure has worked well in Minnesota, but as circumstances change over time due to economic, population-related, or other reasons, consortia structure needs to be re-examined to ensure consortia are achieving the goals they were formed to meet. As such, State leaders are requesting that Perkins consortia in Minnesota take a critical look at whether their current configurations best meet the career and technical education needs of students in these regions. This process will be on-going throughout the next four years as Perkins consortia research and plan governance changes to meet State guidelines for size, scope, and quality of programs going forward into Perkins V. As the state implements the Strengthening Career and Technical Education in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century

Act(Perkins V) the consortia model will continue to be the system of delivery for quality Career and Technical education including addressing State workforce development needs and education goals and assessing quality programs of study.

In the planning year, Minnesota formed five strategic direction work groups to guide our transition to Perkin V: Advancing CTE, Career-Connected Learning, Integrated Network, Equity and Inclusion, and Knowledgeable Experts. The purpose of the Career-Connected Learning Work Group is to provide recommendations and decisions that re-set/guide the state in career pathway development from career exploration to employment. Career Connected Learning provides context to core academics through integrated, applied and experiential learning with an exposure to Career and Technical Education and a balanced secondary and postsecondary experience. One of the goals of the group included the development of a checklist and two rubrics that define the minimum criteria for State-recognized programs of study, the second to identify strengths or potential opportunities in their State-recognized Programs of Study, and the third to provide measures for continuous improvement for all programs of study. The minimum criteria rubric advances and refines the previous Rigorous Program of Study checklist that Minnesota implemented in 2012, the MDE program approval guidelines, and the quality standards from the research of national organizations including Advance CTE.

The elements of the rubric (available at <https://minnstate.edu/system/cte/Strengthening-CTE/index.html> ) to meet the minimum standard for a State-recognized CTE program of study include the following:

1. **Course standards accurately align to the academic, technical, and employability skills learners must master for entry and success in a given career pathway:** Content standards, frameworks and competencies that define what students are expected to know and be able to do to enter and advance in college and/or careers comprise the foundation of a POS.
2. **Program of Study incorporates active involvement from an integrated network of partners:** Ongoing relationships among education, business, and diverse community stakeholders bolster POS design, implementation, evaluation and maintenance.
3. **Secondary program(s) meets MDE program approval requirements and incorporates courses that lead to postsecondary credits/credentials:** Secondary programs have appropriately-licensed teachers, advisory committees, develop and ensure access to equitable student leadership opportunities, and provide career exploration activities leading to postsecondary credits/credentials.
4. **Postsecondary academic program meets Minnesota State board policy and Higher Learning Commission requirements:** A cohesive arrangement of college-level credit courses and experiences, designed to accomplish predetermined objectives, lead to the awarding of a degree, diploma, or certificate.
5. **Materials, Equipment and Resources:** Facilities, equipment, technology and materials used in the program of study reflect current workplace, industry and/or occupational standards and practices for installation, use, maintenance, and safety.
6. **Incorporates authentic work experiences at the secondary and/or postsecondary level that are valued by industry:** POS engages students in authentic work-based learning experiences that demonstrate progressive occupational learning aligned to industry workforce needs.

7. **Program of Study development, improvement and advocacy are supported by findings from a comprehensive local needs assessment:** Systems and strategies for gathering, analyzing, and disseminating needs assessment data are effective for guiding the improvement of POS, and available in plain language to enhance use by stakeholders for POS advocacy.

A consortium will have a minimum requirement of six programs of study by the submission of their second 2-year local application. The process includes program approvals at the secondary level (Minnesota Department of Education program approval and 5-year program review) and the postsecondary level (initial program by Minnesota State system office and then local program review according to their accreditation standards). The consortia's POS will be submitted and reviewed on an annual basis as part of the application for funds. The continuous improvement efforts of the local consortia will be documented through the use of the POS Continuous Improvement rubric which is now in final draft.

### **Postsecondary**

The Minnesota State program approval policy:

Board of Trustee Policy 3.36 Academic Programs Part 5.

**Academic Program Approval.** Approval of the chancellor is required for new academic programs, changes to existing academic programs, suspension of academic programs, and closure of academic programs at system colleges and universities.

An approved academic program shall include curricular requirements for earning an academic award, such as credits in general education, a major and/or minor, and all prerequisite courses. The chancellor shall maintain the academic program inventory and annually report to the Board of Trustees on the status of the inventory. The annual report to the Board will include data and analysis of programs measured against program goals established by the Chancellor. The goals will be based on aligning program offerings to workforce needs statewide, regionally and locally in collaboration with the Department of Employment and Economic Development and the Governor's Workforce Development Council (GWDC), and including data from the State Demographer. Only academic programs approved by the chancellor as recorded in the academic program inventory may be offered by system colleges and universities.

(Retrieved from <https://www.minnstate.edu/board/policy/336.html>)

### **Secondary**

#### **Minnesota Department of Education Program Approval**

Districts, Cooperatives, and Charter Schools submit a Program Approval Form to the Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) if they are:

- Applying for a new program.
- Making updates to an existing program.
- Perkins consortia region that is up for five-year renewal.

The programs and courses listed within a district's Program Approval Database are the programs and courses that will be reported to MDE in the P-file (Perkins data submission). Retrieved from (<https://education.mn.gov/MDE/dse/cte/progApp/>) All programs receive review conducted by the Minnesota Department of Education on a five-year cycle.

### **B.2.b (ii) expand access to career and technical education for special populations;**

While economic indicators for the Minnesota are headed in a very positive direction, a number of other indicators highlight the educational and employment disparities that continue to persist. As the disaggregated unemployment data is analyzed, it documents that unemployment and poverty rates for communities of color continue to increase. This research shows that people with disabilities experience over twice the rate of unemployment as those without a disability. The State's WIOA plan states, "Youth are becoming increasingly disconnected from education and the labor market. Minnesota's future economic prosperity requires a workforce development system that provides greater employment opportunities for those experiencing barriers to employment and meets the skill needs of employers."

The Perkins V strategies to meet the challenges of our special populations will come from the analysis at the local or regional level derived from the CLNA. Local consortia are required to document and evaluate how their intentional activities will expand access to Career and Technical Education (CTE) for special populations as identified in the comprehensive local needs assessment. The State will continue to provide professional development to consortia including understanding the expansion of special populations as defined by the Strengthening Career and Technical Education for the 21 Century Act, consortia data review and analysis, applicable national research projects, and recommendations for interventions.

A component of providing *access for all* to programs is the Office of Civil Rights compliance requirements. Minnesota has demonstrated a long-standing commitment to equity and ensuring that members of special populations are provided equal access to programs. Each year the Minnesota State conducts a minimum of four Office of Civil Rights (OCR) compliance reviews. The major purposes of the OCR Compliance Review are to ensure that community colleges are providing equal access to CTE through vigorous enforcement of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, Section 504 of the Vocational Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and Title II of The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). In addition to conducting a minimum of four local OCR On-Site Compliance Reviews each year, Minnesota State provides ongoing technical assistance to community college staff members on equal access.

The Minnesota Department of Education is required to submit to the United States Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights (OCR), a Biennial Civil Rights Compliance Report. It is MDE's responsibility to conduct comprehensive on-site reviews of school districts to address issues of discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex and disability in vocational education programs. The strategies that have been undertaken under Perkins IV will continue under Perkins V. Specialists with the Compliance and Assistance Division within the Minnesota Department of Education will review Minnesota school districts on a cyclic time frame.

### **B.2.b. iii. support the inclusion of employability skills in programs of study and career pathways.**

Employability skills are increasingly a component of curriculum and instruction in all career and technical programs, and are addressed and validated through the inclusion of work-based learning (WBL) experiences within programs of study and career pathways and all aspects of MDE's Career and College Readiness work.

Work-based learning provides students the opportunity to become engaged with occupations, employers and career pathways. There is a significant importance for both secondary and post-secondary students to participate in work-based learning opportunities. The experience gives students a first-hand look into prospective or chosen careers as well as experience in

developing employability skills. Students have the opportunities to participate in career exploration to full emersion either in or outside of the traditional school setting. This is rich experience for students and helps guide them to well-suited career choices. The state supports the local consortium's implementation for work-based learning in the programs of study. One of the minimum requirements for State-recognized Program of Study recognition by the state is the inclusion of a work-based learning opportunity for students. The state supports work-based learning at the consortium level by providing funding to the consortium to both develop and improve these opportunities for students, professional development, and technical assistance.

Opportunities to build career awareness, explore careers, and develop employability, critical thinking and problem solving skills are provided through work-based learning experiences. Local consortium have a range of WBL strategies to include in programs of study, including instructor-led experiences such as simulation, portfolio development, and capstones or employer-aligned WBL such as internships, project work, or field experience. WBL is an instructional strategy within the experiential learning continuum wheel (p. 6, A Reference Guide to Minnesota Work-Based Learning Programs, <http://education.state.mn.us/MDE/dse/cte/tl/wbl/>) which involves an appropriately licensed teacher (through the Minnesota Professional Educator Licensing and Standards Board (PELSB), formerly the Board of Teaching) who closely supervises the worksite activities, convenes an advisory committee, and is responsible for the required Training Plan, Training Agreement, safety training, seminar class, evaluation of competencies and recordkeeping.

The work-based learning experience is to be connected to career pathway CTE classes and the career technical student organizations (when available) of the career pathway, including, but not exclusively, the work-based learning career seminar. Training Plans for a particular work experience detail the scope and sequence of occupational competencies and employability skills for entering an occupation or postsecondary education. If a student completes multiple work experiences, the training plan should include a progression of acquisition of higher-level competencies. Each student participating in an employer-aligned work-based learning opportunity must have a training plan prepared by the work-based learning coordinator and the employer, with competencies identified by the team. These identified competencies must match proposed deliverables/outcomes specified in a vendor contract for an identified employment opportunity. Training plans are required to be kept on file at the local school district and be available for review upon request.

This array of opportunities provides Minnesota students with the strategies to become career ready. Students with disabilities have opportunities to participate in work-based learning, however, there may be times when students with disabilities will require specially-designed instruction to meet their educational needs. If an IEP team determines that need, accessing Minnesota's CTE for Students with a Disability may be an appropriate service. The WBL experience provides students with opportunities to build career awareness, explore careers, employability skills, and develop critical thinking and problem-solving skills.

Minnesota has codified employability skills within its definition of career and college readiness. Career and college readiness is defined by Minnesota Statutes, section 120B.30, as:

“For purposes of statewide accountability, ‘career and college ready’ means a high school graduate has the knowledge, skills, and competencies to successfully pursue a career pathway, including postsecondary credit leading to a degree, diploma, certificate, or industry-recognized credential and employment. Students who are career and college ready are able to successfully

complete credit-bearing coursework at a two- or four-year college or university or other credit bearing postsecondary program without need for remediation.”

### **B.2.c.i. Availability of Career Pathways Information**

At the state level, career pathway inventories are available through MN Programs of Study (<http://www.mnprogramsofstudy.org/mnpos//>). Currently information on college credit options, career exploration resources and the full listing of programs of study by high school, career or pathway or college are available. The pathways can also be sorted by consortium name. However, as the system makes changes to its own software platforms and the new State-recognized Programs of Study checklist is implemented the State is researching new options to transition our delivery of this information in more user friendly, compliant and diverse language platforms. Local consortia have print and website information available to students, parents, teacher and faculty.

### **B.2.c.ii. Career Pathway Multiple Entry and Exit Points**

The State is committed to providing support to local consortia and partners and to build career pathways that demonstrate the opportunity for multiple entry and exit points. The availability of multiple entry and exit points provides the opportunity for students to enter a career pathway at various stages in their educational experience. The State does not have the authority to mandate to colleges or high schools the structure of the programs and the creation of degree options. However, the State does collectively encourage programs to structure the credential attainment in a stackable format. This allows students to enter and stop-out at various life points without losing previously obtained experience as well as provide opportunities for students to gain both experience in the industry and educational experiences. This includes the ability of singular institutions to offer only portions of a program because of limited physical or human resources. The state encourages collaboration and partnerships between educational institutions to provide credential attainment in a variety of ways and encourages institutions to honor transfers, articulations, dual enrollment agreements, and award credits for prior learning experiences, or competency-based education.

Some circumstances are beyond the control of the Career and Technical Education units and are governed by other regulatory agencies such as Regional Accreditation (HLC), State Statute, or Board of Trustee Policy. Programs of study provide students with opportunities to stack their credentials and earn credits for prior educational or work experiences. Programs are developed for people to gain professional development and/or leadership responsibilities in a chosen career pathway. This may be a degree completion or preparation for completion of an industry recognized credential or re-certification. Institutions are developing programs that have smaller parsed courses that allows for students to enroll in courses (or parts) that are needed to complete credentials without having to “re-enroll” and participating in programs that are not needed because of experience or educational completions.

The state will review all the State-recognized Programs of Study and career pathways and provide supports for technical assistance to programs to re-design so that various entry and exit points exists. The creation of the Continuous Improvement Rubric for “program quality” is aligned with Minnesota State, MDE, and the program approval process for schools to self-evaluate the quality of their programs and programs of study in their school district’s (not a state evaluation tool). One of the metrics in this tool is to review the multiple entry and exit points. There are many efforts throughout Minnesota State to enhance the entry and exit points in career pathways for various populations such as Veterans and ex-offenders.

Minnesota has required consortia formation between secondary and postsecondary for several years. This obligates partners to collaborate on the development of a joint local Perkins application. This application details how each consortium will use funds to develop, coordinate, and implement CTE programs and programs of study. This requirement by the state has been a successful tool in having eligible recipients work together to leverage resources. Efforts to coordinate and improve State-recognized Programs of Study will include consortia collaboration with secondary, post-secondary, adult basic education (ABE), and workforce agencies.

The state supports application and plan development by monitoring and providing feedback on each local plan. In addition, the annual CTEWorks! Conference starts with a preconference designed to support local consortia coordinators. It gives coordinators a time to network and share learning. This work was highlighted partly because of the alignment of the career pathways definition in WIOA and Perkins V. Future conferences could include sessions on fiscal collaboration with other revenue streams.

The alignment of definitions has provided an opportunity to merge work around multiple entry and exit points. For instance, State-recognized Programs of Study are designed to move students through secondary and postsecondary courses in a particular industry. Although this is a good model it limits access for adult learners, dislocated workers, and others. The only entry point they have is postsecondary and, unfortunately, too many of them end up in development education instead postsecondary coursework. To address this issue, system leadership in ABE and CTE have been regularly meeting this past year to consider a new strategy with Adult Basic Education to create professional development that guides CTE and ABE instructors in creating scaffolded pathway coursework that clearly delineates entry and exit points.

### **B.2.c.iii. Labor Market Data**

Each consortia is required to conduct local and regional needs assessment throughout the state on a biennial basis. The state will utilize the data collected from local and regional needs assessment to influence conversation at regional levels. This will provide some of data required to make informed decisions about State-recognized Programs of Study. The State also has several resources to align State-recognized Programs of Study to local and regional labor market data. State staff will develop a process for conducting an analysis of consortium programs of study. This analysis will help consortia to determine which programs of study are offered throughout their region. Perkins state leadership will conduct professional development for the consortia leaders and provide technical assistance to utilize a variety of labor market data resources to triangulate data both quantitative and qualitative to analyze what programs are vital to the region. The State anticipates that manufacturing and health care will have a strong presence as needed industries in all needs assessment and will show as in-demand careers in labor market data information. The state may not have the capacity in every institution to develop career pathways in these industries, but can support the partnerships and collaboration between institutions that may not be able to develop program. Once the information is available, consortium leadership will determine how to support the programs that are deemed high-wage, high-skill, or in-demand and how to align programs to meet the needs of the local needs assessment. There are many resources and collaborations occurring throughout the state to address occupations that are deemed high-wage, high-skill, or in-demand.

Funding sources may be directed to consortia to examine and implement the use of current technology, equipment, or training aids that align directly to local, regional, state, and national standards within the economy. Consortia applications will document how they have

determined what these needs are and how they came to these conclusions with the support of advisory committees. Programs that do not meet the local needs assessment or the definitions of size, scope and quality may need to seek other sources of funds for equipment or materials to maintain programs.

#### **B.2.c.iv. Equal Access to Approved CTE Programs**

The State will continue to ensure equal access to approved career and technical education for all students with evidence-based practices that have proven to be successful in the state. Several consortia have demonstrated the ability to provide education and activities to populations that have barriers to access. Access to Career Technical Education for Students with a disability (ACTE-SPED) aid is available for contracted services and special equipment to enable students to access CTE courses. Information will continue to be disseminated to consortia so that they can continue to access this aid. The state will collaborate with consortium leaders to identify best practices for educational program delivery to diverse populations across large geographic boundaries. This will include guidance for small institutions with limited economic means for delivering needed career and technical education programs because of factors that are beyond the State's ability to control.

The availability of resources can be scarce in extremely rural regions. In addition, the diversity of career and technical programs offered in the consortia is vastly different. One of the elements of the local needs assessment reviews the issues of access to special populations. This will provide regional data for the consortia to determine strategies on closing the gap associated with access and opportunities for students in special populations.

During the transition year, the State conducted research to identify tools such as NAPE's Equity gap analysis tool that will assist in the identification of gaps or present barriers for special populations' access to career and technical education. Gap analysis will allow the state to determine a strategic approach to reducing or eliminating barriers to career and technical educational programming. The state will continue to provide incentive funding for consortia to improve access and opportunity to special populations and to those that have been able to improve and maintain providing career and technical programming and related activities.

The State will encourage local consortia to establish stronger working relationships with community-based organizations and adult basic education to expand career and technical opportunities to underserved populations as defined in the law. The state will continue to support consortia efforts to expand career and technical education offerings beyond the traditional school building. This includes distance delivery of education through various modalities and utilization of industry supported facilities to eliminate one of the physical barriers. It is evident that many of the barriers to access are caused by the lack of career and technical education teacher licensure or credentialing opportunities. Multiple initiative are in place to address the CTE teacher shortage.

The state will continue to support the availability of brokered career pathways to provide more experiences that are educational for students. The State will also continue to fund support services for students with a variety of needs and provide opportunities for students of all abilities to participate in career and technical education wherever practical and applicable. Professional development needs for educators will be considered to aid in the development of curriculum and programs to meet the needs of learners of all ability levels.

#### **B.2.c.v. Local Workforce Development Boards**

Local workforce development boards participate in all CTE work in Minnesota and the extent of the involvement is very locally controlled. At minimum, workforce development board members participate in the CLNA. The DEED regional labor market analysts and career pathway counselors are active participants in this work. The Career Pathways Tool (<https://mn.gov/deed/data/data-tools/career-pathways-tool/>) developed and hosted by the Minnesota Employment and Economic Development is utilized to connect educational programming with labor market data to help align educational outcomes with the employment opportunities. The interactive tool provides access to state-wide or regional exploration of career field and cluster employment projections, the education demand in these occupations, and wage data. The professional development focused on the use of this tool is part of the Perkins V webinar series hosted by Minnesota State. Local and regional relationships exist between the regional career pathway specialists to assist in providing information for educational programming and career advisement for our learners.

In the majority of the consortia, these personnel also participate in career and technical education advisory boards. Workforce center personnel are also part of the local Perkins governance teams in many consortia. The flip-side is also true. Many of our consortia leaders serve on their regional or local workforce development boards.

Minnesota State and Minnesota Department of Education have separate processes for developing and approving career and technical education programs and each State agency has the authority to approve or deny the application based on a variety of criteria. This process does not discriminate between career and technical education or general education programs. The state currently requires consortia to possess six State-recognized Programs of Study. The state does not dictate or mandate that certain consortia offer certain programs. The consortia determine which pathways are best suited to meet the needs of the students and are available regionally. Secondary and postsecondary approval requires the engagement of a local advisory committee in the ongoing delivery of CTE programs. The State has developed and is updating resources for the programs to utilize the creation of local advisory committees. There are also requirements that the program has occupational data demands to support the creation of postsecondary career pathways. Once programs are completed and approved, the program is required to participate in a program review process. State-recognized Programs of Study are reviewed annually to ensure all the required components exist. The State also strongly encourages the participation in State career pathway collaborative meetings where secondary teachers, postsecondary faculty, and industry experts develop, edit, and approve competencies and assessments to validate the skills needed for entering graduates.

The State will review continue to review processes to improve the performance in the areas of career pathway development, program of study development, and local workforce board and education collaboration and partnership. In addition to these mentioned strategies, consortium throughout the State will be conducting local needs assessments and evaluating the findings. This process will influence the decisions to add, improve, modify, or delete career pathways and/or state approved programs of study. It will also influence postsecondary program modification through involvement of established workforce boards.

As part of the development of a Continuous Improvement rubric, one metric includes evaluating the level of engagement by local workforce boards. The metric will evaluate industry and workforce board involvement in the establishment and modifications of career pathways to meet local needs assessments and the needs of the local workforce development boards.

#### **B.2.c.vi. All Aspects of Industry**

The State places a strong emphasis on the incorporation of work-based learning, mentoring, internships, and simulated work environments into career pathways as part of State-recognized Programs of Study. Many consortia have developed strong collaborations or partnership with business and industries to provide experiential learning opportunities for students. Consortia are currently developing opportunities for students to engage with business and industry on a variety of levels from exploration to employment in various stages of their education. Secondary and post-secondary partners have developed partnerships to take courses in shared spaces with access to all instructors including industry experts. This also includes providing opportunities for teachers and faculty to participate in externships to learn more about relevant industry skills to be teaching students.

One of the metrics the State has examined is the incorporation of work-based learning for students as a program quality indicator. This may include simulated work environments such as health care simulation laboratories or other simulated businesses. The State will begin to investigate the impact of requiring that all identified State-recognized Programs of Study (which includes both the secondary and postsecondary levels) provide the opportunity for some form of work-based learning for students including youth apprenticeships, internships, co-operative experiences, clinical and practicum experiences, entrepreneurships, work simulations, or other forms work-based learning. In addition, every State-recognized Programs of Study already includes career exploration, preparation, and guidance provided by both educators and industry professionals. Several of the consortia are using Perkins funding to provide opportunities for rigorous, long-term, and sustained career exploration with hands-on experiences that are relevant and current in the industry. Continuing to provide technical support and professional development for these types of work-based learning opportunities will be ongoing with the implementation of Perkins V. In addition, the state will explore partnerships with the Minnesota Department of Labor and Industry to provide secondary schools with collaborative guidance about school-based businesses to ensure that experiences meet requirements of WIOA, Olmstead and other labor laws.

The state will provide technical assistance, evidence-based practice, and resources on proven strategies for local school districts and colleges to implement more and create new work-based learning experiences for students. This metric will become one of the scoring sections in determining program quality.

#### **B.2.c.vii. Improvements in Gaps of Performance**

The state will continue to link CTE coursework to hands-on relevant work-based learning experiences, including efforts to develop a scaffolded framework of employability skills development as part of the work experience seminar. The state will provide open educational resources development with the Minnesota Partnership for Collaborative Curriculum (MPCC), with input from a team of CTE teachers from various career fields, which can be used as a course or as modules within other courses. The enhanced connection to work-based learning and development of employability skills has the potential to increase student retention, engagement, graduation rates and academic performance.

During the Perkins V full implementation, consortium will continue to be encouraged to strengthen intentional connections to regional workforce development centers within consortia and local school districts to identify workforce skill training needs for all students/workers including special population students. Programs of study will be reviewed for their responsiveness to local needs assessments and delivered with fidelity to address workforce and workplace needs. The state, in consultation with grants from ADVANCE CTE, is piloting a workshop on moving beyond "having data" to analyzing root causes and recommending

interventions to actually influence change. The pilot is scheduled to review data from two consortia. Revisions to process will be made with all consortia invited in early summer to bring teams to work on their own intervention plan to address gaps of performance.

### **B.2.d. Dual enrollment**

Minnesota has been increasing postsecondary opportunities for students through multiple approaches and offers dual enrollment opportunities for students under the Postsecondary Education Options (PSEO) Act, which includes postsecondary courses taught at the college and/or at the high school through Concurrent Enrollment. By participating in these dual enrollment options, high school students complete both high school graduation requirements and college requirements that allow for greater flexibility when they enter the postsecondary setting full-time. Students may benefit from cost-savings and shorter time-to-credential. State law and consortium regional articulation agreements support planning and funding early college opportunities and ease the transition from secondary to postsecondary.

Eligibility for secondary students to access PSEO on a college campus has expanded over the years to include participation in postsecondary CTE programs for 10<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grade students. Transcripts at the secondary and postsecondary level document course completion. Tuition, fees, and books for PSEO students who earn dual credit are paid by the Minnesota Department of Education to the colleges and universities in which PSEO students are enrolled. The state also provides support to pay the cost of transportation for low income students attending college courses on a postsecondary campus. In addition to financial provisions to support access to college course-taking opportunities for students, policy holds both institutional partners accountable for offering support services to students both prior to and during enrollment in the PSEO program.

The Minnesota Department of Education developed a Postsecondary Enrollment Options Reference Guide, updated August 2019, which provides definitions of postsecondary options, eligibility of students, and participation requirements including students with Individualized Education Programs (IEP). The guide also includes information for students, parents, districts and postsecondary institutions. The Minnesota Automated Reporting Student System (MARSS) collects enrollment and demographic student data using a unique student identification system. The system allows MDE to track student enrollment and postsecondary enrollment option participations.

Minnesota's Concurrent Enrollment partnerships offer thousands of Minnesota students' access to rigorous college courses at their local high school. Research shows that high school students who participate in accelerated learning options, such as concurrent enrollment, benefit greatly from:

- Exposure to high expectations.
- Participation in challenging courses.
- The momentum gained by earning college credits while still in high school.

Minnesota's Concurrent Enrollment program has one of the most extensive policy structures in the country to support high school instructors teaching college courses. Secondary and postsecondary institutions are required to sign a concurrent enrollment agreement that provides for the following assurances: determination of qualifications and responsibilities of high school instructors; postsecondary supports for instructors, resources needed to support teaching and learning; regular communication and professional development between

postsecondary faculty and high school instructors; and approval of high school instructors to teach college courses by the college or university partner.

Partnerships developed between university and college faculty and high school teachers provide learning and training opportunities that may not otherwise exist. Additionally, concurrent enrollment students stay at the high school instead of leaving to attend classes at a university. This allows the student to continue their learning within their high school community and eliminates the barrier that transportation that might be experienced if the student needs to travel to the local college. Finally, through participation in concurrent enrollment, high schools establish themselves as education leaders by setting high standards, providing outstanding offerings, and preparing students for the 21st century.

All thirty-one of the two-year colleges in the Minnesota State system participate in dual enrollment and offer these opportunities to high school students. In 2018, over 41,000 high school students gained college credit via dual enrollment, and participation in dual enrollment has grown by 44% over the past five years. This statistic is inclusive of career and technical educational coursework.

Professional development is an essential part of successful dual enrollment activities. The Minnesota State system office provides a variety of professional development opportunities for both internal staff and external partners specific to dual enrollment opportunities and requirements. Monthly webinars are held for concurrent enrollment directors for our 33 concurrent enrollment programs to share best practices, provide policy guidance, and share information relevant to effective program implementation.

Due to state legislation requiring all concurrent enrollment programs to receive NACEP accreditation, we provide annual workshops in collaboration with NACEP. NACEP is the national accreditor of concurrent enrollment programs and provides rigorous programs standards to support high quality programming. These workshops provide opportunities to learn more about the standards, how to implement them, and how to prepare a strong portfolio for accreditation. Minnesota State also held its first concurrent enrollment summit in the fall of 2018 bringing secondary and postsecondary partners together from across the state to learn about effective and equitable programming practices and build a community of practice statewide.

For programming where high school students take college courses on the college campus (PSEO), quarterly webinars are held to share practices and hold an annual convening of program coordinators to engage in professional development around the specific program needs of this model. Technical assistance is provided as specialized support for PSEO programming with students enrolled in the state approved alternative high schools as well.

For all the success of dual enrollment in all of its iterations, two major challenges persist:

1. The barriers created by the misalignment of secondary teacher licensure requirements and postsecondary minimum qualifications in the same or similar content areas
2. The recruitment and support of nonwhite students into dual enrollment opportunities.

### **B.2.e. Stakeholder Involvement**

The stakeholders described in Section 122(d)(12) of Perkins V were involved in this work through a variety of methodologies. Every opportunity to present the opportunities that changes in the Perkins act presented were capitalized upon. Examples included state staff presentation as part of the agenda for Minnesota's Centers of Excellence, webinars and conference of the Minnesota State Equity and Academic and Student Affairs divisions,

Minnesota State's Board of Trustees, and Governor's Workforce Development Board, surveys to parents and students, attendance at the Tribal Nations Education Council, counselor conferences, program advisory meetings, and direct presentations to the regional or local Perkins planning committees. In addition, formal public provided another opportunity for stakeholder engagement. This engagement continues, very actively, as local consortia are in the process of executing their CLNA work. At the local level, consortia will involve all stakeholder groups in the planning, development, implementation and evaluation of the CTE programs and services.

In compliance with section 134(b) of Perkins V the local application has been developed.  
<https://minnstate.edu/system/cte/Strengthening-CTE/index.html>

The planning doc also has all the narrative questions and posted on our site here in WORD doc:

<https://www.minnstate.edu/system/cte/perkins-local-application/documents/FY21-22-Perkins-Application-Planning-Doc-Narrative-Questions-Only.docx>

For the implementation of this Perkins V plan, Minnesota has reviewed its criteria for defining consortia using the lens of size, scope and quality in addition to the minimum requirement of one public secondary district and one public 2-year Minnesota State institution. The consortium's configuration moving forward will need to meet the criteria below by the 2022 submission of a CLNA:

- Minimum of one school district plus one postsecondary Minnesota State College
- Minimum of 6 State-recognized Programs of Study
  - Of these 6 POS, a minimum of 4 career fields must be represented
  - All components of 3 of the 4 POS by career field must be provided within the consortium
- Greater than 1000 CTE participants at the secondary level
- Greater than 1800 FYE at the postsecondary level.
- The definitions and headcount used for participants and FYE are based on 2018 academic numbers. This was the most recent data as Perkins V went into effect July of 2019.

At the local use of funds level, Minnesota defines size, scope and quality as documented below. However, the State is reviewing and potentially revising these components as we collect information from the comprehensive needs assessments and our formal consultations.

Minnesota defines size, scope and quality at the program level as documented below. However, the State will continue to review and potentially revise these components as we collect information from the comprehensive needs assessments.

### **Size**

- Parameters/resources that affect whether the program can adequately address student-learning outcomes. This includes:
  - Number of students within a program
  - Number of instructors/staff involved with the program
  - Number of courses within a program
  - Available resources for the program (space, equipment, supplies)

### Scope

- Programs of study are part of or working toward inclusion within a clearly defined career pathway with multiple entry and exit points. (The goal of 6 State Recognized programs of study offered with in a consortium will be a component of the full Perkins V plan.)
- Programs of study are aligned with local workforce needs and skills.
- Postsecondary programs connect with secondary career and technical education via articulation agreements and/or dual credit, etc.
- Programs develop not only specific work-based skills, but also broadly applicable employability skills
- **Quality**
- A program must meet two out of the following three criteria: the program develops (1) high skilled individuals, (2) individuals who are competitive for high wage jobs, and (3) individuals who are trained for in-demand occupations.
  - High skilled: programs that result in industry-recognized certificates, credentials, or degrees,
  - High wage: High wage is anything that is above the median wage for all occupations (\$41,749 based on 2018 data from Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development)
  - In demand: occupations that are identified in the Occupation in Demand index (<https://careerwise.minnstate.edu/jobs/hotCareers?re=R01000>) and/or through local needs assessment.
- A program or activity must work toward closing student equity gaps in access and completion (e.g., reducing barriers to students, implementing guided pathways, providing recruitment).
- A program must work toward effectively using data to inform and improve student learning.
- Approved programs meet the requirements of MDE or Minnesota State policies and rules
- Implementation of a continuous program improvement process approved in the local application
- Activities must support or be collaborations with POS Waivers to uses of funds that do not meet the size, scope, and quality criteria at the consortia or local level will be

handled on an individual basis at the time of the local application review or as consortia make requests to change their original submissions.

### B.3.a. Meeting the Needs of Special Populations

Equity is different from equality. Although equality demands that everyone is treated the same, equity recognizes the unique identity of a student that is too often impacted by racism, bigotry, or bias. Equity corrects these realities through conversations, actions, and distribution or redistribution of resources based on individual and group needs to eliminate structures and barriers to ensure equitable outcomes. By eliminating systemic barriers and biases, well-implemented Career and College Readiness (CCR) programs improve outcomes for underserved students and benefit everyone. Commitments to equity provide the framework for school- and district-level actions that will result in greater access, participation, representation, and attainment of CCR skills for all students.

Applying specifically to Perkins funded activities, all local consortia applications are reviewed by the Minnesota State System Office and Minnesota Department of Education staff to ensure that discrimination against members of special populations in learning, student recruitment and support services, and physical accessibility is not apparent in written goals, objectives, strategies or policies. It is an expectation that each local consortium will identify how the needs of special populations of students will be met to ensure that each learner can be successful and experience the same rigorous career and technical education programs leading to high skill, high wage or in-demand occupations.

The work of Perkins V will continue to have an emphasis on developing strategies that focus not just on prioritizing student recruitment but put in place approaches and support that ensure learner success within CTE programs such as:

- Sharing practices for supporting students in special populations, especially disabilities, English language learners, homeless and non-traditional CTE programs. Outreach through campuses and community-industry partnerships, for example, will be utilized to educate local consortia and support communities of practice to address equity in CTE programs.
- Provide technical assistance to address barriers for access and participation in CTE programs by utilizing partnerships from local and national sources to examine equity challenges, priorities, and research.
- Provide professional development to educators and faculty on effective tools and strategies for supporting learners and ensure equity and access to effective support services, without regard to race, color, national origin, gender or (dis)ability. Utilize OCR compliance and campus diversity officers among other local and national resources to provide effective strategies and assessment of programming and services to learners.
- Provide incentives to support the expansion of the opportunities for learners in diverse geographic communities and to explore and experience CTE in flexible environments, such as but not limited to online learning and community-based CTE programming. Identify and utilize opportunities for innovation and partnership grants to support local initiatives and scale promising practices.

- Extend outreach to include more community and industry input on meaningful and quality CTE opportunities and experiential learning. Provided opportunities for funding through RFP grant process to support these efforts and scale practices.

**ii. will not be discriminated against on the basis of status as a member of a special population**

Under Perkins V Minnesota will continue the adherence to the Office of Civil Rights guidelines and requirements. OCR Guidelines require each state agency receiving federal financial assistance that offers or administers vocational education programs to develop and implement a program to monitor compliance to Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. Compliance to the law will include review of institution’s documents and publications containing Title VI, Title IX, and Section 504 policy statement(s) of nondiscrimination; language or media used in public notifications other than English if necessary; and statement(s) or write-up(s) used to notify public of nondiscrimination in career and technical opportunities including date(s) issued.

Minnesota State has adopted the general philosophy that this compliance program be perceived and projected as an opportunity to put students first and to improve the learning environment through activities that allows the system to examine the status of existing conditions, identify problems that exist, plan and implement correction and/or improvement and provide the changes as opportunity for improvement across the full Minnesota State system.

In addressing our secondary student population, the Minnesota Department of Education Civil Rights Compliance Review program is designed to ensure that all groups and populations have an equal opportunity to access their education:

- Review data and records, interview staff and students, administer a survey, and examine facilities for accessibility.
- Prepare a Letter of Findings, detailing areas that are out of compliance, and assist with the development of a Voluntary Compliance Plan that outlines what will be done to come into compliance.
- Assist with completing the items on a voluntary compliance plan, including providing technical assistance and sample policies and procedures.

**Secondary**

The Minnesota Department of Education is required to submit to the United States Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights (OCR), a Biennial Civil Rights Compliance Report. It is MDE’s responsibility to conduct comprehensive on-site reviews of school districts to address issues of discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex and disability in vocational education programs. The strategies that have been undertaken under Perkins IV will continue under Perkins V. Specialists with the Compliance and Assistance Division within the Minnesota Department of Education will review Minnesota school districts on a cyclic time frame.

**Postsecondary**

Minnesota State has demonstrated a long-standing commitment to equity and ensuring that members of special populations are provided equal access to programs. Each year the Minnesota State conducts a minimum of four Office of Civil Rights (OCR) compliance

reviews. The major purposes of the OCR Compliance Review are to ensure that community colleges are providing equal access to CTE through vigorous enforcement of civil rights in compliance with the requirements of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, Section 504 of the Vocational Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and Title II of The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). In addition to conducting a minimum of four local OCR On-Site Compliance Reviews each year, Minnesota State provides ongoing technical assistance to community college staff members on equal access.

Both the Minnesota Department of Education and Minnesota State provide professional development to staff and Perkins consortia leadership as well as teachers and faculty. The Office of Equity and Inclusion and the Office of General Counsel also provides professional development such as the September 19, 2019 workshop Disability Accommodations: Students and Employees (<https://www.minnstate.edu/system/ogc/docs/webinars/>)

The Minnesota State Board of Trustee Policy 1B1 addresses Equal Opportunity and Nondiscrimination in Employment and Education. Individual campuses are also required to apply the Minnesota State Board of Trustee Policy or implement a local policy providing not less than the system criteria.

## **Minnesota State Board of Trustee Policy 1B1**

### **Part 1. Policy Statement.**

**Subpart A. Equal opportunity for students and employees.** Minnesota State Colleges and Universities has an enduring commitment to enhancing Minnesota's quality of life by developing and fostering understanding and appreciation of a free and diverse society and providing equal opportunity for all its students and employees. To help effectuate these goals, Minnesota State Colleges and Universities is committed to a policy of equal opportunity and nondiscrimination in employment and education.

#### Meeting the Needs of Special Populations

MDE's Equity Statement follows: Educational equity is the condition of justice, fairness and inclusion in our systems of education so that all students have access to the opportunities to learn and develop to their fullest potentials. The pursuit of educational equity recognizes the historical conditions and barriers that have prevented opportunity and success in learning for students based on their races, incomes, and other social conditions. Eliminating those structural and institutional barriers to educational opportunities requires systemic change that allows for distribution of resources, information and other support depending on the student's situation to ensure an equitable outcome.

Minnesota State has this goal: "By 2030, Minnesota State will eliminate education equity gaps at every Minnesota State college and university."

Under the umbrella of these statements and goals, multiple initiatives are in place to address disparities or gaps in performance. For example, within the Minnesota Department of Education there is an effort to better align CTE work and ESSA initiatives. We anticipate supporting and collaborate with state specialists and educators in our special education division, homeless student liaison staff, as well as our English learner division all of whom have a strong start toward reducing and eliminating gaps in performance.

### **iii Programs to help special pop's meet or exceed state levels of performance for high skill, high wage, in-demand sectors or occupations [Sec. 113]**

One of the strategies in place to help special populations meet or exceed state levels of performance involves providing awareness of and recruitment into programs of high skills, high wage, or in-demand sectors or occupations. Minnesota has developed, supported, and encouraged the use of electronic career guidance tools for raising awareness of career options. Examples of guidance tools for learners to explore and build individual career plans include Minnesota Career Information System (MCIS), TalentNeuron Recruit and CareerWise.

Examples of data tools to provide research and additional useful information about career options available, including non-traditional careers, and career options for ex-offenders, are listed below:

1. Career profile integration example:  
(New: job counts, top employers, top skills, top certifications, and links to job postings)  
<http://careerwise.minnstate.edu/careers/careerDetail?id=6&oc=132011&title=Accountants%20and%20Auditors>
2. Industry profile integration example:  
(New: top employers, links to job postings)  
<http://careerwise.minnstate.edu/careers/industryDetail?in=221&title=Utilities>
3. Integrated job search tool:  
(New: job postings and multiple options to filter data)  
<http://careerwise.minnstate.edu/jobs/jobSearchResults>
4. Career Information Site tailored to better meet the needs of students in Special Education. <https://portal.mncis.intocareers.org/media/2044/2019-mcis-subscription-fees-for-sped.pdf>
5. Tools and insights into career clusters through the lens of employer demand <http://www.realtimentalent.org/research/cte-pathways/>

In summary, efforts to address equity in CTE will focus on four pillars that are guided by federal requirements:

- Professional development programs (**capacity and competency**)
- Address equal access to activities under this Act (**existing programs**)
- Programs that help special populations meet or exceed state performance (**interventions and innovation**)
- Non-discrimination (**compliance**)

To provide actions in support of these four pillars, the Minnesota Perkins team is committed to providing the following:

1.
  - a. Professional Development for faculty, teachers, counselors and staff to address disparities including underrepresentation in nontraditional career programs. Further professional development on the impact of poverty and implicit bias on classroom teaching practices, student engagement and advising. Education Innovation Faculty development can also serve as a source for delivering equity training.

- b. Technical Assistance to local consortia to support equity assessment of programs of study, supports for special populations and campus or school environment. The Minnesota State Office of Equity and Diversity can serve as one of many resources for technical assistance, along with other identified organizations such as NAPE, MDRC and NTACTION.
- c. Community and Employer Engagement to broaden outreach to community-education-employer partnerships (and communications) about the opportunities and value of CTE for career development and work preparation.
- d. System approaches to support shared best practices among diverse geographic regions of state on strategies and delivery methods proven effective in expanding the educational experiences and nontraditional career options for special populations. Use of incentivized support to replicate or scale proven practices. Community organizations, workforce centers and state agencies will be invited via RFP process and state register notification to apply for funding to support corrections and disabilities services.
- e. Compliance and Non-discrimination: New partners, both internal and external, such as OCR compliance officers will be engaged to identify and develop system strategies and technical assistance needed for addressing disparities or equity related performance gaps.
- f. Provide incentive and capacity-building funding to support innovation for initiatives that increase the success of special populations. Metrics and measurements related to support requires the disaggregation of Perkins data regarding performance on core indicators and the support for the redistribution of funds to support equity. iv. Provide appropriate accommodations; and integrated settings that support competitive, integrated employment. (Section 122(d)(9) of Perkins V)

Equal opportunity to enter CTE programs, services, and activities requires equal access for learners with special needs as compared to the general student population. Such provisions are reviewed for compliance throughout all required accountability indicators. Specific strategies to address learner accommodations include auxiliary or related aids and services, modified instructional equipment, and modified or adapted course offerings. Accommodations are provided for persons with disabilities in regular or special needs occupational programs. Accommodation services are publicized and use is actively encouraged by teachers, faculty and staff. Students with IEPs are assessed for career interests and abilities. The IEP reflects [career] education and training leading to the outcome of competitive, integrated employment (ACTE-SPEDS, MN Department of Education)

**v. will be provided instruction and work-based learning opportunities in integrated settings that support competitive integrated employment. (Section 122(d)(9) of Perkins V)**

Work-based learning (WBL) provides appropriate accommodations for students of various ability levels. All students, regardless of abilities, must have impactful experiences. WBL experiences provide:

- Guidance to schools and employers on perceptions of quality WBL and value to all student populations

- WBL experiences and activities that offer high quality content and curriculum, including a range of levels from exploration (experiential learning) to work experience, career preparation and instruction that is “stackable” and explores all aspects of a targeted industry or occupation.
- WBL that has quality content and learning experiences as an integral part of CTE, supporting meaningful career development.

At the secondary level, appropriate accommodations and support for a competitive, integrated work environment for students with disabilities are undergirded by Minnesota’s Olmstead Plan. Named after a United States Supreme Court decision the, Olmstead Plan is a statewide comprehensive plan to provide people with disabilities opportunities to live, learn, work, and enjoy life in integrated settings. The plan calls out multiple education related goals, including those listed below, that in order to be achieved, require the support of Career and Technical Education at the secondary level:

- By June 30, 2020, the number of students with developmental cognitive disabilities, ages 19-21 that enter into competitive integrated employment will be 763
- By June 30, 2020 the percent of students with disabilities who have enrolled in an integrated postsecondary education setting within one year of leaving high school will increase to 36% (from baseline of 31%). To that end, secondary career and technical education programs will provide appropriate accommodations and support for a competitive, integrated work environment through a variety of strategies targeted specifically at work-based learning programs. These strategies will increase the quality of programs, enhance educator expertise, and capitalize on partnerships with other state agencies. High Quality Work-based Learning Programs Every five years, school districts will engage in a formal program approval process for work-based learning programs specifically designed for students with disabilities. The program approval process, as outlined by administrative rule, identifies the minimum requirements needed to ensure all students engage in a well-designed work experience aligned to their interests and skills. Once a school district’s program is approved, the district may access additional state funding to modify curriculum and purchase special equipment for students with disabilities enrolled in the work-based learning program. Educator Expertise The Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) will provide direct technical assistance to teachers who work with students with disabilities to ensure work-based learning programs are well-designed to align with students’ interests and skills. Additionally, MDE will coordinate an annual professional development conference for work-based learning coordinators with programming related to competitive, integrated work environments. Partnerships

Minnesota Department of Education staff will continue to work closely with colleagues in Vocational Rehabilitation Services, Special Education Transition Services, and the Department of Labor to ensure each agency, when possible, uses similar language and processes when working with school districts to provide high quality work-based learning experiences for students with disabilities and to eliminate barriers that prevent school districts from offering these programs.

## **Preparing Teachers and Faculty**

The need for recruitment and preparation of CTE teachers is critical in Minnesota. State leadership funds will support over-arching programs and professional development as outlined below. Local consortium will have additional goals and strategies based on their CLNA. State staff will assist with the professional development and provide technical assistance as needed and appropriate. This work is also supported by state legislation in policy and funding as truly, multiple resources are needed to approach this challenge.

## **Shortage of Licensed CTE Teachers**

The 2019 Biennial Minnesota Teacher Supply and Demand report prepared for the Minnesota Professional Educator Licensing Standards Board (PELSB) by Wilder Research (retrieved from: [https://mn.gov/pelsb/assets/2019%20Supply%20and%20Demand%20Report\\_tcm1113-370206.pdf](https://mn.gov/pelsb/assets/2019%20Supply%20and%20Demand%20Report_tcm1113-370206.pdf)) found that Minnesota school districts are facing a shortage of licensed teachers across grade levels and in most disciplines. Licensure areas with a high percentage of teachers on special permission (out of their licensure area or without a standard teaching license) include Career and Technical Education fields, world languages, special education, and STEM. The report also noted that the percentage of teachers of color remains stagnant with the percentage of students of color continues to grow in Minnesota.

Of specific concern to CTE, the Teacher Supply and Demand report states that four CTE licensure areas currently do not have board-approved licensure programs. Another four CTE licensure areas currently have only one board-approved licensure program; however, that program is not approved to provide an initial teaching license. Only three licensure areas have more than one option for candidates to obtain a license and there is only one option for obtaining work-based learning as a stand-alone certification.

Minnesota CTE will support the recruitment and preparation of educators by employing data from consortia Comprehensive Local Needs Assessments and national and state research to assess options for addressing current and future needs. In addition, it will support the growth and development of experiential learning for prospective CTE teachers. Emerging solutions include for-credit and non-credit teacher education programs using traditional and alternative approaches. Continuous consultation with education and training providers as well as agencies and stakeholders directing all aspects of CTE teacher licensure will be critical to the success of this work. The Knowledgeable Experts Strategic CTE Work Group is tasked with facilitating and supporting initiatives to accomplish Recruitment & Retention of Teachers & Faculty.

The Knowledgeable Experts strategic group develops, implements, and analyzes professional development priorities designed to advance Career and Technical Education in Minnesota as part of the state's four-year plan for the Strengthening Career and Technical Education for the 21st Century Act. "Knowledgeable Experts" refers to the community of career and technical education stakeholders who would benefit from professional development and resources related to all aspects of career pathways and Perkins administration. The work of this group includes keeping the multiple initiatives aligned, making connections with other state and national initiatives, and providing focus so that the work becomes actionable.

Recruitment and retention of CTE educators is one of three priority areas for the Knowledgeable Experts group and is the focus of a specific Work Group. The Recruitment & Retention of Teachers & Faculty in CTE Work Group provides professional development to support the recruitment and retention of CTE teachers and faculty in secondary and postsecondary institutions. Due to the great need for educators of color in Minnesota, special emphasis is placed on recruiting and retaining these individuals. This 15-20-member group first

met in the fall of 2019 and is scheduled to meet every other month for the rest of fiscal year 2020. Goals for the group will be confirmed in early 2020.

Expected priorities to be addressed 2020-2024 by the Work Group include:

- Professional development resources for newly-hired college technical program faculty
- Initiatives supporting perspective CTE teachers of color as they pursue licensure
- Cultural competency learning for secondary and postsecondary educators
- Assessing pathways for non-licensed educators (paraprofessionals) to pursue CTE licensure
- Providing resources and connections for CTeacher Prep 2030.

Measurements will be determined as the Work Group recommends the specific projects and action items related to these priorities.

### **CTeacher Prep 2030**

Minnesota State Colleges and Universities (Minnesota State) and the Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) are actively pursuing solutions to meet the state's needs with the development of the CTeacher Prep 2030 program. The vision of this initiative is to address the Career and Technical teacher shortage by creating a multi-pronged approach for candidates to complete credentialing requirements and enter, or continue to be part of, the educational system's workforce.

Three components of teacher preparation need to be met with innovative and collaborative strategies: Standard Effective Practices (SEP), Career and Technical Education Core (CTE Core), and Work Based Learning Teacher Coordinator Training (WBL). By 2024, Minnesota CTE will be supporting the development and administration of multiple online and in-person programs offering these courses.

The most current documentation of CTE Teacher Shortage Initiatives and recommendations may be accessed at :

[https://minnstate.edu/system/cte/professionaldevelopment/documents/MN\\_CTE\\_Teacher\\_Prepare\\_Report-March2020.pdf](https://minnstate.edu/system/cte/professionaldevelopment/documents/MN_CTE_Teacher_Prepare_Report-March2020.pdf). In addition to developing flexible programs and access to the necessary components for CTE teacher candidates to meet Minnesota Professional Educator Licensing and Standards Board (PELSB) approval, recruitment and retention initiatives are part of the state's work. CTeacher Prep 2030 proposes to accomplish the following:

1. Support "grow your own" and alternative initiatives that encourage non-CTE licensed educators to pursue and obtain CTE licensure.
2. Support experiential learning programs such as the Teacher Cadet program currently in place.
3. Identify career and technical academic routes for prospective CTE teachers to earn teacher education degrees across Minnesota State campuses.
4. Establish partnerships for delivery of Standards of Effective Practice (SEP) in Teacher Education in multiple formats.
5. Build a universal work-based learning academic component for all CTE teachers.

6. Create or identify institutional support for recruitment, hiring, and training of CTE teachers.
7. Develop new and support existing systems of assessing CTE skills of potential CTE teachers through portfolio, internship, or demonstrated skill set attainment.
8. Create a statewide system of support through instructional coaching and/or with veteran CTE Instructors on Special Assignment.
9. Support Minnesota Associations of Career Technical Educators (MnACTE) in initiatives to serve as coaches or mentors to non-licensed CTE teachers preparing portfolios for PELSB approval.
10. Continue support of the teacher education sequence (TES) required for postsecondary CTE faculty. Research the opportunity to have this sequence serve secondary teachers.

The intent of CTEacher Prep 2030 is to create a collaborative approach to confront the career and technical needs of Minnesota by linking institutional resources. This collaborative approach supports alternative approaches to credentialing, conventional paths to academic degrees at our universities, and must provide flexibility for innovation for stakeholders and across institutions. The specific examples of initiatives below all fall under the umbrella structure of CTeacher Prep 2030 and will be under the overall auspices of the Knowledgeable Expert Strategic workgroup.

More details of some of the major components of this work are provided below.

### **Increasing Diversity in Minnesota's Educator Workforce**

Through multiple state grants, the Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) is working on an endeavor to increase and diversify the educator workforce with the support of the governor's office. MDE's Career and College Success Division is focusing on Career and Technical Education teachers, especially those in their first four years of teaching. The four elements of MDE's plan are: Explore, Become, Grow, and Thrive.

Specific goals and activities for the "Increase and Diversify the Educator Workforce" initiative will be determined in alignment with CLNA results and the overall needs of the state.

### **New CTE Teacher Initiative**

Perkins V will continue to support the New CTE Teacher Initiative, which focuses on the "become" and "grow" elements of MDE's Increase and Diversify the Educator Workforce initiative. Designed to help teachers gain the knowledge and resources they need to be successful in the secondary CTE classroom, this initiative has already served more than 100 CTE educators. While open to any CTE teacher, the program is ideal for new or first-time CTE teachers because it provides opportunities to support and improve teacher confidence and collaboration. Resources and support for the year-long program include ongoing professional development in webinars, in-person meetings, book recommendations, monthly newsletters, breakout sessions at CTE conferences, and a two-day summer conference. The New CTE Teacher Initiative goal is for a 15% increase in CTE-licensed teachers in the next four years.

### **Teacher Cadet Training**

As part of the recruitment strategies for CTE teachers, the Teacher Cadet program focuses on recruiting high school students from ethnically diverse populations, students on free and reduced lunch, students first in their families to attend college, and male students interested in working with young children. The Teacher Cadet program addresses the teacher shortage problem in Minnesota and the United States by providing experiential learning for prospective students who might later pursue their CTE teacher license. The program also utilizes partnerships among MDE and Minnesota colleges to close the opportunity gap for the Cadets by providing mentoring, financial-aid resources or loan forgiveness programs if concurrent enrollment options are available, and help in transitioning successfully from the Cadet program to postsecondary options. The program directs students to college wrap-around support services available to help students successfully transition to postsecondary offerings.

State Leadership funds will be used to support the full spectrum of educational personnel including special education teachers, faculty, school principals, and administrators at secondary and postsecondary levels, specialized instructional support personnel, and paraprofessionals. The delivery methodologies be consistent with the our professional development framework including webinars, the state-wide conference, and alignment (or insertion) into existing opportunities such as the NTEC meetings, superintendents conferences, monthly student and academic affairs officers ZOOM meeting for Minnesota State colleges and universities.

Specifically regarding education for students with disabilities, at the secondary level, appropriate accommodations and support for a competitive, integrated work environment for students with disabilities are undergirded by Minnesota's Olmstead Plan. Named after a United States Supreme Court decision the, Olmstead Plan is a statewide comprehensive plan to provide people with disabilities opportunities to live, learn, work, and enjoy life in integrated settings. The plan calls out multiple education related goals, including those listed below, that in order to be achieved, require the support of Career and Technical Education at the secondary level:

- - By June 30, 2020, the number of students with developmental cognitive disabilities, ages 19-21 that enter into competitive integrated employment will be 763
  - By June 30, 2020 the percent of students with disabilities who have enrolled in an integrated postsecondary education setting within one year of leaving high school will increase to 36% (from baseline of 31%). To that end, secondary career and technical education programs will provide appropriate accommodations and support for a competitive, integrated work environment through a variety of strategies targeted specifically at work-based learning programs. These strategies will increase the quality of programs, enhance educator expertise, and capitalize on partnerships with other state agencies.

Minnesota has many efforts in place or in concept stage to meet the projected needs for career and technical education teachers. The Knowledgeable Expert strategic work group in the process of taking an inventory of both national and state initiatives so that we can, with focus, bring solutions to our work. This work needs to include recruitment and retention of teachers. A 2018 survey of 796 CTE teachers conducted by the Student Research Foundation found that 37% of them plan to leave the teaching profession within the next five years. This work group has much to do!

### C. FISCAL RESPONSIBILITY

- 1. Describe the criteria and process for how the eligible agency will approve eligible recipients for funds under this Act, including how—
  - a. Each eligible recipient will promote academic achievement;
  - b. Each eligible recipient will promote skill attainment, including skill attainment that leads to a recognized postsecondary credential; and
  - c. Each eligible recipient will ensure the local needs assessment under section 134 takes into consideration local economic and education needs, including, where appropriate, in-demand industry sectors and occupations. (Section 122(d)(5) of Perkins V)
- 2. Describe how funds received by the eligible agency through the allotment made under section 111 of the Act will be distributed—
  - a. Among career and technical education at the secondary level, or career and technical education at the postsecondary and adult level, or both, including how such distribution will most effectively provide students with the skills needed to succeed in the workplace; and
  - b. Among any consortia that may be formed among secondary schools and eligible institutions, and how funds will be distributed among the members of the consortia, including the rationale for such distribution and how it will most effectively provide students with the skills needed to succeed in the workplace. (Section 122(d)(8) of Perkins V)
- 3. For the upcoming program year, provide the specific dollar allocations made available by the eligible agency for career and technical education programs and programs of study under section 131(a)-(e) of the Act and describe how these allocations are distributed to local educational agencies, areas career and technical education schools and educational service agencies within the State. (Section 131(g) of Perkins V)
- 4. For the upcoming program year, provide the specific dollar allocations made available by the eligible agency for career and technical education programs and programs of study under section 132(a) of the Act and describe how these allocations are distributed to eligible institutions and consortia of eligible institutions within the State.
- 5. Describe how the eligible agency will adjust the data used to make the allocations to reflect any changes in school district boundaries that may have occurred since the population and/or enrollment data was collected, and include local education agencies without geographical boundaries, such as charter schools and secondary schools funded by the Bureau of Indian Education. (Section 131(a)(3) of Perkins V)
- 6. If the eligible agency will submit an application for a waiver to the secondary allocation formula described in section 131(a)—
  - a. Include a proposal for such an alternative formula; and
  - b. Describe how the waiver demonstrates that a proposed alternative formula more effectively targets funds on the basis of poverty (as defined by the Office of Management and Budget and revised annually in accordance with section

673(2) of the Community Services Block Grant Act (42 U.S.C. 9902(2)) to local educational agencies with the State. (Section 131(b) of Perkins V)

Also indicate if this is a waiver request for which you received approval under the prior Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act of 2006 (Perkins IV).

- 7. If the eligible agency will submit an application for a waiver to the postsecondary allocation formula described in section 132(a)—
  - a. Include a proposal for such an alternative formula; and
  - b. Describe how the formula does not result in a distribution of funds to the eligible institutions or consortia with the State that have the highest numbers of economically disadvantaged individuals and that an alternative formula will result in such a distribution. (Section 132(b) of Perkins V)

Also indicate if this is a waiver request for which you received approval under the prior Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act of 2006 (Perkins IV).

- 8. Provide the State's fiscal effort per student, or aggregate expenditures for the State, that will establish the baseline for the Secretary's annual determination on whether the State has maintained its fiscal effort, and indicate whether the baseline is a continuing level or new level. If the baseline is new, please provide the fiscal effort per student, or aggregate expenditures for the State, for the preceding fiscal year. (Section 211(b)(1)(D) of Perkins V)

### **C. Fiscal Responsibility**

#### Academic achievement

Continuing Minnesota's consortium model, eligible recipients must offer Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs that include rigorous, coherent CTE content aligned with challenging academic standards. All approved State-recognized program of study much include opportunities for both academic and technical skill attainment, which, ideally are integrated. The newly implemented State-recognized Program of Study rubric includes the requirement that "course standards accurately align to the academic, technical, and employability skills learners must master for entry and success in a given career pathway." This articulates that the foundation of a program of study is the academic skills student must have to enter and advance in career and/or college.

Academic skills as the foundation of a program of study is further emphasized in the Minnesota Department of Education's recent work on Career and College Readiness (CCR). In March, 2016, MDE, in collaboration with the Regional Educational Laboratory (REL) Midwest and the Midwest Comprehensive Center (MSCC), brought together a group of stakeholders to articulate what career and college readiness means for Minnesota students. Minnesota's vision of CCR is that a well-rounded view of education is needed to drive educational and workforce goals and policies. Taking many perspectives into consideration through stakeholder feedback, the Minnesota CCR Work Group developed a holistic vision of career and college readiness:

"A sufficiently prepared student is one who has the knowledge, skills, mindset, and experiences in the academic, workplace, and personal/social domains to keep learning and, beyond secondary school, to successfully navigate toward and adapt to an economically viable career."

Clearly, academic skills are at the very foundation of career and college readiness. CCR resources developed by MDE and distributed to secondary districts provide a comprehensive

set of guidance, strategies, and tools for engaging districts and schools in equity-oriented CCR program planning and a continuous improvement process.

### Skill Attainment

Historically, reporting of technical skills assessment has been part of an intentional review process in Minnesota for more than a decade. The technical skill assessment project began with a pilot group of five programs of study completing a comprehensive review of foundational and academic knowledge, skills, and technical competencies needed to gain employment in selected careers. Through this collaborative process, secondary teachers, postsecondary faculty, business/industry experts validated the appropriate competencies, and technical skill assessments that would support these competencies. Minnesota continued completion of this process of bringing the secondary and postsecondary teaching staff together with their business and industry partners twice to analyze each of the 72 career pathways. The review process continued to update and validate competencies and the identification of assessments with over 600 secondary teachers and 500 post-secondary faculty along with business and industry representatives participating. The TSA reports were an essential component of the Perkins IV work.

In the implementation of Perkins V, skill attainment remains a priority of the work. However, due to stakeholder engagement and feedback along with the review by state leaders of the challenges to completing and reports TSA as had been done in the past, Minnesota has chosen not to have TSA as a program quality element that will be reported as a program quality indicator. The documentation of skill attainment will continue to be an element required for designation as a State-recognized Program of Study, the documentation of skill attainment will continue as an element of program review at secondary and postsecondary institutions.

All State-recognized POS have a pathway leading to a recognized postsecondary credential. The definition of recognized postsecondary credential utilized is the WIOA definition. Under WIOA the term “recognized postsecondary credential” means a credential consisting of an industry-recognized certificate or certification, a certificate of completion of an apprenticeship, a license recognized by the State involved or Federal Government, or an associate or baccalaureate degree.

In addition, Minnesota will validate the definitions of program quality and determine baseline data for CTE concentrators in academic year 2019-2020. The complete accountability system, secondary and postsecondary, will monitor academic performance and completion rates including CTE subpopulations. Professional development and technical assistance will be provided to assist consortia in developing and implementing continuous improvement plans.

The State-recognized Programs of Study requires that the secondary component of the POS includes an MDE approved CTE program and the postsecondary component of the POS includes a Minnesota State approved program.

To have an approved program requires that local district to meet the MDE program requirements which includes both the academic and technical knowledge and skill components. In a similar fashion, a postsecondary approved diploma or associate degree award consists of both general education and technical courses. The program approval process for both has elements of interaction with business and industry through the requirement of program advisory committees.

### Local Needs Assessment (**Section 122(d)(5) of Perkins V**)

As part of a local application, submitted on May 1, 2020, local consortium must include a comprehensive local needs assessment (CLNA) as per Perkins V requirements to be an eligible recipient of funds. All elements documented in ACT will be required: student performance, sufficient size, scope, and quality; progress toward programs and programs of study, recruitment, retention and training of CTE professionals, and equity of access. The state's definition of size, scope, and quality, and alignment to labor market include parameters for identification of high-skilled, high-wage, and in-demand. Both Minnesota's Comprehensive Local Needs Assessment Guide and the Framework provide guidance to ensuring that local economic and education needs are taken into consideration. State leadership will review the applications and have a dialogue with applicants to ensure section 122 is observed. On an on-going basis, the monitoring process conducted with the individual consortium will review the evidence that the CLNA collected data, and implemented actions that took local economic and education needs into consideration.

Our Advancing CTE Strategic Direction group has been reviewing research, consulting with other states and gleaning promising practices from the states experience with WIOA and ESSA needs assessments to formulate a CLNA form and guide to increase the consortia's success in gathering, analyzing, and implementing actions from the CLNA. Professional development regarding the form, guide and process have occurred July 31, 2019; November 4, 2019; through multiple webinars and utilizing face-to-face technical assistance.

The joint secondary and postsecondary applications submitted by consortia must provide performance targets and strategies for continuous improvement of academic achievement and technical skill attainment linked to comprehensive local needs assessment.

## **2. Describe how funds received by the eligible agency through the allotment made under section 111 of the Act will be distributed**

### **a. among career and technical education at the secondary level, or career and technical education at the postsecondary and adult level, or both, including how such distribution will most effectively provide students with the skills needed to succeed in the work place; and**

State Administration: 5%

Administration allocation is spent on activities related to developing the State Plan; reviewing applications, monitoring consortia; compliance oversight; supporting fiscal and data systems required to implement Perkins V.

State Leadership Activities: 10%

Leadership funds are split between Minnesota Department of Education 42% and Minnesota State 58%. A minimum of 0.1% of leadership funds will be used for recruitment of special populations. From the postsecondary 58%, \$50,000 will be used for state institutions and \$50,000 used for preparation for nontraditional career fields.

Distribution to Local Education Agencies (Consortia): 85%

In Minnesota, funds received by the eligible agency under section 111 will be allocated to local consortia according to the following allotments and calculations. These distribution methods are expected to provide the resources needed for student success in the workplace throughout the state including the increase in reserve funds to incentivize innovation and quality of POS. The reserve fund calculation will be split, by formula, to target both rural areas and applications serving high numbers of CTE students.

Basic: Eighty-five percent of the funds received by the state will be distributed to local applicants through basic and reserve funding allocations will be allocated under Section 131. The basic grant funds awarded are calculated by formula with the split of distribution to secondary programs 50% of the 85% and postsecondary 50% of the 85%. This change from 42:58 to an equal percentage split of funding is based on an agreement between the Minnesota Department of Education and the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities and represents a change that will be reflected in the July 1, 2020 allocation to consortia. The 50:50 split represents a philosophical commitment by leadership to support equal opportunity and economic empowerment for both partners in the consortium. Neither secondary nor postsecondary is a "lesser than" or "greater than" at the governance table.

Reserve: Fifteen percent distributed to secondary programs (50%) and postsecondary (50%) as reserve funding. These funds take into consideration "rural" and high numbers by adding the square mileage of the consortia as part of the calculations. Allocation amounts to the whole consortium are based on 50% sum of the area for member district in the consortium area if/as consortium have greater than 50 square miles of area served.

**b. among any consortia that may be formed among secondary schools and eligible institutions, and how funds will be distributed among the members of the consortia, including the rationale for such distribution and how it will most effectively provide students with the skills needed to succeed in the workplace. (Section 122(d)(8) of Perkins V)**

While consortia will submit a single application and receive an overall award, the calculations for the consortium will be based on:

Local Consortium Formula Allocation amounts:

Secondary formula:

- Most recent U. S. Census data for the population by school district of individuals aged 5-17
- Most recent U. S. Census data for the population by school district of individuals aged 5-17 in households of poverty
- Description (70% District population 5-17 in poverty/state population 5-17 in poverty times the total secondary formula amount) plus 30% district population 5-17/state population 5-17 times the total secondary formula amount for the state from the OCTAE allocation-50% is calculated for each district. The secondary consortium formula=the sum of the amounts calculated for each district member of the consortium.

Postsecondary formula:

- Most recent data for CTE Postsecondary Pell Recipients
- Description (Pell recipients in the college in Perkins eligible programs/ Pell recipients in the state in Perkins eligible programs times the total postsecondary formula amount for the state from the OCTAE allocation-50% is calculated for each college. The postsecondary consortium formula=the sum of the amounts calculated for each college member of the consortium.

Local Consortium Reserve Allocation amounts:

Reserve: As per the Minnesota State CTE Plan, allocations amounts to the whole consortium are based on 50% sum of the area for member districts in the consortium/area for all districts in the state; 37.5% on the sum of secondary participants for member districts in the consortium/total secondary CTE participants in the state and 12.5% on the sum of postsecondary participants for member districts in the consortium/total CTE postsecondary participants in the state based on the following data:

- School district area to account for certain district consolidations
- Most recent data for CTE Secondary Participants
- Most recent data on Perkins CTE Participants

For all calculations, the year representing “most recent” will be consist across all formula.

3. For the upcoming year, ***provide the specific dollar allocations made available by the eligible agency for career and technical education programs and programs of study under section 131(a)-(e) of the Act and describe how these allocations are distributed to local educational agencies, areas career and technical education schools and educational service agencies within the State. (Section 131(g) of Perkins V).***

Based on the state’s receipt of Perkins V dollars July 1, 2019, the allocation for postsecondary CTE programs and services in the next allocation is \$7,953,475.50. The postsecondary allocation is calculated based on Section 132 and Section 112 of the Act.

Based on the state’s receipt of Perkins V dollars July 1, 2019, the allocation for secondary CTE programs and services in the next allocation is \$7,953,475.50. The secondary allocation is calculated based on Section 132 and Section 112 of the Act.

Allocations are distributed to eligible consortia consisting of both secondary and postsecondary partners and dependent upon an approved application. The applications are reviewed by state staff and must include the CLNA, POS, required narrative of activities, and the proposed budget.

Each consortium determines a fiscal agent to manage distribution for the secondary partners and a second fiscal agent to manage distribution for the postsecondary partners. The members of the consortium jointly determine the process for prioritizing activities that are reasonable, necessary, and allocable based on the CLNA. Members of a consortium reach agreement upon the mutually beneficial programs and services that Perkins funds will support, describe the purposes and programs in their joint application, and include evidence of assessment and continued improvement.

The chart below relies on the last fiscal information from the federal award and the last-year student data. It is a projected consortia breakdown of budgets for planning purposes only.

Estimated (FFY20) PERKINS V BUDGET AWARD 2020-2021			
		October 1, 2020 Allocation	
A	Title 1 Assistance to States		18,714,060.00
B	Title 11 (Tech Prep) Allocation		-
C	<b>Total Award</b>	<b>A + B</b>	<b>18,714,060.00</b>
D	<b>26 Consortia (85% of total award)</b>	<b>0.85 * C</b>	<b>15,906,951.00</b>
E	Basic Grant (85% of the 85%)	0.85 * D	13,520,908.35
F	Secondary Programs 50%	0.50 * E	6,760,454.18
G	Postsecondary Programs 50%	0.50 * E	6,760,454.18
H	Reserve (15% of the 85%)	0.15 * D	2,386,042.65
I	Secondary Programs 50%	0.50 * H	1,193,021.33
J	Postsecondary Programs 50%	0.50 * H	1,193,021.33
K	<b>State Leadership (up to 10%)</b>	<b>0.10 * C</b>	<b>1,871,406.00</b>
L	Secondary Programs 42%	0.42 * K	785,990.52
M	Postsecondary Programs 58%	0.58 * K	1,085,415.48
N	State Institutions, max of 1% of total award		50,000.00
O	Non Traditional Training, must spend \$60K - \$150K		60,000.00
P	State Leadership Initiatives	M - N - O	975,415.48
Q	<b>State Administration (5%)</b>	<b>0.05 * C</b>	<b>935,703.00</b>
R	Fiscal Agent responsibility--Post-Secondary (5% of 5%)	0.05 * Q	46,785.15
S	Remainder to be split	Q - R	888,917.85
T	Postsecondary (50%)	0.50 * S	444,458.93
U	Secondary (50%)	0.50 * S	444,458.93
	<b>Total Award</b>	<b>D + K + Q</b>	<b>18,714,060.00</b>

**4. Provide the specific dollar allocations made available by the eligible agency for career and technical education programs and programs of study under section 132(a) of the Act and describe how these allocations are distributed to eligible institutions and consortia of eligible institutions within the State.**

Based on the state's receipt of Perkins V dollars July 1, 2019, the allocation for postsecondary CTE programs and services in the next allocation is \$7,953,475.50. The postsecondary allocation is calculated based on Section 132 and Section 112 of the Act.

Based on the state's receipt of Perkins V dollars July 1, 2019, the allocation for secondary CTE programs and services in the next allocation is \$7,953,475.50. The secondary allocation is calculated based on Section 132 and Section 112 of the Act.

Specific distribution formulas are found in C.2.b. The final distribution to the individual consortia will also be dependent upon the local applications received and approved. Each consortium determines a fiscal agent to manage distribution for the secondary partners and a second fiscal agent to manage distribution for the postsecondary partners. The members of the consortium jointly determine the process for prioritizing activities that are reasonable, necessary, and allocable based on the CLNA. Members of a consortium reach agreement upon the mutually beneficial programs and services that Perkins funds will support, describe the purposes and programs in their joint application, and include evidence of assessment and continued improvement.

Planning budgets for the consortia are presented in the chart below:

DO NOT UPDATE	Projected 2020-2021 Perkins Distribution - Basic and Reserve				
Consortium	Secondary Basic	Secondary Reserve	Post-Secondary Basic	Post-Secondary Reserve	Consortia Total
Carlton County	44,516.78	17,962.01	89,816.64	17,962.01	170,257.44
Central Lakes	242,011.86	60,533.96	162,222.02	60,533.96	525,301.80
Dakota County	172,191.80	22,850.58	185,153.93	22,850.58	403,046.89
East Range	83,126.14	53,356.14	102,131.93	53,356.14	291,970.35
Great River	414,217.73	56,693.47	224,860.11	56,693.47	752,464.78
Hennepin West	592,669.56	64,758.63	875,446.86	64,758.63	1,597,633.68
Hibbing-Chisholm	36,305.58	6,012.08	76,015.03	6,012.08	124,344.77
Itasca	68,566.32	36,146.01	64,973.74	36,146.01	205,832.08
Lake Superior	140,864.63	46,779.77	239,086.38	46,779.77	473,510.55
Lakes Country	226,958.32	71,073.98	388,356.13	71,073.98	757,462.41
Mid-Minnesota	173,160.23	46,265.24	234,415.07	46,265.24	500,105.78
Minneapolis	725,144.33	21,286.79	548,667.16	21,286.79	1,316,385.07
Minnesota West	264,185.42	95,531.32	138,440.78	95,531.32	593,688.84
North Country	165,114.88	59,022.46	89,179.65	59,022.46	372,339.45
Northeast Metro	620,379.05	66,562.37	551,215.15	66,562.37	1,304,718.94
Oak Land	365,454.61	62,226.43	427,849.97	62,226.43	917,757.44
Pine Technical	64,663.54	16,787.07	99,159.27	16,787.07	197,396.95
Pine to Prairie/Northland	156,427.68	95,973.46	210,421.50	95,973.46	558,796.10
Riverland	142,949.83	23,911.93	122,091.18	23,911.93	312,864.87
Rochester-ZED	196,690.22	28,608.48	357,143.25	28,608.48	611,050.43
Runestone	59,247.64	20,045.55	124,639.17	20,045.55	223,977.91
South Central	282,786.37	54,999.25	190,249.91	54,999.25	583,034.78
South Metro	265,766.41	26,952.23	152,667.06	26,952.23	472,337.93
Southeast Minnesota	163,010.10	40,715.35	121,878.85	40,715.35	366,319.65
Southwest Metro	379,137.53	54,043.21	389,417.79	54,043.21	876,641.74
St. Paul	714,907.62	43,923.54	594,955.65	43,923.55	1,397,710.36
Full Award Totals	6,760,454.18	1,193,021.31	6,760,454.18	1,193,021.32	15,906,950.99

**5. Describe how the eligible agency will adjust the data used to make the allocations to reflect any changes in school district boundaries that may have occurred since the population and/or enrollment data was collected, and include local education agencies without geographical boundaries, such as charter schools and secondary schools funded by the Bureau of Indian Education. (Section 131(a)(3) of Perkins V).**

When a school district changes boundaries, splits or merges, Minnesota revises formula populations as soon as the new population information is available. The process for a district or college changing to a new consortium is outlined in the Operational Handbook (available at <https://minnstate.edu/system/cte/Strengthening-CTE/index.html>). Minnesota State partners with MDE to obtain any population data changes if school district boundaries change. Charter schools with approved CTE programs or secondary schools funded by the Bureau of Indian Education are incorporated into consortia.

**6. If the eligible agency will submit an application for a waiver to the secondary allocation formula described in section 131(a)— a. include a proposal for such an alternative formula; and b. describe how the waiver demonstrates that a proposed alternative formula more effectively targets funds on the basis of poverty (as defined by the Office of Management and Budget and revised annually in accordance with section 673(2) of the Community Services Block Grant Act (42 U.S.C. 9902(2)) to local educational agencies with the State. (Section 131(b) of Perkins V). Also indicate if this is a waiver request for which**

***you received approval under the prior Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act of 2006 (Perkins IV).***

Minnesota will not be submitting a waiver to the secondary allocation formula.

***7.If the eligible agency will submit an application for a waiver to the postsecondary allocation formula described in section 132(a)— a. include a proposal for such an alternative formula; and b. describe how the formula does not result in a distribution of funds to the eligible institutions or consortia with the State that have the highest numbers of economically disadvantaged individuals and that an alternative formula will result in such a distribution. (Section 132(b) of Perkins V). Also indicate if this is a waiver request for which you received approval under the prior Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act of 2006 (Perkins IV).***

Minnesota will not be submitting a waiver to the postsecondary allocation formula.

***8. Provide the State’s fiscal effort per student, or aggregate expenditures for the State, that will establish the baseline for the Secretary’s annual determination on whether the State has maintained its fiscal effort, and indicate whether the baseline is a continuing level or new level. If the baseline is new, please provide the fiscal effort per student, or aggregate expenditures for the State, for the preceding fiscal year. (Section 211(b)(1)(D) of Perkins V).***

Using aggregate numbers of state support for CTE, which is calculated by excluding tuition revenue and allocating indirect expenses, the maintenance of effort for 2019 is equal to \$124,944,120.00. The state does not split out a specific career and technical education allocation so we do rely on calculations to arrive at the maintenance of effort.

#### D. ACCOUNTABILITY FOR RESULTS

- 1. Identify and include at least one (1) of the following indicators of career and technical education program quality—
  - a. The percentage of CTE concentrators (see Text Box 6 for the statutory definition of a CTE concentrator under section 3(12) of Perkins V) graduating from high school having attained a recognized postsecondary credential;
  - b. The percentage of CTE concentrators graduating high school having attained postsecondary credits in relevant career and technical education programs and programs of study earned through a dual or concurrent enrollment program or another credit transfer agreement; and/or
  - c. The percentage of CTE concentrators graduating from high school having participated in work-based learning. (Section 113(b)(2)(A)(iv)(I) of Perkins V)

Include any other measure(s) of student success in career and technical education that are statewide, valid, and reliable, and comparable across the State. (Section 113(b)(2)(A)(iv)(II) of Perkins V) Please note that inclusion of “other” program quality measure(s) is optional for States.

Provide the eligible agency’s measurement definition with a numerator and denominator for each of the quality indicator(s) the eligible agency selects to use.

- 2. Provide on the form in Section V.B, for each year covered by the State plan beginning in FY 2020, State determined performance levels or each of the secondary and postsecondary core indicators, with the levels of performance being the same for all CTE concentrators in the State. (Section 113(b)(3)(A)(i)(I) of Perkins V)

Text Box 6: Statutory Definition of CTE Concentrator

The term 'CTE concentrator' means—

- (A) At the secondary school level, a student served by an eligible recipient who has completed at least 2 courses\* in a single career and technical education program or program of study; and
- (B) At the postsecondary level, a student enrolled in an eligible recipient who has—
  - (i) Earned at least 12 credits within a career and technical education program or program of study; or
  - (ii) Completed such a program if the program encompasses fewer than 12 credits or the equivalent in total. (Section 3(12) of Perkins V)

\* This means that once a student completes 2 courses in a single CTE program or program of study, they are counted as a CTE concentrator.

(Section 3(12) of Perkins V)

- 3. Describe the procedure the eligible agency adopted for determining State determined levels of performance described in section 113 of Perkins V, which at a minimum shall include—
  - a. A description of the process for public comment under section 113(b)(3)(B) of Perkins V as part of the development of the State determined levels of performance (see Text Box 7 for the statutory requirements for consultation on State determined performance levels under section 113(b)(3)(B) of Perkins V);
  - b. An explanation for the State determined levels of performance that meet each of the statutory requirements in Text Box 8; and
  - c. A description of how the State determined levels of performance set by the eligible agency align with the levels, goals and objectives other Federal and State laws, (Section 122(d)(10) of Perkins V).

As part of the procedures for determining State determined levels of performance, describe the process that will be used to establish a baseline for those levels.

- 4. Provide a written response to the comments regarding State determined performance levels received during the public comment period pursuant to section 113(b)(3)(B) of Perkins V. (Section 113(b)(3)(B)(iii) of Perkins V).

As part of the written response, include a description of any the changes made to the State determined performance levels as a result of stakeholder feedback.

- 5. Describe how the eligible agency will address disparities or gaps in performance as described in section 113(b)(3)(C)(ii)(II) of Perkins V in each of the plan years, and if no meaningful progress has been achieved prior to the third program year, a description of

the additional actions the eligible agency will take to eliminate these disparities or gaps. (Section 122(d)(11) of Perkins V)

As part of the written response, and pursuant to the Report of the Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions (HELP),<sup>2</sup> the eligible agency could indicate that it will analyze data on the core indicators of performance to identify gaps in performance, explain how they will use evidence-based research to develop a plan to provide support and technical assistance to eligible recipients to address and close such gaps, and how they will implement this plan. The eligible agency is not required to submit a new State plan prior to the third program year in order to address this requirement.

Text Box 7: Statutory Requirements for Consultation on State Determined Performance Levels

- (B) PUBLIC COMMENT.—
  - (i) IN GENERAL.—Each eligible agency shall develop the levels of performance under subparagraph (A) in consultation with the stakeholders identified in section 122(c)(1)(A).
  - (ii) WRITTEN COMMENTS.—Not less than 60 days prior to submission of the State plan, the eligible agency shall provide such stakeholders with the opportunity to provide written comments to the eligible agency, which shall be included in the State plan, regarding how the levels of performance described under subparagraph (A)—
    - (I) Meet the requirements of the law;
    - (II) Support the improvement of performance of all CTE concentrators, including subgroups of students, as described in section 1111(h)(1)(C)(ii) of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, and special populations, as described in section 3(48); and
    - (III) Support the needs of the local education and business community.
  - (iii) ELIGIBLE AGENCY RESPONSE.—Each eligible agency shall provide, in the State plan, a written response to the comments provided by stakeholders under clause (ii).

(Section 113(b)(3)(B) of Perkins V)

[2] See page 11 of Committee Report at <https://www.congress.gov/115/crpt/srpt434/CRPT-115srpt434.pdf>.

#### D. Accountability for Results

During May 2019, the Perkins V Secondary Accountability: Technical Advising Committee convened for three in-person meetings to discuss key questions and decision points around the updated legislation. This stakeholder group represented a select group of diverse secondary stakeholders from a variety of perspectives. Options for performance indicators and data sources were shared with the advisory group, who then discussed the issues and provided recommendations to MDE.

The advisory group also provided recommendations for future work such as improving Secondary, Postsecondary, and Business and Industry partnerships so that additional Industry Recognized Credentials could be identified and implemented. This would enhance the

connection between Perkins V and WIOA and provide more 'Career Ready' opportunities for students.

Once the full scope of the accountability system and methodology for determining levels of performance were finalized the previous recommendations made by the stakeholder group were then further analyzed by state leadership. Based on data review, state level priorities and the additional feedback survey information collected from member of the original secondary stakeholder group as well as secondary consortium leaders, and in consultation with state leadership, it was determined that the optional Other program quality indicator (5S4) identified as the Technical Skill Attainment and/or Industry Recognized Credential should not be included in the secondary accountability system.

The final decision was to include (5S3) Program Quality: Work-Based Learning, definition as follows:

**Numerator:** Number of CTE Concentrators who successfully completed one or more work-based learning courses prior to graduation.

**Denominator:** Number of CTE Concentrators who graduated high school.

The full process for seeking input on accountability factors is also part of Section A. Plan Development and Consultation. The report of the feedback on performance indicators is available as Perkins V Public Hearing Reports: Feedback Minnesota Perkins V Program Indicators, <https://www.minnstate.edu/system/cte/Strengthening-CTE/index.html>. The written responses are part of that report. The narrative from Section A is repeated below.

## **Secondary**

Secondary and postsecondary accountability involves a collaboration between two agencies; each with its own data systems and internal processes. Therefore, transition planning for secondary accountability required a dual decision-making process. The process for identifying and defining secondary performance indicators occurred in two phases.

Phase one included an extensive information gathering process as well as documenting feedback from internal state staff. The purpose was to thoughtfully compile information and identify meaningful and specific questions to pose to stakeholders during phase two. State CTE specialists attended five two-hour long in-person meetings in which they reviewed data files, policy documents, and ESSA requirements in addition to considering existing data collection system and other available data sources. Staff considered all information and materials they reviewed through the lens of our state's recently updated mission and vision for Career and Technical Education as well as the following questions.

Does this data and information:

- 1) advance our statewide goals for CTE?
- 2) support *all* of our CTE students and approved programs?
- 3) support the needs of our Business and Industry partners as well as local communities?
- 4) align with the Perkins V legislation?
- 5) align with other existing state legislation?

Products from the phase one internal secondary CTE state staff meetings included a refined list of key decision-points, discussion questions to pose to the advisory group, and a list of materials and resources that would assist in building stakeholder capacity.

Phase 2 involved sharing the previously identified information with secondary stakeholders in order to collect and compile their recommendations. Representatives from each of the following categories were invited to participate in the “Perkins V Secondary Accountability: Technical Advising Committee”: secondary consortia leaders, postsecondary partners, local CTE policy and advocacy groups, school counselors, work-based learning coordinators, high school teachers, principals, and superintendents from rural, suburban, and large metro districts, business and industry leaders from each sector of the CTE Career wheel, Workforce Center staff, and Tribal leaders. During spring 2019, approximately thirty advisory group members engaged in three four-hour in-person meetings. All resources and materials were made available within a secure site so stakeholders could access the information at any point. During the facilitated in-person meetings, advisory group members discussed data sources, reviewed simulated historical data, and considered policy and legislative documents in small groups. Advisory group members were asked to consider all information through the lens of the questions listed above as well as the following questions – are all performance indicators definitions/measures: valid, reliable, meaningful, and possess a high degree of integrity and transparency? Equitable across all student groups? Following each meeting, stakeholders were encouraged to discuss options and implications with their constituents and gather additional feedback that would ultimately inform their recommendations to the state.

Stakeholder recommendations for specific performance indicator definitions were collected using an online survey tool, recommendations for the CTE Concentrator definition and program quality measures were collected using paper and pencil so that stakeholders’ full thoughts and ideas could be documented. There were clear recommendations to the state regarding performance indicator definitions, updated CTE Concentrator definition, and the program quality indicator that was preferred.

Subsequent to the roll out of the full scope of the Perkins accountability system and performance level methodology, through listening to consortia leadership and conduction further analysis, recommendations made by the original work group came under review. Group members, district leaders, local partners and state leadership staff probed the implications of each potential program quality indicator. Further discussion and questions, data, and state level priorities were analyzed. These discussions resulted in MDE leadership carefully reviewing initial recommendations and making changes to the indicators. Original members of the stakeholder advisory group as well as all secondary consortia leaders were invited to provide feedback on whether the state should move forward with the previously recommended optional “Other” indicator or if other solutions should be considered at the state level. Additional comments and feedback were gathered regarding the optional program quality performance indicator via a survey tool. Results of that feedback survey prompted MDE leadership to make changes based on the deeper research. The new indicators were posted and the comment period extended to meet the 60-day requirements.

## Postsecondary

In developing postsecondary operational definitions and identifying data sources for participants, concentrators, and each indicator, the state created an accountability workgroup consisting of state research staff for secondary and postsecondary, the State Director of Career Technical Education, and the Interim Associate System Director of Career Technical Education. The workgroup met as needed, generally at least once a month, to provide updates regarding ongoing work, brainstorm solutions to issues that arose, and clarify any questions around process and timelines. Members of the workgroup then consulted with regional partners and determined our operational definitions and data sources were substantively similar. Consortia coordinators were given the opportunity to review and comment on legislative definitions and proposed operational definitions at the MACTA meeting in April (2019). Throughout May and June, as work on revising operational definitions, identifying data sources, and developing datasets progressed, key consortia coordinators and institutional research staff were engaged in phone calls and online meetings to provide feedback. In July, at a meeting of all consortia coordinators, the final draft of definitions and data sources used to develop the accountability datasets was presented and discussed. Finally, consortia coordinators and institutional research staff were presented with the final details regarding the accountability indicators in September.

### State Determined Performance Levels (Secondary and Postsecondary)

In developing state determined performance levels, in addition to the regular workgroup meetings, we consulted with regional partners in June and August and determined our methodology for establishing performance levels is relatively similar. We also consulted with DEED throughout June specifically to better understand the statistical adjustment model used for the WIOA Performance Accountability System and discuss how it might apply to Perkins accountability indicators. An online meeting was held in September with consortia coordinators and institutional research staff where questions and feedback were discussed. In October, the state determined performance levels were presented at regional public hearings and published on the Minnesota State website, with a form that allows the public to submit comments. The state determined performance levels, with revision from the public comment, were presented at a meeting with all consortia coordinators in November.

### State. (Section 113(b)(3)(A)(i)(I) of Perkins V)

#### State Determined Performance Levels (SDPL) Form

State Name: Minnesota

#### Secondary

Column 1	Column 2	Column 3	Column 4	Column 5	Column 6
<b>Indicators</b>	<b>Baseline Level</b>	<b>FY2020</b>	<b>FY2021</b>	<b>FY2022</b>	<b>FY2023</b>

Column 1	Column 2	Column 3	Column 4	Column 5	Column 6
1S1: Graduation Rates (4-year)	91.50%	91.80%	92.11%	92.71%	93.93%
2S1: Academic Proficiency: Reading/Language Arts	56.06%	56.35%	56.65%	57.23%	58.41%
2S2: Academic Proficiency: Mathematics	45.25%	45.40%	45.55%	45.84%	46.44%
3S1: Post-Program Placement	48.37%	48.43%	48.49%	48.61%	48.84%
4S1: Nontraditional Program Concentration	37.57%	37.77%	37.96%	38.35%	39.14%
5S3: Program Quality: Work-Based Learning	17.27%	17.31%	17.36%	17.46%	17.65%

### Postsecondary

Column 1	Column 2	Column 3	Column 4	Column 5	Column 6
Indicators	Baseline Level	FY2020	FY2021	FY2022	FY2023
1P1: Postsecondary Retention and Placement	90.86%	91.12%	91.37%	91.89%	92.92%
2P1: Earned Recognized Postsecondary Credential	50.25%	50.60%	50.96%	51.68%	53.12%
3P1: Nontraditional Program Enrollment	13.89%	14.00%	14.10%	14.31%	14.73%

### 3. Describe the procedure the eligible agency adopted for determining State determined levels of performance described in section 113 of Perkins V, which at a minimum shall include-

As part of the procedures for determining State determined levels of performance, describe the process that will be used to establish a baseline for those levels.

Multiple statistical approaches were reviewed for establishing state and local performance levels, including the statistical adjustment model used for the WIOA Performance Accountability System, trend extrapolation, and statistically significant increases using simulated historical data. After consultation with representatives from consortia, stakeholders, and regional partners, it was determined that the most appropriate approach for Minnesota was to set the proposed state performance level for each accountability indicator using a factor of the standard deviation of simulated historical data. This procedure allows for the determination of what level would constitute “meaningful progress” for each indicator, establishing statistically significant improvement relative to the baseline by the fourth year of the plan.

At both the secondary and postsecondary levels, simulated historical accountability datasets were created using specifications and definitions per the new Strengthening Career and Technical Education for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Act. These data were used to set the baseline year (the most recent year for which accountability results were available). Then, a conservative rate of growth (i.e., slower growth during first two years, followed by more aggressive growth the final two years) was applied to determine the annual performance levels. A conservative growth rate was adopted for the first two years in recognition that programs and strategies implemented under Perkins V would require some lead-time before the full impact on rates would be observed, but at the same time the methodology incorporates continuous improvement each year.

The same overall methodology was used to determine state performance levels for both secondary and postsecondary indicators, with the following exceptions:

- The number of historical years of data that are available varied by indicator, with some indicators having as few as two years of historical data available, but most indicators having five or six years of historical data; and
- The factor of the standard deviation used differed for some of the indicators.

Although using the standard deviation of simulated historical data was the best approach identified, we also recognize some caveats associated with the methodology. Those caveats, along with other external factors that could impact indicators and result in potential amendments to performance levels, are noted below:

- Simulated historical data for some indicators were limited to only two or three years due to substantial changes in the data over time or unavailability of historical data going back more than a couple of years. The factor of the standard deviation was adjusted to account for the limitation. However, once additional years of data are observed, there may be evidence that the standard deviation of the simulated historical data was substantially different (higher or lower) than what would have been derived with additional data points.
- We may find the methodology needs modification even for indicators where six years of simulated historical data were available. Statistically, even six observations is a small number and may yield an over- or under- estimate of average random variation. After the first two years, we may need to adjust the factor of standard deviations such that it more accurately reflects the observed random variance. Given we anticipate lower programmatic impact in the first two years of the plan due to the time it takes to realize change, we would use those data to reassess the random variance and request adjustments accordingly.
- This methodology presumes conservative growth in the first two years with more aggressive growth in the final two years of the plan. As such, we assumed a doubling of improvement each year of the plan. These presumptions were based on a logical understanding of the process implementing new initiatives, but the actual numeric weights for the annual change were an educated guess. As we move forward with data collection, differences in observed speed of improvement may necessitate performance level adjustments.
- This methodology presumes the make-up of students in the denominator (CTE concentrators) and economic conditions will remain relatively constant over the next

four years. Any substantial changes to either of these things may necessitate an adjustment of performance levels.

- Changes in core elements driving an indicator, such as changes in Technical Skills Assessments (i.e., changes to the assessment itself or more or fewer assessments included in the measure), changes to MCAs, or changes in the employment market would likely impact performance levels.
- Other changes to data collection, data quality, or data availability could also substantiate requests to adjust performance levels.

Minnesota does meet the statutory requirements specified for the state determined performance levels. The performance levels are specified as percentages for each secondary and postsecondary core indicator and the levels require meaningful progress toward improving the performance of all CTE concentrators over the grant timeframe. The state performance levels were subject to the public comment process and responses to the comments are included in section D4.

Regarding the extent to which the state determined levels of performance advance the eligible agency's goals, as set forth in the State plan (3a) and how the SDLPs align with levels, goals and objectives of other federal and state laws, 1P1 is a similar, but broader measure of placement of program completers in WIOA. The Perkins V indicator includes both employment placement AND continuing postsecondary education and other parameters we are currently unable to capture – military, peace corps, advanced training, etc. Indicator 2P1 is a measure of completion as Minnesota has defined it, which aligns with WIOA completion measure and is related to state credential *attainment goals*.

**4. Provide a written response to the comments regarding State determined performance levels received during the public comment period pursuant to section 113(b)(3)(B) of Perkins V. (Section 113(b)(3)(B)(iii) of Perkins V). As part of the written response, include a description of any the changes made to the State determined performance levels as a result of stakeholder feedback.**

The report of the feedback on performance indicators is available as Perkins V Public Hearing Reports: Feedback Minnesota Perkins V Program Indicators, <https://www.minnstate.edu/system/cte/Strengthening-CTE/index.html>. The written responses are part of that report.

**5. Describe how the eligible agency will address disparities or gaps in performance as described in section 113(b)(3)(C)(ii)(II) of Perkins V in each of the plan years, and if no meaningful progress has been achieved prior to the third program year, a description of the additional actions the eligible agency will take to eliminate these disparities or gaps. (Section 122(d)(11) of Perkins V)**

As part of the written response, and pursuant to the Report of the Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions (HELP), the eligible agency could indicate that it will analyze data on the core indicators of performance to identify gaps in performance, explain how they will use evidence-based research to develop a plan to provide support and technical assistance to eligible recipients to address and close such gaps, and how they will implement this plan. The eligible agency is not required to submit a new State plan prior to the third program year in order to address this requirement.

The Strategic Work Group of Equity and Inclusion will assist consortia in addressing disparities or gaps in performance through professional development opportunities, technical assistance and funding promising practices at the local level.

Minnesota Department of Education anticipates developing a suite of dynamic reports that will allow consortium leaders and district staff to quickly identify any gaps in performance that may exist between federally reported student groups. These reports will be updated annually in order to monitor trends in performance as well as progress toward closing any existing gaps. Webinars, group presentations, and individual assistance will be provided in order to ensure that secondary consortium leaders understand the measures used within the reports as well as how to interpret the information. The goal of providing this assistance is to ensure that consortium leaders are able to facilitate conversations with CTE teachers and district administrators so that meaningful gaps can be identified and are actionable.

### **Postsecondary**

Minnesota State is in the process of developing a set of reports that will present gaps in performance between federally identified subgroups and special populations and all CTE concentrators, where data are available. Data will allow consortia leaders to monitor performance over time and determine if progress is being made or where new issues may be arising. Assistance will be provided to help analyze the data to know when gaps are meaningful and to understand when additional information is required to interpret what is happening in their consortia.

### **Initiatives**

Both Minnesota State and the Minnesota Department of Education are committed to addressing disparities or gaps in performance of our students. MDE's Equity Statement follows:

Educational equity is the condition of justice, fairness and inclusion in our systems of education so that all students have access to the opportunities to learn and develop to their fullest potentials. The pursuit of educational equity recognizes the historical conditions and barriers that have prevented opportunity and success in learning for students based on their races, incomes, and other social conditions. Eliminating those structural and institutional barriers to educational opportunities requires systemic change that allows for distribution of resources, information and other support depending on the student's situation to ensure an equitable outcome.

Minnesota State has this goal: "By 2030, Minnesota State will eliminate education equity gaps at every Minnesota State college and university."

Under the umbrella of these statements and goals, multiple initiatives are in place to address disparities or gaps in performance. For example, within the Minnesota Department of Education there is an effort to better align CTE work and ESSA initiatives. We anticipate supporting and collaborate with state specialists and educators in our special education division, homeless student liaison staff, as well as our English learner division all of whom have a strong start toward reducing and eliminating gaps in performance.

There is also state legislation annually requiring each district to identify any existing gaps in performance as well as to document strategies for closing those gaps. Secondary consortium leaders are able to access a summary of their districts' publically available World's Best Workforce and Achievement and Integration plans in order to determine whether CTE students

would benefit from additional support of existing district goals and strategies or whether more is needed in order to support CTE teachers and student more specifically. Finally, it is also anticipated that secondary staff would utilize and share forward any resources produced by Advance CTE, REL, or Midwest Comprehensive Center in support of continuous improvement for all CTE students.

With these overarching goals, and the principle of equity within our state's Perkins Plan, our work will align with and enhance the initial strategies for implementation including the following areas of focus:

- Disaggregation of student data metrics to inform equity work and develop mechanisms to share data and review.
- Convening statewide Equity Summits
- Providing consultative and communicative structures
- Incentivize innovations to enhance access, improve student engagement and support, mitigate policy barriers, and expand workforce diversity and strategic talent management.

The increase of the reserve allocation distributed to local consortia to 15% is one opportunity for financial support for this equity work. In addition, the state will continue to heavily invest leadership funds to support professional development and technical assistance at the state and local levels. Individual consortia interventions will rise from the CLNA. In addition, Minnesota is working with ADVANCE CTE and ACTE to pilot a program of root cause analysis – moving to actionable interventions specifically to assist our consortium in addressing disparity gaps.

#### TEMPORARY ASSISTANCE FOR NEEDY FAMILIES (TANF)

States that include TANF in the Combined State Plan must outline how the State will meet the requirements of section 402 of the Social Security Act including how it will:

(OMB Control Number: 0970-0145)

A. CONDUCT A PROGRAM DESIGNED TO SERVE ALL POLITICAL SUBDIVISIONS IN THE STATE (NOT NECESSARILY IN A UNIFORM MANNER) THAT PROVIDES ASSISTANCE TO NEEDY FAMILIES WITH (OR EXPECTING) CHILDREN AND PROVIDES PARENTS WITH JOB PREPARATION, WORK, AND SUPPORT SERVICES TO ENABLE THEM TO LEAVE THE PROGRAM, SPECIFICALLY CASH ASSISTANCE, AND BECOME SELF-SUFFICIENT (SECTION 402(A)(1)(A)(I) OF THE SOCIAL SECURITY ACT)

**1. STATES THAT INCLUDE TANF IN THE COMBINED STATE PLAN MUST OUTLINE HOW THE STATE WILL MEET THE REQUIREMENTS OF SECTION 402 OF THE SOCIAL SECURITY ACT INCLUDING HOW IT WILL:**

*A. CONDUCT A PROGRAM DESIGNED TO SERVE ALL POLITICAL SUBDIVISIONS IN THE STATE (NOT NECESSARILY IN A UNIFORM MANNER) THAT PROVIDES ASSISTANCE TO NEEDY FAMILIES WITH (OR EXPECTING) CHILDREN AND PROVIDES PARENTS WITH JOB PREPARATION, WORK, AND SUPPORT SERVICES TO ENABLE THEM TO LEAVE THE PROGRAM, SPECIFICALLY CASH ASSISTANCE, AND BECOME SELF-SUFFICIENT (SECTION 402(A) (1) (A) (I) OF THE SOCIAL SECURITY ACT).*

### ***Minnesota Family Investment Program (MFIP)***

The Minnesota Family Investment Program (MFIP), Minnesota's Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program, provides temporary (60 months or less) cash and food assistance to:

Families with children under age 18 (up to age 19 if in secondary education or vocational school full-time), and pregnant women with their spouses when financially eligible. The basis of program eligibility for a pregnant woman is as follows: A pregnant woman who has no other eligible birth, adoptive, or step-children living with her is eligible for MFIP or DWP under the pregnant woman basis of eligibility if she meets all other financial and non-financial program requirements. In addition, if the pregnant woman and the acknowledged father live together but are not married, Minnesota uses only the woman's income and assets to determine eligibility and benefits. But, if the woman and the father live together and are married, the income and assets of both the mother and father is taken into consideration when determining eligibility and benefits. The father is also a mandatory unit member of the assistance unit per state law.

Adult relatives who live with the child and take responsibility for them when their parents cannot or will not. These include: Grandparents, aunts, uncles, cousins, sister or brother, half-sister or half-brother, step-sister or step-brother, niece or nephews, legal custodians/legal guardians, and even relative foster care provider who is receiving federal, state or local foster care payments and who meets program requirement. These adult relatives may receive assistance through MFIP for children in their care, and may choose to be on the MFIP grant or to apply for a child-only grant. When the non-parental caregiver receives assistance only for children, the income and assets of the relative caregivers are not considered and the case is not subject to the 60-month lifetime limit.

MFIP helps families work toward economic stability and greater self-sufficiency. MFIP provides help with child care costs, employment services, opportunities for education and training for workforce preparation, and a grant to supplement family income. MFIP encourages employment by providing work incentives, and promotes personal responsibility by expecting families to actively pursue employment.

Some of the family's earned income is disregarded before calculating the MFIP grant. The monthly disregard amount is \$65 of earned income per wage earner plus 50 percent of the remaining earned income of the assistance unit. The remaining earnings are subtracted from the Family Wage Level grant standard, which is 10 percent higher than the standard allowed for families who receive only unearned income. For applicants, the Family Wage is the single standard used when determining MFIP eligibility regardless if the applicant has earnings or not.

Child care is a key component in Minnesota's strategy to help families leave and remain off public assistance. In Minnesota, the Child Care Assistance Program provides financial assistance to families to support access to child care that is affordable so that parents can work and/or attend school, and children are well cared for and ready for school.

Minnesota Family Investment Program families who participate in work activities such as work, job search, education, or social services activities that are approved in their employment plans are eligible to receive childcare assistance. In addition, Transition Year child care is available to eligible families for a full year after their MFIP case closes to help families move toward economic stability. MFIP child care and Transition Year child care assistance are fully forecasted in the state's budget.

The Basic Sliding Fee program is available for non-MFIP/DWP income-eligible families and is funded through a capped allocation. If a family finishes their Transition Year child care assistance and there is a waiting list in their county for the Basic Sliding Fee program, the Transition Year bridge program will continue to provide them child care assistance until they reach their turn for Basic Sliding Fee child care assistance.

Families receiving MFIP benefits and/or services are encouraged to apply for health care coverage at the same time they apply for MFIP. Families receiving cash assistance and those not receiving cash assistance can apply for the Medical Assistance program and the MinnesotaCare program (Minnesota's health care program for the uninsured).

Families who receive MFIP must cooperate with their local child support agency to establish and enforce their child support orders. In State Fiscal Year 2018, child support agencies collected \$573 million in child support. Through the child support pass-through, Minnesota counties collected and distributed to MFIP families \$9 million in child support. Minnesota passes through 100 percent of the child support payments made to the families receiving MFIP. Child support payments are treated as unearned income when calculating MFIP eligibility and benefits. Up to \$100 in child support payments for a family with one child, and up to \$200 for a family with two or more children is excluded from unearned income budgets when calculating a household's income for benefit determination.

MFIP combines cash and food benefits per the provisions of a waiver from the United States Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Services. Families who are not eligible for MFIP can apply for the federal Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP).

### ***Diversionsary Work Program (DWP)***

The Diversionsary Work Program provides help to families in crisis who are new to public assistance by supporting them in their efforts to immediately obtain and retain employment. DWP may be provided to families in crisis for a maximum of four months once in a 12-month period. Families with children under age 18 (up to age 19 if in secondary or vocational school full-time), or pregnant women and their spouses are eligible for DWP if they have not received cash assistance in the previous 12 months.

Minnesota defines a caregiver as a person who provides care and support to a minor child. The unborn child of a pregnant woman falls under this definition. If the pregnant woman and the acknowledged father live together but are not married, Minnesota uses only the woman's income and assets to determine eligibility and benefits. But, if the woman and the father live together and are married, the income and assets of both the mother and father is taken into consideration when determining eligibility and benefits. The father is also a mandatory unit member of the assistance unit per state law.

Eligibility for DWP begins the date a signed application form is received by the county agency. State statute requires financial workers to hold the interview for an applicant who appears to be eligible for DWP within five working days of the receipt of the application. If it appears that child care is necessary to enable a parent to work or look for work, and the parent has not applied for child care, the application for child care assistance must be completed before the interview with the financial worker is completed.

As soon as possible, but no later than 10 working days before being notified by the county agency that the applicant is financially eligible for DWP, the employment services provider must meet with the applicant and develop an employment plan. The county agency must issue DWP

benefits within one working day after receiving notice that an employment plan has been signed.

DWP supports families during a crisis situation and is not intended to meet recurrent needs. The short-term supports provided may include temporary help with rent, utilities or other housing costs and a personal allowance. Other supports for which families might be eligible are Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, health care and child care assistance. After four months of DWP, a family without a job or very low income may apply for MFIP. Families also may be eligible to continue Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, health care and child care assistance.

Families who receive DWP are required to cooperate with their local child support agency to establish and enforce their child support orders. Although families on DWP are required to cooperate with their child support agency, child support is not assigned to the state. All child support is passed through to the family. Up to \$100 in child support payments for a family with one child, and up to \$200 for a family with two or more children is excluded from unearned income budgets when calculating a household's income for benefit determination.

DWP is a non-recurrent short-term benefit available for a maximum of four consecutive months. Because DWP benefits are meant to address the family's crisis and divert them from long-term assistance, receipt of DWP does not count against the 60-month TANF time limit.

B. REQUIRE A PARENT OR CARETAKER RECEIVING ASSISTANCE TO ENGAGE IN WORK (DEFINED BY THE STATE) ONCE THE STATE DETERMINES THE PARENT OR CARETAKER IS READY TO ENGAGE IN WORK, OR ONCE HE OR SHE HAS RECEIVED 24 MONTHS OF ASSISTANCE, WHICHEVER IS EARLIER, CONSISTENT WITH THE CHILD CARE EXCEPTION AT 407(E)(2) (SECTION 402(A)(1)(A)(II) OF THE SOCIAL SECURITY ACT)

*B. REQUIRE A PARENT OR CARETAKER RECEIVING ASSISTANCE TO ENGAGE IN WORK (DEFINED BY THE STATE) ONCE THE STATE DETERMINES THE PARENT OR CARETAKER IS READY TO ENGAGE IN WORK, OR ONCE HE OR SHE HAS RECEIVED 24 MONTHS OF ASSISTANCE, WHICHEVER IS EARLIER, CONSISTENT WITH THE CHILD CARE EXCEPTION AT 407(E)(2) (SECTION 402(A)(1)(A)(II) OF THE SOCIAL SECURITY ACT).*

### ***Minnesota Family Investment Program (MFIP)***

Caregivers must begin participating in work activities within 30 days of being determined eligible for MFIP. Counties have the option of requiring that work activities begin sooner.

MFIP uses a combination of work incentives and required work activities such as job search, short-term training or subsidized work. Sanctions enforce work activity requirements and include grant reductions, vendor payments of shelter costs from the grant, and even case closure (when there are seven occurrences of noncompliance). When a case is closed, the financial worker re-determines the family's continued eligibility for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program. MFIP must remain closed for a minimum of one full month when closed for sanction reasons. Before ending a family's assistance, because of sanction, the county agency must review the case to determine if the employment plan is still appropriate, and must attempt to meet with the participant face-to-face.

Minnesota does not sanction parents and relatives caring for children in their homes if they do not have access to childcare or transportation because that is considered good cause for incompliance with work requirements.

### ***Diversionsary Work Program (DWP)***

The goal of the Diversionary Work Program is to provide short-term, necessary services and supports to families, which will lead to unsubsidized employment, increased economic stability, and reduced risk of those families needing longer term assistance under MFIP. All parents, including both parents in a two-parent family, are required to develop and sign an employment plan before the family is approved for DWP. Most parents must seek full-time work immediately when approved. Employment services can help the family identify and address issues that may prevent the parents from obtaining or retaining employment. DWP employment service providers help parents find work that fits with the employment plan. The employment plan may include limited training that can be completed in four or fewer months.

Minnesota stresses work as the means to address the family's ongoing needs and places a high priority on starting to work or increasing the number of hours a person is employed. That is why the child care application must be completed during the DWP interview process and why the applicant must develop an employment plan prior to receiving any cash benefits.

When a participant fails to comply with the DWP employment plan or with child support enforcement without good cause, the DWP case is closed. The family is not eligible for MFIP during the DWP disqualification period and the case remains closed unless the parent comes into compliance within the four consecutive months of the DWP eligibility period. The disqualification of the family from DWP does not affect receipt of Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program or health care benefits.

Minnesota does not sanction parents and relatives caring for children in their homes if they do not have access to childcare or transportation because that is considered good cause for noncompliance with work requirements.

C. ENSURE THAT PARENTS AND CARETAKERS RECEIVING ASSISTANCE ENGAGE IN WORK IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 407 (SECTION 402(A)(1)(A)(III) OF THE SOCIAL SECURITY ACT). CONSISTENT WITH THE REQUIRED STRATEGIC ELEMENTS DISCUSSED IN SECTION II (A)(2) HEREIN, PROVIDE A SPECIFIC ANALYSIS OF HOW THE STATE'S WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES ARE ADDRESSING EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING SERVICES FOR PARENTS OR CARETAKERS RECEIVING ASSISTANCE

C. ENSURE THAT PARENTS AND CARETAKERS RECEIVING ASSISTANCE ENGAGE IN WORK IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 407 (SECTION 402(A)(1)(A)(III) OF THE SOCIAL SECURITY ACT). CONSISTENT WITH THE REQUIRED STRATEGIC ELEMENTS DISCUSSED IN SECTION II (A)(2) HEREIN, PROVIDE A SPECIFIC ANALYSIS OF HOW THE STATE'S WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES ARE ADDRESSING EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING SERVICES FOR PARENTS OR CARETAKERS RECEIVING ASSISTANCE.

### ***Minnesota Family Investment Program (MFIP)***

Minnesota ensures that parents receiving assistance through MFIP engage in work activities through three mechanisms: requiring all adults receiving MFIP assistance to develop an individualized employment plan that identifies the activities the adult will participate in and that meets the hours required for participation (256J.561, subd.2); imposing sanctions if the participant does not comply with the work requirements (256J.46); and offering employment services to all adults receiving assistance.

Minnesota requires parents and caregivers to submit pay stubs and documentation verifying participation in work activities as detailed in the State's Work Verification Plan. DHS and DEED jointly operate MFIP employment and training services. DHS also releases regular management

indicator reports to counties in order for the counties to track state-mandated performance measures for MFIP.

Child care assistance is available to all MFIP participants who engage in work activities in an approved employment plan.

Minor parents under the age of 18 who have not received a high school diploma or its equivalent are required to engage in appropriate educational programs and are provided with child care assistance and supportive services to enable successful participation. Parents, ages 18 and 19, can choose whether they want to complete their high school education or participate in work activities leading to employment. Whichever choice is made, child care assistance is available to enable the parents to participate in the chosen activity.

Bilingual employment and training services and work literacy language programs may be available for those lacking English proficiency, although the lack of proficiency in English is not necessarily presumed to be a barrier to employment. Interpreter services are provided when necessary.

### ***Diversionsary Work Program (DWP)***

DWP stresses that work is the means for families to meet their ongoing needs and provides support services as needed to help participants in crisis obtain and retain employment. After establishing financial eligibility, participants must meet with an employment counselor and develop an employment plan in order to be found eligible to receive assistance through DWP. Work activities available for participants include, but are not limited to: job search, job readiness assessment, job readiness assistance, job clubs, job counseling, job coaching, job skills training, work experience, subsidized employment, on-the-job training, job placement, educational programs and post-employment follow-up services. Education for DWP recipients is allowed, but the education program must be completed within the four-month DWP period or an education activity cannot be approved as part of the employment plan. Participants who do not comply with their employment plans have their cases closed.

D. TAKE SUCH REASONABLE STEPS AS THE STATE DEEMS NECESSARY TO RESTRICT THE USE AND DISCLOSURE OF INFORMATION ABOUT INDIVIDUALS AND FAMILIES RECEIVING ASSISTANCE UNDER THE PROGRAM ATTRIBUTABLE TO FUNDS PROVIDED BY THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT (SECTION 402(A)(1)(A)(IV) OF THE SOCIAL SECURITY ACT)

*D. TAKE SUCH REASONABLE STEPS AS THE STATE DEEMS NECESSARY TO RESTRICT THE USE AND DISCLOSURE OF INFORMATION ABOUT INDIVIDUALS AND FAMILIES RECEIVING ASSISTANCE UNDER THE PROGRAM ATTRIBUTABLE TO FUNDS PROVIDED BY THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT (SECTION 402(A)(1)(A)(IV) OF THE SOCIAL SECURITY ACT).*

### ***Minnesota Family Investment Program, and Diversionsary Work Program***

Data on recipients is classified as private and may not be disclosed pursuant to Minnesota Statutes, Chapter 13. Access to Minnesota's eligibility computer system (MAXIS) is defined by a security role that is attached to a worker's ID, and access to information is defined and limited by worker job responsibilities. A personal logon ID cannot be issued until the worker completes a state-developed orientation course. The orientation includes a review of data privacy and ethics as they pertain to client information. All county, state and contracted agency staff working in the Minnesota Family Investment Program must complete annually two data privacy courses designed to increase compliance with data practices and security, and meet federal training requirements for all those with access to DHS information and networks. Mastery of these courses is now required prior to receiving access to DHS systems including the new

eligibility system, MMIS, MAXIS and MEC2. In addition, printed reports distributed by the state are reviewed individually to ensure data provided to the requestor are appropriate for the recipient of the report.

E. ESTABLISH GOALS AND TAKE ACTION TO PREVENT AND REDUCE OUT-OF-WEDLOCK PREGNANCIES, WITH SPECIAL EMPHASIS ON TEENAGE PREGNANCIES (SECTION 402(A)(1)(A)(V) OF THE SOCIAL SECURITY ACT)

*E. ESTABLISH GOALS AND TAKE ACTION TO PREVENT AND REDUCE OUT-OF-WEDLOCK PREGNANCIES, WITH SPECIAL EMPHASIS ON TEENAGE PREGNANCIES (SECTION 402(A)(1)(A)(V) OF THE SOCIAL SECURITY ACT).*

Minnesota's female population ages 15 to 44 in 2018 was estimated at 1,074,005. Of the total resident births (67,348), 45,869 were to married women, 21,467 were to women who were not married, and 12 were unknown. Thus, the out-of-wedlock birth rate in Minnesota for 2018 was 20.0/1000 for women ages 15 to 44. The out-of-wedlock birth rate in Minnesota for 2017 was 20.6/1000, for 2016 was 21.3/1000, for 2015 was 21.3/1000, for 2014 it was 21.4/1000, and for 2013 it was 21.7/1000 women. The out-of-wedlock birth rate for Minnesota has remained relatively stable over the last several years with a slight trend downward. Minnesota still continues to face significant challenges in trying to lower its out-of-wedlock birth rate.

Minnesota has focused significant attention on reducing unintended pregnancies, particularly those occurring to teens and young adults who are less likely to be married or prepared to care for a child. While Minnesota's teen pregnancy rate compares well to national rates, it masks significant and persistent racial and ethnic disparities. African American and American Indian youth are three to four times more likely to have a child when they are a teen than is a white youth. In an effort to address these disparities, the Minnesota legislature provided the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) with \$2 million annually in TANF funds that support non-profit and government agencies in reducing the disparities in teen pregnancy rates in Minnesota.

Minnesota Department of Health receives \$999,106 annually in federal a Title V Abstinence Education Grant (AEGP) funding to support evidenced based efforts to delay sexual activity in youth. Minnesota's program is a coordinated countywide approach in St. Paul-Ramsey County, Hennepin County Watonwan County, Beltrami County and other rural and urban American Indian communities. The program has three components: direct service to youth in schools and community settings through Teen Outreach Program, Making a Difference, Project AIM and Live it! Curriculum; reaching out to parents in the community through It's That Easy: A Guide to Raising Sexually Healthy Children Parent Education Training; and the Making Authentic Connections Program, which trains parents and others in making authentic connections in relationships with youth.

Minnesota Department of Health also receives a federal Personal Responsibility Education Program (PREP) grant (\$887,189 annually). The MN PREP sub-awardees serve male and female youth in the following target populations: the juvenile justice system; attending area learning centers (ALC); in or aging out of foster care; runaway and homeless; with HIV/AIDS; pregnant, mothers' and fathers' who are under 21 years of age; Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Queer/Questioning (LGBTQ); American Indians; youth experiencing racial and ethnic disparities; culturally underrepresented; out of school; at risk of being trafficked for commercial sexual exploitation; and residing in areas of high teen birth rates. The overarching goals of this program are to decrease teen pregnancies and STI rates among participating teens, focusing on ages 15-19, and to increase healthy youth behaviors and life-skills in teens 10-19 years of

age. This is accomplished through the implementation of high quality, medically-accurate and evidence-based programs. It also assists high- risk adolescents to successfully transition from youth to adulthood by providing supplemental adult preparation topics such as adolescent development, healthy life skills, healthy relationships and financial literacy.

Efforts are also directed at increasing access to family planning services for individuals who are low- income and at high risk for unintended pregnancies. Minnesota's Family Planning Special Projects (FPSP) grant program is administered by MDH. Funded through the state Legislature, the current two-year grant cycle made available \$12,706,000 (including \$2,312,000 in TANF funding) to 27 community family planning clinics across the state. Grantees include one county-operated clinic and one university-operated clinic, ten local public health agencies, and fifteen non-profit organizations. In State Fiscal Year 2017, FPSP provided family planning counseling services to 34,682 women, 6,468 men, and 109 client who identified as Transgender or Gender Nonconforming who were low-income and at risk for unintended pregnancy. FPSP grantees provided 30,813 men and women and those identified as Transgender or Gender Nonconforming with a contraceptive method – 24 percent of whom were age 19 or younger. To assist individuals in accessing subsidized family planning services, Minnesota Department of Health also funds a 1-800 family planning hotline. In State Fiscal Year 2017, the hotline responded to 3,600 inquiries.

Federal Title X funds totaling \$3.1 million comes to Minnesota through direct grants to Planned Parenthood of Minnesota, North Dakota and South Dakota, and Ramsey Public Health. Access to subsidized family planning services has also been increased through the Minnesota Family Planning Program. The Minnesota Family Planning Program (MFPP) increases access to family planning services for low-income Minnesotans and helps reduce the number of unintended pregnancies. The program is available to people who are not enrolled in Medical Assistance. In 2016, the program served more than 21,000 people, with a monthly average enrollment of about 12,000. Total spending for the program was just over \$9 million. Federal Medicaid funding for most services is at a 90-percent matching rate. The MFPP was implemented beginning July 1, 2006, as a federal waiver demonstration project approved by the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS). The Affordable Care Act (ACA) established a new Medicaid eligibility group and the option for states to provide family planning services under the Medicaid State Plan. The 2014 Minnesota Legislature directed DHS to seek federal authority to operate the MFPP under the Minnesota Medicaid State Plan. Effective January 1, 2017, the MFPP became a Medicaid State Plan program.

Other state efforts supporting reducing unintended pregnancies include The Family Home Visiting Program administered by MDH. Approximately \$8 million in federal TANF funds are directed to the Family Home Visiting Program. The Family Home Visiting program administered by MDH provides funding to all of Minnesota's local public health agencies and to nine of the 11 tribal governments to support home visiting services to families at or below 200 percent of poverty. The goal of the program is to prevent child abuse and neglect, reduce juvenile delinquency, promote positive parenting and resiliency in children and promote family health and economic self-sufficiency. The program has a strong focus on providing family supports that reduce the risk of teen pregnancies and working with pregnant or parenting teens to delay subsequent pregnancies.

These family home visiting efforts are augmented by receipt of approximately \$9.2 million (FFY18) in federal Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting Program funds. Beginning in July 2019, a total of \$18.7 million in Minnesota state funding will support

implementation of the evidence based home visiting models such as Nurse Family Partnership, Healthy Families America and Family Spirit, Parents as Teachers and Family Connects.

F. CONDUCT A PROGRAM DESIGNED TO REACH STATE AND LOCAL LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICIALS, THE EDUCATION SYSTEM, AND RELEVANT COUNSELING SERVICES, THAT PROVIDES EDUCATION AND TRAINING ON THE PROBLEM OF STATUTORY RAPE SO THAT TEENAGE PREGNANCY PREVENTION PROGRAMS MAY BE EXPANDED TO INCLUDE MEN (SECTION 402(A)(1)(A)(VI) OF THE SOCIAL SECURITY ACT)

*F. CONDUCT A PROGRAM DESIGNED TO REACH STATE AND LOCAL LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICIALS, THE EDUCATION SYSTEM, AND RELEVANT COUNSELING SERVICES, THAT PROVIDES EDUCATION AND TRAINING ON THE PROBLEM OF STATUTORY RAPE SO THAT TEENAGE PREGNANCY PREVENTION PROGRAMS MAY BE EXPANDED TO INCLUDE MEN (SECTION 402(A)(1)(A)(VI) OF THE SOCIAL SECURITY ACT).*

The state of Minnesota considers sexual violence, including statutory rape, a public health problem. Sexual violence is defined as any of the following conditions: statutory rape, date/acquaintance rape, same-sex assault, child sexual abuse, incest, pornography, prostitution, sexual exploitation by professionals, stalking, sexual harassment, and any other sexual activity in which a person is forced, coerced or manipulated without her/his consent.

In order to address this problem, the state passed provisions that outline consequences for sexual violence including age of consent laws (for further details, see Minnesota Statute 609.342 at <https://www.revisor.mn.gov/statutes/?id=609.342>)

In addition, statewide partnerships approach sexual violence in a holistic manner that work towards the elimination of violent sexual behaviors including statutory rape.

These efforts are provided under the leadership of a statewide stakeholder workgroup involving the following organizations and grassroots advocacy entities:

- Minnesota Department of Health (MDH)
- Minnesota Department of Human Services (DHS)
- Department of Corrections (DOC)
- Representatives of county and local legal, health, law enforcement and abuse prevention organizations and workgroups
- MDE and representatives of local school districts
- Minnesota Coalition Against Sexual Assault
- The MN Men's Action Network (Alliance to Prevent Sexual and Domestic Violence)

These statewide public/private collaborative efforts support and fund annual conferences, periodic meetings, and ad hoc taskforces to shape the development of sexual violence prevention curriculum that is available and distributed to communities, youth, and professionals. To this end, a collaborative effort between MDH, Men As Peacemakers in Duluth and the Gender Violence Institute in Clearwater had been created to develop a network of men and male leaders involved in primary prevention practices. These efforts are currently coordinated by Minnesota Department of Health, the Bush Foundation and the Minnesota Department of Public Safety.

G. IMPLEMENT POLICIES AND PROCEDURES AS NECESSARY TO PREVENT ACCESS TO ASSISTANCE PROVIDED UNDER THE STATE PROGRAM FUNDED UNDER THIS PART THROUGH ANY ELECTRONIC FUND TRANSACTION IN AN AUTOMATED TELLER MACHINE OR POINT-OF-SALE DEVICE LOCATED IN A PLACE DESCRIBED IN SECTION 408(A)(12), INCLUDING A PLAN TO ENSURE THAT RECIPIENTS OF THE ASSISTANCE HAVE ADEQUATE ACCESS TO THEIR CASH ASSISTANCE (SECTION 402(A)(1)(A)(VII) OF THE SOCIAL SECURITY ACT)

G. IMPLEMENT POLICIES AND PROCEDURES AS NECESSARY TO PREVENT ACCESS TO ASSISTANCE PROVIDED UNDER THE STATE PROGRAM FUNDED UNDER THIS PART THROUGH ANY ELECTRONIC FUND TRANSACTION IN AN AUTOMATED TELLER MACHINE OR POINT-OF-SALE DEVICE LOCATED IN A PLACE DESCRIBED IN SECTION 408(A)(12), INCLUDING A PLAN TO ENSURE THAT RECIPIENTS OF THE ASSISTANCE HAVE ADEQUATE ACCESS TO THEIR CASH ASSISTANCE (SECTION 402(A)(1)(A)(VII) OF THE SOCIAL SECURITY ACT).

The State of Minnesota has taken several steps to ensure the requirements of Section 4004 of the Middle Class Tax Relief and Job Creation Act of 2012 are as follows:

Enforcing a complementary state law (MN Statute 256.987, Subdivision 2) which prohibits the purchase of tobacco products and liquor with any EBT transactions. Thus, EBT users are informed of their responsibilities and limitations with EBT card use. Furthermore, counties/tribes that deliver MFIP/TANF benefits and services are instructed to communicate to all program participants state expectations around EBT card use restrictions at both application and at recertification stages.

A search is done quarterly through the EBT Data Warehouse system, specifically narrowed to include search fields of retailer name and/or Point of Sale machine names, and location of retailers that clients should not be accessing their cash benefits at. The results are further reviewed to see if the cash withdrawal transactions are done at a retailer that has an assigned Food and Consumer Services (FCS) number that indicates they are a registered retailer with US Food and Nutrition Service (FNS). The results without a FCS number affiliated with the retailer/Point of Sale machine are submitted to Fidelity National Information Services, Inc. (FIS) to review further and block ongoing cash withdrawals if possible. The known locations are reviewed monthly to see if they have been successfully blocked for usage.

Ongoing monitoring occurs by generating quarterly reports. Prohibited retailers and POS machines are continuously identified and blocked as needed.

Findings of noncompliance at the retailer level are resolved by blocking the ability to conduct EBT transactions. At the participant level, findings of non-compliance are addressed through fraud investigations at the county level who have the ability to prosecute such an offense to fraud and unlawful EBT use. The disqualification of the EBT cardholder from the program they were a participant can also occur.

To provide adequate access to TANF benefits, Minnesota's issuance policy provides that the monthly assistance payments or corrective payments be issued in the form of EBT or direct deposit to client checking or savings accounts at a bank or credit union, or warrants at their option. For benefits issued through EBT cards, the state contracts with Fidelity Information Services (FIS) to allow clients get access to their benefits through automated teller machines (ATM) and point-of-sale terminals (POS) at authorized locations in the state's 87 counties and tribal nations. Each ATM and POS machine is owned and operated by different financial institutions. FIS may on their business side work with grocers or retailers to provide POS machine. FIS makes sure that transactions are processing correctly and deals with customer service as they arise. For instance, providing replacement cards, helping clients to check

balances, and to report any ATM error they may encounter. FIS also offers three ways for clients to contact them, online, via phone and an app that clients can download on their mobile phones. Furthermore, state staff can conduct monitoring by call monitoring on FIS customer service call, as well as get monthly reports from FIS on their customer service statistics. The state retains the authority to assess a financial penalty if need be. If a client is not receiving the correct amount from an ATM, the complaint first goes through the bank that owns the ATM, then FIS which will adjust benefits if it is found an ATM made an error. Clients are provided with four (4) free cash ATM/POS transactions each month provide adequate benefit access at little cost.

H. ENSURE THAT RECIPIENTS OF ASSISTANCE PROVIDED UNDER THE STATE PROGRAM FUNDED UNDER THIS PART HAVE THE ABILITY TO USE OR WITHDRAW ASSISTANCE WITH MINIMAL FEES OR CHARGES, INCLUDING AN OPPORTUNITY TO ACCESS ASSISTANCE WITH NO FEE OR CHARGES, AND ARE PROVIDED INFORMATION ON APPLICABLE FEES AND SURCHARGES THAT APPLY TO ELECTRONIC FUND TRANSACTIONS INVOLVING THE ASSISTANCE, AND THAT SUCH INFORMATION IS MADE PUBLICLY AVAILABLE (SECTION 402(A)(1)(A)(VIII) OF THE SOCIAL SECURITY ACT)

*H. ENSURE THAT RECIPIENTS OF ASSISTANCE PROVIDED UNDER THE STATE PROGRAM FUNDED UNDER THIS PART HAVE THE ABILITY TO USE OR WITHDRAW ASSISTANCE WITH MINIMAL FEES OR CHARGES, INCLUDING AN OPPORTUNITY TO ACCESS ASSISTANCE WITH NO FEE OR CHARGES, AND ARE PROVIDED INFORMATION ON APPLICABLE FEES AND SURCHARGES THAT APPLY TO ELECTRONIC FUND TRANSACTIONS INVOLVING THE ASSISTANCE, AND THAT SUCH INFORMATION IS MADE PUBLICLY AVAILABLE (SECTION 402(A) (1) (A) (VIII) OF THE SOCIAL SECURITY ACT).*

While there are client restrictions regarding EBT access and use of TANF benefits, Minnesota is required by federal law to ensure that applicants and recipients are provided adequate access to cash assistance with minimal or no fees or charges for withdrawal. Clients pay electronic fees similar to non-TANF clients. Clients get four free EBT cash withdrawals per month, and eFunds then charges \$1 for subsequent cash withdrawals. This fee is not charged until the client's fifth cash withdrawal.

.Minnesota's EBT brochure includes a description of how EBT card fees work, and is made available in print and electronically (see this link for further information <https://edocs.dhs.state.mn.us/lfsrver/Public/DHS-3315A-ENG> ).

I. INDICATE WHETHER IT INTENDS TO TREAT FAMILIES MOVING FROM ANOTHER STATE DIFFERENTLY FROM OTHER FAMILIES UNDER THE PROGRAM, AND IF SO HOW (SECTION 402(A)(1)(B)(I) OF THE SOCIAL SECURITY ACT)

*I. INDICATE WHETHER THE STATE INTENDS TO TREAT FAMILIES MOVING FROM ANOTHER STATE DIFFERENTLY FROM OTHER FAMILIES UNDER THE PROGRAM, AND IF SO HOW (SECTION 402(A) (1) (B) (I) OF THE SOCIAL SECURITY ACT)*

To be eligible for MFIP or DWP, an assistance unit must have established residency in Minnesota. An assistance unit is considered to have established residency in Minnesota when a child or caregiver has resided in this state for at least 30 consecutive days with the intention of making the person's home here and not for any temporary purpose. A county must waive the 30-day residency requirement when unusual hardship would result from denial of assistance. Families that have move from other states to Minnesota, and who establish state residency, are treated the same as all the other MFIP participants.

J. INDICATE WHETHER IT INTENDS TO PROVIDE ASSISTANCE TO NON-CITIZENS, AND IF SO INCLUDE AN OVERVIEW OF THE ASSISTANCE (SECTION 402(A)(1)(B)(II) OF THE SOCIAL SECURITY ACT)

*J. INDICATE WHETHER IT INTENDS TO PROVIDE ASSISTANCE TO NON-CITIZENS, AND IF SO INCLUDE AN OVERVIEW OF THE ASSISTANCE (SECTION 402(A) (1) (B) (II) OF THE SOCIAL SECURITY ACT).*

Persons who are either United States citizens or qualified non-citizens are eligible for TANF benefits per the provisions of section 431 of the PRWORA, as amended (8 U.S.C. 1641), if they meet all other program eligibility criteria. Qualified non-citizens who entered the United States before Aug. 22, 1996 are considered to be eligible for federally funded cash assistance if they are Lawful Permanent Residents (LPRs); paroled for one year or more; victims of battery and/or cruelty; or conditional entrants prior to April 1, 1980. Qualified non-citizens who entered on or after Aug. 22, 1996 are considered to be ineligible for federally funded MFIP/DWP cash assistance for five years. The following non-citizens may be eligible for federal funding without considering the date of admission to the U.S. if they meet all other program requirements: refugees, asylees, veterans and persons on active duty in the U.S. Armed Forces, their spouses or unmarried dependent children, non-citizens whose deportation/removal is being withheld, Cuban or Haitian entrants and certain Amerasians.

All lawfully residing non-citizens who are not eligible for federal funding may be eligible for state funding if they meet other program eligibility requirements for state funded cash assistance. LPRs age 18 through 69 who are funded under state dollars and who have been in the country for four or more years must meet one of the following requirements to remain eligible: Enrollment in literacy, English as a second language or citizenship classes; applied for admission to such classes and on a waiting list; applied for a waiver from U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) of the English language or civics requirements of the citizenship test; submitted an application for citizenship to USCIS and waiting for a testing date or swearing-in ceremony; or have been denied citizenship due to failure to pass the test after two or more attempts or because of an inability to understand the rights and responsibilities of becoming a U.S. citizen as documented by the USCIS or the county agency.

K. SET FORTH OBJECTIVE CRITERIA FOR THE DELIVERY OF BENEFITS AND THE DETERMINATION OF ELIGIBILITY AND FOR FAIR AND EQUITABLE TREATMENT, INCLUDING AN EXPLANATION OF HOW IT WILL PROVIDE OPPORTUNITIES FOR RECIPIENTS WHO HAVE BEEN ADVERSELY AFFECTED TO BE HEARD IN A STATE ADMINISTRATIVE OR APPEAL PROCESS (SECTION 402(A)(1)(B)(III) OF THE SOCIAL SECURITY ACT)

*K. SET FORTH OBJECTIVE CRITERIA FOR THE DELIVERY OF BENEFITS AND THE DETERMINATION OF ELIGIBILITY AND FOR FAIR AND EQUITABLE TREATMENT, INCLUDING AN EXPLANATION OF HOW IT WILL PROVIDE OPPORTUNITIES FOR RECIPIENTS WHO HAVE BEEN ADVERSELY AFFECTED TO BE HEARD IN A STATE ADMINISTRATIVE OR APPEAL PROCESS (SECTION 402(A)(1)(B)(III) OF THE SOCIAL SECURITY ACT).*

*Eligibility*

An applicant for MFIP or for DWP must meet the eligibility requirements specified in Minnesota Statutes Sections 256J.01 through 256J.95 before receiving benefits and services. All requirements under Section 408 of the Social Security Act, as amended by the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996, are included in Minnesota law.

Assistance is provided equitably to all program recipients in accordance with state and federal law. Neither MFIP nor DWP requires basis of eligibility tests, such as the previous Aid to Families with Dependent Children 100-hour rule requirement for two-parent families.

The asset limit for both programs is \$10,000 for applicants and \$10,000 for participants. One vehicle per assistance member age 16 or older is not counted towards the asset limit. Other assets that do not count towards the asset limit include personal goods and savings in a tax-free ABLE account, up to \$14,000 per year. For MFIP and DWP, statewide payment standards are based on the number of eligible persons in the assistance unit.

Persons convicted of a drug offense committed after July 1, 1997 may receive cash assistance subject to the conditions set forth in Minnesota Statutes 256J.26.

### ***Minnesota Family Investment Program (MFIP)***

#### *Time Limits*

There is a 60-month lifetime limit for receiving MFIP assistance with exceptions in certain situations. Time limit exceptions apply to the months in which individuals are living in Indian country (as defined in Section 1151 of Title 18, U.S.C.) or a Native Alaskan Village where the not-employed rate is over 50 percent per the provisions under 45 CFR 264.1((b)(1)(ii)).

Under the MFIP program, some families are funded with segregated state funds and are exempt from the 60-month lifetime limit. Included are caregivers age 60 and over as well as minor caregivers under the age of 18 and caregivers 18 or 19 who are complying with education requirements. The months a person received cash assistance as part of the MFIP field trials are also exempted from the 60-month time limit. The MFIP field trials were implemented in April 1994 in urban counties and four rural counties in Minnesota. Because that time predates the state TANF program, it is not included in the 60-month time limit count for the current MFIP program (Minnesota's TANF Program).

#### *Hardship Extensions*

Extensions of the 60-month time limit are possible if any of the following hardship conditions are met:

- The participant is suffering from an illness, injury or incapacity which has been certified by a qualified professional when the illness, injury or incapacity is expected to continue for more than 30 days, and severely limits the participant's ability to obtain or maintain suitable employment.
- The participant is a caregiver whose presence in the home is required because of an illness, injury or incapacity of another member in the assistance unit, a relative in the household, or a foster child in the household when the illness or incapacity and the need for a person to provide assistance in the home has been certified by a qualified professional and is expected to continue for more than 30 days.
- The participant is a caregiver with a child or an adult in the assistance unit who meets the disability or medical criteria for home care services or waived services or meets the criteria for severe emotional disturbance under Minnesota statutes.
- The participant is a caregiver who is employed the number of hours required by DHS with a household income that does not exceed program standards.

- The participant is determined to be hard-to-employ because the individual belongs to any of the following groups:
- A person diagnosed by a qualified professional as a person with developmental disability or mental illness, and the condition severely limits the person's ability to obtain or maintain suitable employment.
- A person assessed by a vocational specialist or the county agency to be unemployable.
- A person assessed to have an IQ below 80 assessed by a vocational specialist or a county agency to be employable, but the condition severely limits the person's ability to obtain or maintain suitable employment.
- A person who is determined by a qualified professional to be Learning Disabled and the condition severely limits the person's ability to obtain or maintain suitable employment. The initial approval of a learning disability extension must have been or confirmed within the previous 12 months. Learning disabilities do not include learning problems that are primarily the result of visual, hearing or motor handicaps, mental retardation and emotional disturbance or due to environmental, cultural or economic disadvantage.
- A person assessed to have an IQ below 80 assessed by a vocational specialist or a county agency to be employable, but the condition severely limits the person's ability to obtain or maintain suitable employment.
- A person who is determined by a qualified professional to be Learning Disabled and the condition severely limits the person's ability to obtain or maintain suitable employment. The initial approval of a learning disability extension must have been or confirmed within the previous 12 months. Learning disabilities do not include learning problems that are primarily the result of visual, hearing or motor handicaps, mental retardation and emotional disturbance or due to environmental, cultural or economic disadvantage.

### ***Appeals***

Applicants and recipients of MFIP and DWP are notified in writing of their rights and the process to follow to secure a fair hearing. When an applicant is denied services, or a participant disagrees with a county or tribal agency decision, the applicant or participant may submit a request for a hearing to the county or tribal agency or directly to the DHS Appeals Office. State Human Services judges will conduct a hearing in person at the county office or by telephone. Decisions are issued by the commissioner within 90 days of the request for a hearing. Under certain conditions, a participant may continue to receive benefits pending an appeal decision. Reasonable expenses incurred by a recipient because of the appeal are reimbursed upon request (Minnesota Statute 256.045, Administrative and Judicial Review of Human Services Matters).

L. INDICATE WHETHER THE STATE INTENDS TO ASSIST INDIVIDUALS TO TRAIN FOR, SEEK, AND MAINTAIN EMPLOYMENT (SECTION 402(A)(1)(B)(V) OF THE SOCIAL SECURITY ACT)—

1. PROVIDING DIRECT CARE IN A LONG-TERM CARE FACILITY (AS SUCH TERMS ARE DEFINED UNDER SECTION 139J) OF THIS TITLE); OR
2. IN OTHER OCCUPATIONS RELATED TO ELDER CARE, HIGH-DEMAND OCCUPATIONS, OR OCCUPATIONS EXPECTED TO EXPERIENCE LABOR SHORTAGES AS, DETERMINED APPROPRIATE BY THE STATE FOR WHICH THE STATE IDENTIFIES AN UNMET NEED FOR SERVICE PERSONNEL, AND, IF SO, SHALL INCLUDE AN OVERVIEW OF SUCH ASSISTANCE.

*INDICATE WHETHER THE STATE INTENDS TO ASSIST INDIVIDUALS TO TRAIN FOR, SEEK, AND MAINTAIN EMPLOYMENT (SECTION 402(A) (1) (B) (V) OF THE SOCIAL SECURITY ACT)—*

*(1) Providing direct care in a long-term care facility (as such terms are defined under section 1397j of this title); or*

*(2) In other occupations related to elder care, high-demand occupations, or occupations expected to experience labor shortages as, determined appropriate by the state for which the state identifies an unmet need for service personnel, and, if so, shall include an overview of such assistance.*

Minnesota intends to assist individuals in training for seeking and maintaining employment in the elder workforce as a result of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act of 2010 (ACA). It uses its FastTRAC/Pathways to Prosperity Initiatives to create career pathways programs in high-demand career fields including the elder care workforce. This Initiative provides grants to collections of local partners to operate as part of the state's employment services system, and is available to low income families on public assistance to comply with their work requirements. At the end of the training, MFIP participants are considered to be work ready for the Universal Health Care classification that allows entry to the local long-term care facilities as Certified Nurse Assistants with a focus on elder care. While in the training, they are considered Adult Basic Education (ABE) students and part of the work activities focus on retention by reducing barriers to successful employment once the training is complete. More specifically, the Department is providing access through its annual MFIP Innovations Funds to fund Adult Career Pathways programs focusing on Universal HealthCare Worker in Older Adult Services Certificate training as a tool for integrating adult basic education, non-credit occupational training, and for-credit postsecondary degree and certificate programs, with credentials embedded into these pathways that "stack" toward degrees over time. The lead state agencies in the FastTRAC Adult Career Pathway Alliance include the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities, Minnesota Department of Education Adult Basic Education Office, and Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development. Other key state level collaborators include Minnesota Department of Human Services, Minnesota Department of Labor and Industry, the Office of Higher Education, Greater Twin Cities United Way, Minnesota Workforce Council Association, and the Governor's Workforce Development Council.

Per recent information provided by the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development, out of 1374 total participants, 450 had completed occupational skills training (PCA) and 140 and achieved licensure (CNA). 227 people were co-enrolled in Adult Career Pathways/MFIP. Based on this information, 17% of 450 would give an approximate number of 76 people in MFIP that have gotten their Personal Care Assistant credentials, and 24 TANF recipients attained CNA licensure.

M. PROVIDE FOR ALL MOE-FUNDED SERVICES THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION: THE NAME OF THE PROGRAM BENEFIT OR SERVICE, AND THE FINANCIAL ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA THAT FAMILIES MUST MEET IN ORDER TO RECEIVE THAT BENEFIT OR SERVICE. IN ADDITION, FOR TANF MOE-FUNDED SERVICES (CO-MINGLED OR SEGREGATED MOE) DESCRIBE THE PROGRAM BENEFIT PROVIDED TO ELIGIBLE FAMILIES (SSP SERVICES DO NOT HAVE TO INCLUDE A DESCRIPTION BUT THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES ENCOURAGES IT) (§263.2(B)(3) & §263.2(C) PREAMBLE PAGES 17826-7)

1. Name of Service Program:**Minnesota Family Investment Program (MFIP)**
2. Description of the Major Program Benefits, Services, and Activities:

[MN Statutes 256J.02 - 256J.74] Grants to Individuals - MFIP grants provide integrated cash and food assistance to families with children or to pregnant women while the caregiver works toward becoming self-sufficient. Caregivers are expected to participate in employment services requirements.

1. Purpose(s) of Benefit or Service Program:

MFIP grants provide basic assistance to eligible families. The combined cash and food benefit program also includes an earned income disregard factor that has been shown to encourage work.

1. Program Type: This program is operated under the TANF program.
2. Description of Work Activities: N/A this is not a separate State program.
3. Total State Expenditures for the Program for the Fiscal Year:**\$80,283,482**
4. Total State MOE Expenditures under the Program for the Fiscal Year:**\$27,475,947**
5. Total Number of Families serviced with MOE funds:**15,974**
  - a. This last figure represents the average monthly total for the fiscal year.
6. Financial eligibility criteria for receiving MOE funded Program Benefits or Services:

Pregnant women or a caregiver with a child under age 18, or under age 19 if the child is in secondary education. The resource limit is \$2,000 for applicants and \$5,000 for participants. Income eligibility is with 115 percent of FPG adjusted for family size. Participants must be citizens or legal non-citizens.

1. Program Authorization: YES  NO
2. Total Program Expenditures in FY 1995: \$0
3. Comments: Final approval of the initial waiver from the U.S. Department of Agriculture allowing the MFIP program to combine cash and food benefits was effective January 1, 1998. The waiver was most recently reauthorized in August 2017, effective through September 30, 2022.

1. Name of Service Program:**Employment and Training Services**
2. Description of the Major Program Benefits, Services, and Activities:

These grants are state funds provided to counties to pay for Employment Services for MFIP and DWP participants.

1. Purpose(s) of Benefit or Service Program:

Grants are given to counties to provide various services to MFIP and DWP recipients to assist them in becoming employed. The services include, but are not limited to – job search, job club, GED, employment related education, work literacy, case management, job retention, and job or skills update.

1. Program Type: This program is operated under the TANF program.
2. Description of Work Activities: N/A this is not a separate State program.

3. Total State Expenditures for the Program for the Fiscal Year:**\$8,620,437**
4. Total State MOE Expenditures under the Program for the Fiscal Year:**\$7,086,340**
5. Total Number of Families serviced with MOE funds:**8,755**
  - a. This last figure represents the total served for the fiscal year.
6. Financial eligibility criteria for receiving MOE funded Program Benefits or Services:

To be eligible for the program, the recipient must be an adult or minor caregiver receiving an MFIP or a DWP grant.

1. Program Authorization: YES  NO
2. Total Program Expenditures in FY 1995: \$0
3. Comments: This program was first authorized in the 1997 Legislative session and was repealed effective June 30, 2003. The program was replaced with the supportive services portion of the Consolidated Fund which provides only TANF-funded reimbursements in the final quarter of FFY 2003. The Diversionary Work program employment & training services became part of the Consolidated Fund July 1, 2004.

1. Name of Service Program:**MFIP/DWP Childcare Assistance**
2. Description of the Major Program Benefits, Services, and Activities:

[MN Statute 119B] The Child Care Assistance program helps caregivers receiving Minnesota Family Investment Program (MFIP) or Diversionary Work Program (DWP) benefits with child care costs while participating in authorized activities such as working, looking for work, or participating in other activities that are part of an employment service plan. In addition, a family who leaves MFIP or DWP may be eligible to receive Transition Year Child Care Assistance for up to 12 calendar months after leaving MFIP/DWP.

1. Purpose(s) of Benefit or Service Program:

The purpose of MFIP/DWP child care assistance is to help families with child care costs while they are participating in MFIP/DWP authorized activities, such as job search, employment, or training/education.

1. Program Type: This program is operated under the TANF program.
2. Description of Work Activities: N/A this is not a separate State program.
3. Total State Expenditures for the Program for the Fiscal Year:**\$96,863,661**
4. Total State MOE Expenditures under the Program for the Fiscal Year:**\$74,960,492**
5. Total Number of Families serviced with MOE funds:**4,05**
  - a. This last figure represents the average monthly total for the fiscal year.
6. Financial eligibility criteria for receiving MOE funded Program Benefits or Services:

Child care though MFIP is available to families who have an approved job search support or employment plan under MN Statutes 256J.521 or meet the employment requirements under MN Statutes 119B.

1. Program Authorization: YES  NO
2. Total Program Expenditures in FY 1995: \$0
3. Comments: None

1. Name of Service Program:**Basic Sliding Fee (BSF) Child Care Subsidy**

2. Description of the Major Program Benefits, Services, and Activities:

[MN Statutes 119B, 119A] The BSF program assists low-income working families who are not participating in MFIP or DWP with child care costs.

1. Purpose(s) of Benefit or Service Program:

The purpose of the BSF child care assistance is to help pay the child care costs while low-income non MFIP/DWP families work, look for work or attend educational programs.

1. Program Type: This program is operated under the TANF program.

2. Description of Work Activities: N/A this is not a separate State program.

3. Total State Expenditures for the Program for the Fiscal Year:**\$54,652,533**

4. Total State MOE Expenditures under the Program for the Fiscal Year:**\$42,294,300**

5. Total Number of Families serviced with MOE funds:**3,000**

a. This last figure represents the average monthly total for the fiscal year.

6. Financial eligibility criteria for receiving MOE funded Program Benefits or Services:

Families may enter the BSF program if their income is less than or equal to 175% of the federal poverty guidelines, adjusted for family size. Families moving from Transition Year to BSF are considered to have met the income entry requirement in the first subprogram in which they participated. Families may receive child care assistance until their income reaches 250% of the federal poverty guidelines, adjusted for family size. Eligible families may receive BSF child care assistance for children under the age of 13 or, for children with a disability, under the age of 15. Parents must be working, looking for work, or in an authorized education/training activity.

1. Program Authorization: YES  NO

2. Total Program Expenditures in FY 1995: \$0

3. Comments: None

1. Name of Service Program:**Head Start**

2. Description of the Major Program Benefits, Services, and Activities:

[MN Statutes 119A.50] Head Start is a federal and state funded child and family development program, helping low-income families become self-reliant while also helping prepare their children for school success.

1. Purpose(s) of Benefit or Service Program:

The purpose of the Head Start program is to provide comprehensive child development services to children, with a special focus on helping preschoolers develop the early reading and math skills required to be successful in school.

1. Program Type: This program is operated separate from the TANF program
2. Description of Work Activities: N/A
3. Total State Expenditures for the Program for the Fiscal Year:**\$24,291,599**
4. Total State MOE Expenditures under the Program for the Fiscal Year:**\$5,700,000**
5. Total Number of Families serviced with MOE funds:**535**
  - a. This last figure represents the total served for the fiscal year.
6. Financial eligibility criteria for receiving MOE funded Program Benefits or Services:

Head Start eligibility requires that at least 90% of children enrolled be from low income families as defined by the federal poverty level. State funding to supplement the federal Head Start program is authorized under Minnesota Statute 119A.52.

1. Program Authorization: YES  NO
2. Total Program Expenditures in FY 1995: \$11,500,000.00
3. Comments: None

1. Name of Service Program:**Minnesota Working Family Credit**
2. Description of the Major Program Benefits, Services, and Activities:

[MN Statute 290.0671] MN Working Family Credit. This program provides a tax benefit to eligible low-income families through a refundable income tax credit.

1. Purpose(s) of Benefit or Service Program:

The purpose of the program is to provide economic support to low-income families as well as to encourage employment among low-income parents.

1. Program Type: This program is operated under the TANF program.
2. Description of Work Activities: N/A this is not a separate State program.
3. Total State Expenditures for the Program for the Fiscal Year:**\$231,376,305**
4. Total State MOE Expenditures under the Program for the Fiscal Year:**\$111,738,431**
5. Total Number of Families serviced with MOE funds:**100,665**
  - a. This last figure represents the average monthly total for the fiscal year.

6. Financial eligibility criteria for receiving MOE funded Program Benefits or Services:

A family that qualifies for the federal Earned Income Credit also qualifies for the MN Working Family Credit.

1. Program Authorization: YES  NO
2. Total Program Expenditures in FY 1995: \$22,800,000.00
3. Comments: None

1. Name of Service Program:**Consolidated Fund – Emergency Needs**

2. Description of the Major Program Benefits, Services, and Activities:

Short-term, nonrecurring shelter and utility needs that are excluded from the definition of assistance under TANF, for families who meet the MFIP residency requirements.

1. Purpose(s) of Benefit or Service Program:

Grants provide short-term, basic help to eligible families who find themselves in a crisis or emergency situation.

1. Program Type: This program is operated under the TANF program.
2. Description of Work Activities: N/A this is not a separate State program.
3. Total State Expenditures for the Program for the Fiscal Year:**\$180,415**
4. Total State MOE Expenditures under the Program for the Fiscal Year:**\$180,415**
5. Total Number of Families serviced with MOE funds:**382**
  - a. This last figure represents the total served for the fiscal year.

6. Financial eligibility criteria for receiving MOE funded Program Benefits or Services:

Families with a minor child, a pregnant woman, or a non-custodial parent of a minor child receiving assistance with an income below 200% of the federal poverty guideline for a family of the applicable size are eligible for services funded under the Consolidated Fund.

1. Program Authorization: YES  NO
2. Total Program Expenditures in FY 1995: \$0
3. Comments: None

1. Name of Service Program:**State Administration**

2. Description of the Major Program Benefits, Services, and Activities:

The funds represent the state share of the administrative costs of running the MFIP program as allocated through the state's approved cost allocation plan.

1. Purpose(s) of Benefit or Service Program:

The purpose of state administration is to oversee county administration of the MFIP program to ensure that clients are served under federal and state guidelines.

1. Program Type: This program is operated under the TANF program.
2. Description of Work Activities: N/A this is not a separate State program.
3. Total State Expenditures for the Program for the Fiscal Year:**\$818,072**
4. Total State MOE Expenditures under the Program for the Fiscal Year:**\$818,072**
5. Total Number of Families serviced with MOE funds:**15,974**
  - a. This last figure represents the average monthly total for the fiscal year.
6. Financial eligibility criteria for receiving MOE funded Program Benefits or Services:

State staff administers TANF program rules and regulations by supervising county administration of TANF funds.

1. Program Authorization: YES  NO
2. Total Program Expenditures in FY 1995: \$0
3. Comments: None

1. Name of Service Program:**County Administration**
2. Description of the Major Program Benefits, Services, and Activities:

The funds represent the County share of the administrative costs of running the MFIP program as allocated through the state's federally approved cost allocation plan.

1. Purpose(s) of Benefit or Service Program:

The purpose of county administration is to provide eligibility determination, case maintenance, fraud control and prevention, and related administrative services.

1. Program Type: This program is operated under the TANF program.
2. Description of Work Activities: N/A this is not a separate State program.
3. Total State Expenditures for the Program for the Fiscal Year:**\$16,161,422**
4. Total State MOE Expenditures under the Program for the Fiscal Year:**\$16,161,422**
5. Total Number of Families serviced with MOE funds:**15,974**
  - a. This last figure represents the average monthly total for the fiscal year.
6. Financial eligibility criteria for receiving MOE funded Program Benefits or Services:

County staff administers the TANF program rules and regulations under federal and state guidelines.

1. Program Authorization: YES  NO
2. Total Program Expenditures in FY 1995: \$0

3. Comments: Effective July 1, 2003 this program is funded under the Consolidated Fund (this note not required on ACF-204).

1. Name of Service Program:**Credit for K-12 Education Expenses**

2. Description of the Major Program Benefits, Services, and Activities:

The Credit for K-12 Education Expenses [MN Statutes 290.0674] is a refundable tax credit which is equal to 75% of eligible education expenses for a qualifying child in kindergarten through grade 12.

1. Purpose(s) of Benefit or Service Program:

Eligible expenses include fees or tuition for instruction outside the regular school day or school year, such as tutoring and educational summer camps. Also eligible are costs required for the regular school day for textbooks, instructional materials, and transportation costs paid to others. Private school tuition does not qualify for the credit, although it does qualify for the subtraction. Eligible expenses also include personal computer hardware and educational software, limited to a maximum of \$200 per family.

1. Program Type: This program is operated separate from the TANF program.
2. Description of Work Activities: N/A
3. Total State Expenditures for the Program for the Fiscal Year:**\$8,144,906**
4. Total State MOE Expenditures under the Program for the Fiscal Year:**\$6,659,829**
5. Total Number of Families serviced with MOE funds:**29,468**
  - a. This last figure represents the average monthly total served for the fiscal year.
6. Financial eligibility criteria for receiving MOE funded Program Benefits or Services:

The maximum credit of \$1,000 times the number of children in kindergarten through grade 12 is allowed to taxpayers with total household income of \$33,500 or less. For taxpayers with one or two children, the maximum credit is phased out for household income between \$33,500 and \$37,500. For taxpayers with more than two children, the phase-out range for the maximum credit is increased by \$2,000 for each additional child.

1. Program Authorization: YES  NO
2. Total Program Expenditures in FY 1995: \$0
3. Comments: This refundable tax credit was not instituted until 1997.

#### TANF CERTIFICATIONS

States that include TANF in the Combined State Plan must provide a certification by the chief executive officer of that State, that during the fiscal year, the State will:

The State Plan must include	Include
1. Operate a child support enforcement program under the State Plan approved under part D. (section 402(a)(2) of the Social Security Act);	Yes

The State Plan must include	Include
2. Operate a foster care and adoption assistance program under the State Plan approved under part E, and that the State will take such actions as are necessary to ensure that children receiving assistance under such part are eligible for medical assistance under the State Plan under title XIX. (section 402(a)(3) of the Social Security Act);	Yes
3. Specify which State agency or agencies will administer and supervise the program referred to in paragraph (1) for the fiscal year, which shall include assurances that local governments and private sector organizations (section 402(a)(4) of the Social Security Act)—	
3. (A) have been consulted regarding the plan and design of welfare services in the State so that services are provided in a manner appropriate to local populations; and	Yes
3. (B) have had at least 45 days to submit comments on the plan and the design of such services;	Yes
4. Provide each member of an Indian tribe, who is domiciled in the State and is not eligible for assistance under a tribal family assistance plan approved under section 412, with equitable access to assistance under the State program funded under this part attributable to funds provided by the Federal Government. (section 402(a)(5) of the Social Security Act);	Yes
5. Establish and enforce standards and procedures to ensure against program fraud and abuse, including standards and procedures concerning nepotism, conflicts of interest among individuals responsible for the administration and supervision of the State program, kickbacks, and the use of political patronage. (section 402(a)(6) of the Social Security Act);	Yes
6. (optional) Establish and Enforcing standards and procedures to (section 402(a)(7) of the Social Security Act).—	
6.i. screen and identify individuals receiving assistance under this part with a history of domestic violence while maintaining the confidentiality of such individuals;	Yes
6.ii. refer such individuals to counseling and supportive services; and	Yes
6.iii. waive, pursuant to a determination of good cause, other program requirements such as time limits (for so long as necessary) for individuals receiving assistance, residency requirements, child support cooperation requirements, and family cap provisions, in cases where compliance with such requirements would make it more difficult for individuals receiving assistance under this part to escape domestic violence or unfairly penalize such individuals who are or have been victimized by such violence, or individuals who are at risk of further domestic violence.	Yes

**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)))**

**A. GENERAL REQUIREMENTS [27]**

The State agency must prepare and submit an Employment and Training (E&T) Plan to its appropriate Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) Regional Office. The E&T Plan must be available for public inspection at the State agency headquarters. A State agency may include its plan for

the SNAP E&T program in a Combined Plan under WIOA but will require FNS approval prior to implementation and must continue to make a copy of the plan available for public inspection. If a State includes SNAP E&T in a Combined Plan under WIOA, the State agency will detail the following for each year covered by the Combined Plan:

[27] 7 CFR § 273.7(c)(6)

1. THE NATURE OF THE E&T COMPONENTS THE STATE AGENCY PLANS TO OFFER AND THE REASONS FOR SUCH COMPONENTS, INCLUDING COST INFORMATION. THE METHODOLOGY FOR STATE AGENCY REIMBURSEMENT FOR EDUCATION COMPONENTS MUST BE SPECIFICALLY ADDRESSED;

**SUPPLEMENTAL NUTRITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM, EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING (SNAP E &T) and WORK PROGRAMS AUTHORIZED UNDER SECTIONS 6(d)(4) and 6 6(o) OF THE FOOD AND NUTRITION ACT OF 2008**

(OMB Control Number: 0584-0083)

**A. GENERAL REQUIREMENTS[1]: THE STATE AGENCY MUST PREPARE AND SUBMIT AN EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING (E&T) PLAN TO ITS APPROPRIATE FOOD AND NUTRITION SERVICE (FNS) REGIONAL OFFICE. THE E&T PLAN MUST BE AVAILABLE FOR PUBLIC INSPECTION AT THE STATE AGENCY HEADQUARTERS. A STATE AGENCY MAY INCLUDE ITS PLAN FOR THE SNAP E&T PROGRAM IN A COMBINED PLAN UNDER WIOA BUT WILL REQUIRE FNS APPROVAL PRIOR TO IMPLEMENTATION AND MUST CONTINUE TO MAKE A COPY OF THE PLAN AVAILABLE FOR PUBLIC INSPECTION. IF A STATE INCLUDES SNAP E&T IN A COMBINED PLAN UNDER WIOA, THE STATE AGENCY WILL DETAIL THE FOLLOWING FOR EACH YEAR COVERED BY THE COMBINED PLAN:**

1. THE NATURE OF THE E&T COMPONENTS THE STATE AGENCY PLANS TO OFFER AND THE REASONS FOR SUCH COMPONENTS, INCLUDING COST INFORMATION. THE METHODOLOGY FOR STATE AGENCY REIMBURSEMENT FOR EDUCATION COMPONENTS MUST BE SPECIFICALLY ADDRESSED;

The following is a list of activities provided under SNAP E&T. Current budgeting doesn't identify expenses by these categories.

Some areas of the state have a shortage of remedial education funds. In other areas, specialized programs have been established to service SNAP E&T populations. Minnesota is quite generous in supporting federal ABE funds. Even with state support, the influx of welfare reform has created a burden on resources and staff in some areas and in serving high-barrier populations thus any SNAP E&T funds are supplementing, not supplanting federal, state, or local funds. Minnesota only provides ABE SNAP E&T services to individuals over 21 years of age and the state SNAP E&T team reviews all ABE/GED programs individually to determine if they meet E&T requirements and will supplement, rather than supplant, existing state and federal funds.

<b>Component</b>	<b>Definition</b>
<b>Supervised Job Search</b>	A component occurring at a State approved location where job search activities are supervised and tracked. All SNAP E&T provider locations are considered State approved. Participants will be supervised at that location by checking in and out with program staff when they begin and end their job search activity. Providers may determine the best method for participants to

Component	Definition
	<p>check in and out (which may include electronic or phone notification) but must retain a record of dates and hours of job search activity as well as a summary of job search activities (including date, time, number of positions applied for, and any application barriers that may have arisen).</p> <p>Supervised Job Search focuses on searching for and applying for jobs with direct supervision.</p>
<b>Supervised Job Search Training</b>	<p>A component occurring at a State approved location where job search activities are supervised and tracked. All SNAP E&amp;T provider locations are considered State approved. Participants will be supervised at that location by checking in and out with program staff when they begin and end their job search activity. Providers may determine the best method for participants to check in and out (which may include electronic or phone notification) but must retain a record of dates and hours of job search training activity.</p> <p>Supervised Job Search Training strives to enhance the job search skills of participants by providing instruction in job seeking techniques and increasing motivation and self-confidence. The component may consist of employability assessments, job placement services, or other direct training or support activities. Other activities may include resume writing workshops and learning how to use online job search tools.</p>
<b>Workfare</b>	<p>A work component in which SNAP recipients perform work in a private or public non-profit agency as a condition of eligibility. In lieu of wages, workfare participants receive compensation in the form of their household's monthly benefit allotment. The primary goal of workfare is to improve employability and encourage individuals to move into regular employment while returning something of value to the community.</p>
<b>Work Experience</b>	<p>A work component designed to improve the employability of participants through actual work experience and to enable them to move into regular employment. Work experience assignments may not replace the employment of a regularly employed individual and they must provide the same benefits and working conditions provided to regularly employed individuals performing comparable work for comparable hours.</p>
<b>Work Based Learning</b>	<p>A component comprised of structured work activities, including OJT, apprenticeship, and subsidized employment—that combine in some form education and/or training and paid work. Unlike regular employment, this requires an additional structured activity (beyond regular work hours).</p> <p><b>On-the-job Training (OJT)</b> – A work placement made through a contract with an employer or registered apprenticeship program sponsor in the public, private non-profit, or private sector.</p> <p><b>Apprenticeship</b> — A combination of on-the-job training and related instruction in which workers learn the practical and theoretical aspects of a skilled occupation.</p>

Component	Definition
	<p><b>Subsidized Employment</b> – A work placement made through a contract with an employer.</p>
<p><b>Educational Programs</b></p>	<p>A component that improves basic skills or otherwise improves employability by expanding job search abilities. Only educational components that establish a direct link to job-readiness will be approved, although programs that involve articulated career pathways or stackable credentials that ultimately lead to employment are encouraged and allowed. Educational components are reviewed by SNAP E&amp;T staff to determine if they meet federal standards and are intended to supplement and not supplant existing state funds. Allowable educational programs may include:</p> <p><b>Basic/Foundational Skills Instruction (includes High School Equivalency)</b> — Programs that offer academic instruction and education services below the postsecondary level that increase an individual’s ability to read, write, and speak in English and perform mathematics or other activities necessary for the attainment of a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent; transition to postsecondary education and training; and obtain employment.</p> <p><b>Career/Technical Education Programs or Other Vocational Training</b> — Organized activities at the postsecondary level that provide individuals with the academic and technical knowledge and skills necessary to prepare for further education and for careers in current or emerging employment sectors. Programs are primarily designed for those who are beyond the age of compulsory high school attendance. Ideally, such programs should be employer-driven and lead to industry-recognized certificates or credentials.</p> <p><b>English Language Acquisition</b> — Designed to help English language learners achieve competence in reading, writing, speaking, and comprehension of the English language.</p> <p><b>Integrated Education and Training (IET)/Bridge Programs</b> — Programs that provide adult education and literacy activities concurrently and contextually with workforce preparation activities and workforce training for a specific occupation or group of occupations for the purpose of educational and career advancement.</p> <p><b>Work Readiness Training</b> – Intensive programs that include skill assessment and educational remediation services that prepare individuals for the workforce.</p>
<p><b>Self-Employment Training</b></p>	<p>A component that improves the employability of participants by providing training in setting up and operating a small business or other self-employment venture.</p>
<p><b>Job Retention</b></p>	<p>Services may be provided to SNAP E&amp;T participants who have secured employment after participating in another E&amp;T component for a minimum of 30 days and not more than 90 days even if the individual is no longer</p>

Component	Definition
	receiving SNAP. Only individuals who have received other employment and/or training services under the E&T program are eligible for job retention services. This component is meant to help participants who have secured employment achieve satisfactory performance, retain employment, or to increase earnings over time.
<b>Other Activities</b>	<p><b>Orientation:</b> The Employment Services Provider (ESP) must provide an orientation to the SNAP E&amp;T program for all participants.</p> <p><b>Assessment and Employment Plan:</b> Employability assessments are mandatory for all participants. ESPs must consider the following when preparing an assessment: the person's literacy; ability to communicate in the English language; educational and employment histories; occupational and employment assets; and barriers to employment. Assessments are completed in person with client input.</p> <p><b>Social Services:</b> The social services component consists of referrals to agencies/programs designed to assist participants with overcoming personal or familial barriers which impede successful transition to work.</p>

[1] Footnote: 7 CFR § 273.7(c)(6).

2. AN OPERATING BUDGET FOR THE FEDERAL FISCAL YEAR WITH AN ESTIMATE OF THE COST OF OPERATION FOR EACH FEDERAL FISCAL YEAR COVERED BY THE COMBINED PLAN. ANY STATE AGENCY THAT REQUESTS 50 PERCENT FEDERAL REIMBURSEMENT FOR STATE AGENCY E&T ADMINISTRATIVE COSTS, OTHER THAN FOR PARTICIPANT REIMBURSEMENTS, MUST INCLUDE IN ITS PLAN, OR AMENDMENTS TO ITS PLAN, AN ITEMIZED LIST OF ALL ACTIVITIES AND COSTS FOR WHICH THOSE FEDERAL FUNDS WILL BE CLAIMED, INCLUDING THE COSTS FOR CASE MANAGEMENT AND CASEWORK TO FACILITATE THE TRANSITION FROM ECONOMIC DEPENDENCY TO SELF-SUFFICIENCY THROUGH WORK. COSTS IN EXCESS OF THE FEDERAL GRANT WILL BE ALLOWED ONLY WITH THE PRIOR APPROVAL OF FNS AND MUST BE ADEQUATELY DOCUMENTED TO ASSURE THAT THEY ARE NECESSARY, REASONABLE AND PROPERLY ALLOCATED. A STATE MUST SUBMIT A PLAN AMENDMENT TO REQUEST BUDGET ADJUSTMENTS AT LEAST 30 DAYS PRIOR TO PLANNED IMPLEMENTATION;

**2. AN OPERATING BUDGET FOR THE FEDERAL FISCAL YEAR WITH AN ESTIMATE OF THE COST OF OPERATION FOR EACH FEDERAL FISCAL YEAR COVERED BY THE COMBINED PLAN. ANY STATE AGENCY THAT REQUESTS 50 PERCENT FEDERAL REIMBURSEMENT FOR STATE AGENCY E&T ADMINISTRATIVE COSTS, OTHER THAN FOR PARTICIPANT REIMBURSEMENTS, MUST INCLUDE IN ITS PLAN, OR AMENDMENTS TO ITS PLAN, AN ITEMIZED LIST OF ALL ACTIVITIES AND COSTS FOR WHICH THOSE FEDERAL FUNDS WILL BE CLAIMED, INCLUDING THE COSTS FOR CASE MANAGEMENT AND CASEWORK TO FACILITATE THE TRANSITION FROM ECONOMIC DEPENDENCY TO SELF-SUFFICIENCY THROUGH WORK. COSTS IN EXCESS OF THE FEDERAL GRANT WILL BE ALLOWED ONLY WITH THE PRIOR APPROVAL OF FNS AND MUST BE ADEQUATELY DOCUMENTED TO ASSURE THAT THEY ARE NECESSARY, REASONABLE AND PROPERLY ALLOCATED. A**

**STATE MUST SUBMIT A PLAN AMENDMENT TO REQUEST BUDGET ADJUSTMENTS AT LEAST 30 DAYS PRIOR TO PLANNED IMPLEMENTATION;**

**SNAP E&T Operating Budget for FFY 2020**

Item	State cost	Federal cost	Total
<b>I. SNAP E&amp;T 100%</b>			
	\$0.00	\$566,536	\$566,536
1. State costs	\$0.00	\$638,000	\$638,000
1. Contractual Services	<b>\$0.00</b>	<b>\$1,204,536</b>	<b>\$1,204,536</b>
<b>Total Direct Costs</b>			
<b>II. Indirect Costs:</b>	\$19,836	\$19,836	\$39,672
*Approved Indirect Cost Rate Used: 16.91%	<b>\$19,836</b>	<b>\$19,836</b>	<b>\$39,672</b>
Refer to Table 6 for further clarification.			
<b>Total indirect Costs</b>			
<b>III. 50% Reimbursement Funds (State plus Federal):</b>			
a) County (admin + program)			
b) Third party (admin + program)	\$1,077,927.50	\$1,077,927.50	\$2,155,855
c) DEED (admin + program)	\$2,374,735	\$2,374,735	\$4,749,470
	\$245,110	\$245,110	\$490,222
<b>Total Direct Costs</b>			
	<b>\$3,697,773.50</b>	<b>\$3,697,773.50</b>	<b>\$7,395,547</b>
<b>100% Federal E&amp;T Grant</b>		<b>\$1,204,536</b>	<b>\$1,204,536</b>

Item	State cost	Federal cost	Total
<b>50 percent Additional Administrative and Program Expenditure</b>	<b>\$3,717,609.50</b>	<b>\$3,717,609.50</b>	<b>\$7,435,219</b>
<b>IV. Participant Reimbursement (State plus Federal):</b>			
a) County (support services)	\$142,085	\$142,085	\$284,170
b) Third party (support services)	\$553,998.50	\$553,998.50	\$1,107,997
c) DEED (support services)	\$25,182	\$25,182	\$50,364
<b>Total 50 percent Participant Reimbursement Expenses</b>	<b>\$721,265.50</b>	<b>\$721,265.50</b>	<b>\$1,442,531</b>
<b>V. Total Costs</b>	<b>\$4,438,875</b>	<b>\$5,643,411</b>	<b>\$10,082,286</b>

3. THE CATEGORIES AND TYPES OF INDIVIDUALS THE STATE AGENCY INTENDS TO EXEMPT FROM E&T PARTICIPATION, THE ESTIMATED PERCENTAGE OF WORK REGISTRANTS THE STATE AGENCY PLANS TO EXEMPT, AND THE FREQUENCY WITH WHICH THE STATE AGENCY PLANS TO REEVALUATE THE VALIDITY OF ITS EXEMPTIONS;

**3. THE CATEGORIES AND TYPES OF INDIVIDUALS THE STATE AGENCY INTENDS TO EXEMPT FROM E&T PARTICIPATION, THE ESTIMATED PERCENTAGE OF WORK REGISTRANTS THE STATE AGENCY PLANS TO EXEMPT, AND THE FREQUENCY WITH WHICH THE STATE AGENCY PLANS TO REEVALUATE THE VALIDITY OF ITS EXEMPTIONS;**

Item	Description	Amount or Percentage
<b>I.</b>	Anticipated number of work registrants in the State during the Federal FY (unduplicated count):	126,506
<b>II.</b>	Estimated number of planned State option exemptions from E&T:	126,506
	List below planned State option exemption categories and the number of work registrants expected to be included in each during the Federal FY.  1. All work registrants	  1. 100%
<b>III.</b>	Percent of all work registrants exempt from E&T (line II/line I)	100%
<b>IV.</b>	Anticipated number of E&T mandatory participants (line I-line II)	0
<b>V.</b>	Anticipated number of voluntary E&T participants	4,716

<b>Item</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Amount or Percentage</b>
<b>VI.</b>	Anticipated number of ABAWDs in the State during the Federal FY (excluding the ones residing in waived area)	33,889
<b>VII.</b>	Anticipated number of ABAWDs in waived areas of the State during the Federal FY	14,626
<b>VIII.</b>	Anticipated number of ABAWDs to be exempted under the State's 15 percent ABAWD exemption allowance during the Federal FY	14,698
<b>IX.</b>	Number of potential at-risk ABAWDs expected in the State during the Federal FY (line VI-VIII)	19,191

4. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE POPULATION THE STATE AGENCY INTENDS TO PLACE IN E&T;

**4. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE POPULATION THE STATE AGENCY INTENDS TO PLACE IN E&T;**

Based on estimates from 2019 SNAP E&T participation, the state expects to annually place:

Characteristic	Characteristic Detail	Percentage	Total Number
<b>Voluntary vs. Mandatory</b>	Voluntary Participants	100%	4579
	Mandatory Participants	0%	0
<b>Education</b>	Received high school diploma or equivalency (HSE) prior to participation in E&T	81%	3703
	Did not receive HSE prior to participation	19%	876
	Unknown	0.22%	10
<b>Race</b>	White	50.69%	2321
	African American	30.86%	1413
	Native American	8.5%	389
	Asian	4.2%	194
<b>Ethnicity</b>	Hispanic or Latinx	6.14%	281
<b>Speak English as a second language</b>	Limited English Proficiency- Yes	6.86%	314
	Limited English Proficiency- No	93.14%	4265
<b>Gender</b>	Male	49.79%	2280

Characteristic	Characteristic Detail	Percentage	Total Number
	Female	50.1%	2296
<b>Age</b>	Between 18-21	12.02%	339
	Between 22-39	52.82%	1558
	Between 40-54	28.53%	819
	55 or older	5.89%	222
<b>Disability Status</b>	Yes, Employment Barrier	15.6%	716

5. THE ESTIMATED NUMBER OF VOLUNTEERS THE STATE AGENCY EXPECTS TO PLACE IN E&T;

**5. THE ESTIMATED NUMBER OF VOLUNTEERS THE STATE AGENCY EXPECTS TO PLACE IN E&T;**

Minnesota operates a voluntary SNAP E&T program and anticipates serving 4,579 volunteers in 2020.

6. THE GEOGRAPHIC AREAS COVERED AND NOT COVERED BY THE E&T PLAN AND WHY, AND THE TYPE AND LOCATION OF SERVICES TO BE OFFERED;

**6. THE GEOGRAPHIC AREAS COVERED AND NOT COVERED BY THE E&T PLAN AND WHY, AND THE TYPE AND LOCATION OF SERVICES TO BE OFFERED;**

Minnesota operates a voluntary SNAP E&T program and intends to offer services to all interested SNAP recipients who meet eligibility criteria. Some SNAP E&T services are available in most counties in Minnesota and the DHS SNAP E&T team is working actively to increase the number and range of SNAP E&T providers in the state particularly in rural counties. Where services are not available this is due to limitations of 100% funding and a lack of state-contracted providers. DHS is actively seeking ways to expand the breadth and depth of SNAP E&T state-wide. The state plan covers all areas of the state.

7. THE METHOD THE STATE AGENCY USES TO COUNT ALL WORK REGISTRANTS AS OF THE FIRST DAY OF THE NEW FISCAL YEAR;

**7. THE METHOD THE STATE AGENCY USES TO COUNT ALL WORK REGISTRANTS AS OF THE FIRST DAY OF THE NEW FISCAL YEAR;**

Work registrant data is gathered from the DHS Data Warehouse using Structured Query Language (SQL) developed and approved by FNS regional and national staff. County eligibility workers use work registration codes when approving SNAP eligibility in MAXIS on the STAT/WREG panel, and ESPs use WF1 to record participant level data and activities. The MAXIS codes meet federal exemption code definitions in 7 CFR 273.7.

Completing the FNS-583 Report:

Line 1: Count of all work registrants whose case was active on September 30<sup>th</sup> at midnight. This number provides an accurate count of those on board on October 1<sup>st</sup>. It does not include new applications processed on this date.

Line 2: Count of distinct persons by minimum report month where the report month is greater than the start of the FFY.

Line 3: Count of distinct persons with ABAWD status enrolled in a qualifying component where "Report Month" is equal the 1<sup>st</sup> month of quarter, the 2<sup>nd</sup> month of the quarter and the 3<sup>rd</sup> month of quarter.

Line 4: Count of distinct persons with ABAWD status enrolled in a non-qualifying component and non-ABAWDs in any component, and ABAWDs not subject to the time limit in any activity.

Line 5: Distinct count of persons in each month of the quarter with ABAWD status of B for banked month.

Line 6: Count of distinct persons by component

Line 7: Distinct count of people in the activities table with a start date before the end of the FFY and end date after the first of the FFY, or no end date.

8. THE METHOD THE STATE AGENCY USES TO REPORT WORK REGISTRANT INFORMATION ON THE QUARTERLY FORM FNS-583;

**8. THE METHOD THE STATE AGENCY USES TO REPORT WORK REGISTRANT INFORMATION ON THE QUARTERLY FORM FNS-583;**

DHS employs a state-wide data system (MAXIS) to generate work registrant reports at the state level. County income maintenance workers input information into MAXIS via an online system. All SNAP E&T providers use a shared data system (Workforce One) to report participation in SNAP E&T.

State data staff at DHS access work registrant data from both MAXIS and Workforce One through the DHS Data Warehouse using SQL developed and approved by FNS regional and national staff.

9. THE METHOD THE STATE AGENCY USES TO PREVENT WORK REGISTRANTS FROM BEING COUNTED TWICE WITHIN A FEDERAL FISCAL YEAR. IF THE STATE AGENCY UNIVERSALLY WORK REGISTERS ALL SNAP APPLICANTS, THIS METHOD MUST SPECIFY HOW THE STATE AGENCY EXCLUDES THOSE EXEMPT FROM WORK REGISTRATION UNDER 7 C.F.R. §273.7(B)(1). IF THE STATE AGENCY WORK REGISTERS NONEXEMPT PARTICIPANTS WHENEVER A NEW APPLICATION IS SUBMITTED, THIS METHOD MUST ALSO SPECIFY HOW THE STATE AGENCY EXCLUDES THOSE PARTICIPANTS WHO MAY HAVE ALREADY BEEN REGISTERED WITHIN THE PAST 12 MONTHS AS SPECIFIED UNDER 7 C.F.R. §273.7(A)(1)(I);

**9. THE METHOD THE STATE AGENCY USES TO PREVENT WORK REGISTRANTS FROM BEING COUNTED TWICE WITHIN A FEDERAL FISCAL YEAR. IF THE STATE AGENCY UNIVERSALLY WORK REGISTERS ALL SNAP APPLICANTS, THIS METHOD MUST SPECIFY HOW THE STATE AGENCY EXCLUDES THOSE EXEMPT FROM WORK REGISTRATION UNDER 7 C.F.R. §273.7(B)(1). IF THE STATE AGENCY WORK REGISTERS NONEXEMPT PARTICIPANTS WHENEVER A NEW APPLICATION IS SUBMITTED, THIS METHOD MUST ALSO SPECIFY HOW THE STATE AGENCY EXCLUDES THOSE PARTICIPANTS WHO MAY**

**HAVE ALREADY BEEN REGISTERED WITHIN THE PAST 12 MONTHS AS SPECIFIED UNDER 7 C.F.R. §273.7(A)(1)(I);**

Numbers for each month are recorded separately. This ensures that numbers used in Line 1 of FNS-583 form are only used once during the federal fiscal year. Again, by programming MAXIS and Workforce One to calculate monthly reports using only SSNs, Minnesota is assured of an unduplicated count.

10. THE ORGANIZATIONAL RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE UNITS RESPONSIBLE FOR CERTIFICATION AND THE UNITS OPERATING THE E&T COMPONENTS, INCLUDING UNITS OF THE STATEWIDE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM, IF AVAILABLE. FNS IS SPECIFICALLY CONCERNED THAT THE LINES OF COMMUNICATION BE EFFICIENT AND THAT NONCOMPLIANCE BY THE PARTICIPANT BE REPORTED TO THE CERTIFICATION UNIT WITHIN 10 WORKING DAYS AFTER THE NONCOMPLIANCE OCCURS;

**10. THE ORGANIZATIONAL RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE UNITS RESPONSIBLE FOR CERTIFICATION AND THE UNITS OPERATING THE E&T COMPONENTS, INCLUDING UNITS OF THE STATEWIDE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM, IF AVAILABLE. FNS IS SPECIFICALLY CONCERNED THAT THE LINES OF COMMUNICATION BE EFFICIENT AND THAT NONCOMPLIANCE BY THE PARTICIPANT BE REPORTED TO THE CERTIFICATION UNIT WITHIN 10 WORKING DAYS AFTER THE NONCOMPLIANCE OCCURS;**

DEED, in consultation with DHS, developed a Management Information System (MIS) which provides interfaces between DHS' MAXIS system and DEED's Workforce One system. This interface provides live electronic transfer of information pertinent to participant referrals and participant status changes between agencies and the ESP.

DHS is responsible for both SNAP certification and operation of SNAP E&T.

County agencies are required by Minnesota statute to coordinate program service delivery with any and all employment and training programs/providers within their jurisdiction. This includes educational agencies, WIOA providers, and other referral agencies as deemed necessary to ensure participants have access to all program which may benefit them. Coordination may result in financial or non-financial agreements. However, only SNAP E&T activities are recorded by DHS staff in completing the 583 report.

SNAP E&T policy and practice requires that providers communicate with county eligibility staff as soon as possible, but no more than 10 days, after discovering information that might affect the participant's eligibility for benefits. This information includes communication upon meeting hourly participation requirements, securing employment, or another change in status that might affect benefits. DHS provides a standard form for reporting changes, but counties and E&T providers are encouraged to develop systems collaboratively to ensure that status changes are reported once known to the agency. Counties and SNAP E&T providers are responsible for ensuring that a communication plan is in place that will allow non-compliance to be accurately reported.

11. THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE STATE AGENCY AND OTHER ORGANIZATIONS IT PLANS TO COORDINATE WITH FOR THE PROVISION OF SERVICES, INCLUDING ORGANIZATIONS IN THE STATEWIDE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM, IF AVAILABLE. COPIES OF CONTRACTS MUST BE AVAILABLE FOR INSPECTION;

11. THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE STATE AGENCY AND OTHER ORGANIZATIONS IT PLANS TO COORDINATE WITH FOR THE PROVISION OF SERVICES, INCLUDING ORGANIZATIONS IN THE STATEWIDE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM, IF AVAILABLE. COPIES OF CONTRACTS MUST BE AVAILABLE FOR INSPECTION;

Partner/Contract Name	DEED
Monitoring and communication with contractor(s)	Authorized representatives or their designees from DHS and DEED meet quarterly, or as frequently as needed, to provide progress reports of any or all duties and responsibilities of the contract, identify and discuss concerns related to the contract, and review time and cost estimates for performing any obligations under the contract.
Role of Contractor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide technical assistance, training in the use of Workforce One, contract management, and oversight in order to maximize services to eligible clients</li> <li>• Integrate SNAP E&amp;T 50/50 into workforce development systems, services, and programs (such as Displaced Homemaker, Pathways to Prosperity, and other grants focused on equity), while building on the Career Pathways framework</li> <li>• Bolster the ability of service providers contracted with both DEED and DHS to work effectively with employers</li> <li>• Share program evaluation and jointly review potential new SNAP E&amp;T 50/50 service providers</li> </ul> <p>Share governance of WF1</p>
Timeline	Start: 10/01/2019 End: 09/30/2020. DHS intends to extend this relationship into new contract years.
Description of Activities/Services	<p>Contract management and oversight:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Negotiate agreements with DEED Adult Career Pathways grantees selected based on their interest and an assessment of their ability to coordinate SNAP E&amp;T requirements</li> </ul>

Partner/Contract Name	DEED
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Track activities and support service costs attributable to SNAP recipients, ensuring that federal SNAP reporting requirements are met</li> <li>• Work with local area providers and counties to reach targeted enrollment and expenditure rates for SNAP recipients. Targets will be based on the type of programming and potential participation from SNAP recipients</li> <li>• Monitor grant contracts and act as fiscal agent</li> </ul> <p>Provide data to DHS from WF1 to allow DHS to monitor SNAP E&amp;T and complete state plans and reports</p> <p>Grant WF1 access to providers and provide WF1 technical assistance</p> <p>Assess outcomes for program participants and allow tracking and analysis of new and existing services being funded</p> <p>Work with DHS and counties in identifying career pathway strategies</p>
Funding	SNAP E&T 100 percent funding SNAP E&T 50 percent reimbursement
Evaluation	Contract is reviewed annually and amendments are executed as needed.

12. THE AVAILABILITY, IF APPROPRIATE, OF E&T PROGRAMS FOR INDIANS LIVING ON RESERVATIONS AFTER THE STATE AGENCY HAS CONSULTED IN GOOD FAITH WITH APPROPRIATE TRIBAL ORGANIZATIONS;

**12. THE AVAILABILITY, IF APPROPRIATE, OF E&T PROGRAMS FOR INDIANS LIVING ON RESERVATIONS AFTER THE STATE AGENCY HAS CONSULTED IN GOOD FAITH WITH APPROPRIATE TRIBAL ORGANIZATIONS;**

DHS participates in the American Indian Workforce Development Initiative, a tribal-led project developing integrated employment systems in the career pathways model. This initiative is currently working with White Earth Nation to develop career pathways that braid MFIP, SNAP E&T, and DEED funding. The SNAP E&T team is currently reviewing a workplan for a proposed SNAP E&T program with White Earth Nation. In addition, SNAP E&T is in discussion with the Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe about a Tribal SNAP E&T program on the Mille Lacs Tribal lands.

DHS also coordinates a tribal legislative convening in which SNAP E&T is an active participant. At that meeting in October 2019, all of Minnesota's tribes had the opportunity to hear from SNAP E&T staff and SNAP E&T staff invited all tribes who might be interested to consult about ways to develop SNAP E&T programs on tribal lands. Minnesota's SNAP E&T program is committed to supporting and growing culturally-relevant SNAP E&T programs for tribes who would like to participate.

13. IF A CONCILIATION PROCESS IS PLANNED, THE PROCEDURES THAT WILL BE USED WHEN AN INDIVIDUAL FAILS TO COMPLY WITH AN E&T PROGRAM REQUIREMENT. INCLUDE THE LENGTH OF THE CONCILIATION PERIOD; AND

**13. IF A CONCILIATION PROCESS IS PLANNED, THE PROCEDURES THAT WILL BE USED WHEN AN INDIVIDUAL FAILS TO COMPLY WITH AN E&T PROGRAM REQUIREMENT. INCLUDE THE LENGTH OF THE CONCILIATION PERIOD; AND**

N/A

14. THE PAYMENT RATES FOR CHILD CARE ESTABLISHED IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE CHILD CARE AND DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT PROVISIONS OF 45 CFR 98.43, AND BASED ON LOCAL MARKET RATE SURVEYS.

**14. THE PAYMENT RATES FOR CHILD CARE ESTABLISHED IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE CHILD CARE AND DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT PROVISIONS OF 45 CFR 98.43, AND BASED ON LOCAL MARKET RATE SURVEYS.**

Hennepin County is currently exploring opportunities to build basic sliding fee childcare reimbursement into their SNAP E&T model and is awaiting guidance from US Food and Nutrition Services staff.

15. THE COMBINED (FEDERAL/STATE) STATE AGENCY REIMBURSEMENT RATE FOR TRANSPORTATION COSTS AND OTHER EXPENSES REASONABLY NECESSARY AND DIRECTLY RELATED TO PARTICIPATION INCURRED BY E&T PARTICIPANTS. IF THE STATE AGENCY PROPOSES TO PROVIDE DIFFERENT REIMBURSEMENT AMOUNTS TO ACCOUNT FOR VARYING LEVELS OF EXPENSES, FOR INSTANCE FOR GREATER OR LESSER COSTS OF TRANSPORTATION IN DIFFERENT AREAS OF THE STATE, IT MUST INCLUDE THEM HERE.

**15. THE COMBINED (FEDERAL/STATE) STATE AGENCY REIMBURSEMENT RATE FOR TRANSPORTATION COSTS AND OTHER EXPENSES REASONABLY NECESSARY AND DIRECTLY RELATED TO PARTICIPATION INCURRED BY E&T PARTICIPANTS. IF THE STATE AGENCY PROPOSES TO PROVIDE DIFFERENT REIMBURSEMENT AMOUNTS TO ACCOUNT FOR VARYING LEVELS OF EXPENSES, FOR INSTANCE FOR GREATER OR LESSER COSTS OF TRANSPORTATION IN DIFFERENT AREAS OF THE STATE, IT MUST INCLUDE THEM HERE.**

All participants complete an employment plan. In working with participants, providers issue participant reimbursements on a case-by-case basis using SNAP E&T policy guidelines. These guidelines include a list of allowable reimbursements and providers are expected to demonstrate that costs are reasonable and necessary for participation in a SNAP E&T activity. Minnesota uses identical participant reimbursement guidance to that issued by FNS.

16. INFORMATION ABOUT EXPENSES THE STATE AGENCY PROPOSES TO REIMBURSE. FNS MUST BE AFFORDED THE OPPORTUNITY TO REVIEW AND COMMENT ON THE PROPOSED REIMBURSEMENTS BEFORE THEY ARE IMPLEMENTED.

**16. INFORMATION ABOUT EXPENSES THE STATE AGENCY PROPOSES TO REIMBURSE. FNS MUST BE AFFORDED THE OPPORTUNITY TO REVIEW AND COMMENT ON THE PROPOSED REIMBURSEMENTS BEFORE THEY ARE IMPLEMENTED.**

At the provider's option, Minnesota makes available all participant reimbursements currently allowable by FNS. Additional reimbursements are reviewed by the state, in consultation with FNS, on a case-by-case basis.

**B. ABLE-BODIED ADULTS WITHOUT DEPENDENTS (ABAWD) [28]**

1. A State agency interested in receiving additional funding for serving able-bodied adults without dependents (ABAWDs) subject to the 3- month time limit, in accordance with 7 C.F.R. §273.7(d)(3), must include the following for each Federal fiscal year covered by the Combined Plan under WIOA:

[28] 7 CFR § 273.7(c)(7)

1. ITS PLEDGE TO OFFER A QUALIFYING ACTIVITY TO ALL AT-RISK ABAWD APPLICANTS AND RECIPIENTS;

**B. ABLE-BODIED ADULTS WITHOUT DEPENDENTS (ABAWD)[1]: A STATE AGENCY INTERESTED IN RECEIVING ADDITIONAL FUNDING FOR SERVING ABLE-BODIED ADULTS WITHOUT DEPENDENTS (ABAWDS) SUBJECT TO THE 3- MONTH TIME LIMIT, IN ACCORDANCE WITH 7 C.F.R. §273.7(D)(3), MUST INCLUDE THE FOLLOWING FOR EACH FEDERAL FISCAL YEAR COVERED BY THE COMBINED PLAN UNDER WIOA:**

1. ITS PLEDGE TO OFFER A QUALIFYING ACTIVITY TO ALL AT-RISK ABAWD APPLICANTS AND RECIPIENTS;

N/A

[1] 7 CFR § 273.7(C)(7)

2. ESTIMATED COSTS OF FULFILLING ITS PLEDGE;

N/A

3. A DESCRIPTION OF MANAGEMENT CONTROLS IN PLACE TO MEET PLEDGE REQUIREMENTS;

N/A

4. A DISCUSSION OF ITS CAPACITY AND ABILITY TO SERVE AT-RISK ABAWDs;

N/A

5. INFORMATION ABOUT THE SIZE AND SPECIAL NEEDS OF ITS ABAWD POPULATION; AND

N/A

6. INFORMATION ABOUT THE EDUCATION, TRAINING, AND WORKFARE COMPONENTS IT  
WILL OFFER TO MEET THE ABAWD WORK REQUIREMENT

N/A

TRADE ADJUSTMENT ASSISTANCE (TAA)

There are no program-specific state planning requirements for TAA. If the state includes TAA in a Combined State Plan, the state must incorporate TAA in its responses to the common planning elements in sections II, III, IV, and V of the WIOA State Plan requirements instrument.

Yes

JOBS FOR VETERANS' STATE GRANTS

(OMB Control Number: 1225-0086)

The Jobs for Veterans' State Grants (JVSG) are mandatory, formula-based staffing grants to States (including DC, PR, VI and Guam). The JVSG is funded annually in accordance with a funding formula defined in the statute (38 U.S.C. 4102A (c) (2) (B) and regulation and operates on a fiscal year (not program year) basis, however, performance metrics are collected and reported quarterly on a Program Year basis (as with the ETA-9002 Series). Currently, VETS JVSG operates on a multi-year grant approval cycle modified and funded annually.

In accordance with 38 U.S.C. § 4102A(b)(5) and § 4102A(c), the Assistant Secretary for Veterans' Employment and Training (ASVET) makes grant funds available for use in each State to support Disabled Veterans' Outreach Program (DVOP) specialists and Local Veterans' Employment Representatives (LVER) staff. As a condition to receive funding, 38 U.S.C. § 4102A(c)(2) requires States to submit an application for a grant that contains a State Plan narrative, which includes:

- A. HOW THE STATE INTENDS TO PROVIDE EMPLOYMENT, TRAINING AND JOB PLACEMENT SERVICES TO VETERANS AND ELIGIBLE PERSONS UNDER THE JVSG;

**JOBS FOR VETERANS' STATE GRANTS**

**1. THE JOBS FOR VETERANS' STATE GRANTS (JVSG) ARE MANDATORY, FORMULA-BASED STAFFING GRANTS TO (INCLUDING DC, PR, VI, AND GUAM). THE JVSG IS FUNDED ANNUALLY IN ACCORDANCE WITH A FUNDING FORMULA DEFINED IN THE STATUTE (38 U.S.C. 4102A (C) (2) (B) AND REGULATION AND OPERATES ON A FISCAL YEAR (NOT PROGRAM YEAR) BASIS, HOWEVER, PERFORMANCE METRICS ARE COLLECTED AND REPORTED (VETS-200 SERIES REPORTS) QUARTERLY (USING FOUR "ROLLING QUARTERS") ON A PROGRAM YEAR BASIS (AS WITH THE ETA-9002 SERIES). CURRENTLY, VETS JVSG OPERATES ON A FIVE-YEAR (FY 2015-2019), MULTI-YEAR GRANT APPROVAL CYCLE MODIFIED AND FUNDED ANNUALLY.**

In accordance with 38 U.S.C. § 4102A(b)(5) and § 4102A(c), the Assistant Secretary for Veterans' Employment and Training (ASVET) makes grant funds available for use in each State to support Disabled Veterans' Outreach Program (DVOP) specialists and Local Veterans' Employment Representatives (LVER) staff. As a condition to receive funding, 38

U.S.C. § 4102A(c)(2) requires States to submit an application for a grant that contains a State Plan narrative, which includes

## **A. HOW THE STATE INTENDS TO PROVIDE EMPLOYMENT, TRAINING AND JOB PLACEMENT SERVICES TO VETERANS AND ELIGIBLE PERSONS UNDER THE JVSG**

### Jobs for Veterans State Grants (JVSG)

The Jobs for Veterans State Grants (JVSG) provides federal funding, through a formula grant, to 54 State Workforce Agencies (SWAs) to hire dedicated staff to provide individualized career and training-related services to veterans and eligible persons with significant barriers to employment (SBEs), and helping employers fill their workforce needs with job-seeking veterans.

The JVSG funding supports the Disabled Veterans' Outreach Program (DVOP) specialist position, Local Veterans' Employment Representative (LVER) staff, and Consolidated Position staff.

DVOP and LVER staff are all housed in CareerForce locations they fulfill all responsibilities mandated by the grant programs.

The American Job Center (AJC) is branded as the CareerForce System in the state of Minnesota. CareerForce Locations through the state provide a full array of labor and employment services to veterans and their spouses. The CareerForce locations also provide many tools and resources to job seekers and employers, such as LMI, career guidance, talent pool, and other great tools.

Services for Minnesota Veterans may be accessed through a variety of systems and service providers in addition to the DVOP's and LVER's. Partner staff has been trained in providing services to Veterans via the National Veterans Training Institute (NVTI) online eLearning courses and instructor-led training and through a webinar produced by the Workforce Development Division at DEED. In addition, CareerForce partner staff attends NVTI as non-JVSG seats become available. An eligible veteran or eligible spouse is determined to have significant barriers to employment (SBE) if they attest to belonging to at least one of the criteria identified in VPL 04-13 (including change 2) and VPL 04-14. Minnesota has developed a standardized process for referring SBE Veterans to a DVOP (please see attached flowchart). This triage approach begins when a customer comes to the entry point at a CareerForce. All customers are asked if they ever served in the US Military/Armed Forces. If the answer is "yes", the Veteran is given a copy of our "Veterans Questionnaire" with instructions to complete it and return it to the CareerForce entry point. Non-JVSG staff review the form and complete an assessment of the questionnaire responses. Veterans who indicate a significant barrier to employment are referred to a DVOP if available, or to a "designated intensive service provider" when no DVOP is available. Non-SBE Veterans are provided information on Priority of Service and screened for additional program eligibility by non-JVSG staff.

#### 1. JOB AND JOB TRAINING INDIVIDUALIZED CAREER SERVICES,

Currently, Minnesota tracks services for veterans within two different systems. DVOP services to veterans with a significant barrier to employment are enrolled, tracked and managed through our case management system, Workforce One. Specific services and resources will vary depending on CAREERFORCE partners and funding. Typically, services are delivered to SBE Veterans via a case management model by a DVOP. Based on need, these services may include resume review and assistance, mock interviewing practice including answers to difficult or challenging questions, assistance with social media strategies, and assistance with an internet job search. Job training/skill assessments are provided by partner staff, and in the case of

training/educational needs, the VA CH31 program. Services provided to Veterans with no significant barrier to employment by partner staff and non-JVSG staff are recorded and tracked within Minnesotaworks.net., and also depend on resource availability. Along with other WIOA required titles, options are being considered to have a more unified data collection and management system to streamline systems and provide better reporting on services and outcomes.

#### 1. EMPLOYMENT PLACEMENT SERVICES, AND

Minnesota tracks services, including placement services for veterans within two different systems. DVOP services to veterans with a significant barrier to employment are

entered, tracked and managed through our case management system, WorkForce One. Services provided to veterans with no significant barrier to employment by partner staff and non—JVSG staff are recorded and tracked within Minnesotaworks.net. Activities, services, and performance are also tracked via State Performance Outcome Data reports. Veterans are encouraged to post their resumes on Minnesotaworks.net (among others) so employers can access them as they search for candidates. LVER staff constantly update their working list of SBE and CH31 Veterans seeking work so they can promote specific Vets as they meet with employers. LVERs also do much of their job development and promotion based on the Veterans on the DVOP caseload. LVER staff also plan, organize, promote, and facilitate local CAREERFORCE "Business of the Day" events, and smaller local job fairs and hiring events. Along with other WIOA required titles, options are being considered to have a more unified data collection and management system to streamline systems and provide better reporting on services and outcomes.

Specific services and resources will vary depending on CAREERFORCE partners and funding.

#### 1. JOB-DRIVEN TRAINING AND SUBSEQUENT PLACEMENT SERVICE PROGRAM FOR ELIGIBLE VETERANS AND ELIGIBLE PERSONS;

LVER's have been trained to interpret Labor Market Information and to review this data with employers as they look to grow their CareerForce and develop current employees.

Employees with the skill sets to go with updated equipment and technology are critical. LVER staff is familiar with programs like Career Pathways and P2P that help businesses "grow their own" high skilled staff. LVER staff are also familiar with OJT programs and apprenticeships and promote these with employers also. Hiring incentives like WOTC are also promoted when appropriate. Finally, LVER's educate employers on the opportunities the GI Bill and the "Minnesota GI Bill" can provide.

DVOP staff will be assigned to provide case management and intensive services to Veterans with significant barriers to employment in the following locations throughout the State of Minnesota: 1) All 47 CareerForce locations, 2) VA Vocational Rehab Center, Fort Snelling, 3) VA Medical Center, St Paul, 4) Various community libraries and post-secondary schools as available and necessary. LVER staff will be deployed in many of these same locations for employer outreach and education, and to facilitate networking and job search groups with employers and Veterans.

We also participate as an active partner in the Yellow Ribbon Reintegration program. As mentioned, this is a multi-phased program that includes a series of meetings and training events. Outreach, workshops, and assessments are all part of these events.

**DVOP POSITION PURPOSE** — DVOP specialist provides individualized career services and facilitates placements to meet the employment needs of veterans, prioritizing service to special disabled veterans, other disabled veterans, and other categories of veterans in accordance with

priorities determined by the Secretary of Labor. The DVOP Specialist will provide or facilitate a full range of individualized career services to eligible Veterans with significant barriers to employment (per VPL 03—14 including change 2 and VPL 04 -14) who are unable to obtain suitable employment through universal services in the CareerForce system. This position will serve any eligible Veteran with an SBE seeking assistance with employment-related needs including job seeking assistance, referral to other agencies or services, training opportunities, licensing and certification assistance, and any other assistance as identified in order to meet the needs of the Veteran.

Minnesota has developed a standardized process for referring SBE Veterans to a DVOP. This triage approach begins when a customer comes to the entry point at a CareerForce. All customers are asked if they ever served in the US Military/Armed Forces. If the answer is "yes", the Veteran is given a copy of our "Veterans Questionnaire" with instructions to complete it and return it to the entry point. Non-JVSG staff review the form and complete an assessment of the questionnaire responses. Veterans who indicate a significant barrier to employment are referred to a DVOP if available, or to a "designated intensive service provider" when no DVOP is available. Non-SBE Veterans are provided information on Priority of Service and screened for additional program eligibility by non-JVSG staff.

**DVOP Core Responsibility 1** — Identify and facilitate individualized career services needed by Veterans with significant barriers to employment (SBE) so that they can be placed in suitable employment or in a training program commensurate with their EDP/IDP. Tasks for this responsibility will include: 1) In cooperation with the U.S Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (VR&E) staff, identify Chapter 31 Veterans (CH31) who have completed or are participating in VR&E programs and who are in need of job search assistance. 2) Through the use of the new standardized "Veterans Questionnaire", identify and prioritize services to disabled and other veterans with an SBE.

3) Conduct assessments to determine employment barriers and services needed. 4) Develop a documented case management file in CareerForce One (WF1) for each veteran receiving individualized career services. 5) Develop an employability development plan for each case managed veteran. 6) Refer veterans to appropriate supportive service providers. 7) Coordinate linkages with other employment and training providers and the VA to support Veterans in their job search activities. 8) Provide vocational guidance to eligible Veterans. 9) Refer Veterans to appropriate public and private sector jobs.

**Core Responsibility 2** — Conduct outreach activities to identify and make contact with SBE Veterans who would benefit from, or are in need of individualized career services. Tasks for this responsibility will include:

1) Develop outreach programs in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs and DOL-VETS. 2) Participate in all Military reintegration events, DEED's annual Veterans Career Fair, and all other outreach events as assigned. 3) Conduct outreach activities with VR&E to market all services to Chapter 31 Veterans. 4) Conduct outreach activities to other organizations such as state Vocational Rehabilitation Providers, Homeless Veterans Reintegration Projects (HVRP), VA Hospitals and Veteran Centers, County Veteran Service Offices, homeless shelters, civic and community service organizations, other AJC/CAREERFORCE partners and other sources as identified.

**Core Responsibility 3** — Provide vocational guidance to eligible SBE Veterans who need assistance with vocational change or adjustment. Tasks for this responsibility will include:

1) Establish an Employment Development Plan (EDP) for all SBE Veterans requesting vocational guidance. 2) Provide vocational guidance using knowledge of labor market information and assessment tools. 3) Refer candidates to a qualified vocational counselor as necessary. 4) Assist Veterans in using electronic assessment and job search tools.

The DVOP works closely with other service providers in the community to provide career services to veterans with significant barriers to employment, as defined in VPL 03—14 (including change 2) and 04—14. These providers include but are not limited to Veterans Administration, CAREERFORCE partners, Community based services, Federal, State, county and local programs, educational institutions, VA hospitals & Vet Centers, homeless programs and shelters, Rehabilitation programs, and other service providers. Supervision is provided administratively by the Veterans unit Field Operations Manager and functionally by SrVER.

**LVER STAFF POSITION PURPOSE** — The LVER's principal duties are to: (1) conduct outreach to employers in the area to assist veterans in gaining employment, including conducting seminars for employers and, in conjunction with employers, conducting job search workshops and establishing job search groups; and (2) facilitate employment, training, and placement services furnished to veterans in Minnesota under the State employment service delivery systems. This position exists to provide services to local businesses that will enhance, support, and promote the employment of Veterans, particularly Veterans receiving individualized career services from a local DVOP. They will lead in the planning, development, direction, negotiation, marketing, and delivery of employment services to Businesses, Veterans, and other eligible persons. The LVER will train, teach, and provide technical support to the state of Minnesota staff in the provision of Veteran employment services mandated by legislation and departmental guidelines. Clientele served by this position include employers seeking qualified Veteran applicants or information on employer incentives and training programs, business and professional organizations, and other appropriate business contacts. Other LVER customers include community and Veteran organizations, educational facilities, local elected officials, and other State Departments, as well as other CareerForce staff and management that are either mandated by law or, are seeking assistance in providing priority of service to veterans in hiring and service delivery.

LVERs advocate for all veterans served by the AJC with business, industry, and other community—based organizations by participating in activities such as: • Planning and participating in job and career fairs; • Conducting employer outreach; • In conjunction with employers, conducting job searches and workshops, and establishing job search groups; • Coordinating with unions, apprenticeship programs and businesses or business organizations to promote and secure employment and training programs for veterans; • Informing Federal contractors of the process to recruit qualified veterans; • Promoting credentialing and licensing opportunities for veterans, and • Coordinating and participating with other business outreach efforts.

**Core Responsibility 1** — Develop employer outreach activities to establish, maintain, and facilitate regular contact with employers to promote employment and training opportunities for the benefit of Veterans. Tasks for this responsibility will include: 1) Develop job opportunities for Veteran job seekers through outreach efforts with Minnesota employers: job development phone contacts, in-person employer visits, and participation in job fair activities on behalf of Veterans. 2) Communicate and coordinate with Business Services Representatives in the local AJC to facilitate and promote job opportunities for Veterans, especially those with significant barriers to employment. 3) Promote the "Veteran Friendly Employer" initiative to all businesses contacted. 4) Encourage employers to employ Veterans utilizing apprenticeships and OJT

programs, State and Federal dislocated worker programs, and GI Bill benefits. 5) Maintain current information on employment and training opportunities. 6) Monitor Federal Contractor Job Listings (FCJL) and Vet Central job orders for Veterans using the CAREERFORCE, or on the DVOP caseload. 7) Provide contacts and job leads to DVOPs.

**Core Responsibility 2** — Advocate on behalf of Veterans seeking employment and training opportunities with business, industry, and community—based organizations. Tasks for this responsibility will include: 1) Contact community leaders, employers, labor unions, training programs, and Veterans organizations. 2) Promote Veterans' priority of service in employment and training programs. 3) Maintain current information on employment and training opportunities. 4) Plan and participate in job fairs to promote services to Veterans, and encourage participating employers to become a "Veteran Friendly Employer." 5) Promote licensing and certification assistance and training opportunities for Veterans using training providers and credentialing bodies. 6) Work with unions, apprenticeships programs, and the business community to promote employment, On the Job Training (OJT), apprenticeships, and other available training opportunities to employ Veterans. 7) Establish and maintain contact with the National Guard, Reserve Family Readiness Groups, and Family Assistance Centers in the assigned area. Provide education and information regarding DEED Vets employment services, CareerForce locations, and Beyond the Yellow Ribbon events.

**Core Responsibility 3** — Provide technical assistance, guidance, and leadwork to DVOP's, professional and support staff, and other CAREERFORCE staff engaged in the delivery of services to Veteran eligible. Tasks for this responsibility will include: 1) Plan, guide, and evaluate Veteran Program activities of CAREERFORCE staff to attain program goals and to ensure consistent application of program components by establishing and maintaining workflow/assignment requirements; monitoring and reporting program performance. 2) Train CareerForce staff and partners to enhance their knowledge of Veterans employment and training issues. 3) Provide technical advice and guidance to CAREERFORCE staff regarding procedural questions, or issues, to ensure that program services are administered with accuracy and uniformity by providing written and verbal interpretations of applicable federal laws and departmental policies and procedures. 4) Develop and implement a local Veterans employment service delivery plan, in conjunction with local management, Veterans Staff Supervisor, and Veterans State Director. Ensure community resources are utilized and eligible customers are served in accordance with federally mandated standards and delivery area objectives.

5) Analyze current delivery area operations and levels of program activity and recommend new or corrective action procedures to local management to enhance existing levels of performance. 6) Participate in the interviewing process with Veterans Program Management and local management in the selection of new DVOP/LVER staff to ensure qualified personnel is hired and the integrity of the various Veterans services programs is maintained.

**Core Responsibility 4** — Provide capacity building for other service providers to ensure that Veterans and other eligible persons are provided the range of labor exchange services needed to meet their employment and training needs. Work with other CareerForce development providers to develop their capacity to recognize and respond to these needs. Tasks for this responsibility will include: 1) Train other staff and CAREERFORCE partners to enhance their knowledge of veterans' employment and training issues. 2) Organize and promote public events like Career Fairs that increase the visibility of Veterans. 3) Promote Veterans as a category of job seekers in the CareerForce development system that have highly marketable skills and experience.

**Core Responsibility 5** — Manage and maintain adherence to POS, and DOL priorities for services to Veterans with an SBE, including labor exchange services.

Tasks for this responsibility will include: 1) Facilitate and maintain the provision of labor exchange services by local CAREERFORCE staff to Veterans including the identification of SBE Veterans, proper referral to a DVOP, or in the absence of the DVOP, to the intensive services provider, and referral to vocational counseling, testing, job search assistance. 2) Provide job development and employer outreach on behalf of Veterans, with a focus on Veterans with an SBE being case managed by a local DVOP. 3) Coordinate or conduct job search assistance and networking workshops in conjunction with employers. 4) Provide Labor Market Information (LMI) to employers. 6) Work with DEED Veterans Chapter 31 Program Coordinator and Veterans Affairs (VA) regarding Chapter 31 clients. 7) Refer Veterans to the Department of Labor (DOL)/Veterans Employment and Training Service (VETS) partner as needed to assist with reemployment rights issues covered under the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act (USERRA) law. 8) Assist employers with special job accommodations for disabled Veterans. This position works closely with community leaders, Tasks for this responsibility will include: 1) Facilitate and maintain the provision of labor exchange services by local CAREERFORCE staff to Veterans including the identification of SBE Veterans, proper referral to a DVOP, or in the absence of the DVOP, to the individualized career services provider, and referral to vocational counseling, testing, job search assistance. 2) Provide job development and employer outreach on behalf of Veterans, with a focus on Veterans with an SBE being case managed by a local DVOP. 3) Coordinate or conduct job search assistance and networking workshops in conjunction with employers. 4) Provide Labor Market Information (LMI) to employers. 6) Work with DEED Veterans Chapter 31 Program Coordinator and Veterans Affairs (VA) regarding Chapter 31 clients. 7) Refer Veterans to the Department of Labor (DOL)/Veterans Employment and Training Service (VETS) partner as needed to assist with reemployment rights issues covered under the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act (USERRA) law. 8) Assist employers with special job accommodations for disabled Veterans.

Tasks for this responsibility will include: 1) Facilitate and maintain the provision of labor exchange services by local CAREERFORCE staff to Veterans including the identification of SBE.

Veterans, proper referral to a DVOP, or in the absence of the DVOP, to the individualized career services provider, and referral to vocational counseling, testing, job search assistance. 2) Provide job development and employer outreach on behalf of Veterans, with a focus on Veterans with an SBE being case managed by a local DVOP. 3) Coordinate or conduct job search assistance and networking workshops in conjunction with employers. 4) Provide Labor Market Information (LMI) to employers. 6) Work with DEED Veterans Chapter 31 Program Coordinator and Veterans Affairs (VA) regarding Chapter 31 clients. 7) Refer Veterans to the Department of Labor (DOL)/Veterans Employment and Training Service (VETS) partner as needed to assist with reemployment rights issues covered under the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act (USERRA) law. 8) Assist employers with special job accommodations for disabled Veterans.

This position works closely with community leaders, organizations, employers, labor unions, training programs, various institutions, Veterans organizations, Veterans Administration, Veterans Employment and Training Service (VETS), military units, and other governmental offices. In addition, the LVERs develop and maintain a relationship with management as the Veterans program lead worker and technical advisor. The LVERs work closely with CareerForce partners, supervisors, and committees in the development of CareerForce policies and

procedures as they pertain to Veterans services. The LVER position relates to all CareerForce staff so that they are thoroughly informed about the Veterans Employment Program and are aware of their responsibility in ensuring that Veterans and eligible persons are provided the priority service to which they are entitled to as specified by law. The LVERs implement the directives and mandates of management, evaluate the activities of other CareerForce staff, and coordinate efforts with other staff at the state office level.

B. THE DUTIES ASSIGNED TO DVOP SPECIALISTS AND LVER STAFF BY THE STATE;  
SPECIFICALLY IMPLEMENTING DVOP AND LVER DUTIES OR ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES  
AS OUTLINED IN 38 U.S.C. § 4103A AND 4104. THESE DUTIES MUST BE CONSISTENT WITH  
CURRENT GUIDANCE;

**B. THE DUTIES ASSIGNED TO DVOP SPECIALISTS AND LVER STAFF BY THE STATE;  
SPECIFICALLY IMPLEMENTING DVOP AND LVER DUTIES OR ROLES AND  
RESPONSIBILITIES AS OUTLINED IN 38 U.S.C. § 4103A AND 4104. THESE DUTIES MUST BE  
CONSISTENT WITH CURRENT GUIDANCE;**

The Disabled Veterans' Outreach Program (DVOP) specialist works directly with veterans and eligible persons who have significant barriers to employment, as identified in 38 U.S.C. 4103A (a)(1). The services provided by a DVOP specialist are referred to as individualized career services but were once called intensive services. These services include, but are not limited to:

- Comprehensive assessment interviews
- Career guidance services
- Individual Employment Plans (IEPs)
- Staff-assisted job search activities
- Labor Market Information (LMI)
- Basic staff-assisted career services

Some other responsibilities that DVOP specialists have are case management, outreach services to veterans, and group job counseling, which differs from licensed counseling. It is important that a DVOP establish a strong rapport and relationship with the veterans they serve, to provide them the best services possible to help them reach their employment goals.

LVERs perform a wide range of duties on behalf of our veterans specifically related to outreach to the employer community and facilitation within the state's employment service delivery system. These duties are outlined in 38 U.S.C. 4104(b). LVERs must be assigned duties that promote the advantages of hiring veterans to employers, employer associations, and business groups. LVERs advocate for all veterans served by the American Job Centers (AJC) with business, industry, and other community-based organizations by participating in activities such as:

- Planning and participating in job and career fairs
- Conducting employer outreach
- In conjunction with employers, conducting job searches and workshops, and establishing job search groups
- Coordinating with unions, apprenticeship programs, and businesses or business organizations to promote and secure employment and training programs for veterans

- Informing federal contractors of the process to recruit qualified veterans
- Coordinating and participating with other business outreach efforts

LVERs are also responsible for “facilitating employment, training, and placement services furnished to veterans in a State under the applicable State employment service delivery systems” (38 U.S.C. 4104(b) (2)).

C. THE MANNER IN WHICH DVOP SPECIALISTS AND LVER STAFF ARE INTEGRATED INTO THE STATE’S EMPLOYMENT SERVICE DELIVERY SYSTEM OR AMERICAN JOB CENTER;

**C. THE MANNER IN WHICH DVOP SPECIALISTS AND LVER STAFF ARE INTEGRATED INTO THE STATE’S EMPLOYMENT SERVICE DELIVERY SYSTEM OR AMERICAN JOB CENTER**

The State of Minnesota is committed to ensuring program integration and coordination of employment and training services through the MN CareerForce system. To improve and enhance the delivery of employment and training services for veterans, MN CareerForce offices are integrated with other WIOA program partners to create a unified MN CareerForce system. The CareerForce system is the primary source of information and services for Minnesota’s job-seeking veterans. MN JVSG staff, which includes DVOP specialists and LVERs, work together to obtain employment, training, and related services for veterans through the WIOA partner programs, including Vocational Rehabilitation. DVOP specialists are stationed at CareerForce locations and cover all the locations in their region.

Integrating DVOPs and LVERs programs as a full partner in the CareerForce system is an ongoing process that includes regular staff meetings with system partners to share information on employment and training services available through MN. At staff meetings, program information is highlighted with emphasis on POS to veterans in a one-stop environment. The success of Minnesota’s CareerForce system is predicated on partnerships that continuously strive to improve services to all job seekers and employers while ensuring veterans continue to receive excellent POS.

Local Veterans Employment Representatives (LVER) and Business Services team named Strategy Consultants collaborate consistently and effectively to conduct joint outreach events to numerous business organizations and employers throughout Minnesota to promote the hiring of veterans and to locate veterans in need of intensive services.

The following are activities demonstrate effective integration and collaboration between service providers, partners, DVOP specialists, and LVER staff to promote employment, training, and placement services for veterans.

- DVOPs and LVERs attend and participate in local CareerForce staff meetings which include WP staff, Adult programs, and other partners.
- All DVOP specialists work closely with the CareerForce locations and WIOA providers in their particular regions. When veteran referrals are made, DVOPs enroll veterans into the state’s case management information system, WorkforceOne which is used by all partners in the CareerForce system and it is tracked and monitored using the same system.
- LVERs visit CareerForce locations in their region regularly to provide training and guidance on POS.

- LVERs train partner staff and service providers on Veteran resources and when to refer veterans to DVOP staff for individualized career services.
- LVERs contribute to local initiatives such as the “Meet and Greet” and “Employer of the Day” employer event. LVERs participate in recruiting and hiring fairs and other initiatives
- UI RESA staff refer UI applicants who are SBE veterans to DVOPs for employment services.
- DVOPs and LVERs are co-located with partner staff in the CareerForce locations throughout Minnesota.
- DVOP staff has been assigned as an Intensive Services Coordinator (ISC) at the VR&E location at Fort Snelling to coordinate Chapter 31 placement activity with field staff.
- DVOP/LVER staff are represented on all appropriate CareerForce work teams, workgroups, policy groups, or other appropriate CareerForce teams.

**D. THE INCENTIVE AWARD PROGRAM IMPLEMENTED USING THE 1% GRANT ALLOCATION SET ASIDE FOR THIS PURPOSE, AS APPLICABLE;**

**D. THE INCENTIVE AWARD PROGRAM IMPLEMENTED USING THE 1% GRANT ALLOCATION SET ASIDE FOR THIS PURPOSE, AS APPLICABLE**

The USDOL Veterans Employment and Training Service (VETS) provides up to 1% of the Jobs for Veterans’ State Grant each year to be used as incentive awards to individuals, partners, teams, and CareerForce offices providing exemplary employment services to Veterans. These resources represent an important opportunity to highlight effective work practices, outstanding individual services to veterans, and team-based recognition for outstanding group services to veterans.

The expected outcomes for Minnesota’s incentive award program are:

- To acknowledge superior performance and customer service for Veterans;
- To elevate the visibility and importance of Veteran’s services to CareerForce partners and staff;
- To generate a stronger sense of unity and collaboration between the Veteran’s program and the state CareerForce system.
- Reward and recognize the provision of excellent “Priority of Service” and integration of services to Veterans and other eligible persons at the CareerForce locations

**ENCOURAGING EXCELLENT SERVICE TO VETERANS** - Offering awards provide encouragement and motivation to offer high-quality services to Veterans and offer flexible use of funds for recipients. Examples of selection criteria must show that winning nominations demonstrate a significant impact on Veterans and their job search. A wide range of exemplary employment and training services focused on Veterans will be considered.

**TYPES OF AWARDS** Total funds available for the Jobs for Veteran’s State Grant (JVSG) Performance Incentive Award Program are \$27,299 based on one percent of the total grant

monies designated for FFY20. Minnesota will recognize individual recipients or CareerForce offices or teams based on the selection criteria outlined below.

**Individual** employee awardees are selected through a quarterly review committee process set up through DEED HR. Individual awards are in the amount of \$1000.

**CareerForce office/team** awards are reviewed and selected by a review committee comprised of the federal USDOL-VETS State Director, the DEED CareerForce Director, The Veterans Employment Programs Director, and the Veterans Employment Programs Field Operations Manager. Currently, office/team awards are \$3000 each.

A portion of the Incentive Awards will be used to cover the cost of the awardee to attend the National Association of State Workforce Agency Veterans Conference.

EXAMPLES OF APPROPRIATE USE OF CASH AWARDS ARE, BUT NOT LIMITED TO:

- Computer equipment including network printers, laptops, scanners or other related equipment;
- Office furniture and equipment;
- Conference Room equipment such as whiteboards, LED projectors and screens;
- Donations to U.S. Code recognized 501C(3) charities.

SELECTION CRITERIA - Selection criteria for award recipients must be based on performance or activities during the fiscal year the award is given. Both objective and subjective data are to be considered in the selection of nominees. Nominees should be considered to have demonstrated outstanding outreach and/or service provision on behalf of Veterans who have significant barriers to employment, especially disabled Veterans, homeless Veterans, and incarcerated Veterans. Attitude, motivation, program improvement, positive feedback and other indicators of outstanding performance may be given consideration above numerical data. The Minnesota Dept. of Employment & Economic Development will convene an awards committee and administer the awards.

Examples of selection criteria may be: Development of a program, for which the impact may not be directly measurable (e.g., a resume skills-building program, special programming for targeted Veteran groups, workshops that address significant barriers to employment);

- Outstanding cooperative case management (between DVOP & CareerForce partners); Ideas that are implemented to improve the service delivery system leading to Veteran living—wage and sustainable employment, improvement in outcome performance for Veterans, reduced time or cost, or that promote collaboration that improve services to Veterans;
- Outreach/community—relations efforts, to include employers, social service entities, and/or educators, etc.; or
- Exemplary efforts to assist SBE Veteran populations (homeless, undereducated or under-skilled, low income, disabled veterans, or incarcerated Veterans, etc.).

ELIGIBLE RECIPIENTS Eligible recipients are defined as entities providing services to Veterans under the WIOA/Wagner—Peyser employment delivery system. The term "employment service delivery system" means a service delivery system at which or through which labor exchange

services, including employment, training, and placement services, are offered in accordance with the Wagner—Peysner Act and employment delivery service programs as defined in P.L. 107—288, Section 4112 and P.L. 109—461. Examples of these entities include:

- Joint DEED/WIOA partners and CareerForce
  - CareerForce partners such as the Dislocated Worker Program
  - Community College CareerForce Development staff
- NOMINATION PROCESS AND TIMING OF AWARDS**
- Nominations will be solicited through Minnesota local CareerForce development boards (LWDBs) and local CareerForce Offices.
  - Nominations will reflect the accomplishments of the entity and include sufficient detail to adequately describe to the awards committee the improvements in services to Veterans made by the entity.
  - Nomination descriptions should be no more than one page in length; however, supplemental performance data, testimonials, and other related information may be included as attachments.
  - Nominations must be received 2 weeks in advance of the Awards Committee meeting date each quarter.
  - Nominations will be reviewed by a panel consisting of the State Veteran’s Program Director, a representative of the U.S. Department of Labor—Veterans’ Employment and Training Service (USDOL—VETS), a representative from DEED HR, and a CareerForce Partner.
  - No nomination committee member may be directly connected with any person or office being reviewed for these awards.
  - Awards will be announced to the recipient(s) quarterly.
  - Award funds must be obligated by the end of the federal fiscal year, September 30. An annual Incentive Award report will be included in the quarterly report due in mid—November. The report will detail all incentive awards made.

The intent of P.L. 107—288 is to recognize individuals with an award of corporate benefit not to supplant other spending on training, supplies or other expenditures ordinarily made at the state or program level (see P.L.107—288 & 109—461). Due in part to union restrictions no individual awards will be presented.

**E. THE POPULATIONS OF ELIGIBLE VETERANS TO BE SERVED, INCLUDING ANY ADDITIONAL POPULATIONS DESIGNATED BY THE SECRETARY AS ELIGIBLE FOR SERVICES, AND ANY ADDITIONAL POPULATIONS SPECIFICALLY TARGETED BY THE STATE WORKFORCE AGENCY FOR SERVICES FROM ONE-STOP DELIVERY SYSTEM PARTNERS (E.G., NATIVE AMERICAN VETERANS; VETERANS IN REMOTE RURAL COUNTIES OR PARISHES);**

**E. THE POPULATIONS OF ELIGIBLE VETERANS TO BE SERVED, INCLUDING ANY ADDITIONAL POPULATIONS DESIGNATED BY THE SECRETARY AS ELIGIBLE FOR SERVICES, AND ANY ADDITIONAL POPULATIONS SPECIFICALLY TARGETED BY THE STATE WORKFORCE AGENCY FOR SERVICES FROM ONE-STOP DELIVERY SYSTEM PARTNERS**

## **(E.G., NATIVE AMERICAN VETERANS; VETERANS IN REMOTE RURAL COUNTIES OR PARISHES)**

Additional Veterans Outreach — JVSG grant staff also serves other populations of veterans in the State through Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs). Those populations included:

- National Guard and Reserve members returning from overseas deployment. In particular, Virtual Job Fair Technology and social media are being utilized to connect and assist this group with veterans' resource sites, services accessed while they are still overseas, and actual virtual job fairs when they return to this country. Minnesota also stages an annual Veterans Career Fair each July, which is "Hire a Veteran" month as proclaimed by the Governor.
- Service-connected disabled veterans, who are identified through various Veterans Service Organizations (VSO) such as Disabled American Veterans and VFWs, as well as outreach activities at Veteran Centers, Veterans Administration Medical Centers, and Community Based Outpatient Clinics.
- Recently separated veterans, who are identified at various reintegration events, job fairs, and partner referrals.
- Wounded and injured veterans, who are identified through the outreach activities of our DVOPS, local VSO's, and partner staff in our local CareerForce system.

### Homeless Veterans

DVOP Specialists work in partnership with the Homeless Veteran Reintegration Program to provide one—on—one employment assistance and supportive services to homeless veterans. These services may include a resume and interviewing preparation, employment workshops, job clubs, job search assistance, and job referrals.

Per VPL 03-16, Minnesota also co-enrolls eligible Veterans in both HVRP and JVSG.

Community-based "Beyond the Yellow Ribbon" organizations—DVOP and LVER staff participates in "Beyond the Yellow Ribbon" committees covering 63 National Guard Armory communities. DEED Veterans Employment Representatives are required partners in these organizations comprised of public and private resources designed to support all veterans in the community. Individuals with Disabilities

### Native American Veterans

According to the most recent Census, Minnesota is ranked 13 in the number of Native Americans living in our state. Native American population in Minnesota numbers approximately 70,465 or 1.3% of the population. The population is expected to increase to over 72,000. 31% live on one of 11 different Reservations in Minnesota. Seven of these are in the northern part of the state, with the remaining four located near Minneapolis/St. Paul, or southern Minnesota. In addition, 37% of the Native American population lives in the 9 counties metropolitan area. Unemployment among Native Americans is reported to be three-four times that of none—Indians. The UI rate for Native American Veterans is even higher.

Most of Minnesota's Tribal Reservations have poverty rates double that of the rest of the state. In addition, 93% of white students graduate high school, where only 64% of Native Americans graduate. This negatively impacts employment opportunities and future training plans.

In fact, among the Shakopee Mdewakanton tribe, the statistics are more unsettling. This is a Tribe located just southwest of a major metropolitan area, near resources and opportunity, but has had little-focused effort for their Veteran population. Their high school graduation rate hovers close to 45.7%. Their unemployment rate is over 13%, compared to a Minneapolis/St. Paul's rate of around 3.7%. Per capita income is \$27,119. Minnesota's plan to serve this population includes a DVOP position in the Bemidji area to focus on this population on Red Lake, Leech Lake, and White Earth Reservations in the northern part of the state.

#### Female Veterans

Female Veterans represent approximately 17% of returning National Guard and Reserve troops in Minnesota. Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs estimates there are almost 23,000 female Veterans in Minnesota. Of that number, about 8700 have served in the Persian Gulf, or OIF/OEF/OND. Minnesota currently employs one woman LVER, and 5 DVOP staff, including one DVOP that works exclusively with women Veterans and recently conflict veterans special initiative. They are all engaged with local organizations that cater to women and women Veterans. As mentioned earlier, we work closely with our local HVRP grantee and our CareerForce partners to identify female Veterans seeking services.

#### Justice-Involved veterans

Minnesota currently operates two projects for incarcerated persons. Since these are funded with Wagner—Peysner money, they provide Priority of Service for Veterans wishing to participate. These projects are located in two inner-city offices, using two different models. One is a case management model, where the other focuses on a two-week-long workshop incorporating job search and living skills together. Wagner-Peysner staff facilitates this two-week workshop. Our local DVOP/LVER staff's assigned in those locations participate in the selection of participants, and in the case management process. We also have a special initiative project that provides a specialized dedicated staff to work with Veterans being released from correctional facilities. The dual role DVOP/LVER staff is located at CareerForce in St. Paul and is certified as "Offender Employment Specialist", and "Offender CareerForce Development Specialist" through MN Dept. of Corrections. Staff in these two inner-city locations estimate that 30—40% of the clients using these CareerForce locations have a criminal background.

In addition, the Minnesota Dept. of Employment and Economic Development has formalized a relationship with the Dept. of Corrections and provides job search help and counseling for offenders nearing their release date. We also participate in facility-sponsored events such as "Transition Fairs". DEED Vet staff attends and provides workshops on job seeking/keeping skills at these events, and connect with inmates about to be released.

Staff also sits on the steering committee of the Hennepin County, Anoka County, and Ramsey County Veterans Diversionary Court programs. As the first courts of their kind in Minnesota, they exist to provide an option for Veterans that have had had encounters with the criminal court system and to provide an alternative to prison. The staff works closely with the court on assessment, referral, and job placement.

#### Demobilizing/Recently Separated Veterans

Minnesota's "Beyond the Yellow Ribbon" Reintegration Campaign is the backbone of post-deployment reintegration services. Minnesota DVOP and LVER staff have been a critical part of this process, which includes 5 different events for Service members and their families.

The process begins 3-4 months before deployment. "Family Readiness Academies" are designed to give families an opportunity to ask questions, and provide information to Troops and their

families on what to expect during the deployment. We provide resource information and referrals for assorted common issues faced by families, information on Veterans benefits, and employment information for spouses.

Approximately 30 to 60 days before Troops return home, a “Yellow Ribbon Community Event” is sponsored to help families understand and support their returning Soldiers. Business owners, educators, civic leaders, and law enforcement are called together for a briefing on what they can expect upon their Soldiers' return. We provide resource information, and answers to some difficult questions relating to their combat experience and how that may affect their lives.

DVOP and LVER staff continue to update and modify some of our material based on the type of unit returning, and the predominant skill set of those Troops. Twenty-six (26) Minnesota service providers send staff and materials to various locations as Troops return from overseas deployment for an Initial Reintegration Event. DVOP staff conduct group presentations to Soldiers, and work one—on—one after these sessions to prepare resumes, practice interviewing skills, and assist with the job search strategy. We also provide information on unemployment insurance, Dislocated Worker programs, employment and reemployment, and educational opportunities. Following the initial reintegration events, follow—up events at 30/60/90 days are scheduled. Minnesota DVOP and LVER staff will continue to partner in these events and plan to provide similar services to all returning Veterans from all branches via similar events.

#### F. HOW THE STATE IMPLEMENTS AND MONITORS THE ADMINISTRATION OF PRIORITY OF SERVICE TO COVERED PERSONS;

#### **F. HOW THE STATE IMPLEMENTS AND MONITORS THE ADMINISTRATION OF PRIORITY OF SERVICE TO COVERED PERSONS**

The priority of Service to Veterans will be provided to ensure Veterans receive first consideration for all opportunities for which they qualify in the CareerForce. Signage requests that new clients identify themselves if they are a Veteran. They are further identified through responses to a standardized questionnaire given to Veterans to assist reception to identify them.

##### Access to DOL-funded programs

Veterans and other eligible persons entitled to POS will be referred to DOL-funded programs immediately. If a waiting list for the program exists, the Veteran will be put at the top of the list for service.

Workshops — All workshops available in the CareerForce will have open slots available to Veterans up to the day the workshop is scheduled.

State Job Bank — Veterans (current and former Military members) are able to identify themselves as such and are listed at the beginning of searches done by recruiters and employers. Employers are also able to self—designate as "Veterans Friendly Employer" so that Veterans can do keyword searches to find employers seeking Veterans for hire.

Training of partner staff on the priority of service is ongoing to ensure the process is instituted throughout the CareerForce community. Several processes will be used to monitor POS statewide and within each area of the State in which covered programs operate: 1) Information provided by DVOP/LVER staff or customers, 2) DVET onsite visits (including DOL—VETS audits with the State Director of Veterans Employment Programs, 3) Managers Quarterly Reports.

G. HOW THE STATE PROVIDES OR INTENDS TO PROVIDE AND MEASURE, THROUGH BOTH THE DVOP AND AMERICAN JOB CENTER STAFF:

1. JOB AND JOB TRAINING INDIVIDUALIZED CAREER SERVICES,

**G. HOW THE STATE PROVIDES OR INTENDS TO PROVIDE AND MEASURE, THROUGH BOTH THE DVOP AND AMERICAN JOB CENTER STAFF: (1) JOB AND JOB TRAINING INDIVIDUALIZED CAREER SERVICES, (2) EMPLOYMENT PLACEMENT SERVICES, AND (3) JOB-DRIVEN TRAINING AND SUBSEQUENT PLACEMENT SERVICE PROGRAM FOR ELIGIBLE VETERANS AND ELIGIBLE PERSONS**

1. JOB AND JOB TRAINING INDIVIDUALIZED CAREER SERVICES,

Currently, Minnesota tracks services for veterans within two different systems. DVOP services to veterans with a significant barrier to employment are enrolled, tracked and managed through our case management system, Workforce One. Specific services and resources will vary depending on CareerForce partners and funding. Typically, services are delivered to SBE Veterans via a case management model by a DVOP. Based on need, these services may include resume review and assistance, mock interviewing practice including answers to difficult or challenging questions, assistance with social media strategies, and assistance with an internet job search. Job training/skill assessments are provided by partner staff, and in the case of training/educational needs, the VA CH31 program. Services provided to Veterans with no significant barrier to employment by partner staff and non-JVSG staff are recorded and tracked within Minnesotaworks.net and also depend on resource availability. Along with other WIOA required titles, options are being considered to have a more unified data collection and management system to streamline systems and provide better reporting on services and outcomes

2. EMPLOYMENT PLACEMENT SERVICES, AND

2. EMPLOYMENT PLACEMENT SERVICES, AND

Minnesota tracks services, including placement services for veterans within two different systems. DVOP services to veterans with a significant barrier to employment are entered, tracked and managed through our case management system, WorkForce One. Services rovided to veterans with no significant barrier to employment by partner staff and non-JVSG staff are recorded and tracked within Minnesotaworks.net. Activities, services, and performance are also tracked via State Performance Outcome Data reports. Veterans are encouraged to post their resumes on Minnesotaworks.net (among others) so employers can access them as they search for candidates. LVER staff constantly update their working list of SBE and CH31 Veterans seeking work so they can promote specific Vets as they meet with employers. LVERs also do much of their job development and promotion based on the Veterans on the DVOP caseload. LVER staff also plan, organize, promote and facilitate local CareerForce "Business of the Day" events, and smaller local job fairs and hiring events. Along with other WIOA required titles, options are being considered to have a more unified data collection and management system to streamline systems and provide better reporting on services and outcomes.

Specific services and resources will vary depending on CareerForce partners and funding.

3. JOB-DRIVEN TRAINING AND SUBSEQUENT PLACEMENT SERVICE PROGRAM FOR ELIGIBLE VETERANS AND ELIGIBLE PERSONS;

3. JOB-DRIVEN TRAINING AND SUBSEQUENT PLACEMENT SERVICE PROGRAM FOR ELIGIBLE VETERANS AND ELIGIBLE PERSONS;

LVER's have been trained to interpret Labor Market Information and to review this data with employers as they look to grow their CareerForce and develop current employees.

Employees with the skill sets to go with updated equipment and technology are critical. LVER staff is familiar with programs like Career Pathways and P2P that help businesses "grow their own" high skilled staff. LVER staff are also familiar with OJT programs and apprenticeships and promote these with employers also. Hiring incentives like WOTC are also promoted when appropriate. Finally, LVER's educate employers on the opportunities the GI Bill and the "Minnesota GI Bill" can provide. DVOP staff will be assigned to provide case management and intensive services to Veterans with significant barriers to employment in the following locations throughout the State of Minnesota: 1) All 47 CareerForce locations, 2) VA Vocational Rehab Center, Fort Snelling, 3) VA Medical Center, St Paul, 4) Various community libraries and postsecondary schools as available and necessary. LVER staff will be deployed in many of these same locations for the purpose of employer outreach and education, and to facilitate networking and job search groups with employers and Veterans.

We also participate as an active partner in the Yellow Ribbon Reintegration program. As mentioned, this is a multi-phased program that includes a series of meetings and training events. Outreach, workshops, and assessments are all part of these events.

**POSITION PURPOSE** — DVOP specialist provides individualized career services and facilitates placements to meet the employment needs of veterans, prioritizing service to special disabled veterans, other disabled veterans, and other categories of veterans in accordance with priorities determined by the Secretary of Labor. The DVOP Specialist will provide or facilitate a full range of individualized career services to eligible Veterans with significant barriers to employment (per VPL 03—14 including change 2 and VPL 04 -14) who are unable to obtain suitable employment through universal services in the CareerForce system. This position will serve any eligible Veteran with an SBE seeking assistance with employment-related needs including job seeking assistance, referral to other agencies or services, training opportunities, licensing and certification assistance, and any other assistance as identified in order to meet the needs of the Veteran.

Minnesota has developed a standardized process for referring SBE Veterans to a DVOP. This triage approach begins when a customer comes to the entry point at a CareerForce. All customers are asked if they ever served in the US Military/Armed Forces. If the answer is "yes", the Veteran is given a copy of our "Veterans Questionnaire" with instructions to complete it and return it to the entry point. Non-JVSG staff review the form and complete an assessment of the questionnaire responses. Veterans who indicate a significant barrier to employment are referred to a DVOP if available, or to a "designated intensive service provider" when no DVOP is available. Non-SBE Veterans are provided information on Priority of Service and screened for additional program eligibility by non-JVSG staff.

**DVOP Core Responsibility 1** — Identify and facilitate individualized career services needed by Veterans with significant barriers to employment (SBE) so that they can be placed in suitable employment or in a training program commensurate with their EDP/IDP. Tasks for this responsibility will include: 1) In cooperation with the U.S Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (VR&E) staff, identify Chapter 31 Veterans (CH31) who have completed or are participating in VR&E programs and who are in need of job search assistance. 2) Through the use of the new standardized "Veterans Questionnaire", identify and prioritize services to disabled and other veterans with an SBE.

3) Conduct assessments to determine employment barriers and services needed. 4) Develop a documented case management file in CareerForce One (WF1) for each veteran receiving individualized career services. 5) Develop an employability development plan for each case managed veteran. 6) Refer veterans to appropriate supportive service providers. 7) Coordinate linkages with other employment and training providers and the VA to support Veterans in their job search activities. 8) Provide vocational guidance to eligible Veterans.

9) Refer Veterans to appropriate public and private sector jobs.

Core Responsibility 2 — Conduct outreach activities to identify and make contact with SBE Veterans who would benefit from, or are in need of individualized career services. Tasks for this responsibility will include:

1) Develop outreach programs in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs and DOL-VETS. 2) Participate in all Military reintegration events, DEED's annual Veterans Career Fair, and all other outreach events as assigned. 3) Conduct outreach activities with VR&E to market all services to Chapter 31 Veterans. 4) Conduct outreach activities to other organizations such as state Vocational Rehabilitation Providers, Homeless Veterans Reintegration Projects (HVRP), VA Hospitals and Veteran Centers, County Veteran Service Offices, homeless shelters, civic and community service organizations, other AJC/CareerForce partners and other sources as identified.

Core Responsibility 3 — Provide vocational guidance to eligible SBE Veterans who need assistance with vocational change or adjustment. Tasks for this responsibility will include:

1) Establish an EDP for all SBE Veterans requesting vocational guidance. 2) Provide vocational guidance using knowledge of labor market information and assessment tools. 3) Refer candidates to a qualified vocational counselor as necessary. 4) Assist Veterans in using electronic assessment and job search tools.

The DVOP works closely with other service providers in the community to provide career services to veterans with significant barriers to employment, as defined in VPL 03—14 (including change 2) and 04—14. These providers include but are not limited to Veterans Administration, CareerForce partners, Community based services, Federal, State, county and local programs, educational institutions, VA hospitals & Vet Centers, homeless programs and shelters, Rehabilitation programs, and other service providers. Supervision is provided administratively by the Veterans unit Field Operations Manager and functionally by SrVER.

E. LVER STAFF POSITION PURPOSE — The LVER's principal duties are to: (1) conduct outreach to employers in the area to assist veterans in gaining employment, including conducting seminars for employers and, in conjunction with employers, conducting job search workshops and establishing job search groups; and (2) facilitate employment, training, and placement services furnished to veterans in Minnesota under the State employment service delivery systems. This position exists to provide services to local businesses that will enhance, support, and promote the employment of Veterans, particularly Veterans receiving individualized career services from a local DVOP. They will lead in the planning, development, direction, negotiation, marketing and delivery of employment services to Businesses, Veterans and other eligible persons. The LVER will train, teach, and provide technical support to the state of Minnesota staff in the provision of Veteran employment services mandated by legislation and departmental guidelines. Clientele served by this position include employers seeking qualified Veteran applicants or information on employer incentives and training programs, business and professional organizations, and other appropriate business contacts. Other LVER customers include community and Veteran organizations, educational facilities, local elected officials, and

other State Departments, as well as other CareerForce staff and management that are either mandated by law or, are seeking assistance in providing priority of service to veterans in hiring and service delivery.

LVERs should advocate for all veterans served by the AJC with business, industry, and other community—based organizations by participating in activities such as: • Planning and participating in job and career fairs; • Conducting employer outreach; • In conjunction with employers, conducting job searches and workshops, and establishing job search groups; • Coordinating with unions, apprenticeship programs and businesses or business organizations to promote and secure employment and training programs for veterans; • Informing Federal contractors of the process to recruit qualified veterans; • Promoting credentialing and licensing opportunities for veterans; and • Coordinating and participating with other business outreach efforts.

Core Responsibility 1 — Develop employer outreach activities to establish, maintain, and facilitate regular contact with employers to promote employment and training opportunities for the benefit of Veterans. Tasks for this responsibility will include: 1) Develop job opportunities for Veteran job seekers through outreach efforts with Minnesota employers: job development phone contacts, in-person employer visits, and participation in job fair activities on behalf of Veterans. 2) Communicate and coordinate with Business Services Representatives in the local AJC to facilitate and promote job opportunities for Veterans, especially those with significant barriers to employment. 3) Promote the "Veteran Friendly Employer" initiative to all businesses contacted. 4) Encourage employers to employ Veterans utilizing apprenticeships and OJT programs, State and Federal Dislocated Worker programs and GI Bill benefits. 5) Maintain current information on employment and training opportunities. 6) Monitor Federal Contractor Job Listings (FCJL) and Vet Central job orders for Veterans using the CareerForce, or on the DVOP caseload. 7) Provide contacts and job leads to DVOPs.

Core Responsibility 2 — Advocate on behalf of Veterans seeking employment and training opportunities with business, industry, and community—based organizations. Tasks for this responsibility will include: 1) Contact community leaders, employers, labor unions, training programs, and Veterans organizations. 2) Promote Veterans' priority of service in employment and training programs. 3) Maintain current information on employment and training opportunities. 4) Plan and participate in job fairs to promote services to Veterans, and encourage participating employers to become a "Veteran Friendly Employer." 5) Promote licensing and certification assistance and training opportunities for Veterans using training providers and credentialing bodies. 6) Work with unions, apprenticeships programs, and the business community to promote employment, On the Job Training (OJT), apprenticeships and other available training opportunities to employ Veterans. 7) Establish and maintain contact with National Guard, Reserve Family Readiness Groups and Family Assistance Centers in the assigned area. Provide education and information regarding DEED Vets employment services, CareerForces, and Beyond the Yellow Ribbon events.

Core Responsibility 3 — Provide technical assistance, guidance, and leadwork to DVOP's, professional and support staff, and other CareerForce staff engaged in the delivery of services to Veteran eligible. Tasks for this responsibility will include: 1) Plan, guide and evaluate Veteran Program activities of CareerForce staff to attain program goals and to ensure consistent application of program components by establishing and maintaining workflow/assignment requirements; monitoring and reporting program performance. 2) Train CareerForce staff and partners to enhance their knowledge of Veterans employment and training issues. 3) Provide technical advice and guidance to CareerForce staff regarding procedural questions, or issues, to

ensure that program services are administered with accuracy and uniformity by providing written and verbal interpretations of applicable federal laws and departmental policies and procedures. 4) Develop and implement a local Veterans employment service delivery plan, in conjunction with local management, Veterans Staff Supervisor and Veterans State Director. Ensure community resources are utilized and eligible customers are served in accordance with federally mandated standards and delivery area objectives.

5) Analyze current delivery area operations and levels of program activity and recommend new or corrective action procedures to local management to enhance existing levels of performance. 6) Participate in the interviewing process with Veterans Program Management and local management in the selection of new DVOP/LVER staff to ensure qualified personnel are hired and the integrity of the various Veterans services programs is maintained.

Core Responsibility 4 — Provide capacity building for other service providers to ensure that Veterans and other eligible persons are provided the range of labor exchange services needed to meet their employment and training needs. Work with other CareerForce development providers to develop their capacity to recognize, and respond to these needs. Tasks for this responsibility will include: 1) Train other staff and CareerForce partners to enhance their knowledge of Veteran's employment and training issues. 2) Organize and promote public events like Career Fairs that increase the visibility of Veterans. 3) Promote Veterans as a category of job seekers in the CareerForce development system that have highly marketable skills and experience.

Core Responsibility 5 — Manage and maintain adherence to POS, and DOL priorities for services to Veterans with an SBE, including labor exchange services.

Tasks for this responsibility will include: 1) Facilitate and maintain the provision of labor exchange services by local CareerForce staff to Veterans including the identification of SBE Veterans, proper referral to a DVOP, or in the absence of the DVOP, to the intensive services provider, and referral to vocational counseling, testing, job search assistance. 2) Provide job development and employer outreach on behalf of Veterans, with a focus on Veterans with an SBE being case managed by a local DVOP. 3) Coordinate or conduct job search assistance and networking workshops in conjunction with employers. 4) Provide Labor Market Information (LMI) to employers. 6) Work with DEED Veterans Chapter 31 Program Coordinator and Veterans Affairs (VA) regarding Chapter 31 clients. 7) Refer Veterans to the Department of Labor (DOL)/Veterans Employment and Training Service (VETS) partner as needed to assist with reemployment rights issues covered under the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act (USERRA) law. 8) Assist employers with special job accommodations for disabled Veterans. This position works closely with community leaders, Tasks for this responsibility will include: 1) Facilitate and maintain the provision of labor exchange services by local CareerForce staff to Veterans including the identification of SBE Veterans, proper referral to a DVOP, or in the absence of the DVOP, to the individualized career services provider, and referral to vocational counseling, testing, job search assistance. 2) Provide job development and employer outreach on behalf of Veterans, with a focus on Veterans with an SBE being case managed by a local DVOP. 3) Coordinate or conduct job search assistance and networking workshops in conjunction with employers. 4) Provide Labor Market Information (LMI) to employers. 6) Work with DEED Veterans Chapter 31 Program Coordinator and Veterans Affairs (VA) regarding Chapter 31 clients. 7) Refer Veterans to the Department of Labor (DOL)/Veterans Employment and Training Service (VETS) partner as needed to assist with reemployment rights issues covered under the Uniformed Services Employment and

Reemployment Rights Act (USERRA) law. 8) Assist employers with special job accommodations for disabled Veterans.

Tasks for this responsibility will include: 1) Facilitate and maintain the provision of labor exchange services by local CareerForce staff to Veterans including the identification of SBE.

Veterans, proper referral to a DVOP, or in the absence of the DVOP, to the individualized career services provider, and referral to vocational counseling, testing, job search assistance. 2) Provide job development and employer outreach on behalf of Veterans, with a focus on Veterans with an SBE being case managed by a local DVOP. 3) Coordinate or conduct job search assistance and networking workshops in conjunction with employers. 4) Provide Labor Market Information (LMI) to employers. 6) Work with DEED Veterans Chapter 31 Program Coordinator and Veterans Affairs (VA) regarding Chapter 31 clients. 7) Refer Veterans to the Department of Labor (DOL)/Veterans Employment and Training Service (VETS) partner as needed to assist with reemployment rights issues covered under the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act (USERRA) law. 8) Assist employers with special job accommodations for disabled Veterans.

This position works closely with community leaders, organizations, employers, labor unions, training programs, various institutions, Veterans organizations, Veterans Administration, Veterans Employment and Training Service (VETS), military units and other governmental offices. In addition, the LVER must develop and maintain a relationship with management as the Veterans program lead worker and technical advisor. The LVER must work closely with CareerForce partners, supervisors and committees in the development of CareerForce policies and procedures as they pertain to Veterans services. The position must relate to all CareerForce staff so that they are thoroughly informed about the Veterans Employment Program and are aware of their responsibility in ensuring that Veterans are provided the priority service to which they are entitled to as specified by law. The LVER must implement the directives and mandates of management, evaluate the activities of other CareerForce staff and coordinate efforts with other staff at the state office level.

H. THE HIRE DATE ALONG WITH MANDATORY TRAINING COMPLETION DATES FOR ALL DVOP SPECIALISTS AND LVER STAFF; AND

**H. THE HIRE DATE ALONG WITH MANDATORY TRAINING COMPLETION DATES FOR ALL DVOP SPECIALISTS AND LVER STAFF**

<b>Last Name</b>	<b>First name</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Date Appointed to Current Position</b>	<b>Position</b>	<b>DVOP Training Date</b>	<b>LVER Training Date</b>
Dexter	Jeff	Burnsville	4/21/2014	DVOP	2015	
Douha	Raymond	St. Paul	8/6/2019	Director		2015
Dunn	Andrea	St. Paul	3/7/2018	DVOP	2018	
Eisenstadt	Michael	St Cloud	12/3/2004	LVER		2013
Green	Joseph	N. Minneapolis	3/7/2018	DVOP	2018	

<b>Last Name</b>	<b>First name</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Date Appointed to Current Position</b>	<b>Position</b>	<b>DVOP Training Date</b>	<b>LVER Training Date</b>
Hessler	Joshua	Rochester	1/23/2019	DVOP	2019	
Javorina	Laurie	St. Paul (VARO)	11/10/2010	DVOP/ISC	2016	
Johnson	Zac	Bloomington	5/8/2019	DVOP	2019	
Kaas	Rebecca	Marshall	3/26/2018	DVOP	2018	
Kerntz	Jane	Hibbing	11/21/2011	DVOP	2015	
LaBeau	Timothy	Blaine	11/20/2002	DVOP	2016	
Mann	Mark	Brooklyn Park	2/15/2008	LVER		2016
McNair	Kathryn	Mankato	5/27/2014	DVOP	2014	
Mertzig	Gregory	Duluth	2/20/2019	DVOP	2019	
Montry	Yogi	S. Minneapolis	11/7/2019	DVOP		
O'Connor	Kyle	Brainerd	7/24/2019	DVOP		
Okerstrom	Lee	St. Paul	2/6/2019	Consolidated	2015	2018
Platt	Barry	Mankato	12/25//2019	Staff Supervisor		2015
Poff	Anthony	St. Cloud	10/4/2017	DVOP	2018	2019
Schillinger	LaDeen	Alexandria	5/24/2017	Consolidated		2018
Sprouse	Shannon	Burnsville	11/20/2019	LVER		
Trumbull	Timothy	Duluth	5/4/2015	LVER		2015
Willis	Robert	S. Minneapolis	4/22/2019	LVER		2019
Wold	David	Brooklyn Park	6/29/2009	DVOP	2015	

I. SUCH ADDITIONAL INFORMATION AS THE SECRETARY MAY REQUIRE.

N/A

SENIOR COMMUNITY SERVICE EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM (SCSEP)

(OMB Control No. 1205-0040)

## A. ECONOMIC PROJECTIONS AND IMPACT

1. DISCUSS LONG-TERM PROJECTIONS FOR JOBS IN INDUSTRIES AND OCCUPATIONS IN THE STATE THAT MAY PROVIDE EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES FOR OLDER WORKERS. (20 CFR 641.302(D)) (MAY ALTERNATIVELY BE DISCUSSED IN THE ECONOMIC ANALYSIS SECTION OF STRATEGIC PLAN.)

**1. DISCUSS LONG-TERM PROJECTIONS FOR JOBS IN INDUSTRIES AND OCCUPATIONS IN THE STATE THAT MAY PROVIDE EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES FOR OLDER WORKERS. (20 CFR 0641.302(D))(MAY ALTERNATIVELY BE DISCUSSED IN THE ECONOMIC ANALYSIS SECTION OF STRATEGIC PLAN.)**

The Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP) is a paid community service and work-based program for income eligible job seekers ages 55 and older. It provides service-based training at local nonprofit organizations and government agencies to prepare them for permanent, unsubsidized employment.

Due to their experience, older workers (55 and older) have considerable skills and talents to offer the State economy. According to the Minnesota State Demographic Center, the workforce will expand significantly from an increase in the number of older workers 55+ (Table 1). Yet if older workers don't remain in the workforce and their talents aren't leveraged, the labor force will shrink over the next 5-10 years. Minnesota needs to build and retain the skills of aging workers in order to sustain economic growth.

**Table 1. Minnesota Labor Force Projections, 2020-2030 Change Percent**

	<b>2020 Labor Force Projection</b>	<b>2030 Labor Force Projection</b>	<b>2020-2030 Change Numeric</b>	<b>2020-2030 Change Percent</b>
55 to 64 years	560,791	489,812	-70,979	-13%
65 to 74 years	157,518	193,484	+35,966	+23%
75 years & over	24,211	34,278	+10,068	+42%

*Source: Minnesota State Demographic Center*

The Local Workforce Development Areas (LWDA), under the leadership of the Governor's Workforce Development Board, places a strong emphasis on identifying jobs in industries and occupations throughout the State that will likely provide employment opportunities for older workers. To ensure job readiness, it's vital that Minnesota DEED's SCSEP sub-grantees/operators (hereafter referred to as "providers") have access to current labor market information (LMI) that they can use to effectively assist program participants in developing realistic job goals and marketable skills sets.

SCSEP providers have access to in-service trainings through DEED's local regional labor analysts, featured publications, and online labor market tools such as:

- Occupational Employment Statistics Cost of Living Calculator
- Occupations in Demand

- Job Vacancy Survey
- Career and Education Explorer
- Graduate Employment Outcomes
- MySkillsMyFuture Match Jobs to Experience
- O\*Net OnLine
- CareerForceMN.com

These tools provide current information on the quarterly census of employment and wages, staffing patterns, employment statistics, local area unemployment statistics, comparisons (e.g. statewide and regional), business finder, and quarterly employment demographics.

**Projected Occupations for Older Workers:**

Table 2 below lists the occupations that are expected to have the most job openings from 2016 to 2026, according to DEED’s employment projections data. The top 4 occupations are potentially very suitable for older workers; these include Office and Administrative Support, Food Preparation and Serving Related, Sales and Related, and Personal Care and Service. Other occupations that are projected to have an abundance of job openings that may be suitable for older workers include Building and Grounds Cleaning and Maintenance; and Installation, Maintenance, and Repair.

**Table 2: Long-Term Occupation Projections, Minnesota, 2016 – 2026.**

Title	Estimate Year Employment	Projected Year Employment	Percent Change	Total Change	Labor Force Exit Openings	Occupational Transfer Openings	Total Hires
Office and Administrative Support	423,742	420,508	-0.8	-3,234	215,579	254,776	<b>467,121</b>
Food Preparation and Serving Related	240,410	253,705	5.5	13,295	188,240	236,455	<b>437,990</b>
Sales and Related	295,312	300,901	1.9	5,589	171,482	228,901	<b>405,972</b>
Personal Care and Service	161,950	192,106	18.6	30,156	135,610	120,387	<b>286,153</b>
Production	224,787	220,282	-2	-4,505	92,681	158,328	<b>246,504</b>
Transportation and Material Moving	188,103	196,338	4.4	8,235	95,838	132,073	<b>236,146</b>
Management	236,316	249,678	5.7	13,362	76,453	108,509	<b>198,324</b>

Title	Estimate Year Employment	Projected Year Employment	Percent Change	Total Change	Labor Force Exit Openings	Occupational Transfer Openings	Total Hires
Business and Financial Operations	177,222	192,016	8.3	14,794	54,002	107,892	<b>176,688</b>
Education, Training, and Library	172,960	184,770	6.8	11,810	75,921	73,837	<b>161,568</b>
Construction and Extraction	119,141	129,151	8.4	10,010	43,767	79,862	<b>133,639</b>
Building and Grounds Cleaning and Maintenance	95,789	103,753	8.3	7,964	61,229	63,174	<b>132,367</b>
Healthcare Practitioners and Technical	183,794	206,612	12.4	22,818	52,477	50,535	<b>125,830</b>
Healthcare Support	88,928	104,062	17	15,134	55,746	51,438	<b>122,318</b>
Installation, Maintenance, and Repair	103,306	109,973	6.5	6,667	36,967	62,765	<b>106,399</b>
Computer and Mathematical	100,985	110,159	9.1	9,174	17,971	50,346	<b>77,491</b>
Community and Social Service	63,422	69,174	9.1	5,752	26,725	44,692	<b>77,169</b>
Arts, Design, Entertainment, Sports, and Media	54,952	56,941	3.6	1,989	23,067	30,284	<b>55,340</b>
Protective Service	46,716	48,695	4.2	1,979	23,119	26,245	<b>51,343</b>
Architecture and Engineering	55,330	59,926	8.3	4,596	14,513	26,510	<b>45,619</b>
Farming, Fishing, and Forestry	16,508	17,955	8.8	1,447	6,285	18,669	<b>26,401</b>

Title	Estimate Year Employment	Projected Year Employment	Percent Change	Total Change	Labor Force Exit Openings	Occupational Transfer Openings	Total Hires
Life, Physical, and Social Science	26,096	28,789	10.3	2,693	6,812	16,646	<b>26,151</b>
Legal	21,531	23,406	8.7	1,875	5,543	7,927	<b>15,345</b>
<b>Total, All</b>	<b>3,097,300</b>	<b>3,278,900</b>	<b>5.9</b>	<b>181,600</b>	<b>1,480,027</b>	<b>1,950,251</b>	<b>3,611,878</b>

Source: <https://mn.gov/deed/data/data-tools/employment-outlook/>

2. DISCUSS HOW THE LONG-TERM JOB PROJECTIONS DISCUSSED IN THE ECONOMIC ANALYSIS SECTION OF STRATEGIC PLAN RELATE TO THE TYPES OF UNSUBSIDIZED JOBS FOR WHICH SCSEP PARTICIPANTS WILL BE TRAINED AND THE TYPES OF SKILL TRAINING TO BE PROVIDED. (20 CFR 641.302(D))

**2. DISCUSS HOW THE LONG-TERM JOB PROJECTIONS DISCUSSED IN THE ECONOMIC ANALYSIS SECTION OF STRATEGIC PLAN RELATE TO THE TYPES OF UNSUBSIDIZED JOBS FOR WHICH SCSEP PARTICIPANTS WILL BE TRAINED AND THE TYPES OF SKILL TRAINING TO BE PROVIDED. (20 CFR 641.302(D))**

To identify unsubsidized jobs and the required training within occupations projected to be in high demand for older workers, SCSEP providers review LMI data regularly and work with their participants to strategize plans on how to ensure eligibility for these positions. This section describes the unsubsidized jobs within occupations projected to be in high-demand, the types of skill training for these positions, and the approach that providers take to develop a preparation plan for participants.

**Unsubsidized Jobs Suitable for SCSEP participants:**

As listed in Table 2 in the previous section, the top 4 occupations projected to be in high demand between 2016 – 2026 include Office and Administrative Support, Food Preparation and Serving Related, Sales and Related, and Personal Care and Service. Unsubsidized jobs within these occupations are provided in Figure 1 below. They include Combined Food Preparers, Personal Care Aides/Assistants, Retail Salespersons, Cashiers, Servers (Waiters and Waitresses), Customer Services Representatives, Janitors and Cleaners, and Office Clerks. Other unsubsidized jobs that may be a good fit for SCSEP participants include Stock Clerks, Childcare Workers, Home Health Aides, and Nursing and Teaching Assistants.

**Figure 1:**

Source: <https://mn.gov/deed/data/data-tools/employment-outlook/>

**Skill Training for In-Demand Jobs:**

To ensure participants are trained and well prepared to transition from subsidized to unsubsidized employment, SCSEP career counselors will continue to work diligently to identify

online and local in-person training programs. Examples of unsubsidized jobs for SCSEP participants and the associated skill training are described below:

- Occupation: Office and Administration Support
- Jobs: Customer Service Representative, Office Clerk

To perform office and administrative support positions effectively, SCSEP participants complete specific training in technology programs and/or apprenticeships of a few months to a year to learn from experienced workers. The acquired skills from apprenticeships may include customer and personal service as well as proficiency in customer relationship management (CRM) software, such as Austin Logistics CallTech, Blackbaud The Raiser's Edge, or Salesforce. Preparation may also include training in database user interface and query software, such as Microsoft Access or Oracle. A high school diploma or equivalent is usually required for office and administration support jobs.

- Occupation: Food Preparation and Serving Related
- Jobs: Cashiers, Waiters/Waitresses

Candidates are usually required to have at least a high school diploma or equivalent for food preparation and serving-related positions. Some previous work-related skill, knowledge, or experience is usually needed as well. On-the-job training in these occupations is typically anywhere from a few months to a year of working with experienced employees. Other preparation may include training in accounting or bookkeeping software, database user interface and query software such as ReliaSoft Prism, Microsoft Office, or handheld computer device software.

- Occupation: Sales and related
- Jobs: Retail Salespersons, Cashiers

As previous work-related skill, knowledge, or experience is usually needed for sales positions, SCSEP participants receive on-the-job training with experienced workers, typically lasting a few months to a year. A formal apprenticeship program may be completed for these occupations, particularly to receive skill training in sales and marketing, customer and personal service, persuasion, and negotiation. Preparation can also include training in database user interface and query software such as FileMaker Pro, gift registry software, or Microsoft Access; electronic mail software such as IBM Notes or Microsoft Outlook; or point of sale (POS) software such as iQmetrix RQ4 Retail Management System, or Plexis. A high school diploma or equivalent is typically required.

- Occupation: Personal Care and Service
- Jobs: Home Health Aides, Nursing Assistants

To prepare SCSEP participants for a position as a Home Health Aide, career counselors identify local employers who will provide training or an apprenticeship (typically under 2 years) with experienced staff to instruct on how to care for and assist others, and document and record information. Preparation typically also includes training in database user interface and query software such as Microsoft Access or Oracle; electronic mail software such as Microsoft Outlook; or medical software such as AIG OASIS. Home Health Aides usually have at least a high school diploma or equivalent.

The requirements for Nursing Assistants are typically a high school diploma or equivalent, and a post-secondary non-degree award such as a Certified Nursing Aide/Assistant (CNA). Training in accounting software such as Billing; electronic mail software such as Microsoft Outlook; and medical software such as Epic Systems may also be completed.

Source: <https://www.onetonline.org/find/>

### **SCSEP Approach to Skill Training:**

SCSEP career counselors work with, and will continue to work with, participants to develop an Individual Employment Plan (IEP) after assessing their skills and abilities. Participants' interests and aptitudes are matched with high-demand jobs in the local labor market, and an appropriate host agency for a community service assignment (CSA) is identified. The IEP lists the steps needed to achieve the job readiness goals to ensure participants will exit to an unsubsidized position.

Identification of an appropriate host agency and CSA is an ongoing process. It requires providers to be aware of local community needs, agencies/organizations that can act as hosts, and the quality of the training that the participant will receive. Participants receive most of their training at their assigned host agency. Staff provide the training at no cost to the program. They deliver it through demonstration, hands-on practice, and instruction. Host agency staff may also register participants for local in-person and online workshops and seminars. Additionally, contracts (referred to as On-the-Job Experience (OJE) contracts) are used to further develop job-related goals and interests if needed.

If it aligns with the IEP, providers identify extra vocational training for participants, including classes on time management, communication and active listening, job-searching skills, and application and interviewing techniques. These trainings may be provided by a career development specialist, where available, or taught by SCSEP counselors. To increase the likelihood of unsubsidized job placement, counselors work closely with area employers, and sometimes job developers, to identify or even create openings that meet the needs of both participants and employers.

3. DISCUSS CURRENT AND PROJECTED EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES IN THE STATE (SUCH AS BY PROVIDING INFORMATION AVAILABLE UNDER §15 OF THE WAGNER-PEYSER ACT (29 U.S.C. 491-2) BY OCCUPATION), AND THE TYPES OF SKILLS POSSESSED BY ELIGIBLE INDIVIDUALS. (20 CFR 641.325(C))

3. DISCUSS CURRENT AND PROJECTED EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES IN THE STATE (SUCH AS BY PROVIDING INFORMATION AVAILABLE UNDER §15 OF THE WAGNER-PEYSER ACT (29 U.S.C. 491-2) BY OCCUPATION), AND THE TYPES OF SKILLS POSSESSED BY ELIGIBLE INDIVIDUALS. (20 CFR 641.325(C))

### **Skills Required for In-Demand Jobs:**

As previously discussed, the projection data shows there will be several occupations with job openings suitable for SCSEP participants up through 2026 (Table 2 and Figure 1). DEED's Match Jobs to Experience data tool and O\*NET OnLine provide the typical required education level and skill sets for in-demand jobs. The skills eligible candidates possess for a sample of jobs within the top occupations predicted to be in high demand are listed below (Table 3).

**Table 3: Projected In-Demand Occupations, Jobs, and Skills for Eligible Candidates**

Occupation	Unsubsidized Jobs	Education Level / Training	Skill Sets
Office and Administrative Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Customer Services Representatives</li> <li>• Office Clerks</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• High school diploma or equivalent</li> <li>• Customer relationship management (CRM) software</li> <li>• Database user interface and query software</li> <li>• Enterprise resource planning (ERP) software</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CRM, ERP, and database user/query software proficiency</li> <li>• Clerical</li> <li>• Customer and Personal service</li> <li>• Communication and Active listening</li> <li>• Critical thinking</li> <li>• Team collaboration</li> </ul>
Combined Food Preparation and Serving	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cashiers</li> <li>• Waiters/Waitresses</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• High school diploma or equivalent</li> <li>• On-the-job training with experienced workers</li> <li>• Accounting / bookkeeping software</li> <li>• Database user interface and query software</li> <li>• Handheld computer device software</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Customer and Personal service</li> <li>• Administrative and Management</li> <li>• Accounting / bookkeeping</li> <li>• Database user/query proficiency</li> <li>• Time management</li> <li>• Communication and Active Listening</li> <li>• Team collaboration</li> </ul>
Sales and Related	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Retail Salespersons</li> <li>• Cashiers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• High school diploma or equivalent</li> <li>• On-the-job training with experienced workers or</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sales and Marketing</li> <li>• Database user/query proficiency</li> </ul>

Occupation	Unsubsidized Jobs	Education Level / Training	Skill Sets
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>formal apprenticeship</li> <li>• Database user interface and query software</li> <li>• Electronic mail software</li> <li>• Point of sale (POS) software</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Customer and Personal service</li> <li>• Persuasion</li> <li>• Negotiation</li> <li>• Communication and Active Listening</li> </ul>
Personal Care and Service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Home Health Aides</li> <li>• Nursing Assistants</li> </ul>	<p>Home Health Aides:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• High school diploma or equivalent</li> <li>• On-the-job training or formal apprenticeship</li> <li>• Database user interface and query software</li> <li>• Electronic mail software</li> <li>• Medical software</li> </ul> <p>Nursing Assistant:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Postsecondary non-degree award, such as a CNA</li> <li>• Accounting / bookkeeping software</li> <li>• Electronic mail software</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Medicine and Patient care</li> <li>• Customer and Personal Service</li> <li>• Monitoring</li> <li>• Public Safety and Security</li> <li>• Critical Thinking</li> <li>• Decision-making</li> <li>• Communication and Active Listening</li> <li>• Time Management</li> </ul>

Occupation	Unsubsidized Jobs	Education Level / Training	Skill Sets
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Medical software</li> </ul>	

Sources: <https://mn.gov/deed/data/data-tools/match-jobs-experience/>;  
<https://www.onetonline.org/find/>

## B. SERVICE DELIVERY AND COORDINATION

1. A DESCRIPTION OF ACTIONS TO COORDINATE SCSEP WITH OTHER PROGRAMS. THIS MAY ALTERNATIVELY BE DISCUSSED IN THE STATE STRATEGIES SECTION OF THE STRATEGIC PLAN, BUT REGARDLESS OF PLACEMENT IN DOCUMENT, MUST INCLUDE:

A. PLANNED ACTIONS TO COORDINATE ACTIVITIES OF SCSEP GRANTEEES WITH WIOA TITLE I PROGRAMS, INCLUDING PLANS FOR USING THE WIOA ONE-STOP DELIVERY SYSTEM AND ITS PARTNERS TO SERVE INDIVIDUALS AGED 55 AND OLDER. (20 CFR 641.302(G), 641.325(E))

## B. SERVICE DELIVERY AND COORDINATION

States must:

1. PROVIDE A DESCRIPTION OF ACTIONS TO COORDINATE SCSEP WITH OTHER PROGRAMS

This may alternatively be discussed in the State strategies section of the strategic plan, but regardless of placement in document, must include:

Through Minnesota's Combined State Plan, Minnesota SCSEP and the WIOA statewide offices that serve the older worker population will continue its partnership to ensure the maximum number of eligible individuals will have an opportunity to participate in SCSEP. To serve individuals 55 and older, the partnership will continue to implement the following activities and strategies:

- Refer potential participants to SCSEP and inform them of the training opportunities available through the program
- Encourage co-enrollment of SCSEP and WIOA programs to ensure participants receive adequate support services, and comprehensive training and employment services
- Coordinate and make referrals to other state and national providers
- Engage SCSEP providers in implementing WIOA and other workforce strategies
- Serve as board members (where applicable) for LWDA's.
- Promote joint sponsorship of job fairs and participation at the job fairs.
- Assist in developing strategic workforce plans
- Perform JobLink referrals
- Contact local businesses and employers to serve as potential host agencies
- Sponsor the co-development of job-readiness seminars.

- Utilize CareerForce to bring together members of senior communities through meetings, the development of resources (e.g. web resources, publications, and promotional materials) and forums (meetings and roundtables) to encourage collaboration and eliminate service gaps
- Develop SCSEP content for CareerForceMN.com that highlights the benefits of hiring older workers and supports the needs of older workers

CareerForce joins together providers of workforce development services to create the one-stop delivery system. The partnership brings together state, county, and private nonprofit workforce development services to provide a seamless and comprehensive system for job seekers and employers. As Minnesota's career development and talent matching resource, CareerForce connects individuals to opportunities by helping employers find the workers they need to grow and thrive. It continually works to enhance services to employees and employers, prioritizing equity at the center of everything it does. CareerForce is a business-led network of private, public and nonprofit partners throughout Minnesota committed to helping individuals start, advance or change their career; employers attract, develop and retain talent; and Minnesota thrive economically by continuing to build its world-class workforce. In person, on the phone and online, CareerForce provides tailored resources to help meet the needs of all Minnesota's career seekers and employers.

As part of the SCSEP State Plan, DEED will continue to promote coordination and collaboration between SCSEP and the WIOA one-stop system. SCSEP providers will continue to actively partner with CareerForce. Local collaborations vary by region, ranging from the placement of SCSEP employment and training staff at statewide CareerForce sites to co-sponsoring training and outreach events to assisting with outreach to more rural residents of the state. Providers will also continue to collaborate with CareerForce sites at job fairs and share job leads, as well as work together to engage the business community in initiatives that tap older workers.

**B. PLANNED ACTIONS TO COORDINATE ACTIVITIES OF SCSEP GRANTEES WITH THE ACTIVITIES BEING CARRIED OUT IN THE STATE UNDER THE OTHER TITLES OF THE OLDER AMERICANS ACT (OAA). (20 CFR 641.302(H))**

**B. PLANNED ACTIONS TO COORDINATE ACTIVITIES OF SCSEP GRANTEES WITH THE ACTIVITIES TO BE CARRIED OUT IN THE STATE UNDER THE OTHER TITLES OF THE OAA. (20 CFR 641.302(H))**

Minnesota will continue to cultivate partnerships with Area Agencies on Aging (AAA) and OAA funded service providers. Minnesota's AAAs are regional organizations that provide the services, support, and information for just about everything that older adults and their families could need. Minnesota has 7 AAAs across the state, which serve as connections to older Minnesotans and the community support they require (<https://mn.gov/board-on-aging/about-us/area-agencies/>).

These partnerships will continue to provide opportunities for cross referrals of eligible SCSEP participants and designation of aging network sites as host agencies. The partners assist SCSEP participants with support services such as transportation, respite, and case management services to boost their well-being and help them live independently in their home environment and the community. AAA partners also provide preventive health services such as disease-prevention and health-promotion services at senior centers or alternative sites. Services are designed to help older individuals prevent or manage their health conditions and promote healthier lifestyles. See section (F)(4) below for more information about joint activities of Minnesota SCSEP and statewide AAAs.

C. PLANNED ACTIONS TO COORDINATE SCSEP WITH OTHER PRIVATE AND PUBLIC ENTITIES AND PROGRAMS THAT PROVIDE SERVICES TO OLDER AMERICANS, SUCH AS COMMUNITY AND FAITH- BASED ORGANIZATIONS, TRANSPORTATION PROGRAMS, AND PROGRAMS FOR THOSE WITH SPECIAL NEEDS OR DISABILITIES. (20 CFR 641.302(I))

C. PLANNED ACTIONS TO COORDINATE SCSEP WITH OTHER PRIVATE AND PUBLIC ENTITIES AND PROGRAMS THAT PROVIDE SERVICES TO OLDER AMERICANS, SUCH AS COMMUNITY AND FAITH-BASED ORGANIZATIONS, TRANSPORTATION PROGRAMS, AND PROGRAMS FOR THOSE WITH SPECIAL NEEDS OR DISABILITIES. (20 CFR 641.302(I))

To assist job-seeking individuals and ensure they have access to transportation, housing, health, and other workforce development services, DEED will continue to foster partnerships with a variety of community-based organizations and referral sources.

**Transportation Programs:**

To overcome transportation challenges, DEED will continue to coordinate with the Department of Transportation, partner state agencies, AAAs, transit authorities and local transportation coordination programs, such as Ticket To Work and Transit Link, to ensure SCSEP providers have resources that support participants' ability to make it to work. On the state level, a top priority area of the Governor's Council for an Age-Friendly Minnesota is transportation (see section 2 below for more information about the Governor's Council). With the guidance of several national and state transportation experts such as the AARP, Road Safety Academy, National Highway, Transportation Safety Association, and University of North Carolina Highway Safety Research Center, communities will become more livable for older individuals by creating safer and more pedestrian-friendly/walkable environments, and improving access to public transportation.

Other activities and efforts to mitigate or overcome transportation challenges include providing participants with Metro passes, gas cards, and even making purchasing car parts to accommodate disabilities through local community-based support organizations. As an example, one provider purchased a remote car starter for a participant whose hands were so arthritic she was using a spoon as leverage to turn the car keys. On days this didn't work or caused too much pain, she was unable to make it to her host agency. The remote starter enabled the participant to complete her CSA and with a perfect attendance record. Minnesota SCSEP will continue to identify transportation challenges for participants and work with local providers and resources to identify or develop solutions.

**Community, Faith-Based, Volunteer Organizations and Programs for People with Disabilities:**

To ensure priority to those most-in-need (MIN), such as disabled individuals, DEED will coordinate activities with community, faith-based, and volunteer organizations that provide tailored resources to meet their unique needs and preferences. Strong collaborations with community action partnerships (CAP) agencies, Chambers of Commerce, city offices, Bridges of Hope, Lutheran Social Services, public libraries, Salvation Army, homeless shelters, and county social service agencies exist and provide needed support to participants. Examples of other partner organizations include:

- Living At Home Network (focuses on helping seniors maintain good health)
- Faith Community Nurse Network of the Greater Twin Cities (combines professional nursing and spiritual care)

- Centers for Independent Living (assists people with vision loss, or other disabilities, function at home, work and in their communities)

At the state level, DEED will continue to participate in the Governor’s Council for an Age-Friendly Minnesota which, as previously described, coordinates public- and private-sector age-friendly actions to promote healthy aging. Other collaborations with state agencies and initiatives include:

- Minnesota Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services Division (DHHSD)
- DEED Unemployment Insurance
- DEED State Services for the Blind (SSB)
- DEED Vocational Rehabilitation Services (VRS)

To highlight a few of these partnerships:

- SSB: Facilitates the achievement of vocational and personal independence by Minnesotans who are blind, visually impaired, or DeafBlind. SSB’s Senior Services Aging Eyes partnership fosters successful partnerships with community senior-service organizations. In 2018, the SSB received the Minnesota State Innovation in Government Award, organized by the Humphrey Institute's Public and Nonprofit Leadership Center and the Bush Foundation, for an initiative that provides training and a kit of low vision aids and devices to community members who work with seniors. The kit enables partners to provide practical assistance to seniors in the early stages of vision loss. SSB has trained more than 400 service providers to recognize and provide simple services for seniors who are newly diagnosed with vision loss. Through these partnerships, 714 seniors were served in 2017.
- VRS: Provides employment services to anyone with disabilities age 14 and up (Table 4). SCSEP providers work closely with the VRS to document severe disability and frail MIN status. VRS staff is also working closely with a group of individuals who are 55 and older and seeking employment. While PY19 data for this age group isn’t currently available, Table 4 below shows there was 71 percent change in disabled individuals 65 and older who sought VRS services from PY15 to PY18, a hopeful indicator that more and more MIN individuals are accessing services that will help them find sustainable employment. DEED’s VRS unit also has grant funds to support Independent Living services for persons of any age.

**Table 4: Number of People with Disabilities Who Accessed VRS by Age**

Age group	# served in PY13	# served in PY15	% change PY13 to PY15	# served in PY18	% change PY15 to PY18
Youth	7,466	7,906	5.90%	9,061	14.60%
14-18	5,095	5,371	5.40%	5,833	8.60%
19-21	1,658	1,812	9.30%	2,435	34.40%
22-24	713	723	1.40%	793	9.70%
Adult	7,986	7,827	-2.00%	7,090	-9.40%
25-64	7,928	7,734	-2.40%	6,931	-10.40%

Age group	# served in PY13	# served in PY15	% change PY13 to PY15	# served in PY18	% change PY15 to PY18
<b>65+</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>93</b>	<b>60.30%</b>	<b>159</b>	<b>71.00%</b>
Total	15,452	15,733	1.80%	16,151	2.70%

DEED will continue to strengthen collaborations with community-based, faith-based, and volunteer programs as well as organizations that serve disabled individuals to ensure SCSEP providers and participants have easy access to needed resources.

**D. PLANNED ACTIONS TO COORDINATE SCSEP WITH OTHER LABOR MARKET AND JOB TRAINING INITIATIVES. (20 CFR 641.302(J))**

**D. PLANNED ACTIONS TO COORDINATE SCSEP WITH OTHER LABOR MARKET AND JOB TRAINING INITIATIVES. (20 CFR 641.302(J))**

SCSEP providers develop strategic partnerships with workforce strategy consultants, city councils, and economic-development (both municipal and private) to foster collaborations with host agencies for community service and training opportunities. Community colleges, community education providers, CareerForce locations, and retired professionals are also used for training.

Minnesota will continue to work with small businesses of the primary private sector to train SCSEP participants. Over the last decade, small businesses have generated 60 to 80 percent of net new jobs annually. In many areas, small businesses may be the only source of jobs for job seekers, particularly when those workers are low-income and elderly. Working with small businesses to provide customized training has proven to be a successful placement model; providers can replicate this model in new and current SCSEP areas.

**E. ACTIONS TO ENSURE THAT SCSEP IS AN ACTIVE PARTNER IN THE ONE-STOP DELIVERY SYSTEM AND THE STEPS THE STATE WILL TAKE TO ENCOURAGE AND IMPROVE COORDINATION WITH THE ONE-STOP DELIVERY SYSTEM. (20 CFR 641.335)**

**E. ACTIONS THE STATE WILL TAKE TO ENSURE THAT SCSEP IS AN ACTIVE PARTNER IN THE ONE-STOP DELIVERY SYSTEM AND THE STEPS THE STATE WILL TAKE TO ENCOURAGE AND IMPROVE COORDINATION WITH THE ONE-STOP DELIVERY SYSTEM. (20 CFR 641.335)**

As described above, SCSEP providers will continue to ensure the maximum number of eligible individuals will have an opportunity to participate in SCSEP by consistently using the WIOA One-Stop Delivery System in the recruitment and selection of eligible individuals and keeping community service opportunities with the CareerForce locations in Minnesota up-to-date. Providers will also continue to co-enroll, as appropriate, older workers in SCSEP and WIOA Title I programs so they receive comprehensive training and employment services.

**F. EFFORTS TO WORK WITH LOCAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OFFICES IN RURAL LOCATIONS.**

**F. EFFORTS THE STATE WILL MAKE TO WORK WITH LOCAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OFFICES IN RURAL LOCATIONS.**

DEED has consistently worked to develop strong partnerships with agencies and organizations serving the older worker population in rural areas. Every effort is in place to work with the local economic development offices in the rural areas. Experience Works is highly experienced in providing workforce development services to older workers in rural populations. Other

statewide SCSEP providers who are experienced in providing services to this population include Rural Minnesota CEP, City of Duluth, Arrowhead Economic Opportunity Agency, InterCounty Community Council, Minnesota Chippewa Tribe, Minnesota Valley Action Council, and Southwestern Minnesota Opportunity Council. These providers have over 20 years of experience partnering with local economic development offices to create community service assignments and training opportunities that lead to unsubsidized employment (see below for specific strategies).

2. THE STATE'S LONG-TERM STRATEGY FOR ENGAGING EMPLOYERS TO DEVELOP AND PROMOTE OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE PLACEMENT OF SCSEP PARTICIPANTS IN UNSUBSIDIZED EMPLOYMENT. (20 CFR 641.302(E)) (MAY ALTERNATIVELY BE DISCUSSED IN THE STATE STRATEGIES SECTION OF STRATEGIC PLAN.)

2. THE STATE'S LONG-TERM STRATEGY FOR ENGAGING EMPLOYERS TO DEVELOP AND PROMOTE OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE PLACEMENT OF SCSEP PARTICIPANTS IN UNSUBSIDIZED EMPLOYMENT. (20 CFR 641.302(E)) (ALTERNATELY, THE STATE MAY DISCUSS THIS IN THE STATE STRATEGIES SECTION OF STRATEGIC PLAN IF SUBMITTING A COMBINED PLAN.)

To develop and promote training and unsubsidized employment opportunities, Minnesota SCSEP will continue to implement the following strategies at a state and local level:

- Co-enroll SCSEP participants in WIOA programs and Pathways to Prosperity (P2P) training options. P2P is coordinated in partnership with local employers, SOAR Career Solutions, Adult Education, and Lake Superior College, and provides individuals the skills needed to compete for entry level employment in the healthcare or construction fields.
- Develop a referral relationship with employers
- Invite employers as guest speakers at SCSEP quarterly meetings
- Encourage participants to meet with selected employers through Business of The Day events, Job Fairs, hiring events and Job Club
- Meet with employers at Job Fairs to explain SCSEP and the benefits of hiring older workers
- Direct contact with employers on behalf of a specific participant through job development activities
- Ensure resumes entered into MinnesotaWorks.net are viewable by employers
- Partner with CareerForce and community partners for job placement activities
- Feature SCSEP during LWDB meetings
- Increase collaboration among DEED workforce strategy consultants and local employers to improve work retention of aging employees
- Train employers to effectively communicate the type of skills they need, in ways that do not hinder older applicants
- Provide DEED-sponsored workshops for employers on how to establish on-the-job training and focus on knowledge-transfer strategies

- Demonstrate how volunteer work at desirable organizations/companies helps aging job seekers connect with potential employers
- Encourage employers to network with schools that teach skills they need in their workforce
- Increase opportunities for aging workers to do small business development and become entrepreneurs
- Develop a strategy and model for success, including both paid and unpaid work

To promote and strengthen retention, DEED ensures that unsubsidized employment activities align with service delivery models via providers' close working relationships with employers and participants after placement. Retention strategies also include making sure initial placements meet participant and employer needs (i.e. employer expectations match participant skill levels, interests, and work ethics), conducting follow-up just after placement and periodically thereafter to ensure satisfaction among both participant and employer (i.e. employers are expected to provide a healthy and safe environment for participants), providing counseling when issues arise on the job, and offering support services when needed.

### 3. THE STATE'S LONG-TERM STRATEGY FOR SERVING MINORITY OLDER INDIVIDUALS UNDER SCSEP. (20 CFR 641.302 (C))

### 3. THE STATE'S LONG-TERM STRATEGY FOR SERVING MINORITIES UNDER SCSEP. (20 CFR 641.302(C))

Minnesota strives to ensure that SCSEP opportunities are spread across cultural, racial, gender, and geographic boundaries. Providers will continue to make it a priority to recruit and select individuals from under-resourced, minority groups. Recruitment strategies change with the climate and conditions for the older worker population, particularly minority older workers, but efforts are ongoing and persistent.

Providers will use three primary channels to recruit minority populations:

- Hire and train outreach staff to identify and recruit. These staff will continue to work closely with community leaders, members of culturally-specific organizations, and certain state and national providers that have considerable experience in recruiting and providing services to low income minorities. For example, to recruit Native American participants, Minnesota state and national providers such as the National Indian Council on Aging (NICOA), Senior Services of America, Inc (SSAI), Experience Works, and Minnesota Chippewa Tribe (MCT), target recruitment efforts directly on Native American reservations located within the boundaries of their service areas. They also work closely with cultural brokers and interpreters to ensure job opportunities are spread across cultural, racial, gender, and geographic boundaries by providing translation services and program information translated into Spanish, Somali, Hmong, Vietnamese, Lao, Arabic, and Russian to CareerForce locations, and other appropriate agencies. When needed, they have access to a language line that contracts with qualified interpreters.
- Work with other WIOA programs, county public assistance departments, VRS departments, AAAs, and other community-based organizations to increase referrals. CareerForce locations throughout Minnesota also provide referrals.

- Disseminate program information via local and culturally-specific agencies and outlets that serve MIN populations, such as Native American reservation social service organizations; newsletter, radio, and television outlets (Insight News, Minnesota Spokesman Recorder, The Circle, Latino Midwest News, Asian American Press, JMOJ); grocery stores; public assistance case workers, public health workers; clergy; and rural neighborhood workers.

DEED, and its state and national providers, have a long history of successfully recruiting participants, partnering with host agencies, and providing workforce development services to these demographics. Providers also offer support services, such as transportation, medical services, free meals, wellness classes, legal aid, elder-abuse prevention, tax preparation, and socialization, to address barriers to employment.

Minnesota provides continuous technical assistance to providers to help them identify minority individuals. To evaluate the efforts of SCSEP providers to serve minorities, data is regularly reported by state and national providers in the SCSEP Performance and Results QPR System (SPARQ). Additionally, the DOL provides an annual report that summarizes an analysis of the data reported from state and national providers on their service to minorities.

4. A LIST OF COMMUNITY SERVICES THAT ARE NEEDED AND THE PLACES WHERE THESE SERVICES ARE MOST NEEDED. SPECIFICALLY, THE PLAN MUST ADDRESS THE NEEDS AND LOCATION OF THOSE INDIVIDUALS MOST IN NEED OF COMMUNITY SERVICES AND THE GROUPS WORKING TO MEET THEIR NEEDS. (20 CFR 641.330)

**4. A LIST OF COMMUNITY SERVICES THAT ARE NEEDED AND THE PLACES WHERE THESE SERVICES ARE MOST NEEDED. SPECIFICALLY, THE PLAN MUST ADDRESS THE NEEDS AND LOCATION(S) OF THOSE INDIVIDUALS MOST IN NEED OF COMMUNITY SERVICES AND THE GROUPS WORKING TO MEET THEIR NEEDS. (20 CFR 641.330)**

Using current LMI data on the unemployment rates for Minnesota, we're able to identify the SCSEP counties with unemployment rates above the state average (3.2% - 3.3%). As of October 2019, these counties included: Koochiching at 5.8 percent, Clearwater at 4.8 percent, Itasca at 4 percent, Aitkin at 3.9 percent, Red Lake, Pine, Hubbard at 3.5 percent, Wadena and Cass at 3.4 percent, and Mille Lacs, Lake of the Woods, Kanabec, and Carlton at 3.3 percent. For more detailed information, see Table 5 in section (c)(1) below.

The community or support services SCSEP participants, particularly MIN individuals, tend to access are often transportation support (gas cards or bus passes), and housing and food assistance. SCSEP participants also need professional clothing so they can dress appropriately for interviews, meetings, CSAs, and eventual employment. Partner agencies and organizations that provide needed support services to program participants include, but are not limited to:

- Ticket To Work
- Transit Link
- Fare For All
- Dress for Success
- Project for Pride in Living
- Community Action Partnership
- Senior Linkage Line

- Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)
- Area food shelves
- Chambers of Commerce
- Arrowhead Area Agency on Aging – Duluth, MN
- Central Minnesota Council on Aging – Sartell, MN
- Dancing Sky Area Agency on Aging – Warren, MN
- Metropolitan Area Agency on Aging – Arden Hills, MN
- Minnesota Indian Area Agency on Aging – Cass Lake, MN
- Minnesota River Area Agency on Aging – Mankato, MN
- Southeastern Minnesota AAA – Rochester, MN

5. THE STATE'S LONG-TERM STRATEGY TO IMPROVE SCSEP SERVICES, INCLUDING PLANNED LONG-TERM CHANGES TO THE DESIGN OF THE PROGRAM WITHIN THE STATE, AND PLANNED CHANGES IN THE USE OF SCSEP GRANTEEES AND PROGRAM OPERATORS TO BETTER ACHIEVE THE GOALS OF THE PROGRAM. THIS MAY INCLUDE RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE DEPARTMENT AS APPROPRIATE. (20 CFR 641.302(K))

5. THE STATE'S LONG-TERM STRATEGY TO IMPROVE SCSEP SERVICES, INCLUDING PLANNED LONG-TERM CHANGES TO THE DESIGN OF THE PROGRAM WITHIN THE STATE, AND PLANNED CHANGES IN THE USE OF SCSEP GRANTEEES AND PROGRAM OPERATORS TO BETTER ACHIEVE THE GOALS OF THE PROGRAM. THIS MAY INCLUDE RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE DEPARTMENT AS APPROPRIATE. (20 CFR 641.302(K))

Governor Tim Walz is committed to creating an age-friendly Minnesota and recently established the Governor's Council on an Age-Friendly Minnesota: State of Minnesota Executive Order 19-38

To improve SCSEP services, program coordinators will work closely with members of the Governor's Council on an Age-Friendly Minnesota to refine existing and create new strategies that support the Governor's goals and objectives for older workers. This may include opening the program up to new providers who have a proven track record of providing effective workforce development services to older workers.

6. THE STATE'S STRATEGY FOR CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT IN THE LEVEL OF PERFORMANCE FOR SCSEP PARTICIPANTS' ENTRY INTO UNSUBSIDIZED EMPLOYMENT, AND TO ACHIEVE, AT A MINIMUM, THE LEVELS SPECIFIED IN OAA SECTION 513(A)(2)(E)(II). (20 CFR 641.302(F))

6. THE STATE'S STRATEGY FOR CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT IN THE LEVEL OF PERFORMANCE FOR SCSEP PARTICIPANTS' ENTRY INTO UNSUBSIDIZED EMPLOYMENT, AND TO ACHIEVE, AT A MINIMUM, THE LEVELS SPECIFIED IN OAA SECTION 513(A)(2)(E)(II). (20 CFR 641.302(F))

Minnesota SCSEP has many strategies and a variety of services to increase the likelihood of placement into unsubsidized employment. DEED plans to address performance issues by developing a plan and establishing benchmarks for continuous improvement. Expanding on

section 2 above, the following are possible strategies at the state and local levels to increase the number of participants placed in unsubsidized employment:

- Employer Engagement and Job Opportunities:
  - Promote SCSEP to the business community by developing jobs in high-growth industries with cold calling, emailing, and consultative marketing techniques to identify employer needs and respond with solutions, and highlighting the benefits of older workers
  - Target marketing based on participants' skills and job interests
  - Perform excellent customer service by responding to employers with timely, pre-screened referrals.
- Job Fairs create promising opportunities for local SCSEP providers to meet potential employers and promote SCSEP and the benefits of hiring and retaining older workers.
- Job Clubs assist participants in developing proactive job search strategies including employer targeting, networking, cold calling, resume writing, practice interviewing, voicemail etiquette, and active listening. Job clubs promote peer-to-peer support, collaborative job search practices, and encourages members to access the resources available through the local workforce system.
- Job Search Cooperatives meet on a regular basis to encourage cold calling. Members form a team and conduct marketing campaigns for fellow members. In the process of marketing other members, they improve their own job search skills.
- On the Job Experience (OJE) contracts detail the specific skills required to bridge the gap between employers' expectations and participants' skills. This approach tends to be more commonly used with small businesses. It's a very effective first step in developing relationships with employers through consultative marketing techniques.
- Statewide Strategies – DEED will:
  - Develop and implement surveys to providers and participants to capture feedback on the job development and placement process and experience. The surveys will specifically seek input on best practices for job readiness for in-demand jobs with high retention potential.
  - Increase the frequency of conference calls and in-person meetings with the statewide providers from semi-annually to quarterly.
  - Host biannual roundtables to create an opportunity for providers to come together and discuss common participant barriers and ways to mitigate or overcome them
  - Increase awareness of SCSEP at the state and national level, and collaborate with providers to increase awareness at the local level. SCSEP isn't widely known among workforce development professionals, community service organizations, and eligible populations. Although SCSEP was recently added to the CareerForce website (CareerForceMN.com), which will increase its visibility, DEED will identify other partnerships with local senior centers and gerontology centers and experts to promote the program and develop unique strategies to communicate the benefits of hiring older workers.

After the program becomes more visible and more employers experience the benefits of hiring older workers, it's anticipated that the job placement target will be met or exceeded.

C. LOCATION AND POPULATION SERVED, INCLUDING EQUITABLE DISTRIBUTION

1. A DESCRIPTION OF THE LOCALITIES AND POPULATIONS FOR WHICH PROJECTS OF THE TYPE AUTHORIZED BY TITLE V ARE MOST NEEDED. (20 CFR 641.325 (D))

C. LOCATION AND POPULATION SERVED, INCLUDING EQUITABLE DISTRIBUTION

States must:

1. DESCRIBE THE LOCALITIES AND POPULATIONS FOR WHICH PROJECTS OF THE TYPE AUTHORIZED BY TITLE V ARE MOST NEEDED. (20 CFR 641.325 (D))

Using current LMI data on the unemployment rates for Minnesota, we're able to identify the SCSEP counties with unemployment rates above the state average. As of October 2019, these counties included: Koochiching at 5.8 percent, Clearwater at 4.8 percent, Itasca at 4 percent, Aitkin at 3.9 percent, Red Lake, Pine, Hubbard at 3.5 percent, Wadena and Cass at 3.4 percent, and Mille Lacs, Lake of the Woods, Kanabec, and Carlton at 3.3 percent.

DEED will work with SCSEP providers in these areas to strengthen strategies to increase employment opportunities. Current objectives and strategies include:

- Utilize the equitable distribution report provided on [www.SCSEPed.org](http://www.SCSEPed.org) to monitor and track equitable distribution.
- Recruit host agencies in underserved counties.
- Conduct outreach to participants who have the greatest barriers to employment in underserved areas.
- Enroll more participants in underserved areas and close enrollments in over-served areas.
- Increase specialized training and job development activities in underserved areas.
- Discuss the potential to move state program participants located in over-served areas to the national program.
- Advertise within local community papers, utilizing TV PSA's, providing flyers, pamphlets, and other marketing tools that will aid in educating city/county government agencies.
- Strengthen partnerships with agencies, employers, city/county officials, and community organizations that focus on community improvement and employment for older workers.

With many seniors postponing retirement and seeking new work opportunities, it is critical to partner with all possible workforce participants to increase accessible and suitable positions.

MN County	Labor Force	Employment	Unemployment	Unemployment Rate
<b>Aitkin County</b>	7,333	7,048	285	3.90%

MN County	Labor Force	Employment	Unemployment	Unemployment Rate
<b>Anoka County</b>	199,663	194,587	5,076	2.50%
<b>Becker County</b>	19,063	18,610	453	2.40%
<b>Beltrami County</b>	24,993	24,241	752	3%
<b>Benton County</b>	22,383	21,785	598	2.70%
<b>Big Stone County</b>	2,588	2,537	51	2%
<b>Blue Earth County</b>	42,679	41,791	888	2.10%
<b>Brown County</b>	14,998	14,639	359	2.40%
<b>Carlton County</b>	18,041	17,443	598	3.30%
<b>Carver County</b>	59,064	57,641	1,423	2.40%
<b>Cass County</b>	14,683	14,177	506	3.40%
<b>Chippewa County</b>	7,212	7,010	202	2.80%
<b>Chisago County</b>	30,046	29,258	788	2.60%
<b>Clay County</b>	36,871	36,129	742	2%
<b>Clearwater County</b>	4,526	4,310	216	4.80%
<b>Cook County</b>	3,129	3,044	85	2.70%
<b>Cottonwood County</b>	6,122	5,950	172	2.80%
<b>Crow Wing County</b>	32,941	32,007	934	2.80%
<b>Dakota County</b>	243,913	237,903	6,010	2.50%
<b>Dodge County</b>	12,251	11,966	285	2.30%
<b>Douglas County</b>	21,031	20,574	457	2.20%
<b>Faribault County</b>	7,360	7,153	207	2.80%
<b>Fillmore County</b>	12,029	11,772	257	2.10%
<b>Freeborn County</b>	16,413	15,995	418	2.50%
<b>Goodhue County</b>	27,585	26,992	593	2.10%
<b>Grant County</b>	3,438	3,337	101	2.90%
<b>Hennepin County</b>	715,962	697,915	18,047	2.50%
<b>Houston County</b>	10,881	10,651	230	2.10%
<b>Hubbard County</b>	10,074	9,725	349	3.50%
<b>Isanti County</b>	21,362	20,755	607	2.80%
<b>Itasca County</b>	22,261	21,367	894	4%

MN County	Labor Force	Employment	Unemployment	Unemployment Rate
<b>Jackson County</b>	5,885	5,766	119	2%
<b>Kanabec County</b>	9,013	8,717	296	3.30%
<b>Kandiyohi County</b>	25,728	25,192	536	2.10%
<b>Kittson County</b>	2,471	2,409	62	2.50%
<b>Koochiching County</b>	6,054	5,700	354	5.80%
<b>Lac qui Parle County</b>	3,681	3,593	88	2.40%
<b>Lake County</b>	5,552	5,402	150	2.70%
<b>Lake of the Woods County</b>	2,439	2,358	81	3.30%
<b>Le Sueur County</b>	16,136	15,720	416	2.60%
<b>Lincoln County</b>	3,471	3,395	76	2.20%
<b>Lyon County</b>	15,346	15,033	313	2%
<b>Mahnomen County</b>	2,360	2,284	76	3.20%
<b>Marshall County</b>	5,650	5,482	168	3%
<b>Martin County</b>	10,561	10,283	278	2.60%
<b>McLeod County</b>	19,612	19,109	503	2.60%
<b>Meeker County</b>	13,444	13,124	320	2.40%
<b>Mille Lacs County</b>	12,871	12,443	428	3.30%
<b>Morrison County</b>	18,079	17,534	545	3%
<b>Mower County</b>	20,831	20,339	492	2.40%
<b>Murray County</b>	5,143	5,028	115	2.20%
<b>Nicollet County</b>	22,052	21,647	405	1.80%
<b>Nobles County</b>	11,807	11,474	333	2.80%
<b>Norman County</b>	3,492	3,411	81	2.30%
<b>Olmsted County</b>	90,135	88,333	1,802	2%
<b>Otter Tail County</b>	32,157	31,327	830	2.60%
<b>Pennington County</b>	9,028	8,789	239	2.60%
<b>Pine County</b>	15,099	14,566	533	3.50%
<b>Pipestone County</b>	5,247	5,146	101	1.90%
<b>Polk County</b>	17,314	16,887	427	2.50%
<b>Pope County</b>	6,793	6,658	135	2%

MN County	Labor Force	Employment	Unemployment	Unemployment Rate
<b>Ramsey County</b>	294,012	286,088	7,924	2.70%
<b>Red Lake County</b>	2,295	2,214	81	3.50%
<b>Redwood County</b>	7,787	7,591	196	2.50%
<b>Renville County</b>	9,753	9,503	250	2.60%
<b>Rice County</b>	37,767	36,946	821	2.20%
<b>Rock County</b>	5,970	5,862	108	1.80%
<b>Roseau County</b>	8,017	7,815	202	2.50%
<b>Saint Louis County</b>	104,251	101,028	3,223	3.10%
<b>Scott County</b>	84,169	82,224	1,945	2.30%
<b>Sherburne County</b>	52,353	51,033	1,320	2.50%
<b>Sibley County</b>	8,827	8,604	223	2.50%
<b>Stearns County</b>	93,123	91,050	2,073	2.20%
<b>Steele County</b>	20,661	20,141	520	2.50%
<b>Stevens County</b>	5,751	5,650	101	1.80%
<b>Swift County</b>	5,269	5,124	145	2.80%
<b>Todd County</b>	14,123	13,760	363	2.60%
<b>Traverse County</b>	1,835	1,796	39	2.10%
<b>Wabasha County</b>	12,822	12,532	290	2.30%
<b>Wadena County</b>	6,001	5,794	207	3.40%
<b>Waseca County</b>	9,123	8,854	269	2.90%
<b>Washington County</b>	144,405	140,968	3,437	2.40%
<b>Watonwan County</b>	6,867	6,671	196	2.90%
<b>Wilkin County</b>	3,801	3,720	81	2.10%
<b>Winona County</b>	29,418	28,756	662	2.30%
<b>Wright County</b>	75,790	73,955	1,835	2.40%
<b>Yellow Medicine County</b>	5,674	5,527	147	2.60%

2. LIST THE CITIES AND COUNTIES WHERE THE PROJECT WILL BE CONDUCTED. INCLUDE THE NUMBER OF SCSEP AUTHORIZED POSITIONS AND INDICATE WHERE THE POSITIONS CHANGED FROM THE PRIOR YEAR.

2. LIST THE CITIES AND COUNTIES WHERE THE SCSEP PROJECT WILL TAKE PLACE. INCLUDE THE NUMBER OF SCSEP AUTHORIZED POSITIONS AND INDICATE IF AND WHERE THE POSITIONS CHANGED FROM THE PRIOR YEAR.

**MN Deed Providers – 94 Total Authorized Positions – 87 Counties Statewide**

Agency / Organization	Location	PY19 Authorized Positions	County(s) Served
Anoka County Job Training Center	Blaine	17 State  No change	Anoka
Arrowhead Economic Opportunity Agency	Virginia	7 State  No change	Itasca, Koochiching, Lake, St. Louis
City Of Duluth Workforce Development	Duluth	11 State  No change	St. Louis
Experience Works, Inc.	--	55 State  No change	Becker, Beltrami, Benton, Big Stone, Carver, Cass, Chippewa, Clay, Clearwater, Crow Wing, Dakota, Douglas, Goodhue, Hennepin, Hubbard, Kandiyohi, Kittson, Lac Qui Parle, Lincoln, Lyon, Marshall, Morrison, Norman, Olmsted, Otter Tail, Pennington, Polk, Pope, Redwood, Renville, Rice, Roseau, Stearns, Swift, Todd, Wabasha, Wadena, Wilkin, Winona, Yellow Medicine.
InterCounty Community Council	Oklee	9 State  No change	Clearwater, Lake of the Woods, Pennington, Polk, Red Lake, Roseau
Minnesota Chippewa Tribe	Cass Lake	5 State  No change	Becker, Carlton, Cass, Cook, Itasca, Koochiching, Mahnommen, Mille Lacs, St. Louis

Agency / Organization	Location	PY19 Authorized Positions	County(s) Served
Minnesota Valley Action Council	Mankato	40 State  No change	Blue Earth, Brown, Faribault, Martin, Nicollet, Watonwan
Rural Minnesota CEP, Inc.	Detroit Lakes	14 State  No change	Becker, Beltrami, Cass, Clay, Clearwater, Crow Wing, Douglas, Grant, Hubbard, Lake of the Woods, Mahnommen, Morrison, Otter Tail, Pope, Stevens, Todd, Traverse, Wadena, Wilkin
Scott County Workforce Center	Shakopee	5 State  No change	Scott
Southwestern Minnesota Opportunity Council	Worthington	25 State  No change	Cottonwood, Jackson, Murray, Nobles, Pipestone, Rock
Washington County Workforce Center	Woodbury	5 State  No change	Washington
<b>National Providers</b>			
Experience Works	--	189 National  No change	Becker, Beltrami, Benton, Big Stone, Carver, Cass, Chippewa, Clay, Clearwater, Crow Wing, Dakota, Douglas, Goodhue, Hennepin, Hubbard, Kandiyohi, Kittson, Lac Qui Parle, Lincoln, Lyon, Marshall, Morrison, Norman, Olmsted, Otter Tail, Pennington, Polk, Pope, Redwood, Renville, Rice, Roseau, Stearns, Swift, Todd, Wabasha, Wadena, Wilkin, Winona, Yellow Medicine.
Senior Service America, Inc. (SSAI) – Anoka County Job Training Center	Blaine	25 National	Anoka

Agency / Organization	Location	PY19 Authorized Positions	County(s) Served
		No change	
Senior Service America, Inc. (SSAI) – Arrowhead Economic Opportunity Agency	Virginia	42 National  No change	Itasca, Koochiching, Lake, St. Louis
Senior Service America, Inc. (SSAI) – City Of Duluth Workforce Development	Duluth	27 National  No change	St. Louis
Senior Service America, Inc. (SSAI) – East Side Neighborhood Service, Inc.	Minneapolis	174 National  No change	Hennepin
Senior Service America, Inc. (SSAI) – Motivation Education & Training	New Caney, TX	286 National  No change	Chisago, Dakota, Dodge, Fillmore, Freeborn, Goodhue, Houston, Isanti, Kanabec, Le Sueur, McLeod, Meeker, Mille Lacs, Mower, Olmsted, Pine, Ramsey, Rice, Sherburne, Sibley, Steele, Wabasha, Waseca, Washington, Winona, Wright.
National Indian Council on Aging	Albuquerque, NM	19 National  No change	Hennepin, Ramsey, and St. Louis

**3. DESCRIBE CURRENT SLOT IMBALANCES AND PROPOSED STEPS TO CORRECT INEQUITIES TO ACHIEVE EQUITABLE DISTRIBUTION.**

**3. DESCRIBE ANY CURRENT SLOT IMBALANCES AND PROPOSED STEPS TO CORRECT INEQUITIES TO ACHIEVE EQUITABLE DISTRIBUTION.**

There are no current slot imbalances. If a SCSEP provider would like to change their number of slots, the State will work with them and the other providers to redistribute the slots as appropriate.

**4. THE STATE'S LONG-TERM STRATEGY FOR ACHIEVING AN EQUITABLE DISTRIBUTION OF SCSEP POSITIONS WITHIN THE STATE THAT:**

**A. MOVES POSITIONS FROM OVER-SERVED TO UNDERSERVED LOCATIONS WITHIN THE STATE IN COMPLIANCE WITH 20 CFR 641.365.**

4. EXPLAIN THE STATE'S LONG-TERM STRATEGY FOR ACHIEVING AN EQUITABLE DISTRIBUTION OF SCSEP POSITIONS WITHIN THE STATE THAT:

A. MOVES POSITIONS FROM OVER-SERVED TO UNDERSERVED LOCATIONS WITHIN THE STATE IN COMPLIANCE WITH 20 CFR 641.365.

The State continues to develop cooperative relationships among SCSEP providers and national sponsors. The State and national sponsors have made every effort to correct any equitable distribution slot imbalances.

Minnesota has strong relationships with the Title V national sponsors operating within the state, which includes Experience Works, SSAI, and NICOA. Regular calls are held to discuss mutual concerns, develop an equitable distribution plan, and take into consideration all factors that may impede the equitable distribution of slots.

Activities are also coordinated with the State Board on Aging, Job Service and WIOA administrators. In all cases, additional slots will be allocated to underserved counties of the State. By the same token, any slot reductions will come from over-served counties.

B. EQUITABLY SERVES RURAL AND URBAN AREAS.

B. EQUITABLY SERVES BOTH RURAL AND URBAN AREAS.

In general, rural areas have higher unemployment rates than other areas and competition for available jobs is more intense. Without up-to-date and in-demand skills, older job seekers are unlikely to find work. Further, trainings and support services cannot be fully provided by host agencies without cost from other community resources.

Minnesota will continue to ensure that rural and urban areas are served equitably by working closely with SCSEP providers, such as Experience Works, who are highly experienced in providing services to rural populations. Also, as previously described, Minnesota will expand training with the small businesses that are the primary private sector employers of SCSEP participants. Over the last decade, small businesses have generated 60 to 80 percent of net new jobs annually. In many areas, small businesses may be the only source of jobs for job seekers.

In addition, transportation is a major problem for many rural participants, particularly for those in rural areas who do not have cars. More support service dollars will expand staff ability to work with community partners to address this problem.

C. SERVES INDIVIDUALS AFFORDED PRIORITY FOR SERVICE UNDER 20 CFR 641.520. (20 CFR 641.302(A), 641.365, 641.520)

C. SERVES INDIVIDUALS AFFORDED PRIORITY FOR SERVICE UNDER 20 CFR 641.520. (20 CFR 641.302(A), 641.365, 641.520)

The State will continue to serve and support priority individuals by customizing promotional and outreach campaigns to them. These groups particularly include those who are 65 or older, have a disability, are limited English proficient or have low literacy skills, reside in a rural area, have veteran status (or in some cases, spouses of veterans), have low employment prospects, have failed to find employment after using services provided through the One-Stop delivery system, and are homeless or are at risk of homelessness.

As previously described, special efforts will be made to impact most-in-need communities to ensure the equitable participation of eligible minorities. Providers will use recruitment strategies that have proven to be effective, such as hire outreach staff to identify and recruit

most-in-need individuals, work closely with WIOA and other community-based programs to increase referrals, and disseminate program information to local and culturally-specific agencies and outlets that serve most-in-need populations.

The State will also continue to provide technical assistance to, collaborate with, and evaluate the efforts of providers who are highly experienced in working with most-in-need populations.

**5. THE RATIO OF ELIGIBLE INDIVIDUALS IN EACH SERVICE AREA TO THE TOTAL ELIGIBLE POPULATION IN THE STATE. (20 CFR 641.325(A))**

**5. PROVIDE THE RATIO OF ELIGIBLE INDIVIDUALS IN EACH SERVICE AREA TO THE TOTAL ELIGIBLE POPULATION IN THE STATE. (20 CFR 641.325(A))**

The total number of Minnesotans 55 years of age and older is anticipated to increase by nearly 500,000 people between the 2018 American Community Survey (ACS) 5-year estimates and the 2040 population projections as supplied from the Minnesota State Demographic Center. As such, the population 55 years of age and older in Minnesota is projected to expand by 32 percent, or 2.5 times faster than total population growth in the state (13%). By 2040, approximately one-third of Minnesotans will be 55 years of age and older. By 2040, approximately one-fifth of Minnesotans will be 65 years of age and older.

According to the 2018 ACS 5-year estimates, 7.3 percent of Minnesotans 60 years of age and older live in poverty. This is equivalent to more than 83,600 people. 10.4 percent of the state’s total female population live in poverty, equivalent to nearly 283,800 people. This was a higher share of the state’s total male population living in poverty, 8.6 percent, which was equivalent to nearly 233,700 people.

Nationally, SCSEP is currently funded at a level to serve only .05 percent of the eligible population yet these trends underscore the importance of the SCSEP, the only federal training program that serves low-income older workers on the State of Minnesota’s workforce menu of programs.

County	Ratio	Population 55+	Total Population
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>28%</b>	<b>1,533,614</b>	<b>5,489,594</b>
<b>Aitkin County, Minnesota</b>	50%	7,946	15,834
<b>Anoka County, Minnesota</b>	27%	92,592	347,431
<b>Becker County, Minnesota</b>	35%	11,835	33,773
<b>Beltrami County, Minnesota</b>	27%	12,681	46,117
<b>Benton County, Minnesota</b>	25%	10,048	39,779
<b>Big Stone County, Minnesota</b>	42%	2,108	5,016
<b>Blue Earth County, Minnesota</b>	24%	16,071	66,322
<b>Brown County, Minnesota</b>	35%	8,868	25,211
<b>Carlton County, Minnesota</b>	31%	11,102	35,540
<b>Carver County, Minnesota</b>	24%	23,821	100,416

County	Ratio	Population 55+	Total Population
<b>Cass County, Minnesota</b>	42%	12,104	29,022
<b>Chippewa County, Minnesota</b>	35%	4,195	12,010
<b>Chisago County, Minnesota</b>	28%	15,536	54,727
<b>Clay County, Minnesota</b>	24%	14,912	62,801
<b>Clearwater County, Minnesota</b>	35%	3,059	8,812
<b>Cook County, Minnesota</b>	46%	2,445	5,311
<b>Cottonwood County, Minnesota</b>	37%	4,157	11,372
<b>Crow Wing County, Minnesota</b>	37%	23,317	63,855
<b>Dakota County, Minnesota</b>	27%	110,840	418,201
<b>Dodge County, Minnesota</b>	27%	5,551	20,582
<b>Douglas County, Minnesota</b>	37%	13,809	37,203
<b>Faribault County, Minnesota</b>	39%	5,374	13,896
<b>Fillmore County, Minnesota</b>	35%	7,325	20,888
<b>Freeborn County, Minnesota</b>	37%	11,202	30,526
<b>Goodhue County, Minnesota</b>	34%	15,653	46,217
<b>Grant County, Minnesota</b>	38%	2,285	5,938
<b>Hennepin County, Minnesota</b>	26%	320,491	1,235,478
<b>Houston County, Minnesota</b>	37%	6,884	18,663
<b>Hubbard County, Minnesota</b>	41%	8,579	20,862
<b>Isanti County, Minnesota</b>	29%	11,291	38,974
<b>Itasca County, Minnesota</b>	39%	17,481	45,203
<b>Jackson County, Minnesota</b>	36%	3,655	10,047
<b>Kanabec County, Minnesota</b>	36%	5,791	16,004
<b>Kandiyohi County, Minnesota</b>	32%	13,829	42,658
<b>Kittson County, Minnesota</b>	40%	1,739	4,337
<b>Koochiching County, Minnesota</b>	41%	5,240	12,644
<b>Lac qui Parle County, Minnesota</b>	44%	2,956	6,773
<b>Lake County, Minnesota</b>	43%	4,558	10,569
<b>Lake of the Woods County, Minnesota</b>	43%	1,620	3,809
<b>Le Sueur County, Minnesota</b>	31%	8,699	27,983

County	Ratio	Population 55+	Total Population
<b>Lincoln County, Minnesota</b>	39%	2,246	5,707
<b>Lyon County, Minnesota</b>	28%	7,143	25,839
<b>McLeod County, Minnesota</b>	31%	11,210	35,825
<b>Mahnomen County, Minnesota</b>	30%	1,663	5,506
<b>Marshall County, Minnesota</b>	36%	3,372	9,392
<b>Martin County, Minnesota</b>	38%	7,677	19,964
<b>Meeker County, Minnesota</b>	34%	7,873	23,079
<b>Mille Lacs County, Minnesota</b>	32%	8,160	25,728
<b>Morrison County, Minnesota</b>	34%	11,062	32,949
<b>Mower County, Minnesota</b>	31%	12,426	39,602
<b>Murray County, Minnesota</b>	41%	3,401	8,353
<b>Nicollet County, Minnesota</b>	28%	9,382	33,783
<b>Nobles County, Minnesota</b>	28%	6,196	21,839
<b>Norman County, Minnesota</b>	36%	2,372	6,559
<b>Olmsted County, Minnesota</b>	28%	42,325	153,065
<b>Otter Tail County, Minnesota</b>	39%	22,783	57,992
<b>Pennington County, Minnesota</b>	31%	4,403	14,184
<b>Pine County, Minnesota</b>	35%	10,295	29,129
<b>Pipestone County, Minnesota</b>	34%	3,137	9,185
<b>Polk County, Minnesota</b>	32%	9,985	31,591
<b>Pope County, Minnesota</b>	39%	4,329	10,980
<b>Ramsey County, Minnesota</b>	26%	140,942	541,493
<b>Red Lake County, Minnesota</b>	35%	1,408	4,008
<b>Redwood County, Minnesota</b>	35%	5,396	15,331
<b>Renville County, Minnesota</b>	36%	5,303	14,721
<b>Rice County, Minnesota</b>	27%	17,954	65,765
<b>Rock County, Minnesota</b>	33%	3,143	9,413
<b>Roseau County, Minnesota</b>	31%	4,799	15,462
<b>St. Louis County, Minnesota</b>	34%	67,035	200,080
<b>Scott County, Minnesota</b>	21%	30,728	143,372

County	Ratio	Population 55+	Total Population
<b>Sherburne County, Minnesota</b>	22%	20,738	93,231
<b>Sibley County, Minnesota</b>	32%	4,789	14,912
<b>Stearns County, Minnesota</b>	26%	41,152	156,819
<b>Steele County, Minnesota</b>	30%	11,006	36,676
<b>Stevens County, Minnesota</b>	29%	2,819	9,784
<b>Swift County, Minnesota</b>	36%	3,417	9,411
<b>Todd County, Minnesota</b>	36%	8,858	24,440
<b>Traverse County, Minnesota</b>	41%	1,360	3,337
<b>Wabasha County, Minnesota</b>	36%	7,715	21,500
<b>Wadena County, Minnesota</b>	35%	4,761	13,646
<b>Waseca County, Minnesota</b>	31%	5,802	18,809
<b>Washington County, Minnesota</b>	28%	69,936	253,317
<b>Watonwan County, Minnesota</b>	34%	3,729	10,973
<b>Wilkin County, Minnesota</b>	35%	2,238	6,343
<b>Winona County, Minnesota</b>	29%	14,719	50,847
<b>Wright County, Minnesota</b>	24%	31,225	132,745
<b>Yellow Medicine County, Minnesota</b>	35%	3,475	9,868

*Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2018 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates*

6. THE RELATIVE DISTRIBUTION OF ELIGIBLE INDIVIDUALS WHO:

A. RESIDE IN URBAN AND RURAL AREAS WITHIN THE STATE

6. PROVIDE THE RELATIVE DISTRIBUTION OF ELIGIBLE INDIVIDUALS WHO:

Provide the relative distribution of eligible individuals who:

A. RESIDE IN URBAN AND RURAL AREAS WITHIN THE STATE

The overall current distribution of urban and rural older workers is 65% and 35%, respectively. More detailed information is forthcoming.

B. HAVE THE GREATEST ECONOMIC NEED

B. HAVE THE GREATEST ECONOMIC NEED

According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Minnesota's overall poverty rate averaged about 3.2 percent in 2019. As discussed in section (c)(1) earlier, the SCSEP counties with unemployment rates above the state average included: Koochiching at 5.8 percent, Clearwater at 4.8 percent, Itasca at 4 percent, Aitkin at 3.9 percent, Red Lake, Pine, Hubbard at 3.5 percent, Wadena and Cass at 3.4 percent, and Mille Lacs, Lake of the Woods, Kanabec, and Carlton at 3.3 percent (Table 5).

Table 9 lists the state counties with unemployment rates above average and their ratio of eligibility to the total population. Every county with a high unemployment rate also has a potentially SCSEP-eligible population (based on the age criterion of 55+) of at least 31%. Cass, Hubbard, Koochiching, and Lake of the Woods have SCSEP-eligible populations of at least 40%; and 50% of Aitkin’s total population is potentially eligible.

Section (c)(1) above provides a list of strategies that DEED will work collaboratively with its national and state providers to implement to increase employment opportunities in these counties.

**Table 9: SCSEP-Eligible Minnesota Counties with High Unemployment Rates**

MN County	Unemployment Rate	Ratio of Eligible Individuals (55 years +)
Aitkin County	3.90%	50%
Carlton County	3.30%	31%
Cass County	3.40%	42%
Clearwater County	4.80%	35%
Hubbard County	3.50%	41%
Itasca County	4%	39%
Kanabec County	3.30%	36%
Koochiching County	5.80%	41%
Lake of the Woods County	3.30%	43%
Mille Lacs County	3.30%	32%
Pine County	3.50%	35%
Red Lake County	3.50%	35%
Wadena County	3.40%	35%

**C. ARE MINORITIES**

**C. ARE MINORITIES**

The relative distribution of PY19 Minnesota SCSEP participants who are minorities is provided in Table 10 below.

**Table 10: Relative Distribution of PY19 MN SCSEP Participants Who Are Minorities**

	GROUP	YTD No.	YTD %
<b>Ethnicity</b>	Hispanic, Latino or Spanish origin	1	0
<b>Race</b>	American Indian or Alaska Native	7	3
	Asian	1	0
	Black or African American	24	12

	GROUP	YTD No.	YTD %
	Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	0	0
	White	168	82
	Two or More Races	5	2
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>206</b>	

To provide context, the breakdown of Minnesota’s 55 and older population by minority group is provided in Table 11. This data was extracted from the latest ACS five-year estimates (2014 - 2018 estimates). The data was extracted from IPUMS.org for Minnesota.

**Table 11: Minnesota’s 55 and Older Population by Minority Group**

	White alone, not Hispanic	Black alone, not Hispanic	Asian and Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander alone, not Hispanic	American Indian or Alaska Native alone, not Hispanic	Two or More Races	Hispanic or Latino, all races
55 to 64 years	91.9%	3.3%	2.5%	0.9%	0.8%	2.0%
65 to 74 years	93.8%	2.6%	2.0%	0.7%	0.7%	1.2%
75 years & over	96.2%	1.3%	1.4%	0.3%	0.5%	0.9%

**D. ARE LIMITED ENGLISH PROFICIENT**

**D. ARE LIMITED ENGLISH PROFICIENT**

See Table 13 for the relative distribution of PY19 MN SCSEP participants who are limited English Proficient (LEP).

The breakdown of Minnesota’s population who are LEP is provided in Table 12. The English proficiency is defined as those who either speak only English or speak “very well”. Any proficiency below “very well” is considered “limited”.

**Table 12: Minnesota’s 55 and Older Population by LEP Status**

	English Proficient	Limited
55 to 64 years	3.4%	96.6%
65 to 74 years	3.0%	97.0%
75 years & over	2.7%	97.3%

E. HAVE THE GREATEST SOCIAL NEED. (20 CFR 641.325(B))

E. HAVE THE GREATEST SOCIAL NEED. (20 CFR 641.325(B))

The term “greatest social need” is defined by the OAA to mean the need caused by noneconomic factors, which include—(A) Physical and mental disabilities; (B) Language barriers; (C) Cultural, social, or geographical isolation, including isolation caused by racial or ethnic status, that— (i) restricts the ability of an individual to perform normal daily tasks; or (ii) threatens the capacity of the individual to live independently.

**Table 13: Relative Distribution of PY19 MN SCSEP Participants With The Greatest Social Need**

GROUP	YTD No.	YTD %
Family income at or below the poverty level	173	84
Individuals with disabilities	71	34
Individuals with limited English proficiency	10	5
Individuals with low literacy skills	16	8
Individuals residing in rural areas	105	51
Individuals with low employment prospects	186	90
Individuals who failed to find employment after using WIA Title I	14	7
Individuals age 75 and over at date of report	16	8
Individuals who are homeless or at risk of homelessness	87	42
Displaced homemakers	11	5
Veterans (or eligible spouse of veteran)	34	17
Post-9/11 era veterans	0	0
Individuals receiving public assistance	136	66
Individuals with severe disability	2	1
Individuals who are frail	2	1
Individuals old enough for but not receiving SS Title II	1	0
Individuals with severely limited employment prospects in areas of persistent unemployment	7	3
<b>TOTAL</b>	871	

7. A DESCRIPTION OF THE STEPS TAKEN TO AVOID DISRUPTIONS TO THE GREATEST EXTENT POSSIBLE, WHEN POSITIONS ARE REDISTRIBUTED, AS PROVIDED IN 20 CFR 641.365; WHEN NEW CENSUS OR OTHER RELIABLE DATA BECOME AVAILABLE; OR WHEN THERE IS OVER-ENROLLMENT FOR ANY OTHER REASON. (20 CFR 641.325(I), 641.302(B))

A. DESCRIBE THE STEPS TAKEN TO AVOID DISRUPTIONS TO SERVICE FOR PARTICIPANTS TO THE GREATEST EXTENT POSSIBLE, WHEN POSITIONS ARE REDISTRIBUTED, AS PROVIDED IN 20 CFR 641.365; WHEN NEW CENSUS OR OTHER RELIABLE DATA BECOMES AVAILABLE; OR WHEN THERE IS OVER- ENROLLMENT FOR ANY OTHER REASON. (20 CFR 641.325(I), 641.302(B))

The national grants competition and performance standards create possibilities for authorized positions/slots to be redistributed. If slots are redistributed, every effort will be made to ensure a seamless transition to the new SCSEP provider. The transition of enrolled participants to unsubsidized employment will occur before their slot is moved to the new location, or participants will continue to work with their current SCSEP program until they're exited. As described in a previous section, slots will be reduced and recruitment activities will end in overenrolled areas, and increased in under-enrolled areas, which should also help mitigate disruption to individuals.

### PERFORMANCE INDICATOR APPENDIX

#### ALL WIOA CORE PROGRAMS

The Departments determined that the Effectiveness in Serving Employers indicator will be measured as a shared outcome across all six core programs within each state to ensure a holistic approach to serving employers. The Departments will continue piloting approaches for measuring this indicator for the first two years of PY 2020-2023 plans. Therefore, states are not required to submit an expected level of performance for the Effectiveness in Serving Employers indicator for PY 2020 and PY 2021. However, core programs are expected to collect data and report on this indicator for PY 2020 and PY 2021 as they did for PYs 2016-2019 plans.

Performance Indicators	PY 2020 Expected Level	PY 2020 Negotiated Level	PY 2021 Expected Level	PY 2021 Negotiated Level
Effectiveness in Serving Employers	Not Applicable <sup>1</sup>	Not Applicable <sup>1</sup>	Not Applicable <sup>1</sup>	Not Applicable <sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> "Effectiveness in Serving Employers" is still being piloted and this data will not be entered for 2020 State Plans.

#### ADDITIONAL INDICATORS OF PERFORMANCE

States may identify additional indicators in the plan, including additional approaches to measuring Effectiveness in Serving Employers, and may establish levels of performance for each of the state indicators. Please identify any such state indicators under Additional Indicators of Performance.

Additional Indicators of Performance

## OTHER APPENDICES