A Plan for Joint Action

Workforce Development for Minnesota

Version Date: March 2011
Workforce Development in Minnesota:
A Plan for Joint Action

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Table of Contents
Mission, Challenge, Response 1
A Plan for Joint Action 4
   Education and Training 4
   Focused Populations 5
   Employer Involvement 6
   Integration of Services 8
   Action Plan Oversight 10
Appendix A. Alliance Participants 11

Prepared for
Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development
&
Minnesota Workforce Council Association

Process facilitated by

SERTICH
CONSULTING
The Mission
The Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED) and the Minnesota Workforce Council Association (MWCA) charged a group of leaders and partners within the system to “create an actionable strategic plan to direct its work” and “to make appropriate recommendations to the legislature for action that will improve services to Minnesota workers.”

The Challenge
The context for this undertaking was clearly stated by DEED and MWCA in the project’s scope of work:

- The recession has brought out the strongest and weakest links in the workforce development system.
- Significant increases in customers have caused the system to re-think which services should be prioritized and how services should be delivered.
- How are new or additional resources secured to continue to address the increased demand from customers?
- In light of recent economic conditions, are there any changes that should be made to previous agreements to deliver services?
- Clarify the roles played by state and local elected officials in the delivery of Workforce Investment Act services.
- Given the importance of the private sector leadership in the workforce development system, what can be done to support, retain, and attract private sector workforce board members?

The group was specifically charged to focus on three main areas:

- Customer Service.
- Role of the State and Local partners.
- Fiscal issues.

The Response
A group of 45 people representing the spectrum of workforce development interests met over a period of six months to craft a cooperative process resulting in a limited number of focused actions that are strategic in outlook yet tactical in their responsiveness to the need for action. Those actions are presented in this paper.

This “plan of joint action” is a work-in-progress whose key attribute will be flexible adaptability of action with a sense of urgency. DEED and MWCA will undertake coordinated monitoring to foster timely and effective implementation of the proposed actions.
Our Alliance

As partners we agree to observe these guiding principles for our work together and norms for how we will interact.

   a. Vocalize discontent within the group.
   b. Go after the idea, not the person.
   c. Agree to disagree.

2. Create Actionable and Practicable Deliverables.
   a. Develop forward-thinking policy that will serve the customer of the future.
   b. Target flexibility and long-term stability (resilience).
   c. Identify and utilize measures of success (quantitative and qualitative).

3. How We’ll Approach Our Work.
   a. Focus on the big picture “30,000 foot view.” Don’t be too prescriptive.
   b. Promote a mentality of “we” rather than “us vs. them.”
   c. Keep the national and global context in mind. Think global, act regional.
   d. Recognize regional cultures.
   e. Enable the co-creation of solutions from all possibilities.
   f. Avoid the oppression of the majority.

   a. Start our work first from “topics of agreement.”
   b. Then, invest more attention to topics with less than 90% agreement.
   c. A process for achieving agreement will be dependent upon the significance of the topic decision.

5. Expectations for Meetings.
   a. Meetings will be scheduled from 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. and held in St. Cloud.
   b. A consistent meeting day of the week is preferable.
   c. Facilitators will contact group by email between gatherings. Other online communication tools may be used if revisited by the group.
   d. Meeting notes are public.
   e. Meetings will be scheduled in adequate space.
   f. Participants will prepare for each meeting and be ready to present results to their constituents.
   g. Delegates/substitutes are rarely permitted and must be provided an orientation prior to attending a meeting.
   h. Contact information will be made available to all group members.
   i. Additional partners can be added who can add value in the system.
   j. Co-facilitators may use reasonable judgment in accelerating discussion to adhere to timelines.
The group conducted six meetings as shown below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Desired Outcomes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>October 6, 2010</td>
<td>Form alliance and build trust within the group.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November 17, 2010</td>
<td>Present survey data to the group.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Set a direction for group work.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Identify and assign working groups.</td>
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<tr>
<td>December 22, 2010</td>
<td>Address roadblocks and concerns.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Leverage existing workforce development initiatives.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Encourage creative thinking outside of existing structures and silos.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Generate action ideas for each of the four Areas of Focus.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January 12, 2011</td>
<td>Crosswalk existing work and new ideas into Action Items.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Agree to standardized format for work plan.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Create anticipation for presentation of Action Items.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 16, 2011</td>
<td>Hear recommended Action Items from each Working Group.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Incorporate comments from the larger group into final recommendations to be</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>included in the Working Paper.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Key statements from this session include:

- This effort is evidence of strong local/state cooperation in planning and delivery of services, which reflects the value of working from common ground on a common cause.
- Must always bear in mind that our customers are businesses and workers. We must be nimble, quick and working at the speed of business while ensuring that none of the worker populations are inadvertently left out.
- Enhanced technology-based delivery is critical to more effective and efficient provision of services but it must be balanced with awareness that delivery via technology does not work for a significant number of workers.
- Applying a single assessment/credentialing tool is critical even if it is not 100% perfect for all applications.
- Consider use of off-site locations (e.g., local businesses) as points for delivery of certain services, especially training, as means to strengthen connection to business partners and to localize delivery points in large service areas.
- Need to strengthen involvement of local businesses in need identification and service delivery. This should be a continuous loop of assessment, plan, and implementation.
- Remember this action plan is a work-in-progress that is to be implemented and revised continuously.
A Plan for Joint Action

Minnesota Workforce Development: A Plan for Joint Action

Education and Training

Action:
MWCA, DEED, and Adult Basic Education (ABE) all adopt single standardized, accessible Basic Skills Assessment/Work Credentialing Tool.

Desired Outcome:
- The WorkForce development system recognizes the advantages of one universal assessment / credentialing tool.
- WorkForce Centers, ABE, secondary and postsecondary system speak a common language.
- Individuals are helped to identify areas of need for remediation or job skill acquisition.
- The tool can be administered at all ages/stages of life from high school to dislocated worker.

Implementation Steps:
1. DEED, MWCA, and ABE adopt the credentialing tool in coordination with MnSCA.
2. Identify remediation providers in all areas of the state in all areas of the test.
3. Partner with employers who will recognize this credential statewide.
4. Employment counselors will use a supportive approach – rather than a screening approach – to help people grow and identify opportunities.
5. Identify credential tool in Local Workforce Service Area plans.
6. Meet with statewide High School Counselor Association after resolution between DEED/MWCA/ABE is adopted.

Person / Group Responsible:
DEED/ MWA/ABE agree to meet and confirm standardized credential tool and confirm.
- Discuss at February “Gang of 8”’ meeting
- Discuss ABE buy-in at the February MWCA Operations Meeting

Time Line:
- February 17, 2011: Gang of 8 meeting.
- February 24, 2011: MWCA Operations meeting.
- Ongoing after March 16, 2011

1 The “Gang of 8” is composed of representatives of local Workforce Service Area Directors (WSA) that meet monthly to resolve issues between the state and local one-stop service delivery system.
Focused Populations

Action:
Develop a triage assessment and tool kit for the Universal Customer.

Desired Outcome:
- Turn “Universal Customers” into “Focused Populations” through the early use of triage and assessment tools that help customers create their own path to re-employment.
- Resource Room customers know how to use the self-service tools in their Resource Room because they have received training or direction from professional staff in the WFC first.
- As a result, Resource Rooms are used more effectively and efficiently by customers.
- As a result, professional staff can invest more of their time assisting customers with substantive matters related to their work search rather than monitoring the Resource Room.
- Professional staff in the WFC will have greater opportunity leverage their knowledge and skills in group training sessions thereby having a broader impact than is possible in one-on-one sessions in the Resource Room.
- Get more people employed more quickly.

Implementation Steps:
1. Establish a work group to outline the Universal Customers’ Path to Reemployment. The path should rely on a combination of self-service tools and assessments along with group sessions facilitated by WFC professionals.
2. Establish a standard set of self-service tools and group sessions that provide for career assessment and career exploration.
3. Create separate versions of the Path to Reemployment along with strategies for implementation based on three types of Workforce Centers statewide with separate strategies:
   a. Large Urban.
   b. Suburban and Outstate Large Metro (e.g., Duluth).
   c. Small Town.
4. Establish standards for the tools and services chosen.
   a. Establish credentialing for staff who work with this customer group

Person / Group Responsible:
- “Gang of Eight” for selecting and oversight group.
- Oversight group to select and empower the workgroup
- Workgroup members for developing the tools and processes.
- Oversight group for approving the new tools and processes.

Time Line:
December 2011
Employer Involvement

Action #1:
Conduct a needs assessment with employer partners.

Desired Outcome:
- Determine employer priorities to direct WorkForce Center services.
- Gain insight into system benefits by communicating with employers who habitually use the WorkForce Center System as a resource for talent.

Implementation Steps:
1. Conduct focus groups on specific ideas. Local and State Workforce Investment Board (WIB) members invite peers.
2. Connect with opportunities offered by other groups (e.g., Chamber of Commerce, industry groups).
3. Track the number of new employers using the WorkForce system.
4. Convene a newly formed Employer Advisory Committee (delegates from local WIBs and State WIB); involvement must be beneficial to all parties.

Person / Group Responsible:
WIBS / Business Services (DEED).
State Workforce Investment Board.
Minnesota Workforce Council Association.

Time Line:
December 2011
### Employer Involvement

**Action #2:**
Maximize communication with employers and improve outreach / marketing to inform businesses of the function and benefit of the WorkForce System.

**Desired Outcome:**
- 50% of hiring employers post job openings on Minnesotaworks.net.
- Each workforce has a list of employers to teach classes, inform students, attend job fairs, etc.
- Increased employer retention as key partners in the WorkForce Center System.
- Reduced costs to employer community (e.g., reduce unemployment insurance, etc.).
- Workforce Centers are utilized to a greater extent as a resource for employers to find highly qualified workers.

**Implementation Steps:**
1. Feature a “Business of the Day”.
2. Use labor market information as a “hook” for employers as this is something they are interested in.
3. Use proactive messaging about services based on current economic / business concerns.
4. Encourage succession planning for WIB board members to get a larger number of business representatives involved with the WorkForce Center System.
5. Conduct seminars of interest to employers to bring them into the WorkForce Centers and use this a mean to develop relationships with business leaders.
6. Create more incumbent worker training opportunities.

**Person / Group Responsible:**
- WIBs / Business Services (DEED).
- Minnesota Workforce Council Association.
- State Workforce Investment Board.

**Time Line:**
Reassess at June, September, and December 2011.
# Integration of Services

**Action #1:**

Update the Minnesota-One-Stop system charter to streamline services to meet current realities.

**Desired Outcome:**

- A service delivery model with an increased focus on services rather than program and offers a mix of onsite and virtual services

**Implementation Steps:**

Form a state-local working group to:

- Identify services needed to address/update in order to meet current realities,
- Identify optimum provision mechanism for identified services, and
- Continue development of state-local working relationships around these issues.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Person / Group Responsible:</th>
<th>Time Line:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>State/Local Working Group</td>
<td>July 2011</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Anne Olson will identify local &amp; Bonnie Elsey will identify state working group members)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Integration of Services

Action #2:

Create a Virtual Workforce Center.

Desired Outcome:

- WorkForce Center customers can access the same electronic services remotely as they can currently access in resource rooms.
- The right services delivered in the best possible way.
- Achieve a balance of technology and in-person service delivery.

Implementation Steps:

1. Identify user requirements.
2. Study existing systems.
3. Secure necessary funding/resources for virtual workforce center design and production to the Web.

Person / Group Responsible: Integration of services working group

Time Line: December 2011
## Action Plan Oversight

**Action:**

Oversee follow through on implementation of Joint Action Plan.

**Desired Outcome:**

Timely and effective implementation of actions.

**Implementation Steps:**

- Conduct periodic inquiries as to status of action steps.
- Conduct year-end review and assessment.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Person / Group Responsible</th>
<th>Time Line</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lead: “Gang of 8”.</td>
<td>Initial oversight review: December 2011.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other participants as willing to volunteer.</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
## Appendix A. Alliance Participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Organization</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Erik Aamoth</td>
<td>DEED</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ron Antony</td>
<td>Yellow Medicine County</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lynne Batzli</td>
<td>DEED</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Larry Blackstad</td>
<td>Hennepin/Carver WIB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Patricia Brady</td>
<td>Ramsey County Workforce Solutions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rick Caligiuri</td>
<td>DEED</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kathy Carney</td>
<td>DEED</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barb Chaffee</td>
<td>Central Minnesota Jobs &amp; Training Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Robert Crawford</td>
<td>Washington County Workforce Center</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corey Donat</td>
<td>Stearns-Benton Employment &amp; Training Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bonnie Elsey</td>
<td>DEED</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jim Finley</td>
<td>DEED</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mary Jo Gardner</td>
<td>Ramsey County WIB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ray Garmaker</td>
<td>Northeast Minnesota Office of Job Training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Connie Giles</td>
<td>DEED</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Keith Goodwin</td>
<td>DEED</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amanda Grzadzielewski</td>
<td>Northwest Private Industry Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diane Halvorson</td>
<td>South Central Workforce Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mike Haney</td>
<td>Winona County Workforce Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jim Hegman</td>
<td>DEED</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don Hoag</td>
<td>Duluth Workforce Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doug Hubbard</td>
<td>Ramsey County WIB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Terry Janes</td>
<td>Rural Minnesota CEP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Randy Johnson</td>
<td>Workforce Development, Inc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leif Larson</td>
<td>Minneapolis Workforce Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Juanita Lauritsen</td>
<td>Southwest Minnesota Private Industry Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bryan Lindsley</td>
<td>Governor’s Workforce Development Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chris McVey</td>
<td>DEED</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paul A. Moe</td>
<td>DEED</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Michael Murphy</td>
<td>Minnesota State Colleges and Universities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burke Murphy</td>
<td>DEED</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mark Netzinger</td>
<td>Central Minnesota WIB</td>
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<tr>
<td>Michael Newman</td>
<td>DEED</td>
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<tr>
<td>David Niemann</td>
<td>DEED</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anne Olson</td>
<td>Minnesota Workforce Council Association</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kim Peck</td>
<td>DEED</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Angela Plumbo</td>
<td>Washington County Workforce Center</td>
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<tr>
<td>Barry Shaffer</td>
<td>Minnesota Department of Education</td>
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<tr>
<td>Richard Strong</td>
<td>DEED</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kathy Sweeney</td>
<td>DEED</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jerry Vitzhum</td>
<td>Anoka County Job Training Center</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cathy Weik</td>
<td>Dakota-Scott County WIB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dan Wenner</td>
<td>Rural Minnesota CEP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jim Wrobley</td>
<td>DEED</td>
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