



Regional and Local Plans

Minnesota's Workforce Development System Under WIOA

Program Years 2016 – 2017
Updated for Program Years 2018-2019

Submitted by

RWDA: WIOA REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT AREA 5
SOUTH CENTRAL/SOUTHWEST

LWDA:

SOUTH CENTRAL WORKFORCE COUNCIL
&
SOUTHWEST MINNESOTA WORKFORCE
DEVELOPMENT BOARD

Department of Employment and Economic Development

1st National Bank Building | 332 Minnesota Street | Suite E200 | Saint Paul, MN 55101-1351

Phone: 651-259-7544 | 800-657-3858 | Fax: 651-215-3842 | TTY/TDD: 651-296-3900

888-GET JOBS (888-438-5627) | mn.gov/deed

An Equal Opportunity Employer and Service Provider

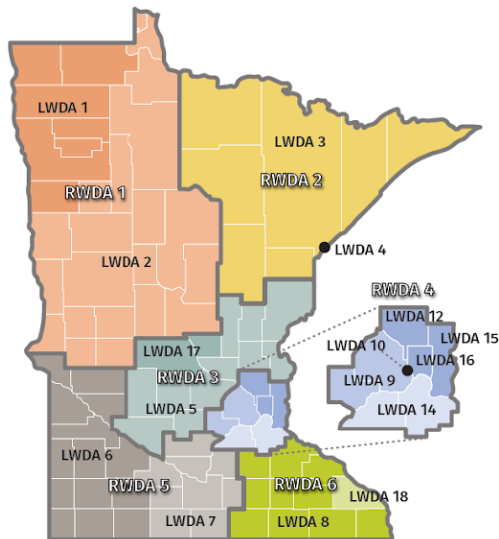
INTRODUCTION

The purposes of the WIOA are the following:

- (1) To increase, for individuals in the United States, particularly those individuals with barriers to employment, access to and opportunities for the employment, education, training and support services they need to succeed in the labor market.
- (2) To support the alignment of workforce investment, education and economic development systems in support of a comprehensive, accessible and high-quality workforce development system in the United States.
- (3) To improve the quality and labor market relevance of workforce investment, education and economic development efforts to provide America's workers with the skills and credentials necessary to secure and advance in employment with family-sustaining wages and to provide America's employers with the skilled workers the employers need to succeed in a global economy.
- (4) To promote improvement in the structure of and delivery of services through the United States workforce development system to better address the employment and skill needs of workers, jobseekers and employers.
- (5) To increase the prosperity of workers and employers in the United States, the economic growth of communities, regions and states and the global competitiveness of the United States.
- (6) For purposes of subtitle A and B of title I, to provide workforce investment activities, through statewide and local workforce development systems, that increase the employment, retention and earnings of participants, and increase attainment of recognized post-secondary credentials by participants, and as a result, improve the quality of the workforce, reduce welfare dependency, increase economic self-sufficiency, meet the skill requirements of employers and enhance the productivity and competitiveness of the Nation.

Workforce Development Areas

Minnesota has designated six Regional Workforce Development Areas (RWDAs) in the state that represent a combination of Local Areas, as defined in WIOA, and Economic Development Regions, as defined in other federal law. These Workforce Development Areas have been approved and adopted by the Governor and the chief local elected officials of the Local Areas.



Each Regional Workforce Development Area is responsible for submitting a Regional Plan, inclusive of the Local Plans of the Local Workforce Development Areas. The Regional and Local Plans will align with the strategic vision set by the Governor, address the regional needs of the workforce and business communities and comply with the planning requirements as determined by the State of Minnesota's Department of Employment and Economic Development and the U.S. Department of Labor and applicable federal and state statutes.

Minnesota's Vision for the Workforce Development System

Vision Statement:

A healthy economy, where all Minnesotans have or are on a path to meaningful employment and a family sustaining wage, and all employers are able to fill jobs in demand.

This vision statement was developed through Minnesota's participation in the National Governor's Association's Policy Academy on Career Pathway Models. Minnesota's effort engaged seven state agencies and has influenced workforce development thinking at the system level. It is fitting to continue to move forward with pursuing the implementation of WIOA under this inclusive effort.

Mission:

The creation of 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.

Rationale:

The economic conditions of the 21st century require a more responsive approach to meeting the needs of business and industry; and the growing diversity of the workforce population. As economies become more global, competition will continue to increase and pressures on the inputs of production, specifically the timing, availability and skill base of the workforce. Rediscovering the value proposition of the Workforce Development System is critical to responding to the 21st century economy.

A Career Pathway System approach will position the needs of a skilled workforce at the center of the system, recognizing the important role of a "dual customer" approach – businesses and

workers. Businesses will lead sector strategies that address the most critical growth needs in occupations that support family sustaining wages. The diverse needs of workers will impact the design and delivery of employment and training programs and services to fulfill these employment needs and their career goals.



SECTION A: REGIONAL PLAN

REGIONAL LEADERSHIP APPROACH

The regional leadership approach describes how the local area boards within each regional workforce development area will define and coordinate the strategic priorities established by the Governor under WIOA.

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

The selection process for the Regional Workforce Development Area #5 (RWDA #5) leadership team was discussed and approved by both the South Central Workforce Council and the Southwest Workforce Council. The RWDA #5 leadership team is comprised of eight (8) members including the Chair and Vice-Chair of each of the Local Elected Official Boards and the Chair and Vice-Chair of each of the Local Workforce Council's. The Board will be staffed by the Executive Director of each Board.

The Chair of the two Workforce Councils will serve as co-chairs.

The make-up of the Board provides a strong mix of private sector and elected officials. Membership represents healthcare, manufacturing, agriculture services, as well as the local elected official's perspectives.

June 2015 - The South Central & Southwest Minnesota Local Elected Official Boards and the Workforce Councils identified and signed the resolution outlining the regional approach and identification of membership.

April 2016 – The Regional Leadership Team was established and an operational agreement was put in place.

January 2017 - The Memorandum of Understanding between the South Central & Southwest Minnesota LWDB's was finalized.

March 2017 (on-going) – The Regional Leadership Team will continue to review the membership structure and identify opportunities to engage diverse populations in future strategic planning. The team will continue to identify on-going opportunities for expanded individual and partnership engagement and coordination.

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

Two regional planning meetings were held in RWDA #5 in Fall 2015. The purpose of the meetings was to gain input from business and major stakeholders throughout the 23-county region. The information/feedback gained from the planning sessions will be used to develop the regional plan and identified the strategic goals and strategies.

The leadership team met on April 13, 2016 to finalize the operational/governance structure of the committee. The leadership team will meet – at a minimum – two times per year.

The local representatives are charged with communicating back to each local elected official board to ensure all members are kept informed and have the opportunity to provide feedback and recommendations to any regional initiatives that may develop.

The first task of the Regional Leadership Team was to review and analyze the regional priorities and strategies (based on information gathered at the Fall Planning Sessions), and approve the Regional Plan. Following that step, the Plan was sent back to each local Board for final review and approval for submittal.

Future responsibilities of the Team may include:

- Meet at minimum twice a year.
- Assure regional strategies are clearly defined and measurable.
- Monitor progress.
- Review and approve potential areas of collaboration.
- Review and approve regional initiatives.
- Convene and engage key stakeholders, individuals from diverse groups, and others experiencing barriers to assist in developing and implementing regional strategies.
- Provide oversight and evaluate progress of regional plan and goals, with emphasis on the DEED's two primary goals of reducing disparities and industry sector partnerships.

Board Development: The Leadership Team will review and implement opportunities to increase the diversity of the Region 5 Leadership Team; local WDB's; and working committees by:

- Follow up and engage individuals who indicated interest in working with workforce boards/committees at the Marnita's Table events.
- Continue to engage individuals who expressed interest in being involved in the regional planning process at the 2015 WIOA Regional Planning events (Mankato & Redwood Falls) to broaden the network and open opportunities for expanded engagement and diversity.
- Set up satellite board meeting sites to improve board member access and attendance to board and committee meetings – in accordance with the Public Meeting requirements.
- March 2017 – June 2020: Implement strategies to recruit diverse populations as LWDB vacancies occur.
- June 2018 – review engagement of diverse populations and set

goals/strategies for PY18-19.

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

Based on labor market information and demographics, the leadership team will focus on assuring that, to the extent possible, the populations experiencing barriers to employment are engaged in both the regional and local workforce development area meetings, discussions, goal setting, strategy development and implementation strategies.

Engaging stakeholders and individuals from diverse backgrounds and populations, as well as those experiencing barriers to employment is critical in establishing the goals and strategies that will lead to success.

Assuring that the diverse demographic make-up of the RWDA #5 area is strategically involved in the identification of issues and solutions, goal setting and strategy development broadens the scope of success and advancement of workforce development in the region.

Included in the partner engagement will be individuals, decision makers representing specific populations and other key stakeholders including, but not limited to: individuals with disabilities; tribal communities; communities of color; K-12; higher education; individuals involved and/or representing the criminal justice system; and representatives specifically focused on addressing employment and education disparities.

The Boards and staff will make a concerted effort in designing and implementing programming that will directly engage diverse populations and groups experiencing specific barriers to employment. Both organizations practice and are compliant with equal opportunity hiring practices and will assure that appropriate outreach for employment opportunities is shared and targeted to special populations.

Hosted two Marnita's Table Events – February 15, 2017 – Worthington; February 22, 2017 – Mankato. As a result of the events, Region 5 has identified the following opportunities:

- 1) Collaborate with community partners to offer at least two community engagement events each year to develop and strengthen involvement of communities of color in workforce development issues. (i.e. – potential continuation of Workforce Development Summits with emphasis on Inclusiveness and Diversity in partnership with Initiative Foundations, Education Service Cooperatives, Employers and organizations representing communities of color).
- 2) March 2017 – [June 2020](#): Implement strategies to recruit diverse populations as board vacancies occur.

- 3) June 2018 – review and benchmark engagement of diverse populations and set goals/strategies for PY18-19 related to targeted recruitment and engagement.
- 4) Review options to communicate “hiring/retention tips” to business, such as the importance of conducting recruitment and job announcements via many modes (paper, online, social media, etc.) and in several languages, specifically being available in English and Spanish.
- 5) Explore ways to “Meet customers where they are” culturally – to adapt schedules to the specific needs of students, interns and employees.
- 6) Assist employers in trying to find resources to be able to provide on-the-job interpreters, ESL courses and other supportive resources as a benefit to employees.
- 7) Focus on strategies and practices for more equitable and inclusive hiring.
- 8) Offer employers sessions on ‘intentional hiring practices designed to pursue equitable representation in the workforce in accordance with local demographics.
- 9) Work with employers to build relationships with formal and informal community liaisons and connectors who can help facilitate the free-flow of networks and professional social capital in order to better support individuals in navigating hiring and on-boarding processes and the successful management of employer expectations.

4. Describe how performance negotiations will be managed among the local workforce development areas within the region.

Describing the management of performance negotiations at this time is difficult to outline due to lack of WIOA rules and regulations. Therefore, RWDA #5 will be addressing this question in more detail following release of specific guidance.

At a minimum, we anticipate that the RWDA #5 leadership team will be responsible for the review and oversight of the negotiations. Each LWDB will conduct negotiations with the partners in the local area. Results of the negotiations will be reviewed by the Regional Leadership Team.

Staff will continue to work with GWDB, DEED and MWCA to develop a comprehensive plan for negotiations – again pending regulations.

Further specifics are pending awaiting final regulations.

The Region 5 Leadership Team has identified the South Central & Southwest WDA Executive Director's as the identified individuals to be involved in the performance negotiations.

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

The regional leadership team outlined the two year plan strategies and direction at their April 13, 2016 meeting. At that time they prioritized and attached timelines to the identified goals and strategies that resulted from the Fall 2015 regional planning sessions.

Goals/Priorities that will be addressed include:

- Focus on final rules & regulations and assuring all aspects of WIOA implementation, governance and delivery are finalized and ready for full implementation on July 1, 2017.
- Assure that the two LWDB boards understand the structure and make up of each other; that the strategic design for the Region is clear and agreed upon.
- Advance Career Pathways as a system throughout the region.
- Strategize on methods to assist populations experiencing employment & education disparities.
- Address shortage of skilled workforce; provide skills training in demand occupations.
- Increase career awareness for youth/parents and adults on demand occupations.
- Expand connections between education and businesses.
- Develop marketing/outreach strategies on workforce programs, services, & resources available in the region.

Region 5 Leadership Team has identified the following as Goals for the July 2016 – June 2018 Plan [and will continue to build upon them in the July 2018 –June 2019 Plan](#). Strategies are identified and outlined throughout this document and on the Region 5 WIOA Regional Work Plan.

Goal 1: Establish Regional Leadership Approach (Regulation 679.510 a.1.i/v).

Goal 2: Establish an Agreement for Negotiating local levels of performance (Regulation 679.510 a.1.vii).

Goal 3: Identify and Implement three (3) Regional Services (Career, Training and/or Support) Alignment Goals (Regulation 679.510 a.1.ii/vi).

[Regional Goal 1: Address the shortage of skilled workers through sector-based career pathway approaches.](#)

[Regional Goal 2: Expand partnership with local school districts to increase career awareness and career counseling opportunities for students and parents.](#)

[Regional Goal 3: Complete asset-map and gap analysis of career and workforce development services in the region utilizing results to broadly inform the region on](#)

services available and to align/target resources to fill gaps.

Regional Goal 4: Cooperative alignment of administrative processes between South Central and Southwest Minnesota Workforce Boards.

WIOA Work Plan Goals 5 & 6 was also identified as Regional Goals.

Goal 4: Coordinate with Economic Development Services and Providers (Regulation 679.510 a.1.vii).

Goal 5: Identify the Populations Experiencing Inequities in Educational and Employment Outcomes (State Plan Goal #1).

Goal 6: Create 1-3 Business Led Sector Partnerships (Regulation 679.510 a.1.iii/iv/vii and State Plan – Strategic Element #1).

Goal 7: Stakeholder Engagement (State Plan – Strategic Element #2).

Goal 8: Submission of Local Plans that Align with the Regional Plan (Regulation 679.510.2.ii).

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

Local area boards will direct system alignment within the region as follows:

- Review the established policies and practices of each local workforce development area, determine opportunities for shared policies and practices as appropriate; while maintaining the intent of each local board to maintain their unique and independent operations.
- Review the current Program Operator model (Consortia Model) in each LWDA, to determine any opportunities for enhancement on a regional basis.
- Review direct delivery of services models in each area to determine potential opportunities for best practices and collaboration.
- With the addition of the Rural Career Counseling Coordinator (RC3) position – the LWDBs have the opportunity to review the data and results of the asset mapping and gap analysis process and then provide direction on opportunities to broaden alignment with multiple partners and stakeholders and drive best practices and bring them to scale across the region.
- The One-Stop Operating Teams – (comprised of Job Service, Rehabilitation Services, Title I provider, and ABE) in LWDA 6 & 7, meet regularly to address operational issues which may include: staffing or programmatic items; collaborative opportunities; up-dates; customer access to programs and services; new grant/programming opportunities; policy development and/or clarifications and other issues. The One-Stop Operating Teams are aligned with the vision & mission as outlined by the local Boards. The One-stop Operating Teams look to the LWDB's to provide direction related to issues and/or opportunities resulting from the One-Stop Operating Team meetings.

- Reports from other partner teams are shared with the LWDB's to assure that the Boards are kept informed and have the opportunity to assure that the team efforts are in line with the vision and direction of the boards. Examples of partner teams include, but not limited to: Business Services Team; Pathways to Prosperity Partnership; Youth Standing Committees; and Project Operator Team.

Regional Services Alignment Goal 1

Address the shortage of skilled workers through sector-based career pathway approaches including:

- Expanded the number of career pathway opportunities by: 1) adding a new industry of a construction/trades pathway; 2) expanding occupations to include a Phlebotomy to Medical Lab Technician Health Care Pathway; and 3) increasing stackable credentials/earning college credits such as The Community Interpreter certificate. Regional Pathway to Prosperity grant obtained November 2016 and application submitted February 2018.
- Expanded outreach & marketing to business & target populations – December 2016 – June 2020.
- Conduct focus groups with target populations to understand how to better promote the benefits and opportunities of participating in training programs – January 2018 – June 2020. Focus groups have proven to be an excellent source of information and feedback, and have resulted in new marketing strategies.
- Expand and maintain representation on career pathway partnerships – August 2016 – June 2020. In 2017, there was a significant increase of diverse representation and employer participation on Career Pathway Teams.
- Develop and implement strategies to increase awareness of importance of education/training for target populations – December 2016 – June 2020.
 - Develop and utilize labor market infographics customized to career pathways programs. Initial infographics developed for youth in 2017. Due to the great response, the development of infographics will expand to more occupations and career pathways in 2018.
 - Increased number of target population enrollments into career pathways.
- Develop and implement strategies to increase awareness of the benefits of hiring target populations – December 2016 – June 2020.
 - Hold Employer “Power of Different” events. September 2017, June 2018, through June 2020. The initial event was held in Montevideo in September 2017. It was well attended and received excellent feedback. Additional events will be held in varying areas of the region.
- Support work-based training and career academies – December 2016 – June 2020.

- Increased number of work-based learning opportunities.
- Increased employer participation through offering clinicals, internships, work experience, job shadowing, guest speakers, industry tours, etc. Work-based learning opportunities will be expanded to be a part of the bridge & integrated curriculum.
- Development of career academies (pathways) for youth and facilitate alignment with adult career pathways. March 2017- June 2018 (potentially a three-year grant through June 30, 2020). Career academies developed at pilot high schools in the demand industries of Health Care, Information Technology, Manufacturing, and Teaching/Social Services. High school students earn dual credits and credentials.
- Develop common evaluation tools – July 2016 with annual evaluation in 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020. Baseline report was developed in 2016 on service levels to target populations and outcomes for target populations. Plans are to “regionalize” customer satisfaction/feedback methods.
- Pursue funding opportunities to support career pathway strategies as a region – December 2016, February 2018, seek additional grant funding as a region as opportunities arise through June 30, 2020. The region was successful in obtaining a Career Pathway Equity grant in December of 2016 and GTCUW Career Academy grants. Additionally, the region submitted two MN P2P Competitive Grant proposals in February 2018.

Regional Services Alignment Goal 2

Expand partnership with local school districts to increase career awareness and career counseling opportunities for students and parents. Process will include:

- Contact all local ISDs in Region to complete asset map and marketing career counseling/workforce services – May 2016 to March 2019 (77 School Districts in Region 5). School visits began in 2016. By June 2017, nearly half the schools were visited. These visits resulted in increased number of school districts utilizing workforce career advising services for high school students.
- Develop process for tracking & reporting partnerships with school districts – May 2016 – March 2019.
- Develop and implement strategies to disseminate career information & services – September 2016 – June 2020. Increase student and parent knowledge of regional labor demand, highlighting opportunities that do not require a 4-year degree. In 2017, new labor market infographics were created. Additional labor market infographics will be created for youth and career pathways and potentially being utilized across the state. Strategies will be developed to share labor market information with parents as well as students.

- Continue to develop strategies to partner with high school career counselors and provide career resources – July 2016 – June 2020.
- Provide reports to local WDBs, LEOs, MN DEED & legislators – December 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019.

Regional Services Alignment Goal 3

Complete asset-map and gap analysis of career and workforce development services in the region utilizing results to broadly inform the region on services available and to align/target resources to fill gaps. Steps to achieve include:

- Contact key stakeholders & identify career/workforce development services available to complete asset map and promote best practices and address gaps in services – April 2016 – June 2020. Stakeholder visits were completed in 2016 and 2017.
- Conduct best practice & gap analysis/develop white paper – December 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019. Preliminary reports on opportunities/gaps and best practices completed in 2016 and 2017. Work continues on asset map and gap analysis.
- Communicate gaps, duplication, and best practices to regional stakeholders – January 2017 – June 2020. Presentations were made to stakeholders, including the Chief Elected Official Boards, Workforce Development Boards, Economic Development, and Career Counselors.
- Develop & implement strategies to align resources, bring best practices to scale and address gaps – January 2017 - June 2020. New strategies were incorporated into regional plan, March 2018.
- Develop & implement marketing and regional awareness of services and best practices – June 2020.

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

Each local area has well established cooperative agreements in place with multiple partners/stakeholders and those will continue.

The funding establishing the RC3 position does provide potential opportunity to expand and strengthen the existing agreements. This will become more evident once the asset mapping and gap analysis are completed.

Southern Minnesota LWDB's (SC, SE, SW & Winona) have an established Southern MN Development Team that provides education and training opportunities for all partner staff on a bi-annual basis. The southern LWDB's intend to continue the staff development opportunity.

In addition, the following area, that currently exist at each local area level, may be

strengthened or broadened across the region and are currently being explored and viewed as potential expansion opportunities:

- Monitoring
- Policies
- Program development and career exploration activities/events
- Marketing programs, services and region
- Grant writing
- Professional development
- Best practices
- Legislative activity

Regional Services Alignment Goal 4

Establish Cooperative Alignment of Administrative Processes Between South Central and Southwest Workforce Development Boards to Promote Consistency within the regional workforce development area and with state policy.

- South Central & Southwest Workforce Development Boards entered into Memorandum of Understanding (completed December 2016).
- Align identified and appropriate local workforce development policies by [September 2017](#). [Five WIOA policies completed and approved](#). [Will continue policy development in April 2018- June 2019](#).
- Connect with and inform local legislators on workforce issues. [Completed March 2016 and March 2017; scheduled for April 2018 and will be done annually](#).
- Engage stakeholders through regional forums (conducted in October 2016). Plan for future forums.
- Jointly hire the Rural Career Counseling Coordinator (completed February 2016 and January 2018). [In addition, DEED hired a Workforce Strategy Consultant \(Fall 2018\)](#). [Orientations completed](#). [On-going direction provided through regional workgroup meetings](#).
- Provide professional development to southern MN Workforce Development Specialists through the Southern MN Professional Development Team (WDA 6, 7, 8 & 9) (Conducted bi-annually [more frequently if needed] – last training held November 2017.)
- Jointly respond to grant opportunities – July 2016 – June 2018 (Region 5 received 2 Equity Grants – December 2016). [In 2017-2018 have submitted 3 regional grants for funding](#).
- Explore coordinated regional monitor teams – [July 2018](#).
- Explore joint marketing materials/social media campaign. [Explore strategies and align with CareerForce rebranding](#). [Regional branding meeting held in](#)

2017. New CareerForce brand implemented Fall 2018.

- Local WDA EO officers will work together jointly to develop Equal Opportunity policies and plans required under WIOA regulations.

REGIONAL STRATEGIC PLANNING

The strategic planning component of the Regional Plan addresses three elements: strategic analytics, strategic approach and strategic operations. The overarching theme is to engage regional stakeholders in the process of establishing the strategic plan and to ensure that decisions are data driven and that the data can be used to measure gains and identify needs for improvement.

Strategic Analytics: *The assessment of the regional workforce development area focuses on key conditions. These conditions are detailed in the following response needs.*

8. Describe the condition of the regional economy and cite the sources of data and analysis.

Regional Workforce Development Area #5 (RWDA #5) consists of the 23-county area of South Central and Southwest Minnesota. The region includes three economic development regions (Regions 6, 8 and 9) and one metropolitan statistical area (greater Mankato/North Mankato).

The RWDA #5 economy was analyzed by a thorough review of labor market information through our MN DEED Labor Market Analysts; engaging board members, partners and community in a dialogue about workforce and economic development needs; and input from local employers. This approach gives us a good understanding of the region by combining what statistics reveal with the real-time knowledge of local employers and community partners. The [updated](#) Regional Profile for the 23-county labor market area is attached (Attachment 1). Sources of data and analysis are notated on the attached profile. Below is a summary of the data.

Industry Employment: [Southwest Minnesota \(RWDA #5\) reached a peak of 178,091 jobs in 2008, then hit a low of 171,042 jobs in 2010, and has still not recovered all of the jobs lost during the recession. The region has seen employment ups and downs over the past decade, but ended 2016 with about 1,200 fewer jobs than it had in 2006 \(see Figure 12, page 13 of Attachment 1\). The manufacturing industry was particularly impacted by the recession.](#)

The labor market in RWDA #5 is characterized by a diverse industry base built largely on manufacturing, health care/social assistance, and retail trade (see Table 13, page 12 of Attachment 1). The top industries in the region that continue to experience employment gains include: manufacturing, health care/social assistance, construction, transportation/warehousing, agriculture, and professional/technical services.

Distinguishing Industries: RWDA #5 stands out in the state for its higher concentrations of employment in manufacturing and agriculture (see Table 15, page 15

of Attachment 1). RWDA #5 is the only region where manufacturing is still the largest employing industry, accounting for 17.8 percent of total jobs in the region. That is 6.5 percent higher than the state's concentration of employment in manufacturing.

Industry Projections: The RWDA #5 is projected to grow 1.0 percent from 2014 to 2024, a gain of 2,114 new jobs. The largest and fastest growing industry is expected to be health care and social assistance, which may gain over 3,100 jobs. Most of the employment gains is expected to be in health care/social assistance, particularly in nursing and residential care, but also including hospitals, ambulatory health care services and social assistance (see Table 16, page 15 of Attachment 1). Rapid employment growth is expected in construction, administrative support and waste services, wholesale trade, finance and insurance, and transportation and warehousing.

Job Vacancies: Regional employers reported 6,322 job vacancies in the fourth quarter of 2016, which was a decline of about 700 fewer openings compared to the past year, but still the seventh highest number ever reported. Overall, 33 percent of the openings were part-time, 30 percent required postsecondary education, and 32 percent required a year or more of experience. Full-time vacancies reported included transportation and material moving, production, installation/maintenance and repair, office and administrative support, architecture and engineering, construction, and business & financial operations occupations (see Table 11, page 11 of Attachment 1).

Our local employers report that they are having a difficult time finding skilled labor. Specific occupations that were identified as difficult to find were: maintenance/boiler operators, skilled trade occupations, truck drivers, lab technicians, physical therapists, physicians, nurses/nursing assistants, and social service technicians/social workers.

Occupations in Demand: There are well over 200 occupations showing relatively high demand in RWDA #5. These occupations are spread across different sectors but are also concentrated in the region's major industries of manufacturing, health care, transportation, and other related industries (see Table 12, page 12 of Attachment 1).

Income and Wages: Household incomes were significantly lower in Southwest Minnesota than the rest of the state. The median household income in Southwest was \$52,018 in 2015, compared to \$61,492 in Minnesota. Nearly half (48.1%) of the households in the region had incomes below \$50,000 in 2015, compared to 40.6 percent of households statewide. Southwest Minnesota's per capita income was just 84 percent of the statewide level.

According to DEED's Cost of Living tool, the basic needs budget for an average family (2 adults with 1 child, with 1 full-time and 1 part-time worker) in the Minnesota was \$55,200 in 2017. The cost of living for a similar family in Southwest Minnesota was \$43,776 – which was easily the lowest in the state. However, the monthly costs for housing, child care, taxes and transportation are also lower than the rest of the state. In order to meet the basic cost of living in the region, the full-time and part-time worker in the family would need to earn at least \$14.01 per hour (see Table 8, page 9 of Attachment 1).

The median hourly wage for all occupations in the region is \$16.58 in the first quarter of 2017, which was the lowest wage level of the six planning regions in the state. Southwest's median wage was \$3.00 below the state's median hourly wage, equaling 84.5 percent of the statewide wage rate, and about \$5.00 below the median hourly wage in the Twin Cities metro area, which would amount to over \$10,000 per year for a full-time worker. (see Table 9, page 10 of Attachment 1).

9. Describe the condition of the regional workforce and cite the sources of data and analysis.

Population Change: In sum, Southwest Minnesota (RWDA #5) was home to 391,702 people in 2016, comprising 7.1 percent of the state's total population. The region saw a small 0.7 percent decline in population over the past 16 years, primarily due to larger losses in EDR 6W and EDR 8, which were nearly offset by a steady increase in EDR 9. In comparison, the state of Minnesota saw a steady 12.2 percent gain (see Table 1, page 2 of Attachment 1). Sources of data and analysis are notated on the attached profile. Below is a summary of the data. Five of the 23 counties in the region gained population from 2000 to 2016, including Blue Earth and Nicollet counties (greater Mankato area), LeSueur County (borders the 7-county metro area), Waseca and Lyon County (Marshall area).

Population by Age Group: RWDA #5 has an older population than the rest of the state, with 18.4% of the population ages 65 years and over, compared to 15.2% statewide. The region has a lower percentage of the age 25-54 population; however, the region has a higher percentage of people ages 15-24 due to numerous post-secondary institutions in the region. More than one-fourth of the region's population was part of the Baby Boomer generation, which is creating a significant shift in the population over time (see Figure 2, page 3 of Attachment 1).

Population Projections: Population projections reported by the MN State Demographic Center reveal that RWDA #5 is expected to lose just over 9,200 residents from 2020 to 2040, a -2.4% percent decline. In comparison, the state of Minnesota is projected to grow 8.8 percent (see Figure 4, page 4 of Attachment 1).

Population by Race: Although RWDA #5 is less diverse than the state as a whole, it is becoming more diverse over time. In 2015, nearly 93.4% of the region's residents report White alone as their race, compared to 84.8% of residents statewide. While overall numbers are low, the region is experiencing significant percentage increases in Hispanic or Latino, Black or African American populations, Asian & Pacific Islanders, and two or more races (see Table 2, page 4 of Attachment 1). Nobles County and Watonwan County have the first and second highest percentage of residents reporting Hispanic origin in the state at 26.3% and 21.4% respectively. Just over 23,000 individuals with Hispanic or Latino origin live in the region. Blue Earth, Lyon, and Nicollet counties have experienced an increase in African immigrants settling in the area.

Population by Educational Attainment: RWDA #5 has four MnSCU institutions (8

campuses) and numerous private post-secondary institutions providing a fairly educated workforce ages 25-64. Southwest Minnesota has a higher percentage of people in the 25 to 44 and 45 to 64 year old age groups who had attended some college and earned associate's degrees than the state, but lower percentages of bachelor's degree or higher in both age groups (see Table 5, page 7 of Attachment 1).

Labor Force Change: RWDA #5 experienced substantial fluctuations in labor force during the 2001 and 2007 recessions. Despite the region's population decline overall, Southwest Minnesota gained about 1,250 workers over the last 16 years (see Figure 5, page 5 of Attachment 1). As the region has recovered from the latest recession, the labor market in the region has been getting tighter, with only 8,800 unemployed workers that were actively seeking work in 2016.

Labor Force Projections: According to labor force projections, the region is expected to experience a decline in labor force from 2020-2030 of -3.9% (a decrease of 8,337 workers). Large gains are expected in the numbers of workers aged 65 years and over against huge declines in the number of workers aged 55 to 64 years. The region is expected to lose teenage and entry-level workers but see gains in the number of 25 to 44 year olds. These changes will likely lead to an even tighter labor market in the future (see Table 3, page 5 of Attachment 1).

Unemployment Rates: With our diverse industry base, RWDA #5 has reported lower unemployment rates than the state and the nation. The region had a 4.0% unemployment rate in 2016 (see Figure 6, page 6 of Attachment 1). The region was home to many of the counties with the lowest county unemployment rates in the state.

Employment Characteristics: Although unemployment rates are low in RWDA #5, not all populations are benefiting from low unemployment rates. Populations experiencing unemployment rate disparities were highest among young people, minorities, individuals with disabilities, veterans, and people with lower educational attainment (see Table 4, page 6 of Attachment 1). Unemployment rates in 2015 for these populations include:

- Youth ages 16 to 19 (14.0%)
- Young people ages 20 to 24 (6.3%)
- Black or African American (15.9%)
- American Indian & Alaska Native (7.5%)
- Asian/Pacific Islanders (4.8%)
- Hispanic or Latino (10.7%)
- Veterans (5.4%)
- Individuals with disabilities (9.2%)
- Individuals with less than high school diploma (4.1%)

Commute and Labor Shed: The vast majority of workers who live in the region also work in the region (76%). However, the region is a net exporter of labor, with 38,656

commuting into the region for work while 46,670 commute outside the region for work.

10. Describe the condition of the regional workforce development system and cite the sources of data and analysis (SWOT analysis).

The South Central WorkForce Council and the Southwest MN Workforce Council convened over 145 stakeholders at two regional planning events in Mankato and Redwood Falls. The majority of those attending were representatives from business and also included representatives from education (secondary, post-secondary, and ABE), economic development, partner/service agencies and elected officials.

Stakeholders were asked to identify and prioritize current workforce issues. Priorities identified by stakeholders to be addressed included:

- Shortage of skilled workers
- Need to expand career awareness/career counseling for students, parents and job seekers on demand occupations
- Need to develop more connections between business community and education for career awareness and work-based learning opportunities.
- Need to address populations experiencing employment disparities including: immigrants, individuals with disabilities, low-income populations, minority populations, offenders, older workers, veterans, and youth.
- Need to market the programs, services and resources available in the region.

Strengths and opportunities of the regional workforce development system were identified through the regional planning process in the context of our capacity to address the priorities identified above.

Key strengths of RWDA #5 :

- Local Workforce Development Boards: Two employer-driven boards with vast experience in convening stakeholders to identify and address workforce priorities. These boards are instrumental in aligning resources and services to address workforce needs and are respected in the region.
- Local and Regional Collaborations: The regional workforce development system has developed strong local and regional collaborations built on trust that aligns resources and expertise to implement workforce strategies. Collaborations include Adult Basic Education, Carl Perkins partners, community organizations, economic development, human services, labor unions, local elected officials, post-secondary institutions, and workforce partners (including veteran and vocational rehabilitation services).
- Workforce Development Career and Training Services: The regional workforce development system has vast expertise in delivering quality career and training services for youth and adults built upon a solid understanding and connection to the local/regional labor market. The workforce system also has vast experience

in serving targeted populations and addressing barriers by providing additional supports and connections to community resources. The regional workforce development system consistently meets and exceeds performance outcomes (MN DEED WIA/WIOA Annual Reports).

- Access to post-secondary career and technical education: The region has two MnSCU community and technical colleges with six campuses. The workforce development system has strong connections with Minnesota West and South Central Community & Technical Colleges in supporting their capacity to provide career and technical education programs and serves as a liaison for meeting the skill needs of area employers and training needs of job seekers. Our MnSCU partners have been very responsive to the needs of the region.
- Career Pathways: The region was an early implementer of FastTRAC/Career Pathway programs that align the expertise and resources of Adult Basic Education, MnSCU, and workforce development system for key industries in the region (health care, manufacturing and transportation). The career pathway system includes career exploration, contextualized basic skills instruction, stackable credits and industry-recognized credentials in demand occupations that lead to family-sustaining wages.

Opportunities identified:

- Capacity to meet needs: Although the regional workforce development system has vast experience and success in providing career services, it does not have the capacity to provide these services for all high school students and job seekers in the region.
- Stability of funding sources: Current funding sources for providing career services for high schools and career pathway development is based on competitive funding. It is difficult to plan long-term, make system changes and to recruit staff based on unstable funding sources.
- Asset map and gap analysis: The asset map of career and workforce development services being developed by our Rural Career Counseling Coordinator will enable the region to market services available in the region, align services, avoid duplication of services and target limited resources to fill gaps in services.
- Increase employer engagement: The region has a great opportunity at this time to increase employer engagement through sector-based strategies through: their need for skilled workers, sector-based career pathway strategies, career exploration activities, and work-based learning strategies such as transitional jobs, internships, apprenticeships and incumbent worker training.
- Increase community engagement: The region has an opportunity to expand community engagement as we focus on populations that are experiencing employment disparities.
- Marketing the region: With declining population in our rural counties, the region has an opportunity to market the quality of life in the region (including job

opportunities) to attract and retain talent.

- **Technology:** The region will support efforts of the State to provide services to a broader audience through technology, especially for those customers who have limited barriers and are able to self-serve. In addition, we will be exploring as a region the opportunity to develop an online application for easier access to services.

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

RWDA#5 has adopted the state's vision:

The vision of Rural Workforce Development Area #5 is a healthy economy where all Minnesotans have – or are on a path to – meaningful employment and a family sustaining wage, and where all employers are able to fill jobs in demand.

This vision expresses our intent to “leave no populations behind,” ensuring all individuals have the resources and services they need to make informed career choices, obtain the skills necessary to compete for demand occupations with family sustaining wages, based on sector-based career pathway approaches that meets employers’ needs for a skilled workforce.

In order to accomplish this vision and in response to regional priorities identified by stakeholders, RWDA #5 has identified five goals:

1. Address the shortage of skilled workers through sector-based career pathway approaches.
2. Increase service levels and outcomes for individuals experiencing employment disparities, focusing on racial disparities, but also including individuals with disabilities, low-income populations, offenders, older workers, veterans and [disconnected](#) youth.
3. Expand partnerships with local school districts to increase career awareness and career counseling opportunities for students and parents.
4. Increase employer engagement through sector based career pathways, career awareness opportunities and work-based learning activities.
5. Complete asset-map and gap analysis of career and workforce development services in the region utilizing results to broadly inform the region on services available and to align/target resources to fill gaps.

In order to compete for high growth, high demand jobs that pay a livable wage, our target populations need to acquire the skills and industry-recognized credentials required by employers in high-demand industries. RWDA #5's vision and goals will address the needs of our target populations by providing pathways to skill training that leads to stackable credits, credentials, and the skills necessary to compete for

employment in high-demand industries that lead to self-supporting wages and also meets the needs of employers for a skilled workforce. In addition to addressing the priority issues of regional stakeholders, these goals also align with the mission and goals of the state.

Strategic Approach: *The core areas of the strategic design focus on priorities of the Governor and the system of service delivery.*

Area 1 – Sector Partnerships

12. Describe how the region will use the labor market information and conduct outreach to business and industry to select the targeted sectors for developing career pathways for occupations in demand that provide family sustaining wages. If sectors and occupations have been already selected, describe them within this response. Complete **Attachment G – Local Workforce Development Area Key Industries in Regional Economy**.

RWDA #5 has utilized labor market information and input from business and industry to identify our key industries and to select the targeted sectors for developing sector-based career pathways.

Local Workforce Development Area (LWDA) Key Industries identified by our local boards were based on input from employers, stakeholders and a review of labor market information and are as follows (see also Attachment G):

- South Central LWDA: agriculture, business/professional services, construction, health care/social assistance, manufacturing, and transportation/ warehousing.
- Southwest LWDA: agriculture, health care/social assistance, manufacturing, [construction](#) and transportation/warehousing.

RWDA #5 will focus on the five key industries the local workforce development areas have in common: ***agriculture, health care/social assistance, manufacturing, [construction](#) and transportation/warehousing.***

RWDA #5 career pathway sector strategies of this plan will focus on our top [four](#) industry employment sectors: manufacturing, health care, construction and trade/transportation/utilities (focusing on transportation) industries. As noted in the labor market information above and on Attachment A, manufacturing is the largest employment industry in the region employing [31,390](#) workers and health care/social assistance is the second largest employment industry employing [30,527](#) workers. These three career pathways address 13 of top 30 demand occupations in the region and half of the top 10 job vacancy occupations. In addition, these pathways address occupations employers indicate they struggle to find skilled workers: nursing, health care & social service technicians, industrial maintenance technicians, machinists, welders, [trades](#) and truck drivers.

13. Describe how the make-up of the sector partnerships will be determined and the expertise and resources they bring to the partnership.

The South Central and Southwest Workforce Councils each convene a sector-based career pathway partnership, which includes business. Key partners are identified based on those with the expertise, resources and interest in supporting career pathway development.

Participating partners include:

- Adult Basic Education
- Community Based Organizations
- Economic Development
- Employers
- Human Services Agencies
- Post-Secondary Institutions
- Workforce Center Partners (including Job Service, Vocational Rehabilitation Services and WIOA providers)

Roles and responsibilities of participating partners are delineated in our career pathways plan and through a Memorandum of Understanding with the partners. Roles and responsibilities for each partner include:

Adult Basic Education:

- Participate in career pathway planning and development.
- Outreach and referral of adult learners, including targeted populations.
- Conduct program intake and eligibility.
- In partnership with Navigator, screen/assess adult learners, including basic skills pre- and post-assessment.
- ESL/GED/high school diploma instruction.
- Development and delivery of bridge curriculum including contextualized basic skills instruction and exposure/exploration of industry specific career pathways.
- Engage employers in career awareness activities.
- Provide integrated technical skills training instruction for “gateway” courses determined by partners, reinforcing skill concepts and providing instructional support.
- Data collection utilizing ABE’s MABE/MARCS data management system.

Community Based Organizations:

- Participate in career pathway planning and development.
- Outreach and referral of adult learners, including targeted populations.
- Inform partnership on the needs of targeted populations.
- Career counseling.
- Case management to address barriers.
- Support services.
- Job search assistance.

Economic Development:

- Participate in career pathway planning and development.
- Outreach and referral of employers.
- Inform partnership on business development and expansion opportunities.
- Engage economic development professionals in WIOA regional planning forums – September & October 2015 (Mankato & Redwood Falls).
- Participate as an active stakeholder in the development and approval of the Comprehensive Economic Development (CEDs) Plans in Region 6W, Region 8 and Region 9 - On-going.
- Engage economic development professionals in career pathway sector partnerships as members of Career Pathway Partnerships and/or on Ad Hoc Sector Workgroups/Teams – On-going.
- Local WDB Board members and staff serve on Regional Development Commission Boards (Region 6W, Region 8, and Region 9) and committees including the Southern Minnesota Economic Development Professionals Group – On-going.
- Region 5 WIOA representatives will continue to be active partners with economic development, by serving on Economic Development and RDC led initiatives/committees that are addressing issues such as transportation and child care, that were identified at the WIOA Regional Planning Forums – December 2016 – June 2019.

Employers:

- Participate in career pathway planning and development.
- Inform partnership on industry and occupational skill needs.
- Provide career awareness activities: guest speaker in classroom, industry tours, job shadowing opportunities, etc.
- Provide work-based learning opportunities: transitional jobs, internships, work experience, apprenticeships, etc.

- Provide employment opportunities for graduates.
- Provide professional development funds for next steps in career pathway.
- Region 5 engaged with the consulting services of Maher & Maher on April 7, 2017 and again on June 6-7, 2017, sponsored by DEED, to increase employer engagement and create 1-3 Business Led Sector Partnerships. The following plan was developed as a result of the meetings.
 - The vision of the Business Led Sector Partnerships is to create a focus shift from programmatic administration to Workforce System Solutions. The mission is to develop and implement industry led sector partnerships in manufacturing and health care to address workforce development issues.
 - Goal 1: Engage industry leaders in workforce development issues by utilizing industry champions as conveners and facilitators. Garner commitment to lead the effort from industry leaders. Orient and support the new Workforce Strategy Consultant in the facilitating this work.
 - Goal 2: Identify workforce development issues and solutions with industry leaders leading and engaging in the conversations.
 - Goal 3: The industry led workgroup(s) adopt an action plan in response to identified issues including goals and measures.
 - Goal 4: Determine workforce development board's commitment (e.g. resources) to implementing the industry lead action plan and embed the solutions into the broader workforce system.
 - Goal 5: Develop communication message, materials and methods of the industry led issues and solutions to be shared with the broader workforce system's internal and external stakeholders.
 - Goal 6: Develop a written agreement and/or incorporate into the MOU regarding ongoing communications on sector strategies and solutions with workforce development partners and the Workforce Development Boards.
 - Goal 7: Develop and implement regional evaluation methodologies for each issues/solution.
 - Goal 8: Identify high demand, high wage sectors and occupations that lack gender equity. Develop regional materials and activities that promote "non-traditional" careers to job seekers and gender equity hiring practices to employers.

Human Service Agencies:

- Participate in career pathway planning and development.
- Outreach and referral of adult learners, including targeted populations.
- Alignment with MFIP/DWP/SNAP cash assistance programs.
- Support Services.

MnSCU Community & Technical Colleges:

- Participate in career pathway planning and development.
- Outreach and referral of adult learners, including targeted populations.
- Develop stackable credits and credentials for career and technical education in demand occupations.
- Provide transition assistance with college enrollment and financial aid application.
- Provide credit for prior learning.
- Provide training facilities, equipment and instructors.
- Provide integrated instruction for credit, in partnership with ABE, for “gateway” courses determined by the partners, resulting in industry-recognized credentials.
- Engage employers in work-based learning opportunities.
- Data collection utilizing MnSCU ISRS data management system.

Workforce/WIOA Providers:

- Participate in career pathway planning and development.
- Outreach and referral of adult learners, including targeted populations.
- Conduct program intake and eligibility.
- Provide “Navigator” services, serving as the central point of contact for adult learners and providing wrap around supports as necessary.
- Provide connections and engage local employers.
- In partnership with ABE, screen and assess adult learners for program participation.
- Administer National Career Readiness assessment as appropriate for adult learners in bridge course.
- Provide career counseling including career pathway and labor market information for adult learners in bridge classes and development of an employment plan.
- Provide access to WIOA and other funding sources, for support services and training costs, including access to other community resources.
- Provide additional “navigation” support during transition periods (i.e. completion of bridge course, completion of integrated instruction, etc.).
- Provide job search and job placement assistance.
- Provide follow-up and retention services.
- Data entry and tracking on Workforce One data management system.

Workforce Development Boards:

- Convene and provide staff support for career pathway partnerships.
- Participate in career pathway planning and development.
- Provide labor market information (through MN DEED) for the identification of industry sectors and occupations in demand.
- Outreach and referral of adult learners, including targeted populations.
- Provide career pathway administration and oversight.
- Liaison with the MN Department of Employment and Economic Development and other career pathway funders.
- Complete required reports.
- Serve as fiscal agent for the partnership.

Representatives from Targeted Populations:

- Participate in career pathway planning and development.
- Assist with outreach, marketing and recruitment.

14. Describe how the partnership(s) will work toward developing and implementing a career pathway sector strategy during the two years of this plan. If sectors and occupations have not been selected, address the process for these decisions within this response.

As indicated earlier, both the South Central and Southwest Workforce Development Areas were early implementers of career pathways. The health care and manufacturing career pathways in the region are very mature in their development as well as partnership relationships. Throughout the years numerous system and process improvements have been made. The two local partnerships have been asked to share their career pathway development as a best practice regionally, statewide and nationally. The career pathway partnerships continue to develop continuous improvement strategies for these two industry sectors, and are especially focused on outreach and recruitment strategies to ensure that the cohorts of adult learners are sufficient enough to implement sustainability strategies and on expanding the partnership to include partners that can contribute expertise and resources in serving populations experiencing employment disparities. It is also important to note that career pathway development is very dependent on relationships built between partnership administration and staff. As a result, administrative and staff changes require continuous professional development and oversight.

In the past year, the two career pathway partnerships have been working on implementing career pathway strategies for the transportation sector, specifically providing preparation and training for Class A Commercial Driver's Licensure to meet the demand for truck drivers in the region. Part of this development includes a recent meeting with the Department of Transportation who is

interested in partnering as an employer of graduates of the program. Additionally, an increasing demand in the construction industry has led to a goal of developing career pathway training opportunities in construction.

In general, the Region 5 career pathway approach includes:

- Alignment with the skill needs of industries and employers in region.
- Aligning the expertise and resources of employers, ABE, post-secondary education, community and workforce partners.
- Career counseling, career navigation and support services.
- Bridge programming that includes contextualized basic skills instruction, exposure to industry careers and an introduction to basic occupational skills.
- Enhanced academic instruction that integrates career and technical education with instructional support and reinforcement of skill concepts that results in stackable credits and credentials along a career pathway.
- Work-based learning opportunities including: clinicals, internships, work experience, and apprenticeships.
- Working with post-secondary education to provide credit for prior learning.
- Placement and retention services.
- Career ladder opportunities.

Region 5 received a DEED Career Pathway Equity Grant with implementation beginning in 2017. Through the grant, career pathways will be updated and mapped for health care, manufacturing and transportation. Region 5 also applied in 2018, to expand the career pathways programming to include construction skills.

Business representatives continue to be a critical and vital component of the sector partnerships in Region 5. Business representatives participate at various levels within the sector partnerships including: 1) Actively being engaged at the two WDB levels during development and approval of career pathway initiatives; 2) During the planning and implementation phase at the partnership team meetings; 3) Participating during trainings on employer panels; 4) At hiring phase of successful graduates from the career pathway trainings either through work-based learning opportunities or by direct hire of career pathway training graduates.

Roster of employers engaged in sector-based career pathways in Region 5 is included with documents submitted to DEED.

Throughout the process, Region 5 will identify best practices of regional businesses and utilize their expertise to advance increased hiring and retention of individuals from communities of color.

Area 2 – Stakeholder Engagement

15. Describe the process for identifying the characteristics, size and scope of populations not fully benefiting from the economic recovery, experiencing factors such as high unemployment, lack of credentialed skills and other barriers to employment.

Our process for identifying the characteristics, size and scope of populations not fully benefiting from the economic recovery includes a three-pronged approach:

1. The first approach is a comprehensive review of available data including: labor market information, MN State Demographer information, U.S. Census data and available studies with regional data, for example *Kids Count*. Based on an initial review of data the following populations continue to experience high unemployment rates (2015):

Total Labor Force Population	Number	Unemployment Rate
Youth Ages 16-19	12,829	14.0%
Youth Ages 20-24	24,373	6.3%
Black or African American	2,983	15.9%
American Indian/Alaskan Native	1,123	7.5%
Asian/Pacific Islander	3,197	4.8%
Some Other Race	2,717	11.6%
Two or More Races	1,649	11.2%
Hispanic or Latino	10,433	10.7%
Veterans	9,812	5.4%
Individuals with any Disability	10,510	9.2%
High School Drop-outs	9,212	4.1%

2. The second approach is a broad engagement of stakeholders, including workforce center partners. In the current economy with jobs readily available, the individuals seeking services at workforce centers are often those facing the most barriers to employment. Workforce and community partners currently report, in addition to the populations above, offenders, older workers, and low income individuals with limited skills still struggle to find meaningful employment at family-sustaining wages.
3. The third approach will be through our asset mapping and gap analysis being conducted this year which may provide a greater understanding of the needs of youth populations that continue to experience declining labor force participation rates and populations experiencing employment disparities.

16. Describe who will be included in the broad stakeholder engagement to address a targeted number of socio-economic issues faced by diverse populations.

RWDA #5 will continue to expand our broad stakeholder engagement. Current stakeholder engagement includes:

- Employers representing key industry sectors.

- Feedback from youth and adult customers.
- Workforce partners.
- Local school districts.
- Alternative and charter schools.
- Adult Basic Education.
- Post-Secondary Institutions.
- Service Cooperatives/Carl Perkins Career & Technical Education.
- County Commissioners.
- County Human Service Agencies.
- County Corrections.
- Labor organizations.
- Local, county, regional and state economic development agencies.
- Veteran organizations.
- Chambers of Commerce.
- Community based organizations.
- Vocational Rehabilitation Services, Services for the Blind and private non-profits serving individuals with disabilities.
- Organizations serving diverse populations (i.e. Diversity Council, MN Council of Churches, African Family Education Center, Karen Organization of MN – Marshall Chapter).

17. Describe how this engagement will impact the development and implementation of the selected sector strategies during the first two years of this plan.

The broad engagement of stakeholders greatly impacts the development and implementation of sector strategies including:

- Instrumental in the identification of selected sectors.
- Informs us on the skill needs of employers.
- Provides the basis for curriculum development (aligning with skill needs of employers).
- Provides career exploration opportunities.
- Provides work-based learning opportunities.
- Allows us to focus limited resources through the alignment of resources and expertise.
- Provides us a greater understanding of the unique needs of targeted

populations.

- Provides us a greater understanding of the programs, services, and requirements of partners.
- Provides additional supports for addressing barriers of adult learners and job seekers.
- Avoids duplication of services and resources.
- Assists us in working towards a common mission and goals.
- Benefits our dual customers of employers and job seekers by meeting their expectations and needs.

Goal – Identification of process for engaging communities and organizations serving individuals from disparately impacted populations.

- Participation in Marnita's Table Events – February 2017.
- Asset Map process to identify leadership representatives from disparately impacted populations – May 2017 – June 2019.
- Targeted recruitment of community leaders/representatives and business owners from disparately impacted populations to serve on South Central and Southwest WDB's; Committees; and other leadership groups – April 2017 - June 2019.
- Inclusion of targeted populations to serve on the Career Pathway Work Teams – May 2017 and June 2019.
- Seek input & feedback from targeted populations and engage in development of strategies to address needs – July 2017 – June 2019. *Two focus groups have already been conducted with specific and easy to implement recommendations on how to better market services to diverse communities.*
- Targeted marketing to individuals experiencing employment disparities – June 2017 and June 2019.

Area 3 – Employment & Training Program Design

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

The region has already put a lot of focus and energy in aligning employment and training services with our career pathway approach. Progress to date includes:

- Building cross-agency partnerships; establishing shared mission and goals; defining roles and responsibilities; developing a work plan and Memorandum of Understanding for the partnership.
- Engaging employers; aligning with the skill needs of industry; developing

career exploration and work-based learning opportunities.

- Developing a customer-centered design in which basic skills instruction is concurrent with career and technical training; our colleges are developing stackable credits and credentials within their programs of study allowing multiple entry and exit points; colleges are working on better approaches to provide credit for prior learning; opportunities for career laddering are in place; career navigators are in place to provide career counseling services, case management, supportive services, and employment and retention services.
- Funding streams have been aligned; training programs are for credit which enables the use of financial aid as well as utilizing WIOA Title I and IV funding.
- We have begun work on aligning local programs and policies. Examples include aligning WIOA programs with policies for such things as cross-agency referrals and information sharing.
- We gather and track results as best we can to provide outcome information for our respective boards, however, with three data systems it is difficult. System changes have been made, but measuring them is more antidotal at this point.

RWDA #5 will utilize the U.S. Department of Labor Career Pathway Toolkit to continue to benchmark where we are at and to develop strategies for a more responsive alignment of employment and training services. Current strategies identified in our regional assessment include:

- Expanding partnerships to include more input and alignment of services for individuals experiencing employment disparities, and increasing connections with local school districts.
- Continue to increase employer engagement.
- Complete asset map and gap analysis of career/workforce development services.
- Development of better outreach strategies.

In addition, the region is willing to work in concert with MN DEED on Funding & Resource Needs, Policy and System Alignment, and System Management at the state level which would significantly impact our ability to address these areas at a regional level.

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

The entities responsible for participating in this process will be the stakeholders of our sector-based career pathway partnerships. The stakeholders and their roles

and responsibilities have been identified under Question 13. These stakeholders are knowledgeable and have been dedicated and committed to implementing a career pathway approach. As indicated earlier, our plan is to expand this partnership to increase employer and community engagement. Recommendations of the stakeholders that require policy, program and system change of the workforce system will be brought to our respective local workforce development boards for final approval and implementation.

20. Describe how the outcomes will be determined in terms of employment and training services modeling career pathway thinking by the end of the two year plan.

Once regional strategies have been identified and approved, an action plan will be developed that indicates the strategies, the steps to implement the strategies, the timeline and how we will measure progress, outcomes, and ultimately success. As the conveners of the career pathway partnerships, the local workforce development boards and staff will be responsible for general oversight and that the partnership is making progress on their goals.

SECTION B: LOCAL PLAN

Strategic Operations: *The core elements of strategic operations focuses on operating policies and procedures related to the one-stop system and physical locations of service delivery.*

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

The South Central WorkForce Council, in consultation with our core partners, has designated three WorkForce Centers in the 9-county area of South Central MN. The centers are located in: Fairmont, Mankato and New Ulm.

Core Partners at the Workforce Centers include:

- MN DEED Business Community Development
- MN DEED Job Service –Wagner Peyser Services & WIOA Provider
- MN DEED REA
- MN DEED State Services for the Blind
- MN DEED Veterans Employment Services
- MN DEED Vocational Rehabilitation Services
- MN Valley Action Council –WIOA Provider

During Program Year 2014, documented job seekers that physically utilized the three workforce centers for services was over 4,000. This number does not include the large number of job seekers who come in to receive services and/or information but do not register on the client registration system. In addition, the number of job orders from employers was at an all-time high of 18,374 job orders.

Workforce Centers are vital to ease of access to services and developing relationships with local employers. The number of business service representatives in our local area has been reduced from two to one. Consequently, workforce center staff in Fairmont and New Ulm are vital to expanding and maintaining connections to employers in those areas.

The South Central Workforce Council will re-evaluate the designation of workforce centers and affiliate sites based on final regulations and the workforce center policy being developed by the One-Stop Operations WIOA work group.

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

Strategies to ensure coordination and connectivity among the physical sites within our local workforce development area include:

- Representation of the core partners on the South Central WorkForce Council. Core partners have the opportunity to provide input and participate in the decision-making process of the SC WorkForce Council in designating the

physical sites of workforce centers in the local area.

- The South Central Operations Committee. The Operations Committee meets monthly and is made up of the core partners of the workforce center. The managers ensure that communication, services, and processes are consistent in the three physical locations. The managers develop a cost allocation plan to identify how each partner will contribute to the infrastructure costs of each workforce center.
- Reception and Resource Area Certification Program: This training program ensures that each physical location has consistent and quality customer service.
- Technology. Coordination and connectivity also occurs through technology, including shared data systems and communication through websites and email networks.
- A One-Stop Operator RFP was issued and the consortium of core partners was selected to provide One-Stop Operator services. A One-Stop Operator agreement was entered into delineating the responsibilities and duties of the One-Stop Operator, including connectivity and coordination among the physical sites.

Strategies to ensure connectivity and coordination among the service providers within our workforce development area include:

- As in the connectivity of the physical sites, the SC Operations Committee is key to connectivity and coordination among the service providers. The Operations Committee is charged with the day-to-day operations of the workforce center, safety plans, review outcomes and customer feedback, implement continuous improvement strategies, develop cost allocation plan to identify how each partner will contribute to the staffing of reception and resource room, and other shared costs of the partners.
- Managers and/or staff of each of the partners participate on SC WorkForce Council committees including the SC Career Pathways Partnership, Workforce Development Committee and Youth Council. Participation on these committees ensures partner input into planning, implementation and coordination of services for the local workforce development area.
- Each workforce center conducts staff meetings to ensure communication across the partners in the individual workforce centers.
- Professional development through the South Central Training Team. The training team is made of staff from each of the partners and addresses professional development needs that are shared across the partnership. In addition, the team focuses on building relationships across the partners.
- The South Central Continuous Improvement Team. This team is made of staff from each of the partners and focuses on the continuous improvement of services at the three workforce centers. The team conducts customer surveys to obtain feedback from workforce center customers, conducts quality assessments of services, and implements continuous improvement strategies. In addition, the team has developed a web-page to improve communication across the partnership.
- An email communication network that was set-up to send information, announcements, job leads, training opportunities, minutes, events, etc. out to all staff of each the partners.
- A One-Stop Operator RFP was issued and the consortium of core partners was selected to provide One-Stop Operator services. A One-Stop Operator agreement was entered into delineating the responsibilities and duties of the One-Stop Operator, including connectivity and coordination among the service providers.

3. Describe the strategies to ensure proper connectivity and coordination among the **service providers** within the local workforce development area.
4. Describe other strategies that will be used to maximize services and access to services, such as non-traditional hours or using partner facilities.

Strategies to maximize services and access to services include:

- Local workforce centers post information on local library hours for access to computers outside of workforce center hours.
- MN Valley Action Council has offices in each of the six counties that do not have a workforce center and each of these offices provide computers to

access MinnesotaWorks on-line. This is especially beneficial for customers who face transportation issues.

- Engaging and aligning resources with area partners. Referral forms and release of information forms have been developed for ease of referrals across the partners and co-enrollment when appropriate.
- The South Central Workforce Council. As the administrative entity, the South Central Workforce Council aligns resources and the expertise of each of the partners to maximize resources and services.
- Providing services on a temporary basis at satellite locations for special populations or projects. This is often set-up for large mass lay-offs.
- Technology. The use of technology helps us to maintain contact with job seekers and provide case management services. We will be exploring with Southwest Minnesota, the development of an on-line application/screening tool. We will continue to support efforts at MN DEED to develop on-line services for individuals, especially for those customers with limited barriers that are able to self-serve.

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

WIOA career services are defined in TEGL 3-15 as:

Basic Career Services – available to all individuals seeking services

- Eligibility determination;
- Outreach, intake and orientation;
- Initial assessment of skill levels and supportive service needs;
- Labor exchange services including: job search, job placement and provision of in-demand industry and occupation information and nontraditional employment opportunities;
- Referrals to other programs and services;
- Provision of workforce and labor market information;
- Provision of performance and program cost information on eligible training providers;
- Provision of information on how the local area is performing on local performance measures;
- Provision of information on the availability of supportive services or assistance and appropriate referrals;
- Assistance in establishing eligibility for programs of financial aid assistance for training and education programs not provided under WIOA; and
- Provision of information and assistance regarding filing claims under UI programs.

Individualized Career Services – available when appropriate to obtain or retain employment.

- Comprehensive and specialized assessment;

- Individualized employment plan;
- Group or individualized counseling;
- Career planning/case management;
- Short-term pre-vocational services;
- Internships and work experiences;
- Workforce preparation activities;
- Financial literacy services;
- Out-of-area job search;
- English language acquisition and integrated education/training programs; and
- Follow-up Services.

The South Central WorkForce Council conducts a Request for Proposal (RFP) process to identify providers for WIOA Adult and DW services. The RFP requires that responders provide all of the above career services at all local workforce center locations. MN DEED –Job Service has been selected to provide Basic Career Services. They are uniquely positioned to be able to align WIOA and Wagner Peyser funding and services to ensure these services are available at all sites and for all populations. Individualized Career Services will be provided by both MN DEED –Job Service and MN Valley Action Council depending on whether employment strategies are work-based (MN DEED –Job Service) or classroom-based (MVAC). The South Central WorkForce Council staff monitor sites on an annual basis to ensure quality services are available at service locations and for individuals with barriers to employment. In addition, the Memorandum of Understanding also delineates across the partnership and WIOA titles the providers of career services.

A separate RFP is conducted for WIOA Youth services. The RFP requires that all service elements are available for youth. MN Valley Action Council has been selected to provide WIOA Youth services.

The South Central WorkForce Council reviews service levels and outcomes for individuals with barriers to employment on an annual basis. Services are provided through a number of strategic approaches including: one-on-one, on-line and workforce center workshops. During this 2-year plan we will be focusing on serving individuals experiencing employment disparities and will review processes and services to ensure that all elements of Career Services are readily accessible to all populations including youth and individuals with barriers to employment or service access.

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

South Central continues to explore and expand the use of technology for services in order to provide services that meets the diverse needs of our customers and to expand services to more job seekers and employers.

Current strategies include:

- Assessing job seekers' digital literacy and refer to Adult Basic Education when appropriate to increase computer skills.
- The Council identifies resources each year to ensure our three Adult Basic Education partners have KeyTrain licenses to provide on-line training to improve NCRC results and as part of career pathway bridge curriculum.
- Utilization of email, texting, and social media for enhanced communication with customers.
- Career Pathway bridge curriculum is a hybrid of face-to-face and on-line learning in support of digital literacy.
- Our post-secondary partners continue to increase opportunities for on-line learning.
- The development of on-line applications/screening tools.
- Continue to support MN DEED in the development of on-line services.

We ensure compliance with accessibility standards by:

- Requiring compliance in our contracts/subcontract agreements.
- Providing accessibility in each of our WorkForce Centers through assistive technology such as: Jaws, Zoomtext, Nextalk, Pocket Talker, UbiDuo, TTY, and Language Line.
- Participate in the on-site accessibility review by MN DEED to assure that our workforce centers are in compliance with accessibility requirements.

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

The provision of supportive services is a key tool in addressing barriers and supporting customer success and retention in training/education and employment. Transportation is by far the greatest support service need in our rural WDA with limited public transportation.

All individuals enrolled in WIOA programs are assigned a case manager/navigator who is knowledgeable on community resources available and coordinates the provision of support services. Potential support service needs are discussed and identified during the assessment process. Other support service needs are identified as barriers occur during service provision. Case managers/navigators work closely with other partners to coordinate the provision of support services including human services, Vocational Rehabilitation Services, and community organizations such as MN Valley Action Council, Lutheran Social Services and Salvation Army. Strong partnerships in the local area allow staff to identify the expertise and resources of partners and allow them to align services and resources, avoiding duplication.

The South Central WorkForce Council supports the development of directories of

resources to provide information on a broad array of services provided in our local area and is available on-line or copies are also available in our resource rooms for all customers.

The development of the asset map and gap analysis will also help to identify resources in the local area that could be utilized to better serve individuals with barriers to training, education and employment.

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

The South Central WorkForce Council facilitates the development of the Memorandum of Understanding and Cost Allocation Plan for core partners in our Workforce Centers utilizing state policies on infrastructure funding. Local cost allocation plans are developed to identify a fair and equitable method to disburse shared costs of the workforce centers. Shared costs include items such as staffing of the resource room and reception, and infrastructure costs such as space, telephone and data lines. Costs are allocated based on staffing levels of each partner and customer data through the Customer Registration System and Workforce One.

The South Central WorkForce Council will implement any changes to the cost allocation plan made based on the release of the Department of Labor regulations and the ensuing policy changes made by MN DEED in partnership with the One-Stop Operations workgroup.

Historically, we have not had any major disagreements in adopting the cost allocation plans due to the fair and equitable method of disbursing costs. If disagreements did occur with local partners it would be brought to the Executive Committee of the South Central Workforce Council for local resolution. If the dispute cannot be resolved locally it would be brought to a designee of the MN DEED Commissioner and ultimately to the Commissioner.

9. Describe how local area boards, who contract out for provider services, will ensure that providers fully participate in infrastructure funding requirements and the alignment of service delivery within the local workforce development area.

Approximately every four years the South Central WorkForce Council conducts a Request for Proposal (RFP) process for the delivery of youth, adult and dislocated worker services. Within the RFP package it indicates that all successful responders must deliver services at each of the area's WorkForce Centers and that adult and dislocated worker funds will not be used to support the infrastructure costs of any other facility. In addition, the RFP indicates successful proposers are required to meet all rules, regulations and policies developed by the U.S. Department of Labor, MN Department of Employment and Economic Development and the South Central WorkForce Council, including state policies on infrastructure funding. In addition, once providers are identified a subcontract for services is developed that indicates that the service provider will adhere to the local plan and all rules, regulations and policies of the U.S. Department of Labor, MN DEED and the South Central WorkForce Council.

Alignment of service delivery is required under our service delivery structure. The SC WorkForce Council RFP is conducted based on specific services versus a program-based RFP model. The SC WorkForce Council awards contracts based on the expertise of proposers to deliver basic career services, individualized career services, work-based training and classroom training.

10. Describe how the Memorandum of Understanding will be developed and used to ensure commitment of resources from service providers and required partners.

The South Central WorkForce Council, with the agreement of the Joint Powers Board, will develop and enter into a Memorandum of Understanding with required partners every three years. Provisions of the agreement will include:

- Services and how they will be coordinated and delivered through the workforce center system;
- How the cost of services and operating costs will be funded;
- Methods of referral between workforce center partners;
- Methods to ensure the needs of youth and individuals with barriers to employment are addressed; and
- The duration of the memorandum of understanding.

The South Central WorkForce Council in agreement with the South Central WDA Joint Powers Board entered into a memorandum of understanding with core workforce center partners and service providers in June 2017. The memorandum of understanding is in effect until June 30 2020, at which time it will be reviewed and amended as necessary.

11. A. Describe the local area board's strategic vision and how it aligns with the designated state priorities under WIOA.

As a partner in Regional Workforce Development Area #5, the South Central

WorkForce Council has adopted the state's vision statement:

The vision of Regional Workforce Development Area #5 is a healthy economy where all Minnesotans have – or are on a path to – meaningful employment and a family sustaining wage, and where all employers are able to fill jobs in demand.

This vision aligns with the state's priorities and expresses our intent to "leave no populations behind", ensuring all individuals have the resources and services they need to make informed career choices, obtain the skills necessary to compete for demand occupations with family sustaining wages, based on sector-based career pathway approaches that meets employers' needs for a skilled workforce.

This vision will be accomplished through our employer-led boards and sector-based career pathway partnerships.

- B. Describe the local area board's goals for preparing an educated and skilled workforce, including youth and individuals with barriers to employment.

In order to accomplish this vision and in response to regional priorities identified by stakeholders, RWDA #5 has identified five goals:

1. Address the shortage of skilled workers through sector-based career pathway approaches.
2. Increase service levels and outcomes for individuals experiencing employment disparities, focusing on racial disparities, but also including individuals with disabilities, low-income populations, offenders, older workers, veterans and youth.
3. Expand partnerships with local school districts to increase career awareness and career counseling opportunities for students and parents.
4. Increase employer engagement through sector based career pathways, career awareness opportunities and work-based learning activities.
5. Complete asset-map and gap analysis of career and workforce development services in the region utilizing results to broadly inform the region on services available and to align/target resources to fill gaps.

In order to compete for high growth, high demand jobs that pay a livable wage, our target populations need to acquire the skills and industry-recognized credentials required by employers in high-demand industries. RWDA #5's vision and goals will address the needs of our target populations by providing pathways to skill training that leads to stackable credits, credentials, and the skills necessary to compete for employment in high-demand industries that lead to self-supporting wages and also meets the needs of employers for a skilled workforce.

In addition to addressing the priority issues we heard from our regional stakeholders, these goals also align with the goals of the state to: 1) reduce racial disparities in

education and employment to provide greater opportunity for all Minnesotans, and 2) build employer-led industry-sector partnerships focused on aligning skills with careers in demand; and the strategy of the state to address these goals through a career pathway approach.

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

The performance accountability measures under WIOA measures our effectiveness in serving individuals and employers. Measures include: employment, retention, earnings gain, credentials, skill gains and effectiveness in serving employers.

Our goals align with the performance accountability measures by ensuring all individuals we serve have the resources and services they need to make informed career choices, obtain the skills necessary to compete for demand occupations with family-sustaining wages, based on career pathway approaches that meets the needs of employers for a skilled workforce.

Our effectiveness in addressing Goals 1, 2, 3, and 4 listed in B. above is measured by how many individuals attain the skills and credentials necessary to be placed and retained in employment, resulting in earnings gain through employment in demand occupations (effectively serving employers). Goal 5 aligns resources and services in order to address our goals and achieve performance measures.

- D. Describe the strategy to work with the entities that carry out the core programs to align resources available to the local workforce development area, to achieve the strategic vision and goals of the local area board.

Our primary strategy to align the resources of the core programs to achieve our strategic vision and goals is through our career pathway approach. Our career pathway approach aligns the resources and expertise of workforce development partners in order to streamline employment and training services and to provide the additional supports necessary for individuals with barriers to employment to be successful. The SC Career Pathways Partnership includes representatives from workforce center partners, Adult Basic Education, MnSCU, Human Services and community partners that work tirelessly to identify the expertise of each partner and align resources and services to meet the needs of individuals we serve.

The establishment of workforce centers in itself is a strategic alignment of the core programs of WIOA to meet the workforce development needs of area employers and job seekers. The co-location of WIOA programs, the relationships developed across partners, the development of the Memorandum of Understanding and cost allocation plans all contribute to the alignment and

collaboration of core programs. Having Vocational Rehabilitation Services, Veterans Employment Services, Services for the Blind, UI/REA services in a one-stop location allow us to collaborate, avoid duplication and meet the unique needs of targeted populations.

The asset map and gap analysis of career and workforce services conducted by our Regional Career Counseling Coordinator will assist us in identifying services available in our local area, expand our partnerships and align limited resources where they will have the greatest impact.

Finally, the South Central WorkForce Council and its committees also provides an opportunity for strategic alignment of the core programs to achieve our vision and goals. Employers, core workforce center partners, Adult Basic Education, MnSCU, labor, human services, economic development and community organizations are all represented on the Council. These partners will participate in the development and implementation of action plans to achieve our mission and goals, identifying roles and responsibilities of each of the partners in implementing strategies, and achieving our goals.

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

The South Central WorkForce Council has a long-standing partnership with secondary and post-secondary Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education partners, programs and initiatives in our local area. Currently, WorkForce Council staff are participating in the development of the Carl Perkins plan. As the workforce partner, we contribute labor market information to help inform on key industries and demand occupations in the region as well as align workforce and Carl Perkins priorities and goals. The priorities and goals being proposed for the Carol Perkins plan are as follows and align well with our mission and goals:

Priority 1: Provide regional exploratory technical education programming to help students develop specific understandings and skill sets needed to qualify for advanced programming leading to earning industry recognized certifications and stackable credentials.

Priority 2: Ensure that all senior high school students and educators understand current and forecasted employment/career opportunities, and related career choice and post-secondary education economics.

Goal 1: Program of Study Design and Implementation

Goal 2: Effectively Utilize Employer, Community, and Education Partnerships

Goal 3: Improve Services to Special Populations

Goal 4: Provide a Continuum of Service Provision for Enabling Student Transitions

Goal 5: Sustain the Consortium of Secondary and Post-secondary Institutions

Staff of the South Central Service Cooperative serve on the SC Youth Council. The local Carl Perkins plan is brought to the Youth Council and Workforce Council for review. In addition, we partner on numerous career fairs and industry days in the region to provide youth exposure to key industries and demand occupations. We develop youth directories in partnership with the South Central Service Cooperative, identifying resources available in the local area. We coordinate Outreach to School activities (HECAP/PICE) with the South Central Service Cooperative. The Rural Career Counseling Coordinator will be working with the SC Service Cooperative in asset mapping career and workforce development services available in the region.

The focus for our partnership with Carl Perkins in the coming year is to align resources to provide more career exploration, career awareness, career counseling and work-based learning opportunities for youth.

The South Central WorkForce Council, in partnership with the South Central Service Cooperative, South Central College, six area high schools, and community organizations received a Greater Twin Cities United Way Grant to build out and implement grades 9-14+ career academies/career pathway programs in the high wage, high demand industries of health care, information technology and manufacturing. The six pilot high schools were selected based on their percentage of diversity and percentage of students that qualify for free or reduced lunch. These career academies will offer high students sequential classes, work based learning opportunities, and supports that result in dual high school/post-secondary credits, credentials, and internships. This grant has provided us an excellent opportunity to further identify and align the expertise and resources of the partners to develop career paths for high school students in demand industries in the region. The career academies will begin the Fall of 2018.

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

The SC WorkForce Council, in the alignment of resources and expertise in our local area, recognize MN DEED –Job Service as our best connection to local employers and employment opportunities through Wagner Peyser labor exchange services, [Workforce Strategy Consultant](#) and MinnesotaWorks. Consequently, as resources become available (i.e. NEG Sector Partnership Grant, MnAMP TAACCCT grant) we contract those dollars with MN DEED –Job Service to expand its capacity to provide outreach to local employers, develop work-based learning opportunities and expand access to employment opportunities in the local area.

The Council also aligns with Vocational Rehabilitation Services, Services for the Blind, Veteran Employment Services, MN Valley Action Council Youth Programs, and MRCI that connects with local employers to provide work-based learning and employment opportunities for targeted populations including: individuals with disabilities, veterans, youth, high school drop-outs, teen parents and low income populations.

In the coming year, we will be working with South Central College to develop apprenticeship opportunities for the manufacturing sector. This sector-based initiative will expand work-based learning and employment opportunities in the manufacturing industry.

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

Within our broad partnership, workforce development support service funding is one of the most stable and consistent source of support services that supports training and employment retention and success. However, whenever other community resources are available to address barriers, referrals are made to expand access to supportive services. Other entities that we partner with for access to supportive services for individuals with barriers to employment include: Vocational Rehabilitation Services, MN Family Investment Program, Diversionary Work Program, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, Child Care Assistance Program, Medical Assistance, MNSure, Salvation Army, Lutheran Social Services, MN Council of Churches, VINE, MN Valley Action Council, SMILES, area thrift stores, churches and food shelves. The SC WorkForce Council and partners will continue to expand partnerships to increase access to support services in the local area.

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

The South Central WorkForce Council has been convening local partners for almost ten years to develop career pathways. We currently have developed career pathways for the health care, manufacturing and transportation industries.

In general, our career pathway approach includes:

- Alignment with the skill needs of key industries and employers in region;
- Aligning the expertise and resources of employers, ABE, post-secondary education, community and workforce partners;
- Career counseling, career navigation and support services;
- Bridge programming that includes contextualized basic skills instruction, exposure to industry careers and an introduction to basic occupational skills;
- Enhanced academic instruction that integrates career and technical education

with instructional support and reinforcement of skill concepts that results in stackable credits and credentials along a career pathway;

- Work-based learning opportunities including: clinicals, internships and apprenticeships;
- Working with post-secondary education to provide credit for prior learning;
- Placement and retention services; and
- Career ladder opportunities.

Technical skills training under career pathways is credit-based training allowing individuals to apply for and utilize financial aid. Whenever feasible, the majority of individuals are co-enrolled in workforce development programs to provide tuition and support service assistance. These programs include: WIOA Adult, WIOA Youth, State or Federal Dislocated Worker programs, or Vocational Rehabilitation Services. The Career Navigator is responsible for identifying and aligning resources to maximize career and training services.

We have worked with South Central College to develop portable and stackable credentials. Individuals in the health care pathway earn a Nursing Assistant certification which is required credits and credential for a number of health care pathways. Under manufacturing, individuals earn a MSSC certification after their first semester which is required certification and credits for the machining, mechatronics and welding pathways. We are just beginning the development of the transportation pathway. *At this time, individuals will obtain a driving permit in the bridge class. Individuals are then either placed with employers who will support CDL training/licensure or enrolled in WIOA for CDL instruction/licensure at training programs in the metro area.*

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

The South Central WorkForce Council facilitates engagement of employers in a number of ways. Most of the employers in our local area are small employers, consequently engagement is primarily with small employers. Due to our focus on key industries and demand occupations, our engagement with employers are in-demand industry sectors and occupations. Engagement of employers in workforce development programs includes:

- The South Central WorkForce Council is comprised of a majority of business representatives. Businesses represented on the Council are from the key industries of: business/professional services, construction, health care, and manufacturing. This board is engaged in a public-private partnership in the administration and oversight of workforce development programs. The board identifies the key industries, demand occupations, sets policy, and provides direction and oversight of the investment of public dollars in workforce development.

- Employers participated in our regional planning sessions providing input on workforce issues and opportunities and identifying workforce priorities for the region.
- Our [Workforce Strategy Consultant](#), Rehabilitation Services Employment Specialists, and Local Veterans' Employment Representatives provide outreach to employers and assist with their hiring and retention needs.
- The [MN DEED Workforce Strategy Consultant](#) will develop industry-led sector partnerships, focusing on employers from the key industries identified by the WorkForce Council. [Workforce Solutions Roundtables will be held in the region as well as Power of Different events that promote hiring of diverse populations.](#)
- Employers participate in planning and development of career pathways, inform the partnership on skill needs, provide career exploration activities including guest speaker in classroom and industry tours, provide work-based learning opportunities through clinicals and internships/apprenticeships, provide employment and career laddering opportunities.
- Employers are engaged in career exploration and awareness events including the "Hot Jobs" health care event, Tour of Manufacturing, Construct Tomorrow, Scrubs Camp, career expos, employer panels, and job shadowing opportunities.
- Employers provide work-based training for adults and dislocated workers through on-the-job training, internships, apprenticeships and transitional jobs (work experience). In addition, employers provide work experience and internships for youth.
- Employers participate in a number of job fairs held throughout the year that provides employment opportunities for job seekers.
- Providers also engage with employers through local Chambers of Commerce and SMHRA.

A priority for this two-year plan is to continue to increase employer engagement.

- B. Describe how the local area board will support a local workforce development system that meets the needs of businesses in the local workforce development area.

The services of our local workforce development system are all centered around meeting the skill needs of businesses in our local area. Utilizing labor market information, input from employers on our local board, and other employer engagement noted above, we identify the skill needs and gaps of local employers. Through our career services we assess the skills of job seekers and identify and address where gaps exist. Career counseling focuses on matching the skills and interests of job seekers with the key industries and demand occupations in the region. Job search assistance is based on feedback from employers. Training is focused on meeting the skill needs of employers by targeting training in demand occupations. Our post-secondary providers develop education/training programs based on the skills identified by employers. Career pathways are developed based on the key industries in the local area and the

bridge/integrated curriculum is developed based on input of skill needs from employers. Our business services focus on meeting the human resource needs of businesses in the local area. Salary Survey and other labor market information is provided to businesses. Workforce Center staff facilitate workshops and seminars for business on common topics of interest.

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

The South Central WorkForce continues to meet with state, regional and local economic development professionals to identify ways to coordinate programs and services. Current coordination includes:

- The South Central WorkForce Council is the review board for the Region 9 Comprehensive Economic Development Survey (CEDS) that is completed each year for submission to the federal Economic Development Administration.
- The Executive Director of the South Central WorkForce Council and the Job Service area manager serves on the Economic Development Committee of the Region 9 Development Commission.
- The South Central WorkForce Council has an economic development representative on the board who chairs our Workforce Development Committee. All state, regional and local economic development professionals are invited to participate on the WorkForce Development Committee.
- The MN DEED local Business Development Specialist convenes local economic development professionals and invites WorkForce Council staff to engage in dialogue on an annual basis. As specific projects are identified, economic development professionals work with workforce development staff on identifying and addressing workforce needs of the business.
- Local, county and regional economic development professionals participated in our regional planning meetings to help identify needs and strategies for the region.
- Workforce Center staff participate in local economic development meetings and initiatives.

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

A key strategy to strengthen linkages between local workforce services and unemployment insurance is through coordination with Reemployment Assistance (REA). Job Service staff attend REA sessions to ensure attendees are aware of the broad range of services available at the workforce center and on dislocated worker services specifically. Attendees that express an interest in dislocated

worker services are connected to the appropriate staff.

MN DEED Job Service staff, with their connection to local employers, is a key link in providing employers information on lay-off prevention strategies and [dislocated worker services](#). Job Service staff provide information to local businesses on potential lay-off prevention strategies such as shared work and training services including incumbent worker training, on-the-job training, transitional jobs and apprenticeship.

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

Our local workforce centers provide services for individuals interested in entrepreneurship through our continued partnership with local agencies providing entrepreneurial services including: SBDC, MSU-Mankato, SC College, Riverbend Center for Entrepreneurial Facilitation/Ignite, Greater Mankato Growth, Waseca BEST, Southern MN Initiative Foundation, Region 9 Development Commission and local financial institutions. Individuals interested in entrepreneurship are referred to these local partners for services depending on their need and location. Workforce partners provide the full-compliment of program services as appropriate in collaboration with entrepreneurial services including supporting training plans and support services.

CLIMB (Converting Layoffs Into Minnesota Businesses), allows providers to offer entrepreneurial training, business consulting, and technical assistance to dislocated workers who wish to start their own business without impacting performance results. MN DEED Job Service provides guidance and outreach materials for delivery of these services and supports entrepreneurial skills training.

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

The South Central WorkForce Council has established two partnership teams that address continuous improvement and staff development needs of our core partners: the South Central Training Team and the SC Continuous Improvement Team.

The South Central Training Team is made up of staff from the core partners to address the training needs of partnership agencies including: ABE, Job Service, Life-Work Planning Center, Minnesota Valley Action Council, MRCI, Rehabilitation Services, and Services for the Blind. The team assesses the training needs of our WorkForce Center partners and provides training that addresses the needs that are common across the partnership. Training days are held twice a year for all partnership staff. These training days are noteworthy in that the agendas are driven by the staff of our WorkForce Center partnership and also address partnership development.

The Continuous Improvement Team deals with quality issues. The team conducts assessments of the system, obtains feedback from our customers and staff, and develops continuous improvement plans that address quality issues.

In addition to these activities, the SC WorkForce Council also participates in “Mystery Shoppers” where unidentified staff from other Workforce Development Areas visit our resource rooms and rate the level of services. The Continuous Improvement Team and Operations Committee review the results of these visits and identify improvement areas.

We conducted the National Workforce Institute assessment to identify the training needs of staff. This assessment was also completed by SE and SW MN. As a result of this work, the Southern MN Professional Development Network was established to address training needs we have in common across the four local WDAs in Southern Minnesota as well as sharing best practices.

Rural youth providers have been meeting to discuss implementation of WIOA and to share best practices.

The SC WorkForce Council conducts an annual review of program results. The Council not only reviews results of WIOA Title I programs, but also the results of the partners of the WorkForce Center. State and SC WorkForce Council staff conduct on-site monitoring of WIOA and MFIP service providers on an annual basis. These monitoring reviews provide an opportunity to identify and address areas of continuous improvement.

Finally, each partnering agency provides staff development specific to their agency needs. This includes participating in local, state (MN DEED, MN DHS, MWCA) and national training opportunities. Through MWCA, best practices are shared across the 16 local WDAs.

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

The South Central WorkForce Council, along with our Providers, identify the needs of employers, workers and job seekers through the regional forums, labor market information, engaging local businesses and the broader community.

Employers

Employers indicate that a skilled workforce is the number one factor that predicates business success and competitive advantage. Skills needed that are consistent across industries include:

- Basic work readiness skills (including attendance, timeliness, work ethic, etc.)
- Teamwork and interpersonal skills
- Problem-solving/critical thinking skills

- Basic math and reading skills
- Communication skills (oral and written)
- Computer skills
- Technical/occupational skills

Our local employers report that they are having a difficult time finding skilled labor. Currently, there is **less than** one job seeker for every job vacancy in the local area. Shortages exist in skilled, technical positions. Occupations that were identified as difficult to fill were: maintenance/boiler operators, skilled trade occupations **including carpenters, truck drivers, skilled manufacturing mechanics and technicians, machinists, welders, entry level production workers**, paraprofessionals/teaching assistants, lab technicians, physical therapists, physicians, and nurses/nursing assistants.

Many employers within key industries indicate there needs to be greater awareness of career opportunities within their industry. This is especially prevalent within manufacturing and trade occupations. With the decline of the family farm and industrial arts/technology programs at local school districts, youth are not exposed to these career opportunities as they once were. Marketing and career exploration programs (i.e. Project Lead the Way, Partners In Career Exploration, Tour of Manufacturing) are needed that expose job seekers to career opportunities within these industries and that combat old stereo-types, especially in the manufacturing industry.

As businesses look ahead to the aging of our workforce and the retirements of baby boomers, employers need succession planning strategies and knowledge transfer plans. Employers are looking at mentorship programs where older, long-term employees mentor younger workers. They also indicate that knowledge can transfer both ways, as younger employees often have better computer/technology skills and can assist older workers with technology changes. A related issue for employers is dealing for the first time with four generations in the workforce. Each generation is motivated differently and responds to differing styles of supervision and incentives.

The recession compounded the problem of an aging workforce. Many industries had few new hires and experienced lay-offs during the recession; consequently, they have not developed a pipeline of younger workers within their industry to fill the positions vacated by retirees. This was prevalent in the Trades where workers were on the bench during the recession, and now that they are experiencing vast growth and retirements they do not have a pipeline of younger workers that have been developed to fill these positions.

The needs of employers are met by providing qualified job applicants with the basic, work readiness and occupational/technical skills required for employment. This begins by identifying the demand occupations in the region and providing job seekers with the information they need to make informed career choices. Assessments identify any deficits a job seeker may have in meeting the skill requirements of employers. Sector-based career pathways provide job seekers with the basic and

technical skills needed to meet employer demand for a skilled workforce through partnerships with Adult Basic Education and post-secondary institutions in the region. Strategies such as employment counseling, work experience/transitional jobs and employability/skill classes address work readiness/employability skill issues.

Employer needs are also addressed by [Job Service staff](#) who meet one-on-one with area employers to identify and address employment-related issues. Business seminars are held to address broad issues such as succession planning, generational issues, labor laws, etc. Job fairs and career fairs are organized to provide employers with an opportunity to connect with large number of job seekers and the emerging workforce. Employers are also featured in our workforce centers, providing them an opportunity to meet with job seekers utilizing our resource rooms.

Finally, employer needs are identified and addressed by their involvement in workforce development through their participation on boards, committees; by providing tours, job shadowing, and guest speakers in the classroom; and by providing work-based opportunities through work experience, internships/clinicals, and apprenticeships. Employer involvement with workforce and education professionals is instrumental in developing training and strategies that meet their needs.

Workers

Trends all indicate that our incumbent workforce will need to be life-long learners. Studies reveal that our workforce will not only change jobs at least eleven times in their life-time, but they will also need to change careers. It is estimated that many of the jobs of tomorrow have not yet been created. As technology, mechanization, and information continually changes, our workforce will continue to need training and upgrading of skills. We are experiencing a “churning” of the workforce where we see loss of jobs due to downsizing at that same time where high skilled jobs go unfilled. Many of the jobs lost are the entry-level, lower skilled jobs. All of these trends point to a need for access to training opportunities that provide the skills workers will need to compete and succeed in today's and tomorrow's workforce.

Manufacturing employers have indicated that incumbent workers need training in: LEAN/Six Sigma, computer skills/technology, supervisory skills, fiscal management (understanding profit) and employee personal development plans. Health care employers indicated many of the same training needs: computers/technology, mentoring, data analysis, leadership/supervisory skills and the sciences. All industries indicate employees need better written and oral communication skills.

Workers need training that accommodates their schedules such as on-line, nights and week-ends. They also need company-specific training through incumbent, customized and on-the-job training opportunities.

Workers need career advancement/career laddering opportunities. They need opportunities to increase their skills so they can move up the career ladder and obtain higher skilled/higher wage jobs. As the aging population leaves the workforce,

there will be a need for employees to fill higher level positions. Employers prefer to recruit within for qualified employees that already know the business. As a result, this will provide openings for new entry level workers. Workers need training opportunities that will prepare them for these advancement opportunities.

Workforce strategies that address worker needs include incumbent worker training, customized training opportunities, evening and on-line training, and employer professional development opportunities.

Job Seekers

There are a variety of individuals looking for work. Whether it is a youth entering the workforce for the first time, a low skilled unemployed individual, a highly skilled dislocated worker or someone currently employed looking for better employment opportunities, they have similar yet specialized needs.

Job seekers need work readiness and basic skills to succeed in the workplace. All occupations, across all industries require basic skills including work readiness skills, basic math and reading, computer, communication, interpersonal, and critical thinking skills. MNSCU campuses report that an increasing percentage of students are requiring remediation in basic skills prior to enrolling in specific occupational training programs. As a result, job seeker basic and work readiness skills are assessed. Individuals with low basic skills are referred to Adult Basic Education and our “FastTRAC” Career Pathway programs. Employment counseling, work experience/transitional jobs and employability/skill classes are provided to address work readiness/employability skill issues.

As the labor market continues to change, job seekers need access to good labor market information to make informed career choices. Job seekers are provided labor market information on demand occupations, future employment trends, career pathway and laddering opportunities. Interest and aptitude assessments are provided to help them identify their strengths and how skill sets transfer across job opportunities.

Job seekers also need basic job search assistance. They need to know how to find the jobs that are available and tap the hidden job market. Employer recruitment methods continue to change. Some employers do not list their job openings. Many require online applications and situational assessments to screen their applicants. Almost all job openings require either an application or resume. Frequently we work with dislocated workers who have not job searched in years and require assistance in conducting a successful job search. Special populations, like older workers and ex-offenders need specialized job search assistance to overcome barriers to finding employment. As a result, Creative Job Search and Resume Writing classes are provided at each of the WorkForce Centers. In our resource rooms, job seekers have access to computers, telephones, copiers to conduct their job search. Specialized job search assistance is provided to ex-offenders and older workers. One-on-one assistance is also available in our resource rooms for individuals who need additional assistance with researching job opportunities, posting resumes,

completing on-line applications, etc.

Job seekers need employment opportunities that pay a livable wage. They need jobs that will provide income sufficient to meet their basic needs. The Jobs Now Coalition Cost of Living In Minnesota Wage Calculator indicates that a family of four with one adult worker needs to earn a minimum of \$16.00 per hour working 40 hours per week in order to meet basic expenses. The average annual wages for the region is \$15.48. Job seekers have access to information on demand occupations in the region and wages through labor market information.

Job seekers need the technical skills and credentials required for demand occupations in the region. Consequently, job seekers will need computer and occupational skill training that is affordable, flexible and provides the skills necessary to compete for higher wage job opportunities. Training institutions provide a wide range of training opportunities in a variety of formats. This includes short-term customized training, work-based training, as well as one, two and four year certification/degree programs. Training is provided evenings, week-ends and through on-line instructional formats to meet the varying needs of life-long learners.

The Georgetown study reveals that 70% of Minnesota jobs will require education beyond high school by the year 2018. Job seekers accessing services who lack a post-secondary credential are provided career counseling that stresses the importance of post-secondary training in preparing them for high skilled job opportunities in demand occupations. Tuition assistance is provided to help job seekers obtain the post-secondary training and credentials required for employment in demand occupations that pay self-sustaining wages.

Employers are seeking job candidates that have experience in the industry. Consequently, work-based learning opportunities are provided including: work experience/transitional jobs, on-the-job training, internships and apprenticeships.

Workforce participation rates for teens has been on a steady decline. Consequently, teens are provided work experience opportunities to learn work readiness skills and how to succeed in the world of work, in addition to career counseling and comprehensive labor market information to make informed decisions on their future career choice. Teens receive assistance to transition from high school to post-secondary opportunities, making career decisions, enrolling in post-secondary education and exploring financial aid opportunities.

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

Strategies to maximize access to services include:

- Local workforce centers post information on local library hours for access to computers outside of workforce center hours.

- MN Valley Action Council has offices in each of the six counties that do not have a workforce center and each of these offices provide computers to access MinnesotaWorks on-line. This is especially beneficial for customers who face transportation issues.
- Providing services on a temporary basis at satellite locations for special populations or projects. This is often set-up for large mass lay-offs.
- Technology. The use of technology helps us to maintain contact with job seekers and provide case management services. Assistive technology provides better access for individuals with disabilities. We will be exploring with Southwest Minnesota, the development of an on-line application/screening tool. We will continue to support efforts at MN DEED to develop on-line services for individuals, especially for those customers with limited barriers that are able to self-serve.

- D. Describe how entities within the one-stop delivery system will comply with section 188, if applicable, and applicable provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, regarding the physical and programmatic accessibility of facilities, programs and services, technology and materials for individuals with disabilities including providing staff training and support for addressing the needs of individuals with disabilities.

All core partners of our WorkForce Centers comply with section 188 of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, regarding the physical and programmatic accessibility of facilities, programs and services, technology and materials for individuals with disabilities including providing staff training and support for addressing the needs of individuals with disabilities.

The WorkForce Centers have been MN DEED certified to be fully accessible to all Minnesotans. The local Centers are equipped with the required accessible equipment, software and technology to meet the requirements of ADA and are regularly monitored by MN DEED for compliance. Core partners follow policies and procedures outlined by MN DEED for all aspects of accessibility, participate in MN DEED staff training , and work with MN DEED staff to address concerns or areas of needed assistance. All contracts/subcontracts require ADA compliance.

Training has been provided for staff through MN DEED and the training team.

Vocational Rehabilitation Services is the designated partner for ADA Coordination and are available for technical assistance.

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

Core partners of the South Central Workforce Development Area include:

- MN DEED Business Development: The Business Development Specialist provides assistance to businesses interested in expanding or locating in the region.
- MN DEED Job Service: The Job Service is responsible for providing Wagner

Peyser labor exchange services, Creative Job Search and Resume Workshops, business services, WIOA Adult and Dislocated Worker career services and work-based training services, and career pathway navigation services. In two counties, the Job Service provides MFIP, Diversionary Work and SNAP employment and training services.

- MN DEED REA: Provides reemployment assistance to individuals receiving unemployment insurance through workshops and one-on-one assistance.
- MN DEED State Services for the Blind: Provides tools, training and technology to help individuals who are blind or visually impaired live independently and to prepare for, find and keep employment.
- MN DEED Veteran Employment Services: Provides specialized employment and training services for Veterans with significant barriers to employment. Local Veterans Employment Representatives provides outreach to employers on behalf of Veterans.
- MN DEED Vocational Rehabilitation Services: Assists individuals with disabilities to live independently and prepare for, find and keep employment.
- MN Valley Action Council: Provides WIOA Youth and MN Youth Program services; career and classroom-based training services for WIOA Adult and Dislocated Workers; SCSEP; and MFIP, Diversionary Work and SNAP employment and training services for five counties.

All partners contribute to the costs of the workforce center and enter into a Memorandum of Understanding which delineates each partner's roles and responsibilities.

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

All complement of adult and dislocated worker employment and training activities is available in the South Central local workforce development area. Providers of services were selected through a Request for Proposal process. Services will be provided through a partnership between MN DEED –Job Service and MN Valley Action Council, focusing on the strengths of each organization.

Basic Career Services

Basic Career Services is provided by MN DEED –Job Service. Job Service is uniquely positioned and qualified to provide these services as the Wagner Peyser provider and as the provider of front-line services at each of the WorkForce Centers. Basic Career Services are available to all individuals seeking services and includes:

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

- Provision of performance and program cost information on eligible training providers;
- Provision of information on how the local area is performing on local performance measures;
- Provision of information on the availability of supportive services or assistance and appropriate referrals;
- Assistance in establishing eligibility for programs of financial aid assistance for training and education programs not provided under WIOA; and
- Provision of information and assistance regarding filing claims under UI programs.

Individualized Career Services

Individualized Career Services are provided by MN DEED –Job Service for individuals receiving stand-alone work-based training and by MN Valley Action Council for individuals on a classroom-training pathway. Individualized Career Services include:

- Comprehensive and specialized assessment;
- Individualized employment plan;
- Group or individualized counseling;
- Career planning/case management;
- Short-term pre-vocational services;
- Internships and work experiences;
- Workforce preparation activities;
- Financial literacy services;
- Out-of-area job search;
- English language acquisition and integrated education/training programs; and
- Follow-up services.

The focus of career services is to provide individuals with the information they need to make informed career decisions, identify a career goal, assess their interests and aptitudes, and to develop a career plan that identifies the steps, resources and services necessary to achieve their goal for meaningful employment in a demand occupation that pays a family-sustaining wage. One-on-one career counseling services focused on career pathways is critical to providing career services, and case management/navigator services and support services is especially vital for individuals experiencing barriers to employment and employment disparities.

An assessment of career services reveals that we have experienced providers that provide quality career services. However, our capacity to provide this level of intensive, one-on-one services is limited to funding available. It will be important to continue to support development of technology to provide these services for individuals that can self-serve so we can focus limited resources on individuals who require more intensive services.

In addition, with our focus on serving populations experiencing employment disparities it will be important to engage other community resources to understand and address the unique needs of special populations.

Training Services:

Work-based training services are provided by MN DEED –Job Service to align with their strong connection with area employers. MN Valley Action Council provides classroom-training services aligning with their expertise to provide intensive case management services.

Training services include:

- Occupational skills training;
- On-the-job training;
- Incumbent worker training;
- Cooperative education programs;
- Private sector training;
- Skill upgrading and retraining;
- Entrepreneurial training;
- Transitional jobs (work experience);
- Job readiness training;
- Adult education and literacy; and
- Customized training.

The focus of training services is to provide individuals with the skills they need for a career pathway in high demand industries and occupations that lead to a family-sustaining wage. Training is provided through work-based and/or post-secondary training that results in industry recognized, stackable credentials that leads to meaningful employment.

An assessment of training services reveals that we have developed strong partnerships for the development of career pathways. The health care and manufacturing pathways are well-developed. We need to continue to expand career pathway opportunities, increase employer engagement for work-based learning opportunities including apprenticeships, continue secondary and post-secondary education alignment, increase community engagement for targeted populations, and continue to develop outreach strategies. Although communities of color are served well above their incidence in the population and have comparable employment results, we do see that this target population has lower average wage rates. In order to increase wages, we need to provide comprehensive counseling to promote the benefits of skill training in order to compete for in demand occupations that pay livable wages.

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

II complement of youth workforce investment activities is available in the South Central local workforce development area. The youth provider of services was selected through a Request for Proposal process. Services will be provided by MN Valley Action Council based on their vast experience and success in providing youth services.

workforce investment activities include:

- Objective assessment;
- Development of service strategies;
- Activities leading to a secondary school diploma;
- Preparation for post-secondary education and training;
- Linkages between academic instruction and occupational education that leads to a credential;
- Preparation for unsubsidized employment;
- Effective connections to employers in demand occupations;
- Program elements include: tutoring, alternative school services, paid and unpaid work experience, occupational skill training, education concurrently with workforce preparation activities, leadership development, supportive services, mentoring, comprehensive career guidance, follow-up services, financial literacy, entrepreneurial skill training, labor market information on demand occupations, and transition to post-secondary education and training.

The focus of youth workforce investment activities is to ensure that youth have the basic skills, work readiness skills and occupational skills necessary to be successful in post-secondary education and training, and ultimately to obtain meaningful employment in demand occupations that pay livable wages along a career pathway.

Successful models include:

- Minnesota Disability Employment Initiative (MN DEI) which was a three year Department of Labor Grant awarded to Minnesota to provide services to youth with disabilities. South Central was one of three Workforce Development Areas that were chosen to be implementation sites. The key strategic approaches implemented in this project included: Guideposts for Success, Integrated Resource Teams and Partnerships & Collaboration. The Guideposts for Success represent key educational and career interventions that make a positive difference in the lives of youth with disabilities. Integrated Resource Teams were instrumental in coordinating services and resources with multiple agencies and resulted in greater communication and coordination between agencies. The initiative strengthened partnerships with agencies that provide services and resources for youth with disabilities.
- Youth at Work project titled “Dream It. Believe It. Achieve It.” targets services to youth from communities of color. In addition to providing youth workforce investment activities, this program engages youth and their families, provides cultural awareness to the community, positive role models and leadership opportunities to inspire youth and specialized services for those with disabilities. Because we recognize the strong family connection in communities of color, parents are invited to participate in the initial meetings for program enrollment as well as the group activities. To increase cultural awareness in the community, worksite supervisors participate in cultural awareness training. The program provides positive role models from communities of color that have overcome adversity to demonstrate that it is possible to achieve their dreams. In addition, the YWCA Mankato provides leadership opportunities, such as SURGE!, which is

a leadership program for young girls grades 9-12 or the Annual Women's Leadership Conference. Youth with disabilities that are not ready for competitive employment participate in specialized programming to build their employability skills.

- Youth Intervention Program targets services to youth that have been or are currently in out-of-home placement (i.e. foster care, group homes). Youth receive career and life skills curriculum to explore and identify positive education, career and life goals.
- The TANF Youth Project provides work experiences for teen parents receiving Minnesota Family Investment Program (MFIP) benefits or youth in MFIP households. Youth can work an average of 30 hours per week for 12 weeks while meeting their MFIP work participation requirements.
- Outreach to Schools/Partners In Career Exploration program recruits first year graduate students in the Student Counseling Program at Minnesota State University-Mankato to provide career exploration and career counseling assistance to high school students in local school districts including: Gibbon-Fairfax-Winthrop (GFW) High School, Le Sueur-Henderson High School, Sibley East High School, St. Clair High School, St. Peter High School, Tri-City United High School, and Waterville-Elysian-Morristown (WEM) High School.

Career Pathways for in-demand occupations are introduced through work experience opportunities, career exploration events, and FastTRAC programming. The work experience component has a significant impact in preparing youth for the workforce and introducing career pathways for in-demand occupations. Worksites are recruited based on youth's interests and career goals. Staff work with youth to investigate careers and labor market information. Each year the South Central WorkForce Council develops a demand occupation list from a rich set of labor market information including current demand and outlook coupled with real-time input from local employers and job counselors. Employers that provide work experiences in high growth and in-demand occupations are targeted. When possible, youth are placed in private sector worksites where there is greater opportunity to get hired after the work experience.

We have worked with area high schools to provide academic credit for youth employment activities which assists youth in obtaining the credits they need to graduate on time.

Youth attend the following career exploration events: Career expos, Hot Jobs: Healthcare Needs You, Scrubs Camp, Tour of Manufacturing, and Construct Tomorrow.

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

Primary strategy to coordinate education and workforce investment activities in order to align strategies, enhance services and avoid duplication is through the activities of our Rural Career Counseling Coordinator. Our Regional Workforce Development Area has been awarded funding for a Rural Career Counseling Coordinator position. This position is responsible for strengthening connections between workforce, education, area businesses, job seekers, and other stakeholders; aligning regional resources; implementing sector strategies; and promoting career pathway opportunities within the region. Building on current initiatives (including career pathways, career education, and out-reach to schools), one of the key responsibilities will be to enhance alignment and assure non-duplication of services. This is being achieved by conducting an asset map and analysis of existing services and identifying where gaps exist. Upon completion of the asset mapping process, the results will be shared with the Regional Leadership Board and the local workforce development boards. Based on the results, the boards and staff will develop recommendations and strategies for future steps to align resources, fill gaps and implement identified strategies. The Rural Career Counseling Coordinator will work closely with stakeholders throughout the region to ensure overall coordination, as well as share best practices and bring them to scale.

Another important strategy is providing career exploration events for key industries, working closely with area partners, including education. These events provide broad exposure for large numbers of students in key industries. Events include:

- Career Expos in Fairmont, Mankato and New Ulm;
- Hot Jobs in Health Care career exploration event and Scrubs Camp;
- Construct Tomorrow career exploration event on trade occupations; and
- Tour of Manufacturing.

Our partnership with local secondary schools and South Central Service Cooperative help us to coordinate and align resources to increase career awareness, career counseling and work-based learning opportunities in the area.

Finally, our outreach to schools program entitled “Partners in Career Exploration” places graduate students in the Student Counseling program at MSU-Mankato at area high schools one day a week with a focus on providing one-on-one career counseling to high school juniors and seniors. The graduate students receive training from workforce center partners and our labor market analyst who provides information on key industries and demand occupations in the local area.

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

Provision of supportive services is critical to the success of individuals we serve. In a rural workforce development area, transportation is by far the greatest need of our customers, in addition to tools, clothing, and emergency medical and financial assistance. Public transportation is limited in our workforce development area and what public transportation that does exist does not meet the needs of individuals who have jobs that

require shift work. During our regional planning sessions with stakeholders, transportation was identified as a great need as well as child care. Once again, current child care services does not meet the needs of individuals who have shift work plus there is limited availability for infant care.

Both Central WorkForce Council informs and supports local and regional efforts to address transportation needs through organizations such as the Region 9 Development Commission, the Highway 14 partnership, and other local initiatives in small rural communities to transport workers.

Workforce system has limited support service dollars and identifies and aligns with other community resources whenever possible to stretch funding as far as possible.

21. Describe the plans and strategies for, and assurances concerning, maximizing coordination of service provided by the state employment service under Wagner-Peyser Act, and services provided in the local workforce development area through the one-stop delivery system, to improve service delivery and avoid duplication of services.

Minnesota's WIOA State Plan describes the state's strategy for providing reemployment assistance to Wagner Peyser targeted populations of UI claimants. The strategy (with implementation date of July 2016) will be as follows:

- A Wagner Peyser staff person will attend every Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment (REA) session that the UI program offers across the state. The UI program typically offers REA sessions to approximately 40,000 applicants per year to those who are at risk of exhausting their benefits.
- The REA and Wagner Peyser staff will conduct a quick assessment of every participant to determine who will most likely need additional services from the WorkForce Center.
- The Wagner Peyser staff person will conduct an overview of WFC 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 [MinnesotaWorks](#), and information about programs such as the Dislocated Worker program that they may be eligible for.
- The Wagner Peyser staff person will assist the REA 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.
- Wagner Peyser will follow up with REA participants 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.

These activities will be coordinated with the programs within the local Workforce Development Area as follows:

The Wagner Peyser program also provides services to businesses.

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

South Central WorkForce Council has a long, vast history of working in partnership with our local Adult Basic Education partners. We have four Adult Basic Education consortia in our local area including: Area Adult Learning Cooperative, Faribault County Adult Basic Education, Mankato Area Adult Basic Education and Southwest Adult Basic Education.

Basic Education is a key partner in our local workforce development area. Examples of coordination between workforce investment activities and Adult Basic Education include:

- The development of career pathways for health care, manufacturing and transportation pathways. Through career pathways we align the resources and expertise of local partners to develop sector-based pathways for key industries. Adult Basic Education provides concurrent basic skills instruction and instructional support for adult learners with low basic skills. This is aligned with workforce center career navigation services, aligning titles under WIOA to provide tuition assistance and support services, as well as South Central College's career and technical education.
- Referrals are made between WIOA programs and Adult Basic Education for adult literacy instruction, GED/high school diploma, and English Language Learner instruction.
- Workforce partners utilize Adult Basic Education's College Prep course for low-skilled adult learners that are entering programs of study outside of our developed career pathway programs.
- Workforce partners utilize Adult Basic Education for individuals with limited digital literacy skills.
- Individuals identified through the National Career Readiness Credential assessment needing additional skill development are referred to Adult Basic Education for KeyTrain on-line instruction. The WorkForce Council supports and identifies funding for the purchase of the KeyTrain license.
- Referral forms and data-sharing agreement forms have been developed to better serve common customers.
- Adult Basic Education has a representative on the South Central WorkForce Council and staff also participate on the SC Career Pathway Partnership, Workforce Development Committee and Youth Council as well as other task forces for special initiatives and events. Adult Basic Education participated on a task force that developed non-traditional employment resource materials and training.
- Adult Basic Education is invited to our local workforce development area training days to promote a better understanding across partners.

Adult Basic Education is included in our current Memorandum of Understanding of core partners and will be included in the updated Memorandum of Understanding. Every Adult Basic Education consortia in the state provides a program narrative to the MN Department of Education every five years for approval of their service model and programming. All Adult Basic Education partners are expected to submit a new program narrative June 2017. The narrative will include provisions for local ABE programs to provide evidence that programming aligns with the local and regional WIOA plan, including evidence of common referral, co-location, program collaboration, alignment of assessment processes, and helping select and design key occupational pathways. These applications/narratives will be submitted by Adult Basic Education to the local workforce development board for review in 2017.

23. Describe the replicated cooperative agreements (as defined in section 107(d)(11)) between the local area board or other local entities described in section 101(a)(11)(B) of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (29 U.S.C. 721(a)(11)(B)) and the local office of a designated state agency or designated state unit administering programs carried out under title I of such Act (29 U.S.C. 720 et seq.) (other than section 112 or part C of that title (29 U.S.C. 732, 741) and subject to section 121(f)) in accordance with section 101(a)(11) of such Act (29 U.S.C. 721(a)(11)) with respect to efforts that will enhance the provision of services to individuals with disabilities and to other individuals, such as cross training of staff, technical assistance, use and sharing of information, cooperative efforts with employers, and other efforts at cooperation, collaboration, and coordination.

The South Central Workforce Council, Vocational Rehabilitation Services and core partners under WIOA enter into a cooperative Memorandum of Understanding. The Memorandum of Understanding delineates the roles and responsibilities of the core partners and how services will be coordinated and delivered; how costs will be shared across the core partners; methods of referral between the core partners; and methods to ensure the needs of youth and individuals with barriers to employment are addressed. [The Memorandum of Understanding was signed by core partners in June 2017.](#)

Vocational Rehabilitation Services collaborates with core partners to enhance services to individuals with disabilities and for individuals with other barriers to employment. Vocational Rehabilitation Services are co-located with core partners in all three workforce centers in the local area. WorkForce Center staff provide an orientation to the full array of services available through core partners to assist job seekers in making an informed decision on choice of service provider. All core partner staff participate in training days to ensure they understand the services offered by the various partners, the eligibility criteria for each program and to address common training needs.

Examples of collaboration with Vocational Rehabilitation Services includes:

- A Vocational Rehabilitation Services representative serves on the South Central WorkForce Council.
- Vocational Rehabilitation Services staff serve on the South Central Career Pathways Partnership, the Operations Committee, Workforce Development Committee and the Youth Council.

- Vocational Rehabilitation Services staff serve on the SC Training Team and the SC Continuous Improvement Team.
- Referral forms and data sharing forms have been developed to assist in collaboration of services with shared customers.
- Strong coordination and collaboration was developed under the recent Youth DEI grant. Although this grant focused on youth programming, the collaborations that were developed continues under all programs.
- Vocational Rehabilitation Services staff played a lead role in the development of resources and training for non-traditional employment.
- WIOA Youth Providers are working in collaboration with Vocational Rehabilitation Services in the delivery of Pre-ETS services.

24. Describe and identify the entity responsible for the disbursement of grant funds described in section 107(d)(12)(B)(i).

Under the WIOA law under section 107(d)(12)(B)(ii), the South Central Workforce Development Area Joint Powers Board has designated Minnesota Valley Action Council, Inc. as the local grant subrecipient for the disbursement of grant funds. This designation has been recently approved by all nine local county board of commissioners through the approval of the workforce development area Joint Powers Agreement. In addition, roles and responsibilities are delineated in the recently approved agreement between the Joint Powers Board, the South Central WorkForce Council and Minnesota Valley Action Council. These agreements are in place through June 30, 2020 in alignment with the four year planning process.

Minnesota Valley Action Council has over 30 years of experience in receiving and disbursing state and federal resources. Under the most recent audit, MN Valley Action Council continues to have no issues or questioned costs.

25. Describe the competitive process to be used to award the sub-grants and contracts in the local workforce development area for activities carried out under this title.

The South Central WorkForce Council conducts a formal Request for Proposal (RFP) process to identify the service deliverers of WIOA Youth, WIOA Adult, WIOA Dislocated Worker and State Dislocated Worker programs. The process begins by the development of an RFP Task Force. The Task Force includes SC WorkForce Council members and staff and a Joint Powers Board representative. All Task Force members are required to sign a Conflict of Interest/Nondisclosure Statement prior to their participation. The RFP Task Force evaluates current service delivery and identifies changes to be made to the system and/or services to efficiently and effectively deliver services to our customers.

A Request for Proposal package is developed and published requesting potential providers to detail how they will fulfill the requirements for services and expected outcomes. Publishing of the RFP includes a notice in all nine-county legal newspapers, a notice on our website, letters sent to area organizations/agencies, other identified providers of workforce development programs, and those that request to be on our RFP

list.

The Task Force reviews and evaluates the responses. Evaluation criteria includes:

- ◆ Identification of Need
- ◆ Services (including: Career Services, Training Services and Career Pathway Navigator services)
- ◆ Commitment to Partnership/WorkForce Center System
- ◆ Performance Outcomes
- ◆ Budget/Costs –including cost/price analysis
- ◆ Operational Capability

on evaluation results the RFP Task Force develops a recommendation that is submitted to the South Central WorkForce Council and Joint Powers Board for approval.

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

ated performance standards are one way in which the South Central WorkForce Council measures the performance of the local workforce development area, providers and the one-stop delivery system.

quarterly basis, performance progress is reviewed with providers. South Central WorkForce Council staff reviews the rosters behind the results with service providers to ensure that services and outcomes have been correctly coded on Workforce One.

outh Central WorkForce Council reviews final results on an annual basis. If deficiencies exist, the board works with service providers to identify strategies to increase performance.

scal agent performance is reviewed through a monthly review of the general ledgers, a quarterly fund review with service providers, on-site monitoring by MN DEED and an end of the year review of financial statements and audit.

ition to performance measures, the board also conducts a thorough review, on an annual basis, of demographics, services, trends, training occupations and outcomes of service providers, as well as on-site monitoring visits where case files are reviewed for compliance and quality of services.

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

pecific criteria of what constitutes a high-performing board has not yet been issued by the Governor's Workforce Development Board. Once the standards have been developed, the South Central WorkForce Council will review and identify strategies for remaining a high-performing board.

South Central WorkForce Council, in partnership with the Southwest Workforce Council, will address the six strategies, inputs, outputs and milestones identified in the State Plan:

1. Business Engagement – Three sector-based career pathways have been developed for the health care, manufacturing and transportation industries. The South Central WorkForce Council will continue to increase business engagement on our board and committees, through regional stakeholder meetings, sector based career pathways, and increase business involvement in providing career exploration and work-based learning activities.
2. Community Engagement – The local workforce board currently engages the community through the workforce board, the Career Pathway Partnership, the Workforce Development Committee, the Youth Council, and numerous task forces to plan specific activities and events. The South Central WorkForce Council will continue to increase community engagement by engaging partners that represent populations that experience employment disparities.
3. Customer-Centered Design – The local workforce board has always had a customer-focused approach. Through feedback from our customers and partners, an examination of customer outcomes, and a review of best practices, the South Central WorkForce Council will continue to develop strategies, program and policy alignment, resources and measurement systems to continue to address the needs of our customers.
4. Funding and Resource Needs – The local workforce board has worked hard to align funding and resources through our one-stop delivery system and career pathway approach. Through our Regional Career Counseling Coordinator, we will be conducting an asset map of career and workforce development services and identifying where gaps exist. This analysis will assist us in identifying resources in the region and enable us to align resources to avoid duplication and target resources to where the greatest impact can be made.
5. Policy and System Alignment – As final regulations are published and State policies revised, the South Central WorkForce Council and the Southwest Workforce Council will develop and align local policies that meet federal regulations and State policies.
6. System Management – Throughout the years, the local board has engaged career pathway partners to improve processes and outcomes of our career pathways. As we focus on populations experiencing employment disparities we will continue to improve processes and outcomes and to evaluate our career pathway system based on the dashboard created by the State.

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

Provision of training services begins with a comprehensive assessment. Career counselors assist the customer in aligning their interests, aptitudes and values with occupations in-demand in the region. As the occupational goal is identified, an Occupational

Research Packet is completed by the customer to understand the occupation, its wages, and demand. Access to information on training providers and their outcomes is provided in order to allow the customer to make an informed choice on the selection of training programs. An Individual Training Account is completed to identify to the customer the amount of resources available for the training and to inform the training provider in order to avoid duplication of resources. At this point in time we are not utilizing contracts for training services.

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

A public notice of the Regional and Local Plan was published in April in the Mankato Free Press legal notices section, posted on the South Central WorkForce Council website, and notices were emailed to local stakeholders giving employers, labor organizations and other interested parties an opportunity to review and comment. The notice indicates that the plan is available for review and comment on our website for 30 days and provides information on how to provide input or comment.

Through their representation on the South Central WorkForce Council, representatives of business and organized labor participate in the development of our regional and local unified plan. The SC WorkForce Council includes representatives of the following industries: construction, manufacturing, health care and social assistance, and business and professional services. In addition, we have two active labor representatives from the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers and Carpenters Union who represent the trades industry and are involved in the review process.

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

South Central WorkForce Council continues to explore ways to transition to an integrated technology-enabled intake and case management information system. We currently use technology to help us to maintain contact with job seekers and provide to case management services. We will be exploring with Southwest Minnesota, the development of an on-line application and support the development of an on-line "triage" tool to direct customers to appropriate services. We will continue to support the efforts of MN DEED to develop on-line services for individuals, especially for those customers with limited barriers that are able to self-serve. Our core partners utilize the common Workforce One data information system and we support the system changes that need to occur to align Adult Basic Education, MnSCU and Workforce Center data systems.

SECTION C: PROGRAM OPERATIONS

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

The South Central WorkForce Council supports and complies with the policies developed by the MN Department of Employment & Economic Development. To ensure our providers comply with MN DEED policy, all subcontracts with local service providers state: *SUBGRANTEE agrees to administer the program in accordance with the Act, as amended, State and Federal laws, regulations and guidelines promulgated thereunder, including the MN Department of Employment and Economic Development's WIAO Title I and Related Activities Manual.*

In practice, the local WDA Rapid Response Liaison and service provider staff (MN DEED –Job Service) have years of experience in partnering with MN DEED to respond to dislocation events. The WDA recognizes that the primary responsibility for initial Rapid Response lies with the MN Dept. of Employment & Economic Development. Rapid Response is the primary contact with the business. Good communication between Rapid Response and local partners is key to responding to the needs of area businesses and laid off workers.

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

The South Central WorkForce Council and its provider, MN DEED –Job Service, have built excellent relationships with the State Rapid Response team. The recent recession has afforded us many opportunities to work with Rapid Response partners in responding to local dislocation events. Our local WDA contacts the State Rapid Response Team within 24 hours, either by telephone or email, whenever we are aware of an actual or potential mass lay-off of 50 or more. As a local provider, MN DEED –Job Service works closely with their colleagues in Rapid Response to respond to actual and potential lay-offs.

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

The local WDA provides any information they have received to the State Rapid Response Team regarding a mass lay-off. This could be in the form of media announcements or relaying information received from the company itself or from affected workers who come to the WorkForce Center for assistance with Unemployment. Rapid Response makes the official contact with the company to confirm the lay-off information, identify if they might qualify for TAA, obtain a lay-off list and determine if they will cooperate in setting up outreach/informational meetings with affected workers. If there is no competition for a project (which is usually the case), local staff works closely with Rapid Response to set up the meetings and obtain information (surveys) from the affected workers. On occasion we have had poor turn-outs at the informational meetings, in which case local staff provides outreach to affected workers to obtain survey information. In either case, surveys are

sent to State Rapid Response to tabulate and generate a report. Based on survey results, occupations of affected workers, local economy, type of lay-off, etc. a determination is made whether a special project will be sought or referral to formula programs. As history has shown us, every mass lay-off is different with differing circumstances. It is through good communication and working relationships between the local WDA and the State Rapid Response Team that results in the most effective coordination of processes, procedures and roles to meet the needs of workers affected by their unique lay-off event.

D. Complete **Attachment B – Local Workforce Development Area Contacts.**

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

Local businesses and/or workers often contact the WorkForce Center when they know a potential or actual lay-off may occur. As staff talk with the business or laid off workers, they are trained to inquire as to the reason for the lay-off and whether foreign trade competition may have had an impact. If there is the slightest connection to foreign trade competition, WorkForce Center staff informs State Trade Act staff either by phone or email of a potential TAA affected lay-off.

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

Once the Department of Labor TAA certifies a company, State Trade Act staff sets up a meeting with all the workers affected. It is at this time that the local WDA is contacted and provides assistance in setting up a site for the meeting and provides contact information of affected workers if necessary. The State Trade Act staff sends a mailing to all affected workers that invites them to an informational meeting and includes the Trade Act application. As staff meet with the workers they encourage them to attend the TAA orientation. Individuals are referred to their local WorkForce Center to be enrolled in a Dislocated Worker Program (if they are not already enrolled) to establish an Employment Plan with their counselor. The Counselor then assists with the completion of the TAA application and it is submitted to State Trade Act staff for approval. Once the training plan/application is approved by Trade Act staff, the individual, the post-secondary institution and the WF Center are notified. Trade Act staff are responsible for entering Trade Act activities into Workforce One. Local staff continues to provide case management and support services if necessary. The process is much the same for OJTs, with the exception that Trade Act staff work closely with local staff to provide good customer service to employers in the completion of the paperwork. Local and State Trade Act staff continue to communicate as necessary throughout program delivery and program exit.

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

Yes X

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

Yes X

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

The South Central WorkForce Council has developed a support service policy to establish procedures for addressing the provision of support services, including coordination, any limits on the amount, and duration of support services.

WIOA Title I service providers are provided a copy of the State and local support service policies. Initial needs for support services are identified during the assessment process and included as part of the employment plan. Other needs may be identified during the course of service delivery and are notated in the case notes/plan. All payments are based on customer needs and must support their employment and training goals. Payments are made through a voucher process with signatory requirement. Payments are paid primarily to vendors, and are only provided directly to participants on a limited basis when vendor payment is not practical. Any payment outside the perimeters of the support service policy would require management approval and signature. Fiscal staff are required to flag any vouchers that do not meet policy requirements.

SECTION D: SYSTEM OPERATIONS AND ATTACHMENTS

1. The local workforce development area has processes in place to assure non-duplicative services, and avoid duplicate administrative costs.

Yes X

2. The local workforce development area is aware of and staff participate in the Reception and Resource Area Certification Program (RRACP) to better serve all customers?

Yes X

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

Yes X

B. Complete **Attachment B – Local Workforce Development Area Contacts**.

- C. The local workforce development area is aware and conducts annually a physical and program accessibility review?

Yes X

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

Yes X

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

Yes X

B. Complete **Attachment B – Local Workforce Development Area Contacts**.

6. How do you identify current or former Military Service Members coming into your WorkForce Center?

The Minnesota Veterans Questionnaire is used to identify Veterans. We ask all customers that come to the Workforce Center (WFC) if they ever served in the U.S. Military. If the answer is yes, we ask them to complete the Veterans Questionnaire. Non-JVSG (Jobs for Veterans State Grants) staff do the initial assessment/review of the questionnaire, and make appropriate referrals based on the responses on the questionnaire.

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

7. How do you inform current or former Military Service Members coming into your WorkForce Center about “Veteran Priority of Service?”

Signage in the WFC 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 staff and management on the provisions of POS and PL107-288.

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

In addition to local Workforce Center sites, Veterans Priority of Service is indicated and promoted on the Minnesota DEED main website at <http://mn.gov/deed/job-seekers/veteran-services/>. Minnesota State’s Career Wise (www.careerwise.minnstate.edu) with input and assistance from JVSG staff continues to be a partner in promoting and enhancing career opportunities for Veterans by offering dedicated links to Veterans and other link sources for translating military skills to civilian skills. Minnesota’s civil service career website (<http://mn.gov/mmb/careers>) in collaboration with JVSG staff continues to develop links and other efforts to reach and assist Veterans.

9. How do you identify current or former Military Service Members with “significant barriers to employment?”

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

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

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

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

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

Local DVOP and/or LVER staff attends staff and partner meetings and orientations, participate on WFC work teams, collaborate with WFC partners on various events and

LVER staff provide training to partner staff and management regarding the JVSG program.

12. Are all WIOA-funded partners complying with the guidance provided in the TEGL regarding Selective Service?

Yes X

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

WorkForce Center staff serving universal customers utilizing our resource rooms encourages job seekers to register on MinnesotaWorks and stresses the importance of posting their resume so it is viewable to employers. All core partners working with individuals enrolled in programs emphasize the importance of a viewable resume from the initial meeting. After the job seeker is enrolled, the job counselor can check MinnesotaWorks resume status by using the MAD system. If an enrolled job seeker is not in Minnesota Works (viewable) the job counselor contacts the individual to discuss and offer their assistance in developing and posting a quality resume in the system. All customers attending Creative Job Search and Resume Workshops are encouraged to post their resume on MinnesotaWorks. All UI claimants attending REA sessions are required to register on MinnesotaWorks and to post their resume.

Staff from all of the WorkForce Center core partners have received instruction on MinnesotaWorks and customer assistance is provided for any job seekers (Universal or Program) needing assistance developing their resume or posting it on MinnesotaWorks.

Another strategy to ensure job seekers are registering and making their resumes viewable to employers is to increase the number of job orders on MinnesotaWorks. [MN DEED Job Service staff promote employers listing their job openings on Minnesota Works and will assist with posting jobs when necessary.](#)

14. **Conflict of Interest and Integrity:** Local area boards must make decisions in keeping with several laws and regulations. Indicate below that your local area board is aware of DOL Training and Employment Guidance Letter 35-10 and Minnesota OGM 08-01 and its relevant federal laws and regulations.

Yes X

15. The local workforce development area's conflict of interest policies are in compliance with the above two references?

Yes X

16. A. The local workforce development area is aware of the referenced statute on Government Records.

Yes X

B. The local workforce development area is aware of the requirement to retain documentation for six years.

Yes X

C. Complete **Attachment B – Local Workforce Development Area Contacts**.

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

Yes X

18. **Human Trafficking:** The local workforce development area is aware of TEGL 09-12 and will follow the procedures for working with trafficked persons.

Yes X

19. **Gender Identification:** The local workforce development area is aware of TEGL 37-14 and will follow the procedures for developing a similar policy including key terminology, and have in place regarding working with customers who may be lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender. Local workforce development areas will also participate in any related training.

Yes X

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

Yes X

21. A. Briefly describe the local area board's policy and timetable for filling vacancies, replacing/reappointing individuals whose terms have come to an end. Include in your description any plans to fill the terms that will be expiring as of June 30, 2016.

The South Central WorkForce Council policy for filling vacancies is as follows:

- (a) Council members vacating their position notify the Council Chair or WorkForce Council Executive Director in writing.
- (b) The full WorkForce Council and Joint Powers Board are notified by the WorkForce Council Executive Director at the WFC/Joint Powers Board meeting(s).
- (c) When the vacated position is from the private sector, business organizations are contacted and asked to nominate a business owner, executive or manager for the vacant position. Priority will be given to nominees from counties who are not currently represented on the Council. Nominations are submitted to the WorkForce Council Executive Director, who in turn submits them to the Joint Powers Board.
- (d) Nominees are solicited who have optimum local policy making authority, policy and decision making responsibilities.
- (e) The Joint Powers Board reviews the nominees and appoints one for each vacancy.

- (f) Selecting public sector members is handled in the same fashion, except that letters are sent requesting nominations from organizations appropriate to the position. For education, contact is made to Adult Basic Education and post-secondary schools. For labor, contact is made with State and local labor unions. For economic development, contact is made with economic development organizations. For Rehabilitation Services, contact is made with agencies serving individuals with disabilities, such as Vocational Rehabilitation Services. For Job Service, the Field Operations Area Manager is contacted. For community based organizations, we contact local community based organizations. For Human Services, the regional human services directors are asked to nominate a representative.

The South Central WorkForce Council timetable for replacing or reappointing Council members is as follows:

1. In May, Council members whose terms are expiring on June 30th are contacted to inquire whether they are willing to serve an additional 3-year term.
2. For Council members who are seeking reappointment, the Joint Powers Board reappoints and the SC WorkForce Council confirms the re-appointment at their respective meetings in June.

When vacancies occur, WorkForce Council staff in June and July make contact with chambers ~~and Business Services Representatives~~ (or appropriate organization for non-private sector representatives) to let them know the Joint Powers Board is seeking nominations to serve on the South Central WorkForce Council. Staff meet with nominees in August and individuals are appointed and confirmed during the Joint Powers Board and SC WorkForce Council meetings in September.

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

Yes X No

If No, what steps will be taken to bring your local area board into compliance by June 30, 2016?

C. Complete **Attachment C – Local Area Board Membership List**.

D. Complete **Attachment D – Local Area Board Committee List**.

22. Complete remaining portions of **Attachment B – Local Workforce Development Area Contacts**.

23. If applicable, complete **Attachment E - Local Workforce Development Area Sub-Grantee List**.

24. If applicable, complete **Attachment F - Local Workforce Development Area Non-WFC Program Service Delivery Location List**.

ASSURANCES AND CERTIFICATIONS

ASSURANCES

As a condition to the award of financial assistance from the Department of Labor under Title I of the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 (WIA) and the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act and any other DEED/Workforce Development Employment and Training funds, the grant applicant assures that it will comply fully with the nondiscrimination and equal opportunity provisions and other assurances of the following laws:

- **Accessibility** - [Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended](#) - Requires that federally funded program providers make their electronic information and technology accessible to people with disabilities;
- **ACORN** – [Funds may not be provided](#) to the Association of Community Organizations for Reform Now, or any of its affiliates, subsidiaries, allied organizations or successors;
- **Audits** – [2 CFR 200.501](#) and [Single Audit Act Amendments of 1996](#) - organization-wide or program-specific audits shall be performed;
- **Buy American**- Buy American Act – award may not be expended unless the funds comply with [USC 41, Section 8301-8303](#);
- **Data Sharing** – [MN Access to Government Data](#), [MN Duties of Responsible Authority](#); [MN Access to Information](#); [MN Administrative Rules Data Practices](#); [DEED Policy – Data Practices](#);
- **Disability** - that there will be compliance with the [Architectural Barriers Act of 1968](#), [Sections 503 and 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973](#), as amended, and the [Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990](#);
- **Drug-Free Workplace** – [Drug-Free Workplace Act of 1988](#) – requires all organizations to maintain a drug-free workplace;
- **Equipment** – [2 CFR 200. 313](#), [200.439](#) – must receive prior approval for the purchase of any equipment with a per unit acquisition cost of \$5,000 or more, and a useful life of more than one year;
- **Fire Safety** – [15 USC 2225a](#) – ensure that all space for conferences, meetings, conventions or training seminars funded in whole or in part complies with the protection and control guidelines of the Hotel and Motel Fire Safety Act ([Public Law 101-391](#));
- **Fraud/Abuse** - that the provider has policies on fraud and abuse and will contact DEED for potential fraud and abuse issues; [20 CFR 667.630](#); [DEED Policy – Fraud Prevention and Abuse](#);
- **Health Benefits** – [Public Law 113-235, Division G, Sections 506 and 507](#) – ensure use of funds for health benefits coverage complies with the [Consolidated and Further Continuing Appropriations Act, 2015](#);
- **Insurance** - that insurance coverage be provided for injuries suffered by participants in work-related activities where Minnesota's workers' compensation law is not applicable as required under Regulations [20 CFR 667.274](#);
- **Insurance** – [Flood Disaster Protection Act of 1973](#) – provides that no Federal financial assistance to acquire, modernize or construct property may be provided in identified flood-prone communities in the United States, unless the community participates in the National Flood Insurance Program and flood insurance is purchased within 1 year of the identification;
- **Limited English** - [Executive Order 13166](#) - Improving access to services for persons with limited English proficiency;

- **Nondiscrimination** - [Section 188 of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act \(WIOA\)](#) - Requires applying nondiscrimination provisions in the administration of programs and activities for all eligible individuals, including individuals with disabilities;
- **Nondiscrimination** - [Section 188 of the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 \(WIA\)](#) - Requires applying nondiscrimination provisions in the administration of programs and activities for all eligible individuals, including individuals with disabilities;
- **Nondiscrimination** - [Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended](#) – Prohibits discrimination on the bases of race, color, and national origin under any program receiving federal financial assistance;
- **Nondiscrimination** - [Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended](#) - Prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, sex or national origin in employment;
- **Nondiscrimination** - [Title II of the Genetic Information Nondiscrimination Act of 2008](#) - Prohibits discrimination in employment on the basis of genetic information;
- **Nondiscrimination** - [Title V of the Older Americans Act of 1965](#) - Prohibits discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex, national original, age disability or political affiliation or beliefs in any program funded in part with Senior Community Services Employment Program funds;
- **Nondiscrimination** - [Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, as amended](#) - Requires applying nondiscrimination provisions, based on sex, in educational programs;
- **Nondiscrimination** - [Title I \(Employment\) Americans with Disabilities Act \(ADA\)](#) - Prohibits state and local governments, from discriminating against qualified individuals with disabilities in job application procedures, hiring, firing, advancement, compensation, job training, and other terms, conditions, and privileges of employment;
- **Nondiscrimination** - [Title II \(State and Local Governments\) Americans with Disabilities Act \(ADA\)](#) - Prohibits qualified individuals with disabilities from discrimination in services, programs, and activities;
- **Nondiscrimination** - [Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended](#) - Prohibits discrimination against qualified individuals with disabilities;
- **Nondiscrimination** - [Age Discrimination Act of 1975, as amended](#) - Prohibits discrimination on the basis of age;
- **Nondiscrimination** - [Title 29 CFR Part 31](#) Nondiscrimination in federally-assisted programs of the Department of Labor, effectuation of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964;
- **Nondiscrimination** - [Title 29 CFR Part 32](#) Nondiscrimination on the basis of disability in programs and activities receiving or benefiting from federal assistance;
- **Nondiscrimination** - [Title 29 CFR Part 33](#) Enforcement of nondiscrimination on the basis of disability in programs or activities conducted by the Department of Labor;
- **Nondiscrimination** - [Title 29 CFR Part 35](#) Nondiscrimination on the basis of age in programs or activities receiving federal financial assistance from the Department of Labor;
- **Nondiscrimination** - [Title 29 CFR Part 37](#) Implementation of the Nondiscrimination and Equal Opportunity provisions of the Workforce Investment Act of 1998;
- **Nondiscrimination** - [Title 29 CFR Part 38](#) Implementation of the Nondiscrimination and Equal Opportunity provisions of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act;
- **Nondiscrimination** - [Executive Order 13160](#) Nondiscrimination on the basis of race, sex, color, national origin, disability, religion, age, sexual orientation, and status as a parent in federally conducted education and training Programs;
- **Nondiscrimination** - [Executive Order 13279](#) - Nondiscrimination against grant seeking organizations on the basis of religion in the administration or distribution of federal financial assistance under social service programs, including grants, contracts, and loans;

- **Nondiscrimination** - [The Minnesota Human Rights Act of 1973, Minnesota Statutes, Chapter 363A](#) - Prohibits discrimination in employment and providing public services on the basis of race, color, creed, religion, natural origin, sex, marital status (employment only), disability, status with regard to public assistance, sexual orientation, familial status (employment only), citizenship, or age (employment only), and local human rights commission activity (employment only);
- **Nondiscrimination** - that collection and maintenance of data necessary to show compliance with the nondiscrimination provisions of WIA and [WIOA Section 188](#), as provided in the regulations implementing that section, will be completed;
- **Opportunity** – [Executive Order 12928](#) – encouraged to provide subcontracting/subgranting opportunities to Historically Black Colleges and Universities and other Minority Institutions and to Small Businesses Owned and Controlled by Socially and Economically Disadvantaged Individuals;
- **Personally Identifiable Information (PII)** – [Training and Guidance Letter 39-11](#) – must recognize and safeguard PII except where disclosure is allowed by prior written approval of the Grant Officer or by court order;
- **Procurement** – Uniform Administrative Requirements – [2 CFR 200-317-36](#) – all procurement transactions to be conducted in a manner to provide, to the maximum extent practical, open and free competition;
- **Publicity** – no funds shall be used for publicity or propaganda purposes, preparation or distribution or use of any kit, pamphlet, booklet, publication, radio, television or film presentation designed to support or defeat legislation pending before the Congress or any state/local legislature or legislative body, except in presentation to the Congress or any state/local legislature itself, or designed to support or defeat any proposed or pending regulation, administrative action, or order issued by the executive branch of any state or local government. Nor shall grant funds be used to pay the salary or expenses of any recipient or agent acting for such recipient, related to any activity designed to influence the enactment of legislation, appropriations regulation, administrative action, or Executive Order proposed or pending before the Congress, or any state government, state legislature or local legislature body other than for normal and recognized executive-legislative relationships or participation by an agency or officer of a state, local or tribal government in policymaking and administrative processes within the executive branch of that government;
- **Salary/Bonus** – [Public Law 113-235, Division G, Title I, Section 105](#) – none of the funds appropriated under the heading “Employment and Training” shall be used by a recipient or sub-recipient of such funds to pay the salary and bonuses of an individual, either as direct costs or indirect costs, at a rate in excess of [Executive Level II](#). Further clarification can be found in [TEGL 5-06](#);
- **Seat Belts** - [Executive Order 13043](#) – Increasing Seat Belt Use in the United States;
- **Text Messaging** – [Executive Order 13513](#) – encouraged to adopt and enforce policies that ban text messaging while driving company-owned or –rented vehicles or GOV or while driving POV when on official Government business or when performing any work for or on behalf of the Government;
- **Trafficking of Persons** – [2 CFR 180](#) – OMB Guidelines to Agencies on Government-wide Debarment and Suspension – may not engage in severe forms of trafficking, procure a commercial sex act or use forced labor in the performance;
- **Veteran Priority of Service** - [Public Law 107-288: Jobs for Veterans Act](#) - Priority of service for veterans (including veterans, eligible spouses, widows and widowers of service members) in qualified job training programs;

- **Veterans** - [Public Law 112-56: Vow to Hire Heroes Act of 2011](#) - Establishes guidelines for service providers who are providing employment, training, academic or rehabilitation services for military veterans;
- **Veterans** - that veterans will be afforded employment and training activities authorized in WIA and WIOA Section 134, and the activities authorized in Chapters 41 and 42 of Title 38 US code, and in compliance with the veterans' priority established in the Jobs for Veterans Act. ([38 USC 4215](#)), U.S. Department of Labor, [Training and Employment Guidance Letter 5-03](#) and Minnesota's Executive Order 06-02;
- **Voter Registration** - that the required voter registration procedures described in [Minnesota Statutes 201.162](#) are enacted without the use of federal funds;
- **Voter Registration** – [52 USC 20501 – 20511](#) – National Voter Registration Act of 1993.

CERTIFICATIONS

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

- A. That this ***Regional and Local Workforce Development Area Plan*** was prepared and is in accordance with all applicable titles of the WIOA Act of 2014, Title V of the Older Americans Act, applicable Minnesota state statutes and that it is consistent with Minnesota's current and future state plans;
- B. that it has provided at least a thirty day period for public comment and input into the development of plan by members of the local area board and the public (including persons with disabilities) and has provided information regarding the plan and the planning process, including the plan and supporting documentation, in alternative formats when requested and that any comments representing disagreement with the plan are included with the local plan forwarded to DEED (as the Governor's representative) Section 118(c); Section 108 (d)
- C. that the public (including individuals with disabilities) have access to all of the local area board's and its components' meetings and information regarding the local area board's and its components' activities;
- D. that fiscal control and fund accounting procedures necessary to ensure the proper disbursement of, and accounting for, funds paid through the allotments funded through the contract/master agreement issued by DEED have been established;
- E. that it is, and will maintain a certifiable local area board;
- F. that it will comply with the confidentiality requirements of WIA Section 136 (f)(3) and WIOA Section 116 (i)(3)
- G. that the respective contract/master agreement and all assurances will be followed;
- H. that it will ensure that no funds covered under the contract/master agreement are used to assist, promote, or deter union organizing;
- I. that this plan was developed in consultation with the local area board;
- J. that it acknowledges the specific performance standards for each of its programs and will strive to meet them;
- K. that the local area board members will not act in a manner that would create a conflict of interest as identified in 20 CFR 667.200(a)(4), including voting on any matter regarding the provision of service by that member or the entity that s/he represents and any matter that would provide a financial benefit to that member or to his or her immediate family;
- L. that local area board and staff are aware of local WorkForce Center services, and are working with and referring to the WorkForce Center services as appropriate;
- M. that all staff are provided the opportunity to participate in appropriate staff training;

- N. that, if applicable, the local area board must maintain the currency of its information in the System Award Management until submission of the final financial report or receive the final payment, whichever is later;
- O. that sponsored (in whole or in part) conferences are charged to the grantee as appropriate and allowable; and
- P. that funds are not used for the purpose of defraying costs of a conference unless it is directly and programmatically related to the purpose of the award.
- Q. that the local area board and its sub-grantees must also adhere to the same certifications and assurances that DEED must assure.

SIGNATURE PAGE

Local Workforce Development
Area Name

South Central Workforce Development Area #7

Local Area Board Name

South Central WorkForce Council

Name and Contact Information for the Local Area Board Chair:

Name	Deborah Barnes
Title	Director/Administrator
Organization	Lakeview Health Services/Oak Terrace
Address 1	1306 S. Ramsey
Address 2	
City, State, ZIP Code	Blue Earth, MN 56013
Phone	(507) 526-5876
E-mail	deb.barnes@lakeviewmethodist.com

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

Name	John Roper
Title	County Commissioner
Organization	Faribault County Board of Commissioners
Address 1	18 Elm Boulevard
Address 2	
City, State, ZIP Code	Blue Earth, MN 56013
Phone	(507) 526-2710
E-mail	djroper@bevcomm.net

We, the undersigned, attest that this submittal is the Program Year 2018 Local Plan Update for our Workforce Development Board and Local Workforce Development Area and hereby certify that this Local Plan has been prepared as required, and is in accordance with all applicable state and federal laws, rules and regulations.

Local Area Board Chair

Name Deborah Barnes

Title Local Area Board Chair

Signature _____

Date May 9, 2018

Chief Local Elected Official

Name Commissioner John Roper

Title Chair –Joint Powers Board

Signature _____

Date May 21, 2018

REGIONAL OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE

Regional Workforce Development Area

Regional Workforce Development Area #5

Upda

Local Workforce_Development_Area

South Central Workforce Development Area #7

MEMBER	ORGANZIATION
Deborah Barnes	Lakeview Health Services/Oak Terrace
Grant Moody	Express Employment Professionals
Commissioner John Roper	Faribault County Board of Commissioners
Commissioner Tom Mahoney	Martin County Board of Commissioners
John Roiger	Lac qui Parle County Co-op Oil
Len Bakken	JBS
Commissioner Ron Antony	Yellow Medicine County Board of Commissioners
Commissioner Joe Fox	Swift County Board of Commissioners

LOCAL WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT AREA CONTACTS

ROLE	Contact Name	Phone	Email	Report
Rapid Response Liaison for Mass Layoffs (see section C.2.D.)	Diane Halvorson	(507) 345-2408	diane@workforcecouncil.org	Deborah Work
Equal Opportunity Officer (see section D.3.B.)	Diane Halvorson	(507) 345-2408	diane@workforcecouncil.org	Deborah Work
Program Complaint Officer (see section D.5.B.)	Diane Halvorson	(507) 345-2408	diane@workforcecouncil.org	Deborah Work
Records Management/Records Retention Coordinator (see section D.16.C.)	Lynn Sorenson	(507) 345-2413	lynn@mnvac.org	Amanda Actio
ADA Coordinator (see section D.22.)	Christine Olson	(507) 389-6954	Christine.olson@state.mn.us	Jan Th
Data Practices Coordinator (see section D.22.)	Lynn Sorenson	(507) 345-2413	lynn@mnvac.org	Amanda Actio
English as Second Language (ESL) Coordinator (see section D.22.)	Karen Wolters	(507) 207-3054	Kwolte1@isd77.k12.mn.us	Audrey

Official Name of WorkForce Center Fairmont WorkForce Center

ROLE	Contact Name	Phone	Email	Report
Site Representative	Connie Hines	(507) 235-5518	Connie.hines@state.mn.us	Reggie
Job Service Manager	Reggie Worlds	(507) 344-2600	Reggie.worlds@state.mn.us	David M
Vocational Rehabilitation Services Manager	Christine Olson	(507) 389-6954	Christine.olson@state.mn.us	Jan Tho
State Services for the Blind Manager	Lindsey Hanson	(651) 539-2340	Lindsey.hanson@state.mn.us	Joan B
Local Workforce Development Area Director	Diane Halvorson	(507) 345-2408	diane@workforcecouncil.org	Deb Ba WorkFo
Adult Basic Education (ABE)	Marty Olsen	(507) 372-1239	Marty.olsen@isd518.net	ISD 518
Carl Perkins Post-Secondary Manager	Glenn Morris	(507) 389-5106	gmorris@mnsccsc.org	Les Ma
Adult	Connie Hines	(507) 235-5518	Connie.hines@state.mn.us	Reggie
Dislocated Worker	Connie Hines	(507) 234-5518	Connie.hines@state.mn.us	Reggie
Youth	Nancy Haag	(507) 345-2405	nancyh@mnvac.org	Amanda

Official Name of WorkForce Center Mankato WorkForce Center

ROLE	Contact Name	Phone	Email	Report
------	--------------	-------	-------	--------

Attachment B

Page 87

Site Representative	Reggie Worlds	(507) 344-2600	Reggie.worlds@state.mn.us	David M
Job Service Manager	Reggie Worlds	(507) 344-2600	Reggie.worlds@state.mn.us	David M
Vocational Rehabilitation Services Manager	Christine Olson	(507) 389-6954	Christine.olson@state.mn.us	Jan Tho
State Services for the Blind Manager	Lindsey Hanson	(651) 539-2340	Lindsey.hanson@state.mn.us	Joan B
Local Workforce Development Area Director	Diane Halvorson	(507) 345-2408	diane@workforcecouncil.org	Deb Ba WorkFo
Adult Basic Education (ABE)	Karen Wolters	(507) 207-3054	Kwolte1@isd77.k12.mn.us	Audra E
Carl Perkins Post-Secondary Manager	Glenn Morris	(507) 389-5106	gmorris@mnsccsc.org	Les Ma
Adult	Reggie Worlds	(507) 344-2600	Reggie.worlds@state.mn.us	David M
Dislocated Worker	Reggie Worlds	(507) 344-2600	Reggie.worlds@state.mn.us	David M
Youth	Nancy Haag	(507) 345-2405	nancyh@mnvac.org	Amanda

Attachment B**Page 88****Official Name of WorkForce Center** New Ulm WorkForce Center

ROLE	Contact Name	Phone	Email	Report
Site Representative	Jill Berglund	(507) 354-3138	jill@mnvac.org	Nancy I
Job Service Manager	Reggie Worlds	(507) 344-2600	Reggie.worlds@state.mn.us	David M
Vocational Rehabilitation Services Manager	Christine Olson	(507) 389-6954	Christine.olson@state.mn.us	Jan Tho
State Services for the Blind Manager	Lindsey Hanson	(651) 539-2340	Lindsey.hanson@state.mn.us	Joan Be
Local Workforce Development Area Director	Diane Halvorson	(507) 345-2408	diane@workforcecouncil.org	Deb Ba WorkFo
Adult Basic Education (ABE)	Karen Wolters	(507) 207-3054	Kwolte1@isd77.k12.mn.us	Audra E
Carl Perkins Post-Secondary Manager	Glenn Morris	(507) 389-5106	gmmorris@mnsccsc.org	Les Ma
Adult	Reggie Worlds	(507) 344-2600	Reggie.worlds@state.mn.us	David M
Dislocated Worker	Reggie Worlds	(507) 344-2600	Reggie.worlds@state.mn.us	David M
Youth	Nancy Haag	(507) 345-2405	nancyh@mnvac.org	Amanda

LOCAL AREA BOARD MEMBERSHIP LIST

Regional Workforce Development Area

Regional Workforce Development Area #5 -Revised October 15, 2016

Local Workforce Development Area

South Central Workforce Development Area #7

MEMBER	POSITION/ORGANIZATION	
REPRESENTATIVES OF BUSINESS IN LOCAL WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT AREA (must be majority)		
Deb Barnes - Chair 1306 S. Ramsey Blue Earth, MN 56013 Deb.Barnes@lakeviewmethodist.com (507) 526-5876	Executive Director-Lakeview Health Services Administrator –Oak Terrace	
Val Bentsdahl 3201 Third Avenue Mankato, MN 56001 vbentsdahl@jonesmetalinc.com (507) 205-9694	Human Resource Manager Jones Metal, Inc.	
Brent Christopherson 1725 Roe Crest Drive North Mankato, MN 56003 bchristopherson@taylorcorp.com (507) 386-5814	Talent Acquisition Manager Taylor Corporation	
William FitzSimmons 405 Eighth Avenue NW Waseca, MN 56093 wtf@hickorytech.net (507) 835-1094	Owner WTF Tax Services	
Tavia Leonard 410 W Industrial Street LeCenter, MN 56057 Tavia.leonard@diannesfinedesserts.com (507) 357-8014	Human Resources/Safety Manager Dianne's Fine Desserts	
Norma Martin 304 Main Street N Winnebago, MN 56098 Norma.martin@everidge.com (507) 893-3888	Human Resource Generalist Everidge, Inc./Crown Tonka	
Lorna Mendez 330 Poplar Street Mankato, MN 56001 lmendez@tectaamerica.com (507) 722-2624	Recruitment & Organizational Development Manager Schwickert's Tecta America	

Attachment D

Page **91**

Grant Moody – Vice Chair 113 Monroe Avenue North Mankato, MN 56003 Grant.moody@expresspros.com (507) 387-5620	Owner Express Employment Professionals	
Julie Nelson 424 North Riverfront Drive, Suite 210 Mankato, MN 56001 Julie.nelson@mnsu.edu (507) 389-8875	Associate Regional Director Small Business Development Center –MSU, Mankato	
Jennifer Pfeffer 3530 Lexington Avenue North Shoreview, MN 55126 jenniferpfeffer@ecumen.org (507) 327-9411	Sr. Regional Director of Operations Ecumen	
Dennis Siemer 752 Summit Avenue Mankato, MN 56001 d.siemer@vtekusa.com (507) 387-2039	CEO V-Tek, Inc.	
Tim Wenzel 1209 S. State Street Waseca, MN 56093 Tim.wenzel@winegarinc.com (507) 835-3495	President Winegar, Inc.	

LABOR & COMMUNITY-BASED ORGANIZATIONS (20% Minimum and 2 or more nominated by state labor federations and one joint labor-management apprenticeship program labor organization or training director) Shane Meier (Labor – Apprenticeships) 709 S. Front Street, Suite 6 Mankato, MN 56001 shane@ibewlocal343.org (507) 345-2133 Jon Nowak (Labor – Apprenticeships) 409 2nd Avenue Pemberton, MN 560078 jnowak@ncsrcc.org (651) 341-4436 Amanda Mackie (CBO – Youth Employment) 706 N. Victory Drive Mankato, MN 56001 amanda@mnvac.org	Business Representative IBEW Local 343 Business Representative North Central States Regional Council of Carpenters Executive Director MN Valley Action Council
--	---

Attachment D

Page **92**

(507) 345-2400 Ariana Boelter (CBO – Youth Employment) 212 15th Avenue NE –Suite 1015 Waseca, MN 56093 boelter@metinc.org (507) 310-8384	MN State Specialist MET, Inc.
EDUCATION & TRAINING (Required: ABE; Higher Education) Karen Wolters 110 Fulton Mankato, MN 56001 Kwolte1@isd77.k12.mn.us (507) 207-3054 Dr. DeAnna Burt 1920 Lee Boulevard North Mankato, MN 56003 Deanna.burt@southcentral.edu (507) 389-7228	ABE Program Coordinator Mankato Area ABE Vice President of Academic & Student Affairs South Central College
GOVERNMENT (Required: Economic Development; Job Service; Rehabilitation) Linsey Preuss 100 Downtown Plaza Fairmont, MN 56031 lpreuss@fairmont.org (507) 238-9461 Reggie Worlds 12 Civic Center Plaza, Suite 1600A Mankato, MN 56001 Reggie.worlds@state.mn.us (507) 344-2600 Christine Olson 12 Civic Center Plaza, Suite 1600C Mankato, MN 56001 Christine.olson@state.mn.us (507) 344-2630	Economic Development Coordinator City of Fairmont Area Manager MN DEED – Job Service Area Manager MN DEED – Vocational Rehabilitation Services
PUBLIC ASSISTANCE AGENCY DeAnn Boney 410 S. Fifth Street Mankato, MN 56001 Deann.boney@blueearthcountymn.gov (507) 304-4358	Financial Assistance Supervisor Blue Earth County Human Services

CONTACT INFORMATION

NAME	ADDRESS/PHONE/EMAIL
------	---------------------

CHAIR Deb Barnes Executive Director, Lakeview Health Services Administrator, Oak Terrace	1306 S. Ramsey Blue Earth, MN 56013 Deb.Barnes@lakeviewmethodist.com (507) 526-5876
VICE CHAIR Grant Moody Owner Express Employment Professionals	113 Monroe Avenue North Mankato, MN 56003 Grant.moody@expresspros.com (507) 387-5620

LOCAL AREA BOARD SUBCOMMITTEE LIST

Regional Workforce Development Area

Regional Workforce Development Area #5

Local Workforce Development Area

South Central Local Workforce Development Area #7

Committee Name	Objective/Purpose
Executive Committee	This committee provides leadership for the Council and is comprised of Vice Chair and other members as deemed appropriate by the Council. Committee has responsibility for personnel and budget issues; and when on behalf of the Council.
Operations Committee	This committee consists of the core partners of the WorkForce Centers. responsible for on-going program review, local marketing and day-to-day WorkForce Centers. This committee develops cost allocation plans for the Memorandum of Understanding between the partners.
Workforce Development Committee	This committee concentrates on determining the workforce development job seekers and workers in the region. They develop short and long-term activities to further develop and retain our local workforce. Local economic development is invited to all Workforce Development committee meetings.
Youth Council	The Youth Council is made up of area youth partners and is responsible for implementing strategies to prepare our emerging workforce, assist youth in coordinating youth resources.
SC Career Pathway Partnership	The SC Career Pathway Partnership is made up of representatives from Basic Education, South Central College, Workforce Center partners, higher education and community partners. This partnership is responsible for aligning resources to develop career pathways with multiple entry and exit points that lead to high-demand industries in the region.
RFP Task Forces	These Task Forces develop and implement a Request for Proposal process for providers for WIOA Youth and WIOA Adult, Dislocated Worker and Statewide Programs. The task force consists of representatives from the WorkForce Council staff, the Joint Powers Board and Youth Council. The task force is responsible for implementing the RFP process and for providing recommendations to the WorkForce Council and SC WorkForce Council.

LOCAL WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT AREA SUB-GRANTEE LIST

Regional Workforce Development Area

Regional Workforce Development Area #5

Local Workforce Development Area

South Central Workforce Development Area #7

Name of Sub-Grantee	Services Provided	Funding Source	Sub-Grantee located in which WFC?
MN DEED –Job Service	Basic and Individualized Career Services, Work-Based Training and Career Pathway Navigator	WIOA Adult, WIOA Dislocated Worker & State Dislocated Worker, Pathways to Prosperity	Fairmont, Mankato, and New Ulm

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

Regional Workforce Development Area

Regional Workforce Development Area #5

Local Workforce Development Area

South Central Workforce Development Area #7

Name and Location (City)	Program Service Deliv
MN Valley Action Council – Blue Earth	WIOA Adult, WIOA DW, State DW, WIO.
MN Valley Action Council – Gaylord	WIOA Adult, WIOA DW, State DW, W MFIP/DWP/SNAP
MN Valley Action Council – LeCenter	WIOA Adult, WIOA DW, State DW, WIO. MFIP/DWP/SNAP
MN Valley Action Council – Mankato	WIOA Youth, MYF
MN Valley Action Council – St. James	WIOA Adult, WIOA DW, State DW, WIO.
MN Valley Action Council – St. Peter	WIOA Adult, WIOA Yo
MN Valley Action Council - Waseca	WIOA Adult, WIOA DW, State DW, WIO. MFIP/DWP/SNAP

LOCAL WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT AREA KEY INDUSTRIES IN REGIONAL ECONOMY

The South Central WorkForce Council has identified the following key industries for the **Local Workforce Development Area**:

- **Manufacturing**
- **Health Care & Social Assistance**
- **Construction**
- **Transportation & Warehousing**
- **Agriculture**
- **Business & Professional/Technical Services**

The South Central WorkForce Council, the Southwest Workforce Council and the Regional Leadership team have identified the following key industries for **Regional Workforce Development Area #5**:

- **Manufacturing**
- **Health Care & Social Assistance**
- **Construction**
- **Agriculture**
- **Transportation & Warehousing**

Table 13. Region 9 Industry Employment Statistics, 2014

NAICS Industry Title	2014 Annual Data			
	Number of Firms	Number of Jobs	Percent of Jobs	Total Payroll
Total, All Industries	6,454	102,364	100.0%	\$3,935,182,024
Manufacturing	363	18,829	18.4%	\$885,127,477
Health Care & Social Assistance	559	17,603	17.2%	\$684,145,068
Retail Trade	862	12,398	12.1%	\$269,855,004
Educational Services	117	9,203	9.0%	\$366,819,718
Accommodation & Food Services	463	7,525	7.4%	\$86,606,289
Public Administration	280	5,426	5.3%	\$220,663,255
Construction	802	4,439	4.3%	\$201,191,993
Wholesale Trade	320	3,793	3.7%	\$202,447,985
Transportation & Warehousing	381	3,352	3.3%	\$122,252,754
Other Services	555	3,004	2.9%	\$74,130,638
Agriculture, Forestry, Fish & Hunt	283	2,956	2.9%	\$115,683,411
Finance & Insurance	415	2,935	2.9%	\$153,333,308
Admin. Support & Waste Mgmt.	208	2,613	2.6%	\$63,336,196
Professional & Technical Services	350	2,422	2.4%	\$118,446,548
Information	103	2,242	2.2%	\$105,024,372
Management of Companies	39	1,033	1.0%	\$174,664,127
Arts, Entertainment & Recreation	128	1,030	1.0%	\$11,899,238
Real Estate, Rental & Leasing	180	797	0.8%	\$19,837,076
Utilities	38	501	0.5%	\$39,493,295
Mining	10	259	0.3%	\$20,224,272

Source: DEED Quarterly

Table 15. Southwest Minnesota Industry Projections

Industry	Estimated Employment 2012	Projected Employment 2017
Total, All Industries	207,849	211,000
Manufacturing	31,654	31,000
Total Government	31,721	31,000
Health Care & Social Assistance	25,529	26,000
Retail Trade	20,071	20,000
Accommodation & Food Services	11,915	12,000
Wholesale Trade	8,262	8,000
Other Services	8,312	8,000
Construction	7,299	7,000
Finance & Insurance	5,874	5,000
Agriculture, Forestry, Fish & Hunt	5,389	5,000
Transportation & Warehousing	5,123	5,000
Professional & Technical Services	4,069	4,000
Admin. Support & Waste Mgmt.	3,893	3,000
Information	2,914	2,000
Arts, Entertainment, & Recreation	2,507	2,000
Management of Companies	1,977	1,000
Educational Services	1,971	1,000
Real Estate & Rental & Leasing	1,270	1,000
Utilities	772	700
Mining	383	300

Source: DEED 2012



SOUTHWEST MINNESOTA ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT REGIONS 6W, 8, and 9

Covers counties:

Big Stone, Blue Earth, Brown, Chippewa,
Cottonwood, Faribault, Jackson,
Lac qui Parle, Le Sueur, Lincoln, Lyon,
Martin, Murray, Nicollet, Nobles,
Pipestone, Redwood, Rock, Sibley, Swift,
Waseca, Watonwan, and Yellow Medicine

2017 REGIONAL PROFILE

Updated August 1, 2017



Luke Greiner

Central & Southwest

St. Cloud WorkForce Center
1542 Northway Dr. Door 2
St. Cloud, MN 56303
Office: 320-308-5378

E-mail: luke.greiner@state.mn.us
Web: <http://mn.gov/deed/data/>

Mark Schultz

Southeast & South Central

Winona WorkForce Center
1250 Homer Rd., Suite 200
Winona, MN 55987
Office: 507-205-6068

E-mail: mark.schultz@state.mn.us
Web: <http://mn.gov/deed/data/>



REGIONAL PROFILE

SOUTHWEST MINNESOTA PLANNING REGION

DEMOGRAPHICS

POPULATION CHANGE, 2000-2016

The Southwest Minnesota planning region includes a total of 23 counties, covering three Economic Development Regions (EDRs) and two Workforce Development Boards (WDBs). In sum, Southwest Minnesota was home to 391,702 people in 2016, comprising 7.1 percent of the state's total population. The region saw a small 0.7 percent decline in population over the past 16 years, primarily due to larger losses in EDR 6W and EDR 8, which were nearly offset by a steady increase in EDR 9. In comparison, the state of Minnesota saw a steady 12.2 percent gain (see Table 1).

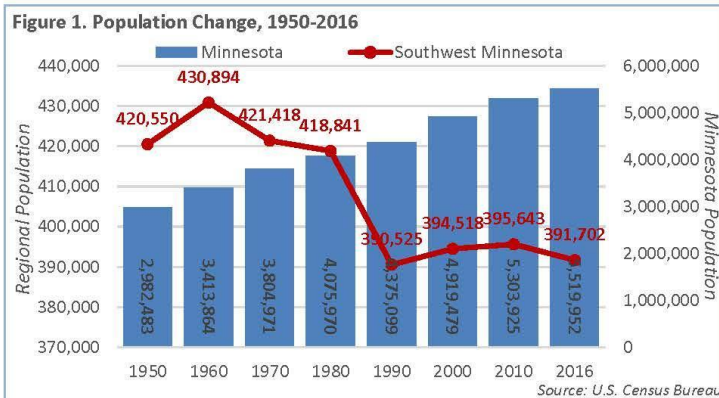
Only 5 of the 23 counties in the region gained population from 2000 to 2016, with the other 18 seeing declines – including Swift County, which was the fastest declining county in the state. The largest counties in the region are Blue Earth and Nicollet County, which make up the Mankato/North Mankato Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA). With 66,441 people, Blue Earth is the 13th largest county out of 87 in the state, and Nicollet has 33,575 people. Other large counties in the region include Le Sueur with 27,591 people, Lyon with 25,699 people, Brown with 25,331 people, and Nobles with 21,848 people.

The recent declines are part of a much longer-term trend in the region, where the population has declined by nearly 40,000 people over the past 56 years after peaking in 1960. As shown in Figure 1, the region suffered severe population loss during the farm crisis in the 1980s, and has mostly held steady since then, hanging around 390,000 people since 1990.

Table 1. Population Change 2000-2016

	2000 Population	2016 Estimates	2000-2016 Change	
			Number	Percent
Southwest Minnesota	394,518	391,702	-2,816	-0.7%
Region 6W	50,011	43,252	-6,759	-13.5%
Big Stone Co.	5,820	5,050	-770	-13.2%
Chippewa Co.	13,088	12,133	-955	-7.3%
Lac qui Parle Co.	8,067	6,715	-1,352	-16.8%
Swift Co.	11,956	9,419	-2,537	-21.2%
Yellow Medicine Co.	11,080	9,935	-1,145	-10.3%
Region 8	121,717	117,102	-4,615	-3.8%
Cottonwood Co.	12,167	11,470	-697	-5.7%
Jackson Co.	11,268	9,944	-1,324	-11.8%
Lincoln Co.	6,429	5,783	-646	-10.0%
Lyon Co.	25,425	25,699	+274	+1.1%
Murray Co.	9,165	8,329	-836	-9.1%
Nobles Co.	20,832	21,848	+1,016	+4.9%
Pipestone Co.	9,895	9,202	-693	-7.0%
Redwood Co.	16,815	15,263	-1,552	-9.2%
Rock Co.	9,721	9,564	-157	-1.6%
Region 9	222,790	231,348	+8,558	+3.8%
Blue Earth Co.	55,941	66,441	+10,500	+18.8%
Brown Co.	26,911	25,331	-1,580	-5.9%
Faribault Co.	16,181	13,935	-2,246	-13.9%
Le Sueur Co.	25,426	27,591	+2,165	+8.5%
Martin Co.	21,802	19,829	-1,973	-9.0%
Nicollet Co.	29,771	33,575	+3,804	+12.8%
Sibley Co.	15,356	14,827	-529	-3.4%
Waseca Co.	19,526	18,911	-615	-3.1%
Watsonwan Co.	11,876	10,908	-968	-8.2%
State of Minnesota	4,919,479	5,519,952	+600,473	+12.2%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Population Estimates



REGIONAL PROFILE | SOUTHWEST MINNESOTA PLANNING REGION

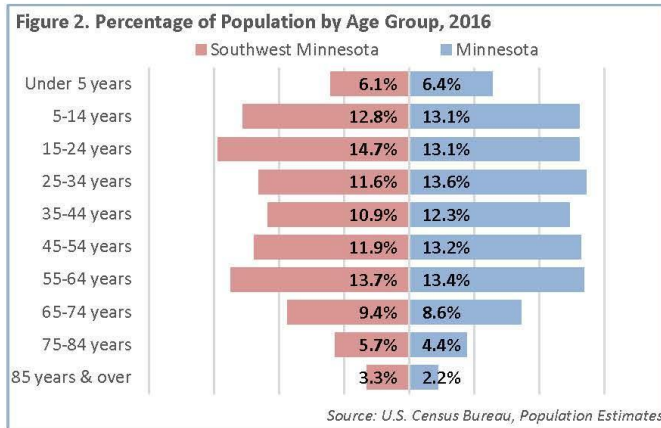
Likewise, 18 of the 23 counties in Southwest Minnesota suffered population declines from 1950 through 2016, including 8 counties that lost more than 5,000 residents during that timeframe. The largest decline occurred in Faribault County, which lost almost 10,000 people since 1950. Lac qui Parle County suffered the fastest decline in the region, losing just over 50 percent of its population from 1950 to 2016.

In sum, EDR 6W saw its population shrink by 40.8 percent from 1950 to 2016, by far the largest decline of any economic development region in the state. EDR 8's population dropped by 21.5 percent during the past 66 years, the second fastest decline of the 13 EDRs.

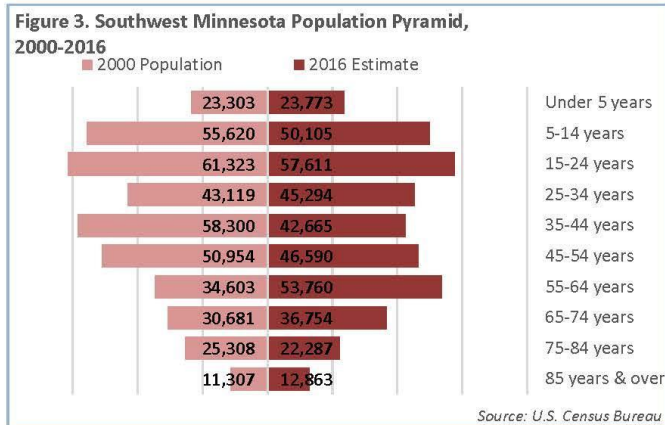
In contrast, the five counties that enjoyed population increases from 1950 to 2016 include Blue Earth, Nicollet, Le Sueur, Waseca, and Lyon County. Blue Earth County gained 28,114 people, a 73.3 percent increase, making it the largest and fastest growing county in the region; followed by Nicollet County, which added 12,646 people for a 60.4 percent growth rate. Waseca County lost population from 2000 to 2016, but was still up nearly 4,000 people from 1950. Overall, EDR 9 has grown 16.6 percent since 1950.

POPULATION BY AGE GROUP, 2000-2016

Southwest Minnesota has a much older population than the rest of the state, with 18.4 percent of residents aged 65 years and over, compared to 15.2 percent statewide. Consequently, Southwest Minnesota had a lower percentage of people in the 25- to 54-year-old age group, typically considered the “prime working years,” as well as a smaller percent of school-aged children. However, having several postsecondary institutions in the region led to a higher percentage of people aged 15 to 24 (see Figure 2).



More than one-fourth of the region's population was a part of the Baby Boom generation, people born between 1946 and 1964, which is creating a significant shift in the population over time. While the number of younger and middle-aged residents is declining, the number of residents aged 55 years and over was rapidly increasing. This included a huge jump in the number of people from 55 to 64 years of age, but a more measured increase in people aged 65 years and over (see Figure 3).



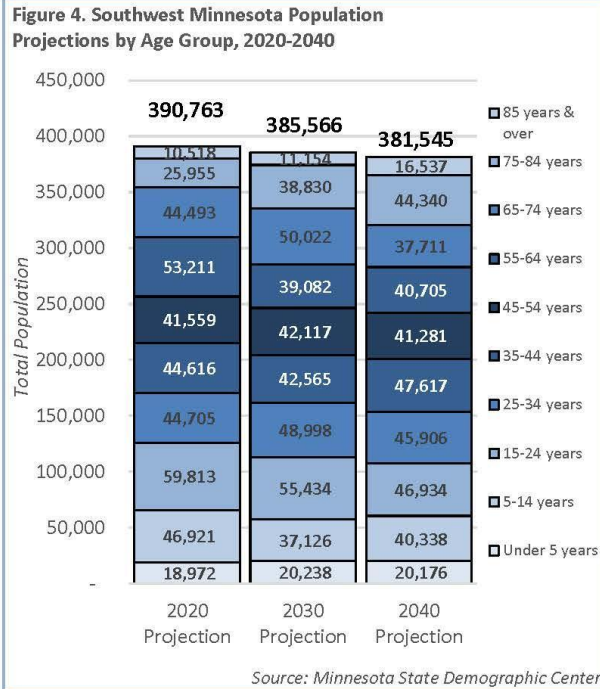
REGIONAL PROFILE

SOUTHWEST MINNESOTA PLANNING REGION

POPULATION PROJECTIONS BY AGE GROUP, 2020-2040

The entire region is projected to experience a population decline in the next 20 years. According to population projections from the [State Demographic Center](#), Southwest Minnesota is expected to lose just over 9,200 residents from 2020 to 2040, a -2.4 percent decline (see Figure 4). In comparison, the state of Minnesota is projected to grow 8.8 percent.

Most notably, Southwest Minnesota is projected to gain nearly 24,400 people aged 75 years and over, a 67 percent increase. The region is also expected to see a small increase in the 25- to 44-year-old age group, as well as a corresponding bump in children under 5 years of age. In contrast, Southwest Minnesota is expected to lose school-aged children and young adults from 5 to 24 years of age, as well as people from 45 to 64 years of age – as the current Baby Boom generation moves through the population pyramid.



POPULATION BY RACE, 2015

Southwest Minnesota's population is less diverse than the state's, but is becoming more diverse over time. In 2015, about 93.4 percent of the region's residents reported White alone as their race, compared to 84.8 percent of residents statewide. The region had much smaller percentages of Black or African American residents, Asian or Other Pacific Islanders, and people of Two or More Races. However at 6.0 percent, Southwest Minnesota had a higher percentage of people reporting Hispanic or Latino origin than the state, and a similar percentage of people of some other race, and American Indian (see Table 2).

Nobles County had the most diverse populace in the region, including 25 percent of residents reporting Hispanic origin, which was highest rate in the state. Redwood, Lyon, and Watonwan were also relatively diverse. In contrast, at least 97 percent of residents in Big Stone, Brown, Faribault, Lac qui Parle, and Lincoln County were White alone, making them among the least diverse in the state.

Table 2. Race and Hispanic Origin, 2015	Southwest Minnesota			Minnesota	
	Number	Percent	Change from 2000-2015	Percent	Change from 2000-2015
Total	393,174	100.0%	-0.3%	100.0%	+10.2%
White	367,246	93.4%	-2.3%	84.8%	+4.4%
Black or African American	6,282	1.6%	+132.4%	5.5%	+74.2%
American Indian & Alaska Native	2,591	0.7%	+30.6%	1.0%	+2.9%
Asian & Other Pac. Islander	6,340	1.6%	+47.2%	4.5%	+68.6%
Some Other Race	5,631	1.4%	-11.5%	1.5%	+24.7%
Two or More Races	5,084	1.3%	+52.1%	2.7%	+74.3%
Hispanic or Latino	23,564	6.0%	+89.3%	5.0%	+89.0%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2011-2015 American Community Survey

REGIONAL PROFILE

SOUTHWEST MINNESOTA PLANNING REGION

LABOR FORCE

LABOR FORCE CHANGE, 2000-2016

According to data from DEED's [Local Area Unemployment Statistics](#) program, Southwest Minnesota has experienced some substantial fluctuations in the size of the available labor force over the last 16 years in response to changing economic conditions. During the recessions in both 2001 and 2007, workers flooded into the labor market to earn extra income; then dropped back out when the region's economy improved. Despite the region's population decline overall, Southwest Minnesota gained about 1,250 workers over the last 16 years, from 220,267 available workers in 2000 to 221,526 workers in 2016. In contrast, the state was steadily gaining workers over the past decade and a half (see Figure 5). As the economy has recovered, the labor market in the region has been getting tighter, with only about 8,800 unemployed workers that were actively seeking work in 2016.



LABOR FORCE PROJECTIONS, 2020-2030

If Southwest Minnesota's population changes at the projected rates shown in Figure 4 above, the region would be expected to see a decline in the labor force over the next decade. Applying current labor force participation rates to future population projections by age group creates labor force projections for the region, which show a steady drop in workforce numbers (see Table 3).

In addition to the overall decline, the labor force will also see a significant shift over time, with large gains in the number of workers aged 65 years and over against huge declines in the number of workers aged 55 to 64 years. The region is also expected to lose teenaged workers and entry-level workers. However, the region is expected to see gains in the number of 25 to 44 year olds. Due to the growth, the 25 to 54 year old age group will make up about 58 percent of the total workforce in 2030, up from 54.5 percent in 2010. Either way, these long-term declines will likely lead to a tight labor market in the future, with employers needing to respond to the changing labor force availability in the region.

Table 3. Southwest Minnesota Labor Force Projections				
	2020 Labor Force Projection	2030 Labor Force Projection	2020-2030 Change	
			Numeric	Percent
16 to 19 years	12,088	10,622	-1,466	-12.1%
20 to 24 years	27,403	26,451	-953	-3.5%
25 to 44 years	79,436	81,430	+1,994	+2.5%
45 to 54 years	36,471	36,960	+490	+1.3%
55 to 64 years	41,291	30,327	-10,964	-26.6%
65 to 74 years	13,520	15,200	+1,680	+12.4%
75 years & over	2,379	3,260	+881	+37.0%
Total Labor Force	212,588	204,250	-8,337	-3.9%

Source: calculated from [MN State Demographic Center projections](#), and [2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates](#).

REGIONAL PROFILE

SOUTHWEST MINNESOTA PLANNING REGION

EMPLOYMENT CHARACTERISTICS, 2015

With 68.5 percent of the population aged 16 years and over in the labor force, Southwest Minnesota had slightly lower labor force participation rates than the state's 70 percent rate. However, the region actually had higher labor force participation rates than the state in all but one age group, but the overall rate was lower because a higher percentage of Southwest Minnesota's labor force was older (see Table 4).

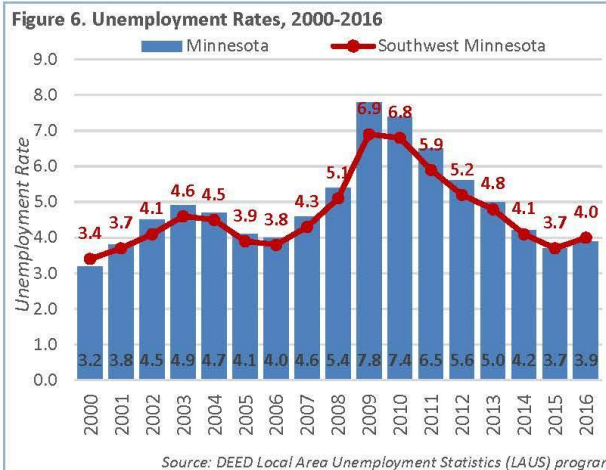
In contrast, the region had lower participation rates than the state for almost every race group; and also had large unemployment rate disparities for minorities. Southwest Minnesota had about 9,800 veterans and just over 10,500 workers with disabilities in the labor force, with both having higher participation rates in the region than the state. In sum, unemployment rates were highest for young people, minorities, and workers with disabilities.

Table 4. Employment Characteristics, 2015					
	Southwest Minnesota			Minnesota	
	In Labor Force	Labor Force Partic. Rate	Unemp. Rate	Labor Force Partic. Rate	Unemp. Rate
Total Labor Force	214,756	68.5%	4.5%	70.0%	5.6%
16 to 19 years	12,829	56.8%	14.0%	51.9%	16.1%
20 to 24 years	24,373	82.5%	6.3%	82.8%	9.2%
25 to 44 years	79,206	88.9%	4.2%	88.1%	5.0%
45 to 54 years	45,141	87.8%	3.0%	87.2%	4.3%
55 to 64 years	40,722	77.6%	2.8%	72.1%	4.2%
65 to 74 years	10,162	30.4%	3.1%	26.9%	3.6%
75 years & over	2,294	6.5%	3.6%	6.0%	3.5%
Employment Characteristics by Race & Hispanic Origin					
White alone	203,074	68.5%	4.1%	70.0%	4.8%
Black or African American	2,983	67.3%	15.9%	68.8%	14.7%
American Indian & Alaska Native	1,123	60.0%	7.5%	58.6%	16.3%
Asian or Other Pac. Islanders	3,197	66.9%	4.8%	70.4%	6.4%
Some Other Race	2,717	76.8%	11.6%	77.4%	9.4%
Two or More Races	1,649	67.5%	11.2%	71.0%	11.5%
Hispanic or Latino	10,433	72.2%	10.7%	75.0%	9.1%
Employment Characteristics by Veteran Status					
Veterans, 18 to 64 years	9,812	80.9%	5.4%	77.6%	5.7%
Employment Characteristics by Disability					
With Any Disability	10,510	56.6%	9.2%	51.3%	12.7%
Employment Characteristics by Educational Attainment					
Population, 25 to 64 years	165,059	85.5%	3.3%	84.0%	4.6%
Less than H.S. Diploma	9,212	69.6%	4.1%	65.4%	6.5%
H.S. Diploma or Equivalent	50,678	82.9%	3.0%	78.8%	3.9%
Some College or Assoc. Degree	63,850	87.5%	3.0%	85.2%	4.7%
Bachelor's Degree or Higher	41,328	90.5%	1.6%	89.3%	2.7%

Source: 2011-2015 American Community Survey, 5-Year Estimates

UNEMPLOYMENT RATE, 2000-2016

Up until 2015, Southwest Minnesota had consistently reported slightly lower unemployment rates than Minnesota and the nation, regardless of the state of the economy. According to [Local Area Unemployment Statistics](#), the region's unemployment rate hovered just below the state rate from 2002 to 2008, before rising to about 7.0 percent in 2009 and 2010, then dropping back to prerecession levels in 2014 and 2015, when it matched the state rate (see Figure 6). The region is home to many of the counties with the lowest unemployment rates in the state.



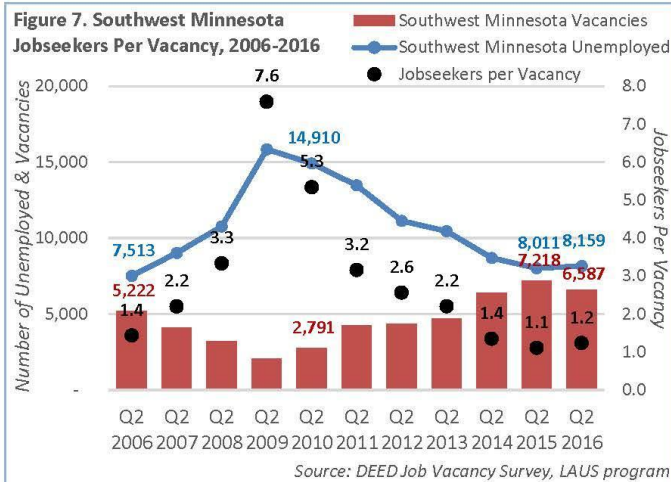
REGIONAL PROFILE

SOUTHWEST MINNESOTA PLANNING REGION

JOBSEEKERS PER VACANCY, 2016

As the number of available workers has declined and the economy continues to recover, the region's labor market has tightened. One clear demonstration of this is the ratio of unemployed jobseekers per vacancy, which now stands at 1.2-to-1 in Southwest Minnesota.

According to recent job vacancy survey results, there were 6,587 openings reported by employers compared to 8,159 unemployed jobseekers in the region. The ratio climbed as high as 7.6 during the recession in 2009 (see Figure 7).



EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT BY AGE GROUP, 2015

With 30.4 percent of adults aged 18 years and over having a college degree, Southwest Minnesota has lower educational attainment than the state, where 41.3 percent of adults have an associate, bachelor's, or advanced degree. In contrast, Southwest has a higher percentage of people with some college but no degree, and a high school diploma or less (see Table 5).

However, for younger residents, a different picture emerges. Nearly half (49.8%) of people in the region aged 18 to 24 years have attended some college, but hadn't earned a degree yet, and almost 14 percent already had a college degree. Southwest also had a higher percentage of people in the 25 to 44 and 45 to 64 year old age groups who had attended some college and earned associate's degrees than the state, but lower percentages of bachelor's degree or higher in both age groups.

Not only does Southwest Minnesota have a higher percentage of the population in the oldest age groups, those residents have much lower educational attainment than the rest of the state, and those in younger age groups (see Table 5).

Table 5. Educational Attainment by Age Group, 2015	Southwest Minnesota		Minnesota
	Number	Percent	Percent
18 to 24 years	42,265	13.9%	12.2%
Less than high school	4,769	11.3%	12.7%
High school grad. (incl. equiv.)	10,599	25.1%	26.2%
Some college, no degree	21,053	49.8%	42.7%
Associate's degree	2,963	7.0%	6.3%
Bachelor's degree	2,832	6.7%	11.6%
Advanced degree	49	0.1%	0.4%
25 to 44 years	89,062	29.3%	34.1%
Less than high school	7,104	8.0%	6.7%
High school grad. (incl. equiv.)	23,403	26.3%	19.2%
Some college, no degree	20,582	23.1%	21.6%
Associate's degree	14,736	16.5%	13.1%
Bachelor's degree	18,040	20.3%	27.6%
Advanced degree	5,197	5.8%	11.7%
45 to 64 years	103,917	34.2%	35.5%
Less than high school	6,126	5.9%	5.7%
High school grad. (incl. equiv.)	37,696	36.3%	26.9%
Some college, no degree	25,259	24.3%	23.3%
Associate's degree	12,421	12.0%	11.3%
Bachelor's degree	16,151	15.5%	21.4%
Advanced degree	6,264	6.0%	11.4%
65 years & over	68,610	22.6%	18.2%
Less than high school	11,966	17.4%	12.8%
High school grad. (incl. equiv.)	30,555	44.5%	37.3%
Some college, no degree	12,335	18.0%	19.8%
Associate's degree	2,569	3.7%	5.1%
Bachelor's degree	7,249	10.6%	15.2%
Advanced degree	3,936	5.7%	9.8%

Source: 2011-2015 American Community Survey, 5-Year Estimates

REGIONAL PROFILE | SOUTHWEST MINNESOTA PLANNING REGION

COMMUTE SHED AND LABOR SHED, 2014

According to commuting data from the [U.S. Census Bureau](#), the vast majority – about 76 percent – of workers who live in the region also work within the region. However, Southwest Minnesota is a net exporter of labor, having slightly more workers than available jobs; not only drawing in workers from surrounding counties but also having residents drive outside the region to find work. In sum, 147,444 workers both lived and worked in Southwest Minnesota in 2014, while another 38,656 workers drove into the region for work, compared to 46,670 workers who lived in the region but drove to surrounding counties for work (see Table 6 and Figure 8).

Table 6. Southwest Minnesota Inflow/Outflow Job Counts (All Jobs), 2014	2014	
	Count	Share
Employed in the Selection Area	186,100	100.0%
Employed in the Selection Area but Living Outside	38,656	20.8%
Employed and Living in the Selection Area	147,444	79.2%
Living in the Selection Area	194,114	100.0%
Living in the Selection Area but Employed Outside	46,670	24.0%
Living and Employed in the Selection Area	147,444	76.0%

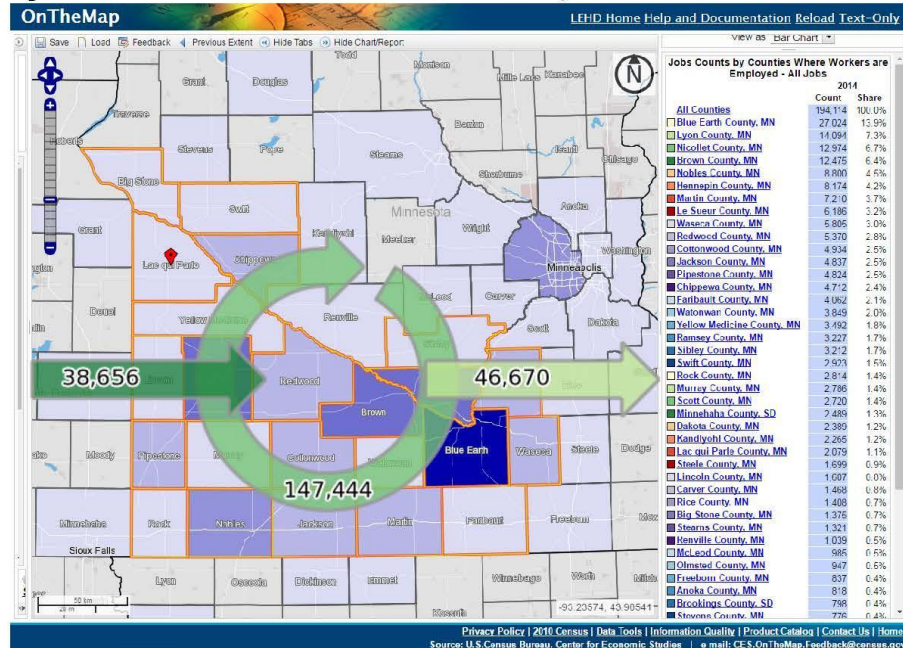
Source: [U.S. Census Bureau, OnTheMap](#)

Blue Earth County is the largest employment center in the region and was the biggest draw for workers, followed by Lyon, Nicollet, Brown, Nobles, Martin, Le Sueur, and Redwood County. Employers in the region both lose and draw workers from the Twin Cities metro area, as well as Minnehaha County in South Dakota, which includes the Sioux Falls Metropolitan Statistical Area. In contrast, the region also sends workers out of the region, primarily to larger metro areas including Sioux Falls, as well as the Twin Cities (see Table 7 and Figure 8).

Table 7. Southwest Commuting Data	
Counties outside the region that send the most workers into the region	Counties outside the region that the most workers from inside the region travel to
Hennepin Co. MN	Hennepin Co. MN
Dakota Co. MN	Ramsey Co. MN
Scott Co. MN	Scott Co. MN
Rice Co. MN	Minnehaha Co. SD
Ramsey Co. MN	Dakota Co. MN

Source: [U.S. Census Bureau, OnTheMap](#)

Figure 8. Southwest Minnesota Labor and Commute Shed, 2014



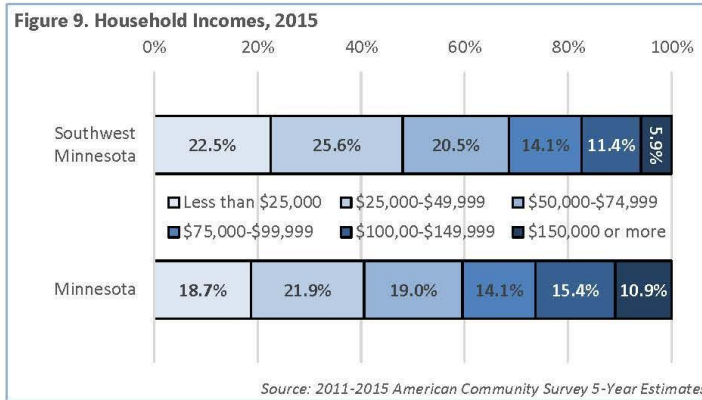
REGIONAL PROFILE

SOUTHWEST MINNESOTA PLANNING REGION

INCOMES, WAGES AND OCCUPATIONS

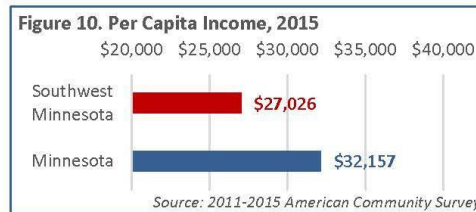
HOUSEHOLD INCOMES

Household incomes were significantly lower in Southwest Minnesota than the rest of the state. The median household income in Southwest was \$52,018 in 2015, compared to \$61,492 in Minnesota. Nearly half (48.1%) of the households in the region had incomes below \$50,000 in 2015, compared to 40.6 percent of households statewide. About 35 percent of households earned between \$50,000 and \$100,000 in the region. In contrast, only 17.4 percent of households in Southwest Minnesota earned over \$100,000 per year, compared to 26.3 percent of households statewide (see Figure 9).



PER CAPITA INCOMES

Per capita incomes were also lower in the region than the state, ranging from \$26,298 in EDR 8 to \$27,294 in EDR 6W to \$27,346 in EDR 9, compared to \$32,157 in Minnesota (see Figure 10). Southwest Minnesota's per capita income was just 84 percent of the statewide level.



COST OF LIVING

According to DEED's [Cost of Living tool](#), the basic needs budget for an average Minnesota family (which consists of 2 adults and 1 child, with 1 full-time and 1 part-time worker) was \$55,200 in 2017. The cost of living for a similar family in Southwest Minnesota was \$43,776 – which was easily the lowest in the state. The highest monthly costs were for transportation, food, and housing; with the region's housing, child care, taxes, and transportation costs were significantly lower than the rest of the state (see Table 8).

In order to meet the basic cost of living for the region, the workers in the family scenario described would need to earn \$14.03 per hour over the course of 60

hours per work week. DEED's Cost of Living tool provides different estimates for household compositions including single people, partnered couples, and up to 4 children. For a single person living alone and working full-time, the estimated yearly cost in Southwest would be \$25,440, which would require an hourly wage of \$12.23 to meet the basic needs standard of living.

Table 8. Family Yearly Cost, Worker Hourly Wage, and Family Monthly Costs, 2017									
Region	Family Yearly Cost of Living	Hourly Wage Required	Monthly Costs						
			Child Care	Food	Health Care	Housing	Transportation	Other	Taxes
Southwest	\$43,776	\$14.03	\$214	\$758	\$396	\$720	\$712	\$432	\$416
Minnesota	\$55,200	\$17.69	\$468	\$763	\$472	\$936	\$788	\$496	\$677

Source: DEED Cost of Living tool

REGIONAL PROFILE

SOUTHWEST MINNESOTA PLANNING REGION

WAGES AND OCCUPATIONS

According to DEED's [Occupational Employment Statistics](#) program, the median hourly wage for all occupations in Southwest Minnesota was \$16.58 in the first quarter of 2017, which was the lowest wage level of the six planning regions in the state. Southwest's median wage was \$3.00 below the state's median hourly wage, equaling 84.5 percent of the statewide wage rate, and about \$5.00 below the median hourly wage in the Twin Cities metro area, which would amount to over \$10,000 per year for a full-time worker. At \$15.93, EDR 6W had the lowest median wage in the region, just below EDR 8 at \$16.17, and well below EDR 9 at \$16.99 (see Table 9).

Table 9. Occupational Employment Statistics by Region, 1st Qtr. 2017	Median Hourly Wage	Estimated Regional Employment
Central Minnesota	\$17.45	280,910
Twin Cities Metro Area	\$21.55	1,751,580
Northeast Minnesota	\$17.25	141,910
Northwest Minnesota	\$16.71	215,520
Southeast Minnesota	\$18.53	259,060
Southwest Minnesota	\$16.58	181,430
EDR 6W - Upper MN Valley	\$15.93	16,600
EDR 8 - Southwest	\$16.17	50,360
EDR 9 - South Central	\$16.99	114,470
State of Minnesota	\$19.62	2,810,400

Source: [DEED Occupational Employment Statistics](#)

Southwest Minnesota stands out for having higher concentrations of farming, production; education, training, and library; and transportation and material moving workers than the state. Not surprisingly, the lowest-paying jobs are concentrated in food preparation and serving, sales and related, personal care and service, healthcare support, and building, grounds cleaning and maintenance jobs, which tend to have lower educational and training requirements. For the most part, the gap in pay between Southwest Minnesota and the state is also much lower in these jobs (see Table 10).

Table 10. Southwest Minnesota Occupational Employment Statistics, 1st Qtr. 2017							
	Southwest Minnesota				State of Minnesota		
	Median Hourly Wage	Estimated Regional Employment	Share of Total Employment	Location Quotient	Median Hourly Wage	Estimated Regional Employment	Share of Total Employment
Total, All Occupations	\$16.58	181,430	100.0%	1.0	\$19.62	2,810,400	100.0%
Office & Administrative Support	\$16.32	25,080	13.8%	1.0	\$18.26	404,120	14.4%
Production	\$16.26	20,820	11.5%	1.5	\$17.46	220,570	7.8%
Sales & Related	\$11.62	17,630	9.7%	1.0	\$13.48	275,740	9.8%
Education, Training & Library	\$21.10	16,730	9.2%	1.6	\$23.33	164,560	5.9%
Transportation & Material Moving	\$16.47	14,500	8.0%	1.3	\$17.06	178,270	6.3%
Healthcare Practitioners & Technical	\$25.70	11,510	6.3%	1.0	\$32.85	174,230	6.2%
Personal Care & Service	\$12.14	10,440	5.8%	1.2	\$11.77	129,490	4.6%
Food Preparation & Serving Related	\$9.89	9,330	5.1%	0.6	\$10.05	236,820	8.4%
Management	\$37.86	8,670	4.8%	0.8	\$49.20	168,370	6.0%
Installation, Maintenance & Repair	\$20.46	6,690	3.7%	1.1	\$22.41	95,700	3.4%
Healthcare Support	\$13.04	6,140	3.4%	1.1	\$15.11	84,730	3.0%
Business & Financial Operations	\$27.47	6,110	3.4%	0.6	\$31.83	164,180	5.8%
Construction & Extraction	\$22.49	5,950	3.3%	0.9	\$26.55	98,730	3.5%
Building, Grounds Cleaning & Maint.	\$12.13	5,270	2.9%	1.0	\$13.68	83,180	3.0%
Community & Social Service	\$21.04	3,400	1.9%	1.0	\$21.32	53,060	1.9%
Protective Service	\$18.91	3,270	1.8%	1.2	\$19.80	42,740	1.5%
Computer & Mathematical	\$28.13	2,820	1.6%	0.4	\$39.75	97,680	3.5%
Architecture & Engineering	\$30.31	2,590	1.4%	0.7	\$35.96	54,400	1.9%
Arts, Design, Entertainment & Media	\$17.31	1,690	0.9%	0.7	\$22.39	37,290	1.3%
Life, Physical & Social Science	\$25.70	1,510	0.8%	1.0	\$30.59	24,230	0.9%
Farming, Fishing & Forestry	\$14.44	810	0.4%	3.4	\$15.31	3,680	0.1%
Legal	\$34.51	490	0.3%	0.4	\$40.36	18,640	0.7%

Source: [DEED Occupational Employment Statistics, Qtr. 1 2017](#)

REGIONAL PROFILE | SOUTHWEST MINNESOTA PLANNING REGION

In contrast, the highest paying jobs are found in management, legal, architecture and engineering, computer, business and financial operations, healthcare practitioners, and life, physical, and social science occupations, which all need higher levels of education and experience, including many that require postsecondary training. The pay gaps between the region and state are much bigger in these occupations.

JOB VACANCY SURVEY

Employers reported 6,322 job vacancies in the fourth quarter of 2016, which was a decline of about 700 fewer openings compared to the past year, but still the seventh highest number ever reported. Overall, 33 percent of the openings were part-time, 30 percent required postsecondary education, and 32 percent required a year or more of experience. The median hourly wage offer was \$12.95 across all occupations, but ranged from a low of \$10.00 to \$25 per hour or more for architecture and engineering, healthcare practitioners, and management occupations. The largest number of vacancies were in sales and related occupations, followed by food preparation and serving, personal care, and health care (see Table 11).

Table 11. Southwest Minnesota Job Vacancy Survey Results, 4 th Qtr. 2016							
	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	6,322	33%	8%	30%	32%	30%	\$12.95
Sales & Related	932	39%	3%	4%	35%	1%	\$12.18
Food Preparation & Serving Related	737	55%	2%	0%	7%	6%	\$10.77
Personal Care & Service	690	26%	1%	11%	9%	11%	\$10.49
Healthcare Practitioners & Technical	524	28%	0%	97%	55%	96%	\$27.00
Production	469	18%	2%	11%	28%	5%	\$12.96
Transportation & Material Moving	437	56%	13%	6%	29%	75%	\$12.00
Office & Administrative Support	402	19%	2%	34%	25%	42%	\$15.66
Education, Training & Library	310	44%	12%	92%	36%	54%	\$17.33
Construction & Extraction	307	3%	87%	14%	15%	13%	\$10.00
Healthcare Support	305	56%	0%	48%	3%	81%	\$12.59
Management	215	2%	0%	74%	94%	30%	\$24.84
Building, Grounds Cleaning & Maint.	172	60%	20%	4%	9%	4%	\$12.04
Installation, Maintenance & Repair	162	4%	0%	74%	80%	59%	\$19.79
Community & Social Service	135	9%	0%	61%	57%	19%	\$14.51
Arts, Design, Entertainment & Media	93	65%	10%	14%	60%	3%	\$11.91
Architecture & Engineering	91	2%	0%	94%	86%	25%	\$29.22
Life, Physical & Social Sciences	78	35%	2%	58%	55%	26%	\$14.90
Business & Financial Operations	76	3%	2%	80%	81%	36%	\$21.69
Protective Service	45	45%	23%	23%	38%	59%	\$12.92
Computer & Mathematical	24	0%	0%	77%	77%	0%	\$20.43
Legal	4	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	\$18.64

Source: DEED Job Vacancy Survey, 4th Qtr. 2016

OCCUPATIONS IN DEMAND

According to DEED's [Occupations in Demand](#) tool, there are well over 200 occupations showing relatively high demand in the region, with training and education requirements ranging from short-term on-the-job training to postsecondary education to advanced degrees. These occupations are spread across different sectors but are also concentrated in the region's major industries. For example, nursing assistants, home health aides, production workers, mechanics and repair workers, and heavy and tractor trailer truck drivers are among the top occupations in demand based on the consistent need for workers in these industries. Many of the jobs are concentrated in manufacturing, health care, transportation, and other related industries (see Table 12).

REGIONAL PROFILE

SOUTHWEST MINNESOTA PLANNING REGION

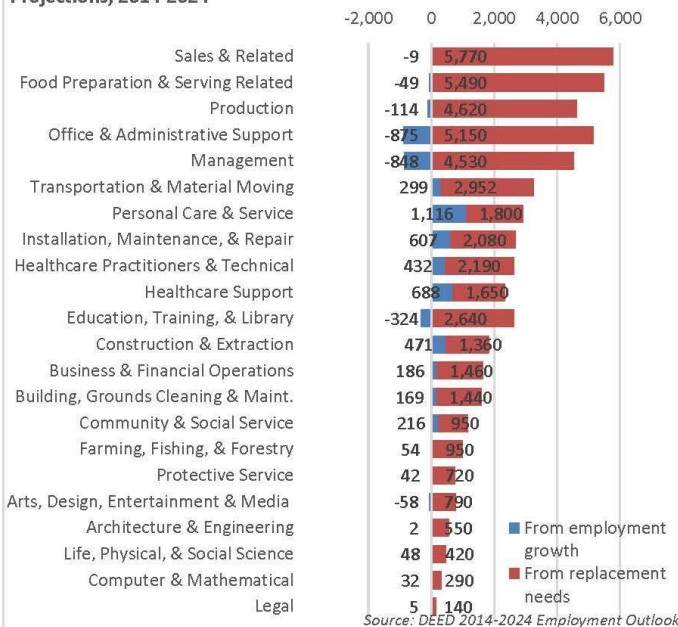
Table 12. Southwest Minnesota Occupations in Demand by Education Level, 2016

Less than High School	High School or Equivalent	Some College or Assoc. Degree	Bachelor's Degree or Higher
Food Prep & Serving Workers (\$19,090)	Customer Service Representatives (\$31,269)	Nursing Assistants (\$25,136)	Elementary & Secondary School Teachers (\$48,572)
Personal Care Aides (\$25,098)	Office Clerks, General (\$30,173)	Heavy & Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers (\$37,196)	Accountants & Auditors (\$60,471)
Home Health Aides (\$22,896)	Secretaries & Administrative Assistants (\$35,541)	Registered Nurses (\$55,837)	Industrial Engineers (\$72,620)
Cashiers (\$19,248)	Bus, Truck & Diesel Engine Mechanics (\$36,660)	Licensed Practical & Licensed Voc. Nurses (\$41,577)	Sales Managers (\$95,718)
Stock Clerks & Order Fillers (\$21,830)	Social & Human Service Assistants (\$40,679)	Teacher Assistants (\$26,098)	Financial Managers (\$95,820)
Laborers & Freight, Stock & Material Movers (\$28,992)	Maintenance & Repair Workers, General (\$38,534)	HVAC Mechanics (\$47,356)	Network & Computer Systems Admins. (\$62,067)
Retail Salespersons (\$20,298)	Bus Drivers, School or Special Client (\$27,018)	Computer User Support Specialists (\$42,052)	Family & General Practitioners (\$18,1359)
Janitors & Cleaners (\$24,723)	Sales Representatives, Wholesale & Mfg. (\$51,863)	Medical Assistants (\$27,648)	Child, Family, & School Social Workers (\$51,702)
Cooks, Restaurant (\$19,930)	Light Truck or Delivery Services Drivers (\$33,533)	Industrial Engineering Technicians (\$45,750)	Industrial Production Managers (\$78,204)
Helpers--Production Workers (\$30,293)	Team Assemblers (\$30,567)	Emergency Medical Techns. & Paramedics (\$30,400)	Mental Health Counselors (\$69,836)

Source: [DEED Occupations in Demand](#)**EMPLOYMENT PROJECTIONS**

The 23-county Southwest planning region, which includes Region 6W, 8, and 9, is projected to grow just 1.0 percent from 2014 to 2024, making it the slowest growing planning region in the state, which is expected to expand by 4.3 percent.

The region could gain 2,114 new jobs, but will also need to fill 48,070 replacement openings for existing jobs left vacant by retirements and other career changes. In fact, the number of replacement openings is expected to dwarf the number of new jobs in every group except for personal care and service occupations. Seven occupational groups will not see any new growth, but will still have demand for workers (see Figure 11).

Figure 11. Southwest Minnesota Regional Employment Projections, 2014-2024

Source: DEED 2014-2024 Employment Outlook

REGIONAL PROFILE

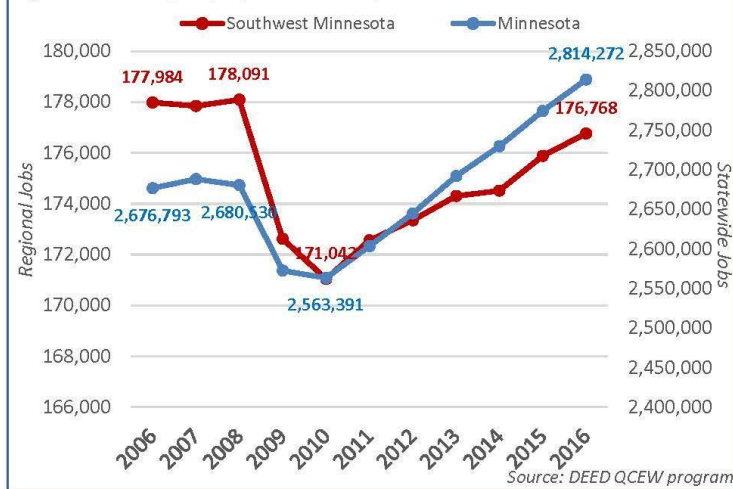
SOUTHWEST MINNESOTA PLANNING REGION

ECONOMY

INDUSTRY EMPLOYMENT

Southwest Minnesota has seen employment ups and downs over the past decade, but ended 2016 with about 1,200 fewer jobs than it had in 2006. The region entered the recession later than the state, still experiencing job growth through 2008, before suffering severe declines in 2009 and 2010. Since then, Southwest Minnesota has recovered much more slowly than the state, which gained jobs at an 8.1 percent clip from 2011 to 2016, compared to a 2.4 percent increase in the region. Southwest Minnesota reached a peak of 178,091 jobs in 2008, then hit a low of 171,042 jobs in 2010, and has still not recovered all of the jobs lost during the recession (see Figure 12).

Figure 12. Industry Employment Statistics, 2006-2016



According to DEED's [Quarterly Census of Employment & Wages \(QCEW\) program](#), Southwest Minnesota was home to 11,690 business establishments providing 176,768 covered jobs through 2016, with a total payroll of just under \$6.9 billion. That was about 6.3 percent of total employment in the state of Minnesota. Average annual wages were \$38,850 in the region, which was almost \$15,500 lower than the state's average annual wage (see Table 13).

Geography	Number of Firms	Number of Jobs	Total Payroll	Average Annual Wage	2011-2016		2015-2016	
					Change in Jobs	Percent Change	Change in Jobs	Percent Change
Southwest Minnesota	11,690	176,768	\$6,867,369,237	\$38,850	+4,206	+2.4%	+883	+0.5%
Region 6W	1,519	17,286	\$629,088,118	\$36,393	-774	-4.3%	+3	0.0%
Region 8	3,827	54,119	\$2,045,220,060	\$37,791	+607	+1.1%	-563	-1.0%
Region 9	6,345	105,362	\$4,193,061,059	\$39,797	+4,373	+4.3%	+1,443	+1.4%
Minnesota	161,520	2,814,272	\$152,795,190,643	\$54,293	+210,746	+8.1%	+39,864	+1.4%

Source: [DEED Quarterly Census of Employment & Wages \(QCEW\)](#)

With 105,362 jobs at 6,345 business establishments, EDR 9 accounts for about 60 percent of total employment in the Southwest Minnesota planning region. EDR 9 also provided the bulk of the region's job growth during the recovery from 2011 to 2016, adding 4,373 net new jobs. In contrast, EDR 6W had the smallest number of firms and jobs, with 17,286 jobs at 1,519 establishments, and saw a loss of 774 jobs in the past five years. EDR 8 had 3,827 establishments providing 54,119 jobs in 2016, regaining over 600 jobs since 2011 despite a loss of 563 jobs in the past year. EDR 9 had the highest average annual wages at \$39,797, though that was still nearly \$15,000 below the state average. Wages were \$36,393 in EDR 6W and \$37,791 in EDR 8, but increased over the past year (see Table 13).

REGIONAL PROFILE | SOUTHWEST MINNESOTA PLANNING REGION

With 31,390 jobs at 604 firms, Southwest Minnesota is the only region where manufacturing is still the largest employing industry, accounting for 17.8 percent of total jobs in the region. That is 6.5 percent higher than the state's concentration of employment in manufacturing. In addition, Southwest Minnesota is still adding manufacturing jobs, gaining 61 net new jobs over the past five years. At \$48,326 in 2016, average annual wages were nearly \$10,000 higher in manufacturing than the total of all industries.

The next largest industry in Southwest Minnesota was health care and social assistance, with 30,527 jobs at 1,025 firms, after gaining 544 net new jobs in the past five years. Due to the region's older population, the largest sector was nursing and residential care facilities with just over 10,000 jobs, followed by hospitals with 8,049 jobs, ambulatory health care services with 7,018 jobs, and social assistance, with 5,446 jobs.

Retail trade is the third largest industry, with 20,576 jobs at 1,523 establishments, while the closely related accommodation and food services industry was fifth largest with 12,792 jobs at 796 firms. Though the region has seen steady job gains over the past five years, annual wages are still relatively low in these service-providing industries. With 15,797 jobs accounting for 8.9 percent of total jobs, the region has a higher concentration of employment in educational services than the state (8.0%).

Other important industries in Southwest Minnesota include public administration, construction, wholesale trade, transportation and warehousing, finance and insurance, agriculture, and other services. Thirteen of the 20 main industries in the region added jobs since 2011, with huge gains occurring in agriculture, transportation and warehousing, construction, health care and social assistance, educational services, and retail trade. In contrast, the region saw job declines in management of companies, other services, wholesale trade, and utilities. Ten of the 20 industries saw job growth in the past year (see Table 14).

Table 14. Southwest Minnesota Industry Employment Statistics, 2016									
NAICS Industry Title	2016 Annual Data				Avg. Annual Wage	2011-2016		2015-2016	
	Number of Firms	Number of Jobs	Percent of Jobs	Total Payroll (\$1,000s)		Change in Jobs	Percent Change	Change in Jobs	Percent Change
Total, All Industries	11,690	176,768	100.0%	\$6,867,369	\$38,850	+4,206	+2.4%	+883	+0.5%
Manufacturing	604	31,390	17.8%	\$1,516,939	\$48,326	+61	+0.2%	-226	-0.7%
Health Care & Social Assistance	1,025	30,527	17.3%	\$1,169,423	\$38,308	+544	+1.8%	+204	+0.7%
Retail Trade	1,523	20,576	11.6%	\$469,154	\$22,801	+474	+2.4%	+162	+0.8%
Educational Services	236	15,797	8.9%	\$631,667	\$39,987	+487	+3.2%	+315	+2.0%
Accommodation & Food Services	796	12,792	7.2%	\$173,542	\$13,566	+249	+2.0%	+33	+0.3%
Public Administration	582	9,878	5.6%	\$401,942	\$40,691	+428	+4.5%	+224	+2.3%
Construction	1,451	8,113	4.6%	\$398,997	\$49,180	+695	+9.4%	-38	-0.5%
Wholesale Trade	625	7,854	4.4%	\$424,393	\$54,035	-59	-0.7%	+89	+1.1%
Transportation & Warehousing	727	6,625	3.7%	\$241,437	\$36,443	+725	+12.3%	+297	+4.7%
Finance & Insurance	733	6,053	3.4%	\$344,024	\$56,835	+205	+3.5%	+39	+0.6%
Agriculture, Forestry, Fish & Hunt	633	5,344	3.0%	\$216,816	\$40,572	+935	+21.2%	+128	+2.5%
Other Services	982	4,903	2.8%	\$127,105	\$25,924	-358	-6.8%	-83	-1.7%
Professional & Technical Services	580	4,064	2.3%	\$212,187	\$52,211	+261	+6.9%	-69	-1.7%
Admin. Support & Waste Mgmt. Svcs.	358	4,002	2.3%	\$120,659	\$30,150	+208	+5.5%	+157	+4.1%
Information	202	2,802	1.6%	\$127,348	\$45,449	#N/A	#N/A	-83	-2.9%
Arts, Entertainment, & Recreation	219	1,959	1.1%	\$30,700	\$15,671	+68	+3.6%	-10	-0.5%
Management of Companies	48	1,544	0.9%	\$128,645	\$83,320	-554	-26.4%	-153	-9.0%
Real Estate & Rental & Leasing	272	1,227	0.7%	\$31,589	\$25,745	-1	-0.1%	-10	-0.8%
Utilities	74	971	0.5%	\$78,174	\$80,509	-56	-5.5%	-28	-2.8%
Mining	23	342	0.2%	\$22,627	\$66,161	-21	-5.8%	-64	-15.8%

Source: [DEED Quarterly Census of Employment & Wages \(QCEW\)](#)

REGIONAL PROFILE

SOUTHWEST MINNESOTA PLANNING REGION

DISTINGUISHING INDUSTRIES

Southwest Minnesota stands out in the state for its higher concentrations of employment in manufacturing and agriculture. Southwest Minnesota has 6.3 percent of total state employment, but has 36.5 percent of the state's jobs in animal production and aquaculture, and over 22 percent of statewide jobs in support activities for agriculture, electrical equipment manufacturing, and food manufacturing. The region also has strengths in printing, truck transportation, and merchant wholesalers of nondurable goods (see Table 15).

Table 15. Southwest Minnesota Distinguishing Industries, 2016					Avg. Annual Wages	Location Quotient
NAICS Industry Title	NAICS Code	Number of Firms	Number of Jobs	Total Payroll		
Total, All Industries	0	11,690	176,768	\$6,867,369,237	\$38,850	1.0
Animal Production & Aquaculture	112	312	3,928	\$161,633,143	\$41,149	5.8
Support Activities for Agriculture	115	106	563	\$26,349,744	\$46,802	3.7
Electrical Equip., Appl. & Component Mfg.	335	20	1,928	\$107,145,306	\$55,573	3.6
Food Manufacturing	311	103	10,600	\$524,236,745	\$49,456	3.6
Nonmetallic Mineral Product Mfg.	327	32	1,747	\$98,414,460	\$56,333	2.7
Printing & Related Support Activities	323	61	3,531	\$142,958,207	\$40,487	2.5
Truck Transportation	484	417	3,371	\$134,676,621	\$39,952	2.0
Gasoline Stations	447	225	2,933	\$52,130,262	\$17,774	1.9
Crop Production	111	201	814	\$28,046,270	\$34,455	1.8
Merchant Wholesalers, Nondurable Goods	424	344	4,632	\$252,348,484	\$54,479	1.7

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

INDUSTRY PROJECTIONS

As noted above, the 23-county Southwest Minnesota Planning Area is projected to grow 1.0 percent from 2014 to 2024, a gain of 2,114 new jobs. The largest and fastest growing industry is expected to be health care and social assistance, which may gain over 3,100 jobs.

Southwest is also expected to see rapid employment growth in construction, administrative support and waste services, wholesale trade, finance and insurance, and transportation and warehousing. In contrast, the region is expected to see declines in retail trade, public administration, self-employed workers, manufacturing, information, other services, and management of companies (see Table 16).

Table 16. Southwest Minnesota Industry Projections, 2014-2024				
Industry	Estimated Employment 2014	Projected Employment 2024	Percent Change 2014-2024	Numeric Change 2014-2024
Total, All Industries	208,555	210,669	+1.0%	+2,114
Manufacturing	31,340	30,844	-1.5%	-496
Public Administration	31,816	30,682	-3.5%	-1,134
Health Care & Social Assistance	25,914	29,025	+12.0%	+3,111
Self-Employed & Family Workers	26,449	26,008	-1.6%	-441
Retail Trade	20,285	19,570	-3.5%	-715
Accommodation & Food Services	12,038	12,106	+0.5%	+68
Wholesale Trade	8,104	8,457	+4.3%	+353
Construction	7,613	8,164	+7.2%	+551
Other Services	8,056	7,901	-1.9%	-155
Finance & Insurance	6,131	6,399	+4.3%	+268
Transportation & Warehousing	5,377	5,583	+3.8%	+206
Agriculture, Forestry, Fish & Hunt	5,335	5,360	+0.4%	+25
Admin. Supp. & Waste Mgmt Svcs.	4,200	4,566	+8.7%	+366
Professional & Technical Services	4,301	4,458	+3.6%	+157
Arts, Entertainment & Recreation	2,556	2,784	+8.9%	+228
Information	2,839	2,673	-5.8%	-166
Educational Services	1,950	1,920	-1.5%	-30
Management of Companies	1,822	1,625	-10.8%	-197
Real Estate & Rental & Leasing	1,225	1,376	+12.3%	+151
Utilities	813	760	-6.5%	-53
Mining	391	408	+4.3%	+17

Source: DEED 2014-2024 Employment Outlook

REGIONAL PROFILE

SOUTHWEST MINNESOTA PLANNING REGION

EMPLOYERS BY SIZE CLASS

The vast majority of businesses in Southwest Minnesota are small businesses, with 53.6 percent of businesses reporting 1 to 4 employees in 2015, according to County Business Patterns from the U.S. Census Bureau. Another 33.3 percent had between 5 and 19 employees; and 10.9 percent had between 20 and 99 employees. Just 2.0 percent had 100 to 499 employees, and only 18 businesses in the region had more than 500 employees, which is the Small Business Administration's official cut off for a "small business". Obviously then, small businesses are vital to the region's economy (see Table 17).

Table 17. Employers by Size Class, 2015			
	Southwest Minnesota	Minnesota	
Number of Employees	Number of Firms	Percent of Firms	Percent of Firms
1-4	6,088	53.6%	53.7%
5-9	2,247	19.8%	17.7%
10-19	1,534	13.5%	13.3%
20-49	942	8.3%	9.3%
50-99	290	2.6%	3.2%
100-249	187	1.6%	1.9%
250-499	48	0.4%	0.5%
500 or more	18	0.2%	0.3%
Total Firms	11,354	100.0%	100.0%

Source: U.S. Census, County Business Patterns

NONEMPLOYER ESTABLISHMENTS

Before growing, the basic building block of most small businesses is a self-employed business. Southwest Minnesota was home to 27,233 self-employed businesses or "nonemployers" in 2015, 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)." Much like covered employment, Southwest Minnesota has seen a small decline in nonemployers over the past decade. In sum, the region suffered a net loss of 62 nonemployers from 2005 to 2015, a -0.2 percent decline. The largest amount of nonemployers and the fastest growth occurred in EDR 9, while EDR 6W and EDR 8 both saw decreases in self-employment. These nonemployers generated sales receipts of \$1.2 billion in 2015 (see Table 18).

Table 18. Nonemployer Statistics, 2015				
	2015		2005-2015	
	Number of Firms	Receipts (\$1,000s)	Change in Firms	Percent Change
Southwest Minnesota	27,233	\$1,202,475	-62	-0.2%
Region 6W	3,308	\$137,522	-136	-3.9%
Region 8	8,331	\$381,104	-125	-1.5%
Region 9	15,594	\$683,849	+199	+1.3%
State of Minnesota	397,378	\$18,435,244	+23,959	+6.4%

Source: U.S. Census, Nonemployer Statistics program

CENSUS OF AGRICULTURE

Finally, one of the most important industries in Southwest Minnesota is agriculture, with 19,151 farms producing nearly \$8.4 billion in the market value of products sold in 2012, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Southwest Minnesota had 25.7 percent of the state's farms, and 39.4 percent of the state's total market value, led by Blue Earth, Faribault, Lyon, Martin, Nobles, Redwood and Rock County, which were all among the top 20 counties in the state for the market value of products sold. Despite seeing a small decline in the number of farms, the region saw a 53 percent increase in the market value of products sold from 2007 to 2012, as many farms got bigger and commodity prices went up (see Table 19).

Table 19. Census of Agriculture, 2012			Change in
	Number of Farms	Market Value of Products Sold	Market Value, 2007-2012
Southwest Minnesota	19,151	\$8,386,406,000	+53.4%
Region 6W	3,612	\$1,471,581,000	+77.6%
Region 8	7,621	\$3,419,803,000	+45.3%
Region 9	7,918	\$3,495,022,000	+53.0%
State of Minnesota	74,542	\$21,280,184,000	+61.5%

Source: 2012 Census of Agriculture

Upon request, this information can be made available in alternate formats for people with disabilities by contacting Luke Greiner at 320-308-5378 or at luke.greiner@state.mn.us or Mark Schultz at 507-205-6068 or at mark.schultz@state.mn.us.

