



Minnesota Combined State Plan 2024-2027

Plan Draft for Public Comment

1/17/2024

State Plan Submitted By:

Governor's Workforce Development Board
Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development
180 E 5th St Suite 1200
Saint Paul, MN 55101
state.plan.wioa@state.mn.us
<https://mn.gov/deed/gwdb/>

Upon request, this material will be made available in an alternative format such as large print, Braille or audio recording.

Contents

- Minnesota Combined State Plan 2024-2027 1
 - State Plan Submitted By: 2
 - I. WIOA State Plan Type and Executive Summary 5
 - a. Unified or Combined State Plan..... 5
 - b. Executive Summary..... 6
 - II. Strategic Elements 16
 - a. Economic, Workforce and Workforce Development Activities Analysis 17
 - b. State Strategic Vision and Goals 48
 - c. State Strategy..... 50
 - III. Operational Planning Elements 56
 - a. State Strategy Implementation..... 56
 - b. State Operating Systems and Policies..... 87
 - IV. Coordination with State Plan Programs..... 150
 - V. Common Assurances (For All Core Programs) 152
 - VI. Program-Specific Requirements for Core Programs..... 154
 - Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth Activities General Requirements 154
 - Wagner-Peyser Act Program (Employment Service) 170
 - Adult Education and Family Literacy Act Programs 194
 - Vocational Rehabilitation..... 220
 - Vocational Rehabilitation – Minnesota State Services for the Blind 281
 - VII. Program-Specific Requirements for Combined State Plan Partner Programs 357
 - Strengthening Career and Technical Education for the 21st Century (Perkins V)..... 357
 - Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)..... 433
 - Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP E&T) and Work Programs Authorized Under Sections 6(D)(4) And 6 6(O) of the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008..... 465
 - Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA)..... 483
 - Jobs for Veterans State Grants 483
 - Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP) 488

I. WIOA State Plan Type and Executive Summary

a. Unified or Combined State Plan

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

Minnesota is submitting a combined State Plan, which includes the six core programs, meaning:

Title I of WIOA: the Adult program, the Dislocated Worker program, and the Youth program;

Title II of WIOA: the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act program;

Title III of WIOA: the Wagner-Peyser Act Employment Service program (authorized under the Wagner-Peyser Act, as amended by title III); and

Title IV: the Vocational Rehabilitation program (authorized under Title I of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended by Title IV).

Through the combined State Plan, Minnesota also submits plans for the following programs:

Career and technical education programs authorized under the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act of 2006, as amended by the Strengthening Career and Technical Education for the 21st Century Act (Perkins V) (20 U.S.C. 2301 et seq.)

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

Employment and Training programs under the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (programs authorized under section 6(d)(4) of the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 (7 U.S.C. 2015(d)(4)))

Trade Adjustment Assistance for Workers programs (activities authorized under chapter 2 of title II of the Trade Act of 1974 (19 U.S.C. 2271 et seq.))

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

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

b. Executive Summary

The State Strategic Vision, Goals and Strategies for 2024-2027 were developed by modifying the previous State Plan's Vision, Goals and Strategies in consultation with workforce program administrators, the Governor's Workforce Development Board (GWDB), the Minnesota Association of Workforce Boards (MAWB), and the National Governor's Association (NGA). The shift in Vision, Goals and Strategies represents a new strategic direction for workforce development in the state, one that is focused on breaking down silos across workforce partners and being more intentional and proactive about the delivery of programs and services to Minnesotans.

Leveraging historic infrastructure investments

The GWDB supports five state-wide sector partnerships focused on the five most in-demand sectors in Minnesota which are highly aligned to the historic federal infrastructure investments: the trades, technology, manufacturing, education and the caring professions. The GWDB will be leading efforts to bring sector partners together to support equitable and inclusive recruitment and retention efforts for building the needed workforce, especially those focused on creating more diverse and representative workforces in the construction sector. Building a more diverse workforce is a major focus of Governor Tim Walz and Lt. Governor Peggy Flanagan's administration, and the work of the state-wide sector strategies will focus on providing support and resources to expand successful recruitment and retention initiatives and partnerships focused on diversity, equity, inclusion and accessibility. This includes breaking down silos between different programs or agencies to create a statewide strategy with regional and local areas of focus to meet the upcoming workforce needs.

As an example of breaking down silos to improve service delivery, the GWDB in partnership with the Governor's Office, Minnesota Management and Budget (MMB), and the Economic Analysis and Labor Market Information divisions within DEED and are working together to conduct a cross-agency and cross-industry analysis of upcoming occupational needs related to the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, known as the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL). As part of this occupational analysis, the team will also be diving deeper into the demographic analysis of occupations and sectors most in-demand and will be bringing together partners to help close existing equity gaps.

Once this analysis is complete, the GWDB will be leading both the development of a state-wide human capital plan and providing information to local workforce partners across the state so that this information can be used to inform the upcoming WIOA Regional and Local planning efforts for 2024-2027. This will ensure a coordinated state and local approach to addressing the cross-sector workforce needs our state will face over the coming years. The GWDB has also

been playing a leading role in supporting the development of workforce plans for a number of additional historic infrastructure investments, including the Broadband Equity Access and Deployment Plan, the Minneapolis-St. Paul region's recent Tech Hubs designation, and the Creating Helpful Incentives to Produce Semiconductors (CHIPS) and Science Act.

Minnesota is committed to implementing the US Department of Labor and Department of Commerce's Good Jobs Principles through our sector strategies, understanding implementation of this vary slightly as the demographics and challenges for the sectors vary. This includes identifying demographic gaps to help determine recruitment and hiring practices, amplifying worker voice, providing job security and safe working conditions, identifying best practices to improve organizational culture, and career pathway development and sharing. The approach for achieving this differs slightly by industry as there are varied areas of more pressing focus, but this strategy will be embedded across all of our work.

With respect to the BIL, in many cases the benefits provided to workers in the related sectors and occupations are often a barrier for entry, so identifying common benefits that help to bring down barriers to employment for the underrepresented will be prioritized. Benefits like flexible and advanced scheduling, child care support, access to health care, paid time off and future compliance with Minnesota's new paid family leave program, transportation, and retirement benefits will all be part of this conversation. Additionally, through the sector strategies we will identify common best practices to support pay transparency to ensure that wages paid to workers in these in-demand occupations do not differ due to gender or race.

An example of this is committing to using registered apprenticeship programs (RAPs) to support a well-trained workforce. Minnesota has a longstanding, demonstrated commitment to developing, expanding, and sustaining high-quality statewide RAPs and to increasing RAP participation and completion by underrepresented populations. Minnesota is host to a number of initiatives and providers that support women and other under-represented populations gaining skill, experience and working in construction industries. RAPs are already active and growing in the a number of the [occupations](#) identified by NTIA, including Laborers, equipment operators, and telecommunication technicians.

As part of the Minnesota CHIPS Coalition, the GWDB is serving as the lead or "backbone organization" role for the Minnesota CHIPS Coalition Workforce Partnership (CHIPS Workforce Partnership). The GWDB has a Federal and State statutory responsibility to align the state's workforce vision and strategy across state agencies and with a variety of stakeholders which uniquely positions the CHIPS Workforce Partnership to be able to engage partners from across the state and better leverage the historic investments the state is making in workforce development.

CHIPS Workforce Partnership has established a sectoral and cross-sector partnership engaging key employers, unions, education institutions, and community-based partners to train workers in the skills needed for high-demand jobs. This partnership is addressing the challenges that hinder workers' participation, recruitment, placement, and retention in the in-demand jobs

providing family-sustaining wages that employers as part of this partnership are offering and thereby unlock opportunities in science and technology for those who have been historically left out.

CHIPS for America funding provides the opportunity to strengthen the semiconductor industry and enhance economic competitiveness for our region while contributing to the work of closing historical wealth and wage gaps. COVID-19 illuminated inequities in our local communities. The pandemic exacerbated long-standing inequities in employment and financial well-being and persistent racial trauma. CHIPS for America represents an unparalleled opportunity to address these challenges while bridging the gulf between employers' needs and workers' realities, build pathways for workers into family-supporting careers, and dismantle the underlying structural and systemic roadblocks that exclude underrepresented workers from the region's overall prosperity. A collaborative, equity-focused response targeting historically under-served populations is needed as our region emerges from the continued social and economic aftermath of the murder of George Floyd.

Our workforce plan was developed in partnership alongside other Minnesota-based semiconductor and related microelectronics industry employers because we recognize that collaboration is critical to overcoming the barriers to growing the industry and achieving our ambitions. The details of the plan described in this section highlight the State's developing strategy for supporting workforce planning for federal funding and for the sector partnership strategy described below to (1) recruit and train the workforce needed to meet employer needs throughout the state and (2) establish a firm foundation to build the workforce pipeline that will sustain growth. Key takeaways of our plan:

- 1) **Employer-led:** this plan reflects the aggregated hiring demands of employers in Minnesota. This includes aggregating hiring demand, finding commonalities in our occupation and skills needs to reflect our workforce needs more accurately and efficiently to partners. Because of this collaboration we have a clear view of the critical roles and number of positions that must be filled over the coming years if we are to expand and modernize.
- 2) **Collaborative:** this plan recognizes that we have a long history of collaborating in Minnesota, which includes relationships between workforce boards, education and training providers, including high schools and postsecondary education institutions, unions, and community-based organizations.
- 3) **State of Minnesota Leadership:** Minnesota is responding to our workforce challenges by expanding interagency collaboration and leveraging historic state and federal investments to meet the moment.
- 4) **Equity and Community:** We recognize that we can meet the needs of employers by doing more to reach underrepresented and economically disadvantaged populations.

The strategies described with regard to the BIL and CHIPS and Science Act will also be leveraged as part of Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) investments in Minnesota. The GWDB and DEED's Labor Market Information (LMI) office are working together to support the initial occupational needs assessment based on upcoming identified projects for the Climate Pollution Reduction Grants (CPRG) Program.

Investments that prepare workers for quality jobs.

This year Minnesota's legislature passed historic investments in legislative priorities and key items to improve the workforce development system across the state, including passing a \$72 billion biennial budget. Major investments in groundbreaking programs like Paid Family and Medical Leave, Free Community College, and Child Care all will make a major difference in the lives of working families across the state.

For the Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED), Minnesota's federally recognized workforce development agency, these investments include:

- \$50 million in funding for Targeted Populations to support employment services and training to bring workers who have been overlooked for employment – particularly people of color – into the workforce at family-sustaining wages.
- \$20 million in Drive for 5 funding to prepare the workforce to enter five of the most critical occupational categories in the state with high-growth jobs and family-sustaining wages
- \$400 million for the Minnesota Forward Fund, \$250 million of which is being made available to match federal funds made available in the Chips and Science Act which can also be matched by employers to support workforce development activities.
- \$15 million for Child Care Economic Development Grants and \$1 million to create a new Office of Child Care and Community Partnerships.
- An additional \$20 million for youth workforce development programs.
- \$4 million to create an Employer Reasonable Accommodations Fund which will reimburse small- to mid-sized Minnesota employers for expenses tied to providing reasonable accommodations for employees with disabilities and \$3.89 million increase for the Individual Placement and Supports (IPS) Program to provide specialized supports to people with serious mental illnesses so they can find and maintain steady employment.

Minnesota Department of Labor and Industry (DLI), which serves as the State Apprenticeship Agency, and provides work-based learning and on-the-job training programs for youth called Youth Skills Training and adults called the Dual-Training Pipeline program,

both of which have pathways into the in-demand occupations, received historic funding, including:

- \$1 million for Labor Education Advancement Program (LEAP) grants to better facilitate the participation and retention of women, people of color and Indigenous people in registered apprenticeship programs (RAPs)
- \$3 million for clean economy apprenticeship grants
- \$8.02 million in FY24 to support Pipeline Dual-Training from the Minnesota Office of Higher Education's (OHE) dual training grant funding.
- \$1.5 million in Youth Skills Training (YST) grants to create, implement and expand programs which could include partnerships between high schools and semiconductor manufacturers.
- The Minnesota Registered Expansion Grant (APEX) program provides funding to address Minnesota's racial and economic disparities by increasing female and minority participation in the apprenticeship programs. Through this U.S. Department of Labor funded program, unions engage with contractors in apprenticeship recruitment and retention initiatives. In 2020, 28 individuals benefited from the APEX program, and nearly 200 have received training as a result of these grants since 2018.

Minnesota views good jobs an essential element of creating an economy that works for all. This past year, Minnesota was selected to participate in USDOL's Job Quality Academy (JQA), with DEED as the lead partner, with the goal of better integrating job-quality principles into all workforce development work across the state. The Minnesota Job Quality Academy Team has representatives across all workforce development stakeholders, creating a powerful synergy between efforts and ensuring in-demand employment opportunities are informed by the Department of Commerce and Department of Labor's Good Job Principles: recruitment and hiring, benefits, diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility (DEIA), empowerment and representation, job security and working conditions, organizational culture, pay, and skills and career advancement.

As part of that work, the Minnesota JQA team defined quality jobs in Minnesota as: The job seeker and employer match of equitable, competitive pay with regular opportunities for advancement, access to family-supporting benefits, holistic empowerment and representation, positive organizational culture, while communities benefit from greater stability for families as well in the local economy. With its roots in DEED's mission to empower the growth of the Minnesota economy for everyone, the definition of job quality stems from "an economic environment to produce jobs and improve the quality of the state's workforce." Minnesota recognizes that a quality job means different things to different people:

- Our New Americans may define it as a well-paying job which help establish their new lives in Minnesota and where transportation, English language learning support, and religious and cultural acceptance is the norm.
- Parents may define it as workplace flexibility to attend to their children's childcare, school, and health needs while providing family-sustaining benefits.
- Minnesota's Black, Indigenous, and workers of color who have experienced the deepest disparities in our country and state, as well as bias in the workplace, may define it as a job that provides them 100% of the wages of their white counterparts, equal access to job prospects without discrimination, and a culture of inclusivity.
- Employers will define it as a job that allows their employees to live without stress, empowering them to come to work each day knowing that they are respectfully compensated for their time. Their employees are paid wages which fully support them without relying on public assistance funding.
- Employers can use their quality jobs to see improvements in recruitment and retention, lower turnover and increased positive organizational culture. These benefits will ideally net gains for the employers, such as greater productivity, increased profits, business expansion, and more.

In addition to the specific needs and interests of Minnesota's diverse population, good jobs for all support strong career pathways, positive work culture, skill and knowledge growth and wages and benefits that contribute to quality of life for Minnesota families.

Data-driven decisions

Minnesota's workforce strategies are based in data and ensure that data helps lead our strategic workforce efforts and investments. An example of this is the Drive for 5 Initiative, which is based on data demonstrating the sectors in Minnesota with the highest growth of family sustaining wages. Drive for 5 focuses on moving Minnesotans into high-growth employment opportunities with family sustainable wages and prioritizes training for populations that face some of the most significant barriers to employment: people of color, people with disabilities, and those that face other systemic barriers.

This initiative will prepare a workforce to enter five of the most critical occupational categories in the state with high-growth jobs and family-sustaining wages: Technology, Caring Professions, Education, Manufacturing, and Trades and create a pipeline of workers who are skilled and prepared to enter high-growth and high-wage employment. This work is being grounded at the GWDB, with employer-led sector partnerships already established for each of the sectors listed above. Each of the sector partnerships under the GWDB are focused on four key outputs: addressing top talent needs, identifying supporting programs, career pathway development, and defining targeted populations and barriers to employment. The GWDB and DEED's LMI office collaborated to create an [article](#) describing the effort and [industry profiles](#) for each of these occupations, ensuring that any additional decisions or programming would be data-driven decisions.

The focus on data continues to our regional and local planning process. Minnesota does best when state agencies and community partners collaborate to achieve common goals. Through the state, local and regional planning process, the GWDB seeks to build in alignment of the state agency, local, and regional programs and priorities. This involves transparency in the state's planning, programs, initiatives and funding prior to the start of the local and regional planning process.

In the planning process each local area provides an opportunity to share with the state their regional perspective on ways to incorporate the state's vision, goals, and strategies for interagency coordination at the local level. Local/regional planning will now be overseen by the Governor's Workforce Development Board (GWDB) staff, with the goal of increasing alignment and strategic coordination with the State Plan.

Through this planning process our local partners are being asked to incorporate strategic alignment between local, state, and federal programs, planning, and resources. It is critical that local areas and regions look to their economic and labor market information (LMI) and adjust strategies for what may now be a different set of circumstances post pandemic, with growing and declining industries, occupations and skills, and changing demographics. Regionally there will be a need to adapt workforce goals and strategic focus for those communities with disproportionately higher unemployment rates and lower earning particularly among underserved population groups, or individuals facing barriers to employment (e.g., low-income individuals, English language learners, individuals without housing, and individuals with disabilities). Regional plan narratives must incorporate updates in data analysis. In order for communities to flourish there must be equitable access for all Minnesotans to workforce development programming, employment, and a family sustaining wage. DEED's Labor Market Analysts have provided data specific to regions and local areas. Regions have challenges, successes, trends, and promising practices that are unique to their respective locations.

Finally, data on occupational and demographic data will be crucial to informing all federal funding opportunities through BIL, CHIPS and IRA. For example, with regard to the construction sector, occupational profiles have shown that there are nearly 140,000 jobs at about 18,000 employer establishments, making construction the 8th largest employing industry in Minnesota, with the 4th largest number of establishments. Average annual wages are just under \$80,000, about \$10,000 above the total of all industries. In general, the more defined and technical the skills, the higher the wage in these occupations, though rising demand has also helped push wages higher. The recent rise in construction employment has led to an increased number of job vacancies across the state. The median wage offered for these vacancies increased to \$23.50 per hour in the second quarter of 2022, up nearly \$2 per hour compared to the same survey in the second quarter of 2019, and up nearly \$3.50 from the second quarter of 2021 when vacancies peaked.

Demographic analysis of occupations and sectors most in-demand are crucial for bringing together partners to help close existing equity gaps. To continue with the construction example, not surprisingly, the Construction industry relies more heavily on younger workers, with nearly 80% (79.2%) of workers between 19 and 54 years of age, compared to 72.4% across all industries. Across all industries, 84.2% of jobs are held by workers identifying as white alone, compared to 94.1% in Construction, making it one of the least racially diverse industries in the state. Additionally, Construction is a male-dominated industry, with males holding nearly 85% of total jobs, compared to a nearly 50-50 split across all industries. In the face of tight labor markets, construction workforce planning will need to continue to tap into new labor pools by age, race, and gender in order to attract the talent they need to grow and replace existing workers in the future.

Investing in Youth

As described briefly above, Minnesota had a historic legislative session in terms of investments in Minnesotans, which includes investments in youth. The Jobs bill doubled the existing funding to put \$20 million in the FY24-25 biennium toward youth workforce development – which will serve over 38,000 young people. This expands Minnesota’s results-driven Youth at Work, Minnesota Youth Program and YouthBuild programs to prepare more Minnesota young people to enter the workforce focused and work-ready.

Additionally, Minnesota is managing a \$2.5 million, 42-month Disability Employment Initiative (DEI) grant funded through the U.S. DOL’s Employment and Training Administration and the Office of Disability Employment Policy. This grant allowed three of Minnesota’s rural WDAs to strengthen partnerships and strategically align career pathways systems to effectively serve youth with disabilities through multiple entry and exit points. The federal DEI grant allowed Minnesota to expand the number of Employment Networks (ENs) in the state which increases services to Social Security disability beneficiaries. More information about investments in youth can be found throughout this plan, including in Section III: Operational Planning Elements section and Section VI: Program-Specific Requirements for Core Programs

Equity in service delivery and educational programming

Every year, DEED identifies agency wide outcomes and key results (OKRs) and brings together teams to collaborate to achieve them. Setting strong goals and regularly measuring progress is a hallmark of a well-run organization. OKRs ensure that we are all moving in the same direction. Even though DEED’s individual programs are different, our ultimate mission - *‘to empower the growth of the Minnesota economy for everyone’* - cannot be achieved unless teams are working together.

Objective 1: Empower Minnesota to create and economy rooted in equity- across every race, identity, and ability.

Key Results:

- 1) For direct-to-business programs, implement standardized demographic questionnaire for economic development programs and align with demographic data collection for workforce development programs.
- 2) For requests for proposal (RFP) partner programs, require RFP grant partners to identify the target groups they serve by assessing who their end-users are (following the Office of Business Finance demographic categories to the extent possible) in order to convey the reach and impact DEED has on equity.
- 3) Establish quarterly engagement plan for new Office of Public Engagement Director and Communications to meet with senior leadership about proactive outreach planning (program milestones, desired external footprint, tailored messaging, planning and execution).
- 4) Enhance DEED employee awareness of language access responsibilities, resources, and requirements to translate and interpret information for customers.
- 5) Achieve and sustain a workforce that at least matches the representation of Minnesota's diverse communities, specifically regarding race and ethnicity, by July 2024.

Objective 2: Drive growth that puts Minnesota at the forefront of innovation in technology, high-tech-manufacturing, and health and wellness.

Key Results:

- 1) Increase the business development pipeline (creating, fostering, and retaining opportunities) in target sectors by 15%.
- 2) Establish at least seven new partnerships and collaborations between businesses, higher-ed institutions and other partners focused on target sectors.
- 3) Feature at least 25 businesses within target sectors in DEED events, press conferences, media opportunities, and promotional campaigns.
- 4) Increase participation (attendance, sponsorship, exhibitor) by 20% in the most important and relevant outreach channels (trade shows, events and meetings).

Objective 3: Meet the moment for Minnesota's historic workforce shortages, with collaborative efforts towards high-wage jobs with strong growth potential.

Key Results:

- 1) DEED workforce programs will increase by 5% the number of participants they serve who come from Quartile 1 and 2 of the Social Vulnerability Index (SVI), which includes the most vulnerable populations and areas of the state.

- 2) 80% of Job Creation Fund/Minnesota Innovation Fund recipients hire at least 20% of participants from programs administered by Workforce Development and Workforce Services.
- 3) Improve and provide training to DEED staff, grantees, and Local Workforce Development Area partners on how to assist job seekers in learning more about and entering into Occupations in Demand and the Drive for Five sectors.
- 4) Through the workforce digital transformation project, implement system integration and technology recommendations that support DEED in creating a better customer experience for individuals and employers.

Enhance supportive service offerings

Providing additional support for supportive services is embedded in most of the work that our workforce partners across the state undertake and is ingrained into many of the state grant programs such as Drive for 5 and Targeted Populations.

One area of supportive services that was a major focus of Minnesota over the last legislative session however was childcare. Minnesota rose to face its childcare challenges through seven omnibus bills, as well as the Paid Family and Medical Leave Act, which contained policy or funding to benefit families with children. A summary of these momentous investments is found [here](#); with a few state governance focused investments below:

- A new Department of Children, Youth, and Families was created to combine related programs from several current departments under one department.
- Establishes the Office of Childcare Community Partnerships within the Department of Employment and Economic Development to coordinate with government and business entities to promote investment in childcare businesses and access and to administer childcare economic development grants, among other duties.
- Allocates \$50,000 per year to the Labor Market Information Office to conduct research and analysis related to the childcare industry.

Strategic partnering

Strategic partnering is a theme across all three of Minnesota's State Plan goals, and starting in 2024, the GWDB will host convenings with relevant partners and stakeholders to gain feedback and build plans and metrics for meeting each of our state's goals that include strategic partners across the workforce system in the state.

Starting in 2023 and happening annually thereafter, the GWDB hosts an annual Workforce Summit to bring together workforce development stakeholders around the State's Vision, Goals

and Strategies for our workforce development system. The inaugural Workforce Summit included breakout listening sessions on the State’s Vision, Goals and Strategies with state program administrators and local workforce board representatives. This provided an opportunity for both state and local partners to hear from one another, to share best practices and discover potential ways for interagency and local coordination taking into consideration where we are as a state and what we hope to accomplish in the next four years.

The focus on strategic partnering also extends to the state’s new sector partnership strategy which is described above and in more detail in Section (II)(c)(1) on Sector Partnerships.

II. Strategic Elements

The Unified or Combined State Plan must include a Strategic Planning Elements section that analyzes the State’s current economic environment and identifies the State’s overall vision for its workforce development system. The required elements in this section allow the State to develop data-driven goals for preparing an educated and skilled workforce and to identify successful strategies for aligning workforce development programs to support economic growth. Unless otherwise noted, all Strategic Planning Elements apply to Combined State Plan partner programs included in the plan as well as to core programs. Where requirements identify the term “populations”, these must include individuals with barriers to employment as defined at WIOA Section 3. This includes displaced homemakers; low-income individuals; Indians, Alaska Natives, and Native Hawaiians; individuals with disabilities, including youth who are individuals with disabilities; older individuals; ex-offenders; homeless individuals, or homeless children and youths; youth who are in or have aged out of the foster care system; individuals who are English language learners, individuals who have low levels of literacy, and individuals facing substantial cultural barriers; farmworkers (as defined at section 167(i) of WIOA and Training and Employment Guidance Letter No. 35-14); individuals within 2 years of exhausting lifetime eligibility under the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families program; single parents (including single pregnant women); and long-term unemployed individuals. Additional populations include veterans, unemployed workers, and youth, and others that the State may identify.

a. **Economic, Workforce and Workforce Development Activities Analysis**

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

1. **Economic and Workforce Analysis**

In [October of 2023](#), Minnesota employers reported 3,001,300 jobs, the highest number of jobs ever recorded and the first time when the seasonally adjusted monthly jobs estimate has ever surpassed 3 million. After three years of recovery from the COVID-19 Pandemic Recession of 2020, the state finally surpassed pre-pandemic employment levels earlier in 2023, and is showing signs of continuing growth.

Over the year, Minnesota's job gains are slower than the U.S. growth rate, and much like the past five years, the state's labor market tightness has constrained even faster economic growth. From the end of the Great Recession in early 2010 until March of 2020, the state's economy continued to reach new employment peaks each year in the longest-running economic expansion on record. Even then, however, the state's steady – but slowing – labor force growth constrained even more potential job growth over the decade. Essentially, if we had more workers, we could have filled more jobs.

In fact, Deeds [Job Vacancy Survey](#) has revealed a progressively increasing number of vacancies each year since 2010 as employers have struggled to find workers for all their available jobs. This trend continued all the way up to 2020 and is even more pronounced since the Pandemic Recession. With the state's labor force currently still down about 15,000 workers compared to February 2020, Minnesota employers posted nearly 185,000 job vacancies in 2022. That number was up almost 40,000 vacancies above the number in the second quarter of 2019, prior to the pandemic, and up by more than 140,000 vacancies compared to the second quarter of 2010, coming out of the Great Recession.

Since 2017, Minnesota has had more job vacancies than unemployed workers – meaning even if our unemployment rate dropped to zero, we still wouldn't have enough workers to fill all the open jobs in the state. The tight labor market will make it more challenging for employers to grow but will also shine a light on the importance of creating positive employment outcomes for all Minnesotans, including groups that have traditionally faced discrimination and systemic barriers such as communities of color, individuals with disabilities, and immigrants.

Scores of business owners across Minnesota report that finding workers is one of their biggest challenges. Although some of the blame for this problem was placed on the pandemic, the truth is that workforce shortages were already an issue in Minnesota and have been since the

end of the Great Recession. People dropped out of the labor force due to the pandemic in 2020, but the long-term reasons for workforce shortages are years of economic growth and an aging workforce heading toward retirement. This is not a short-term problem, but rather a long-term problem that will need various strategies if we are to overcome it.

According to data from DEED's [Local Area Unemployment Statistics](#) program, Minnesota had an average of just over 3.1 million workers through the first 10 months of 2023. That was about 5,000 fewer workers than in 2019, but was about 26,500 more workers compared to 2022. Data show that every region gained workers so far in 2023, with the Twin Cities and Central seeing the fastest increase, and Northeast seeing the smallest. However, every region but Northwest still has fewer workers now than in 2020 (see Table 1).

	Twin Cities Metro Area	Northwest	Northeast	Southeast	Southwest	Central	State of Minnesota
2014 Annual Avg.	1,642,460	297,224	164,194	277,021	218,657	380,247	2,979,798
2015 Annual Avg.	1,653,838	300,940	164,152	279,552	223,463	383,472	3,005,413
2016 Annual Avg.	1,669,746	300,357	163,991	280,925	221,799	386,305	3,023,110
2017 Annual Avg.	1,706,940	301,963	164,498	283,308	221,486	392,816	3,071,005
2018 Annual Avg.	1,714,156	300,359	163,407	283,187	220,354	393,635	3,075,089
2019 Annual Avg.	1,734,928	303,005	164,189	286,922	221,125	398,521	3,108,681
2020 Annual Avg.	1,749,292	306,399	164,055	290,455	222,661	401,304	3,134,160
2021 Annual Avg.	1,688,645	303,530	159,692	284,625	214,988	387,846	3,039,322
2022 Annual Avg.	1,717,199	305,175	161,024	285,282	216,146	392,682	3,077,500

2023 Jan-Oct Avg.	1,733,510	306,937	161,365	287,897	218,253	396,027	3,103,988
2020-2023 Avg.	-15,782	+538	-2,690	-2,558	-4,408	-5,277	-30,172
<i>Source: DEED Local Area Unemployment Statistics (LAUS) program</i>							

Looking forward, data show that current population and aging trends will lead to a tight labor market over the next decade as well, with some regions experiencing labor force declines. Applying current labor force participation rates by age group to population projections by age group from the [Minnesota State Demographic Center](#) show that the state would be expected to add just under 105,000 workers from 2025 to 2035, a 3.3% growth rate over the decade. That would be the smallest amount of labor force growth in a 10-year period and the slowest labor force growth rate in the state when comparing the past three decades and beyond.

This projection includes a sizeable decline in workers from 55 to 74 years of age, as Generation X filters in behind the Baby Boomer generation. However, it also includes huge increases in the number of workers from 20 to 54 years of age, as Millennials and Generation Z replace Generation X in their prime working years. There is also projected to be some growth in the number of workers aged 75 years and over as Baby Boomers remain in the labor force longer (see Table 2).

Table 2. Minnesota Labor Force Projections, 2025-2035				
	2025 Labor Force Projection	2035 Labor Force Projection	2025-2035 Change in Workers	
			Numeric	Percent
16 to 19 years	165,227	162,233	-2,994	-1.8%
20 to 24 years	302,995	324,524	+21,530	+7.1%
25 to 44 years	1,362,824	1,392,696	+29,871	+2.2%
45 to 54 years	590,842	692,246	+101,404	+17.2%
55 to 64 years	515,086	466,596	-48,490	-9.4%
65 to 74 years	175,925	169,259	-6,666	-3.8%
75 years & over	28,636	38,831	+10,195	+35.6%
Total Labor Force	3,141,536	3,246,386	+104,850	+3.3%

Source: calculated from Minnesota State Demographic Center population projections and 2017-2021 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

Four of the six regions in the state are projected to add workers, led by more rapid growth in the Twin Cities (+4.3%, +77,000 workers) and Central (+4.1%, +16,500 workers), and more measured growth expected in Southeast (+3.1%, +8,700 workers) and Northwest (+2.8%, +8,000 workers). In line with recent trends, both Northeast (-1.6%, -2,500 workers) and Southwest (-1.0%, -2,000 workers) are projected to lose workers from 2025 to 2035. Moving forward, every region's economy and employers will have to deal with these labor force constraints.

To that end, reducing unemployment rate disparities for Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) and immigrants, as well as increasing labor force participation rates for people with disabilities, both younger and older workers, people with lower educational attainment, and other people with barriers would lead to important increases in the size of the state's available labor force.

With a labor force participation rate of 68.0% in 2022, Minnesota is well known for our hard work ethic, ranking 6th highest out of the 50 states and D.C. As noted above, Minnesota has just over 3.1 million workers aged 16 years and over in the labor force, compared to about 1.5 million people aged 16 years and over who are not in the labor force. Almost 62% of the workforce is between 25 and 54 years of age, compared to 15% that are 24 years and younger and 23% that are 55 years and older. While prime age workers are still the majority of the labor force, the share is down nearly 3% compared to 2012, when 64.8% of workers were between 25 and 54 years of age. Instead, the percent of workers aged 55 years and over increased more than 2.5% compared to 2012, reflecting the aging workforce in the state. Workforce demographics varied by region, with the Twin Cities, Central, and Southeast having younger populations, and Northeast, Southwest, and Northwest having older populations.

In addition to aging, Minnesota's labor force is rapidly becoming increasingly racially diverse. In 2022, 79% of Minnesota's workforce reported white alone as their race, down from 88% in 2012. The number of Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) in Minnesota's labor force increased 72% over the past decade, an increase of nearly 350,000 additional workers. Minnesota now has just under 195,000 Black or African American workers, or 6.2% of the total labor force, up from 133,500 in 2012. The state also has around 175,000 workers who are Asian alone, of Two or More Races, and Hispanic or Latino origin of any race, all accounting for about 5.5% of the total labor force. Every race group other than American Indian & Alaska Native had a higher labor force participation rate than the state's white population; but also had a higher unemployment rate than for whites (see Table 3).

Table 3. Minnesota Labor Force Characteristics, 2022				
	Number of Workers	Percent of Total Workers	Labor Force Participation Rate	Unemp. Rate
Total Population 16 years & over	3,114,021	100.0%	68.0%	3.2%
16 to 19 years	162,306	5.2%	54.7%	8.3%
20 to 24 years	304,800	9.8%	83.7%	5.6%
25 to 34 years	664,210	21.3%	89.4%	2.8%
35 to 44 years	683,737	22.0%	87.5%	2.7%
45 to 54 years	577,584	18.6%	88.0%	2.6%
55 to 64 years	537,603	17.3%	72.4%	2.2%
65 to 74 years	153,755	4.9%	26.4%	2.5%
75 years and over	28,060	0.9%	6.8%	3.9%
RACE AND HISPANIC OR LATINO ORIGIN				
White alone	2,451,074	78.8%	66.8%	2.7%
Black or African American alone	194,285	6.2%	69.0%	7.9%
American Indian & Alaska Native alone	23,051	0.7%	56.8%	8.3%
Asian alone	171,703	5.5%	76.0%	2.8%
Some other race alone	92,502	3.0%	75.6%	4.5%
Two or more races	177,520	5.7%	74.8%	4.4%
Hispanic or Latino origin (of any race)	174,804	5.6%	75.9%	4.2%
DISABILITY STATUS (pop. 20 to 64 years)				
With any disability	180,303	5.8%	56.4%	8.2%
EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT (pop. 25 to 64 years)				
Less than high school graduate	118,895	4.8%	67.9%	6.2%
High school graduate (includes equiv.)	456,815	18.6%	75.5%	4.0%
Some college or associate's degree	785,733	31.9%	84.9%	2.8%
Bachelor's degree or higher	1,100,965	44.7%	90.4%	1.5%
<i>Source: 2022 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates</i>				

Greater Minnesota has less racial diversity than the Twin Cities. While every region in the state saw an increase in the number of jobs held by people of color over the past 20 years, only about 13.1% of jobs in Greater Minnesota are held by people of color, compared to 25.9% in the Twin Cities. Employers across the state will need to tap into the changing demographics of the state's population and labor force, and work to remove systemic barriers to economic success.

Alongside changing racial diversity, [immigration has been key to Minnesota's labor force growth](#). According to the U.S. Census Bureau's 2021 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, Minnesota is now home to almost 480,000 foreign-born residents, or about 8.5% of

the total population. The number of immigrants in the state increased 30.6% from 2010 to 2021, compared to a national growth rate of 16%. Immigrants have a much younger age profile than the native-born population.

Immigrants have become critical to Minnesota's economy, providing a rapid stream of new workers in the face of an aging native-born workforce. Statewide, 74.3% of the foreign-born population aged 16 years and over was actively participating in the labor force, which was higher than the native-born population labor force participation rate. In Minnesota, that equaled about 335,000 available immigrant workers, comprising about 10.7% of the state's total workforce in 2021. And while the state's overall labor force growth was slowing, the number of immigrant workers in the state increased by more than 80,000 workers from 2011 to 2021, a 31.5% increase. In comparison, the native-born workforce expanded by 75,500 workers, a 2.8% increase. In sum, immigrants accounted for half of the state's labor force growth between 2011 and 2021.

Minnesotans with disabilities age 16 and older make up about 12.9% of the total population but only 5.8% of the employed population. [People with disabilities face many obstacles to working.](#) Finding suitable work, convincing employers of their value as employees during the hiring process, commuting and transportation, are all significant barriers. In addition, obtaining the accommodations needed to perform their jobs, whether that is personal care assistance, job coaches, accessibility software and hardware or simply accessible facilities, can prove insurmountable for many people and may be exacerbated in certain geographic areas, industries, and labor markets. Despite these obstacles, Minnesotans with disabilities are a critical part of the workforce. Since 2012, Minnesota has added more than 50,000 workers with disabilities to the labor force, and the labor force participation rate for people aged 20 to 64 with a disability climbed from 49.4% in 2012 to 56.4% in 2022.

Equity is at the core of DEED's work, so we are deeply committed to advancing Minnesota's economy for everyone. Racial disparities in unemployment, based on inequitable systems, practices and policies, are found in every region throughout the state, making eliminating these disparities an opportunity for growth regardless of location.

I. Existing Demand Industry Sectors and Occupations

Minnesota is home to a strong and diverse economy, with employment spread across several industries. While most industries lost jobs during the pandemic recession and some have still not fully recovered, many are now back to or even above their pre-pandemic employment levels, including 10 that now have more jobs than before the recession. Other industries are prepared to hire more workers but have seen record levels of job vacancies as they struggle to find enough available workers to fill their openings.

Thousands of jobs are being added across the state each month, but thousands more are still open and waiting for workers to fill them. Employers have responded by raising wages, increasing hours, offering benefits, and changing experience and education requirements to attract a broader pool of applicants. The return to pre-pandemic labor market tightness is leading to unprecedented opportunities and challenges. Data from DEED’s [Quarterly Census of Employment & Wages program](#) shows that the state of Minnesota had an average of nearly 200,000 employer establishments in 2022, providing an average of about 2,855,000 total jobs. Total wages paid were just under \$200 billion, with average annual wages of \$69,713 across all industries (see Table 4).

NAICS Code	NAICS Industry Title	Number of Employer Establishments	Number of Jobs	Total Wages	Avg. Annual Wages
0	Total, All Industries	199,991	2,854,990	\$199,029,523,595	\$69,713
62	Health Care & Social Assistance	23,313	494,072	\$31,088,770,882	\$62,924
31	Manufacturing	8,523	323,787	\$24,914,065,671	\$76,946
44	Retail Trade	17,492	281,787	\$10,562,740,621	\$37,485
61	Educational Services	5,031	225,377	\$13,065,569,289	\$57,972
72	Accommodation & Food Services	12,471	217,223	\$5,485,130,200	\$25,251
54	Professional & Technical Services	27,489	167,149	\$19,034,502,228	\$113,877
52	Finance and Insurance	10,553	142,631	\$17,764,184,313	\$124,546
23	Construction	17,928	139,940	\$11,164,040,565	\$79,777
56	Admin. Support & Waste Mgmt. Svcs.	9,791	134,710	\$7,222,136,844	\$53,612
42	Wholesale Trade	14,888	131,542	\$13,162,654,592	\$100,064
92	Public Administration (2021 data)	3,391	130,805	\$8,630,377,719	\$65,979
48	Transportation & Warehousing	6,262	113,569	\$7,340,158,377	\$64,632
55	Management of Companies	2,053	87,228	\$12,487,183,107	\$143,156
81	Other Services	19,943	86,981	\$3,765,109,853	\$43,287
71	Arts, Entertainment, & Recreation	3,842	49,329	\$2,212,960,813	\$44,861
51	Information (2021 data)	4,892	46,152	\$4,413,389,950	\$95,627

53	Real Estate & Rental & Leasing	6,908	35,337	\$2,297,616,095	\$65,020
11	Agriculture, Forestry, Fish & Hunting	3,152	23,098	\$1,099,462,001	\$47,600
22	Utilities	525	13,724	\$1,670,403,649	\$121,714
21	Mining	244	5,644	\$651,648,735	\$115,459
<i>Source: DEED Quarterly Census of Employment & Wages</i>					

Health Care & Social Assistance is the largest employing industry in Minnesota, providing about 495,000 jobs, or 17.3% of total jobs. Manufacturing is next largest, with 324,000 jobs, or 11.3%, followed by Retail Trade with 282,000 jobs (9.9%), Educational Services with 225,000 jobs (7.9%), and Accommodation & Food Services with 217,000 jobs (7.6%). Combined, those five industries account for over half (54%) of total employment in the state.

Likewise, Health Care & Social Assistance and Manufacturing have the largest total payrolls, at \$31.1 billion and \$24.9 billion, respectively. But the next largest include high paying industries Professional & Technical Services at \$19 billion, Finance & Insurance at \$17.8 billion, and then Wholesale Trade, Educational Services, and Management of Companies, all of which are over \$12.5 billion in total payroll. Despite being third largest in employment, Retail Trade ranks 9th in total payroll at \$10.6 billion, also behind Construction at \$11.2 billion.

The highest wage industries in the state are Management of Companies with annual average wages of just over \$143,000, followed by Finance & Insurance and Utilities, both around \$120,000 per year, and then Mining and Professional & Technical Services, which both hover close to \$115,000. In contrast, the lowest wage industries include Accommodation & Food Services at \$25,250, Retail Trade at \$37,500, Other Services at \$43,500, and Arts, Entertainment & Recreation at just under \$45,000 per year.

Due to COVID-19, Minnesota lost 416,000 jobs from February through April 2020, but has since recovered 424,200 jobs as of October 2023, which brings Minnesota to 100.3% of the number of jobs prior to the Pandemic Recession on a seasonally adjusted basis. The private sector lost 385,900 jobs from February through April 2020, but has regained 398,100 jobs as of October 2023.

Sixteen of 20 industries added jobs from 2022 to 2023, leading to a gain of more than 50,000 jobs in the past year, a 1.8% increase. With that growth, 10 of 20 industries now have more jobs now than prior to the pandemic. The industries that have performed the best include Professional & Technical Services, Construction, Health Care & Social Assistance, Wholesale Trade, and Transportation & Warehousing, which have combined to add more than 32,000 jobs since 2019.

In contrast, even with a strong job recovery from 2022 to 2023, the industries that are farthest away from their pre-pandemic level include Accommodation & Food Services, Retail Trade, Finance & Insurance, and Administrative Support & Waste Management Services.

Accommodation & Food Services is still down over 9,500 jobs from its 2019 level, while Retail Trade is down about 9,150 jobs. Finance & Insurance did well in the immediate outbreak, but has since continued to cut jobs.

Long-term, Minnesota has been adding jobs at a steady pace, growing nearly 8% and up almost 215,000 jobs from 2013 to 2023, even with the Pandemic Recession. Health Care & Social Assistance accounted for nearly 61,500 net new jobs, or almost 30% of total job growth in the state over the past decade. Construction was the second largest and the fastest growing industry, up more than 38,000 jobs and 35% since 2013. Professional & Technical Services has also seen rapid job growth in the state, adding 32,205 jobs. The biggest declines have been in Information and Real Estate, Rental & Leasing.

Industry	Q2 2023 Jobs	1-year Trend		Pre-pandemic Change		10-year Trend	
		Q2 2022 - Q2 2023	%	Q2 2019 - Q2 2023	%	Q2 2013 - Q2 2023	%
Total, All Industries	2,919,232	+50,374	+1.8%	-37	0.0%	+213,460	+7.9%
Agriculture, Forestry, Fish & Hunt	23,903	+255	+1.1%	+962	+4.2%	+2,638	+12.4%
Mining	5,921	+48	+0.8%	-52	-0.9%	-387	-6.1%
Construction	145,677	+2,366	+1.7%	+8,315	+6.1%	+38,212	+35.6%
Manufacturing	325,997	+3,115	+1.0%	+2,103	+0.6%	+19,010	+6.2%
Utilities	14,432	+772	+5.7%	+817	+6.0%	-39	-0.3%
Wholesale Trade	133,755	+2,185	+1.7%	+4,627	+3.6%	+2,643	+2.0%
Retail Trade	283,622	+1,139	+0.4%	-9,152	-3.1%	-1,792	-0.6%
Transportation & Warehousing	113,804	+1,111	+1.0%	+3,896	+3.5%	+21,018	+22.7%
Information	48,365	N/D	N/D	-2,272	-4.5%	-8,674	-15.2%
Finance & Insurance	141,038	-1,500	-1.1%	-7,178	-4.8%	+1,265	+0.9%
Real Estate & Rental & Leasing	35,529	+202	+0.6%	-75	-0.2%	-4,381	-11.0%

Professional & Technical Services	168,398	+1,517	+0.9 %	+8,584	+5.4%	+32,205	+23.6%
Management of Companies	90,400	+3,419	+3.9 %	+965	+1.1%	+13,396	+17.4%
Admin. Support & Waste Mgmt.	132,594	-2,767	-2.0%	-4,712	-3.4%	-1,094	-0.8%
Educational Services	238,110	+3,538	+1.5 %	-1,928	-0.8%	+7,598	+3.3%
Health Care & Social Assistance	507,063	+15,001	+3.0 %	+7,036	+1.4%	+61,489	+13.8%
Arts, Entertainment & Recreation	53,930	+2,431	+4.7 %	-1,589	-2.9%	+3,197	+6.3%
Accommodation & Food Services	229,009	+9,434	+4.3 %	-9,554	-4.0%	+9,336	+4.2%
Other Services	90,315	+3,313	+3.8 %	-1,787	-1.9%	+4,363	+5.1%
Public Administration	137,364	N/D	N/D	+958	+0.7%	+13,459	+10.9%
<i>Source: DEED Quarterly Census of Employment & Wages</i>							

After a couple years of rapid growth, wages increased more slowly across most industries, both high- and low-paying, in the past year. Across all industries, average annual wages climbed 2.1% in the past year, but are still up 19.5% compared to pre-pandemic levels. Only the Management of Companies and Mining industries saw a decline in wages over the year. In comparison to pre-pandemic wage levels, the biggest increases have encouragingly occurred in some of the lowest-paying industries, such as Arts, Entertainment & Recreation, Administrative Support & Waste Management Services, Other Services, and Accommodation & Food Services. The smallest increases have been in Mining, Retail Trade, Manufacturing, and Educational Services.

Wages have increased due to demand for workers. During 2022, employers reported nearly [185,000 job vacancies](#), up nearly 40,000 from the second quarter of 2019, but down about 20,000 from the record set in the second quarter of 2021. [Job Openings and Labor Turnover Survey](#) (JOLTS) updates from the Bureau of Labor Statistics show that job vacancies have remained high in the state this year as well, with 206,000 job openings estimated in September of 2023.

While vacancies remain near record levels, the number of unemployed workers has remained low as workers return to jobs. In second quarter 2023, there were just 0.4 unemployed persons for each vacancy, meaning that there were more than twice as many open positions as unemployed individuals in Minnesota. This is the lowest ratio on record, suggesting that the labor market is extremely tight. The 6.9% Job Vacancy Rate (the ratio of vacancies for every 100 filled jobs) is the third highest on record, behind the peaks set in 2021 when unemployment was at historic lows. The labor force growth so far this year has been helpful but is still not

enough to overcome the challenges that many employers are finding when trying to fill open positions.

Statewide, the Health Care & Social Assistance industry had the most job vacancies with more than 45,000 openings, followed by Retail Trade with just under 28,500 vacancies, Accommodation & Food Services with almost 26,000 postings, Manufacturing with 19,000 vacancies, and Educational Services with just over 13,000 openings. Combined, those five industries account for over two-thirds of the total openings in the state (see Table 6).

Table 6. Minnesota Job Vacancies by Industry, Qtr. 2 2022						
Industry	Number of Job Vacancies	Job Vacancy Rate	Percent Part-Time	Requiring Post-Secondary Education	Requiring 1 Plus Years Experience	Median Wage Offer
Total, All Industries	184,588	6.9%	37%	32%	47%	\$18.32
Health Care & Social Assistance	45,230	9.2%	46%	53%	51%	\$20.04
Retail Trade	28,477	10.2%	49%	6%	26%	\$15.70
Accommodation & Food Services	25,894	13.3%	50%	1%	28%	\$15.12
Manufacturing	18,987	6.1%	13%	24%	51%	\$19.99
Educational Services	13,098	5.8%	42%	65%	75%	\$19.23
Professional & Technical Services	7,763	5.4%	15%	73%	82%	\$29.47
Wholesale Trade	5,708	5.1%	8%	49%	69%	\$21.41
Finance and Insurance	5,589	4.0%	9%	60%	93%	\$40.94
Transportation & Warehousing	5,394	5.2%	38%	15%	36%	\$19.94
Construction	5,147	3.7%	2%	17%	65%	\$23.50
Other Services	4,882	6.5%	47%	40%	28%	\$15.09
Administrative & Waste Services	4,822	6.9%	25%	7%	22%	\$17.43

Public Administration	2,909	2.2%	20%	41%	63%	\$21.06
Arts, Entertainment, & Recreation	2,407	5.6%	52%	17%	42%	\$15.10
Agriculture, Forestry, Fish & Hunting	2,287	9.9%	24%	9%	35%	\$16.97
Management of Companies	2,168	2.5%	22%	66%	88%	\$33.25
Real Estate & Rental & Leasing	2,154	6.5%	70%	11%	15%	\$13.97
Information	1,286	3.1%	20%	40%	68%	\$21.66
Mining	242	4.1%	1%	13%	44%	\$20.34
Utilities	143	1.1%	3%	69%	76%	\$29.93
<i>Source: DEED Job Vacancy Survey</i>						

Regionally, 98,330 or 53.3% of all job vacancies were posted in the seven-county Twin Cities metro area, while the remaining 86,258 vacancies, or 46.7%, were located in Greater Minnesota during second quarter 2022. Compared to one year ago, the number of job vacancies decreased by 17.7% in the Twin Cities but remained nearly level in Greater Minnesota. As in past years, the job vacancy rate was higher in Greater Minnesota (8.4%) than in the Twin Cities (6.0%), with both exhibiting extremely tight labor markets. And just like the state overall, both the Twin Cities and Greater Minnesota have a ratio of 0.4 unemployed persons to every one job vacancy.

Just 32% of vacancies required some level of post-secondary education or training beyond high school. This means the other two-thirds of vacancies require no education beyond a high school diploma or equivalent. The percent of job openings requiring post-secondary education has been declining due to the tight labor market, as employers look to expand their applicant pool. In contrast, the percent of vacancies requiring work experience has been increasing over time, with 47% requiring one or more years of work experience.

The median (50th percentile) wage offer for all job vacancies is \$18.32 per hour. This is easily the highest median wage offer in the history of the Job Vacancy Survey, reflecting both employers offering higher starting wages and also a changing mix of available occupations, with jobs shifting toward higher wage industries. Wage offers are highly correlated with experience and education requirements.

Having a comprehensive understanding of [occupations in demand](#) in Minnesota that considers current job vacancies, the number and types of jobs people have been laid off from, the prevalence of certain occupations in each region, long-term demand projections, and regional differences in labor market supply and demand is critical to helping employers, job seekers, career counselors and educators during these challenging times. In the short-term, to help jobseekers see what jobs are currently available, [CareerForceMN.com](#) publishes a list of [the top 30 jobs that are hiring now](#) – providing a summarized list of postings from Minnesota employers that are showing up on the [National Labor Exchange](#). In addition, job seekers can always rely on the staff, tools, and resources available through [CareerForce locations](#) across the state to get back to work.

As we get a clearer picture of the impact of the pandemic and economic recovery, job seekers and employment counselors looking for more information on how to transition back into the labor market also need to take into account various factors related to labor market supply and demand. While the top 30 list is helpful as a tool for those looking for employment quickly, it includes no analysis; it is simply a count of job postings. DEED's [Occupations in Demand \(OID\) tool](#) was developed to provide a more comprehensive look at current demand for job seekers and career counselors, specifically in the Dislocated Worker program. The [updated OID list](#) is a ranking of occupations that have the most favorable demand conditions as measured by the following factors:

- What jobs are open and available in the region now and have had openings since the start of the pandemic? (Source: Minnesota [Job Vacancy Survey](#))
- How large and prominent is each occupation in the region? (Source: [Occupational Employment & Wage Statistics](#))
- How many people were laid off and how hard has it been to find re-employment in an occupation since the start of the pandemic? (Source: [Unemployment Insurance claims](#) data)

Another key component of the OID demand score is input from analysts in DEED's [Regional Analysis & Outreach Unit](#), which edit the lists based on local knowledge. For example, a [regional analyst](#) has first-hand knowledge of a business opening soon, which will result in numerous job opportunities not yet captured by the Job Vacancy Survey or focus on industries and occupations that have been targeted by local workforce development partners.

Based on this comprehensive set of data, occupations are ranked and split into quintiles based on demand, with 5 stars representing the highest level of demand and 1 star the lowest. Statewide, there are over 110 occupations in the 5-star category and more than 325 occupations in the top three levels of demand. There are also over 200 occupations in lower demand, including some that might have a number of job postings, though those are offset by

even larger numbers of unemployed workers from those occupations. Table 7 displays the top 25 occupations in demand in Minnesota, and the full list of 563 occupations is found on the [OID tool](#).

Table 7. Top 25 Minnesota Occupations in Demand, 2022					
Soc Code	Job Title	Median Annual Wage	<i>Projected 10-year Growth Rate</i>	<i>Projected 10-year Openings</i>	<i>Typical Starting Education Requirements</i>
311120	Home Health & Personal Care Aides	\$33,029	+24.1%	+171,243	High school or equiv.
412031	Retail Salespersons	\$32,512	-3.0%	+101,384	High school or equiv.
291141	Registered Nurses	\$87,291	+6.6%	+43,201	Associate's degree
412011	Cashiers	\$29,977	-9.3%	+105,183	High school or equiv.
353023	Fast Food & Counter Workers	\$30,646	+12.4%	+151,605	High school or equiv.
311131	Nursing Assistants	\$40,439	+3.6%	+37,189	Vocational training
537062	Laborers & Freight, Stock, & Material Movers	\$41,416	+6.5%	+58,224	High school or equiv.
533032	Heavy & Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers	\$58,460	+4.1%	+43,441	High school or equiv.
411011	First-Line Supervisors of Retail Sales Workers	\$47,200	-5.9%	+19,635	High school or equiv.
434051	Customer Service Representatives	\$46,307	-4.4%	+68,803	High school or equiv.
372011	Janitors & Cleaners	\$37,168	+5.9%	+60,938	High school or equiv.
537065	Stockers & Order Fillers	\$36,317	+2.9%	+64,838	High school or equiv.
351012	First-Line Supervisors of Food Prep Workers	\$40,136	+17.8%	+26,222	High school or equiv.
353031	Waiters & Waitresses	\$24,353	+17.4%	+71,182	High school or equiv.

259045	Teaching Assistants, Except Postsecondary	\$38,069	+7.6%	+36,287	High school or equiv.
292061	Licensed Practical & Vocational Nurses	\$56,356	+6.6%	+12,178	Vocational training
499071	Maintenance & Repair Workers, General	\$50,729	+4.6%	+22,553	High school or equiv.
439061	Office Clerks, General	\$45,119	-3.3%	+53,694	High school or equiv.
512090	Miscellaneous Assemblers & Fabricators	\$40,914	-8.4%	+29,512	High school or equiv.
352021	Food Preparation Workers	\$32,590	-4.4%	+15,680	High school or equiv.
352014	Cooks, Restaurant	\$37,826	+45.9%	+48,448	High school or equiv.
436014	Secretaries & Administrative Assistants	\$48,270	-9.4%	+32,990	High school or equiv.
111021	General & Operations Managers	\$90,481	+6.9%	+38,082	Bachelor's degree
414012	Sales Representatives, Wholesale & Mfg.	\$76,857	+2.9%	+31,987	High school or equiv.
372012	Maids & Housekeeping Cleaners	\$34,931	+4.9%	+29,521	High school or equiv.
<i>Source: DEED Occupations in Demand</i>					

In addition to displaying the OID scores, the OID tool also includes employment projections supplied by the [Employment Outlook](#) program, wage data from [Occupational Employment & Wages Statistics](#), information on the [typical education \(or degree\) or training required](#), and details on related training programs offered around the state. This information helps the end user determine if the job is attractive to them and what additional skills or training might be necessary to obtain it.

Efficient and successful labor markets require economic and workforce development partners that react quickly to changing supply and demand factors. Employers benefit from attracting and hiring from a large pool of qualified workers while job seekers and their counselors need access to reliable information about occupational demand, wages and trends to move careers in the right direction. In addition, local education institutions should also be working to help provide an appropriate supply of qualified workers to fill local business needs by adapting their program offerings to local occupational demand conditions. [Each planning region](#) has its own set of specific occupations in demand.

II. Emerging Demand Industry Sectors and Occupations

After three long years dealing with and recovering from COVID-19, employment in Minnesota is expected to continue growing in both the short-term and the long-term, according to projections from DEED. This included the recent period of recovery to get back to pre-pandemic employment levels, followed by continued economic expansion as businesses resume previous growth patterns.

Unfortunately, much uncertainty remains in the economy, the labor force, and the world, but our outlook is still positive and pointed toward recovery. Despite the unknowns, we expect that our state will continue to see strong recovery and job growth in the future. To that end, our [10-year projections](#) are designed to provide details on employment prospects in various industries and occupations. These projections of future job growth are widely used in career guidance, in planning education and training programs, and in workforce development efforts in both the private and public sectors.

Minnesota's employment outlook relies on national industry and occupational projections produced by the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS). Along with most other states, Minnesota customizes these national projections to reflect state-specific industrial, occupational, demographic, and labor market trends and characteristics. Historical employment trends for 290 industries in Minnesota were compared to corresponding national industry employment trends using statistical techniques and then projections were created and analyzed through Projections Management software.

Industry	Estimated Employment 2020	Projected Employment 2030	Percent Change 2020-2030	Numeric Change 2020-2030
Total, All Industries	2,975,300	3,145,200	+5.7%	+169,900
Health Care & Social Assistance	473,914	533,729	+12.6%	+59,815
Accommodation & Food Services	172,515	208,244	+20.7%	+35,729
Professional & Technical Services	154,228	170,931	+10.8%	+16,703
Arts, Entertainment & Recreation	39,891	53,804	+34.9%	+13,913
Other Services	106,083	118,291	+11.5%	+12,208
Educational Services	229,788	241,644	+5.2%	+11,856
Administrative Support & Waste Mgmt. Svcs.	120,228	129,573	+7.8%	+9,345

Transportation & Warehousing	103,467	110,041	+6.4%	+6,574
Construction	123,927	129,479	+4.5%	+5,552
Finance & Insurance	159,797	164,617	+3.0%	+4,820
Manufacturing	309,108	313,098	+1.3%	+3,990
Public Administration	184,485	188,472	+2.2%	+3,987
Wholesale Trade	124,780	126,800	+1.6%	+2,020
Management of Companies	86,958	87,685	+0.8%	+727
Information	43,138	43,734	+1.4%	+596
Real Estate & Rental & Leasing	33,760	33,693	-0.2%	-67
Mining	5,474	5,318	-2.8%	-156
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing & Hunting	24,004	23,750	-1.1%	-254
Utilities	11,898	10,501	-11.7%	-1,397
Retail Trade	276,316	263,653	-4.6%	-12,663
<i>Source: DEED 2020-2030 Employment Outlook</i>				

However, even if it were to add nearly 36,000 jobs from 2020 to 2030 as projected, Accommodation & Food Services would still not be back to pre-pandemic employment levels. Many jobs in this industry had been hard to fill for years even prior to the pandemic, and became even more so coming out of it, and are also at long-term risk of automation. Restaurants are projected to regain almost 26,000 jobs over the next 10 years, while Accommodation is expected to add about 4,200 jobs.

The Health Care & Social Assistance industry is expected to again lead Minnesota's economy over the next decade, projected to add nearly 60,000 jobs through 2030. That would be well above the pre-pandemic peak around 500,000 jobs and make it the third fastest growing industry overall. However, there are structural shifts occurring in the health care system that differ from past projections. The next decade is likely to feature rapid growth in Social Assistance – primarily Individual & Family Services, which includes Child & Youth Services, Services for the Elderly & Persons with Disabilities, and Social Service, Welfare, Rehabilitation, & Drug Addiction & Substance Abuse Counseling – along with the more traditional growth in Ambulatory Health Care Services, Hospitals, and Nursing & Residential Care Facilities. But while we forecast rapid growth at Community Care Facilities for the Elderly and Residential Mental

Health Facilities, there is continued decline projected for Nursing Care Facilities, which have [struggled with retention and recruitment of workers throughout the pandemic](#).

Professional, Scientific & Technical Services – most notably Computer Systems Design & Related Services and Management & Technical Consulting Services – are projected to benefit from the technological advancements and the shift to telework experienced throughout the pandemic. But every subsector in this industry from Accounting & Bookkeeping Services to Scientific Research & Development Services are projected to grow over the decade, creating new high-paying career opportunities in the state.

The same cannot be said for every subsector in Manufacturing, though the industry overall is now projected to add another 3,990 jobs through 2030. At a detailed level, projections show growth in the Food, Fabricated Metal Product, Electronic Instrument & Medical Device, Chemical & Pharmaceutical, Machinery, and Nonmetallic Mineral Product Manufacturing subsectors. Instead, the state is projecting continuing job losses in areas like Printing & Related Support Activities, Paper Manufacturing, Textile Product Mills & Apparel Manufacturing, and Computer & Electronic Product Manufacturing.

As consumer behaviors changed and online shopping became even more prevalent, Retail Trade lost nearly 17,000 jobs from 2019 to 2020. Though demand for workers in these brick-and-mortar settings has returned in the short-term, Retail is projected to lose more than 12,600 jobs over the decade, the most of any sector by nearly a factor of 10. Likewise, the fastest job decline is expected in Utilities, which had been seeing a slower but steady shift toward lower employment over the past decade even before the pandemic recession and will continue to cut jobs across the state.

Shifts in staffing patterns over the 2020-2030 period across industries are projected as part of the BLS national projections, with trends and analysis identifying which occupations within an industry are likely to be increasing or decreasing as a percent of total industrial employment. Staffing patterns for Minnesota industries are developed from estimates collected through the [Occupational Employment & Wage Statistics \(OEWS\) program](#). Eighteen of 22 occupational groups are expected to experience employment growth over the next 10 years in Minnesota (see Table 9).

Industry	Estimated Employment 2020	Projected Employment 2030	Percent Change 2020-2030	Numeric Change 2020-2030	Labor Force Exit Openings

Total, All Occupations	2,975,300	3,145,200	+5.7%	+169,900	1,299,528
Healthcare Support	165,026	195,744	+18.6%	+30,718	110,552
Food Preparation & Serving Related	196,413	230,396	+17.3%	+33,983	162,071
Personal Care & Service	85,350	97,909	+14.7%	+12,559	57,296
Computer & Mathematical	103,199	115,793	+12.2%	+12,594	22,665
Community & Social Service	65,252	72,662	+11.4%	+7,410	23,361
Education, Training, & Library	164,751	178,355	+8.3%	+13,604	70,050
Arts, Design, Entertainment & Media	50,051	54,147	+8.2%	+4,096	19,503
Healthcare Practitioners & Technical	192,413	207,998	+8.1%	+15,585	50,559
Legal	22,327	23,964	+7.3%	+1,637	6,339
Transportation & Material Moving	217,673	233,084	+7.1%	+15,411	106,855
Life, Physical, & Social Science	28,259	30,029	+6.3%	+1,770	5,840
Business & Financial Operations	194,738	206,660	+6.1%	+11,922	52,881
Protective Service	46,767	49,561	+6.0%	+2,794	21,676
Building, Grounds Cleaning & Maintenance	88,554	93,911	+6.0%	+5,357	52,792
Management	225,287	237,754	+5.5%	+12,467	67,446
Architecture & Engineering	55,462	58,392	+5.3%	+2,930	13,817
Construction & Extraction	120,028	124,959	+4.1%	+4,931	36,430
Installation, Maintenance, & Repair	105,222	109,437	+4.0%	+4,215	33,714
Production	205,773	205,003	-0.4%	-770	76,945
Farming, Fishing, & Forestry	16,818	16,596	-1.3%	-222	6,965

Sales & Related	272,390	265,840	-2.4%	-6,550	137,391
Office & Administrative Support	353,547	337,006	-4.7%	-16,541	164,380

Source: DEED 2020-2030 Employment Outlook

Occupational growth in Minnesota will be led by Healthcare Support, which is also the fastest growing occupational group at the national level. In sum, health care-related occupations account for 12 of the top 50 fastest growing jobs in the state, and demand for health care services will continue to drive projected employment growth.

As presented above, projected employment growth can be viewed from two perspectives – percent change and numeric change. Some occupations, which have relatively small numbers of workers in 2020, are projected to grow rapidly over the next 10 years but will add relatively few new jobs. Other occupations which start with a large number of workers in 2020 but are projected to grow slower than overall employment growth will still add large numbers of workers by 2030. The distinction between occupations with fast employment growth and occupations expected to add the most jobs is apparent when the 25 fastest growing occupations are compared to the 25 occupations expected to add the most jobs (Table 10). Just nine jobs make it onto both lists, as highlighted in bold.

Occupational Title	Estimated Employment 2020	Projected Employment 2030	Percent Change 2020-2030	Numeric Change 2020-2030
Total, All Occupations	2,975,300	3,145,200	+5.7%	+169,900
Home Health & Personal Care Aides	107,496	133,419	+24.1%	+25,923
Cooks, Restaurant	21,685	31,629	+45.9%	+9,944
Fast Food & Counter Workers	66,583	74,855	+12.4%	+8,272
Software Developers & Software Quality Assurance	33,284	40,994	+23.2%	+7,710
Waiters & Waitresses	31,369	36,813	+17.4%	+5,444
Registered Nurses	71,782	76,538	+6.6%	+4,756

Passenger Vehicle Drivers, exc. Bus Drivers	17,498	21,777	+24.5%	+4,279
Bartenders	14,149	18,000	+27.2%	+3,851
Market Research Analysts & Marketing Specialists	17,291	20,542	+18.8%	+3,251
General & Operations Managers	41,540	44,400	+6.9%	+2,860
Teaching Assistants (Paraprofessionals)	35,378	38,075	+7.6%	+2,697
Laborers & Freight, Stock, & Material Movers, Hand	41,147	43,817	+6.5%	+2,670
First-Line Supervisors of Food Prep & Serving Workers	14,789	17,416	+17.8%	+2,627
Janitors & Cleaners	42,824	45,348	+5.9%	+2,524
Financial Managers	16,009	18,487	+15.5%	+2,478
Medical & Health Services Managers	8,326	10,751	+29.1%	+2,425
Management Analysts	20,543	22,816	+11.1%	+2,273
Hairdressers, Hairstylists, & Cosmetologists	12,062	14,116	+17.0%	+2,054
Nurse Practitioners	4,107	5,985	+45.7%	+1,878
Subs. Abuse, Behavioral & Mental Health Counselors	8,127	9,987	+22.9%	+1,860
Preschool Teachers, Except Special Education	9,719	11,579	+19.1%	+1,860
Self-Enrichment Education Teachers	9,649	11,415	+18.3%	+1,766
Project Management & Business Oper. Specialists	32,809	34,527	+5.2%	+1,718
Fitness Trainers & Aerobics Instructors	4,950	6,633	+34.0%	+1,683
Amusement & Recreation Attendants	6,453	8,119	+25.8%	+1,666

Source: DEED 2020-2030 Employment Outlook

Job prospects tend to be better in occupations that are growing, but new jobs created by growth are only a fraction of the total number of future openings across occupations. The opportunity to get a job in a particular occupation also depends on how many workers are leaving the occupation and how many other job seekers are considering the same career. Though we've mostly focused on recovery and growth thus far, projections data show that job openings created by workers leaving the labor force or transferring to a different occupation will far exceed openings generated by employment growth.

As shown in Table 9, the number of new jobs created is expected to be around 170,000 jobs over the course of the decade, while the number of jobs that will become open due to labor market exits is close to 1.3 million! For example, many of the more than 217,500 people currently working in Transportation & Material Moving occupations in 2020 will still be working in those jobs in 2030, but many others will have retired or transferred to another occupation over the next ten years, thereby creating labor market exit and occupational transfer openings for new workers. While we are projecting a gain of more than 15,000 new Transportation & Material Moving jobs by 2030, we may also need more than 106,000 workers to fill existing jobs that become available due to retirements or other labor force changes.

On that note, the largest number of labor market exit openings are projected for Office & Administrative Support occupations, which are projected to see the largest decline – but will still offer nearly 165,000 job openings for interested job seekers. Likewise, the state will have significant demand for replacement openings in Food Prep & Serving, Sales & Related, Healthcare Support, Transportation & Material Moving, Production, Management, and Education, Training & Library occupations. Even in fast growing Computer & Mathematical occupations group, labor force exits account for two-thirds of total openings; and average over 88% of total openings across all occupations.

In sum, Minnesota's total employment is projected to climb 5.7% over the 2020-2030 period, compared to projected U.S. employment growth of 7.7% over the same time period. Minnesota's employment growth trailed the U.S. pace during the previous 10 years and will most likely continue to lag behind national growth rates unless the labor force is able to grow more than currently projected. Projections are available for [each of the planning regions](#) in the state as well.

Unfortunately, Minnesota's job growth is still projected to be constrained by our tight labor market unless there is significant expansion of the number of available workers in the state with the right skills.

The state is expected to add nearly 170,000 new jobs over the decade and may also have up to 1.3 million labor market exit openings, creating a multitude of opportunities for workers in Minnesota. Fifteen of the 20 main industries are expected to see job growth or recovery during

that time frame, again led by Health Care & Social Assistance but also boosted by recovery in Leisure & Hospitality and Other Services. Likewise, most occupational groups and occupations are expected to see job gains, but even more will have demand due to replacement openings.

III. Employers' Employment Needs

Minnesota's diverse economy has led to a range of employment needs across various industries. In the Health Care & Social Assistance sector, employers typically seek professionals with a strong foundation in medical knowledge, including degrees in nursing, medicine, or allied health fields. Skills such as patient care, medical diagnostics, and familiarity with healthcare technologies are highly valued. Licensure, such as nursing licenses or medical certifications, is often required.

The Manufacturing industry in Minnesota demands a skilled workforce with expertise in technology, automation, and advanced manufacturing processes. Professionals in this field should possess knowledge of supply chain management, quality control, and lean manufacturing principles. Certifications in relevant areas, such as Six Sigma or Certified Manufacturing Engineer, can enhance employability.

Professional & Technical Services, including information technology and consulting, emphasize a combination of technical proficiency and soft skills. Employers often look for candidates with degrees in computer science, information technology, or business-related fields. Certifications like Project Management Professional (PMP) or Certified Information Systems Security Professional (CISSP) may be preferred, highlighting the need for specialized skills and recognized credentials.

In the Construction industry, employers seek individuals with a strong understanding of building codes, project management, and construction techniques. Depending on the role, relevant degrees in construction management or civil engineering may be required. Additionally, certifications such as Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) certifications may be necessary for certain positions.

Educational services in Minnesota, which include schools and universities, require professionals with educational degrees, teaching certifications, and a commitment to ongoing professional development. Teachers may need licenses specific to the state's education regulations, while administrators might benefit from advanced degrees in education leadership or related fields.

Overall, soft skills like communication, problem-solving, and adaptability are increasingly crucial across these industries. In a rapidly evolving job market, continuous learning and adaptability are essential for employees to stay competitive and for employers to maintain a skilled workforce. State and industry-specific initiatives for workforce development, education, and

training programs play a vital role in addressing these employment needs and fostering economic growth in Minnesota.

To help meet the moment of this unique challenge, Governor Walz and Lieutenant Governor Flanagan created the [Drive for 5 initiative](#) to create sector partnerships across the state and help fill in-demand positions in [technology, the trades, caring professions, manufacturing, and education](#). This initiative is focused on those five occupational groupings because they are in high demand, are projected to be high-growth, and provide family-sustaining wages. Drive for 5 focuses on moving Minnesotans into high-growth employment opportunities with family sustainable wages and prioritizes training for populations that face some of the most significant barriers to employment: people of color, people with disabilities, and those that face other systemic barriers.

Beyond those targeted sectors, workforce development efforts can also be focused in several other vital industries in the state. For example, employers in the Finance & Insurance sector typically seek professionals with educational backgrounds in finance, accounting, or related fields. Strong analytical and quantitative skills are crucial, and many roles may require certifications such as Certified Public Accountant (CPA) or Chartered Financial Analyst (CFA). Attention to detail, risk management expertise, and knowledge of regulatory compliance are also highly valued.

Wholesale Trade demands individuals with skills in logistics, supply chain management, and an understanding of market trends, as well as transportation and material moving. Professionals in this industry often benefit from degrees in business, economics, or supply chain management. Knowledge of international trade regulations and negotiation skills are essential. Certifications such as Certified Supply Chain Professional (CSCP) can enhance credibility.

Management of Companies, also known as corporate headquarters, which often includes management and administrative roles, seeks candidates with diverse skill sets. Strong leadership, strategic planning, and organizational management skills are paramount. Education in business administration, human resources, or related fields is common, and advanced degrees (MBA) may be preferred for higher-level positions. Certifications in project management or leadership can add value.

In Retail Trade, employers prioritize customer service skills, sales acumen, and a good understanding of merchandising. Retail management positions often require leadership and organizational abilities. A background in business or retail management is beneficial, and on-the-job training is common. Flexibility and adaptability are essential due to the dynamic nature of the retail environment.

Likewise, Leisure & Hospitality, which includes restaurants, hotels, casinos, and other entertainment establishments, values a combination of customer service, communication, and organizational skills. Depending on the specific role, educational backgrounds may vary from hospitality management degrees to culinary arts or business degrees. Certifications in food safety or hospitality management can enhance employability. Adaptability to changing customer preferences and a focus on creating positive experiences are key attributes in this industry. Other Services need skilled workers in personal care and service and also installation, maintenance, and repair. In personal care, such as hair salons, and in automotive repair, professionals require specific licenses and certifications to ensure competence, safety, and compliance with regulatory standards. Hairstylists typically need state-issued cosmetology licenses, often obtained through formal cosmetology programs and exams. Automotive technicians often pursue certifications from organizations like the National Institute for Automotive Service Excellence (ASE), showcasing expertise in specific areas. These credentials not only attest to professional skills but also contribute to building trust with clients and customers, reinforcing the commitment to quality service and regulatory compliance.

In the Transportation & Warehousing sector, the demand for new workers is driven by factors such as industry growth, technological advancements, and the retirement of older professionals. A diverse skill set is essential, ranging from logistics and supply chain management expertise to proficiency in the use of modern transportation technologies and software. Educational backgrounds in business, logistics, or engineering are common, with an increasing emphasis on certifications in areas like logistics management or safety compliance. Strong organizational and problem-solving skills are crucial, given the complexity of managing transportation networks and warehousing operations. As the industry evolves, adaptability to new technologies, such as automation and data analytics, is becoming increasingly important. The sector also values safety-conscious individuals, as well as those who can contribute to sustainable and efficient practices in the movement and storage of goods.

In Public Administration, the imminent retirement of older workers necessitates a focus on recruiting and preparing new professionals equipped with a diverse skill set. While educational backgrounds in public administration, political science, or law are foundational, the evolving landscape emphasizes the importance of technical skills, including data analysis and information technology expertise. Soft skills such as effective communication, collaboration, and adaptability are paramount, given the complexities of public service. The sector's increasing reliance on digital tools requires a workforce capable of navigating technological advancements. Leadership qualities are essential for those entering managerial roles, and initiatives like succession planning and professional development programs are crucial for a seamless transition. Above all, a commitment to public service and a sense of civic responsibility remains central to thriving in the dynamic field of public administration.

In every industry, the integration of technology skills, such as proficiency in relevant software and data analysis tools, is becoming increasingly important across all sectors. As industries evolve, the ability to navigate digital platforms and leverage technology becomes an asset for both employers and employees.

- 2. *Workforce Development, Education and Training Activities Analysis.* The Unified or Combined State Plan must include an analysis of the workforce development activities, including education and training in the State, to address the education and skill needs of the workforce, as identified in (a)(1)(B)(iii) above, and the employment needs of employers, as identified in (a)(1)(A)(iii) above.**

This must include an analysis of—

- A. *The State's Workforce Development Activities.* Provide an analysis of the State's workforce development activities, including education and training activities of the core programs, Combined State Plan partner programs included in this plan, and required⁴ and optional one-stop delivery system partners.**

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

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

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

System partners provide a robust range of workshops, e-learning, one-on-one meetings and other resources to help people prepare for a successful job search. Minnesota's career services are supported by nationally-recognized labor market information systems and a "Creative Job

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The state along with its many workforce partners work to support and assist employers in their talent attraction and retention efforts whether through workforce planning, innovative workforce solutions, labor market information and training opportunities. Being competitive in

today's tight labor market and having the tools employers need to remain up to date in their recruitment and retention efforts, help them to attract and retain a skilled workforce. All core programs participate in and benefit from business services activities.

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

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

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

To best serve Minnesota businesses, the Department of Employment and Economic Development provides many resources through the Regional Workforce Strategy Consultant team, assigned to the 6 Workforce Development Areas of Minnesota. The Workforce Strategy Consultants have developed innovative workforce solutions by aligning resources, facilitating collaboration, convening business leaders, and leveraging expertise in targeted industry sectors that drive economic equity and growth. The Workforce Strategy Consultants team is housed on the "Economic Development" side of the agency at DEED, which is intended to help create more alignment with programming and efforts to attract and support businesses that typically exist "outside" of the WIOA/federally funded workforce system of states.

B. *The Strengths and Weaknesses of Workforce Development Activities.* Provide an analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of the workforce development activities identified in (A), directly above.

Minnesota's workforce development system has several strengths, one of its greatest being the renewed focus and interest in interagency and local collaboration. Minnesota's workforce partners have committed to using this State Planning process as a tool to improve the implementation of our workforce development activities described in (A) and those programs outside of the plan as well. The work to come is described throughout this document and will be acted on throughout the course of 2024 – 2027, with the GWDB serving as a convener to support increased coordination and collaboration across the state. Additional specific strengths and weaknesses can be found below.

Strengths

- From entry into the system through One-Stops, to the partnerships with community-based organizations, customers receive career services that are regional or localized to individual labor markets. This is achieved through constant input from regional and local employers through employer engagement and cross-sector partnerships developed primarily through the work of the local workforce development boards.
- Minnesota's workforce development system providers also represent the growing diversity of our state's population, with community engagement by local providers enhancing and expanding services to assist with target populations experiencing disparate outcomes based on race, disability, gender or disconnected youth. The employer and community engagement also contribute to the customer-focused design, offering individualized or culturally appropriate approaches. Community engagement efforts in the state have been led primarily by community-based organizations with experience working with communities facing systemic barriers to employment.
- Minnesota's 2023 legislative session provided historic investments in workforce development programs serving individuals with barriers to employment across each of the state's agencies providing WIOA programming.
- Minnesota also oversees several key workforce development programs that seek to address the state's economic disparities. This includes competitive grant programs support nonprofit organizations that provide business assistance to targeted groups including women, People of Color, indigenous people, rural residents, innovative startups, entrepreneurs, inventors and people with disabilities. This includes the new state grants for Targeted Populations which aims at supporting community-based organizations, employers, and education and training providers and Drive for 5 focused on closing job vacancies in the state's top industries, both targeted on underserved populations.

Weaknesses

- Focus on finding a job and meeting job seekers “where they are at” – we want to help people who need family sustaining employment to focus on finding a career pathway that best meets their interests and skills.
- Need for greater focus on employers – we want to develop tools that assist employers in tapping overlooked job seekers while we increased awareness of our services. We want to help all Minnesota meet their workforce needs, but many employers are not aware of our services.
- MinnesotaWorks.net, the required federal labor exchange, is outdated and not integrated with CareerForceMN.com. This integration is a priority for state staff in 2024 as it will help provide more seamless service online for career services and for employers.

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

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

Minnesota has a long history of successful participation in national and state initiatives to expand workforce development activities through cross-agency and systems collaboration. As an example, the GWDB takes part in monthly virtual briefings with NGA policy and congressional analysts who provide technical assistance to directors of state workforce development boards and co-create resources and tools to facilitate capacity building for strategic leadership. These peer-to-peer learning opportunities are enhanced by in-person meetings of the NGA’s affiliate associations for State Workforce Liaisons and State Workforce Board Chairs, webinars and strategic publications. Minnesota received technical assistance from the National Governors Association on the development of our State, local and regional plan strategy and our 2023 Workforce Summit which included breakout listening sessions on the State’s Vision, Goals and Strategies with state program administrators and local workforce board representatives.

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

- DEED’s Labor Market Information Office and its regional analysts continue to collaborate with local Workforce Boards, DEED staff, and others to provide data and

analysis for grant applications, career information tools for customers, and meaningful analysis on the state and regional economies.

- DEED’s Performance Management Office, which works throughout the agency to facilitate results-based accountability that is client-focused, impartial, and transparent. The office informs strategic direction by providing data-driven analysis and context to those who use, deliver, and fund the Minnesota economic and workforce development systems.
- The Minnesota P-20 Education Partnership (P-20 Partnership) was created by the Minnesota Legislature to promote policies and systems alignment across Minnesota’s primary, secondary, and postsecondary educations systems. The GWDB is actively partnering with representatives of the P-20 Partnership on several alignment-focused initiatives, with the P-20 Partnership supporting and helping drive the GWDB’s efforts to make progress in this area.
- Minnesota Management and Budget (MMB) serves on the GWDB and is currently supporting an interagency review of workforce development programs to better understand our state’s capacity to meet the needs of workers and employers across the state.

b. State Strategic Vision and Goals

The State Strategic Vision, Goals and Strategies for 2024-2027 were developed by modifying the previous State Plan’s Vision, Goals and Strategies in consultation with workforce program administrators, the Governor’s Workforce Development Board, the Minnesota Association of Workforce Boards, and the National Governor’s Association. The shift in Vision, Goals and Strategies represents a new strategic direction for workforce development in the state, one that is focused on breaking down silos across workforce partners and being more intentional and proactive about the delivery of programs and services to Minnesotans. More information on the rationale behind the updated language can be found below.

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

The updated version has a new focus on workforce partners across the state working toward a set of collective goals of equitably providing workforce development programming for MN employers.

2024-2027 WIOA Strategic Vision: The strategic vision of the One Minnesota Workforce Development Vision is a healthy economy where all Minnesotans have equitable access to a workforce development system in which partners across the state are working toward a collective goal of providing workforce development programs that are responsive to employer needs in in-demand occupations and lead to good jobs with family-sustaining wages.

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

2024-2027 WIOA State Plan Goals

1. Increase interagency and local area coordination and alignment around shared goals, maximizing efficiency and coordination of workforce funding and programs and improving system integration, and creating a “no wrong door” approach for individuals or employers engaging in the workforce system.

Goal #1 was modified to recognize a strategic focus on increased interagency and local area coordination and alignment around shared goals. This coordination should result in partners understanding how their individual work contributes to the collective goals, and how the work of each of the partners in the workforce system can meet the needs of individuals and employers. This shared understanding will help reach the “no wrong door” approach which will ensure that our workforce customers – employers and job seekers – will be able to understand and access the full range of workforce services offered in the state whether they engage a CareerForce Center, a community college, or any partner in the system.

2. Build employer-led industry-sector partnerships across the state to create or expand responsive and equitable workforce development programs and career pathways with embedded work-based learning or on-the-job training, including Registered Apprenticeships, focused on closing gaps in participation and representation based on race, ethnicity, disability, gender, veteran status, and age.

Goal #2 was modified to provide more emphasis on the importance of developing sector partnerships to inform workforce development programs, and for there to be a more specific focus on addressing gaps in opportunities in in-demand occupations for underrepresented populations. Plan writers should describe existing sector partnerships, in-demand sectors within their areas where they will focus on creating or participating in new sector partnerships, and detailed demographic information on how the labor force in the sectors of focus align with state or local labor market information and how they plan to address any gaps in representation (e.g. reaching proportional share of women for the state or local labor market).

3. Create a more inclusive, equitable, accessible, and proactive workforce system to serve all Minnesotans, preparing employers and the current and emerging workforce for the changing nature of work including new and emerging technology, changing labor market demands, and for the state’s shifting demographics, including our new Minnesotans.

Goal #3 was modified to have a focus on innovative service delivery with customer-focused design so that our workforce system is more nimble and ready to respond to the changing ways our customers interact with the workforce system. This includes creating ways to better anticipate future workforce needs.

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

Performance measurements are negotiated annually with the US Departments of Labor and Education. Minnesota will develop proposed targets for the applicable performance measurements for PY 24 and PY 25. This state plan will be updated as performance targets are negotiated in each program year based on the negotiation process with the federal departments.

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

The state is in the process of reviewing not just the workforce development programs covered by this State plan, but relevant programs across all agencies to determine where there is opportunity for alignment and collaboration. This work, in addition to the negotiated performance metrics described above, will help inform the assessment measurements the GWDB will be developing in coordination with local and regional partners to measure the implementation and effectiveness of the vision and each of the goals described in section (b).

c. State Strategy

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

- 1) **Describe the strategies the State will implement, including industry or sector partnerships related to in-demand industry sectors and occupations and career pathways, as required by WIOA section 101(d)(3)(B), (D). "Career pathway" is**

defined at WIOA section 3(7) and includes registered apprenticeship. “In-demand industry sector or occupation” is defined at WIOA section 3(23).

Minnesota is taking a more proactive approach through state and federal funding to support and expand sector partnerships within the state. This is reflected in our second of three State plan goals, to:

- 2) *Build employer-led industry-sector partnerships across the state to create or expand responsive and equitable workforce development programs and career pathways with embedded work-based learning or on-the-job training, including Registered Apprenticeships, focused on closing gaps in participation and representation based on race, ethnicity, disability, gender, veteran status, and age.*

A crucial part of our state’s sector strategy is focused on closing demographic disparities or gaps within each of our sectors of focus for each of the sector partnerships. This is a clear focus of our state’s funding for the state’s Drive for 5 initiative and is embedded into the workforce plans that have been created or are in the process of being created for each of the IIA funding opportunities.

Minnesota realizes that sector partnerships are a nationally recognized best practice to ensure that the workforce system, including education and training partners, are responsive to employer demands through a unified employer voice on in-demand industry sectors or occupations. The GWDB has been charged with leading the state’s overall implementation of the Drive for 5 initiative and sector partner strategy, with the GWDB serving as the coordinator of state partners and best practices for implementation and expansion. As a result, the GWDB has created 5 subcommittees on the GWDB Industry Partnership Committee to address statewide sector-specific concerns. Moving forward, these Subcommittees will also support the development or collection of best practices from around the state and help with identifying or prioritizing initiatives within each of the sectors of focus.

Minnesota is also using the industry or sector partnership model in creating our workforce development plans for the various IIA funding opportunities. The Minnesota CHIPS Workforce Partnership, for example, is using a sector strategies model to inform the manufacturing and construction workforce development work. This starts with conducting an occupational needs assessment, then building out three bodies of work based on that assessment for the most in-demand occupational needs. Those three bodies of work focus on Talent Pipeline Development, Skills Development, and Workplace Development. Talent Pipeline Development will consist of career exploration and exposure activities, especially for those populations underrepresented in manufacturing and construction, while Skills Development will focus on creating or expanding education and training programs, including registered apprenticeship programs (RAPs) for the in-demand occupations that can be scaled to education system partners across

the state. Finally, Workplace Development will be focused on the implementation of the Good Jobs Principles, ensuring that employers have the support and resources to not just attract but retain talent. This model is being replicated across other initiatives like Tech Hubs and other IIA funded initiatives.

As part of our State plan for 2024-2027, we will be expanding our sector partnership initiatives throughout the state and through DEED's strategic activities. This includes the following activities:

- GWDB Statewide Sector Partnership Mapping and Best Practice Sharing:
 - *GWDB Committees:* Through the Industry Partnership Committees, the GWDB will be supporting the collection of best practices and identification of statewide sector needs that could be created or expanded to support local sector partnership work.
 - *Defined Sector Partnerships:* The GWDB will be releasing guidance on what constitutes an industry or sector partnership and how to register a partnership with the state to be part of the sector partnership communities of practice. Definitions around Drive for 5 sectors and how to place prioritization on those sectors for partnership expansion or creation will be included as part of this guidance.
 - *Sector Partnership Mapping:* While many great initiatives and partnerships already exist across the state, Minnesota lacks a comprehensive database and mapping tool of the geographic and sector diversity of partnerships. The GWDB will be exploring creating an online tool as part of the GWDB website for partners and the public to see where sector partnerships exist across the state.
 - *Best Practice Sharing:* Quarterly meetings led by the GWDB Committee Chairs will bring together representatives from sector partnerships across the state to share best practices, discuss common needs across the partners within the industries or occupations of focus, and inform the GWDB of additional resources or guidance needed from the state.
 - *Sector Partnership Convening:* The GWDB will host convenings on each of the 3 State plan goals as part of achieving these goals over the next four years and gaining broader statewide awareness and adoption of the goals. This coming spring the GWDB will host a convening on the development and implementation of our statewide sector partnership strategy, engaging local

and regional sector partnerships from across the state and including those that have recently formed or are expanding as a result of Drive for 5 funding.

- *Career Pathway Development:* The GWDB will work in partnership with the P-20 Partnership to develop statewide career pathways for each of the Drive for 5 sectors, building from existing best practices from across the state's local and regional partners. These will include information on wages and benefits, skills, competencies and credentials that are fully portable, stackable and have multiple on-and-off ramps and include work-based learning and on-the-job training opportunities like Registered Apprenticeship Programs.
- State and Local Strategies:
 - *Drive for 5 Funds:* The Drive for 5 Initiative will release funding to selected partners in 2024, with the grant funding available over a two-year window. These grant funds are meant to address current job vacancies, but the state will be exploring over this two-year period how to continue and sustain partnerships in the future.
 - *Local/Regional Sector Partnerships:* DEED will provide technical assistance as requested for local and regional sector partnerships across the state. Minnesota is using the required WIOA Local and Regional Plan to better identify where partnerships exist and what best practices have been developed or resources are needed to support partners across the state.
- DEED Internal Partners:
 - *Business Engagement and Workforce Strategy Consultants:* These divisions within DEED will be formulating a plan to provide more targeted technical assistance to sector partnerships and employers throughout the state.
 - *Rapid Response and UI:* Once the GWDB has established a statewide network of sector partnerships, we will create more direct lines of communication for our Rapid Response and Unemployment Insurance teams to be flagging relevant roles subject to layoff or unemployment in the geographic area of each or any relevant sector partnership. We will also explore supporting stronger initial outreach to individuals in those in-demand positions to do skill and competency assessments to align with identified skill and competency needs of the sector partnerships and identify any additional skill

or competency development strategies that could be leveraged by the sector partnerships to address immediate job vacancies.

- **Interagency and Educational Alignment:** This includes working across partners at DEED and state agencies like DLI to incorporate registered apprenticeship programs into the sector partnership strategies, with the P-20 Partnership to support development state-wide career pathways which can be used by sector partnerships to inform their local or regional education and training efforts as described above. This includes secondary and postsecondary career and technical education programs and the Minnesota State system for creating or expanding academic and training offerings.
- 2) Describe the strategies the State will use to align the core programs, any Combined State Plan partner programs included in this Plan, required and optional one-stop partner programs, and any other resources available to the State to achieve fully integrated customer services consistent with the strategic vision and goals described above. Also describe strategies to strengthen workforce development activities in regard to weaknesses identified in section II(a)(2).**

2024-2027 WIOA State Plan Strategies

For the state to achieve the One Minnesota Vision for workforce development, each workforce partner across the state should be working toward implementing the Governor’s major workforce priorities in a unified manner. For the 2024-2027 State, Local and Regional plans, we request that plan writers describe how they are implementing any or all of the priorities put forward by the Governor and those requested by DOL and the U.S. Department of Education who oversee and approve the State plans.

The strategies described below are intended to support and advance the coordination of statewide initiatives and strategies and better understand how these strategies can be implemented at a program or local level. This will also help with improving alignment between federally funded and state-funded programs, ensuring that all programs are moving in similar strategic directions.

- **Drive for 5:** The Drive for 5 Initiative was created to prepare more Minnesotans for high-demand jobs in five occupational categories: technology, the trades, caring professions, manufacturing, and education. State, regional and local plan writers have been encouraged to consider how their programs, local areas, or regions prioritize any or all of the five in-demand sectors.

- Targeted Populations: This state-wide initiative was created to bring workers who have been overlooked for employment – particularly people of color – into the workforce at family-sustaining wages. State, regional and local plan writers have been encouraged to consider who their program’s Targeted Populations are and their plans for providing pathways to family sustaining wages.
- Office of New Americans (ONA): ONA was created to support immigrant and refugee inclusion, reduce barriers to employment, and improve connections between employers and job seekers. State, regional and local plan writers have been encouraged to consider how they will work with ONA to support immigrants and refugees in their programs.
- Good Jobs Principles The U.S. Department of Labor and U.S. Department of Commerce released the Good Jobs Principles to create a shared vision of job quality across workforce partners. State, regional and local plan writers have been encouraged to consider how they will support their employer clients in adopting Good Jobs Principles to provide high-quality employment opportunities and improve retention.
- North Star Promise: Minnesota is implementing a free college program beginning in the fall of 2024. State, regional and local plan writers have been encouraged to examine eligibility criteria as compared to their existing clients and consider how they will account for changes in uses of funds in light of the free college program.
- Individualized Career Services: Career services to job seekers play a critical role in supporting placement and providing more individualized career services as described in section 134(b)(2)(A)(xii) of WIOA are an evidence-based model for improving individual’s earnings. State, regional, and local plan writers have been encouraged to describe how they will be utilizing this strategy to improve outcomes for job seekers, and how they may potentially shift funding to career services as funding for workforce training becomes more readily available with the implementation of the North Star Promise Program.
- Attracting and retaining workers: Minnesota continues to face challenges with population growth, which makes attracting and retaining workers all the more important to supporting a healthy and thriving economy in our state. State, regional, and local plan writers have been encouraged to describe what strategies they are implementing to support employers in improving job quality and marketing of job opportunities to support attraction and retention strategies.

- **Supportive Services:** Providing wraparound or supportive services is critical to ensuring that underrepresented populations or individuals with barriers to employment have access to the resources they need to enroll or complete workforce development programs and are retained in employment. State, regional, and local plan writers have been encouraged to describe how they are providing supportive services, leveraging partnerships to expand access to such services, or potentially shifting resources to provide supportive services as funding for workforce training becomes more readily available with the implementation of the North Star Promise Program. Please see the [WIOA TEGL](#) for more implementation ideas.

III. Operational Planning Elements

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

a. State Strategy Implementation.

The Unified or Combined State Plan must include—

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

In Minnesota, the State board, called the Governor’s Workforce Development Board (GWDB) carries out this function by supporting the development and implementation of the state’s strategic plan and vision for workforce development. This is done through standing committees and subcommittees organized by the GWDB, through supporting the development of statewide focused workforce plans in response to the many federal funding opportunities through the IIA, and supporting the interagency work of achieving the One Minnesota Workforce Shortage Goal of reducing the job vacancy rate in Minnesota. This also includes hosting the now annual Workforce Summit in September of each year which showcases state and local workforce initiatives, best practices, and priorities for achieving the One Minnesota Vision and Goals for workforce development.

Operational Structure

The State Board was established prior to the passing of the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) in 1997 and the Board structure was grandfathered in under WIA. With the passing of WIOA,

significant changes to the composition and role of the Board have taken place. The duties and structure of the board are laid out in Minnesota Statutes 116L.665. The Governor appoints all members of the Board, with the exception of legislative members. State and local leadership, GWDB staff, and representatives of local areas encourage potential candidates from specific sectors, organizations and regions to apply for open positions in alignment with the state vision.

The GWDB is supported by a director and 1.5 full-time staff who are involved in the day-to-day implementation of the key activities and initiatives. The GWDB works with staff across DEED to support the GWDB Committees, with the goal of having subject matter experts leading and implementing the work and recommendations coming out of each committee. This list of partners includes:

- Industry Partnerships:
 - *Manufacturing:* Co-Chairs: Steve Kalina, President & CEO, Minnesota Precision Manufacturing Association (MPMA) & Gabe Mooney, Corporate Project Manager, Central Boiler; Staff: Della Ludwig and Jessica Miller, Workforce Strategy Consultants, Economic Development Division
 - *Caring Professions:* Co-Chairs Laura Beeth & Nicole Mattson, VP of Strategic Initiatives, Care Providers of Minnesota; Staff: GWDB
 - *Education:* Co-Chairs: Troy Haugen, Director of Career and College Readiness, Lake Country Service Cooperative & Naveen Aggarwal, Owner & Founder, Kiddigarten School of Maple Grove; Staff: GWDB
 - *Technology:* Chair: Jeff Tollefson, President & CEO, Minnesota Technology Association (MnTech); Staff: GWDB
 - *Trades:* Co-Chairs: Sam Heimlich, Business Representative, North Central States Regional Council of Carpenters, Roy Smith, Director of Talent Development, IRRRB/Minnesota State; Staff: Liz McLoone, Rapid Response Employment & Training Programs, Workforce Division
- Youth Programs: Chair: Bernie Burnham, President, Minnesota AFL-CIO, Vice Chair: Hannah Alstead, Political and Labor Director, Teamsters Joint Council 32; Staff: Cory Schmid, Youth Programs Employment & Training Programs, Workforce Division
- Racial Equity: Chair: Linda Sloan, Executive Directors, Council for Minnesotans of African Heritage, Vice Chair: Whitney Harvey, Senior Director of Workforce Diversity and Inclusion, Minnesota Chamber of Commerce; Staff: Sonji Davis, GWDB

- Disability Equity: Chair: Josh Berg, Director of Services and Strategic Growth, Accessible Space; Vice Chair: Karlton Scott, Executive Director, Minnesota Nurses Association; Staff: Natasha Jerde, Director, Minnesota State Services for the Blind
- Future of Work: Chair: Rob Stark, Financial Advisor, Edward Jones Investments, Vice Chair: Kevion Ellis, VP of Business & Talent Development, St. Paul Area Chamber; Staff: Nathan Ratner, DEED Government Affairs

Decision-Making Process

The GWDB meets quarterly to discuss and review state policies, programs and initiatives that impact the implementation of the State Vision, Goals and Strategies. Starting in 2024, that will commence with the review of the State plan vote for approval. The GWDB also receives updates and recommendations from the GWDB Committees. The GWDB has five standing committees based on member recommendations: Industry Partnerships, Youth Programs, Racial Equity, Disability Equity, and the Future of Work, and five subcommittees under the Industry Partnership Committees aligned with the Drive for 5 Initiative: Manufacturing, Caring Professions, Education, Technology, and the Trades.

These committees are made up of GWDB members and non-GWDB members that are subject matter experts engaged in the work across the state. The GWDB Committees are tasked with identifying areas with the greatest short-term and long-term needs in their area of focus and identifying best practices as well as potential barriers or solutions to share with the larger GWDB. If necessary, the GWDB will be asked to vote on recommendations coming out of the GWDB committees.

The GWDB is also consulted on larger issues like the development and adoption of the State Plan Vision, Goals and Strategies. For these issues, the GWDB is presented information and voting members are asked to voice vote or move for a recorded vote if requested. The GWDB follows Roberts Rules of Order for Meetings.

- 2) **Implementation of State Strategy. Describe how the lead State agency with responsibility for the administration of each core program or a Combined State Plan partner program included in this plan will implement the State’s Strategies identified in II(c) above. This must include a description of—**
 - A. ***Core Program Activities to Implement the State’s Strategy.* Describe the activities the entities carrying out the respective core programs will fund to implement the State’s strategies. Also, describe how such activities will be aligned across the core programs and Combined State Plan partner programs included in this plan and**

among the entities administering the programs, including using co-enrollment and other strategies, as appropriate.

Title I

The WIOA Adult and Dislocated Worker program will implement the State Plan vision, goals, and strategies by strengthening partnerships across the state with stakeholders in both the public and private sectors as well as across the agency, encouraging co-enrollment to ensure comprehensive service provision to participants and employers, and supporting innovative service delivery strategies including outreach to underserved populations.

WIOA Youth providers will implement the vision, goals and strategies of Minnesota's WIOA State Plan through a variety of methods. One critical element is to leverage the Shared Vision for Youth Blueprints which identify priorities and strategies for serve WIOA eligible youth, see: <https://mn.gov/deed/programs-services/office-youth-development/special/shared-vision/>. Minnesota will provide career pathways for youth from underrepresented communities, increasing access to high quality jobs in demand in regional economies. Work experience and career pathways programming that prioritizes laddering opportunities and family sustaining wages supports Minnesota's effort to close the opportunity and achievement gap that exists in education and employment. Within the Shared Vision for Youth Blueprints, WIOA Youth providers elevate youth voice to ensure that programming is person-centered and focused on the needs of youth. Minnesota's WIOA Youth providers have the ability to leverage state-funded youth employment funds, such as the Minnesota Youth Program (MYP). By blending and braiding funds, WIOA Youth providers are able to support youth as they achieve their education and employment goals.

Mental health concerns of youth participants remains a core part of WIOA Youth programming. Local Workforce Development Boards (LWDB) identify entities and organizations that can support youth to address mental health challenges. This support is critical to ensuring that youth persist successfully through programming and once they have exited from programming. Addressing mental health also supports the Department of Labor's (DOL) emphasis on elevating youth voice and promoting self-advocacy.

Ensuring equitable services to WIOA Youth participants is an essential element to service delivery. This includes deliberate outreach to BIPOC communities, disability serving entities, and other organizations serving underrepresented communities. Counselors attend Diversity, Inclusion and Equity (DEIA) trainings and professional development opportunities to support cultural competency when working with underrepresented youth. Each WIOA Youth provider follows their own Shared Vision for Youth Blueprints which outline specific strategies for serving homeless youth, foster youth, and juvenile justice-involved youth. Moreover, a recent study completed by the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED)

shows that nearly nine out of ten youth served by Youth Workforce Programs live in one of Minnesota's most vulnerable zip codes. See:

<https://public.tableau.com/app/profile/magda.olson/viz/YouthSVI/GoalTracking?publish=yes>

By prioritizing efforts to areas of most need in Minnesota, WIOA Youth programs ensure there is greater accessibility to workforce development activities for underrepresented youth. A crucial strategy employed by WIOA Youth providers is use of support services to help youth successfully persist through programming. Support services allow WIOA Youth providers to offer complete wraparound services. These services are especially helpful for underrepresented youth who have significant barriers to education and employment success.

Title II

Minnesota's Adult Education (ABE) system will help:

- Increase collaboration and alignment;
- Build employer-led industry sector partnerships; and
- Create a more inclusive workforce system.

Increase Collaboration and Alignment

- Minnesota Adult Education works collaboratively with learner and community goals through: co-locations, Regional Transitions Coordinators, Ability-to-Benefit, and Conditional Work Referrals.
- Adult education instruction and services are frequently co-located with postsecondary, CareerForce, social service organizations, corrections, Tribal Nation entities, online, and additional areas in order to better reach learners and connect them with partner services. This co-location also helps increase communication and collaboration with workforce development partners.
- Minnesota Adult Education has also set up a regional system of collaboration with partners through the Regional Transitions Coordinators (RTCs). RTCs help connect ABE providers with workforce development partner systems and share best practices in effective partnering with the help of the Minnesota Association of Workforce Boards (MAWB).
- Collaborations with Minnesota State (public postsecondary system) have led to a state Ability-to-Benefit plan and options that gives adults access to financial aid for postsecondary career-focused programs while still completing their diploma with ABE.
- Collaborations with DEED and CareerForce have created a Conditional Work Referral process to help build adults' technology and employability skills through a referral from the one-stop center. The technology and employability skill instruction is

funded using state ABE funding that is not matched with federal adult education funding.

Build employer-led industry sector partnerships

Minnesota Adult Education providers work with hundreds of employer worksites through: workplace education programs, Integrated Education and Training, contextualized instruction, and teaching essential technology and employability skills.

- Minnesota Adult Education will encourage adult education providers to identify employers in priority sectors and industries to explore and develop workplace education programs with employers to build employees' skills. Adult education providers can utilize regional transitions funding and/or other federal and state adult education funding to help develop and sustain workplace education programs.
- Adult Education providers are encouraged to develop Integrated Education and Training (IET) programs with employers and training institutions to help individuals further their career pathways. IET programs are required to combine the education, employability skills, and workforce training in a single program to shorten the timeline for adults to be skilled and ready for employment. Minnesota Adult Education provides special IET professional development and technical assistance to make the IET development process easier. Cohort professional development and ongoing coaching with professional development providers and the Minnesota Department of Education have been effective in helping providers implement IETs effectively.
- Education efforts for adults are frequently contextualized. Minnesota Adult Education providers create contextualized English, math and other basic skills instruction for learners that are often focused on their career pathway goals to help build their skills and apply them in work and life. In addition, the contextualized instruction can work in multiple ways in different programs, from career exploration to credential completion programs.
- Employers and adult learners frequently note how technology and employability skills are essential for any employee to be successful. Minnesota Adult Education has prioritized these skills by setting content standards in digital literacy skills and employability skills in addition to the academic skills. Adult Education providers are expected to integrate technology and employability skills into academic instruction. Adult Education staff have access to professional development and resources to help them embed technology and employability content and skills in their instruction.

Create a more inclusive workforce system

The Adult Education Team at the Minnesota Department of Education is committed to improving diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts to make education and workforce systems accessible and inclusive for all learners.

- More than half of Minnesota Adult Education learners have English language acquisition goals. Many of these learners are newly arrived immigrants and refugees. Minnesota Adult Education providers offer differentiated and comprehensive English language instruction to meet this need.
- Adult Education providers understand that if a learner does not have their basic needs covered, the learner's ability to further their education will be limited. Providers build trust with learners so they can identify needs and help connect learners with support services to meet their basic needs, including but not limited to food, housing, transportation, clothing, and childcare. Many Adult Education providers also partner with entities to provide some of these services, like children's education activities offered during adult education classes.
- In 2021, Minnesota Adult Education created a grant to identify and analyze equity issues in adult education. Part of this work included the development of advisory groups of staff and learners to drive this work. As this work evolves, Minnesota Adult Education will: focus on developing and implementing provider- and state-level tools to deeply analyze policies and practices; create a community of practice to further the work and advise the State Adult Education team and system; and provide professional development to help build individual and team awareness of equity issues and efforts.
- Ensuring our communications, programming, and resources are accessible to Minnesotans is also important. The Adult Education Team at MDE reviews communications and resources developed and work to make them accessible. All adult education programs are required to make reasonable and appropriate accommodations. Minnesota Adult Education has a support network provider that helps providers work with students with disabilities and has resources online (www.pandamn.org). In addition, Minnesota Adult Education has created some specialized programs for adults who are Deaf, programs for adults who are blind or have impaired vision, and programs for adults who have had a traumatic brain injury.

Additional Strategies

Regularly communicating and sharing information are key to building relationships that help us collaborate more deeply, build adult career pathways, and create a better, more inclusive workforce system. The Adult Education (ABE) team at the Minnesota Department of Education will regularly participate in Governor's Workforce Development Board meetings, communicating our work with the board, workforce development programs, and community partners

Title III

The Employment Service Program oversees the operation of several statewide programs under the identity of Job Service. This includes Work Opportunity Tax Credits, Bonding, Foreign Labor Certification, Agricultural Outreach to Migrant and Seasonal Farm Workers, Partners for Reentry Opportunities in Workforce Development (PROWD), and several other local and statewide programs and services. The Job Service team works closely with the Veterans Employment Service team, that operates the Jobs for Veterans State Grant (JVSG) program.

These teams will continue to work with DEED leadership to implement the vision, goals and strategies through: participation in Objectives and Key Result activities; adhering to DEED's values; participation in the Job Quality Academy activities and planning; and serving as a conduit between the partners of the CareerForce system and the State Workforce Agency.

Title IV

Minnesota's Vocational Rehabilitation program is carrying out a number of activities related to the State's Vision, Goals, and Strategies, including:

Targeted Populations: providing pathways to family sustaining wages to workers who have been overlooked for employment – particularly people of color:

- Dedicated outreach to individuals with disabilities, including students of color, to expand public awareness.
- Providing paid work experience and introduction to careers that provide family-sustaining wages.
- Focusing on hiring staff who are representative of the people we serve.
- Researching other state's rebranding strategies to reach more people.

Office of New Americans (ONA): working with ONA to support immigrants and refugees:

- VRS has dedicated New Americans staff, located in the St. Paul office.
- VRS has an outreach and coordination position focused on DEIA, who works directly with the ONA team and coordinates with VRS field services.

Good Jobs Principles: supporting employer clients in adopting Good Jobs Principles to provide high-quality employment opportunities and improve retention by:

- VRS, along with some business representatives from Mayo Health System, developed "Bite-size Learning" modules, which are a resource for employers that

takes a topic around employing individuals with disabilities and breaks it into short modules that can be presented in about 20 minutes. There are 5 current modules on DEED's CareerForce website on the following topics:

- Defining Disability and the Americans with Disabilities Act
- Recognizing and Implementing a Request for Reasonable Accommodations
- Self ID: Building a More Inclusive Culture
- Inclusive Communication
- Mental Health Matters: Let's Talk
- VRS leads and convenes Business Engagement Networks (BEN's) focused on meeting the needs of business by providing a talent pool of candidates that can meet the needs of business utilizing a Single Point of Contact (SPOC) coordinated approach with VRS, Community Rehabilitation Providers, and Special Education Work Coordinators.
- The Employer Reasonable Accommodation Fund (ERAF) is a pilot program that creates a central fund for the next two years where small- to mid-sized Minnesota employers can request reimbursement for expenses related to providing reasonable accommodations for job applicants and employees with disabilities. The ERAF's purpose is to encourage employment of people with disabilities by reducing any perceived or real financial barriers.
- Inclusive Worksite Training & Certification Program, which DEED is leading, is coming in 2024.

Individualized Career Services: utilize individualized career services through person-centered practices. Every participant served by VRS receives individualized career services provided by an array of vocational rehabilitation professionals.

Attracting and retaining workers: implementing strategies to support employers in improving job quality and marketing of job opportunities to support attraction and retention strategies, including:

- VRS leads and convenes Business Engagement Networks (BEN's) focused on meeting the needs of business by providing a talent pool of candidates that can meet the needs of business utilizing a Single Point of Contact (SPOC) coordinated approach with VRS, Community Rehabilitation Providers, and Special Education Work Coordinators.

- Employer Reasonable Accommodation Fund (ERAF)
- Inclusive Worksite Training & Certification Program, which DEED is leading, is coming in 2024.

Supportive Services: providing wraparound or supportive services to ensure access to the resources needed to enroll or complete workforce development programs and are retained in employment:

- VRS collaborates with workforce development partners, MDE, DHS, county and local service providers to offer statewide employment services.
- E1MN Framework
- Youth Services Strategic Plan
- Minnesota VRS has been a leader in implementing the Evidence Based Practice of Supported Employment for persons with serious and persistent mental illness known as Individual Placement and Support (IPS). Minnesota’s programs utilize the IPS fidelity scale (2008) to guide program development and implementation as well as program evaluation and outcome measurement.

Minnesota State Services for the Blind, a Title IV vocational rehabilitation program, created our specific goals, priorities, and strategies to be in alignment with the overall State Plan vision, goals, and strategies. The only major difference is that our goals are tailored towards our customer base: individuals who are blind, low vision, and DeafBlind.

- 1) Improve Partnerships. Increase interagency coordination with local and state workforce partners so individuals who are blind, low vision, and DeafBlind and employers have a customer-centric, positive experience no matter which “door” they enter.
- 2) Increase the Workforce Participation Rate. Build relationships with businesses that lead to career opportunities with family sustaining wages for individuals who are blind, low vision, and DeafBlind. It is recognized that services prior to job placement in the individuals plan may include internships and work opportunities that build a work foundation that leads to meaningful and career path employment.
- 3) Focus on Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility. Create an agency that better meets the needs of the current and emerging workforce, including improving services to new Americans, underrepresented communities, and veterans.
- 4) Marketing Work Ready Individuals to Employers. Identify and implement innovative and evidence-based practices and service-delivery approaches so that individuals with disabilities have the same opportunities in the labor market as everyone else.

- B. *Alignment with Activities outside the Plan.*** Describe how the activities identified in (A) will be aligned with programs and activities provided by required one-stop partners and other optional one-stop partners and activities provided under employment, training (including Registered Apprenticeships), education (including career and technical education), human services and other programs not covered by the plan, as appropriate, assuring coordination of, and avoiding duplication among these activities.
- C. *Coordination, Alignment and Provision of Services to Individuals.*** Describe how the entities carrying out the respective core programs, Combined State Plan partner programs included in this plan, and required and optional one-stop partner programs will coordinate activities and resources to provide comprehensive, high-quality, customer-centered services, including supportive services (e.g. transportation), to individuals, including those populations identified in section II(a)(1)(B), and individuals in remote areas. The activities described shall conform to the statutory requirements of each program.

Services to Laid-Off Adults

Unemployment Insurance — DEED houses the state’s Unemployment Insurance (UI) division. CareerForce locations provide co-location for UI staff members to coordinate reemployment initiatives for claimants and the long—term unemployed. The Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment (RESEA) engages UI claimants within the first weeks of their benefit payments to provide earlier engagement and increased services through CareerForce locations to expedite their return to work.

Dislocated Worker Program — This program mitigates the negative impact to businesses, communities, and employees who are facing a layoff. It assists laid-off workers in returning to work with comparable wages and benefits and connects employers with skilled staff. The Rapid Response team is the first responder when a business has closed down or is planning to lay off workers. The team is trained to assess the situation and inform the affected workers of available services. Participants enrolled in the program can access career planning and counseling; job search and placement services; short-term training upon counselor approval; and support services for expenses such as childcare and transportation upon counselor approval. Minnesota maintains both a federally and state- funded Dislocated Worker program.

Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) — This program provides aid to workers who lose their jobs, or are at risk of losing their jobs, or whose hours of work and wages are reduced as a result of foreign competition. TAA assists laid-off workers in returning to the workforce as quickly as possible by offering them help with work searches, relocation, job training, and weekly cash benefits. There are two major components, separately funded by the U.S. Department of Labor:

Trade Readjustment Allowances (TRA), which are special extensions to unemployment insurance; and Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) which includes assistance with training costs, job search allowances, relocation allowances, and similar costs. TAA now uses Electronic Document Storage within the case management database which reduces cost and waste and increases efficiency.

Assessments for Job Seekers— Local areas use a variety of assessment instruments across the state, but the most commonly used are the DOL Career One Stop’s Interest, Skills and Work Value assessments. Interest and skills assessments have been made available on the CareerForceMN.com platform to assist job seekers. Minnesota also developed an “Employment Readiness Profile” assessment that is used across the state. This assessment functions as a triage tool and was developed by Title I and Title III staff. In 2021 CareerForceMN.com also released a “Compare Skills” tool that demonstrates how skills of one job transfer to other jobs, and also filters those results to direct seekers to jobs in demand today.

Services to Adults with Barriers to Employment

WIOA Adult – The program serves adults who are seeking greater participation in the labor force and prioritizes individuals who receive public assistance, individuals living with low incomes, and veterans. Minnesota is developing additional policy that leverage state resources to address disparities gaps in race, disability, and disconnected youth which is a priority of this plan. Services include a preliminary assessment of skill levels, support services, occupational or on-the-job training or work-based learning, job search and placement assistance, access to apprenticeship opportunities, and career counseling. It also provides resource libraries providing access to employment-related services such as current job vacancies via local education and training service providers, and labor market information. WIOA Adult providers have been partnering with Adult Career Pathway programming to ensure individuals have access to career pathways that lead to family sustaining wages or beyond.

Minnesota Pathways to Prosperity – Minnesota Pathways to Prosperity (P2P) is an innovative framework built on a Career Pathway programming model, which integrates basic skills education, competency-based skills training, support services, higher-level education for those who chose, employment placement and retention to meet the needs of adults. P2P projects are designed for adults who traditionally face multiple barriers to employment, and who need enhanced educational and supportive services to be successful in securing long-term family sustaining wages. P2P provides opportunities to build their skills through On-Ramp, Bridge, and Individualized Training career pathways models that ultimately lead to employment in an industry sector at a family sustaining wage. This competitively awarded grant program targets populations of color; individuals experiencing housing insecurity; individuals with a criminal record; those lacking a high school diploma or equivalent; individuals with disabilities; and those unemployed for 26 or more consecutive weeks. In addition, special consideration should be provided to veterans, those returning to work after receiving public assistance, low-income,

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

MN Family Resiliency Partnership Program – (formerly displaced homemakers) – This program provides pre-employment services that empower participants to enter or re-enter the labor market. Customers are women and men who have worked in the home for a substantial number of years caring for home and family but, due to separation, divorce, death, or disability of spouse or partner, or other loss of financial support, must now support themselves and their families. These participants often need to address and resolve multiple barriers before they can be competitive in the workforce. Most participants are worried about basic needs for themselves and their families, such as stable housing, caring for a spouse or child with a disability or escaping a violent relationship or situation. Eligibility for this program is based on income guidelines. The six providers offer services covering 51 counties in the State. MN Family Resiliency Partnership is a state-funded program.

Minnesota Family Investment Program (MFIP/TANF) — This program helps families with children meet their basic needs, while helping parents move to financial stability through work. Parents are expected to work and are supported in working with both cash and food assistance. Most families have a lifetime limit of 60 months on MFIP. DEED works with the DHS Economic Assistance and Employment Supports Division to ensure the program goals of MFIP are met.

SNAP Employment and Training Program (E&T) — The Minnesota Department of Human Services (MN DHS) administers the state’s SNAP Employment and Training Program (SNAP E&T) by supervising local counties and directly contracting with community agencies. Minnesota’s SNAP E&T program is built on strong partnerships and offers multiple contracting options. Interested providers can contract through the DHS, Minnesota’s Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED), and certain other Minnesota Counties. DHS contracts directly with agencies and organizations seeking to offer a range of jobs-driven employment support programs across the state. This includes organizations already receiving a portion of E&T funding through their local county. DHS is the contracting agency for all tribal contracts and other state agencies. DEED’s SNAP E&T program is available as an enhancement to existing contracts for non-federal funding through DEED. Also, some counties elect to contract with organizations who provide a range of jobs-driven employment supports to low-income residents of the county.

Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP) — The SCSEP program fosters economic self-sufficiency through community service activities for unemployed, low-income persons who are 55 years of age and older and have poor employment prospects. Program clients are Minnesotans with an income of less than 125 percent of the federal poverty levels,

who want or need additional income. Service providers include five Local Workforce Development Areas, three community action agencies, three counties, two national sponsors, and one Native American tribe. Program operations are sub-granted to 11 local agencies that serve workers in 60 counties throughout the state; remaining 27 counties are served by national sponsors.

Women in High-Wage, High Demand Nontraditional Jobs Grant Program — This program seeks to increase the number of women in high-wage, high-demand, nontraditional occupations including those in the skilled trades, science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) occupations. Grant funds serve women, especially low-income women and women over 50 years of age. This is a state-funded grant program, which began in December 2014 and continues.

Migrant and Seasonal Farmworkers — This program provides migrant seasonal farm workers with a full range of employment services and referrals to other community services. Migrant and other seasonal employees engaged in farm work that are legally eligible to work in the United States and of legal age to perform services for wages are eligible for services. The full range of services provided includes: job search assistance and placement, job counseling, training opportunities, and referrals to supportive services and programs. The program is administered by a Job Service supervisor who leads the State Monitor Advocate and migrant labor representatives. Migrant Labor Representatives are fluent in both English and Spanish, to better serve the predominantly Spanish-speaking clientele.

Southeast Asian Economic Disparities Relief Grant Program — This program was implemented in July of 2016 to address economic disparities in Southeast Asian communities through workforce recruitment and development, job creation, assistance to smaller organizations to increase capacity and outreach services. The Minnesota Legislature has funded this program every year since its inception.

Adult support services — This competitive grant focuses on low-income communities, young adults from families with a history of intergenerational poverty, and communities of color to provide support services to individuals, such as job training, employment preparation, internships, job assistance to fathers, financial literacy, academic and behavioral interventions for low-performing students, and youth intervention. The Minnesota Legislature has funded this program every year since its inception.

Youth

WIOA Youth Program — Minnesota's WIOA Youth Program provides comprehensive employment and training services to opportunity youth, including work-based learning, an introduction to career pathways, attainment of recognized credentials and wrap-around support services. Participants are youth ages 16 - 24 who are not attending any school, and in-school youth ages 14-21 who are low-income and at-risk. Minnesota serves a high percentage of youth who are most in need of services such as homeless youth and runaways, youth in

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

- *Minnesota Youth Program (MYP)*: MYP serves low-income youth, ages 14 to 24, and is the only youth employment program available in all 87 counties. Over half of the youth served under MYP receive academic credit or service-learning credit for work-based learning. Other MYP services include career exploration and counseling, labor market information on in-demand occupations, work readiness skills, financial literacy training, work experience and support services. MYP serves nearly 3,766 youth each year through individual, case managed services and almost 30,000 youth through the Outreach to Schools component. MYP operates in coordination with WIOA, under oversight of Local Workforce Development Boards appointed by Local Elected Officials (business-led majority). Each \$1 of MYP funds leverages over \$6 of other federal, state and local resources. Youth may be co-enrolled in WIOA, MFIP, VRS, or Youthbuild because of strong local partnerships. Worksite supervisors/employers evaluate the contextual work readiness skills of youth on the MYP worksite using pre and post assessments. For more information, see the Minnesota Youth Program webpage: <https://mn.gov/deed/programs-services/office-youth-development/youth-programs/youth-program.jsp>.
- *Youthbuild Program*: The state funded Youthbuild Program offers a construction career pathway for low-income, at-risk youth, ages 16-24, who have dropped out of school or are at-risk of dropping out. Youthbuild provides pre-apprenticeship training, industry-recognized credentials, contextual basic skills and work readiness soft skills; career exploration and counseling; mentoring and leadership development; and support services. Ten organizations provide services across Minnesota. Each \$1 of state Youthbuild funding is matched by one local dollar and state funds are used as match for federal YouthBuild resources. The pandemic impacted services for Minnesota Youthbuild grantees and caused construction projects to be delayed. Local Youthbuild staff pivoted construction training and programming to virtual formats in response to pandemic restrictions. For more information, see the Youthbuild webpage at: <https://mn.gov/deed/programs-services/office-youth-development/youth-programs/youthbuild.jsp>.

- Youth at Work Equity Grants*: provide workforce development and training opportunities for economically disadvantaged and at-risk youth with special consideration for youth from BIPOC communities and youth with disabilities. 86% of the youth served are from BIPOC communities in State Fiscal Year 2023. Experiential learning opportunities are designed for youth that promote mastery of work readiness competencies and 21st Century skills. Projects promote skill acquisition (academic and work readiness) through project-based instruction and increase exposure to in-demand jobs important to regional economies. In response to the COVID-19 precautions, many programs converted programming from in-person to virtual. This meant many youth needed access to internet hot spots, laptops, and other technology to complete required schooling and remote work. Providing these resources to youth ensure low-income youth and BIPOC youth had equitable access to online learning and working. The program served 8215 youth in SFY23. Youth at Work Equity grants provide high-quality worksites and overall participant and employer satisfaction. These are two-year grants that emphasize innovation in serving youth. For more information, see the Youth Equity Grants webpage: <https://mn.gov/deed/programs-services/office-youth-development/special/grants/>.
- Youth Support Services Grants*: The Minnesota Legislature appropriated \$475,000 in State Fiscal Year (SFY) 2023 for a competitive grant program to provide support services for individuals. Grant funded services include job training, employment preparation, internships, job assistance to parents, financial literacy, academic and behavioral interventions for low-performing students, and youth intervention activities. Grants must serve individuals from low-income communities, and/or young adults from families with a history of intergenerational poverty, and/or BIPOC communities. In SFY 23 were 17 Youth Support Services grantees with 54% of the grant funds allocated to the Twin Cities metro area and 46% allocated to Greater Minnesota. Through these grants, 425 young people received individual services in SFY 23 with over 94% receiving education, employment preparation, or work readiness services. The young people served through these grants were 83% from BIPOC communities, 14% identifying as having a disability, and 47% young women. Detailed program information and reports available at <https://mn.gov/deed/programs-services/office-youth-development/special/youth-support/>
- Disability Employment Initiative (DEI)*: Partners for Youth Career Pathways - Minnesota is managing a \$2.5 million, 42-month DEI grant funded through the U.S. DOL's Employment and Training Administration and the Office of Disability Employment Policy. This grant allowed three of Minnesota's rural WDAs to strengthen partnerships and strategically align career pathways systems to effectively serve youth with disabilities through multiple entry and exit points. The federal DEI grant allowed Minnesota to expand the number of Employment Networks (ENs) in the state which increases services to Social Security disability beneficiaries. The DEI helped Minnesota build the capacity of rural WDA staff to

increase the number of youths with disabilities participating in career pathways programs by implementing the Integrated Resource Team (IRT) approach and the Guideposts for Success best practices framework into service delivery. The DEI grant was successfully closed out in the spring of 2020. For more information on the DEI see the Disability Employment Initiative weblink: <https://mn.gov/deed/programs-services/office-youth-development/special/disability-employment-initiative/>.

- *DEED, DHS, and MAWB have worked in partnership:* Since 2009 to serve teen parents receiving Minnesota Family Investment Program (MFIP) benefits or in TANF-eligible households. This partnership has leveraged over \$8.6 million in TANF funds to provide work experience and work-readiness training for over 5,000 teen parents who were receiving MFIP benefits or younger youth who were MFIP recipients. The partnership addresses disparities in MFIP outcomes, especially the Work Participation Rate, for African American and American Indian participants. Many of the participants have little or no previous work experience and they develop work readiness skills through their participation in the project. Participants are assigned a youth counselor/case manager and receive labor market information highlighting in-demand industries and educational opportunities available in the region. Co-enrollment in the WIOA Youth Program and the Minnesota Youth Program, when appropriate, has contributed to the success of these projects.
- *The TANF project:* has enabled young adults, many of whom have significant barriers to obtaining and maintaining employment, to explore educational opportunities and fulfilling careers that will set them and their families up for lifelong success. A 2018 evaluation report and other TANF Youth Innovation resources and participant success stories can be found on the project webpage: <https://mn.gov/deed/programs-services/office-youth-development/special/tanf/>.

Some of the industries that are introduced to youth include information technology, manufacturing, transportation, childcare, and health care. Person-centered planning is a major key to success. The work experiences that youth receive are targeted to their specific career interest areas as much as possible to provide hands-on exposure to a field that is intriguing to them. Career readiness skills are assessed on the worksite by the worksite supervisors, allowing the youth to gauge their skill level with regards to industry-specific expectations and requirements. Financial literacy tools are used to help each youth navigate having a job and managing the earnings that follows. During the COVID-19 pandemic, providers instituted virtual opportunities for participants to complete work readiness training and earn a stipend for their work. Some virtual work experiences have also been developed to meet the needs of participants and employers during the pandemic and beyond.

Veterans

The Veteran Employment Services is funded by the Jobs for Veterans State Grant (JVSG) from the DOL Veterans Employment and Training Service (VETS). The Jobs for Veterans State Grants

(JVSG) program is a staffing grant that provides federal funding, through a formula grant, to 54 State Workforce Agencies (SWAs) to hire dedicated staff to provide individualized career- and training-related services to eligible veterans and eligible persons with significant barriers to employment (SBE).

Disabled Veteran Outreach Program (DVOP) representatives are branded as Veterans Employment Specialists. They're veterans too, they are well-versed in workforce development programs and community resources, and they relate very well to the job-seeking veterans. They provide intensive and individualized career services to eligible veterans and other eligible persons which include job-readiness assessment, job search strategy, and placement assistance.

Local Veteran Employment Representatives (LVER), focus on assisting and supporting employers in recruiting, hiring, and retaining veterans. LVERs are veterans too and have immediate access to highly qualified veterans seeking employment. Their goal is to create partnerships between public and private organizations that help veterans successfully transition into civilian employment in Minnesota. LVERs plan and participate in job fairs, reach out to businesses to develop job opportunities for veterans, and educate Minnesota businesses on the value veterans bring to a business. LVERs promote credentialing and licensing programs to veterans. Also, they educate and guide CareerForce staff and partners on veterans Priority of Service and veteran's programs and benefits.

Minnesota implemented several system-wide strategies to ensure veterans are receiving Priority of Service (POS) to access workforce services. These strategies include educating CareerForce staff, screening for veteran status at all points of entry, offering special programs for veterans, priority ranking for job vacancies and access to workshops, annual Veterans Career/Job Fairs, and Veteran Services to employers.

Priority Ranking for Job Vacancies: Minnesota's job bank provides priority of service to all veterans. All new registrants in Minnesota's job bank who check "veteran status" are prompted to answer a series of questions regarding their military engagement. If identified as an eligible veteran, their name goes to the top of the qualified applicant list, and a flag is displayed by their name to designate their veteran status. When employers list job vacancies, they could identify themselves as a "Veteran-Friendly Employer." Private employers are also encouraged to add the verbiage "Veterans Encouraged to Apply" to job postings, per Minnesota State Statute 197.455.

Priority Access to Workshops: Veterans interested in attending career workshops can register for a variety of classes directly from www.careerforcemn.com. Veterans are never turned away from workshop programming.

Veteran Services to Employers: LVERs plan and coordinate outreach to employers interested in recruiting, hiring, and retaining veterans. Many of these employers were proclaimed as Beyond the Yellow Ribbon companies and they are committed to supporting the military-connected individuals and their families. JVSG has implemented Salesforce customer relationship management (CRM) that is used by LVERs and other partners to track contacts with employers and the services provided to them. The CRM system is critical to enhance our customer and business relationships.

LVERs distribute brochures entitled “Minnesota Veterans...Good for Business” to all employers they meet. LVER and partner staff encourage employers to follow a three-step process to recruit and hire veterans:

- 1) Post your job opening on www.MinnesotaWorks.net
- 2) Contact a Veterans Employment Representative <https://www.careerforcemn.com/Veterans>
- 3) Connect with your local yellow ribbon network <https://mnbtyr.ng.mil/Pages/Yellow-Ribbon-Networks.aspx>.

Veteran Services Outreach / Services to Special Populations / Initiatives

- Chapter 31 Disabled Veterans - The DEED Veterans Intensive Service Coordinator (ISC) is collocating with The Veterans Affairs (VA) Veteran Readiness and Employment (VR&E) Regional office in Fort Snelling. The ISC is responsible for the coordination of initial communication between the Veteran, the VR&E counselor, and the DVOP. DVOPs typically receive notification of an upcoming Chapter 31 disabled Veteran client within 90 days of graduation or upon designation as "job-ready" by the VR&E office. When the DVOPs receive the referral from the ISC, they complete a comprehensive assessment and an Individual Employment Plan in collaboration with the referred veterans.
- *Homeless Veterans:* DEED and MDVA established the Homeless Veteran Registry Cooperation Agreement in 2016 which allows JVSG staff to access a SharePoint database of registered homeless veterans. Through active participation in the Homeless Veteran Registry, and ongoing partnership in Continuum of Care planning efforts, JVSG is visible and available for Veterans experiencing homelessness throughout Minnesota. JVSG partners with MACV staff which serve on Continuum of Care committees and play crucial roles in informing policy and direction, particularly related to Veteran homelessness. Also, per VPL 3-16, JVSG and MACV partner closely to implement dual enrolling clients to leverage CareerForce resources, MACV's expertise, and services for Veterans experiencing homelessness.
- *Native American Veterans:* Veterans Employment Services serves the Native American Veteran population through the DVOP position in the Bemidji area which includes the Red Lake, Leech Lake, and White Earth Tribal Nations in the northern

part of the state. The Bemidji DVOP is collocating with the Tribal Veterans Service Officers (TVSO) at White Earth every Tuesday.

- *Women Veterans:* Women Veterans represent approximately 17 percent of returning National Guard and Reserve troops in Minnesota. Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs estimates there are almost 23,000 female Veterans in Minnesota. Of that number, about 8700 have served in the Persian Gulf, or OIF/OEF. Minnesota has Veteran staff that is active in different Women's Veterans groups and serves as a liaison with the local DAV chapter. Minnesota currently employs 7 Women Veterans Representatives.
- *Justice-Involved Veterans:* DEED and the Minnesota Department of Corrections have extended the interagency agreement until June 2026 to continue providing intensive employment services and counseling for justice-involved veterans nearing their release date. JVSG staff is assigned as the Justice-Involved Veterans Project Lead and currently attends the steering committee meetings of the Veterans Diversionary Court Program. The court exists to provide an option for veterans who have had encounters with the criminal court system and provide an alternative to prison. Veterans Treatment Courts are modeled after drug courts, which promote collaboration among the judiciary, community corrections agencies, drug treatment providers, and other community support groups.
- *Demobilizing Veterans and Recently Separated Veterans:* Minnesota's "Beyond the Yellow Ribbon" Reintegration Campaign is the backbone of post-deployment reintegration services. Minnesota DVOP/LVER staff have been a critical part of this process which includes five different events for Service members and their families.
 - The process begins 3–4 months before deployment. "Family Readiness Academies" are designed to allow families to ask questions and provide information to Troops and their families on what to expect during the deployment. DVOP staff provide resource information and referrals for common issues faced by families. Approximately 30 to 60 days before Troops return home, a "Yellow Ribbon Community Event" is sponsored to help families understand and support their returning Soldiers.
 - Business owners, educators, civic leaders, and law enforcement are called together for a briefing on what they can expect upon their Soldiers' return. LVER and DVOP staff provide resource information, and answers to some difficult questions relating to their combat experience, and how that may affect their lives. Twenty-six Minnesota service providers send staff and materials to various locations as Troops return from overseas deployment for an Initial Reintegration Event. DVOP staff conduct group presentations and work one–on–one to provide information on workforce services available.

Adult Learners

Minnesota's Department of Labor and Industry (DLI): is Minnesota's agency responsible for expanding registered apprenticeships in Minnesota. In addition to registered apprenticeship, DLI administers two other employment-based training programs: Minnesota Dual-Training Pipeline and Youth Skills Training. DEED collaborates with the Department of Labor and Industry to align workforce needs along with other statewide workforce partners. DLI is the lead state agency in developing apprenticeships in traditional and emerging industry sectors in partnership with the core partners in this plan. In addition, DLI is also the lead agency in identifying and establishing opportunities that may lead to registered apprenticeships.

- *Registered apprenticeship programs*: support Minnesota's economy by fostering and promoting employment-based career development through structured training, development and credentialing of highly skilled employees. Minnesota's registered apprenticeship system was launched in 1939, and since then has trained over 110,000 apprentices. Currently, the Department of Labor and Industry supports over 200 registered apprenticeship in several industries, including construction, utilities, transportation, agriculture, healthcare and education. These programs prepare Minnesota's 11,000 apprentices to compete in a global economy through a time-tested employee training system that combines job related technical instruction with related on-the-job learning.
- *The Minnesota Dual-Training Pipeline*: Program was established by the Minnesota Legislature in 2014 to expand dual training in Minnesota. In 2015, additional legislation was passed to create a grant program to help employers fund the related instruction component of dual-training programs. Dual training is an employment-based, earn-as-you-learn program in which the trainee is employed by a participating employer and receives structured on-the-job training and technical instruction in accordance with the competency standards.

Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) — As the entity responsible for management and oversight of Title II funds, MDE works collaboratively with partners within the Combined State Plan to ensure effective and efficient career pathways for Minnesotans. ABE transition coordinators and Local Workforce Development Area directors have developed strong partnerships and continue to convene meetings, identify opportunities for collaboration and planning, and host discussions aimed at meeting regional needs. This work was initially funded, in part, by the WIA Incentive funding that Minnesota received. The state invested much of these earnings into WIOA implementation to achieve better alignment and leveraging of resources and opportunities within the six regions in Minnesota.

New Americans

DEED prioritizes supporting Immigrants and Refugees through establishing the Office of New Americans (ONA). The One Minnesota Budget proposed \$750,000 annually to support the Office of New Americans (ONA). This total included \$250,000 per year to fund agency translation services. Foundation supports funded a temporary ONA, but the One Minnesota Budget proposed using state funds to establish a permanent office. The office focuses solely on supporting immigrant and refugee integration, reducing barriers to employment and improving connections between employers and job seekers. The ONA will lead the state's initiative to provide comprehensive and accessible services to the state's approximately 500,000 immigrants and refugees. The office will organize and lead quarterly interagency efforts to eliminate the barriers immigrants and refugees face by raising awareness of opportunities, educating about the process of accessing services and providing technical assistance. The Office of New Americans will also be the state agency lead on federal immigrant and refugee affairs.

Immigrant and Refugee Resettlement Pipeline Development: The Workforce Strategy team is partnering with the Department of Human Services Immigrant and Refugee Resettlement division to develop a talent pipeline for the immigrant, refugee, and asylee talent coming into state and transitioning into employment opportunities. This partnership is focused on educating DHS staff working with this talent pool on employment and training opportunities providing occupations in demand and family sustaining wages and educating employers on hiring and recruiting from the immigrant and refugee population, resulting in matching talent to employers seeking these skills by region.

Justice-Involved Individuals

The Minnesota Department of Corrections (DOC) has an Employment Services program, the EMPLOY Program, within the state prisons. This program works with releasing incarcerated persons (IP) pre and post release. Services are available to all IPs that are with three and twenty-four months of release. Workforce Development staff are dedicated to offering job search preparation training, to include resume writing, interview techniques, assessing the levels of work readiness and identifying job interest based on skills, past work experience, training and certifications received. As IPs are transition back into the communities throughout the State of Minnesota, other Workforce Development staff provide individualized employment plan development and goal setting. The EMPLOY Program also makes referrals community partners for skills and certification opportunities and access to resources that will reduce or eliminate barriers to employment. Formally IPs receive specific job leads in their area of interest, employment opportunities available at the time of their release, and matched their skills set. The EMPLOY Program provides follow up services post release for up to one and is available for refresher services.

Additionally, the EMPLOY Program has a dedicated Job Developer, to develop businesses and employer relationships though out the State of Minnesota. The Job Developer educates

employers on the skills and training of formally incarcerated persons acquired during and incarceration education, career technical certifications and job assignments within the State prisons. Assistance is provided to aide employers to identify their workforce needs/desired skills/training and certifications requirements, discuss hiring practices, market skills and experience of specific candidates, and inform employers of Work Opportunity Tax Credit and Federal Bonding Employer Incentives. The Job Developer aligns services with DEEDs Workforce Strategy Consultants. This partnership with DEED strengthens employer relationships and access to qualified candidates to fulfill their workforce needs.

DOC also leverages DEED Veteran Employment Services to target resources and programming to incarcerated veteran who will be transition back into the community. DEED Veteran Employment Specialists (VES) provide individualized career services to incarcerated Veterans within DOC facilities. A full range of employment and training will be provided to Veterans with significant barriers to employment (SBE). The goal is to empower the Veterans to overcome barriers and to become “job-ready” when they are released on probation or parole. This initiative will contribute to less idle time between leaving the prison setting and employment, which should lead to less recidivism and bolster community reintegration.

DOC is engaging with DEED Vocational Rehabilitation Services (VRS) to identify available resources, who qualifies for services and how to make referrals. IP will be connected to VRS to gain specialized access to training, preparation, and workplaces accommodations for people with disabilities. VRS provides long-term support for career advancement which will impact Minnesota’s recidivism rates.

PROWD Round 1—DEED is leading the Partners for Reentry Opportunities in Workforce Development (PROWD) Grant Initiative, a comprehensive program aimed at providing tailored career pathways training and support services for individuals currently residing in four Federal Bureau of Prisons (BOP) facilities located in Duluth, Sandstone, Rochester, and Waseca, Minnesota; and, in two Residential Reentry Centers located in Roseville and Minneapolis. The objective is to serve 661 individuals over a three-and-a-half-year period. The proposed major activities encompass assessing participants' employment readiness, offering pre and post-release employment skills training, cognitive behavioral interventions, and providing educational programs with certifications in construction, business and entrepreneurship, and digital reskilling options.

The expected outcomes of the PROWD initiative are multifaceted, aiming to enhance the capacity of justice and workforce system partnerships across education, employment, and housing. By improving employment outcomes for returning citizens, the program also contributes to public safety and community strengthening by reducing recidivism. DEED is collaborating with various partners and multi-agency working group members from the Minnesota Department of Corrections, Volunteers of America, Residential Reentry Centers, community-based organizations, industry associations, employers, and other government

agencies, to ensure the success of the initiative. Overall, the PROWD Grant Initiative reflects a comprehensive approach to reentry and workforce development, addressing the unique needs of individuals transitioning from BOP facilities to Residential Reentry Centers and their communities in Minnesota.

PROWD Expansion—In addition to the PROWD 1 grant, DEED will spearhead a groundbreaking initiative—the Partners for Reentry Opportunities in Workforce Development (PROWD) Expansion grant. This project aims to transform the lives of incarcerated individuals through free and transformative programs and experiences. PROWD Expansion focuses on bridging the educational gap, aligning job training with labor market needs, and improving employment outcomes for returning citizens, while contributing to public safety.

The initiative comprises three key strategies:

- 1) The Transformation Reentry through Education and Community (TREC) Program, delivered in partnership with educational institutions, targets incarcerated individuals nearing release, offering comprehensive education, skills training, and peer mentoring.
- 2) A partnership with Repowered aims to provide hands-on training and subsidized employment opportunities in electronics recycling, aligning with environmental sustainability.
- 3) A collaboration with the Minnesota Governor’s Workforce Development Board (GWDB) focuses on addressing labor shortages in high-demand industries, creating apprenticeship and employment opportunities for justice-involved individuals.

The PROWD Expansion grant will specifically serve individuals releasing from the BOP four Federal facilities in Rochester, Duluth, Waseca, and Sandstone, as well as two Residential Reentry Centers in Minneapolis and Roseville. The program goal is to serve 150 individuals over a four-year period of performance. Through these comprehensive efforts, PROWD Expansion seeks to empower individuals with education, skills, and employment opportunities, breaking the cycle of recidivism and fostering safer communities.

DEED has developed and launched the "New Leaf" workshop tailored for individuals who are justice-involved, now accessible virtually to reach a statewide audience. This initiative extends its reach beyond physical locations, providing support to job seekers facing challenges in securing employment due to personal barriers or a criminal history. The workshop seamlessly integrates DEED’s Creative Job Search course with specialized strategies to overcome employment obstacles, covering topics such as addressing employers' hiring and retention concerns, efficiently handling tough interview questions, and offering insights into navigating the disclosure of one's criminal history. Additionally, the program provides valuable information on state resources such as the Work Opportunity Tax Credit, Federal Bonding, and "Ban the Box" requirements. Furthermore, DEED's Veteran employment program includes a dedicated

DVOP working on special projects to support justice-involved veterans in both state and federal correctional facilities in the state.

State and County Fair Chance Pipeline Development: The Workforce Strategy team is partnering with the Department of Corrections to develop a talent pipeline for people as they exit city, county, and state correctional facilities. This partnership will align DOC education and training programs to match high growth industry training and skill needs to in demand careers providing a family sustaining wage. This partnership is also focused on mapping talent as they leave the correctional system to their county of release, connection to employers seeking skilled talent in those counties prior to release and educating employers on the unique needs of this talent pool allowing for the flexibility to be successful in long term employment.

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

The Workforce Strategy Consultants (WSCs) serve as one of DEED's primary employer engagement teams. The six WSCs provide services in Minnesota's six workforce regions offering regional integrative expertise of in-demand sectors, talent pipelines, partnerships, and economic development opportunities. Their primary focus is to develop innovative workforce solutions with businesses, within high growth sectors that will provide family sustaining wages. This is accomplished through a customized consultative process driven by regional data, state data, best practices, employer goals, community supports and resources. By aligning these resources, WSCs facilitate collaboration, leverage expertise, drive regional economic equity, and growth. The WSCs provide value to communities through leveraging their expertise in industry sector workforce strategies, connecting key stakeholders to workforce development, highlighting economic development resources, and supporting businesses.

The WSCs regional work is highly successful due to the strong partnership with LWDAs, employers, education partners, community organizations along with DEED's regional employer outreach teams, which include Business Development Managers, Job Service Managers, Layoff Aversion (Rapid Response) Specialists, Veterans Representatives, Vocational Rehabilitation, Grant Specialists, Labor Market Analysts, and GWDB. The WSCs enhance economic prosperity while assisting key stakeholders in the successful implementation of the WIOA Local and Regional plans.

Achieving Equity: DEED prioritizes addressing disparities and achieving economic equity for all Minnesotans by identifying and breaking down barriers to employment and business opportunities. The data on populations served has highlighted many available career opportunities. Additionally, WSCs have placed a focus on providing resources to minority-owned businesses and connecting organizations that serve Immigrant and Refugee populations, and communities of color with Minnesota’s employers seeking qualified applicants.

The USDOL requires us to report on the “Effectiveness for Serving Employers” annually. Below, find the final numbers SFY 2022 (or WIOA Program Year 2021) that we supplied in our WIOA Annual Report Narrative.

Employer Services	Establishment Count PY22	Establishment Count PY21
1. Employer Information and Support Services	153	101
2. Workforce Recruitment Assistance	4,590	8,127
3.Strategic Planning/Econ Dev. Activities	323	1,759
4. Untapped Labor Pools Activities	2,451	903
5.Training Services	119	305
5b. Incumbent Worker Training Services	121	160
6. Rapid Response/Business Downsizing Assistance	71	183
6b. Planning Layoff Response	76	146

Employer Penetration	3.5%	6.3%
Total (De-duplicated)	7,087	10,145
QCEW	199,953	162,058
Retention with Same Employer	46.7%	44.6%
Same Employer Q2 Q4	12,691	12,342
Employed Q2	27,179	27,646

- E. *Partner Engagement with Educational Institutions and other Education and Training Providers.* Describe how the State’s Strategies will engage the State’s community colleges, adult education providers, area career and technical education schools, providers on the State’s eligible training provider list, and other education and training providers, as partners in the workforce development system to create a job-driven education and training system. WIOA section 102(b)(2)(B)(iv). Include how the State’s strategies will enable the State to leverage other Federal, State, and local investments to enhance access to workforce development programs at these institutions.**

State Educational Attainment Goal

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

DEED serves as a key stakeholder in this effort to increase educational attainment levels because of our role in administering workforce training programs for adults and youth with

barriers to entry, particularly those from communities of color. Approximately 37 percent of CareerForce customers do not have education beyond a high school diploma or GED. Providing customers access to education and training opportunities – including information on the education required for Minnesota’s current and future in-demand jobs – will support the state attainment goal.

Transparency of Educational Outcomes

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

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

Education and Workforce Alignment

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

- The Statewide Longitudinal Education Data System (SLEDS), which is led by OHE and brings together data from MDE, DEED and OHE and other agencies.
- The Early Childhood Longitudinal Data System (ECLDS), which is led by OHE and brings together data from MDE and the Minnesota Departments of Health (MDH) and Human Services (DHS).
- SLEDS brings together data from education and workforce to identify the most viable pathways for individuals in achieving successful outcomes in education and work. It is used to inform decisions to support and improve education and workforce policy and assist in creating a more seamless education and workforce system for all Minnesotans. The general purpose of the SLEDS system is to identify and analyze the 4 P’s of Minnesota’s education and workforce systems:
 - Pathways: The movement of individual students between K-12, higher education, and workforce
 - Progress: The benchmarks transition points students meet or fail to meet
 - Predictors: The characteristics or patterns that help explain which students succeed and which do not

- In 2023, Minnesota received a 4-year national SLDS grant through the Institute for Education Sciences (IES) with a focus on early learning and college and career. The grant projects will expand SLEDS use to better inform and improve education programming, workforce development reporting, policies and resource allocation decisions. The projects supported increased use of SLEDS, improve key stakeholders' data literacy, added linkages to important additional data and improved data quality.
- F. *Improving Access to Postsecondary Credentials.* Describe how the State's strategies will improve access to activities leading to recognized postsecondary credentials, including Registered Apprenticeship certificates. This includes credentials that are industry-recognized certificates, licenses or certifications, and that are portable and stackable.**

The Minnesota Department of Labor and Industry (DLI) is committed to supporting Minnesota's economy by fostering and promoting employment-based career development through registered apprenticeship programs that provide structured training, development and credentialing of highly skilled employees. In June 2023, DLI transitioned to the federal apprenticeship data management system, Rapids. The transition to Rapids provides improved data tracking and sharing with workforce partners about registered apprenticeship programs.

In 2023, Minnesota received \$806,738 in federal State Apprenticeship Expansion Formula funding (SAEF) to expand the apprenticeship system in Minnesota and align internal processes with the national apprenticeship system. Key initiatives for this grant include the expansion of apprenticeship programs into the education, childcare, and clean economy fields, conducting an equity audit to identify opportunities to connect with underserved communities and underrepresented populations in apprenticeship, and conducting a needs assessment to identify opportunities for collaborating with the workforce and education systems.

Minnesota Dual-Training Pipeline (Private Investment, Public Education, Labor and Industry Experience) Program – Initially established as a pilot project by the Minnesota legislature in 2014, the Minnesota Dual-Training Pipeline exists to support employers in developing their own dual-training programs in these seven industries: advanced manufacturing, agriculture, child care, health care services, information technology, transportation and the legal cannabis industry. These programs combine related instruction with on-the-job training to create powerful competency-based learning opportunities for employees to enhance their skills and master competency standards for in-demand occupations in the seven industries. Minnesota Dual-Training Pipeline is an innovative approach to expand earn-and-learn training through its own programming as well as by encouraging employers to take steps toward forming registered apprenticeship programs in Minnesota.

Labor Education Advancement Program (LEAP) — LEAP was established by DLI for the purposes of facilitating the participation of people of color, indigenous people and women into registered apprenticeship opportunities. Grants appropriated by the legislature are distributed annually to community-based organizations, non-profits, and tribal governments serving the targeted population.

The development of industry-recognized competency standards is a core component of Minnesota Dual-Training Pipeline. As of January 2024, competency standards have been developed and validated for 82 occupations with more to come in 2024. The Legislature requires DLI to develop competency standards for occupations in the following seven industries: advanced manufacturing, agriculture, child care, health care services, information technology, transportation and the legal cannabis industry. DLI convenes multiple stakeholders to assist in identifying credible competency standards for specific occupations in the seven industries. DLI also works with industry subject matter experts to verify the foundational competencies for each occupation including personal effectiveness, academic, workplace, industry-wide technical, industry-sector technical and occupation-specific competencies often leveraging and modifying US DOL occupational competency model clearinghouse pyramids.

For purposes of dual training, the industry-wide technical and industry-sector technical competencies are typically those that will be provided during the related instruction component of dual training, while the occupation-specific competencies are typically gained during the on-the-job training. A critical component in the development of industry valued competency standards is to acknowledge that each individual employer will also provide employer-specific training for its employees. Each of the Minnesota Dual-Training Pipeline occupational competency standards templates includes space for individual employers to reflect their own training needs as part of a broader industry-based dual-training program. All of the competencies developed are validated through stakeholder engagement and used to develop baseline occupational competency standards templates which are displayed on the agency's website.

Since 2015, 2,992 trainees have participated in dual-training programs since the inception of the Dual Training Grant. Minnesota Office of Higher Education (OHE) is responsible for the oversight and reporting of the outcomes of the grant to the Minnesota Legislature. Employers, including dual-training grantees, receive consultative assistance in the creation of new dual-training programs and registered apprenticeship programs.

DLI provides resources for employers to improve their on-the-job-training as part of Minnesota Dual-Training Pipeline: <http://www.dli.mn.gov/business/workforce/minnesota-dual-training-pipeline-tools>. Additionally, Pipeline hosts industry forums throughout the year to discuss ways

to expand outreach, exposure and awareness of the model as well as to better provide assistance for employers hoping to start their own dual-training programs.

Lastly, Minnesota Dual-Training Pipeline also maintains a related instruction inventory of education and training programs to earn credentials that align with Pipeline approved occupations: <http://www.dli.mn.gov/business/workforce/pipeline-related-instruction-inventory>.

DLI's third and newest employment-based training program is Youth Skills Training, which supports the development of partnerships that provide industry-related classroom instruction and paid work experience to high school students aged 16 years and older in high-growth, high-demand, living wage occupations. Local partnerships must include schools and employers working together to develop and implement YST programs throughout the state. Locally developed partnerships create programs to provide safe, healthy, and meaningful paid work experience for student learners. YST programs provide industry exposure opportunities, industry-related classroom instruction, safety training, industry-recognized credentials and paid work experience in the key industries of advanced manufacturing, agriculture, automotive, health care and information technology. Employers go through an approval process to allow student learners to work on hazardous equipment which, in some cases, has prohibitions or limitations. YST rounds out DLI's offering of employment-based training programs as Minnesota has seen great success through the Youth Skills Training program since its inception in 2017.

G. *Coordinating with Economic Development Strategies.* Describe how the activities identified in (A) will be coordinated with economic development entities, strategies, and activities in the State.

To better support Minnesota businesses, the DEED Economic Development Business Development division is utilizing grant funding to work with The Improve Group consulting team to simplify the Minnesota workforce development system and build talent pipelines in targeted and in demand occupations. The Improve Group is working across Business Development, Workforce Development, and the Governor's Workforce Development Board divisions to build synergy across Business Development, Minnesota Job Skills Partnership, Workforce Strategy, Employment and Training Programs, CareerForce, and the Governor's Workforce Development Board to match the needs of our existing industry and prospects around workforce recruitment, development, and training more effectively. Outcomes will include an analysis of best practices from 10 other states, identification of process improvement opportunities, streamlining of services, and an overall increase in collaboration and coordination resulting in an improved service to mission and shared goals.

b. State Operating Systems and Policies

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

- 1. State operating systems that support coordinated implementation of State strategies (for example labor market information systems, data systems, communication systems, case management systems, job banks, etc.).**

Labor Market Information Systems

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

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

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

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

- The My Goals and Experience feature on CareerForceMN.com provides a wide range of occupational information, including wages, current and future demand, education and training resources, and job opportunities. The Regional and industry pages on CareerForceMN.com provide easier access to local and regional employment information. Regional pages provide local wage, demand and other information for each of Minnesota's six regions, as well as workforce-related blog and news content specific to each region.
- The Graduate Employment Outcomes tool on mn.gov/deed shows how many Minnesota college graduates found jobs and at what wages. Outcomes are available at an institution and program of study level.

- The Cost of Living tool on mn.gov/deed provides a yearly estimate of the basic—needs cost of living in Minnesota by county, region, and statewide. The tool can be customized by family size and number of workers.

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

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

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

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

Data Systems

Uniform Report Card – DEED measures the performance of all the programs it funds or provides at the state level. The Report Card shows activities and employment outcomes for select workforce development programs by education level, race, ethnicity, gender and geography. Because this web-based tool is regularly updated, accessing the link provides current data not available on a static point-in-time chart.

WIOA Annual Report – System management is a coordinated effort of the GWDB, state agencies and programs that are part of the WIOA State Plan, regional workforce development entities and local workforce development boards. The most recent program data can be found in the [WIOA Annual Report](#).

Performance and Technical Management (PTM) – DEED administrators inform strategic direction by providing data-driven analysis and context to those who use, deliver and fund the Minnesota economic and workforce development systems. The Performance and Technical Management Office’s three core functions are information analysis, management analysis and outreach. Most recently, PTM worked with CareerForce to identify methods for targeting those needing services the most and applied the Social Vulnerability Index to Title I and III programs to better understand if we are serving the most vulnerable Minnesotans in the state.

Workforce One (WF1) – found at www.mnworkforceone.com, is a web-based client management application used by nearly 2,000 state, city, county, and non-profit employment and training providers to track employment and training services to more than 100,000 customers across Minnesota's One Stop network. WF1 was created through a partnership between the Department of Human Services (DHS) and the Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED) and is maintained by MNIT-DEED.

WF1 Connect – is a mobile app that customers can download to communicate with their Employment Services Counselor and/or Financial or Childcare Worker. The app was developed by MNIT-DEED in partnership with DEED, DHS, and subject-matter experts from DEED’s Performance and Technical Management (PTM) team.

A project is underway to replace MinnesotaWorks.net and integrate the labor exchange into CareerForceMN.com

Communications Systems

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

In 2023, DEED added 35,000 new subscribers to this email tool, with the total number of subscribers currently at 1,237,21 — with half of those being job seekers. A total of 1,541 email bulletins were sent to subscribers, with the majority of those emails being to job seekers and employers in the state. Overall, DEED emails for the year were sent to a total of 52,189,846 recipients.

- 2. The State policies that will support the implementation of the State’s strategies (for example., co-enrollment policies and universal intake processes where appropriate). In addition, provide the State’s guidelines for State-administered**

one-stop partner programs' contributions to a one-stop delivery system and any additional guidance for one-stop partner contributions.

Under the Workforce Investment Act, DEED operated as the lead on writing, soliciting feedback, publishing, and enforcing policies. Under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, DEED still performs many of these duties, but engages other partner state agencies to ensure continuity and shared awareness in coordination with the GWDB.

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

Universal intake processes have some layers in Minnesota. All individuals who access job seeker support services via CareerForce and through Minnesota's labor exchange system are accessing programs funded through Wagner-Peyser's Employment Service Program. Many of those customers seek deeper services with counselors that require program enrollment. In those cases, the majority of WIOA enrolled customers are co-enrolled with Wagner-Peyser Employment Service Program, but the opposite is not true. Service providers in Minnesota will continue to work to make the program enrollment process as seamless as possible to the customer.

Minnesota fulfills its obligation to provide guidance on infrastructure cost allocation procedures to be reflected within the memorandums of understanding through an existing policy put in place in 2018. DEED is currently facilitating discussion on a new IFA policy and procedure that will improve the process for the one-stop system and all its required partners. Additionally, DEED is working with across one-stop system partners to support negotiations for the upcoming round of IFAs and MOUs.

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

Infrastructure Funding Agreements (IFAs)

As Minnesota is in the process of updating the IFA policy, what follows is an outline of current guidance provided to the system on Infrastructure Funding Agreements.

IFAs must be submitted at least every 3 years for each CareerForce Center (CFC) to ensure that all required CareerForce partners are equitably contributing to the costs of the CareerForce System, as defined in WIOA. The IFA will be included in every Local Workforce Development Area's (LWDA) Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). In the wake of changing guidance on these agreements, in Minnesota in coordination with guidance received from the United States Department of Labor (DOL), we guide the IFA process in the following ways.

An IFA must be submitted at least every 3 years for each CareerForce Center (CFC) to ensure that all required CareerForce partners are equitably contributing to the costs of the CareerForce System. The IFA recognizes the shared resources of key partners delivering workforce development and related services. Mutual consent and cooperation of all partners is an essential part of the IFA process. IFAs are guided by the Coordination Unit of DEED's Administrative and Financial Services Division.

The IFA must be completed and submitted to DEED for the CFC prior to the expiration date of the current IFA. Participants in an IFA can request the IFA to be amended if a material change occurs during the covered period.

If the IFA is not submitted and finalized in a timely manner as described above, the existing IFA will remain in place until a new IFA is agreed to. If the local board reports to DEED and the GWDB that an impasse cannot be resolved, the State Funding Mechanism (SFM) replaces any operational cost sharing agreement in place at the CareerForce Center.

WIOA as well as federal Department of Labor (DOL) and Minnesota Management and Budget (MMB) guidelines require that all actual and required partners in a CFC share benefitting expenses associated with infrastructure. Minnesota's IFA policy recognizes the principles of proportionate use and relative benefit and applies it to all required WIOA titles, with different principles for co-located and non-co-located required partners. This policy details the approach and process for both scenarios. WIOA requires the following programs to contribute to infrastructure costs of the CareerForce system:

- 1) WIOA Title I - Adult, Dislocated Worker, Youth and YouthBuild
- 2) WIOA Title II – Adult Education and Family Literacy
- 3) WIOA Title III – Wagner-Peyser Employment Service Program
- 4) WIOA Title IV – Vocational Rehabilitation Services/State Services for the Blind
- 5) National Farmworker Jobs Program
- 6) OAA, (Older Americans Act) Title V – SCSEP (Senior Community Service Employment Program)
- 7) Temporary Assistance for Needy Families
- 8) Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program E&T

- 9) Career & Technical Education Programs (post-secondary)
- 10) Trade Adjustment Assistance
- 11) Jobs for Veterans State Grants
- 12) Community Services Block Grant E&T
- 13) Housing & Urban Development E&T
- 14) Unemployment Insurance
- 15) Job Corps
- 16) Native American Programs (contribution is optional for Native American Programs. Additionally, they must be part of the MOU, but their participation in the IFA is optional)

Local Funding Mechanism

Co-Located Partners Procedure for Completing IFAs

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

- DEED can provide necessary customer data from Workforce One (WF1) and the labor exchange data, as well as the previous approved IFA.
- Local partners will negotiate costs with local partners, obtain all necessary local signatures on the IFA, and send the IFA either electronically or physically to DEED no later than the last week of May prior to the IFA's effective program year date.
- DEED will obtain necessary central DEED signatures on the IFAs prior to its effective date. If central DEED authorities disagree with any aspect of an IFA and refuse to sign it, DEED will notify local partners of this no later than one week after the IFA has been submitted to DEED in order to allow adequate time for an agreement to be reached.

DEED will keep central records of all IFAs.

Career Lab Costs

This includes the associated costs of running a Career Lab resource room supported by the State of Minnesota. This includes Wide Area Network (WAN) Internet costs; public-use computers; public-use printer, scanner, fax machines; and the Cybrarian software used to secure and track activity. The State Funding Mechanism appeals process per 121(h)(2)(D) is described in State Policies and Guidance, however, the responsibility for IFAs has transitioned to DEED's Administration and Financial Services Division and current policies are under review.

Other Sub-Lease or Space Rental Agreements: Note on situations of special space rental not reflected within the IFA- if any organization that is allocated space within an IFA wishes to rent

some of their space to any other organization outside of the IFA, they may do so. The particulars of this agreement don't need to be tracked in the IFA if the space is accounted for within the IFA and allocated to the organization responsible for it.

Security and/or Site Management Costs

Some CFCs allocate "Site Management" costs. Site Managers take on the business of the facility they are located in and handle things such as communication with landlords on matters of snow removal, ordering supplies, and/or keeping usage logs of conference room space up to date. These must be considered as in-kind contributions of time.

Some CareerForce Centers allocate "Security" costs such as the cost of security guards on site. Other security costs that could be allocated according to the above formula instead of directly to one program could include examples like the following: a new lock system in the front entrance of the facility; security cameras throughout the facility; a panic button and announcement system.

Methodologies Described

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

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

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

Workforce One Data (WF1). Workforce One participant enrollments can be used for allocating costs of operations. However, the breakdown of these costs are still subject to local negotiation of partners involved.

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

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

Career Lab Costs. Career Lab costs are negotiated by CareerForce system partners at the local and regional level. Quantitative metrics should be used when appropriate for allocating costs of a Career Lab. If this issue becomes an impasse issue for the local board or rises to the State Board for resolution.

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

Reconciliation

If usage data or other changes that affect any allocations of the IFA deviate more than 5% during a biannual review, this is a material change and adjusting reconciliation payments will be required. If the review identifies material changes during consecutive bi-annual reviews a new IFA must be completed at a minimum on a quarterly basis and will be coordinated by DEED.

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

IFA Amendments

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

Non-Co-Located Partners Procedure for Completing IFAs

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

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

If this can't be achieved, it is recommended that a process be applied that assumes proportionate benefit can be assessed based on the distribution of their program eligible

individuals within each of the local areas and the recognition of total financial contributions equaling 1.5% of the State’s total federal allocation for that program based on the current Federal fiscal year funding for the program. The following table illustrates this process to establish the required contribution within each local area.

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

Eligible Program Population by Local Workforce Development Area

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

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

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

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

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

- Staff support for CareerForce or board activities beyond required participation
- Other services that leverage the expertise of the program or customize the work of the program
- Non-cash contributions are comprised of –
 - Expenditures incurred by one-stop partners on behalf of the CareerForce system; and
 - Non-cash contributions or goods or services contributed by a partner program and used by the one-stop center.

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

Dispute Resolution

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

The State Funding Mechanism (SFM)

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

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

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

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

- 1) The Governor will not determine the contribution amounts for infrastructure funds for Native American program grantees described in regulation part 684. The appropriate portion of funds to be provided by Native American program grantees to pay for one-stop infrastructure must be determined as part of the development of the MOU described in 678.500 and specified in the MOU.
- 2) In States in which the policy-making authority is placed in an entity or official that is independent of the authority of the Governor with respect to the funds provided for adult education and literacy activities authorized under title II of WIOA, postsecondary career and technical education activities authorized under the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act of 2006, or VR services authorized under title I of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (other than sec. 112 or part C), as amended by WIOA title IV, the determination of the amount each of the applicable partners must contribute to assist in paying the infrastructure costs of one-stop centers must be made by the official or chief officer of the entity with such authority, in consultation with the Governor.

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

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

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

- 1) The Local WDB must provide the Governor with local negotiation materials in accordance with regulation 678.735(a).
- 2) The Governor must determine the one-stop center budget by either:
 - (i) Accepting a budget previously agreed upon by partner programs in the local negotiations, in accordance with regulation 678.735(b)(1); or
 - (ii) Creating a budget for the one-stop center using the State WDB formula (described in regulation 678.745) in accordance with regulation 678.735(b)(3).
- 3) The Governor then must establish a cost allocation methodology to determine the one-stop partner programs' proportionate shares of infrastructure costs.
- 4) (i) Using the methodology established in this policy, and taking into consideration the factors concerning individual partner programs listed in regulation 678.737(b)(2), the Governor must determine each partner's proportionate share of the infrastructure costs, and
 - (i) In accordance with regulation 678.730(c), in some instances, the Governor does not determine a partner program's proportionate share of infrastructure funding costs, in which case it must be determined by the entities named under the limitation section of the IFA policy.
- 5) The Governor must then calculate the statewide caps on the amounts that partner programs may be required to contribute toward infrastructure funding, according to the steps found in regulation 678.738(a)(1) through (4).
- 6) The Governor must ensure that the aggregate total of the infrastructure contributions according to proportionate share required of all local partner programs in local areas under the State funding mechanism do not exceed the cap for that program. If the total does not exceed the cap, the Governor must direct each one-stop partner program to pay the amount determined toward the infrastructure funding costs of the one-stop center. If the total does exceed the cap, then to determine the amount to direct each one-stop program to pay, the Governor may:
 - (i) Ascertain whether the local partner or partners whose proportionate shares are calculated above the individual program caps are willing to voluntarily contribute above the capped amount to equal that program's proportionate share; or
 - (ii) Choose from the options provided in regulation 678.738(b)(2)(ii), including having the local area re-enter negotiations to reassess each one-stop partner's proportionate share and adjust or identify alternate sources of funding to make up the difference between the capped amount and the proportionate share of infrastructure funding of the one-stop partner.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Determining Caps on Contributions

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Program Title	Limitation	Program Title	Limitation
----------------------	-------------------	----------------------	-------------------

Title IB (Youth, Adult, DW)	3.00%	Temporary Asst. Needy Families	1.50%
Title II - AFLA	1.50%	Sup. Nut. Assistant Program E&T	1.50%
Title III – Wagner-Peyser	3.00%	Community Serv. Block Grant	1.50%
Title IV – VRS/SSB FY16	.75%	Jobs for Veterans State Grants	1.50%
Title IV – VRS/SSB FY17	1.00%	Trade Adjustment Assistance	1.50%
Title IV – VRS/SSB FY18	1.25%	Unemployment Compensation	1.50%
Title IV – VRS/SSB FY19	1.50%	Sr. Community Ser. Emp. Program	1.50%
Carl Perkins Career and Technical Education Act	1.50%	Native American Programs	1.50%
YouthBuild	1.50%	Employment and Training Administration	1.50%
Natl. Farmworker Jobs Program	1.50%	Second Chance Act Grants	1.50%
Job Corps	1.50%		

Federal direct spending programs. For local areas that have not reached a one-stop

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The State Formula

The State WDB must develop a formula to be used by the Governor under Sec. 678.735(b)(3) in determining the appropriate budget for the infrastructure costs of one-stop centers in the local areas that do not reach agreement under the local funding mechanism and are, therefore, subject to the State funding mechanism. The formula identifies the factors and corresponding weights for each factor that the Governor must use, which must include: the number of one-stop centers in a local area; the population served by such centers; the services provided by such centers; and any factors relating to the operations of such centers in the local area that the State WDB determines are appropriate. As indicated in Sec. 678.735(b)(1), if the local area has agreed on such a budget, the Governor may accept that budget in lieu of applying the formula factors.

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

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

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

Appeals of the SFM

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

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

(c) The process must ensure prompt resolution of the appeal in order to ensure the funds are

distributed in a timely manner, consistent with the requirements of Sec. 683.630 of this chapter.

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

The IFA as Part of the MOU

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

For the purposes of paragraph (a) of this section, shared services' costs may include the costs of shared services that are authorized for and may be commonly provided through the one-

stop partner programs to any individual, such as initial intake, assessment of needs, appraisal of basic skills, identification of appropriate services to meet such needs, referrals to other one-stop partners, and business services. Shared operating costs may also include shared costs of the Local WDB's functions.

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

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

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

Non-Required Co-Located Partners

Any additional co-located partners at one stop centers are required to contribute toward infrastructure and other additional costs. The contributions from any additional partners shall be based on proportionate use and relative benefit.

Additional Costs

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

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

The shared costs must be allocated according to the proportionate use and relative benefit received by each of the partners, consistent with the Federal law authorizing the partner's

program, and consistent with all other applicable legal requirements. Any shared costs agreed upon by the one-stop partners must be included in the MOU.

3. State Program and State Board Overview.

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

The WIOA State Plan programs are administered across four state agencies including the Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED), Minnesota Department of Education (MDE), Minnesota State Colleges and Universities, and Minnesota Department of Human Services (DHS). The following list provides details for the programs administered by each agency.

Agency	Program
Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED)	Title I: Adult, Dislocated Worker, Youth, Migrant and Seasonal Farmworker Program Title III: Wagner-Peyser (Employment Services), Title IV - Vocational Rehabilitation - State Services for the Blind, Trade Adjustment Assistance for Worker, Program; Jobs for Veterans State Grants; Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP)
Minnesota Department of Education (MDE)	Title II - Adult Education and Family Literacy Act
Minnesota State Colleges and Universities	Career and Technical Education - Perkins V
Minnesota Department of Human Services (DHS)	Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Employment & Training Programs (SNAP E&T)

DEED

DEED is led by Commissioner Matt Varilek and four Deputy Commissioners. Deputy Commissioner Marc Majors leads the Workforce Development division which are WIOA Titles I, III, TAA, Trade Adjustment Assistance for Worker, Program, Jobs for Veterans State Grants, and the Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP). Within the titles of WIOA, separate directors oversee each of the WIOA titles. Katie McClelland serves at the Director of the GWDB and also reports to Deputy Commissioner Majors.

Deputy Commissioner Evan Rowe leads the Workforce Services and Transformation division which oversees WIOA Title IV, including Vocational Rehabilitation Services and State Services for the Blind as well as Unemployment Insurance. Each of these programs has its individual director overseeing those activities.

Deputy Commissioner Kevin McKinnon leads the Economic Development division includes the Labor Market Information office and Business Development office which houses the Workforce Strategy Consultants

Deputy Commissioner Elizabeth Frosch leads the Operations division which includes Communications, the Office of Public Engagement and the Diversity and Equal Opportunity Office. Information technology needs are supported by the state agency known as MN-IT@DEED.

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

MDE

MDE is led by Commissioner Willie Jett, Deputy Commissioner Stephanie Graff, a Chief Operating Officer and four Assistant Commissioners. Assistant Commissioner Angela Mansfield leads the Office of Educational Opportunity which oversees Title II, Adult Education and Literacy, and includes the Student Access and Opportunity, Career and College Success which leads the secondary-level career and technical education programs, Educator Workforce and Development Center, Data Practices and Analytics, and COMPASS offices.

Minnesota State Colleges and Universities (Minnesota State)

Minnesota State is led by Chancellor Scott Olson. Shannon Bryant is the Executive Director of the Workforce and Economic Development Division, which houses the state's career and technical education program at the secondary level and the implementation of the Strengthening Career and Technical Education for the 21st Century Act (Perkins V) to advance career and technical education for all learners.

DHS

DHS is led by Commissioner Jodi Harpstead and five Assistant Commissioners, including Assistant Commissioner Tikki Brown who oversees the Economic Assistance and Employment Supports Division which houses TANF and SNAP E&T.

- B. State Board. Provide a description of the State Board activities that will assist State Board members and staff in carrying out State Board functions effectively. Also, provide a membership roster for the State Board consistent with 20 CFR 679.110-120, including members' organizational affiliations and position titles.**

The GWDB serves as a convener and connector of workforce partners across the state, and as such many of the activities the Board engages in relate to meetings or convenings. This includes:

- *Quarterly Meetings:* The GWDB meets once a quarter to discuss and review state policies, programs and initiatives that impact the implementation of the State Vision, Goals and Strategies.
- *Committees, Subcommittees and Special Committees:* The GWDB standing committees and subcommittees, and any special committees, task forces or other working groups established by the GWDB Chairperson also meet throughout the calendar year in order to produce policy recommendations or reports to be considered by the full GWDB for approval.
- *Workforce Summit:* Starting in 2023 and happening annually thereafter, the GWDB hosts an annual Workforce Summit to bring together workforce development stakeholders around the State's Vision, Goals and Strategies for our workforce development system.
- *Goal Convenings:* Starting in 2024, the GWDB will host convenings with relevant partners and stakeholders to gain feedback and build plans and metrics for meeting each of our state's goals.

The GWDB also serves in supporting the review and updating of state and federal policies related to workforce development and WIOA implementation, and carries out a number of activities to support proper adoption and implementation of policies, including:

- *Development of Minnesota’s Combined State Plan:* The GWDB establishes a broad vision for workforce development in Minnesota, and this vision helps guide the development of Minnesota’s Combined State Plan.
- *Workforce Development System Strategic Plan and Continuous Improvement:* The GWDB is required to submit a report to the legislature regarding the performance and outcomes of Minnesota’s CareerForce locations in January of each odd—numbered year.
- *Legislative Report:* As required by Minnesota state statutes, the GWDB prepares a biannual legislative report to the Minnesota Legislature which captures the insight and recommendations of the GWDB for consideration by the Legislature and state agencies.
- *Policies:* Starting in 2024 the GWDB will lead an agency-wide review of existing workforce policies and will convene partners and stakeholders in the development of updated policies.
- *Workforce Plans for Federal Funding Opportunities:* The GWDB has begun to play the convening or backbone organization role for federal funding opportunities, especially in developing workforce plans and identifying relevant partnerships to be part of the work.

The GWDB plays an important role in supporting workforce partnerships across the state to ensure the success of a workforce system rather than individual workforce programs. This includes:

- *Sector Partnerships:* The GWDB supports the development and implementation of best practices for sector partnerships in the state, as described in section II.c.1.
- *Local Workforce Boards and Regional Workforce Partners:* The GWDB partners with local boards in support of their implementation of WIOA and workforce programs. This also includes working with the LMI team and other agencies to ensure that the local boards have the information and policies they need to be successful.
- *Interagency Work:* GWDB staff facilitate cross-agency meetings with program administrators from across the workforce development system and will be utilizing information and dialogue from these meetings to develop more robust recommendations around system alignment and program coordination.

GWDB Roster

Name	Business or Organization	Member Type
Aggarwal, Naveen	Kiddiegarten School of Maple Grove	Business Representative
Anderson, Carol	Anderson Farms	Business Representative
Berg Joshua	Accessible Spaces	Business Representative
Broberg, Deb	RealTime Talent	Business Representative
Ellis Kevion	St. Paul Area Chamber of Commerce	Business Representative
Jacobson, Ralph	Impact Power Solutions	Business Representative
Kalina, Steve	Minnesota Precision Manufacturing Association	Business Representative
Louis, Lance	Louis Industries	Business Representative

Lundmark, Katie	Ecumen	Business Representative
Mattson, Nicole	Care Providers of Minnesota	Business Representative
Mooney, Gabriel	Central Boiler	Business Representative
Rainey, Jeffrey	Dakota Electric Association	Business Representative
Ramirez, John	Latino Economic Development Center	Business Representative
Rodway, Ali	Pepper Foster Consulting	Business Representative
Sloan, Shannon	North Memorial Health System	Business Representative
Stark, Robert	Edward Jones Investment	Business Representative
Theisen, Jennifer	Stoneridge Software	Business Representative
Tollefson, Jeff	MnTech	Business Representative
Palmer, Tuleah	Blandin Foundation	Community Based Organization

Van Acker, Kyle	Goodwill-Easter Seals Minnesota	Community Based Organization
Varilek, Commissioner Matt	Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development	Core Program Representative (Titles I and III)
Jett, Commissioner Willie	Minnesota Department of Education	Core Program Representative (Title II)
Torgerson, Dee	Vocational Rehabilitation, DEED	Core Program Representative (Title IV)
Alstead, Hannah	Teamsters Joint Local 32	Labor Union
Burnham, Bernadette	AFL-CIO Minnesota	Labor Union
Davies, Barry	Iron Workers Local 512	Labor Union
Heimlich, Samuel	North Central States Regional Council of Carpenters	Labor Union
Scott, Karlton	Minnesota Nurses Association	Labor Union

Parker, Scott	International Union of Painters and Allied Trades	Labor Union
Fernando, Commissioner Irene	Hennepin County	Local Elected Official
Campbell, Commissioner Erin	Minnesota Management and Budget	Non-Voting Member (required by State Statutes)
Dively, David	Minnesota Council on Disability	Non-Voting Member (required by State Statutes)
Jeanna Fortney	Minnesota Association of Workforce Boards	Non-Voting Member (required by State Statutes)
Geshick, Shannon	Minnesota Indian Affairs Council	Non-Voting Member (required by State Statutes)
Blissenbach, Nicole	Minnesota Department of Labor & Industry	Non-Voting Member (required by State Statutes)
Nesheim, Eric	Literacy Minnesota	Non-Voting Member (required by State Statutes)
Olson, Dr. Dennis	Minnesota Office of Higher Education	Non-Voting Member (required by State Statutes)

De Vera, Emma	St. Paul Public Libraries	Non-Voting Member (required by State Statutes)
Schnell, Paul	Minnesota Department of Corrections	Non-Voting Member (required by State Statutes)
Smith, Roy	Iron Range Resources & Rehabilitation Board	Non-Voting Member (required by State Statutes)
Her, Sia	Council on Asian Pacific Minnesotans	Non-Voting Member (required by State Statutes)
Sloan, Linda	Council for Minnesotans of African Heritage	Non-Voting Member (required by State Statutes)
Tock, Rosa	Minnesota Council on Latino Affairs	Non-Voting Member (required by State Statutes)
Pribbenow, Paul Dr.	Augsburg University	Other Member as Required by State Statutes
Berndt, Michael	Inver Hills Community College	Other Member as Required by State Statutes
Ettinger, Interim President Jeff	University of Minnesota	Other Member as Required by State Statutes

Harpstead, Jodi	Minnesota Department of Human Services	Other Member as Required by State Statutes
Haugen, Troy	Lakes Country Service Cooperative	Other Member as Required by State Statutes
Olson, Chancellor Scott	Minnesota State Colleges and Universities	Other Member as Required by State Statutes
Hoffman, Sen. John	Minnesota Senate	State Legislator
Nelson, Sen. Carla	Minnesota Senate	State Legislator
Perryman, Rep. Bernie	Minnesota House of Representatives	State Legislator
Xiong, Rep. Jay	Minnesota House of Representatives	State Legislator

4. Assessment and Evaluation of Programs and One-Stop Program Partners.

A. Assessment of Core and One-Stop Program Partner Programs. Describe how the core programs will be assessed each year based on State performance accountability measures described in section 116(b) of WIOA. Describe how other one-stop delivery system partner program services and Combined State Plan partner programs included in the plan will be assessed each year. This State assessment must include the quality, effectiveness, and improvement of programs

broken down by local area or provider. Such state assessments should take into account local and regional planning goals.

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

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

- Mandated Reports to the Legislature for those programs funded by state workforce, general fund, and other special state funds.
- Annual Program Results/Reports for both federal and state programs, which often provide the federal negotiated performance goals and outcomes.
- Customer Satisfaction assessments for job seekers and employers.
- A Uniform Report Card for specific workforce development programs.
- For many programs, solicitations for services (requests for proposals) are posted on DEED's website and through the State Register in an effort to attract the best possible proposals.

The Adult and Dislocated Worker Team assesses program performance throughout the year through close collaboration with DEED's Performance and Technical Management (PTM) team. PTM assembles quarterly and annual PIRL reports and submits them to USDOL. All Title I Adult and Dislocated Worker programs must participate in the State of Minnesota's Uniform Outcome Report Card. This mandated report includes several measures that the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) does not. Including Median wage change by previous employment status, Retention in Q3 and Q8 after exit, and Occupation of employment in Q1, Q3, and Q8 after exit. Minnesota evaluates WIOA programs under 20 CFR § 682.200. For Title I Adult and Dislocated Worker Programs, the following evaluations have been or will be conducted:

- Social Vulnerability Index (SVI) Study (Phase I complete Phase II beginning):* This study uses the Center for Disease Control's Social Vulnerability Index to assess if Title I programs serve Minnesotans from the most marginalized parts of the state. This study resulted in DEED setting a goal to increase the percentage of people they serve from the most marginalized parts of the state (defined using the SVI). PTM is working with WIOA Adult and Dislocated Worker to establish baselines for Title I adult programs and create interactive multi-layered maps and measures to help program staff target outreach. An example of one of these tools and evaluations is here:

<https://public.tableau.com/app/profile/magda.olson/viz/DWandWIOASVI/DemographicProfile?publish=yes>
- Family-Sustaining Wage Calculation and Attainment study (Complete):* This study has two parts. The first involves working with the LMI team to calculate individual-level family-sustaining wage thresholds of participants based on their family size and location. The second part consists in analyzing when participants exit a program and if they attain a family-sustaining wage within a year after exit. This study helps programs better understand if participants can support themselves post-exit. The results of this study indicated that while a decline in enrollment (mainly attributable to the pandemic and closure of services) prevented programs from attaining similar family-sustaining wage placement numbers, the percentage of participants who achieved a family-sustaining wage recovered to pre-pandemic levels and saw some increases in marginalized groups like BIPOC participants. The final dashboard can be found here:

<https://public.tableau.com/app/profile/magda.olson/viz/FSWReportMMB6272022/FSWbyDemographic>
- Study of changing populations (In progress):* This study includes partnering with the LMI team to see if programs are properly set up to serve Minnesotans most impacted by the COVID-19 Pandemic. The initial results of this study indicate that Title I Adult programs have pivoted to serving more diverse customers across every measure of marginalization we analyzed after the COVID-19 Pandemic. The next step of this study is examining the regional impacts of COVID-19 in Minnesota and seeing if Title I programs served industries impacted by pandemic layoffs. The report will be available in the late Fall of 2023.
- Co-Enrollment Study (planning):* This study, which might be done with the Minneapolis Federal Reserve, will examine the impact of co-enrollment between Title I and state-funded workforce programs. This study will look at training completion, credential attainment, employment, retention, and median wage, along with program reentry and how these measures are impacted by co-enrollment.

In addition to the evaluations above, Minnesota continues to be a willing partner with the DOL in other states. It is willing to continue to share our approach to evaluation, equity analysis, and how to conduct rigorous independent evaluations without needing an external vendor via technical assistance sessions or larger meetings.

Continuous Quality Improvement strategies are on-going and follow the Plan-Do-Study-Act (PDSA) cycle as a “trial-and-learning” method to test changes quickly for the Dislocated Worker and Adult programs. These methods are especially important when new or updated guidance is released by the U.S. Department of Labor. As new guidance is received, multiple protocols, including database and data entry procedures, need to be evaluated to determine the actual impacts of the change. This may include, applying changes to multiple programs, updating policy, remapping the state’s case management system (Workforce One), updating case management desk guides, and scheduling training sessions to inform LWDAs. Planning for USDOL monitoring visits begin with coordinating with local areas to inform of the planned visit and to prepare files for the monitoring visit. DEED is already unified with local areas via Workforce One. Minnesota responds to USDOL monitoring reports in collaboration with LWDAs.

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

1. *THE STATE ADULT EDUCATION MANAGEMENT INFORMATION SYSTEM (MIS) DATA:* Minnesota’s MIS, called SiD, balances both program quality and program compliance with state and federal expectations. In addition to required reports, local providers can use SiD to analyze student persistence, program outcomes, and other measures at the consortium, site, class and student level.
2. *A STATE ADULT EDUCATION GRANTEE REPORT CARD:* The report card notes actual performance and ranks providers by key program data measures, including measurable skill gain by population, cost of programming per individual served, intensity of service provided, and percentage of population served.
3. *A PROGRAM IMPROVEMENT PROCESS:* Programs will be identified for review based on rankings in the state adult education report card and will undergo a comprehensive review and monitored implementation of a program improvement plan that requires local providers to complete site visits, workshop activities, reports, and plans to strengthen program performance and quality. (For more information on Program Improvement, see the response to (D) above.)
4. *INTENSIVE PROGRAM APPLICATION CYCLE:* On a five- to six-year basis, adult education providers are required to complete an in-depth application as a method to adhere to state statute governing local adult education programming. These in-

depth applications are reviewed and scored by a team of state staff from MDE and local AEFLA providers. In this intensive application, local providers describe their:

1. Consortium,
 2. Program accountability procedures,
 3. Professional development priorities and activities,
 4. Proposed programming,
 5. Local program governance,
 6. Program collaboration with key stakeholders and partners,
 7. Technology resources and integration,
 8. Future plans, and
 9. Performance.
5. GRANTEE MONITORING SITE CALLS AND VISITS: All grantees are subject to monitoring calls and site visits that focus on policy compliance and program quality through multiple methods:
1. All AEFLA grantees receive site visits on a rotating basis, at least once every five-to-six years, when the program participates in in-depth application process to continue receiving state adult education (ABE) funding to comply with state statute;
 2. Monitoring visits based on items that get escalated by the MDE Adult Education team through the monthly data review process;
 3. Providers with low performance participate in site visits through the program improvement process;
 4. Local adult education providers that participate in state initiatives and/or receive special grants through state or federal funding typically receive site visits as part of their participation; and
 5. Local providers request special technical assistance site visits as they face issues
6. *ASSESSING THE QUALITY OF PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS:*

1. Minnesota's Adult Education Supplemental Services system, which is funded with a combination of state and federal leadership funds provides training that supports local programs in implementing program components needed to meet the wide range of needs of Minnesota's adult education participants including: distance education, use of technology for instruction as well as program management; services related to serving students with disabilities; instructional methodology including EBRI and the Teaching Numeracy to Adults Cohort; content standards including CCRS, ACES and Northstar; IET, contextualization and career pathway programming; volunteer recruitment and training; assessment; partner collaborations including workforce, TANF and SNAP, etc. Information regarding the relevance, quality and success of each component is collected through an annual professional development survey. In addition, biannual reporting regarding participation and locally collected participant evaluations are required of all Supplemental Services providers.
2. The statewide Supplemental Services noted above are available to all paid and volunteer staff.
3. Dissemination of information about models and promising practices are facilitated by Minnesota's Supplemental Services providers. Each provider maintains a website of related resources and all providers provide content for Minnesota's monthly PD Update newsletter. Minnesota also maintains a career pathway-related curriculum repository. Information regarding the success of the dissemination system is collected annually as part of the Professional Development Survey and via locally collected participant evaluations.

B. *Previous Assessment Results.* For each four-year state plan and state plan modification, provide the results of assessments of the effectiveness of the core programs and other one-stop partner programs and Combined State Plan partner programs included in the Unified or Combined State plan during the preceding 2-year period (i.e. the 2-year period of the plan modification cycle), in accordance with methods described in 4(A). Describe how the State is adapting its strategies based on these assessments.

The tables below present the percentage of the negotiated measure attained by the State of Minnesota. As stated in TEGL 11-19, Change 1, failure occurs for individual indicators when a score falls below 50 percent of the adjusted level of performance. Alternatively, failure occurs for the overall state program when a score falls below 90 percent. Percentages over 100

indicate the state exceeded the measure. Percentages greater than 50 and less than 100 indicate the state met the measure. Percentages of less than 50 indicate the state failed to meet the measure, in accordance with Training and Employment Guidance Letter 11-19, Change 1.

Program Year 2022 WIOA Performance Assessment data is still preliminary and based on comparing Minnesota’s actual levels of performance to our negotiated levels of performance. The release of Minnesota’s adjusted levels of performance by the USDOL may change these percentages.

Table 1: Program Year 2022 WIOA Performance Assessment – Preliminary					
Performance Measure	WIOA Adult	WIOA Dislocated Worker	WIOA Youth	Wagner-Peyser	Title IV Vocational Rehabilitation
Q2 Employment	109.5%	101.2%	111.0%	104.9%	112.2%
Q2 Earnings	126.2%	102.8%	136.0%	108.6%	109.1%
Q4 Employment	111.5%	102.8%	110.9%	99.0%	116.5%
Credential Attainment	105.6%	103.6%	85.2%	N/A	141.9%
Measurable Skills Gain	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Effectiveness in Serving Employers	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Overall State Program Score	N/A	N/A	N/A	104.2%	N/A

Table 2: Program Year 2021 WIOA Performance Assessment				
Performance Measure	WIOA Adult	WIOA Dislocated Worker	WIOA Youth	Wagner-Peyser
Q2 Employment	109.5%	101.2%	111.0%	104.9%
Q2 Employment	86.4%	96.3%	98.4%	108.9%

Q2 Earnings	110.1%	118.7%	125.9%	117.2%
Q4 Employment	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Credential Attainment	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Measurable Skills Gain	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Effectiveness in Serving Employers	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

Table 3: Program Year 2020 WIOA Performance Assessment				
Performance Measure	WIOA Adult	WIOA Dislocated Worker	WIOA Youth	Wagner-Peyser
Q2 Employment	89.9%	104.4%	99.1%	93.4%
Q2 Earnings	103.8 %	120.6%	133.9%	109.6%
Q4 Employment	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Credential Attainment	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Measurable Skills Gain	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Effectiveness in Serving Employers	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Overall State Program Score	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

- C. *Evaluation.* Describe how the State will conduct evaluations and research projects of activities carried out in the State under WIOA core programs; how such projects will be coordinated with, and designed in conjunction with, State and local boards**

and with State agencies responsible for the administration of all respective core programs; and, further, how the projects will be coordinated with the evaluations provided for by the Secretary of Labor and the Secretary of Education under WIOA (WIOA Section 116(e)).

Minnesota's primary conductor of WIOA evaluations and research projects is the Office of Performance and Technical Management (PTM). PTM has data knowledge as producers of the Participant Individual Record Layout (PIRL) and is independent of programs as they are not funded with WIOA funds. Minnesota has just recently finished its PY22 WIOA Title I evaluation and posted the results on the mandated reports section of the state website. PTM is working with both Employment and Training Programs (ETP) and the local areas to create a feedback loop where local boards can respond to evaluation results and provide feedback and recommendations for future areas of evaluation. Minnesota's process for the next evaluation cycle will be as follows:

1. Solicit feedback from local boards on the current evaluation report and potential topics for future evaluations (current status as of this report).
2. PTM works with ETP to select an evaluation topic based on stakeholder feedback and writes a proposal for agency leadership to review.
3. When agency leadership approves the evaluation topic, PTM begins work on the evaluation.
4. Present the results to stakeholders, solicit feedback, provide technical assistance on recommendations (when applicable), and begin the process anew.

Potential topics for the subsequent evaluation include but are not limited to:

1. Impact of co-enrollment in state programs on WIOA program participant outcomes.
2. Analysis of what barriers or combinations thereof most negatively impact WIOA program participants.
3. Effectiveness of agency efforts to direct time-limited SNAP recipients to WIOA Title I programs.

PTM and ETP send representation to all regularly scheduled DOL evaluation meetings and continue collaborating and communicating with DOL on Minnesota's evaluation efforts. In addition, Minnesota has been chosen to be a member of the Coleridge Institute Applied Data Analytics Training. This training will foster bonds between PTM, Title I, Title III, Labor Market Information, and the Department of Human Services.

6. Distribution of Funds for Core Programs. Describe the methods and factors the State will use in distributing funds under the core programs in accordance with the provisions authorizing such distributions.

A. For Title I programs, provide a description of the written policies that establish the State's methods and factors used to distribute funds to local areas for—

i. Youth activities in accordance with WIOA section 128(b)(2) or (b)(3),

Minnesota will obligate 85 percent of the WIOA Youth Formula allocation to local service providers.

1/3 is based on the WDA's relative share of the number of unemployed in areas with an unemployment rate of 6.5% or higher.

1/3 is based on the WDA's relative share of the number of unemployed in excess of 4.5% of the civilian labor force (in the WDA or in the areas of substantial unemployment within the WDA— whichever is higher).

1/3 is based on the WSA's relative share of the number of youth between the ages of 16 and 21 whose income or family income is at or below poverty or below 70 percent of the lower living standard income level. Since it is designated as a Rural Concentrated Employment Program under section 107 of WIOA, Rural Minnesota CEP has a slightly different requirement for the number of persons in this category. Data is provided by DOL for this portion of the formula.

The state ensures that no WDA allocation falls below 90 percent of the previous two year's average share of youth allocations. Adjustments are made as necessary to maintain the 90 percent hold-harmless provision for impacted WDAs.

ii. Adult and training activities in accordance with WIOA section 133(b)(2) or (b)(3),

Minnesota will obligate 85 percent of its WIOA Adult program formula allocation to local service providers, reserving 15 percent for administration and "10 percent" allowable activities for statewide goals.

When distributing the remaining amount to local service providers, staff take into account the following elements by converting them into shares of Minnesota as a whole and weighted equally:

- The number of economically disadvantaged adults in each Local Workforce Development Area (LWDA)
- The total number of unemployed individuals

- The number of excess unemployed individuals (above the state average) in areas of substantial unemployment

Adjustments are made as necessary to maintain the 90 percent hold-harmless provision ensuring that no local area has less than 90 percent of their two-year average.

iii. Dislocated worker employment and training activities in accordance with WIOA section 133(b)(2) and based on data and weights assigned.

Minnesota will obligate 75 percent of its WIOA Dislocated Worker program formula allocation to local service providers using a combination of labor market information, census data and unemployment insurance information. DEED first reserves five percent of the total allocation for administration, ten percent for allowable statewide activities, and the fully allowable 25 percent for rapid response activity (grants to fund mass layoff projects and statewide rapid response staff).

Three factors to distribute the 75 percent are weighted equally, impacting the preliminary share to local providers:

1. The share of the state's unemployed persons living in a WDA
2. The share of the state's permanently separated unemployed persons living in that WDA
3. The share of statewide total weeks paid of UI to permanently separated claimants

Minnesota then adjusts the share by job and earnings density, measuring a LWDA's standard deviation from the state average, and adjusts the dollars up or down accordingly. Finally, Minnesota includes a 90 percent hold—harmless provision as well as a 130 percent funding cap to minimize any significant changes in funding. This means that each local area is guaranteed to receive an allocation percentage per year that is no less than 90 percent of the average of the preceding two years' allocations.

As stated in WIOA sec. 133(a)(2), a State may reserve up to 25 percent of its allotted dislocated worker funds for rapid response activities. Once the State has reserved adequate funds for rapid response activities, such as those described in §§ 682.310, 682.320, and 682.330, any of the remaining funds reserved may be provided to local areas that experience increases of unemployment due to natural disasters, mass layoffs or other events, for provision of direct career services to participants if there are not adequate local funds available to assist the dislocated workers. States may wish to establish the policies or procedures governing the provision of additional assistance as described in § 682.340.

B. For Title II:

i. Describe the methods and factors the eligible agency will use to distribute title II funds.

The Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) is the State's Eligible Agency for Adult Education programs. MDE is responsible for administering funds and providing program/performance oversight to grantees. During grant years 2016–17 and 2021-22, MDE implemented a competitive application process for all federal AEFLA funding, including WIOA Sections 231(adult education) and 225 (corrections education) activities. The grant competitive applications are based on the 13 considerations in Title II of WIOA and included additional state ABE priorities. As a result of that process, 36 providers from throughout Minnesota were selected to receive funding beginning July 1, 2022. Minnesota will conduct a new grant competition during the 2027-28 year in order to identify grantees who will begin receiving federal ABE funds on July 1, 2028 (unless WIOA is reauthorized before then and requires a competition earlier).

Adult education eligible providers approved in 2022 will continue to be eligible to receive AEFLA funding, as long as they adhere to state and federal grant expectations, as measured through annual applications, financial reports, and program performance reports.

TIMELINE

The following steps and timeline were followed in 2017 and 2022; they will be used again for the 2028 WIOA AEFLA competition:

January: MDE publishes and promotes federal AEFLA provider grant application materials

January-February: MDE provides technical assistance to inquiries from eligible providers

February-March: MDE recruits reviewers to score and rate WIOA-aligned federally-funded AEFLA grant applications

March: Due date for federal AEFLA provider grant applications

March: MDE screens applications to determine which providers in each application meet demonstrated effectiveness requirements

March/April: Applications from providers that have demonstrated effectiveness are forwarded to official reviewers and to the appropriate workforce development boards that serve the same area as the proposed application

April-May: Official reviewers score and rate federal AEFLA provider grant applications by region; workforce development boards review and provide feedback on federal AEFLA provider grant applications that fall within their workforce service areas

May-June: MDE decides which applicants will be approved as providers based on reviewer scores and ratings, workforce development board feedback, and application's response to the conditions and criteria in the application materials

June: MDE announces awarded grant applicants that will receive federal AEFLA funding as providers

July 1: Awarded federal AEFLA providers begin grant cycle, programming and funding with technical assistance provided by the MDE Adult Education team

MDE used the considerations specified in Section 231(e) of WIOA and listed below as the criteria for selecting and funding eligible providers in 2017 and 2022, which will be used again in future competitions until WIOA is reauthorized and the considerations change. As part of the RFP process, agencies were/will be required to provide narrative detail describing how they will meet each consideration.

Needs Assessment: The degree to which the provider is responsive to (A) regional needs as identified in the local plan under Section 108; and (B) serving individuals in the community who are identified in such plan as most in need of adult education and literacy activities, including individuals who have low levels of literacy skills and who are English language learners.

- 1) **Individuals with Disabilities:** The degree to which the provider is able to serve eligible individuals with disabilities, including eligible individuals with learning disabilities.
- 2) **Past Effectiveness:** The degree to which the provider demonstrates past effectiveness in improving the literacy of eligible individuals, to meet State-adjusted levels of performance for the primary indicators of performance described in Section 116, especially with respect to eligible individuals who have low levels of literacy.
- 3) **Alignment with One-stop Partners:** The degree to which the eligible provider is responsive to, and demonstrates alignment between, proposed activities and services and the strategy and goals of the local plan under Section 108 as well as the activities and services of the one-stop partners.
- 4) **Intensity, Quality, and Instructional Practices:** The degree to which the eligible provider's program is of sufficient intensity and quality, and based on the most rigorous research available so that participants achieve substantial learning gains; and uses instructional practices that include the essential components of reading instruction.

- 5) **Research Based Educational Practices:** The degree to which the eligible provider's activities including reading, writing, speaking, mathematics, and English language acquisition instruction, are based on the best practices derived from the most rigorous research available and appropriate, including scientifically valid research and effective educational practice.
- 6) **Effective Use of Technology:** The degree to which the eligible provider's activities effectively use technology, services, and delivery systems, including distance education in a manner sufficient to increase the amount and quality of learning and how such technology, services, and systems lead to improved performance.
- 7) **Integrated Education and Training:** The degree to which the eligible provider's activities offer learning in context, including through integrated education and training, so that an individual acquires the skills needed to transition to and complete postsecondary education and training programs, obtain and advance in employment leading to economic self-sufficiency, and to exercise the rights and responsibilities of citizenship.
- 8) **Qualified Staff:** The degree to which the eligible provider's activities are delivered by well-trained instructors, counselors, and administrators who meet any minimum qualifications established by the state, where applicable, and who have access to high quality professional development, including through electronic means.
- 9) **Partnerships and Development of Career Pathways:** The degree to which the eligible provider's activities coordinate with other available education, training, and social service resources in the community, such as by establishing strong links with elementary schools and secondary schools, postsecondary educational institutions, institutions of higher education, local workforce development boards, one-stop centers, job training programs, and social service agencies, business, industry, labor organizations, community-based organizations, nonprofit organizations, and intermediaries, for the development of career pathways.
- 10) **Flexible Schedules and Coordination with Support Services:** The degree to which the eligible provider's activities offer flexible schedules and coordination with Federal, State, and local support services (such as child care, transportation, mental health services, and career planning) that are necessary to enable individuals, including individuals with disabilities or other special needs, to attend and complete programs information management system that has the capacity to report measurable participant outcomes (consistent with Section 116) and to monitor program performance.
- 11) **Information management system:** The expectation will be that the eligible provider will use the State-administered designated MIS for all grant-related data collection and reporting; and

- 12) English Language Acquisition and Civics Education: The degree to which the eligible provider has a demonstrated need for additional English language acquisition programs and civics education programs.

ADDITIONAL CRITERIA

In addition to the above 13 considerations, the grant applications also required descriptions of applicants:

- Location, service area, the scope of the program, a description of the population to be served, fiscal management procedures, and audit history;
 - Capacity to offer programming and evidence of the organization's past effectiveness in providing AEFLA-eligible activities and services;
 - Budget, as well as programmatic information regarding statutory requirements;
 - Coordination with other service providers to provide wrap-around services to participants (e.g., child care, transportation)
 - A description of how the program will align activities to the Local, Regional, and/or State Plan for WIOA providers and supportive services.
- ii. **Describe how the eligible agency will ensure direct and equitable access to all eligible providers to apply and compete for funds and how the eligible agency will ensure that it is using the same grant or contract announcement and application procedure for all eligible providers.**

In 2017 and in 2022, the grant opportunity was publicized in compliance with federal law, Minnesota statute, and MDE policy in order to ensure that all eligible providers had direct and equitable access to apply and compete for grants. The process was fair and equitable and followed federal AEFLA grant funding requirements and other state and federal grant procedures. MDE published and promoted all grant opportunities on its website. Any eligible entity (described above) was able to submit a proposal. A similar process will be followed in 2028.

During years when we have a competition, MDE screens all applications. This screening includes determining which providers meet the demonstrated effectiveness requirement. Starting in 2022, applicants are required to submit a Provider Details Worksheet for each provider included in the application. This worksheet asks each provider to share data and any additional information on past effectiveness in serving eligible adults.

- Continuing providers submit data available from the state adult education database (SiD) or any other sources that align with the WIOA indicators.
- New providers submit data on past effectiveness with eligible adults from any available sources on metrics similar to the WIOA indicators.

MDE staff review all the Provider Details Worksheets to determine which applications to send to workforce development boards and reviewers to be evaluated and scored.

Next, proposals are evaluated and scored by teams of reviewers approved by the MDE Grants Office and Adult Education Office. Reviewers score applications based on their responses to each of the 13 considerations of WIOA, the programming proposed and its alignment to the four instructional components, the articulated use of funds, and additional criteria listed above. An MDE staff person is part of each review team and facilitates the group review session, during which scores and evaluation comments are compiled into an official review document.

Workforce development boards evaluate applications for alignment to local needs and plans. Boards also document the strengths, weaknesses, and questions they have for each application. This review document is sent to MDE.

MDE selects applicants for federal AEFLA funding based on scores and feedback from reviewers and the workforce development boards. Applicants selected for federal AEFLA funding are notified in May or June and are eligible to start programming on July 1.

Vocational Rehabilitation Program: In the case of a State that, under section 101(a)(2)(A)(i) of the Rehabilitation Act designates a State agency to administer the part of the Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan under which VR services are provided for individuals who are blind, describe the process and the factors used by the State to determine the distribution of funds among the two VR agencies in the State.

- C. *Vocational Rehabilitation Program: In the case of a State that, under section 101(a)(2)(A)(i) of the Rehabilitation Act designates a State agency to administer the part of the Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan under which VR services are provided for individuals who are blind, describe the process and the factors used by the State to determine the distribution of funds among the two VR agencies in the State.***

The distribution of Minnesota's allotment of VR110 funds between the General and Blind agencies is based upon a methodology submitted to the Rehabilitation Services Administration in 1975. This methodology, still being used today, distributes 82 percent of Minnesota's allotment to the General Agency and 18 percent to the Blind Agency. Funds are distributed to states based on a statutory formula that takes into account population and per capita income in

determining the amount of Federal funds that are available to states for vocational rehabilitation program purposes.

6. Program Data

- A. *Data Alignment and Integration.* Describe the plans of the lead State agencies with responsibility for the administration of the core programs, along with the State Board, to align and integrate available workforce and education data systems for the core programs, unemployment insurance programs, and education through postsecondary education, and to the extent possible, the Combined State Plan partner programs included in this plan. The description of the State’s plan for integrating data systems should include the State’s goals for achieving integration and any progress to date. Describe data-collection and reporting processes used for all programs and activities, including the State’s process to collect and report data on co-enrollment, and for those present in the one-stop centers.**
- i. Describe the State’s plans to make the management information systems for the core programs interoperable to maximize the efficient exchange of common data elements to support assessment and evaluation.**

Workforce One (WF1) is a web-based case management application used by 2,000 state, city, county, and non-profit employees to track services to more than 100,000 customers across Minnesota’s county offices, CareerForce locations, and Vocational Rehabilitation Services Offices. WF1 was created through a partnership of three Minnesota state agencies — the DHS, DEED, and MNIT.DEED. There are over 20 state and federally-funded workforce training programs — including WIOA Adult, Dislocated Worker and Youth — that track program participants in WF1.

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

System Management is currently anchored, from a data perspective, within Workforce One. This system supports data management and collaboration across WIOA titles I and IV; TANF and SNAP E&T, including all of the local partners delivering the related services. This system also has

the capability to store participant documents electronically, streamlining administrative activities and monitoring.

Workforce One serves as a resource for not only the tracking of data but also used as a system which shares information between programs and identifies individuals whom may be co-enrolled in several programs. DEED and Minnesota Information Technology (MNIT) at DEED's staff serve as support to all users of this system and also provide recommendations for system improvements. Workforce One is Minnesota's primary tool for tracking program participant data. Workforce One Connect is a mobile app that customers can use to send messages and documents to their staff, and also access local resources. MinnesotaWorks.net, our labor exchange, also tracks data, including the majority of the state's reportable individual activities, as well as Title III program participants and business/employer services data.

Workforce One Connect is a mobile app that customers can download on a smartphone or tablet. It allows customers to send messages and documents, and access local resources. Staff receive those messages and documents in the Workforce One case management system and are able to reply to the customer. Staff may also post local resources that customers can view in the app.

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

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

ii. Describe the State's plans to integrate data systems to facilitate streamlined intake and service delivery to track participation across all programs included in this plan.

Currently, in Minnesota, seven of the 13 participating titles share the same management information system, Workforce One, which is described in more detail in other Sections of this Combined State Plan. Minnesota will continue to explore the possibilities of additional titles sharing the same management information system.

With the restructuring of the DEED's Performance Technical Management team, the WIOA State Plan Dashboard is evolving. Enhancements to this data tool, designed to track performance by race, gender and other factors, are pending.

- iii. **Explain how the State board will assist the governor in aligning technology and data systems across required one-stop partner programs (including design and implementation of common intake, data collection, etc.) and how such alignment will improve service delivery to individuals, including unemployed individuals.**

The GWDB, through its functions under WIOA, will continue to study the existing management information system to ascertain the practicality functionality of such a broad-based system and make a recommendation to the Governor. This includes through the implementation of the state's third goal around innovative service delivery. Over the course of the coming year, the GWDB, in partnership with CareerForce, Workforce One, local partners, and others will come together to identify specific strategies to provide better service to all customers through improved technology and data systems.

- iv. **Describe the State's data systems and procedures to produce the reports required under section 116, performance accountability system. (WIOA section 116(d)(2)).**

Minnesota has dedicated program performance and information technology staff to develop and produce the reports required for performance accountability. All programs underwent a substantial review and revision to align data elements, data collection and reporting to the WIOA requirements. This work continues, as needed, when new USDOL guidance is provided.

- B. ***Assessment of Participants' Post-Program Success.* Describe how lead State agencies will use the workforce development system to assess the progress of participants who are exiting from core programs in entering, persisting in, and completing postsecondary education, or entering or remaining in employment. States may choose to set additional indicators of performance.**

Under Minnesota statute 116L.98, the Minnesota legislature has required specific and long-term performance indicators of state-funded workforce training programs, known as the Uniform Outcome Report Card. The report to the legislature must contain participant information by education level, race and ethnicity, gender, and geography, and a comparison of exited participants who completed training and those who did not.

These indicators include:

- 1) the total number of participants enrolled;
- 2) the median pre-enrollment wages based on participant wages for the second through the fifth calendar quarters immediately preceding the quarter of enrollment excluding those with zero income;
- 3) the total number of participants with zero income in the second through fifth calendar quarters immediately preceding the quarter of enrollment;

- 4) the total number of participants enrolled in training;
- 5) the total number of participants enrolled in training by occupational group;
- 6) the total number of participants that exited the program and the average enrollment duration of participants that have exited the program during the year;
- 7) the total number of exited participants who completed training;
- 8) the total number of exited participants who attained a credential;
- 9) the total number of participants employed during three consecutive quarters immediately following the quarter of exit, by industry;
- 10) the median wages of participants employed during three consecutive quarters immediately following the quarter of exit;
- 11) the total number of participants employed during eight consecutive quarters immediately following the quarter of exit, by industry;
- 12) the median wages of participants employed during eight consecutive quarters immediately following the quarter of exit;
- 13) the total cost of the program;
- 14) the total cost of the program per participant;
- 15) the cost per credential received by a participant; and
- 16) the administrative cost of the program.

DEED's agency-wide performance staff has already integrated WIOA programs into the Uniform Outcome Report Card.

State law also requires a workforce program net impact analysis to include the impact of workforce services on individual employment, earnings and public benefit usage outcomes and a cost-benefit analysis for understanding the monetary impacts of workforce services from the participant and taxpayer points of view.

Finally, DEED submits workforce training and UI wage records to the Minnesota Statewide Longitudinal Education Data System (SLEDS), which links secondary and postsecondary education and workforce to identify the most viable pathways for individuals in achieving successful outcomes in education and work. Through access to a secure data mart, the performance management team at DEED is able to access more robust data on WIOA – and other state workforce – program participants who enter, persist and complete postsecondary education after exiting when program tracking typically commences.

- C. ***Use of Unemployment Insurance (UI) Wage Record Data.*** Explain how the State will meet the requirements to utilize quarterly UI wage records for performance accountability, evaluations, and as a source for workforce and labor market

information, consistent with Federal and State law. (This Operational Planning element applies to core programs.)

Minnesota’s workforce development and unemployment insurance (UI) programs are both housed within DEED. This helps facilitate secure access to Minnesota wage detail data for the completion of official performance reporting requirements as required by federal or state laws. Minnesota’s performance and information technology staff coordinate the extracts from Minnesota UI and State Wage Interchange System (SWIS) data to produce performance accountability reports under WIOA. Under a data sharing agreement, DEED also supplies Minnesota UI wage records to the Minnesota Statewide Longitudinal Education Data System (SLEDS) for tracking student pathways from high school, postsecondary completion and into the workforce. Public reporting on the SLEDS website shows aggregate outcomes for high school students who do not enter college in the first year after high school graduation, but instead enter the workforce. Expanded postsecondary employment and wage outcomes reporting is also available at the institution level by programs of study (i.e., major) and award type. DEED also leverages SLEDS postsecondary program completers and Minnesota UI data linkages for Eligible Training Providers reporting (ETA-9171).

DEED has studied relevant and timely issues on graduate employment and wage outcomes in Minnesota:

- Employment and wage outcomes of Minnesota workers who were laid off during the COVID-19 recession including racial disparities in employment outcomes.
- Employment and wage outcomes of students who participated in Career and Technical Education (CTE) in high school including how different CTE programs compared and how post-secondary education impacted earnings.
- Regional economic factors in shaping college graduate’s decisions to stay or leave the region in which they graduated. Other worker mobility analyses include workers decisions to switch employers during the period of the “great resignation” following the COVID-19 recession.
- An analysis of which programs at different degree levels offer the best wage outcomes when compared to program cost.

D. *Privacy Safeguards.* Describe the privacy safeguards incorporated in the State’s workforce development system, including safeguards required by section 444 of the General Education Provisions Act (20 U.S.C. 1232g) and other applicable Federal laws.

DEED relies on data to operate its programs and provide services. The public has a right to know about DEED activities and to protect their own individual privacy. Federal and state data practices laws and rules balance these rights and responsibilities. Compliance with federal and

state laws, including the Minnesota Government Data Practices Act, which govern the protection of private data on individuals is and remains a priority for DEED.

We, therefore, take the following safeguards:

- Participants who are asked to provide data about themselves that is not public will be given notice through a Tennessee Warning, with written consent required when we need to use or release private data for specific purposes not explicitly authorized by statute.
- Only staff responsible for delivering and reporting on employment and training services are authorized recipients of nonpublic data, with access to systems to track, monitor or view program data containing personally identifiable information restricted to those who have been determined by internal DEED staff to require access.
- Workforce One (WF1), which tracks WIOA program data, grants user permissions based on role in relation to data subjects, thereby preventing users from accessing data which does not belong to them or otherwise pertain to relevant clients.

As DEED submits both workforce training participant and Minnesota Unemployment Insurance (UI) wage detail to Minnesota's Statewide Longitudinal Education Data System (SLEDS), we also fully understand and comply with confidentiality requirements as required by Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and State and Federal UI Confidentiality Laws and Regulations.

Data on individuals intended for public use is reported in aggregate form, meaning outcomes are only disclosed for groups of 10 individuals or more. No personally identifiable data on individuals, including Social Security Numbers, are shared publicly.

7. Priority of Service for Veterans.

A. Describe how the State will implement the priority of service provisions for covered persons in accordance with the requirements of the Jobs for Veterans Act, codified at section 4215 of 38 U.S.C., which applies to all employment and training programs funded in whole or in part by the Department of Labor.

Veterans and eligible spouses receive priority of service in all Minnesota CareerForce locations. Also, veterans and eligible spouses who are also recipients of public assistance, other low-income individuals, or individuals who are basic skills deficient would receive first priority of service with the WIOA Adult formula funds.

Priority is given in the following order:

- First, to veterans and eligible spouses who are also funded in the groups given statutory priority for WIOA Adult formula funds. This means that veterans and eligible spouses who are also recipients of public assistance, other low-income individuals, or individuals who are basic skills deficient would receive first priority of services with the WIOA Adult formula funds.
- Second, to non-covered persons (that is, individuals who are not veterans or eligible spouses) who are included in the WIOA's priority groups.
- Third, to veterans and eligible spouses who are not included in the WIOA's priority groups.
- Fourth, to any other populations identified by the Governor or Local Board for priority.
- Last, to non-covered persons outside the groups are given priority under the WIOA.

Veterans and other eligible persons, defined as covered persons, are ensured Priority of Service (POS) upon entering the CareerForce System with the implementation of the following services:

- Identified at the point of entry to programs & services.
- Made aware of priority of service.
- Made aware of the full array of programs and services available to them.
- Take precedence over non-covered persons in accessing and obtaining services.

Veterans

Veterans who have served at least *one day* in the active military, naval, or air service, who were discharged or released from service under any condition other than a condition classified as dishonorable, and who are otherwise eligible for participation in programming are included as covered persons. This definition includes Reserve units and National Guard units activated for Federal Service.

Spouses of Veterans

An "eligible spouse" means a spouse of any of the following:

- a. A spouse of any veteran who died of a service-connected disability.
- b. A spouse of any member of the Armed Forces serving on active duty who, at the time of application for the priority, is listed in one or more of the following categories and has been so listed for a total of more than 90 days.

- i. Missing in action.
- ii. Captured in the line of duty by a hostile force; or
- iii. Forcibly detained or interned in the line of duty by a foreign government or power.

c. A spouse of any veteran who has a total disability resulting from a service-connected disability, as evaluated by the Department of Veterans Affairs; or

d. A spouse of any veteran who died while a disability was in existence.

Priority of Service to Covered Persons means when customers self-attest they are a veteran or an eligible spouse, they are given precedence over eligible non-covered persons for the receipt of employment, training, and placement services provided under new or existing qualified job training programs. Veterans or eligible spouses receive access to the services or resources before noncovered persons. If the service or resource is limited, the veteran or Covered Person receives access to the service or resource instead of or before the non-covered person. For example, this could mean:

- The Covered Person receives access to the service or resource earlier in time than the non-covered person; or
- If the service or resource is limited, the Covered person receives access to the service or
- resource before the non-covered person.

B. Describe how the State will monitor priority of service provisions for veterans.

Priority of Service is monitored by the State Veterans Services Director in collaboration with CareerForce to ensure priority of service is provided in all Minnesota CareerForce locations.

Monitoring activities include on-site visits, interviews with staff, and regular reviews of local office plans, and if available policies related specifically to “Priority of Service for Covered Persons.” USDOL will also conduct visits and federal audits, as scheduled. The JVSG staff submit Quarterly Managers Reports to the local office managers that identify Priority of Service for Covered Persons and will identify issues and resolutions to Priority of Service as necessary.

Local Veterans Employment Representatives (LVER) staff provides ongoing training to CareerForce staff and partners statewide to ensure a successful implementation and understanding of Priority of Service for Covered Persons.

In addition, LVER staff reviews how Priority of Service is being implemented within each of the Minnesota CareerForce locations in their respective regions and offers guidance on how/where

to improve Priority of Service efforts if necessary. The goal is to make certain that local CareerForce front desk staff is well versed on veteran priority of service.

Point of Entry — signage at all CareerForce locations advises Veterans and other eligible persons of Veterans Priority of Service (POS). Information on Priority of Service is also provided during various program orientations, by staff, and during workshops. LVER staff trains and updates local CareerForce staff and management on the provisions of POS and Public Law 107-288.

C. Describe the triage and referral process for eligible veterans and other populations determined eligible to receive services from the Jobs for Veterans State Grants (JVSG) program’s Disabled Veterans’ Outreach Program (DVOP) specialist/Consolidated Position.

Veterans Questionnaire – The Minnesota Veterans Questionnaire is given to Veterans to assist reception area staff in identifying Veterans with significant barriers to employment. This questionnaire is also available online on the Veterans Resources landing page on the CareerForceMN.com website: <https://www.careerforcemn.com/veterans>.

Non-JVSG staff conducts the triage by reviewing the questionnaire responses. We ask all customers who come to the CareerForce locations if they ever served in the US Military. If the answer is yes, we ask them to complete the Veterans Questionnaire. Non-JVSG partner staff does the initial triage/assessment, reviews the questionnaire, and makes appropriate referrals based on the responses to the questionnaire.

The JVSG staff is trained and instructed not to perform intake duties or point-of-entry functions normally assigned to other CareerForce partner staff.

Veterans with Significant Barriers to Employment (SBE)— All veterans with SBE will be referred to and will receive assistance and individualized career services from a DVOP or in the absence of the DVOP, a designated individualized career services provider. Veterans are eligible for DVOP services if they meet the criteria for having a significant barrier to employment or if they are designated as a special population. VPL 03-14, including changes 1 and 2, and the companion TEGL 19-13 define the criteria for having significant barriers to employment (SBEs) and provide expansion and clarification of SBEs. Veterans Questionnaire needs to be assessed by non-JVSG staff only. Veterans with SBEs should be referred to a DVOP or identified as individualized career services providers when a DVOP is not available. New guidance identifies a distinction between LVERs and DVOPs; the term “Veteran Staff or Veterans Representative” is no longer acceptable per VPL 03-14 including change 2. You must identify DVOP or LVER staff per DOL refocusing.

Referral Process — All other non-SBE Veterans will be referred to a trained partner staff person within the CareerForce who will provide job search information/assistance, program information, and priority referral to services and resources.

Access to U.S. DOL-funded programs — Veterans and other eligible persons entitled to POS will be referred to U.S. DOL-funded programs immediately. If a waiting list for the program exists, the Veteran will be put at the top of the list for service.

Workshops — all workshops available in the CareerForce through CareerForce will have open slots available to Veterans up to the day the workshop is scheduled.

State Job Bank — Veterans and current and former Military members are able to identify themselves as such and are listed at the beginning of searches done by recruiters and employers. Employers are also able to self-designate as "Veterans Friendly Employers" so that Veterans can do keyword searches to find employers seeking Veterans for hire.

Training of Partner Staff — Non-JVSG staff is trained specifically as the point of contact for Veterans not receiving individualized career services from DVOPs. To ensure that CareerForce reception staff is deeply familiar with the priority of service provisions for veterans, all staff participates in priority of service training provided by LVERs and via webinars provided by the JVSG program. Front desk CareerForce staff received the WIOA JVSG Desk Reference flyer. Staff, particularly those who work at the reception desks, are encouraged to participate in the online training and instructor-led training provided by the National Veterans Training Institute (NVTI) geared toward educating one-stop staff about the veteran's service and priority of service.

Several processes will be used to monitor POS statewide and within each area of the State in which covered programs operate:

- Information provided by DVOP/LVER staff or customers,
- DVET onsite visits (including U.S. DOL—VETS audits with the State Director of Veterans Employment Programs,
- Managers Quarterly Reports.

Services are made available and provided within the CareerForce and through other service providers to eligible Veterans, transitioning service members, Chapter 31 participants, other eligible persons, and other such groups targeted for special consideration, including Veterans with significant barriers to employment.

A Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) has been developed between MN VA Veteran Readiness and Employment (VR&E) and the Jobs for Vets program to facilitate an effective referral process and ensure Veterans are receiving priority services.

8. **Addressing the Accessibility of the One-Stop Delivery System for Individuals with Disabilities.** Describe how the one-stop delivery system (including one-stop center operators and the one-stop delivery system partners), will comply with section 188 of WIOA (if applicable) and applicable provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C. 12101 et seq.) regarding the physical and programmatic accessibility of facilities, programs, services, technology, and materials for individuals with disabilities. This also must include a description of compliance through providing staff training and support for addressing the needs of individuals with disabilities. Describe the State's one-stop center certification policy, particularly the accessibility criteria.

DEED meets its ongoing obligation not to discriminate on the basis of disability by developing system wide policy and procedure initiatives that comply with Section 188 of WIOA. These policies include physical and programmatic accessibility of facilities, programs, services, technology, and materials to serve the needs of customers with disabilities.

DEED's WIOA Equal Opportunity Manual, Chapter 5.1 explains that all recipients of WIOA Title I funds have an affirmative obligation not to discriminate based on disability. The overarching principle of federal disability nondiscrimination law is that people with disabilities must be treated as individuals, not based on assumptions and stereotypes about their disabilities. All recipients of WIOA Title I funds are prohibited from discriminating in the registration for and the provision of aid, benefits, services, or training, including core, intensive training, and support services, based on disability. No individual shall be excluded from participation in, denied the benefits of, subjected to discrimination under, or denied employment in the administration of, or in connection with, any such program or activity, based on disability. Under this principle, recipients are required to focus on the skills, strengths, and abilities of a particular customer or employee with a disability, and to provide reasonable accommodations/modifications and the auxiliary aids and services that the customer or employee needs to utilize their skills, strengths, and abilities. Recipients should not focus on the limitations caused by the customer's or employee's disability.

The Determining the Location policy requires that CareerForce locations in Minnesota will be accessible to all populations including individuals with disabilities. The Office of Diversity and Equal Opportunity is the final authority in determining if a location meets the accessibility criteria to be certified as a CareerForce location.

The Minnesota CareerForce location System Certification Standards policy provides guidance on the implementation standards for the equal access obligations under WIOA. CareerForce locations must be universally accessible to all populations including but not limited to various racial and ethnic groups, persons for whom English is not their first language, ex. Justice-

involved individuals, people who are houseless, Veterans, various age groups, different genders, and individuals with disabilities.

DEED's WIOA Equal Opportunity Manual also addresses programmatic accessibility and state that all WIOA Title I – financially assisted programs and activities must be programmatically accessible, which includes:

- Providing reasonable accommodations for qualified individuals with disabilities
- Making reasonable modifications to policies, practices, and procedures.
- Administering programs in the most integrated setting appropriate.
- Communicating with persons with disabilities as effectively as with others.
- Providing appropriate auxiliary aids or services free of charge, including assistive technology devices and services, where necessary so individuals with disabilities have an equal opportunity to participate in, and enjoy the benefits of the program or activity.
- Allowing service dogs to accompany people with disabilities in all areas of the facility where the public is normally allowed to go.

DEED's Americans with Disability Act Title II policy PPM 423, states, "In accordance with the requirements of Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, as amended (ADA), Section 188 of WIOA, and the Minnesota Human Rights Act, DEED will not discriminate against qualified individuals with disabilities based on disability in its services, programs, products, or activities.

The policy applies to all employees of the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED), and third parties who have business interactions with DEED. In addition, DEED partners that receive federal financial assistance must meet their accessibility obligations under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act and the implementing regulations at 29 CFR part 32.

Provide Architectural Accessibility for Individuals with Disabilities

The CareerForce location System provides integrated program services through the development and maintenance of an accessible environment. All facilities open to the public as well as administrative offices must be accessible to and useable by the broadest population. All partners are covered by Title II of the ADA and the equal opportunity and nondiscrimination elements of Section 188 of WIOA and, therefore, are subject to the same set of standards.

The Determining the Location policy states, "DEED must ensure that all services are compliant with applicable laws, regulations and policies. DEED may, therefore, withhold certification and/or funding from a location that does not meet the criteria established in this and related

policies and laws." The Policy goes on to state, "the CareerForce location will be accessible to all populations including individuals with disabilities.

The Section of the Policy titled Minnesota CareerForce location System Certification Standards provides detailed information regarding the criteria and the process for selecting, remodeling or moving a CareerForce location. CareerForce locations must meet the standards set forth in the Policy. The Policy identifies the tools used to assist in evaluating and determining access requirements. They include:

- The site and building element descriptions are intended to help determine if a site location has the most basic accessible features to ensure equal access to participants with disabilities. If the site does not have the required features, modifications can be made to create improved access. It is imperative that a review be conducted prior to lease negotiations so that access issues can be addressed and remediated.
- It is the responsibility of DEED and its partners to choose sites that are accessible to and usable by the broadest population. DEED, as the designated state agency for WIOA implementation, is responsible for oversight and implementation of access standards regardless of the WIOA entity that holds the lease.
- During site reviews, the ADA Checklist for Existing Facilities is used. The checklist is based on the 2010 ADA Standards for Accessible Design. The Institute for Human Centered Design and the ADA National Network developed the checklists. Using the checklists, a comprehensive review is done on sites, including approach and entrance, access to goods and services, toilet rooms, and additional access.

DEED developed a review schedule for all Comprehensive CareerForce locations. Site visits for recertification of the 50 CareerForce locations are scheduled on a three—year cycle. Comprehensive CareerForce locations that are newly developed, remodeled or relocated are included in the review and are prioritized. There is generally an eighteen-month lead time on remodeling or relocation.

Affiliate CareerForce locations are required to provide full access and opportunities to all job seekers including serving individuals with disabilities. Physical locations, services and programs must comply with Section 188 of WIOA and provisions of the American with Disabilities Act of 1990, as amended.

DEED will work closely with Affiliate CareerForce locations to have them provide an annual assessment on architectural and programmatic accessibility for individuals with disabilities. A review schedule for Affiliate CareerForce locations will occur during Program Monitoring Visits.

Provide Programmatic Accessibility for Individuals with Disabilities

All DEED and its partners CareerForce locations programs and activities must be programmatically accessible, which includes providing reasonable accommodations for individuals with disabilities, making reasonable modifications to policies, practices, and procedures, administering programs in the most integrated setting appropriate, communicating with individuals with disabilities as effectively as with others and providing appropriate auxiliary aids or services, including assistive technology devices and services, where necessary so individuals with disabilities have an equal opportunity to participate in, and enjoy the benefits of the program or activity.”

DEED has developed a variety of methods to ensure that its programs and activities are universally accessible to individuals with disabilities. They include:

- The Minnesota CareerForce location System Certification Standards described earlier identifies both physical and programmatic accessibility requirements. Customers with disabilities must be able to participate and benefit from the services available in the CareerForce location System, as do all customers. In addition to the site accessibility standards, the Policy identifies the following requirements:
- Development of an evacuation and safety plan
- Notice displayed and available in alternate formats upon request
- Inclusion of tag lines
- Identification of Minnesota Relay
- Availability of accommodation and modifications
- Staff knowledge of assistive technology
- Use of auxiliary aids and services
- Community resources
- Complaint processes
- Technology standards have been developed for all CareerForce locations
- A variety of assistive technologies are available in CareerForce locations

Assistive technology in CareerForce locations include such things as JAWS and ZoomText software, pocket talkers, and UbiDuos. DEED is currently in the process of determining which required AT equipment will be required in both comprehensive and affiliate sites. DEED’s Policy and Procedure Manual (PPM 215), Office Identification Policy includes requirements for interior signage. The policy provides information on character proportion, character height, raised/Brailed characters, contrast, placement height and pictorial symbols.

All CareerForce location staff must be trained in and promote the use of Minnesota Relay or a customer's preferred relay service. A relay service is used to effectively communicate with individuals who have speech, hearing, or other disabilities.

Are Able to Communicate with Individuals with Disabilities as Effectively as with Others

Public entities are required to ensure that applicants, participants and members of the public with disabilities have communication access that is equally as effective as that provided to people without disabilities.

All printed communications provide contact information for a person with a disability to request the information in an alternative format.

When developing, purchasing, maintaining, or using electronic and information technology, DEED and its partners must utilize electronic and information technologies, applications, or adaptations which: 1) Incorporate accessibility features; 2) Are consistent with modern accessibility standards, such as Section 508 Standards (36 CFR part 1194) and W3C's Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0 AA; and (3) Provide individuals with disabilities access to, and use of, information, resources, programs, and activities that are fully accessible, or ensure information provided by the electronic and information technologies are provided to individuals with disabilities in an equally effective and equally integrated manner.

MN.IT's Office of Accessibility provides services and technical support to the State of Minnesota executive branch. MN.IT has set standards for IT Accessibility. On their website a page is devoted to accessibility information for state agencies. It includes information on creating electronic documents, an information implementation toolkit for accessibility, and tools, training and testing information for creating accessible videos, podcast and webinars. The Chief Information Accessibility Officer is a STAFF TRAINING AND SUPPORTS

DEED's Workforce Coordination Training Team is able to provide on-demand training for all CareerForce location staff and partners. These trainings can be in person or webinar based depending on the topic and need.

9. **Addressing the Accessibility of the One-Stop Delivery System for Individuals who are English Language Learners. Describe how the one-stop delivery system (including one-stop center operators and the one-stop delivery system partners) will ensure that each one-stop center is able to meet the needs of English language learners, such as through established procedures, staff training, resources, and other materials. Describe how English language learners will be made aware of the**

opportunity to enroll and/or co-enroll in all the core programs for which they are eligible.

DEED has a Language Access Policy, which follows the guidance set by the U.S. Department of Justice concerning language access for individuals in all DEED programs and services.

The DEED WIOA Equal Opportunity Manual 5.2: Providing Language Access states that it is the policy of DEED to ensure equal access to WIOA Title I services for limited English and non-English speaking customers. All recipients of WIOA Title I funds have an affirmative duty to take reasonable steps to provide services and information in languages other than English so that limited English proficient (LEP) are effectively informed about and/or can participate in the program or activity.

Local Areas are required to take reasonable steps to ensure that LEP individuals have meaningful access to their programs and activities. Reasonable steps may include but are not limited to the following:

- Conducting an assessment of an LEP individual to determine their language assistance needs.
- Providing oral interpretation or written translation of both hard-copy and electronic materials, in the appropriate non-English languages, to LEP individuals when requested.
- Conducting outreach to LEP communities to improve service delivery in needed languages.

Minnesota's One-Stop system addresses the needs of ELL clients in a variety of ways:

- Each CareerForce location attempts to hire staff that reflect the local community. When filling vacant positions, the CareerForce Division's Job Service team prefers candidates to be bilingual in language that their customers speak including non-English languages spoken in the area. For example, Somali-speaking staff are housed in the Minneapolis, St. Paul, and St. Cloud, Burnsville, and Willmar CareerForce locations where Somali communities are growing.
- Every CareerForce location has an account with Language Line Translation Services. CareerForce locations can access translation services via phone, video remote, or on site in 290+ languages.
- Every CareerForce location is knowledgeable of community-based organizations who specialize in serving LEP learners. The local Adult Basic Education (ABE) provider offers English language classes in every region of the state and is often one of the first referral sources.

- There are also community-based organizations in larger communities that are an important partner and referral source for the One-Stops.
- DEED targets areas of the state with significant populations of LEP clients by investing existing resources in those areas. For example, additional Wagner Peyser funding is provided to the Minneapolis and St. Cloud CareerForce locations so they can employ a Community Liaison Representative for the Afghan evacuee community. This is an individual who speaks the local languages of the community he serves. DEED invested significant WIOA and Wagner Peyser resources into a new One-Stop in North Minneapolis that houses all WIOA programs, adult and K-12 education programming, and a community health care clinic to better serve the growing LEP population.
- Top-level content on CareerForceMN.com is translated into Somali and Spanish.

DEED and its partners already collect the preferred language of each applicant, registrant participant, and terminnee, which is a requirement for all states. For languages spoken by a significant number or portion of the population eligible to be served, or likely to be encountered, vital information will be translated into those languages and made readily available in hard copy, upon request, or electronically.

The State has a policy and procedure that provides guidance to local areas on serving public assistance recipients and other low-income individuals. This policy establishes a broad guideline for local judgment of those participants who are “most in need” and require a service plan and outreach process to serve this population.

Local providers must establish a system of prioritizing the enrollment of participants and delivery of services in times of limited availability of State and/or Federal resources.

Local providers must write and implement a policy outlining a priority of service policy and include the criteria impacting this policy in annual planning documents required by DEED. The criteria should apply to all dislocated workers and adults served and ensure availability of program services throughout the program year for those who meet the local priority of service.

Local providers should determine priority on an individual basis. Staff members with the local provider may determine an individual’s “most in need” status based on their unique factors and barriers. Local providers should intervene early with eligible customers. DEED monitors these activities through our client data system to ensure this priority is addressed. The outcomes of these efforts become a part of monitoring reports.

The State (DEED) implements an annual monitoring schedule on all Federal grants to ensure that local areas are following and implementing the required Federal and/or State policies relevant to the grants being executed. A part of the monitoring process is ensuring that local areas are enrolling participants based on priority of service. Local areas are also required to

provide the State a copy of their priority of service policy. If they do not have one in place, they have the option to follow the DEED's Priority of Service Policy and inform the State of such decision.

During monitoring, monitors ensure that priority is given based upon the priority of service outlined in DEED's WIOA Equal Opportunity Policy Manual Chapter 5.0 Affirmative Outreach requires that state and local-level recipients conduct affirmative outreach to ensure that they are providing equal access to their WIOA Title I-financially assisted programs and activities. Affirmative outreach means ensuring that an equivalent level of information regarding aid, benefits, services, and training is provided to all populations of eligible participants. These steps should involve reasonable efforts to include members of the various groups protected by WIOA regulations including but not limited to persons of different sexes, various racial and ethnic/national origin groups, various religions, individuals with limited English proficiency, individuals with disabilities, and individuals in different age groups.

DEED's WIOA Adult Eligibility and Priority of Service Policy

(<https://apps.deed.state.mn.us/ddp/PolicyDetail.aspx?pol=508>), with first priority going to Veterans and eligible spouses who are low income or recipients of public assistance or who are basic skills deficient.

Additionally, DEED will also be updating the case management system to allow staff to pull and monitor this data efficiently. Furthermore, DEED will continue to ensure that local areas have updated strategic plans, policies and procedures implementing priority of service to ensure that at least 75% of the participants in the Adult program are from at least one of the priority groups as outlined in TEGL 7-20.

English learners are addressed in both state and federal legislation. The Civil Rights Act of 1964 initially determined that students limited in English language proficiency have a right to a language instruction educational program that provides them access to the academic content instruction that all children receive. Court decisions and guidance from the Office for Civil Rights with the United States Department of Education have described in more detail the responsibilities of school districts. The Elementary and Secondary Education Act reauthorized under Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), delineated more specifically the responsibilities of schools, districts, and states to ensure that ELs become proficient in English and meet the same challenging state academic standards as expected of their English-only peers.

The ESSA provides an opportunity to meaningfully include and support English learners. In the past, Minnesota did not mandate statewide EL entry and exit criteria or procedures. However, as part of ESSA implementation, states are required to develop and implement standardized entry and exit criteria and procedures. For more information on the laws, regulations and court cases surrounding the needs of ELs, see the English Learners in Minnesota Report at <https://education.mn.gov/MDE/dse/el/>.

IV. Coordination with State Plan Programs

Plan Development

WIOA Combined State Plan Program Administrators began meeting on a quarterly basis in May 2023 in preparation for submitting the next four-year WIOA State Plan. State Program Administrators collaborated with the State Board and each other via a SharePoint platform that was set up in September 2023, specifically for planning and coordination. Shortly thereafter, [2024-2027 State, Regional and Local Plan Guidance](#) was released to align planning efforts across the workforce development system in Minnesota.

Several hundred workforce development partners attended [Minnesota's Inaugural Workforce Summit](#) at DEED Headquarters in St. Paul on September 20, 2023. Due to the overwhelming success of this event, plans are currently underway for the second annual summit in Fall 2024.

The GWDB convened representatives from the Minnesota Association of Workforce Boards (MAWB), State Program Administrators from WIOA titles I-IV, as well as State Program Administrators from each of the combined partner programs including TANF, Perkins V, Department of Corrections, and Jobs for Veterans State Grant (JVSG). This team assisted in determining the strategic planning process for the development of the WIOA State Plan. Further planning sessions were conducted to review progress, address strengths and weaknesses of the workforce development system, and develop processes for ongoing implementation of the State Plan following implementation. A Special Committee made up of GWDB members had an opportunity to review and comment on the plan prior to publication for public comment. Consensus to put forth approval of the State Plan is expected at the next quarterly business meeting of the GWDB on Wednesday, Feb. 28, 2024.

Implementation

Minnesota believes that coordination among State Plan partners for implementation of the 2024-2027 WIOA State Plan is critical to success in achieving its vision. To that end, the GWDB will create and monitor a dynamic community engagement plan for the WIOA Plan over the next four years. This will include interdepartmental and interagency state staff, businesses, local and regional workforce development boards, communities of color and indigenous people, people with disabilities, and community-based organizations. During implementation activities, Minnesota will further identify areas of growth and development for strengthening the statewide workforce development system.

This coordination plan will be developed early following the adoption of the WIOA 2024-2027 State Plan. Joint planning and coordination are anticipated to be inclusive of interested entities and multidimensional as indicated below:

- Input from community engagement sessions and public comment on the WIOA 2020 State Plan will be incorporated as a basis for implementation and initial identification of areas for growth.
- High-level monthly workforce development discussions including Deputy Commissioners from across Minnesota State Departments will be aligned with State Plan goals.
- State Program Administrators from across Minnesota state agencies and including representatives from the local boards will continue to meet quarterly to discuss implementation progress, identify areas for development and growth, and ensure agreement on impact measures.
- Ongoing state-wide community outreach and engagement will be implemented in partnership with businesses, local and regional boards, Community-based organizations, Tribal communities, refugee and immigrant communities, and other stakeholders and organizations.
- Results of the work will be presented to the GWDB on a quarterly basis.

Timeline for Implementation

March 2024 - August 2024:

- Community Outreach and Engagement: The Director of the GWDB, the CareerForce Director, the Director of the Equal Opportunity Office, the Office of Public Engagement and Government Affairs will develop a statewide community engagement plan with input from MAWB. This plan will focus on gaining input specifically tied to Minnesota's vision, goals, and strategies.
- The GWDB will formalize State Plan coordination and determine a timeline for planning, review, and submission of the two-year Plan Modification in 2026.

September 2024-December 2025:

- State agency leaders, program administrators and other workforce development partners will gather to review community input, discuss WIOA Plan implementation progress, and determine strategies for continuous improvement and growth.
- Quarterly updates regarding progress will be presented to GWDB members, as well as the MAWB Operations Committee.
- WIOA State Plan coordination strategies and alignment will be shared with Deputy Commissioners from across Minnesota State Departments.

January 2025:

- The GWDB, WIOA Program Administrators, and MAWB Executive Directors and Local Workforce Development Chairs will jointly create a schedule for ongoing WIOA State Plan 2024-2027 coordination work and planning for future State and Regional Plans.

V. Common Assurances (For All Core Programs)

The Unified or Combined State Plan must include assurances that:

The State Plan must include	Included
1. The State has established a policy identifying circumstances that may present a conflict of interest for a State Board or local board member, or the entity or class of officials that the member represents, and procedures to resolve such conflicts;	Yes
2. The State has established a policy to provide to the public (including individuals with disabilities) access to meetings of State Boards and local boards, and information regarding activities of State Boards and local boards, such as data on board membership and minutes;	Yes
3. The lead State agencies with optimal policy-making authority and responsibility for the administration of core programs reviewed and commented on the appropriate operational planning elements of the Unified or Combined State Plan, and approved the elements as serving the needs of the populations served by such programs;	Yes
4. (a) The State obtained input into the development of the Unified or Combined State Plan and provided an opportunity for comment on the plan by representatives of local boards and chief elected officials, businesses, labor organizations, institutions of higher education, the entities responsible for planning or administering the core programs, required one-stop partners and the other Combined Plan programs (if included in the State Plan), other primary stakeholders, including other organizations that provide services to individuals with barriers to employment, and the general public, and that the Unified or Combined State Plan is available and accessible to the general public; (b) The State provided an opportunity for review and comment on the plan by the State Board, including State agency official(s) for the Unemployment Insurance Agency if such official(s) is a member of the State Board;	Yes
5. The State has established, in accordance with WIOA section 116(i), fiscal control and fund accounting procedures that may be necessary to	Yes

ensure the proper disbursement of, and accounting for, funds paid to the State through allotments made for the core programs to carry out workforce development activities;	
6. The State has taken appropriate action to secure compliance with uniform administrative requirements in this Act, including that the State will annually monitor local areas to ensure compliance and otherwise take appropriate action to secure compliance with the uniform administrative requirements under WIOA section 184(a)(3);	Yes
7. The State has taken the appropriate action to be in compliance with WIOA section 188, Nondiscrimination, as applicable;	Yes
8. The Federal funds received to carry out a core program will not be expended for any purpose other than for activities authorized with respect to such funds under that core program;	Yes
9. The State will pay an appropriate share (as defined by the State board) of the costs of carrying out section 116, from funds made available through each of the core programs;	Yes
10. The State has a one-stop certification policy that ensures the physical and programmatic accessibility of all one-stop centers with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA);	Yes
11. Service providers have a referral process in place for directing Veterans with Significant Barriers to Employment (SBE) to DVOP services, when appropriate; and	Yes
12. Priority of service for veterans and eligible spouses is provided in accordance with 38 USC 4215 in all workforce preparation, development or delivery of programs or services funded directly, in whole or in part, by the Department of Labor.	Yes

VI. Program-Specific Requirements for Core Programs

The State must address all program-specific requirements in this section for the WIOA core programs regardless of whether the State submits either a Unified or Combined State Plan.

Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth Activities General Requirements

a. **General Requirements**

1) **Regions and local workforce development areas**

A. **Identify the regions and the local workforce development areas designated in the state.**

The following is a list of the six regions created in Minnesota and the associated local workforce development areas (LWDA):

- Region 1: LWDA 1 (NW MN Private Industry Council); LWDA 2 (Rural MN CEP);
- Region 2: LWDA 3 (NE MN Office of Job Training); LWDA 4 (City of Duluth);
- Region 3: LWDA 5 (Central MN Job & Training Service); LWDA 17 (Career Solutions);
- Region 4: LWDA 9 (suburban Hennepin and Carver Counties); LWDA 10 (Minneapolis Employment and Training); LWDA 12 (Anoka County Job Training Center); LWDA 14 (Dakota & Scott Counties); LWDA 15 (Ramsey County— Workforce Solutions); LWDA 16 (Washington County);
- Region 5: LWDA 6 (SW MN Private Industry Council); LWDA 7 (South Central Workforce Council/MN Valley Action Council)
- Region 6: LWDA 8 (SE MN Workforce Development, Inc.); LWDA 18 (Winona County Workforce Council)

B. **Describe the process used for designating local areas, including procedures for determining whether the local area met the criteria for “performed successfully” and “sustained fiscal integrity” in accordance with 106(b)(2) and (3) of WIOA. Describe the process used for identifying regions and planning regions under section 106(a) of WIOA. This must include a description of how the state consulted with the local boards and chief elected officials in identifying the regions.**

The designation of the local areas followed the requirements in WIOA. The State, through review and consultation with the Minnesota Association of Workforce Boards, which represents the chief elected officials and the private sector leadership of the local boards, accepted requests for initial designation of all 16 existing local areas, based on satisfactory performance and sustained fiscal integrity. Satisfactory performance was defined as meeting or exceeding performance standards for the two most recently completed program years. Sustained fiscal integrity was

defined as having no audit exceptions for the two most recently completed program years. Documentation included published performance reports and audit letters issued by the State of Minnesota. Opportunities for public comment on the State plan specific to the designation of local areas occurred at local area board meetings, a State board meeting, regional listening sessions and the 30-day public comment period published in the State Register.

The designation of regions followed the requirements in WIOA. The State, through review and consultation with the Minnesota Association of Workforce Boards, which represents the chief elected officials and the private sector leadership of the local boards, considered various options based on the criteria contained in WIOA law. Additional criteria included having one metropolitan statistical area in each region and the partnering of two or more local areas. Other considerations, based on feedback from local boards and economic development regions in the state, was to keep existing boundaries intact, as to not require local boards or existing regional economic development regions to engage in multiple regional planning efforts, stressing their resources and capacity to fully participate. The proposed regions were approved by the GWDB and MAWB and adopted in 2015. Opportunities for public comment on state plan specific to the designation of local areas occurred at local area board meetings, a state board meeting, regional listening sessions and the 30 day public comment period.

C. Provide the appeals process referred to in section 106(b)(5) of WIOA relating to designation of local areas.

Subsequent to initial designation, any local unit of government, including a combination of such units, may appeal the State's decision to not grant designation as a local area. The basis for not granting designation is presumed to be failure to satisfactorily perform or failure to not maintain sustained fiscal integrity. The State must provide technical assistance to the local area to address performance or fiscal integrity issues before such action can be taken.

Any local unit(s) of government may also be denied subsequent designation based on not meeting the State criteria for regional planning, as outlined in section 106(c)(1) in WIOA, as articulated in the State Combined Plan and any planning guidance issued to local areas. The State must provide technical assistance to the local areas within the region to address regional planning issues before such action can be taken.

Following the course of action that denies local designation, the appeals process will allow for the local unit(s) of government to present their appeal to the Governor's Workforce Development Board. The State Board will make a recommendation to the Governor. If the determination is not satisfactorily resolved with the Governor's decision, the local unit(s) of government may appeal to the Secretary of Labor. See DEED Policy and Guidance site: <https://apps.deed.state.mn.us/ddp/PolicyDetail.aspx?pol=505>

D. Provide the appeals process referred to in section 121(h)(2)(e) of WIOA relating to determinations for infrastructure funding.

WIOA requires an infrastructure funding policy to support the CareerForce (One-Stop) delivery system. Minnesota has had such a policy in place since 2010 for operations of the 50 CareerForce

Locations. This policy uses general customer, participant and staffing data to determine the proportional benefit that each title derives from the shared services now known as “Career Services” under WIOA. All infrastructure funding is borne by the local budgets of service providers. This policy includes a dispute resolution process based on regulation 678.700, allowing the local partners to appeal the infrastructure funding dispute to the Governor’s Workforce Development Board, who will review all documentation and recommend a resolution. If the resolution is not accepted, the state funding mechanism will be used.

2) Statewide Activities

A. Provide state policies or guidance for the statewide workforce development system and for use of state funds for workforce investment activities.

DEED oversees the administration of the WIOA titles IB, III and IV. As the administrator of these titles, the department issues policy and guidance and maintains a publicly accessible database of policies at <https://apps.deed.state.mn.us/ddp/PolicyList.aspx>.

Policy and guidance covers all areas of department operated core partner titles and additional titles, and includes the following categories of policy: Equal Opportunity & Complaints; Administration & Operations; Multi-Program Administration Requirements; One-Stop Centers; WIOA Adult, Dislocated Worker and Youth; Wagner-Peyser Employment Service Program; Vocational Rehabilitation Services; Displaced Homemaker; Foreign labor Certification; Migrant & Seasonal Farmworker; Senior Community Services Employment; Trade Adjustment Act; Work Opportunity Tax Credit; Minnesotaworks.net and new elements under WIOA. These policies have been updated and several are in the process of continued review as TEGs are released and clarifying guidance is provided by DOL.

B. Describe how the State intends to use Governor’s set aside funding for mandatory and discretionary activities, including how the State will conduct evaluations of Title I Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth activities.

Considerations for the use of Minnesota’s set aside will include, but not limited to: Enhanced employer engagement and sustainability strategies, development of career pathways and pre-apprenticeships, development and ongoing support of technology infrastructure and systems enhancements, comprehensive sector specific WIOA youth and adult program development and administration, Governor’s Workforce Development Board and continued of support of local regional planning activities.

C. Describe how the State will utilize Rapid Response funds to respond to layoffs and plant closings and coordinate services to quickly aid companies and their affected workers. States also should describe any layoff aversion strategies they have implemented to address at risk companies and workers.

The Minnesota State Rapid Response Team (SRRT) within the Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED) is dedicated to providing assistance to workers and businesses

during periods of economic transition inherent to the business cycle. SRRT funds help fund staff salaries and expenses incurred providing services to businesses and their employees across the state of Minnesota. Rapid Response collaborates with the WSCs, Business and Community Development (BCD), the UI Division and local and regional partners to provide early warning indicators of a business layoff or potential closure.

Some other strategies and permissible Rapid Response Activities include:

- Ongoing engagement, partnership, and relationship-building activities with businesses.
- Developing, funding, and managing incumbent worker training programs and other worker upskilling approaches as part of a layoff aversion strategy or activity; and,
- Conducting analyses of the suppliers of an affected company to assess their risks and vulnerabilities from a potential closing or shift in production of their major customer.

SRRT accomplishments during PY21:

- Developed a robust and effective Layoff Aversion strategy to include an Early Warning Network to monitor and predict plant closures, to implement response and prevention strategies.
- Held bi-monthly Metro Area Outreach Group meetings to provide outreach, technical assistance, and information to the states Metro Area DW service providers and to discuss marketing and advertising strategies on how to attract individuals affected by layoff and closure to enroll in the DW program.

D. Describe the State policies and procedures to provide Rapid Responses in cases of natural disasters including coordination with FEMA and other entities.

The primary objective of the SRRT is to proactively mitigate layoffs when feasible, minimize their impact on affected workers, and expedite the transition of dislocated workers to new employment opportunities. SRRT interventions encompass various scenarios, including business closures, Mass Layoffs (involving 50 or more affected workers), Small Layoffs (involving fewer than 50 employees), and layoffs resulting from either manmade or natural disasters. The SRRT would work directly with employers and their impacted employees providing assessments determining their interest in programming assistance, information to access local dislocated worker programs and services.

In the event of a natural disaster, where federal assistance is needed to supplement local efforts. National Dislocated Worker Grants (DWG) are awarded to states by the USDOL to temporarily expand the service capacity of the DW program by providing funding assistance in response to large, unexpected economic events with significant job loss. Minnesota was awarded two National Dislocated Worker Grants. States may qualify for a National Dislocated Worker Grant under WIOA law. There are two types and purposes of National Dislocated Worker Grants (DWGs) under sec. 170 of WIOA: Employment Recovery DWGs and Disaster Recovery DWGs.

Applications for Employment Recovery DWGs may be submitted at any time during the year and must be submitted to respond to eligible events as soon as possible when:

- (1) The applicant receives a notification of a mass layoff or a closure as a result of a Worker Adjustment and Retraining Notification (WARN) Act notice, a general announcement, or some other means, or in the case of applications to address situations described in [§ 687.110\(a\)\(4\)](#), when higher-than-average demand for employment and training activities for those members of the Armed Forces and military spouses exceeds State and local resources for providing such activities;
- (2) Worker needs and interest in services has been determined through Rapid Response, or other means, and is sufficient to justify the need for a DWG; and
- (3) A determination has been made, in collaboration with the applicable local area, that State and local formula funds are inadequate to provide the level of services needed by the affected workers.

(b) Applications for Disaster Recovery DWGs to respond to an emergency or major disaster must be submitted as soon as possible when:

- (1) As described in [§ 687.110\(b\)\(1\)](#), FEMA has declared that the affected area is eligible for public assistance;
- (2) A situation as described in [§ 687.110\(b\)\(2\)](#) occurs. The applications must indicate the applicable Federal agency declaration, describe the impact on the local and/or State economy, and describe the proposed activities; or
- (3) A situation as described in [§ 687.110\(b\)\(3\)](#) occurs, and interest in services has been determined and is sufficient to justify the need for a DWG.

- E. Describe how the State provides early intervention (e.g., Rapid Response) and ensures the provision of appropriate career services to worker groups on whose behalf a Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) petition has been filed. (Section 134(a)(2)(A) and TAA Section 221(a)(2)(A).) This description must include how the State disseminates benefit information to provide workers in the groups identified in the TAA petitions with an accurate understanding of the provision of TAA benefits and services in such a way that they are transparent to the dislocated worker applying for them (Trade Act Sec. 221(a)(2)(A) and Sec. 225; Governor-Secretary Agreement). Describe how the State will use funds that have been reserved for Rapid Response to provide services for every worker group that files a TAA petition and how the state will ensure the provision of appropriate career service to workers in the groups identified in the petition (TAA Sec. 221(a)(2)(A)).**

The Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) Program is a federal program that provides aid to workers who lose their jobs, or are at risk of losing their jobs, or whose hours of work and wages are reduced as a result of foreign competition.

TAA services are designed to help employees regain employment that is the same or better than the job they are at risk of losing or have actually lost. Once Rapid Response has been notified of an impending layoff or permanent closure due to jobs that will be moved overseas the SRRT

notifies TAA. The employers will be provided information on filing a TAA petition and once approved the businesses employees will have a scheduled informational session either in-person or virtually. The State's Rapid Response Team will work alongside the TAA team and the local workforce service provider to cover information and services available to employees who have been approved for TAA program co-enrollment.

Though co-enrollment is now mandated between the TAA Program and WIOA Dislocated Worker Program under the Final Rule, Minnesota has required co-enrollment with the Dislocated Worker (DW) program for many years. TAA created and distributed booklets and quick guides to all participants enrolled in TAA-funded training and their DW Counselors, called Navigating TAA Training. The information is offered in five (5) languages and posted online as a resource for participants in training and staff serving them <https://www.careerforcemn.com/TAA>. Additionally, Minnesota's TAA program shifted to a paperless environment and 100% of participant files are electronically stored. The shift saved materials, space, time, and promoted better coordination for staff to cover for each-other during absences and staff transitions.

b. Adult and Dislocated Worker Program Requirements

- 1. Work-Based Training Models. If the State is utilizing work-based training models (e.g. On-the-job training, Incumbent Worker training, Transitional Jobs, and Customized Training) as part of its training strategy and if these strategies are not already discussed in other sections of the plan, describe the State's strategies for how these models ensure high quality training for both the participant and the employer.**

The COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated and amplified the racial inequities prevalent in employment and access to quality training. Even before the pandemic, inherent inequities in the labor market disproportionately affected young people and communities of color. Young adults from low-income backgrounds have lower employment rates and work in lower-paying jobs. In addition, Black and Latinx individuals are disproportionately represented among the low-wage workers and the unemployed. With the pandemic upending school operations and access to training for those with limited internet access, the long-term impact on underserved communities will be significant. As the State weathers this crisis and rebuilds the economy, work-based training models will be a critical component of the economic recovery.

The WIOA Adult and Dislocated Worker programs will continue to work closely with local Workforce Development Areas to promote work-based training models through the provision of a framework for local action. This framework ensures compliance with federal regulations and state policies that provide guidance to local areas in establishing processes that are data driven. Local areas collect, evaluate, and track their progress against determined goals as well as alignment with local demand.

Many local areas have processes and key personnel assigned to perform employer outreach in order to establish work-based training models that best fit their customers' needs. Local areas continue to create partnerships with various stakeholders including training institutions and

employers to ensure coordination efforts are best utilized and customers receive the services needed to obtain suitable employment.

Moreover, the state will continue to invest in tools and activities that support quality work-based experiences for eligible participants. Coordination and communication across state agencies involved in this work will also remain central to ensuring that quality work-based trainings are available and accessible to those who need it. An example a successful work-based training model is the MN Pathways to Prosperity (P2P) program which supports participation of enrollees in career pathway programming that increases career awareness, promotes acquisition of basic skills, provides skills-training and education that lead to industry recognized credentials, and works with employers to place participants into positions in high growth, high demand industries that offer long-term employment at family-sustaining wages.

2. **Registered Apprenticeship. Describe how the State will incorporate Registered Apprenticeship into its strategy for service design and delivery (e.g., outreach to sponsors and prospective sponsors, identifying potential participants and connecting them to apprenticeship opportunities).**

3. **Training Provider Eligibility Procedure. Provide the procedure, eligibility criteria, and information requirements for determining training provider initial and continued eligibility, including Registered Apprenticeship programs (WIOA Section 122).**

Provide the procedure, eligibility criteria, and information requirements for determining training provider initial and continued eligibility, including Registered Apprenticeship programs (WIOA Section 122).

WIOA requires that a training program or course whose completion results in a recognized credential must be "WIOA-certified," in order to use WIOA training dollars and get credit for that credential. Program providers, interested training providers, and their partners should comply with this policy to ensure high-quality training experiences for WIOA program customers.

WIOA certification in Minnesota occurs in four steps:

1. Ensuring that the training institution has a physical location in Minnesota, is licensed, registered, or otherwise exempt by the Minnesota Office of Higher Education (OHE), or, depending on program, other appropriate state agency.
2. Entering and updating information on all programs and courses to be WIOA-certified on the state's eligible training provider list.
3. Submitting an WIOA certification application to DEED.
4. All eligible training providers are required to submit ongoing performance data (enrollments and completions) and maintain eligibility criteria.

The ETPL and WIOA certification application for a program, course or Registered Apprenticeship collects the following information:

-Program code and title

- Description of program content and purpose
- Program delivery model
- If and how the program awards credit or contact hours (for non-credit program)
- Award type
- Tuition and fee costs to students
- CIP code of program
- Type of credential (if non-credit program)

In order to be eligible to be WIOA-certified, a training program or course must be delivered by an eligible training provider as defined above. The provider must provide an industry- recognized credential upon successful completion of that program or course. The receipt of the credential must depend on the successful completion of the certified program. Being an eligible provider is a necessary, but not sufficient, condition for offering WIOA-certified training.

When a program is certified, it gains initial eligibility, which lasts for one year. After that year, if providers would like the training to remain certified, training providers must work with DEED to ensure continued eligibility DEED and OHE, as appropriate, will work with the providers of provisionally and permanently certified training programs and courses to acquire certain data, such as the wages of those who complete training and acquire employment.

After the year of initial eligibility is completed, training providers who provide the required information may be considered for continued eligibility. Programs certified under WIA will be grandfathered in under WIOA and will not be subject to initial eligibility, but providers will need to provide any required information for continued eligibility for these programs for participants (including tuition and fees), and information on the program completion rate of participants. DEED will generally acquire as much information (e.g., entered employment rate, wages) through existing data collection processes, without necessitating any paperwork from the training provider. DEED will leverage our inter- agency Minnesota State Longitudinal Data System (SLEDS) to meet the Workforce WIOA reporting requirements for the ETPL.

Only a training institution that has a physical location in Minnesota may apply for listing on Minnesota's ETPL - except for Registered Apprenticeship sponsors, who may apply even if located outside Minnesota. And only a training institution approved for listing on Minnesota's ETPL may request WIOA certification of its programs or sources. WIOA specifically requires training providers to apply for program or course certification.

Any Registered Apprenticeship sponsor in Minnesota whose program is registered with the Minnesota Department of Labor and Industry (DLI) can apply to DEED to be listed on Minnesota's ETPL. Any out-of-state Registered Apprenticeship sponsor whose program is registered with the US Department of Labor can apply to DEED to be listed on Minnesota's ETPL.

Minnesota's ETPL will be embedded in a comprehensive Career and Education Explorer tool being developed by Minnesota's Labor Market Information Office and is intended to better meet the needs of the state's customers and counselors.

Finally, Minnesota has a dedicated staff person to oversee the state's ETPL and WIOA certification process. The State's policy of WIOA Certification for Training Programs that provides definitions, detailed procedures, general and performance reporting requirements, is available online.

To be listed on the state's eligible training provider list (ETPL), a training institution's programs must be licensed, registered, or otherwise legally exempt through the Minnesota Office of Higher Education. There are a few programs that are authorized by other state agencies (for example, nursing assistant training programs are authorized by the Minnesota Department of Health, not OHE).

If a training provider is not sure of their status, they are to contact OHE to obtain full information about what if anything, is required of them for full legal authorization.

The State is updating the Career Profile Tool to with WIOA (displaying required performance metrics, cost, completion rates, etc.) and to better meet the needs of the state's customers and counselors.

The State's policy of WIOA Certification for Training Programs that provides definitions, detailed procedures, general and performance reporting requirements, is available online. See: <https://mn.gov/deed/about/what-we-do/objectives-plans/wioa.jsp>

4. Describe how the state will implement and monitor the priority for public assistance recipients, other low-income individuals, and individuals who are basic skills deficient in accordance with the requirements of WIOA sec. 134(c)(3)(e), which applies to individualized career services and training services funded by the adult formula program.

The State has a policy and procedure that provides guidance to local areas on serving public assistance recipients and other low-income individuals. This policy establishes a broad guideline for local judgment of those participants who are "most in need" and require a service plan and outreach process to serve this population. Local providers must establish a system of prioritizing the enrollment of participants and delivery of services in times of limited availability of State and/or Federal resources.

Local providers must write and implement a policy outlining a priority of service policy and include the criteria impacting this policy in annual planning documents required by DEED. The criteria should apply to all dislocated workers and adults served and ensure availability of program services throughout the program year for those who meet the local priority of service.

Local providers should determine priority on an individual basis. Staff members with the local provider may determine an individual's "most in need" status based on his/her unique factors and barriers. Local providers should intervene early with eligible customers. DEED monitors these activities through our client data system to ensure this priority is addressed. The outcomes of these efforts become a part of monitoring reports.

The State (DEED) implements an annual monitoring schedule on all Federal grants to ensure that local areas are following and implementing the required Federal and/or State policies relevant to the grants being executed. A part of the monitoring process is ensuring that local areas are

enrolling participants based on priority of service. Local areas are also required to provide the State a copy of their priority of service policy. If they do not have one in place, they have the option to follow the DEED's Priority of Service Policy and inform the State of such decision.

During monitoring, monitors ensure that priority is given based upon the priority of service outlined in DEED's WIOA Adult Eligibility and Priority of Service Policy (<https://apps.deed.state.mn.us/ddp/PolicyDetail.aspx?pol=508>), with first priority going to Veterans and eligible spouses who are low income or recipients of public assistance or who are basic skills deficient.

Additionally, DEED will also be updating the case management system to allow staff to pull and monitor this data efficiently. Furthermore, DEED will continue to ensure that local areas have updated strategic plans, policies and procedures implementing priority of service to ensure that at least 75% of the participants in the Adult program are from at least one of the priority groups as outlined in TEGL 7-20.

5. Describe the state's criteria regarding local area transfer of funds between the adult and dislocated worker programs.

The State's criteria is as follows -

- This policy provides the mechanism for transferring up to 100 percent of formula-allocated WIOA Title I-B Adult funds to WIOA Title I-B formula-allocated Dislocated Worker funds and vice versa.
- Background: In accordance with WIOA Law, local workforce investment boards shall ensure the formula-based WIOA Dislocated Worker program, like all partners, contributes proportionally to one-stop core services' costs. Some providers have expressed a wish to use WIOA Law, Section 133(b)(4) to transfer funds between Dislocated Worker and Title I-B Adult to accomplish this.
- Procedures: In accordance with WIOA Law, Section 133(b)(4), a local workforce council can, with state approval, transfer up to 100 percent of a program year allocation for Adult employment and training activities, and up to 100 percent of a program year allocation for Dislocated Worker employment and training activities, between the two programs. A local service provider cannot transfer funds to or from a WIOA Title I-B Youth Program.

In order for DEED to approve the request, the local provider will need to provide a rationale for the transfer in accordance with the request form given below.

A requesting provider must submit the following three documents:

- 1) a completed and signed form (Request to Transfer Funds: Adult/Dislocated Worker - attached);
- 2) a revised Dislocated Worker program budget and participant information forms (found in the Planning Guidelines); and

3) a revised Adult program budget and participant information forms (found in the Planning Guidelines)

6. Describe the State’s policy on WIOA and TAA co-enrollment and whether and how often this policy is disseminated to the local workforce development boards and required one-stop partners Trade Act Sec. 239(f), Sec. 235, 20 CFR 618.325, 20 CFR 618.824(a)(3)(i).

DEED requires that TAA participants be co-enrolled in the Dislocated (DW) program. This requirement ensures participants have access to basic and individualized career services as well as other resources available at CareerForce Locations across the state. This policy was last updated on 9/28/2022 pursuant to 20CFR 618.325.

7. Describe the State’s formal strategy to ensure that WIOA and TAA co-enrolled participants receive necessary funded benefits and services. Trade Act Sec. 239(f), Sec. 235, 20 CFR 618.816(c)

All DW providers awarded WIOA DW allocations must use WIOA funds to support at least one individualized career service for all DW participants prior to or at the time of TAA plan approval.

If the DW provider, in which the case managing DW counselor is employed, does not receive WIOA DW funds from DEED, co-enrollment in the state funded DW program is required.

All services received by DW participants as well as information on what funding sources have supported those services are captured within each record’s activity details. All DW case records are reported through Minnesota’s case management tracking system, Workforce One.

8. Describe the State’s process for familiarizing one-stop staff with the TAA program. 20 CFR 618.804(j), 20 CFR 618.305

(a) Youth Program Requirements. With respect to youth workforce investment activities authorized in section 129 of WIOA, States should describe their strategies that will support the implementation of youth activities under WIOA. State’s must-

WIOA Youth Program: Minnesota’s WIOA Youth Program provides comprehensive employment and training services to opportunity youth, including work-based learning, an introduction to career pathways, attainment of recognized credentials and wrap-around support services. Participants are youth ages 16 - 24 who are not attending any school, and in-school youth ages 14-21 who are low-income and at-risk. Minnesota serves a high percentage of youth who are most in need of services such as homeless youth and runaways, youth in foster care, youth with disabilities and youth from families on public assistance. Minnesota is serving youth who are under-represented in the workforce. For example, Native American youth are served at a level that is 3 times the national average. Minnesota supports partnerships with other State and federally funded youth programs to increase the quality of services available to participants. WIOA Youth Programs provide youth with access to postsecondary training and credentials which reflect 21st century skill requirements. Examples of co-enrollment

opportunities for WIOA Youth participants include: the Minnesota Family Investment Program (MFIP), Vocational Rehabilitation Services (VRS/Pre-ETS), Adult WIOA, Adult Basic Education (ABE), Minnesota Youth Program (MYP), Youthbuild, Job Corps and Youth at Work Equity Grants. For more information, see the WIOA Youth Program webpage: <https://mn.gov/deed/programs-services/office-youth-development/youth-programs/wioa-youth.jsp>.

- (1) Identify the State-developed criteria to be used by local boards in awarding grants or contracts for youth workforce investment activities and describe how the local boards will take into consideration the ability of the providers to meet performance accountability measures based on primary indicators of performance for the youth program as described in section 116(b)(2)(A)(ii) of WIOA.¹ Further, include a description of how the State assists local areas in determining whether to contract for services or to provide some or all of the program elements directly.**

- (2) Explain how the State assists local workforce boards in achieving equitable results for out-of-school and in-school youth. Describe promising practices or partnership models that local areas are implementing and the state’s role in supporting and scaling those models within the state for both in-school and out-of-school youth.**

Minnesota Youth Program (MYP): MYP serves low-income youth, ages 14 to 24, and is the only youth employment program available in all 87 counties. Over half of the youth served under MYP receive academic credit or service-learning credit for work-based learning. Other MYP services include career exploration and counseling, labor market information on in-demand occupations, work readiness skills, financial literacy training, work experience and support services. MYP serves nearly 3,766 youth each year through individual, case managed services and almost 30,000 youth through the Outreach to Schools component. MYP operates in coordination with WIOA, under oversight of Local Workforce Development Boards appointed by Local Elected Officials (business-led majority). Each \$1 of MYP funds leverages over \$6 of other federal, state and local resources. Youth may be co-enrolled in WIOA, MFIP, VRS, or Youthbuild as a result of strong local partnerships. Worksite supervisors/employers evaluate the contextual work readiness skills of youth on the MYP worksite using pre and post assessments. For more information, see the Minnesota Youth Program webpage: <https://mn.gov/deed/programs-services/office-youth-development/youth-programs/youth-program.jsp>.

Youth Support Services Grants: The Minnesota Legislature appropriated \$475,000 in State Fiscal Year (SFY) 2023 for a competitive grant program to provide support services for individuals. Grant funded services include job training, employment preparation, internships, job assistance

¹ Sec. 102(b)(2)(D)(i)(V)

to parents, financial literacy, academic and behavioral interventions for low-performing students, and youth intervention activities. Grants must serve individuals from low-income communities, and/or young adults from families with a history of intergenerational poverty, and/or BIPOC communities. In SFY 23 were 17 Youth Support Services grantees with 54% of the grant funds allocated to the Twin Cities metro area and 46% allocated to Greater Minnesota. Through these grants, 425 young people received individual services in SFY 23 with over 94% receiving education, employment preparation, or work readiness services. The young people served through these grants were 83% from BIPOC communities, 14% identifying as having a disability, and 47% young women. Detailed program information and reports available at <https://mn.gov/deed/programs-services/office-youth-development/special/youth-support/>

- (3) Describe how the State assists local workforce boards in implementing innovative models for delivering youth workforce investment activities, including effective ways local workforce boards can make available the 14 program elements described in WIOA section 129(c)(2); and explain how local areas can ensure work experience, including quality pre-apprenticeship and registered apprenticeship, is prioritized as a key element within a broader career pathways strategy.**

Youthbuild Program: The state funded Youthbuild Program offers a construction career pathway for low-income, at-risk youth, ages 16-24, who have dropped out of school or are at-risk of dropping out. Youthbuild provides pre-apprenticeship training, industry-recognized credentials, contextual basic skills and work readiness soft skills; career exploration and counseling; mentoring and leadership development; and support services. Ten organizations provide services across Minnesota. Each \$1 of state Youthbuild funding is matched by one local dollar and state funds are used as match for federal YouthBuild resources. The pandemic impacted services for Minnesota Youthbuild grantees and caused construction projects to be delayed. Local Youthbuild staff pivoted construction training and programming to virtual formats in response to pandemic restrictions. For more information, see the Youthbuild webpage at: <https://mn.gov/deed/programs-services/office-youth-development/youth-programs/youthbuild.jsp>.

Youth at Work Equity Grants: provide workforce development and training opportunities for economically disadvantaged and at-risk youth with special consideration for youth from BIPOC communities and youth with disabilities. 86% of the youth served are from BIPOC communities in State Fiscal Year 2023. Experiential learning opportunities are designed for youth that promote mastery of work readiness competencies and 21st Century skills. Projects promote skill acquisition (academic and work readiness) through project-based instruction and increase exposure to in-demand jobs important to regional economies. In response to the COVID-19 precautions, many programs converted programming from in-person to virtual. This meant many youths needed access to internet hot spots, laptops, and other technology in order to

complete required schooling and remote work. Providing these resources to youth ensure low-income youth and BIPOC youth had equitable access to online learning and working. The program served 8215 youth in SFY23. Youth at Work Equity grants provide high-quality worksites and overall participant and employer satisfaction. These are two-year grants that emphasize innovation in serving youth. For more information, see the Youth Equity Grants webpage: <https://mn.gov/deed/programs-services/office-youth-development/special/grants/>.

- (4) Provide the language contained in the State policy for “requiring additional assistance to enter or complete an educational program, or to secure and hold employment” criterion for out-of-school youth specified in WIOA section 129(a)(1)(B)(iii)(VIII) and for “requiring additional assistance to complete an education program, or to secure and hold employment” criterion for in-school youth specified in WIOA section 129(a)(1)(C)(iv)(VII). If the state does not have a policy, describe how the state will ensure that local areas will have a policy for these criteria.**

Some of the industries that are introduced to youth include information technology, manufacturing, transportation, childcare, and health care. Person-centered planning is a major key to success. The work experiences that youth receive are targeted to their specific career interest areas as much as possible to provide hands-on exposure to a field that is intriguing to them. Career readiness skills are assessed on the worksite by the worksite supervisors, allowing the youth to gauge their skill level with regards to industry-specific expectations and requirements. Financial literacy tools are used to help each youth navigate having a job and managing the earnings that follows. During the COVID-19 pandemic, providers instituted virtual opportunities for participants to complete work readiness training and earn a stipend for their work. Some virtual work experiences have also been developed to meet the needs of participants and employers during the pandemic and beyond.

The TANF project has enabled young adults, many of whom have significant barriers to obtaining and maintaining employment, to explore educational opportunities and fulfilling careers that will set them and their families up for lifelong success. A 2018 evaluation report and other TANF Youth Innovation resources and participant success stories can be found on the project webpage: <https://mn.gov/deed/programs-services/office-youth-development/special/tanf/>.

The Minnesota Youth Program (MYP) provides short-term, contextualized and individualized training services for at-risk youth, ages 14 to 24. Coordinated at the local level by the Workforce Development Boards/Youth Committees, MYP eligibility criteria is more flexible (inclusive) than the WIOA Youth Program. MYP serves an extremely disadvantaged group of young men and women: participants have multiple challenges such as substance abuse, criminal records, mental health issues, and cognitive learning limitations, in addition to being poor. The COVID-19 Pandemic caused disruption to establish in-person service models. Services to youth that were previously provided in-person shifted to virtual models. Various state and funding sources were leveraged to increase educational access in spite of the pandemic health protocols.

Disability Employment Initiative (DEI): Partners for Youth Career Pathways - Minnesota is managing a \$2.5 million, 42-month DEI grant funded through the U.S. DOL’s Employment and Training Administration and the Office of Disability Employment Policy. This grant allowed three of Minnesota’s rural WDAs to strengthen partnerships and strategically align career pathways systems to effectively serve youth with disabilities through multiple entry and exit points. The federal DEI grant allowed Minnesota to expand the number of Employment Networks (ENs) in the state which increases services to Social Security disability beneficiaries. The DEI helped Minnesota build the capacity of rural WDA staff to increase the number of youth with disabilities participating in career pathways programs by implementing the Integrated Resource Team (IRT) approach and the Guideposts for Success best practices framework into service delivery. The DEI grant was successfully closed out in the spring of 2020. For more information on the DEI see the Disability Employment Initiative weblink: <https://mn.gov/deed/programs-services/office-youth-development/special/disability-employment-initiative/>.

DEED, DHS, and MAWB have worked in partnership since 2009 to serve teen parents receiving Minnesota Family Investment Program (MFIP) benefits or in TANF-eligible households. This partnership has leveraged over \$8.6 millions of TANF funds to provide work experience and work-readiness training for over 5,000 teen parents who were receiving MFIP benefits or younger youth who were MFIP recipients. The partnership addresses disparities in MFIP outcomes, especially the Work Participation Rate, for African American and American Indian participants. Many of the participants have little or no previous work experience and they develop work readiness skills through their participation in the project. Participants are assigned a youth counselor/case manager and receive labor market information highlighting in-demand industries and educational opportunities available in the region. Co-enrollment in the WIOA Youth Program and the Minnesota Youth Program, when appropriate, has contributed to the success of these projects.

TITLE I-B ASSURANCES

The State Plan must include assurances that:	
1.	The State has implemented a policy to ensure Adult program funds provide a priority in the delivery of training services and individualized career services to individuals who are low income, public assistance recipients and basic skills deficient;
2.	The State has implemented a policy to ensure local areas have a process in place for referring veterans with significant barriers to employment to career services provided by the JVSG program’s Disabled Veterans’ Outreach Program (DVOP) specialist;

3.	The State has established a written policy and procedure that set forth criteria to be used by chief elected officials for the appointment of local workforce investment board members;
4.	The State established written policy and procedures to ensure local workforce investment boards are certified by the governor every two years in accordance with WIOA section 107(c)(2);
5.	Where an alternative entity takes the place of a State Board, the State has written policy and procedures to ensure the alternative entity meets the definition under WIOA section 101(e) and the legal requirements for membership;
6.	The State established a written policy and procedure for how the individuals and entities represented on the State Workforce Development Board help to determine the methods and factors of distribution, and how the State consults with chief elected officials in local areas throughout the State in determining the distributions;
7.	The State will not use funds received under WIOA Title I to assist, promote, or deter union organizing in accordance with WIOA section 181(b)(7);
8.	The State distributes adult and youth funds received under WIOA equitably throughout the State, and no local area suffers significant shifts in funding from year-to-year during the period covered by this plan;
9.	If a State Workforce Development Board, department, or agency administers State laws for vocational rehabilitation of persons with disabilities, that board, department, or agency cooperates with the agency that administers Wagner-Peyser services, Adult and Dislocated Worker programs and Youth Programs under Title I;
10.	The State agrees to report on the impact and outcomes of its approved waivers in its WIOA Annual Report.
11.	The State has taken appropriate action to secure compliance with the Uniform Guidance at 2 CFR 200 and 2 CFR 2900, including that the State will annually monitor local areas to ensure compliance and otherwise take appropriate action to secure compliance with the Uniform Guidance under section WIOA 184(a)(3);

Wagner-Peyser Act Program (Employment Service)

a. Employment Service Staff

1. **Describe how the State will staff the provision of labor exchange services under the Wagner-Peyser Act, such as through State employees, including but not limited to state merit staff employees, staff of a subrecipient, or some combination thereof.**

The State of Minnesota will continue to utilize state merit staff employees to provide labor exchange services, also known as the Employment Service Program, under the Wagner-Peyser Act. The Job Service unit oversees these employees and ensures all services are provided as outlined under WIOA.

2. **Describe how the State will utilize professional development activities for Employment Service staff to ensure staff is able to provide high quality services to both jobseekers and employers.**

The state will use several professional development activities for Job Service staff:

- State-wide staff training on the provisions of Career Services to job seekers started in December of 2017 and will continue through 2024 and 2027 with monthly webinars.
- Classroom presentation skills training based on the state's Creative Job Search workshop will continue to be offered to all employees who facilitate workshops.
- Staff are offered access to LinkedIn learning accounts and additional free and paid trainings as approved by their supervisor to maintain and enhance required skills.
- Training specific to each employee is documented in the employee's Individual Development Plan and supervisory file.
- Ongoing training in the areas of dealing with diverse populations, accessibility, safety, and financial literacy will continue to be offered to all employees.

Training will continue to be provided in specific program areas such as Migrant Seasonal Farm Worker Services, Foreign Labor Certification, Fidelity Bonding, Work Opportunity Tax Credit program, and Trade Adjustment Assistance.

The goal of these training activities is to ensure staff and managers are able to effectively assist job seekers with improving their job search skills, obtaining the best job possible, and progressing in a career pathway. These training activities will also provide staff and managers with the skills necessary to provide employers with access to qualified candidates and strengthen their businesses. The delivery methods of these trainings will include on-the-job training, conference calls, and online training using platforms like Teams, WebEx and Zoom.

In order to improve demand-driven workforce services to our businesses on both a state and regional level, six regional Workforce strategy Consultants serve employers in the state by developing, leading, and delivering demand-driven regional and statewide services, resources, and tools relating to recruiting, retaining, and developing talent for the regional economy.

This work includes developing workforce planning strategies and solutions for businesses, emphasizing talent pipeline development for key regional and statewide targeted industry sectors through regional collaboration and employer-led sector partnerships. The strategy consultants specifically focus on working with business leaders in targeted industry, high growth sectors providing family sustaining wages through analyzing labor market data and workforce planning needs and then developing customized strategies in the areas of: Engaging Community Partners & Stakeholders, Recruiting & Brand Awareness, Employee Inclusion & Career Opportunities, Onboarding, Training & Upskilling, and Diversity, Equity, Inclusion & Accessibility.

In addition to working directly with businesses, the Workforce Strategy Consultants initiate and build partnerships with community organizations, industry associations and education partners, to develop long term regional strategies to meet employer talent needs, connect employer to available resources, and serve as a bridge between regional and state workforce development and economic development entities. These staff also inform the development of the regional plan through sharing employer needs as well as assist in the implementation through the alignment of strategies, tools, and resources supporting businesses.

The Workforce Strategy Consultant team is located within the Economic Development division of DEED to better align with the needs of employers receiving services from their various projects and initiatives.

3. Describe strategies developed to support training and awareness across core programs and the Unemployment Insurance (UI) program and the training provided for Employment Services and WIOA staff on identification of UI eligibility issues and referral to UI staff for adjudication.

At least once or twice a year, Unemployment Insurance Division staff participate in Job Service training webinars that all Employment Service program staff are required to attend. These trainings include the best ways to refer UI applicants to UI staff.

Employment Services and WIOA staff are not involved in the identification of UI eligibility issues.

Additionally, the state will use several professional development activities for Job Service staff:

State-wide staff training on the provisions of Career Services to job seekers started in December of 2017 and will continue throughout 2024 and 2027 with monthly webinars.

Classroom presentation skills training based on the state's Creative Job Search workshop will continue to be offered to all employees who facilitate workshops.

Staff are offered access to LinkedIn learning accounts and additional free and paid trainings as approved by their supervisor to maintain and enhance required skills.

Training specific to each employee is documented in the employee's Individual Development Plan and supervisory file.

Ongoing training in the areas of dealing with diverse populations, accessibility, safety, and financial literacy will continue to be offered to all employees.

Training will continue to be provided in specific program areas such as Migrant Seasonal Farm Worker Services, Foreign Labor Certification, Fidelity Bonding, Work Opportunity Tax Credit program, Unemployment Insurance, Veterans Employment Services, and Trade Adjustment Assistance.

The goal of these training activities is to ensure staff and managers are able to effectively assist job seekers with improving their job search skills, obtaining the best job possible, and progressing in a career pathway. These training activities will also provide staff and managers with the skills necessary to provide employers with access to qualified candidates and strengthen their businesses. The delivery methods of these trainings will include on-the-job training, conference calls, and online training using platforms like Teams, WebEx and Zoom.

b. Explain how the State will provide information and meaningful assistance to individuals requesting assistance in filing a claim for unemployment compensation through one-stop centers, as required by WIOA as a career service.

Local CareerForce location staff receive the training described in the prior section to provide assistance to UI claimants. Staff use this knowledge to assist the claimants in using computers and phones available for use in the local CareerForce locations. The computers and phones give the claimants and local CareerForce staff direct access to the UI program and UI staff. UI Customer Service staff help individuals around the state, and around the country, apply for benefits.

c. Describe the State's strategy for providing reemployment assistance to UI claimants and other unemployed individuals.

Minnesota's strategy is centered on the Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment (RESEA) program. It's important to note that due to the state's low unemployment rate, ALL UI claimants who are seeking work (i.e. not attached to a job) are scheduled for RESEA sessions that are conducted by phone and are then referred to Wagner-Peyser staff. This helps ensure that the Wagner-Peyser program will have direct contact with all UI applicants in the state who are not attached to a job.

Minnesota's strategy in this area will be as follows:

A Job Service staff person will contact every referral that results from an RESEA phone session that UI offers across the state. The UI program plans on offering RESEA sessions to all UI claimants who are not attached to a job.

The RESEA and Job Service staff will conduct an assessment of every UI claimant to determine who will most likely need additional services from the CareerForce location.

The Job Service staff person will conduct an orientation to CareerForce services by phone that includes information on how to register for the state's labor exchange system, i.e. MinnesotaWorks, and information about programs such as the Dislocated Worker program that they may be eligible for.

The Job Service staff person will assist the RESEA customer with creating an initial registration and enrolling in the Creative Job Search workshop. Creative Job Search is typically the first job finding/job placement service that is offered to UI applicants. The workshop consists of training on how to find a job that includes career planning, preparing for the job hunt, skills identification, resumes and cover letters, applications and references, social media, interviewing skills, and more. These workshops are held both in-person and virtually.

Job Service will follow up with UI applicants who are not enrolled in a program to ensure that they have a complete registration and resume in MinnesotaWorks, and that they are taking advantage of job placement services.

Wagner-Peyser services will also be available to all other unemployed individuals. Anyone can enroll in the job search classes offered to UI claimants, can access 1:1 staff assistance to obtain job search assistance, career guidance, labor market information, etc., and can use MinnesotaWorks.net to search for jobs. One of the strategies employed by Wagner-Peyser that is marketed and offered to all citizens are onsite hiring events and career fairs. These events have grown in popularity and will continue to be used as a vehicle to connect all job seekers with employers.

d. Describe how the State will use W-P funds to support UI claimants, and the communication between W-P and UI, as appropriate including the following:

1) Coordination of and provision of labor exchange services for UI claimants as required by the Wagner-Peyser Act;

The UI program strongly encourages all UI applicant participants to register with the state's labor exchange system, MinnesotaWorks.net, and create a resume. Once registered, job seekers have access to all of the online features such as searching for jobs and making their resume viewable by employers registered in the system. As described in the previous Section, RESEA participants, who represent ALL UI applicants who are not attached to a job, also receive information on Wagner-Peyser services, information and referrals to eligibility-based programs (such as WIOA Dislocated Worker), orientations to CF services, and workshop enrollments.

Planning is in process to move the labor exchange system into the newly created CareerForceMN.com website. Integrating these two websites into one system will bring additional value and resources to UI claimants.

Other unemployed individuals as well as universal customers have access to the same re-employment services. Staff-assisted services such as job search workshops, assistance registering with MinnesotaWorks.net, resume writing assistance, provision of labor market information, referral to veteran services, and referral to education, training, and supportive services are offered to all job seekers.

By providing RESEA Services to all non-job attached UI Recipients, Minnesota is meeting the requirements of WPRS by providing employment services to the required UI claimants including those most likely to exhaust benefits.

2) Registration of UI claimants with the State’s employment service if required by State law;

State law does not require all UI claimants to register with MinnesotaWorks.net, however UI requires registration for RESEA program participants. As described earlier, Wagner-Peyser staff receive referrals from every RESEA phone session and provide follow up services with the intent of having every participant create a viewable resume in MinnesotaWorks.net.

3) Administration of the work test for the State unemployment compensation system, including making eligibility assessments (for referral to UI adjudication, if needed), and providing job finding and placement services for UI claimants; and

Wagner-Peyser Employment Service staff in Minnesota are not involved in administration of the work test or making eligibility assessments. The UI program administers the work test and does all eligibility assessments. Please refer to previous Sections for the description on how job finding and placement services are provided to UI applicants. As noted earlier, ALL UI applicants who are not attached to a job are required to attend a RESEA session, which means that all UI applicants are receiving the work test and getting an eligibility assessment.

4) Provision of referrals to and application assistance for training and education programs and resources.

All UI claimants who are not attached to employment are provided information about the availability of training and education programs at the RESEA session. This includes an explanation of how the UI claimant, if eligible, can qualify for and receive training.

Customers who would like further information about training are assisted either by Job Service staff to gain more information and application assistance, or by program staff if the customer is eligible for a WIOA or state funded program. This same information is provided to all other unemployed individuals and the universal customer by either self-service (information provided at the CareerForce location or online links to training programs) or with staff assistance.

e. Agricultural Outreach Plan (AOP). Each State agency must develop an AOP every four years as part of the Unified or Combined State Plan required under sections 102 or 103 of WIOA. The AOP must include an assessment of need. An assessment

need describes the unique needs of farmworkers in the area based on past and projected agricultural and farmworker activity in the State. Such needs may include but are not limited to: employment, training, and housing.

- 1) Assessment of Need. Provide an assessment of the unique needs of farmworkers in the area based on past and projected agricultural and farmworker activity in the State. Such needs may include but are not limited to: employment, training, and housing.**

Minnesota Agricultural Outreach Plan portion of the State Plan details the strategies for providing services to the Migrant and Seasonal Farmworkers (MSFWs) community, for the period of July 1, 2024, to June 30, 2025, as described in Wagner-Peyser, as set forth in regulations 20 CFR 653.107, WIOA Sections 102 and 103, and the Unified Planning Guidance.

In PY 24, the Department of Employment Economic and Development (DEED) will continue to provide Wagner-Peyser services to MSFWs with a full range of employment services and referrals to other community services. The full range of services provided includes job search assistance and placement, job counseling, training opportunities, and referrals to supportive services and programs. The program is administered by a Job Service supervisor who leads the Agricultural Outreach Representatives (AORs). AORs are fluent in both English and Spanish, to better serve the predominantly Spanish-speaking MSFWs

In addition, DEED, will ensure that the full range of services provided to MSFW population are qualitatively equivalent and quantitatively proportionate to the services provided to non-MSFWs. To ensure statewide compliance, the agency will make every effort to meet the Migrant Indicators of Compliance.

Migrant labor participation is concentrated between the months of May to October, based on the growing or harvesting of the crops and the arrival of farmworkers attempting to secure housing for the season. The use of mechanization and chemicals in the state has reduced the number of farmworkers needed per acre in fieldwork. Many migrant farmworkers have continued to take advantage of other longer-term employment opportunities in vegetable, meat, and poultry processing companies. Farmers have also opted to use more of the H-2A foreign workers to ensure that they are able to obtain the needed workers and that the workers will remain throughout the period needed by the employer. As a result, there have been less opportunities for domestic workers to obtain farm work that includes housing that is not H-2A housing. Migrant farmworkers tend to travel with their families, including young children, and lack of housing for their families results in fewer migrant families traveling to Minnesota in search of farm work.

Because some workers return to areas where they have established relationships and are encouraged to seek services from the Agricultural Outreach Representatives at the CareerForce locations. Therefore, it is difficult to provide an exact number of migrant farmworkers in this state. The 2017 Census of Agriculture released in April 2019 reports that there were 3,044 migrant farmworkers, in Minnesota, reported by farmers using their payroll records. This number is from self-reporting and may not reflect the number of farmworkers that work in food processing, smaller farms and operations, and farmworkers that were not counted due to

non-participation of farmers in the 2017 Census of Agriculture. The best estimate of farmworkers for Minnesota is 5000 to 6000 migrant farmworkers residing in Minnesota during the peak season. The total number of registered Migrant and Seasonal Farmworkers in the last full program year, PY20, was 299 compared to 510 registered in PY19 .

Minnesota is expecting an increase in Hemp farming and an increase for farmworker labor in this newer industry. The Minnesota Department of Agriculture (MDA) has seen this industry more than triple in size since the beginning of their pilot program in 2016. It is expected that the harvesting of hemp for CBD oil will be the crop that generates the need for more farmworkers as this is the more labor intense product for hemp farming.

Currently, the majority of the agricultural employers in Minnesota include: Southern Minnesota Beet Sugar Cooperative (SMBSC), Lakeside Foods, Seneca Foods, and Bird's Eye Foods. Smaller agricultural employers include potato farmers, strawberry farmers, Syngenta (seed company), farmers who hire for rock pickers, smaller vegetable farmers (cucumber, cabbage, zucchini), apple farmers, and nurseries who hire seasonal workers. A concern heard from the majority of these agricultural employers is the difficulty in obtaining farmworkers due to the lack of housing in their rural areas. Small farmers and larger agricultural employers are not generally willing to provide housing for domestic workers. Larger employers that have used H-2A workers are leading the industry in Minnesota when it comes to providing housing to H-2A workers but only within the H-2A program. A need for farmworker housing for domestic workers is a need that has not been met by our state.

- 2) Provide an assessment of the agricultural activity in the State means: 1) Identifying the top five labor-intensive crops, the months of heavy activity, and the geographic area of prime activity; 2) Summarize the agricultural employers' needs in the State (i.e. are they predominantly hiring local or foreign workers, are they expressing that there is a scarcity in the agricultural workforce); and 3) Identifying any economic, natural, or other factors that are affecting agriculture in the State or any projected factors that will affect agriculture in the State.**

Minnesota is a leading state in annual farm income. It ranks at 5 among the states, generating about 4% of the nation's total agricultural receipts. In terms of revenue generated Minnesota's top five agricultural products are corn for grain, hogs, soybeans, dairy products, and cattle and calves. Livestock and livestock products account for about half of the state's farm income. The most valuable livestock products are hogs, accounting for 18% of the state's total agricultural revenues (Source: [Minnesota Agricultural Profile 2023](#))

Minnesota has 68,822 farms totaling 25,516,982 million acres of the state's 50 million acres. The average farm size is 371 acres. Minnesota's growing season varies depending on where you are in the state: 100 days in the north to 150 days in the south. The Agricultural and Food Industry is the 2nd largest employer in Minnesota with (2/3) two-thirds of all agricultural jobs are off-farm, in processing, distribution, supply and service sectors. This type of employer hires domestic workers who travel, primarily, from the southern portion of the U.S., specifically,

Texas, and work seasonally for this industry. There is not a shortage of workers for this industry. Minnesota has seen an increase in the implementation of H-2A workers in the more traditional farm work and nursery type work and dairy industry. Employers implementing the H-2A program, in these industries, report they have some shortage of workers and thus, turn to H-2A for labor. Minnesota is a top producer of frozen and canned vegetables. Corn is the state's most valuable crop followed by soybeans. Minnesota's leading fruit crop are apples. Minnesota leads the nation in producing sugar beets, turkeys, oats, and sweet corn and green peas for processing. The state is second only to California in wild rice production. Minnesota is unique in the production of wild rice with it being cultivated paddy wild rice and traditional Native American hand harvested wild rice. The state is also a major producer of spring wheat, canola, hogs, dry beans and milk cows.

The top crops and months of heavy activity include:

- Sugar beets NW/SW MN June- October
- Vegetables SE MN April-October
- Potatoes Statewide March-October
- Corn Central/Southern June-September
- Soybeans Central/Southern June-August
- Apples SE/Metro July -October

- 3) An assessment of the unique needs of farmworkers means summarizing Migrant and Seasonal Farm Worker (MSFW) characteristics (including if they are predominantly from certain countries, what language(s) they speak, the approximate number of MSFWs in the State during peak season and during low season, and whether they tend to be migrant, seasonal, or year-round farmworkers). This information must take into account data supplied by WIOA Section 167 National Farmworker Jobs Program (NFJP) grantees, other MSFW organizations, employer organizations, and State and/or Federal agency data sources such as the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) Employment and Training Administration.**

Minnesota had 510 registered MSFWs for PY19 and 299 registered in PY20. In PY19 97.84% of those MSFWs identified as a person of Hispanic or Latino ethnicity compared to 97.99% in PY20. The number of registered MSFWs were identified during the high-peak season. Gender breakdown showed 50.98% reporting male gender and 49.02% reporting female gender. Data records show that in PY19 80.98% of MSFWs identified as migrant farmworkers versus seasonal farmworker, with 90.20% identifying as migrant farmworkers in PY20. The majority of the MSFWs registered identified a language barrier for a total of 67%. The primary language identified for 77.52% of the MSFWs was Spanish and 62.35% of registered MSFWs identified as having dropped out of high school.

Migrant labor participation is concentrated in the months between May-October based on the growing or harvesting of the crops. The use of mechanization and Roundup Ready chemicals in the state has greatly reduced the number of farm workers needed in fieldwork. Many farm workers have continued to take advantage of other longer-term employment opportunities in vegetable, meat, and poultry processing companies.

Since some workers return seasonally to areas where they have established employer relationships, they do not seek the services of the local one-stop CareerForce location. Therefore, it is difficult to provide an actual number of migrant farm workers in this state. The best estimate of 5,000 to 6,000 migrant and seasonal farm workers residing in Minnesota during the peak season (May-October) with most being recruited and contracted at their permanent home base, for hire by the Food Processing and the Turkey & Poultry company recruiters/contractors. These employers offer on-site housing to the hired workers. Most of this housing is for single adult workers. The farmworkers working in Minnesota are primarily employed by food processing companies. Food processing companies recruit the workers in Texas every spring. The migrant food processing workers arrive to the work sites in Montgomery, Glencoe, Blue Earth, Brooten, Owatonna, and Plainview, MN. Minnesota has experienced the recent closing of two food processing plants, Seneca Foods in Rochester, Minnesota, and Del Monte in Sleepy Eye, Minnesota. The number of migrant and seasonal workers affected by these closures is estimated to be almost 600. Some of the workers affected had been working, seasonally, with these employers for 15-20 years. The most recent closure occurred in 2019 at Del Monte, located in Sleepy Eye, MN.

The period of lowest MSFW activity in Minnesota is between the months of January – March. Migrant farmworkers begin to arrive in Minnesota in late April to attempt to secure their housing and this is oftentimes weeks prior to when their seasonal farm work begins.

The migrant farmworker stream in Minnesota continues to evolve with workers only wanting to assist with seasonal crop production and returning home in the off-season. Employment opportunities have shifted from actual field work to more food processing, thus changing the dynamics that makes employment more predictable based on the growth season. Workers are recruited prior to seasons, as producers recruit in Texas. Farmworkers are less interested in staying in Minnesota for training, due to family members elsewhere and climate reasons.

Most of the farmworker housing is dedicated to contracted adult workers or is severely limited in availability for migrant families. The inability to pay for housing in non-farmworker housing results in fewer migrant workers remaining in Minnesota which has caused employers to struggle with their farmworker labor needs.

Seasonal farmworkers are more likely to consider training for other occupations and to take advantage of the services provided at the AJCs due to their established residence in Minnesota. Migrant farmworkers are faced with high cost for housing, language barrier, and limited family roots in Minnesota. This affects the level of interest in committing to training opportunities in Minnesota. Short-term training opportunities provided by Motivation Education & Training (MET), NFJP partner, are more attractive to migrant farmworkers because they can take advantage of those opportunities in their state of residence and not necessarily just in Minnesota.

4) Outreach Activities.

Agricultural Outreach Representatives (AORs) are State Merit Staff, conduct outreach, listening sessions and build authentic relationship building with MSFWs with fairness and respect.

When the Agricultural Outreach Representative (AOR) conducts outreach, the MSFW Program (bilingual) Resource Guide provides local staff and agency contact information to the MSFWs. The information is important and sometimes crucial to MSFWs, whether they are seeking agricultural or non-agricultural employment and services. The AOR posts contact information with local businesses and agencies that are frequented by the MSFWs, and this information includes tear-off tabs with their names and phone numbers. These postings are written in English and Spanish. This is consistent with our commitment to universal access to labor exchange services and the requirement to ensure that all job seekers with LEP and/or little or no computer knowledge or access to computer-based labor exchange services will be provided services and assistance.

The AORs target early outreach efforts prior to the high-peak season at its highest point. This is to make contact with MSFWs during a time when they not yet started working and to be able to connect them to support services in the area and to review AJC services information and provide farmworker rights and complaint process information. Once the MSFWs begin working they are difficult to meet with as their work schedules become a priority. Having access to farmworkers prior to the peak-season allows the AORs to invite the farmworkers into the AJCs so that they become more familiar and comfortable with seeking services available at the AJCs. This includes job seeking services and training opportunities.

Outreach activity is concentrated in the summer and fall months when MSFW activity is at its peak. Many of the workers that the outreach staff make contact with are food processor workers that are recruited and contracted in Texas by employers. They arrive to work in three 8-to-14-hour shifts during (June-October) the peak season.

There are four one-stop CareerForce locations with significant MSFW activity in Minnesota. These CareerForce locations include a bilingual Spanish/English AOR, all of whom are bilingual / bicultural, have farmworker backgrounds and a strong commitment to their work. The AOR outreach staff perform outreach activities during the peak time of the season including scheduling and coordinating outreach efforts with the other service providers. The outreach staff provide the farmworkers and employers with information, presentations, and handouts related to employment rights and protections, job referrals and job search services. The majority of MSFWs encountered by the AORs and other service providers (Migrant Health, Legal Services, NFJP) indicated that they are limited English (LEP) or non-English speakers. The outreach staff assist MSFWs with translation, program registrations, referral to the Unemployment Insurance Program if needed, and provide and inform workers of all employment services to those who qualify. The staff provides informational resource guides that include eligibility information for all agency partners, and local community resources. Services will be actively promoted to farm workers as described above under the local outreach plan.

Collaborating with partner agencies and organizations that provide service to MSFWs is a vital key to serving MSFWs in Minnesota. AORs are available to attend parent meetings at Tri-Valley Opportunity Council, Inc. (migrant schools) throughout Minnesota. These meetings are held in the evenings and begin as early as 3:00 p.m. or as late as 6:00 p.m. and run for 2 to 3 hours. These meetings are scheduled to accommodate the work schedules of the MSFWs and are a perfect opportunity for AORs to meet farmworkers and present MSFW information and provide services, on-site.

Collaborative work also includes working with the Community Health staff and traveling to different locations to address the needs of the MSFWs who do not have medical coverage and cannot afford medical coverage. AORs provide translation services for Community Health staff and can provide MSFW information and complete registrations for MSFWs, on-site. These collaborative efforts/events are scheduled at migrant housing camps and public parks where AORs can strategically gain access to otherwise non-accessible farmworkers.

AORs will often extend outreach invitations to enforcement agencies to these events and when appropriate. Employer owned housing is difficult to access and thus in those situations outreach focuses on distributing the information for partner agencies/enforcement agencies to maintain a working relationship with the employers.

Local food shelves, churches and any other opportunities that arise for outreach are always considered for outreach workers to provide the required services to farmworkers. Attending local community meetings and providing information on the MSFW population is a key role for our outreach efforts.

The outreach staff in the four significant local offices develop a yearly outreach plan which, in part, describes the coordination and referral system with other local community MSFW service providers and partners. This includes setting goals and objectives on employer and worker contacts, registration number of workers, job referrals and following- up on referrals to record results, increasing the number of employer visits and making contacts for job development and making assessments of the needs of farmworkers and employers. These plans are monitored by the State Monitor Advocate (SMA) as part of the office review process to ensure that MSFWs and employers have full access to all CareerForce services. Additionally, the goals align with DEED's values and mission statement.

Outreach workers (AORs) work with the Rapid Response team when a food processing company is permanently closed. They coordinate with the Rapid Response team to be able to present information on the MSFW services provided by the AORs and they are able to present this information in Spanish. AORs also coordinate this type of event to include the NFJP partner and include them in the presentation provided to the workers.

A) Contacting farmworkers who are not being reached by the normal intake activities conducted by the employment service offices.

When the Agricultural Outreach Representative (AOR) is conducting outreach, the MSFW Program (bilingual) Resource Guide provides local staff and agency contact information to the MSFWs. The information is important and sometimes crucial to MSFWs, whether they are

seeking agricultural or non-agricultural employment and services. The AORs post contact information with local businesses and agencies that are frequented by the MSFWs, and this information includes tear-off tabs with their names and phone numbers. These postings are written in English and Spanish. This is consistent with our commitment to universal access to labor exchange services and the requirement to ensure that all job seekers with LEP and/or little or no computer knowledge or access to computer-based labor exchange services will still be provided services and assistance.

The AORs conduct early outreach efforts prior to the high-peak season at its highest point. This is to contact MSFWs during a time when they not yet started working and to be able to connect them to support services in the area and to review AJC services information and provide farmworker rights and complaint process information. Once the MSFWs begin working they are difficult to meet with as their work schedules become a priority. Having access to farmworkers prior to the peak-season allows the AORs to invite the farmworkers into the AJCs so that they become more familiar and comfortable with seeking services available at the AJCs. This includes job seeking services and training opportunities.

Outreach activity is concentrated in the summer and fall months when MSFW activity is at its peak. Most of the workers that the outreach staff make contact with are food processor workers that are recruited and contracted in Texas by employers. They arrive to work in three 8-to-14-hour shifts during (June-October) the peak season.

There are four one-stop CareerForce locations with significant MSFW activity in Minnesota. These CareerForce locations include a bilingual Spanish/English AOR, all of whom are bilingual / bicultural, have farmworker backgrounds and a strong commitment to their work. The AOR outreach staff perform outreach activities during the peak time of the season including scheduling and coordinating outreach efforts with the other service providers. The outreach staff provide the farmworkers and employers with information, presentations, and handouts related to employment rights and protections, job referrals and job search services. The majority of MSFWs encountered by the AORs and other service providers (Migrant Health, Legal Services, NFJP) indicated that they are limited English (LEP) or non-English speakers. The outreach staff assist MSFWs with translation, program registrations, the Unemployment compensation application process if needed, and provide and inform workers of all employment services to those who qualify. The staff provides informational resource guides that include eligibility information for all agency partners, and local community resources. Services will be actively promoted to farm workers as described above under the local outreach plan.

Collaborating with partner agencies and organizations that provide service to MSFWs is a vital key to serving MSFWs in Minnesota. AORs are available to attend parent meetings at Tri-Valley Opportunity Council, Inc. (migrant schools) throughout Minnesota. These meetings are held in the evenings and begin as early as 3:00 p.m. or as late as 6:00 p.m. and run for 2 to 3 hours. These meetings are scheduled to accommodate the work schedules of the MSFWs and are a perfect opportunity for AORs to come into contact with farmworkers and present MSFW information and provide services, on-site.

Collaborative work also includes working with the Community Health staff and traveling to different locations to address the needs of the MSFWs who do not have medical coverage and cannot afford medical coverage. AORs provide translation services for Community Health staff and are able to provide MSFW information and complete registrations for MSFWs, on-site. These collaborative efforts/events are scheduled at migrant housing camps and public parks where AORs can strategically gain access to otherwise non-accessible farmworkers.

AORs extend outreach invitations to enforcement agencies to these events and when appropriate. Employer owned housing is difficult to access and thus in those situations outreach focuses on distributing the information for partner agencies/enforcement agencies to maintain a working relationship with the employers.

Local food shelves, churches and any other opportunities that arise for outreach are always considered in order for outreach workers to provide the required services to farmworkers. Attending local community meetings and providing information on the MSFW population is a key role for our outreach efforts.

The outreach staff in the four significant local offices develop a yearly outreach plan which, in part, describes the coordination and referral system with other local community MSFW service providers and partners. This includes setting goals and objectives on employer and worker contacts, registration number of workers, job referrals and following- up on referrals to record results, increasing the number of employer visits and making contacts for job development and making assessments of the needs of farmworkers and employers. These plans are monitored by the State Monitor Advocate (SMA) as part of the office review process to ensure that MSFWs and employers have full access to all CareerForce services.

Outreach workers (AORs) work with the Rapid Response team when a food processing company is permanently closed. They coordinate with the Rapid Response team to be able to present information on the MSFW services provided by the AORs and they disseminate this information in Spanish. AORs also coordinate this type of event to include the NFJP partner and include them in the presentation provided to the workers.

- B) Providing technical assistance to outreach staff. Technical assistance must include trainings, conferences, additional resources, and increased collaboration with other organizations on topics such as one-stop center services (i.e. availability of referrals to training, supportive services, and career services, as well as specific employment opportunities), the Employment Service and Employment-Related Law Complaint System (“Complaint System” described at 20 CFR 658 Subpart E), information on the other organizations serving MSFWs in the area, and a basic summary of farmworker rights, including their rights with respect to the terms and conditions of employment.**

Minnesota has a specialist position dedicated as a year-round full-time State Monitor Advocate (SMA) and four full-time Agricultural Outreach Representatives (AORs). The SMA provides training for the outreach workers (AORs) includes an orientation on the WF1 (MIS) system components and the integration of the MSFW Program within WF1 to effectively and efficiently

ensure the documentation of the full range of employment, career and training services provided to the farmworkers. The SMA conducts an annual Pre-Season training for the AORs and agencies such as the Department of Labor and Industry, Office of Attorney General, Agricultural Workers Project, Community Health, Tri-Valley Opportunity Council, Inc., and NFJP partner are presenters and/or attendees. UI staff are also invited to present and discuss the unique needs of the MSFW population as it applies to their UI benefits and the role of the outreach worker. Quarterly meetings are scheduled for MSFW staff to address any areas of concern and/or to review training materials received from federal trainings attended by the SMA. The SMA also provides technical assistance to AJC staff throughout Minnesota and to the AORs, as needed. NFJP partner, MET staff, are invited to participate and provide input on the MSFW population that we both serve and how we can work together to provide services.

The AORs also receive updated training on customer services, workshops on Dislocated Worker programs, Employer services, SNAP, MFIP, Job Fairs, and WIOA compliance. The AOR staff are invited to and do presentations at company's Employee Orientations for the food processors, facilitated by the food processing companies.

AORs (outreach workers) were able to attend the National MAFO conference to receive training on issues concerning and affecting farmworkers. The National MAFO conference was also attended by the NFJP partner. This training opportunity also provided valuable networking opportunities with other outreach workers from across the U.S., and other SMAs, and the National Monitor Advocate and Regional Monitor Advocate. The SMA will continue to promote the attendance of AORs to this valuable training opportunity.

AORs also participate in DOL training opportunities and contribute to the discussions on how to best meet the needs of MSFWs in our state.

C) Increasing outreach worker training and awareness across core programs including the Unemployment Insurance (UI) program and the training on identification of UI eligibility issues.

Agricultural Outreach Representatives are also required to attend monthly training webinars. These are known as Job Service training webinars and feature regular updates about providing Career Services as defined in WIOA. Additionally, these trainings focus on additional resources, best practices, strategies and concepts. The focus is usually related to providing services funded by the Wagner Peyser Act. Furthermore, an annual update about Migrant and Seasonal Farm Worker program is featured on these training webinars.

UI staff are invited to the MSFW Pre-Season trainings to offer updates on UI and UI processes. UI informational brochures are available for distribution by AORs in Spanish and other languages. This information is reviewed by the AOR with MSFWs to provide all information in the MSFWs native language.

D) Providing State merit staff outreach workers professional development activities to ensure they are able to provide high quality services to both jobseekers and employers.

To ensure that AOR staff provides professional, high-quality services to employers and job seekers. The SMA provides technical assistance and support to the outreach staff on outreach for the MSFWs and related functions, including Pre-Season Trainings on topics related to the MSFW program including Complaint Process, MIC, state, and federal regulations affecting the MSFW customer. The SMA provides onsite reviews of local services provided to MSFWs. The SMA and AORs train local staff and provide technical assistance to enhance services to MSFWs (e.g., introducing migrants and other customers to office technology, and offering translation assistance within local communities). Additionally, the SMA performs the following required activities:

- Conducts annual State-level reviews of one-stop centers and career center services and protections provided to MSFWs.
- Consults with State and local staff to ensure accurate reporting of MSFW-related information.
- Compiles and reports on all statistical and other MSFW-related data reported by agricultural offices quarterly.
- Reviews proposed State directives, manuals, and operating instructions that pertain to MSFWs.
- Participates in federal monitoring reviews.
- Prepares an annual summary report of statewide services.

The outreach workers (AORs) participate in the annual Pre and Post Season MSFW Program training, which is developed and facilitated by the State Monitor Advocate (SMA). The emphasis of the training includes outreach efforts, coordination with other agencies, the Complaint Process and the rights and protections afforded to MSFWs by state and federal laws. The NFJP, Motivation, Education and Training (MET, Inc.) staff is always invited to attend and present at the annual trainings. The MET staff work in partnership and collaboration with the outreach staff to deliver services and community information and resources to MSFWs and employers.

The training also includes information on services and training provided by the local CareerForce locations and all agency partners. Enforcement agencies are also invited to attend and present at the post season training, including Wage and Hour, OSHA, Labor & Industry, Human Rights, Legal Services, Department of Transportation, and EEOC. The information presented and obtained from these agencies is vital and important when providing agency referrals to the farmworkers.

E) Coordinating outreach efforts with NFJP grantees as well as with public and private community service agencies and MSFW groups.

Minnesota has a Memorandum of Understanding with Motivation, Education and Training, Inc. (MET) the NFJP grantee since 1997. The collaboration includes team outreach days to the farmworker camps, and informational meetings held for the workers. The NFJP staff is invited to attend bi-weekly team meeting MSFW outreach staff and present at the SMA pre-season training.

MET, Inc. staff are invited and participate in conference call meetings and quarterly meetings with MSFW staff to provide input on status of funding for training and support services offered to MSFWs by MET, Inc.

The following data is derived from the NFJP database of MET, Inc., who is an NFJP grantee for the state of Minnesota. The NFJP services and referrals were provided to farmworkers across a large area stretching from the counties of Kandiyohi, Brown, Blue Earth, Waseca, Steele and Olmsted in the southern half of the state. NFJP services were also provided in the western counties of Clay and Wilken.

PY 2019 (7/1/2019 to 6/30/2020), the number of MSFW contacts by NFJP partner with Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED) reached 510 farmworkers.

PY 2020 (7/1/2020 to 6/30/2021), the number of MSFW contacts by NFJP partner with Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED) reached 299 farmworkers.

NFJP is a co-located partner in the Willmar CareerForce and the Monticello CareerForce locations and are also located in the Clay County Social Services building which is the location of the Moorhead CareerForce. . Their main office is located in Waseca, Minnesota, which is located in the southeastern portion of Minnesota.

The outreach staff in the four significant local offices develop a yearly outreach plan which, in part, describes the coordination and referral system with other local community MSFW service providers and partners. This includes setting goals and objectives on employer and worker contacts, registration number of workers, job referrals and following- up on referrals to record results, increasing the number of employer visits and making contacts for job development and making assessments of the needs of farmworkers and employers. These plans are monitored by the State Monitor Advocate (SMA) as part of the office review process to ensure that MSFWs and employers have full access to all CareerForce services.

- 5) **Services provided to farmworkers and agricultural employers through the one-stop delivery system.** Describe the State agency's proposed strategies for:
 - A. **Providing the full range of employment and training services to the agricultural community, both farmworkers and agricultural employers, through the one-stop delivery system. This includes:**
 - i. **How career and training services required under WIOA Title I will be provided to MSFWs through the one-stop centers.**

ii. How the State serves agricultural employers and how it intends to improve such services.

Narrative for all items above

DEED and MSFW Services' goals are to ensure that MSFWs are offered meaningful employment services, and information on benefits and protections, including counseling, testing, and job training referral services. These services are always equivalent and proportionate to services provided to non-MSFWs. Agricultural Outreach Representatives assist with work registration, and job leads and provide information about the complaint system and assistance with submitting complaints and referrals for supportive services in the language of the significant proportion of the States Migrant Seasonal Farm Worker population.

MSFWs are provided the full range of employment services by Agricultural Outreach Representatives (AORs) who meet with MSFWs directly at CareerForce locations and where they live and work, on an as-needed basis. Information provided to MSFWs includes the MSFW Program (bilingual) Resource Guide which provides staff and agency contact information. The information is important and sometimes crucial to MSFWs, whether they are seeking agricultural or non-agricultural employment. In addition to the full range of CareerForce services information, the Resource Guide provides a listing of resources such as: education services, food shelf contact information, health services including vaccination information, legal services, labor and workplace resources, and government agencies information. If needed services are not available through CareerForce, the AOR's will then make referrals to other agencies and organizations that are able to provide the appropriate assistance.

Through established and newly formed relationships AORs are frequently scheduling outreach events at local businesses, schools and community-based agencies that are frequented by the MSFWs. AOR's share business cards and post contact information including tear-off tabs with their names and phone numbers. These postings are written in English and Spanish. This is consistent with our commitment to universal access to labor exchange services and the requirement to ensure that all job seekers with LEP and/or little or no computer knowledge or access to computer-based labor exchange services will still be provided services and assistance. There are 50 one-stop CareerForce locations throughout Minnesota. CareerForce programs are targeted to dislocated workers, low-income adults, disadvantaged youth, welfare-to-work participants, Veterans, Justice-Involved individuals, and low-income seniors.

However, any person who lives in Minnesota can use their services. The centers offer many different classes and workshops. The locations also have services geared specifically for veterans, and Justice Involved individuals, including networking groups, job clubs and reintegration training.

Workshops to help with job search and career planning. Examples of workshops include:

- Interviewing skills
- Networking
- Internet job searches

- Completing job applications
- Resumes and cover letters

The SMA and AORs will continue to hold informational meetings throughout the high-peak season at the camps to provide information relevant to the MSFWs such as the Employment Service Complaint Process, referral to the Unemployment Insurance Program , and the full range of employment services available at the local CareerForce Locations. The meeting notices are posted in advance and held in the evening and or on the weekend to accommodate shift work schedules. Other MSFW service provider agencies are invited to collaborate and present information regarding agency service eligibility, type of services offered and benefits available. The meetings are well attended by the workers and their families and provide the outreach workers and community partners an opportunity to exchange agency contact information with other agency staff. AORs will also call or text MSFWs to let them know that they will be available to meet with MSFWs at their residence (housing camps) or location of outreach event.

The AORs continue to contact farm workers at their work sites, living areas and gathering places. The AORs collaborate with advocacy groups and enforcement agencies including County Social Service agencies providing supplemental nutrition assistance program (SNAP), Migrant Education centers, Health Service centers, local community agencies, Migrant Head Start, Migrant Legal Services, Agricultural Worker Project (AWP), Wage and Hour, Department of Labor and industry, Department of Health, and other service providers to enable them to provide outreach and locate farm workers that are missed through CareerForce outreach efforts. The cooperative referral arrangements with these agencies are based on long-standing agreements. Minnesota has a Memorandum of Understanding with Motivation, Education and Training, Inc. (MET) the NFJP grantee.

Outreach staff contact agricultural and non-agricultural employers, providing them with information about the employment services available for employers such as posting jobs, viewing resumes, hiring priority targeted populations, apprentice programs, Federal WOTC Tax Credit and Bonding programs and local Job Fairs. We distribute informational pamphlets directed to agricultural and non-agricultural employers that include contact information for the local Workforce Strategy Consultants. The SMA visits communities with substantial farmworker activity to meet with workers, local agencies, and employers, to assess their needs and determine the effectiveness of the CareerForce services. Also, promoting to employers the labor exchange system services website which contains information of particular importance to agricultural and non-ag employers.

Agricultural and non-agricultural employers in the area are provided information on:

- The Agricultural Recruiting System (ARS)
- Posting their job orders, Job Fairs, Apprenticeship programs
- Federal and state employment compliance regulations
- The availability of presentations by compliance agencies to growers' associations, and other affected groups and organizations

- Field and quality assessments
- Mediation/interpreter services
- Liaison between migrant service providers and employer

Minnesota is working to improve outreach to agricultural employers by better marketing the ARS to all agricultural employers to ensure Minnesota meets the DOL regulatory requirements. Moving forward, the Agricultural Outreach Representatives and the SMA will seek new opportunities and best practices to market the ARS. Effective marketing for all CareerForce services including ARS will be accomplished through continued relationship building with the agricultural community via in-person contacts, local office recruitment activities, networking events, job fairs, and community engagement events. New outreach materials are also being reviewed and developed to provide information on compliance assistance, worker protections, labor laws, and other services available to agricultural employers and job seekers. In addition, Minnesota is in the process of upgrading our labor exchange to one provided by Geographic Solutions. The new labor exchange will have greater technical capacity to serve agricultural workers and employers with improved features and significant enhancements to the ARS.

Finally, Minnesota's Governor has created a Governor's Committee on the Health, Safety, and Wellbeing of Agricultural and Food Processing Workers. The Committee is Co-Chaired by DEED leadership and consists of representatives from multiple State Departments as well as stakeholders from across the spectrum – both agricultural employer groups as well as worker advocacy organizations. This Committee presents a great forum to ensure that connections and relationships are strengthened to improve services to agricultural employers.

B. Marketing the employment service complaint system to farmworkers and other farmworker advocacy groups.

The SMA and AORs hold informational meetings throughout the peak-season at the camps to provide information relevant to the MSFWs such as the Employment Service Complaint Process, referral to the Unemployment Insurance Program and the full range of employment services available at the local one-stop centers. The meeting notice is posted in advance, farmworkers are contacted by phone and via text messaging, partner agencies are made aware of outreach events so that they may promote the event with other agencies or workers, and the outreach events are held usually in the afternoons to accommodate MSFWs' shift work schedules. Other MSFW service provider agencies attend and present regarding agency service eligibility, type of services and benefits available. The meetings are well attended by the workers and their families and provide the outreach workers an opportunity to exchange agency contact information with other agency staff.

Collaborative outreach events will oftentimes include enforcement agencies who can review specific laws and regulations and address legal concerns from farmworkers. When conducting outreach to farmworkers the AORs will review the complaint process with each farmworker and provide business cards for other enforcement agency contacts to assist farmworkers in obtaining legal action, when needed.

The AORs play a significant role in assisting MSFWs with the Employment Service Complaint Process and referral to the Unemployment Insurance Program . Farmworkers may be unfamiliar with timeframes for filing, the appeals process or deadlines for applications. Scholarly research have found that many of the agricultural workers have limited English language skills and limited educational attainment or less than high school education. Furthermore, MSFWs' wages earned in Minnesota are for the most part their total yearly earnings. AORs identify LEP community members in the registration process and inform them of their options for assistance including Language Line availability as well as translator assistance.

C. Marketing the Agricultural Recruitment System for U.S. Workers (ARS) to agricultural employers and how it intends to improve such publicity.

Outreach staff contact agricultural and non-agricultural employers, providing them with information about the employment services available for employers such as posting jobs, viewing resumes, hiring priority targeted populations, apprentice programs, WOTC, tax credit program and local Job Fairs. We distribute informational pamphlets on the MSFW program and resources (bilingual) directed to Agricultural and non-agricultural employers that include contact information for the local one- stop offices. The SMA visits communities with substantial farmworker activity to meet with workers, local agencies and employers, to access their needs and determine the effectiveness of the CareerForce services. Also, promoting to employers is the labor exchange system services website which contains information of particular importance to agricultural and non-ag employers. Minnesota's online labor exchange system is called MinnesotaWorks.net.net

The Agricultural Recruitment System (ARS) is promoted to employers through in-person contact during outreach to employers or at the local AJC. An informational sheet is provided to employers which lists the services provided and the requirements for participating in ARS. An employer brochure titled, "Get Help Hiring Farm Workers", is also distributed to employers during outreach. Both the ARS informational sheet and the brochure are available in the local AJC for walk-in customers who may be employers.

Farmworkers also receive information on the ARS which explains how ARS functions. Contact information for the AORs and the SMA is listed on the informational sheet. The AORs promote the ARS to both the employers and the farmworkers.

Employers create an employer account in MinnesotaWorks.net.net, our online self-service labor exchange system, and once approved, they may enter job postings. Employers in search of workers may also contact the local offices staff for assistance in searching for candidates who match the employers' job categories and other requirements of the positions. In addition, the outreach staff is acquainted with employers in their prospective areas who repeatedly hire seasonal workers.

Agricultural and non-agricultural employers in the area are provided information on:

- The Agricultural Recruitment System (ARS)

- Posting job orders, Job Fairs, industry events, work-based learning opportunities including apprenticeships and other training programs
- Federal and state employment compliance regulations
- The availability of presentations by compliance agencies to growers' associations, and other related groups and organizations
- Field and quality assessments
- Mediation/interpreter services
- Liaison between migrant service providers and employers

The ARS will be upgraded when Minnesota's aging MinnesotaWorks.Net system is replaced with a new compliant labor exchange. The request for proposal process that selected the new vendor included information sufficient to ensure the new system is capable of performing the required activities of the ARS.

6) Other Requirements.

A. *Collaboration.*

The SMA and AORs hold informational meetings throughout the high-peak season at the camps to provide information relevant to the MSFWs. Other MSFW service provider agencies attend and present information regarding agency service eligibility, type of services and benefits available. The meetings are well attended by the workers and their families and provide the outreach workers an opportunity to exchange agency contact information with other agency staff.

The AORs continue to contact farm workers at their work sites, living areas and gathering places. The AORs collaborate with advocacy groups including County Social Service agencies, Migrant Education centers, Health Service centers, local community agencies, Migrant Head Start, Migrant Legal Services and other service providers to enable them to provide outreach and locate farm workers that are missed through CareerForce outreach efforts. The cooperative referral arrangements with these agencies are based on long-standing agreements.

Minnesota has had Memorandum of Understanding with Motivation, Education and Training, Inc. (MET) the NFJP grantee since 1997. In May 2019, Minnesota developed an MOU with Tri-Valley Opportunity Council, Inc. (TVOC), to establish more co-enrollment opportunities and increase the area of coverage in Minnesota for providing MSFW services. It is hoped that this newer MOU will assist TVOC in their goal to increase their enrollments as well as increase registrations for MSFWs.

The outreach staff in the four significant local offices develop a yearly outreach plan which, in part, describes the coordination and referral system with other local community MSFW service providers and partners. This includes setting goals and objectives on employer and worker contacts, registration number of workers, job referrals and following-up on referrals to record results, increasing the number of employer visits and making contacts for job development and making assessments of the needs of farmworkers and employers. These plans are monitored by

the State Monitor Advocate (SMA) as part of the office review process to ensure that MSFWs and employers have full access to all CareerForce services.

The State Monitor Advocate and the AORs maintain close contact with the following organizations in the interest of providing effective and inclusive delivery of service to their customers:

- Southern Minnesota Regional Legal Services
- Motivation Education and Training Inc. (MET)
- Migrant-Community Health Services, Inc.
- Tri-Valley Opportunity Council, Inc. (TVOC)

B. *Review and Public Comment*

The AOP was posted on <https://mn.gov/deed/gwdb/priorities/wioa/> and sent out to stakeholders by the director of the GWDB and made available for public comment. The AOP was made available via email notification to the following MSFW groups: NFJP grantee, Motivation Education and Training, Inc., (MET), Community Health Services (CHS), Tri-Valley Opportunity Council, Inc. (TVOC), Southern Minnesota Rural Legal Services/Agricultural Worker's Program (SMRLS/AWP), and all State Agencies in Minnesota. The aforementioned advocacy groups were notified, and no comments were received.

C. *Data Assessment*

In PY 19, Minnesota met 4 of the 5 Equity Ratio Indicators and met 2 of the 5 in PY 20. The loss of our SMA in 2021 contributed to decreased performance in the Equity Indicators. Continued training for outreach workers to ensure that all data is accurately recorded will also assist our state to comply in this area.

We met 2 of the 5 Minimum Service Level Indicators for PY 20. The replacement of Minnesota's labor exchange will improve our ARS which will improve our field checks of job orders. Having a new SMA onboard will help with our processing of complaints.

In PY 20 Minnesota surpassed the minimum number of 40 outreach contacts per week contacts per week, increasing it to 90 contacts per week total for the outreach staff.

All State Workforce Agencies (SWAs) must provide MSFWs the full range of career services of the workforce development system on a basis which is qualitatively equivalent and quantitatively proportionate to services provided to non-MSFWs (TEGL 20-16). SWAs must meet the equity indicators which include: 1) Referral to Jobs, 2) Received Staff Assisted Services, 3) Referred to Support Services, 4) Career Guidance, and 5) Job Development Contact. Four of the five equity indicators must be met. To meet the equity performance standards the percentage of services provided to MSFWs must be equal to or great than the percentage of services offered to non-MSFWs. For example, if there are 100 non-MSFWs and

50 MSFWs registered for services in the local ES office, and 50 of the non-MSFW participants are referred to employment, the local office must refer at least 25 (50%) of the MSFWs for that office to meet this equity ratio indicator (TEGL 20-16).

D. Assessment of Progress

Please note achievements and areas of improvement in response to the previous question. Our plan is to continue to increase our efforts in every aspect of our program requirements as we will strive to improve the number of MSFW registrations, referrals to ESL/GED, referrals to job placements, and referrals for training. Continuing to be fully staffed to ensure that we are serving the MSFW population throughout our state and maintaining our full-time SMA will enable our state to maintain compliance level in all areas. As we continue to work in a collaborative manner with our partners it will lead to an increased number of placements in jobs and training for our customers.

Minnesota will increase the promotion of the Agricultural Recruitment System (ARS) to employers in order to make them aware of this system and the need to begin farmworker recruitment at the local level. The SMA will work with the FLC to educate and guide employers in this process and provide the labor needs of the employers while providing the job opportunities to the U.S. workers prior to having employers recruit foreign workers. Promoting the ARS to farmworkers will also increase more opportunities to U.S. workers and our state will comply with regulations in promoting and implementing ARS.

Minnesota will increase the promotion of H-2A positions with MSFWs to make them aware of these job opportunities and this will increase the number of Field Checks conducted in our state.

E. State Monitor Advocate

The State Monitor Advocate has been afforded the opportunity to review and comment and approves the AOP.

Wagner-Peyser Assurances

The State Plan must include	Include
1. The Wagner-Peyser Act Employment Service is co-located with one-stop centers or a plan and timeline has been developed to comply with this requirement within a reasonable amount of time (sec 121(e)(3));	Yes
2. If the State has significant MSFW one-stop centers, the State agency is complying with the requirements under 20 CFR 653.111, State Workforce Agency staffing requirements;	Yes
3. If a State Workforce Development Board, department, or agency administers State laws for vocational rehabilitation of persons with disabilities, that board, department, or agency cooperates with the agency that administers Wagner-Peyser	Yes

Act services, Adult and Dislocated Worker programs and Youth Programs under Title I; and	
<p>4. SWA officials:</p> <p>1) Initiate the discontinuation of services;</p> <p>2) Make the determination that services need to be discontinued;</p> <p>3) Make the determination to reinstate services after the services have been discontinued;</p> <p>4) Approve corrective action plans;</p> <p>5) Approve the removal of an employer’s clearance orders from interstate or intrastate clearance if the employer was granted conditional access to ARS and did not come into compliance within 5 calendar days;</p> <p>6) Enter into agreements with State and Federal enforcement agencies for enforcement-agency staff to conduct field checks on the SWAs’ behalf (if the SWA so chooses); and</p> <p>7) Decide whether to consent to the withdrawal of complaints if a party who requested a hearing wishes to withdraw its request for hearing in writing before the hearing.</p>	Yes

Wagner-Peyser Program Performance Indicators

Requirements: Wagner-Peyser Program Performance Indicators				
Performance Indicators	PY 2024 Expected Level	PY 2024 Negotiated Level	PY 2025 Expected Level	PY 2025 Negotiated Level
Employment (Second Quarter After Exit)	60.0	NA	61.0	NA
Employment (Fourth Quarter After Exit)	65.0	NA	66.0	NA
Median Earnings (Second Quarter After Exit)	8,100	NA	8,200	NA
Credential Attainment Rate	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
Measurable Skill Gains	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
Effectiveness in Serving Employers	Not Applicable 1	Not Applicable 1	Not Applicable 1	Not Applicable 1

The Departments have not issued the final rule defining Effectiveness in Serving Employers. As a result, states will not submit expected levels of performance for this indicator and the Departments will not establish negotiated levels of performance for PYs 2024 and 2025.

Adult Education and Family Literacy Act Programs

The Unified or Combined State Plan must include a description of the following as it pertains to adult education and literacy programs and activities under title II of WIOA, the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (AEFLA).

- a. **Aligning Of Content Standards. Describe how the eligible agency has aligned its content standards for adult education with State-adopted challenging academic content standards, as adopted under section 1111(b)(1) of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, as amended (20 U.S.C. 6311(b)(1)).**

The content standards for the Minnesota adult education system comprise three components:

- The federally-developed **College and Career Readiness Standards (CCRS) for Adult Education** (<https://lincs.ed.gov/publications/pdf/CCRStandardsAdultEd.pdf>), which identify key English Language Arts/Literacy, Math, and Foundational Reading Skills;
- The Minnesota-developed **Academic, Career and Employability Skills (ACES) Transitions Integration Framework (TIF)** (<http://atlasabe.org/professional/transitions>), which identifies key professional or soft skills in the areas of Effective Communication, Learning Strategies, Critical Thinking, Self-Management, Developing a Future Pathway, Navigating Systems; and
- The Minnesota-developed **Northstar Digital Literacy Standards** (available at www.digitalliteracyassessment.org), which identify key basic digital literacy skills needed to perform tasks on computers and online.

The CCRS for Adult Education are drawn from the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) and the Minnesota state-adopted K-12 standards for English Language Arts and Literacy and align with the CCSS. The current Minnesota state-adopted K-12 standards for Mathematics encompass some content that is beyond the scope of the CCSS, but are largely aligned with the CCSS.

As part of Minnesota's federal grant competition and the state reauthorization process, awardees are required to affirm and show that their curriculum, instruction, and assessment align to these Minnesota adult education content standards and that their staff are trained on the use of the standards.

In order to ensure that all adult education practitioners are knowledgeable about the standards listed above and understand how to use them effectively to guide instruction and

programming, the Minnesota adult education system has provided ongoing systematic professional development and other support to grantees including:

- Face-to-face workshops and online trainings;
- Online courses;
- Training modules based on the College and Career Readiness Standards-in-Action training tools and processes;
- Technical assistance to eligible providers focused on standards implementation;
- Support for local Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) focused on standards implementation; and
- Online standards resource libraries.

- b. Local Activities. Describe how the State will, using the considerations specified in section 231(e) of WIOA, fund each eligible provider to establish or operate programs that provide any of the following adult education and literacy activities identified in section 203 of WIOA, including programs that provide such activities concurrently. The Unified or Combined State Plan must include at a minimum the scope, content, and organization of these local activities.**

Adult Education Provider Selection and Funding Allocation Process

The Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) is the State's Eligible Agency for Adult Education programs. MDE is responsible for administering funds and providing program/performance oversight to grantees.

During grant years 2016–17 and 2021-22, MDE implemented a competitive application process for all federal AEFLA funding, including WIOA Sections 231(adult education) and 225 (corrections education) activities. The grant competitive applications are based on the 13 considerations in Title II of WIOA and included additional state ABE priorities. As a result of that process, 36 providers from throughout Minnesota were selected to receive funding beginning July 1, 2022. Minnesota will conduct a new grant competition during the 2027-28 year in order to identify grantees who will begin receiving federal ABE funds on July 1, 2028 (unless WIOA is reauthorized before then and requires a competition earlier).

Adult education eligible providers approved in 2022 will continue to be eligible to receive AEFLA funding, as long as they adhere to state and federal grant expectations, as measured through annual applications, financial reports, and program performance reports.

Timeline

The following steps and timeline were followed in 2017 and 2022; they will be used again for the 2028 WIOA AEFLA competition:

January: MDE publishes and promotes federal AEFLA provider grant application materials

January-February: MDE provides technical assistance to inquiries from eligible providers

February-March: MDE recruits reviewers to score and rate WIOA-aligned federally-funded AEFLA grant applications

March: Due date for federal AEFLA provider grant applications

March: MDE screens applications to determine which providers in each application meet demonstrated effectiveness requirements

March/April: Applications from providers that have demonstrated effectiveness are forwarded to official reviewers and to the appropriate workforce development boards that serve the same area as the proposed application

April-May: Official reviewers score and rate federal AEFLA provider grant applications by region; workforce development boards review and provide feedback on federal AEFLA provider grant applications that fall within their workforce service areas

May-June: MDE decides which applicants will be approved as providers based on reviewer scores and ratings, workforce development board feedback, and application's response to the conditions and criteria in the application materials

June: MDE announces awarded grant applicants that will receive federal AEFLA funding as providers

July 1: Awarded federal AEFLA providers begin grant cycle, programming and funding with technical assistance provided by the MDE Adult Education team

Eligible Providers

An eligible local provider is an organization that has demonstrated effectiveness in providing adult education activities to eligible individuals and may include:

- Local education agency;
- Community-based or faith-based organization;
- Volunteer literacy organization;
- Institution of higher education;
- Public or private nonprofit agency;
- Library;
- Public housing authority;

- Nonprofit institution with the ability to provide adult education and literacy services;
- Consortium or coalition of agencies, organizations, institutions, libraries, or authorities described above;
- A partnership between an employer and an entity described above and
- Any other entity that has demonstrated effectiveness in serving eligible individuals.

Application Promotion and Publication

In 2017 and in 2022, the grant opportunity was publicized in compliance with federal law, Minnesota statute, and MDE policy in order to ensure that all eligible providers had direct and equitable access to apply and compete for grants. The process was fair and equitable and followed federal AEFLA grant funding requirements and other state and federal grant procedures. MDE published and promoted all grant opportunities on its website. Any eligible entity (described above) was able to submit a proposal. A similar process will be followed in 2028.

Allocations

MDE dedicates at least 82.5 percent of the state allocation of federal AEFLA funding to grants to eligible providers. This amount is allocated to grantees based on scope of service (number of prior year contact hours for eligible service), accountability aid, aid to support services to participants with low incidence disabilities, regional aid to help local programs implement AEFLA initiatives, and aid to promote career pathway and integrated education and training programming.

In addition, up to 12.5 percent of the state allocation is dedicated to Leadership supporting activities such as: professional development; volunteer recruitment and training; technology; serving students with disabilities; distance learning and digital literacy; program quality support; assessment training; and career pathway and other transitions-related collaborations.

13 Considerations

MDE used the considerations specified in Section 231(e) of WIOA and listed below as the criteria for selecting and funding eligible providers in 2017 and 2022, which will be used again in future competitions until WIOA is reauthorized and the considerations change. As part of the RFP process, agencies were/will be required to provide narrative detail describing how they will meet each consideration.

- 1) **Individuals with Disabilities:** The degree to which the provider is able to serve eligible individuals with disabilities, including eligible individuals with learning disabilities.
- 2) **Past Effectiveness:** The degree to which the provider demonstrates past effectiveness in improving the literacy of eligible individuals, to meet State-adjusted

levels of performance for the primary indicators of performance described in Section 116, especially with respect to eligible individuals who have low levels of literacy.

- 3) **Alignment with One-stop Partners:** The degree to which the eligible provider is responsive to, and demonstrates alignment between, proposed activities and services and the strategy and goals of the local plan under Section 108 as well as the activities and services of the one-stop partners.
- 4) **Intensity, Quality, and Instructional Practices:** The degree to which the eligible provider's program is of sufficient intensity and quality, and based on the most rigorous research available so that participants achieve substantial learning gains; and uses instructional practices that include the essential components of reading instruction.
- 5) **Research Based Educational Practices:** The degree to which the eligible provider's activities including reading, writing, speaking, mathematics, and English language acquisition instruction, are based on the best practices derived from the most rigorous research available and appropriate, including scientifically valid research and effective educational practice.
- 6) **Effective Use of Technology:** The degree to which the eligible provider's activities effectively use technology, services, and delivery systems, including distance education in a manner sufficient to increase the amount and quality of learning and how such technology, services, and systems lead to improved performance.
- 7) **Integrated Education and Training:** The degree to which the eligible provider's activities offer learning in context, including through integrated education and training, so that an individual acquires the skills needed to transition to and complete postsecondary education and training programs, obtain and advance in employment leading to economic self-sufficiency, and to exercise the rights and responsibilities of citizenship.
- 8) **Qualified Staff:** The degree to which the eligible provider's activities are delivered by well-trained instructors, counselors, and administrators who meet any minimum qualifications established by the state, where applicable, and who have access to high quality professional development, including through electronic means.
- 9) **Partnerships and Development of Career Pathways:** The degree to which the eligible provider's activities coordinate with other available education, training, and social service resources in the community, such as by establishing strong links with elementary schools and secondary schools, postsecondary educational institutions, institutions of higher education, local workforce development boards, one-stop

centers, job training programs, and social service agencies, business, industry, labor organizations, community-based organizations, nonprofit organizations, and intermediaries, for the development of career pathways.

- 10) Flexible Schedules and Coordination with Support Services: The degree to which the eligible provider's activities offer flexible schedules and coordination with Federal, State, and local support services (such as child care, transportation, mental health services, and career planning) that are necessary to enable individuals, including individuals with disabilities or other special needs, to attend and complete programs
- 11) Information management system: The expectation will be that the eligible provider will use the State-administered designated MIS for all grant-related data collection and reporting; and
- 12) English Language Acquisition and Civics Education: The degree to which the eligible provider has a demonstrated need for additional English language acquisition programs and civics education programs.

Additional Criteria

In addition to the above 13 considerations, the grant applications also required descriptions of applicants:

- Location, service area, the scope of the program, a description of the population to be served, fiscal management procedures, and audit history;
- Capacity to offer programming and evidence of the organization's past effectiveness in providing AEFLA-eligible activities and services;
- Budget, as well as programmatic information regarding statutory requirements;
- Coordination with other service providers to provide wrap-around services to participants (e.g., child care, transportation)
- A description of how the program will align activities to the Local, Regional, and/or State Plan for WIOA providers and supportive services.

Review Process

During years when we have a competition, MDE screens all applications. This screening includes determining which providers meet the demonstrated effectiveness requirement. Starting in 2022, applicants are required to submit a Provider Details Worksheet for each provider

included in the application. This worksheet asks each provider to share data and any additional information on past effectiveness in serving eligible adults.

- Continuing providers submit data available from the state adult education database (SiD) or any other sources that align with the WIOA indicators.
- New providers submit data on past effectiveness with eligible adults from any available sources on metrics similar to the WIOA indicators.

MDE staff review all the Provider Details Worksheets to determine which applications to send to workforce development boards and reviewers to be evaluated and scored.

Next, proposals are evaluated and scored by teams of reviewers approved by the MDE Grants Office and Adult Education Office. Reviewers score applications based on their responses to each of the 13 considerations of WIOA, the programming proposed and its alignment to the four instructional components, the articulated use of funds, and additional criteria listed above. An MDE staff person is part of each review team and facilitates the group review session, during which scores and evaluation comments are compiled into an official review document.

Workforce development boards evaluate applications for alignment to local needs and plans. Boards also document the strengths, weaknesses, and questions they have for each application. This review document is sent to MDE.

MDE selects applicants for federal AEFLA funding based on scores and feedback from reviewers and the workforce development boards. Applicants selected for federal AEFLA funding are notified in May or June and are eligible to start programming on July 1.

Annually

All approved providers are required to comply with all state and federal regulations, policies and expectations for AEFLA grantees including:

- 1) Using the state AEFLA database (SiD);
- 2) Reporting annual performance data; and
- 3) Additional requirements or reporting upon request by state and local agencies.

Adult Education Programming

The focus of adult education instruction in Minnesota will be the above noted content standards contextualized to enhance readiness for employment, citizenship, postsecondary education and training provided through comprehensive services that meet the diverse educational needs of students.

In accordance with federal regulation, grantees receive adult education funding for the delivery of any of the following adult education and literacy activities:

- Adult education;
- Literacy;
- Workplace adult education and literacy activities;
- Family literacy activities;
- English language acquisition activities;
- Integrated English literacy and civics education;
- Workforce preparation activities; or
- Integrated education and training that—
 - 1) Provides adult education and literacy activities, concurrently and contextually with both, workforce preparation activities, and workforce training for a specific occupation or occupational cluster, and
 - 2) Is for the purpose of educational and career advancement.

Eligible providers are required to implement such activities in accordance with the following federal definitions:

Adult education means academic instruction and education services below the postsecondary level that increase an individual’s ability to read, write, and speak in English and perform mathematics or other activities necessary for the attainment of a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent; transition to postsecondary education and training; and obtain employment.

Literacy means an individual’s ability to read, write, and speak in English, compute, and solve problems, at levels of proficiency necessary to function on the job, in the family of the individual, and in society.

Workplace adult education and literacy activities means adult education and literacy activities offered by an eligible provider in collaboration with an employer or employee organization at a workplace or an off-site location that is designed to improve the productivity of the workforce.

Family literacy activities means activities that are of sufficient intensity and quality to make sustainable improvements in the economic prospects for a family, and that better enable parents or family members to support their children’s learning needs, and that integrate all of the following activities:

- A. Parent or family adult education and literacy activities that lead to readiness for postsecondary education or training, career advancement, and economic self-sufficiency.
- B. Interactive literacy activities between parents or family members and their children.

- C. Training for parents or family members regarding how to be the primary teacher for their children and full partners in the education of their children.
- D. An age-appropriate education to prepare children for success in school and life experiences.

Special Rule. Each eligible agency awarding a grant or contract under this section shall not use any funds made available under this title for adult education and literacy activities for the purpose of supporting or providing programs, services, or activities for individuals who are under the age of 17 and/or are enrolled or required to be enrolled in secondary school under State law, except that such agency may use such funds for such purpose if such programs, services, or activities are related to family literacy activities. In providing family literacy activities under this title, an eligible provider shall attempt to coordinate with programs and services that are not assisted under this title prior to using funds for adult education and literacy activities under this title for activities other than activities for eligible individuals.

MDE will not use any funds made available under this title for adult education and literacy activities for the purpose of supporting or providing programs, services, or activities for individuals who are under the age of 17 and are enrolled or required to be enrolled in secondary school under State law, except that the agency may use such funds for such purpose if such programs, services, or activities are related to family literacy activities. In providing family literacy activities under this title, MDE will attempt to coordinate with programs and services that are not assisted under this title prior to using funds for adult education and literacy activities under this title for activities other than activities for eligible individuals.

English language acquisition program means a program of instruction designed to help eligible individuals who are English language learners achieve competence in reading, writing, speaking, and comprehension of the English language; and that leads to attainment of a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent; and transition to postsecondary education and training; or employment.

Integrated English literacy and civics education means education services provided to English language learners who are adults, including professionals with degrees and credentials in their native countries, that enables such adults to achieve competency in the English language and acquire the basic and more advanced skills needed to function effectively as parents, workers, and citizens in the United States. Such services shall include instruction in literacy and English language acquisition and instruction on the rights and responsibilities of citizenship and civic participation, and may include workforce training.

Workforce preparation activities means activities, programs, or services designed to help an individual acquire a combination of basic academic skills, critical thinking skills, digital literacy skills, and self-management skills, including competencies in utilizing resources, using

information, working with others, understanding systems, and obtaining skills necessary for successful transition into and completion of postsecondary education or training, or employment.

Integrated education and training means a service approach that provides adult education and literacy activities concurrently and contextually with workforce preparation activities, and workforce training for a specific occupation or occupational cluster for the purpose of educational and career advancement.

All funded programs will be required to offer the above listed kinds of programming concurrently based on the needs of the population served and encouraged to blend as much programming as possible into coordinated occupational training, employment, and academic pathways as possible by addressing all standards (CCRS, ACES, and Northstar) in all program components, contextualizing secondary credential programming and providing “navigation” support.

Federal funds may be used to increase the level of other funds that would be available in the absence of federal funds, and, in no case, replace those other funds. Federal funds must not be used for the purpose of supplanting, only for supplementing.

- c. **Corrections Education and Other Education of Institutionalized Individuals.**
Describe how the eligible agency will, using the considerations specified in section 231€ of WIOA and in accordance with 34 CFR 463 subpart C, fund eligible providers to establish and operate programs that provide any of the following correctional educational programs identified in section 225 of WIOA:

- **Adult education and literacy activities;**
- **Special education, as determined by the eligible agency;**
- **Secondary school credit;**
- **Integrated education and training;**
- **Career pathways;**
- **Concurrent enrollment;**
- **Peer tutoring; and**
- **Transition to re-entry initiatives and other post release services with the goal of reducing recidivism.**

Each eligible agency using funds provided under Programs for Corrections Education and Other Institutionalized Individuals to carry out a program for criminal offenders within a correctional institution must give priority to serving individuals who are likely to leave the correctional institution within 5 years of participation in the program.

Correctional Institution Programs

MDE awards funds to carry out corrections education and education for other institutionalized individuals within correctional institutions in accordance with the requirements of section 225. Funds for corrections education are competed as part the Federal Adult Education competitive grant process for Section 231 funds. The application asks potential grantees and providers that are applying to offer corrections education activities must describe the proposed specific corrections education activities in the application narrative. Applicants wanting to provide corrections education activities must be approved through the federal adult education grant competition in order to receive funding.

Each grantee that receives funds provided under section 225 to carry out a program for criminal offenders within a correctional institution shall give priority to serving individuals who are likely to leave the correctional institution within five years of participation in the program. Applicants must describe in their grant application how they give priority to individuals most likely to leave the correctional institution within five years of participation in the program.

Section 225(a) of WIOA states, “from funds made available under Section 222(a)(1) for a fiscal year, each eligible agency shall carry out corrections education or education for other institutionalized individuals. The funds described shall be used to provide: (1) Adult education and literacy services, (2) Special education as determined by the eligible agency, (3) Secondary school credit, and (4) Integrated education and training; (5) Career pathways; (6) Concurrent enrollment; (7) Peer tutoring; and (8) Transition to re-entry initiatives and other post-release services with the goal of reducing recidivism.”

MDE reserves no more than 20 percent of its federal AEFLA grant funding to provide programs for corrections education and education for other institutionalized individuals as described in Section 225 and uses the same application process being used for section 231 funds. A single applicant was approved to provide services to Minnesota’s Department of Corrections system. County corrections facilities as well as other facilities such as state hospitals, rehabilitation centers, and limited retention facilities will be addressed by applicants competing for the service area in which they are located.

d. Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education Program.

Describe how the eligible agency will, using the considerations specified in 34 CFR section 463.36 .

Describe how the Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education program under section 243(a) of WIOA will include instruction in literacy and English language acquisition and instruction on the rights and responsibilities of citizenship and civic participation.

Describe how the Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education program under section 243(a) of WIOA will be designed to prepare adults who are English language learners for, and

place such adults in, unsubsidized employment in in-demand industries and occupations that lead to economic self-sufficiency.

Describe how the Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education program under section 243(a) of WIOA will be designed to integrate with the local workforce development system and its functions to carry out the activities of the program.

Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education (IELCE)

The goals of IELCE are to:

- (1) prepare adults who are English language learners for, and place such adults in, unsubsidized employment in in-demand industries and occupations that lead to economic self-sufficiency; and
- (2) integrate with the local workforce development system and its functions to carry out the activities of the program.

The IELCE grant opportunity allows potential eligible providers to show evidence of their past effectiveness in serving adult English language learners. All applicants must demonstrate past effectiveness by providing performance data on their record of improving the skills of eligible individuals, particularly eligible individuals who have low levels of literacy, in the content domains of reading, writing, mathematics, English language acquisition. An eligible provider must also provide information regarding their outcomes for participants related to employment, attainment of secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent, and transition to postsecondary education and training.

There are two ways in which an eligible provider may meet the requirements above. An eligible provider that has been funded under title II of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act must provide performance data required under section 116 to demonstrate past effectiveness.

Or, an eligible provider that has not been previously funded under title II of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act must provide performance data to demonstrate its past effectiveness in serving basic skills deficient eligible individuals, including evidence of its success in achieving outcomes listed in paragraph (A1) of this section. (CFR § 463.24)

Minnesota accepts all applications from entities that have shown demonstrated past effectiveness for at least a year within the past five years. For applicants using WIOA performance data they must not be significantly below the state average in all areas.

A concerted effort has been made by the MDE Adult Education Team to identify populations of professionals with degrees and credentials in their native countries. Work will continue with the Office of Refugee Resettlement and the Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED) to identify individuals in this category.

All IELCE grantees are required to provide all four instructional components as outlined in WIOA including:

- 1) English Literacy
- 2) Civics (defined as instructing on the rights and responsibilities of citizenship and civic participation in the U.S.A.)
- 3) Workforce Preparation (operationalized in Minnesota as the ACES Transitions Integration Framework that identifies key workforce preparation skills in the areas of self-management, developing a future pathway, navigating systems, effective communication, learning strategies, and critical thinking in addition to Northstar Digital Literacy)
- 4) Work Training

IELCE applicants are expected articulate a plan that outlines how the provider will develop an instructional program that integrates all four essential IELCE instructional components. Once awarded, grantees are eligible for ongoing technical assistance and are required to evaluate the effectiveness of their programming and report on outcomes, lessons learned and best practices.

In addition, grantees are required to provide English instruction contextualized to both civics content and occupational training with the occupational training opportunities comprising both short-term certificate programs as well as more extended career pathways.

Minnesota grantees are required to use curriculum that integrates the approved Minnesota Adult Education content standards:

- College and Career Readiness Standards for Adult Education (CCRS);
- Minnesota's Academic, Career and Employability Standards (ACES) Transitions Integration Framework (TIF); and
- Northstar Digital Literacy Standards.

The grant opportunity is a multi-year (three-year) grant offered through a competitive application process specifically for IELCE (Section 243) grant funds. The next grant opportunity will be offered in 2025. The maximum amount for the grant is \$150,000 and the minimum is \$20,000. In the past couple competition cycles, 12-14 applicants have been approved to receive an IELCE award.

The application materials require that applicants describe:

- The programming they would implement and how it incorporates the four instructional components as described above;
- How the grant funds will be used to fund the described programming; and

- Address the WIOA Title II 13 considerations.

Eligible providers for IELCE include local education agencies, community-based organizations (including faith-based organizations), volunteer literacy organizations, institutions of higher education, public or private nonprofits, public housing authorities, libraries, consortiums of the above, and a partnership between an employer and an entity described above

A fair and equitable process is followed to allow all eligible entities the opportunity to apply for the IELCE grant. MDE publishes all grant opportunities on its website. IELCE applications are rated and scored by teams of reviewers approved by the MDE Grants Office and Adult Education Office. Each application is also reviewed by the local workforce development board in which they are located and the review is taken into consideration when awarding grants.

The review process for selecting successful applicants includes formally scoring applications on their responses to each of the 13 considerations of WIOA, the programming proposed and its alignment to the four instructional components, and the articulated use of funds. IELCE applicants are also asked to describe how their program comprises a clear pathway to occupational training that incorporates the IET model including: how the civics and literacy instruction relates to and prepares students for successful transition to and participation in the IET component of the pathway.

Applicants are asked to describe how their program collaborates with other entities and aligns to workforce development regional needs including providing:

- 1) Evidence of alignment to local or regional needs as outlined by local workforce boards and/or partners in the workforce development plans, including how applicant will promote concurrent enrollment with programs in Title I.
- 2) Indications of alignment between proposed activities and services and the strategy and goals of the local plan under section 108 of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, as well as the activities and services of the one-stop partners.
- 3) How IELCE programming is developed in coordination and collaboration with other educational, training, and social service resources in the community. Partner entities could include elementary schools and secondary schools, postsecondary educational institutions, institutions of higher education, local workforce development boards, one-stop centers, job training programs, social service agencies, business, industry, labor organizations, community-based organizations, nonprofit organizations, and intermediaries.

In addition, IELCE applicants are also required to describe how their program comprises a clear pathway to occupational training that incorporates the Integrated Education and Training approach including: how the civics and literacy instruction relates to and prepares students for successful transition to and participation in the IET component of the pathway. IELCE grant applications must also describe how their program aligns with local WIOA plans including

preparing participants for living-wage, in-demand occupations identified in the plan and must include English Language programming designed to provide participants the means to developed skills that are contextualized to in-demand occupation. Grant applications that propose more extensive coordination and integration of local workforce services into the IELCE program receive higher scores.

A state ABE staff member meets monthly with the Local Workforce Development Board (LWDB) staff to ensure the grant activities are promoted and connected to the services provided by other WIOA titles. In addition, ABE representatives to the LWDBs receive ongoing support to integrate ABE programming, including IELCE, with the one-stop partners. Grantees receive considerable technical assistance from the MDE Adult Education Team and will be convened for targeted professional development that emphasizes current best-practices.

e. State Leadership. Describe How the State Will Use the Funds to Carry Out The Required State Leadership Activities Under Section 223 Of WIOA.

MDE uses funds made available under section 222(a)(2) to enhance the quality of programming in the adult education system. Not more than 12.5 percent of the grant funds made available are used to carry out State leadership activities under section 223.

A. The alignment of Adult Education and Literacy activities with other core programs and one-stop partners, including eligible providers, including the development of career pathways to provide access to employment and training services for individuals in adult education and literacy activities.

The Minnesota Department of Education will work collaboratively with other core programs and partner agencies to align and coordinate services for program participants. State-level policy and planning bodies provide an opportunity for Minnesota's Adult Education system and local programs to partner with workforce development, human services, higher education and other key agencies. Leadership funds will be used to build the capacity of grantees to coordinate and align services. Specific areas of capacity building include intake/orientation, eligibility screening, and referral between partners, and other joint mechanisms developed through agency partnerships. In addition, the development of all components of career pathways will continue to be a priority with a focus on integrated education and training.

B. The establishment and operation of high-quality professional development programs to improve the instruction provided pursuant to required local activities, including instruction incorporating the essential components of reading instruction as such components relate to adults, instruction related to the specific needs of adult learners, instruction provided by volunteers or by personnel, and dissemination of information about models and promising practices related to such programs.

Minnesota supports a statewide adult education professional development (PD) advisory committee that meets quarterly to identify key present and future PD needs, develop PD plans and resources, identify and implement best practices in PD, and coordinate and align PD activities for an efficient and effective PD system. This advisory committee has approximately 25 members, and includes state adult education staff, PD providers and local ABE instructors and administrators.

The Minnesota PD system uses a data-driven planning process to identify PD needs and set priorities for each year. The results of an annual statewide PD needs assessment of local providers, along with evaluation data from previous PD efforts, research regarding best practices, and federal recommendations are used to inform PD priorities and the design and delivery of PD activities. Professional development activities are designed to include research-based features of effective professional development – longer-term, job-embedded activities with opportunities for collaborative participation and the application of new knowledge and skills. Both statewide and regional opportunities are provided for adult educators to develop and share their knowledge and skills in order to improve the quality of instruction delivered in local programs. These PD activities include professional learning communities, study circles, statewide and regional conferences, online courses, webinars, and others. Evaluation of PD outcomes, especially evidence of teacher change and quality of implementation of new knowledge and skills, is integrated into every initiative to ensure the effectiveness of PD activities.

State leadership funds will be used to support professional development activities that focus on a variety of areas of emphasis, including content standards implementation, evidence-based reading instruction (EBRI), adult learning, research-based instructional methodologies, volunteer training and management, effective program management, integrated education and training and , transition to postsecondary, employment and training, use of technology, distance education, universal design, serving students with disabilities, volunteer training and recruitment, and DEI (Diversity, Equity and Inclusion).

The MDE adult education office contracts for professional development services related to research-based literacy, numeracy, English language instruction, content standards, and transitions. These PD activities include EBRI (Evidence-based Reading Instruction) webinars and workshops, online courses, and resource dissemination; a cohort-based foundational training on teaching numeracy to adults; and the implementation of content standards. More information regarding existing training provided may be viewed on the ATLAS (ABE Teaching and Learning Advancement System) homepage: www.atlasabe.org.

In addition, the MDE adult education office contracts to deliver professional development and technical assistance in the arena of serving adults with disabilities and to maintain a disabilities website: <https://pandamn.org/>. The disabilities website has received considerable national

attention and is used by adult education professionals across the country. The disabilities service provider also provides training on using Universal Design for Learning principles and strategies to address the varied needs of adult learners. All disability-related activities are consistent with and contribute to implementation of Minnesota's Olmstead plan.

The MDE adult education office contracts to provide statewide services in the areas of volunteer tutor training, volunteer management, and client referral services (an online Literacy Hotline and a phone hotline). The services are described in detail at: www.literacymn.org.

C. The provision of technical assistance to eligible providers of Adult Education and Literacy activities receiving funds under this title, including—

- **The development and dissemination of instructional and programmatic practices based on the most rigorous or scientifically valid research available and appropriate, in reading, writing, speaking, mathematics, English language acquisition programs, distance education, and staff training;**
- **The role of eligible providers as a one-stop partner to provide access to employment, education, and training services; and**
- **Assistance in the use of technology, including for staff training, to eligible providers, especially the use of technology to improve system efficiencies.**

MDE will deliver technical assistance to eligible providers to enhance program effectiveness, increase the ability of providers to meet established performance standards, and fulfill obligations associated with being a one-stop partner. Specific areas of focus will include:

- 1) Increasing the capacity of instructors and programs to provide quality instruction in the areas of reading, writing, speaking, mathematics, English language acquisition, and distance education via implementation of professional development activities and associated technical assistance such as:
 - EBRI online courses and workshops;
 - Annual Language and Literacy Institute;
 - Annual Math Institute;
 - Adult Career Pathway and IET (Integrated Education and Training) workshops and institutes;
 - Distance and Blended Learning Basics for Minnesota Adult Education online course;
 - Distance learning professional development cohorts;
 - Minnesota distance learning website; and
 - Online resource libraries in the areas of ACES (academic, career, and employability skills), adult career pathways, adult diploma/high school

equivalency, adult education staff orientation, CCR standards, cultural competency, ESL, numeracy, project-based learning, reading, science, social studies and civics, and writing

- 2) Enabling providers to establish, build upon, or maintain effective relationships with other core providers via training on referral systems, data sharing/reporting, integrating education with occupational training, and transition strategies for postsecondary enrollment or employment.
- 3) Using technology to improve program effectiveness through training and technical assistance focused on preparing instructors and program administrators to identify and utilize technology to enhance instruction, programming, and distance education. The MDE Adult Education Office contracts with supplemental service providers to provide professional development in the area of educational technology, digital literacy instruction, and distance learning through activities such as face-to-face and online training. More information about current technology training can be found at: www.literacymn.org/distancelearning-PD. Training and technical assistance around distance education and digital literacy is also offered through a contracted provider. More information about current training and resources can be found at: www.literacymn.org/distancelearning.

In addition, other training and technical assistance focuses on the effective use of the statewide data system to maintain accurate student data and continuously improve programming. This support is offered in a variety of formats and venues.

D. The monitoring and evaluation of the quality of, and the improvement in, adult education and literacy activities and the dissemination of information about models and proven or promising practices within the state.

MDE will provide grantee oversight to include data monitoring, site visits and a program improvement process for low performing grantees. The following strategies will be implemented:

- Data Reviews – The statewide MIS (SiD) has local and state-level reports to facilitate ongoing review in the areas of assessment, attendance and compliance. In addition, the MDE Adult Education team meets with SiD staff monthly to review current data issues and providers flagged through the technical assistance and reporting processes.
- Monitoring Calls and Visits – MDE creates monitoring visits for the following grantees: 1. all grantees have a visit as part of the five- to six-year state reauthorization process; 2. grantees identified via data review with issues that get escalated by the MDE Adult Education team and SiD staff due to a need for more in-depth investigation; 3. grantees flagged as low-performing during the program

improvement process; and 4. grantees that are part of a state or federal initiative where a visit is deemed an important part of the process; and 5. Grantees or providers that request monitoring visits. Monitoring calls and visits can be virtual or in-person. additional issues can be included by the grantee, the provider, and/or the MDE Adult Education team. (For more information on monitoring visits, please see the response to (f) below.)

- Reauthorization process (State five-year narrative) - The five-year narrative process, based on requirements outlined in Minnesota State Statute 124D.52, subd. 2, is designed to give Adult Education grantees (re)authorization for state ABE funding through a comprehensive online narrative. This narrative asks grantees to describe programs through data, organizational structure, procedures, goal setting, and more. This narrative process is reviewed by a team of adult education staff at the state and provider level. Review teams look for adherence to state/federal requirements and best practices. The narrative development is a one-year process on average that includes:
 - Attending review sessions of prior year consortiums;
 - Attending a workshop on narrative requirements;
 - Hosting site visits that include MDE Adult Education staff;
 - Completing additional tasks not rated as satisfactory as a corrective action follow up; and
 - Receiving additional technical assistance from MDE and other adult education specialists, as needed.
- Program Improvement Process - Local providers that fall significantly below state and federal program performance targets and grant expectations will be subject to a program improvement process. Over the course of one year, a provider in program improvement will:
 - Host site visits from staff from MDE;
 - Participate in workshops focusing on analyzing and improving local program results;
 - Develop a program improvement plan that will highlight key local challenges, ensure program compliance with state and federal policy, and identify strategies and timelines to improve program performance; and
 - Receive additional technical assistance from MDE and other adult education specialists, as needed.

The program improvement process will last at least one program year. The grantee will have successfully completed the process once they: develop and implement a program improvement plan that is approved by the MDE Adult Education team; adhere to grant and program improvement expectations as established by the MDE Adult Education team; and

show acceptable student outcomes (based on state and federal targets) at the end of the process through the annual grant performance reports. Grantees that continue to fall significantly below state and federal targets and grant expectations will be subject to participate in program improvement again. Grantees that fall significantly below state and federal targets and do not meet grant expectations three consecutive years, may be subject to a special review by MDE to determine if the grantee should continue to receive AEFLA funding.

Regarding sharing best practices, the Minnesota Adult Education team and professional development providers will employ a variety of methods to ensure that information about proven or promising practices and models is disseminated to eligible providers and practitioners working in the Adult Education system. These will include activities such as:

- Local program site visits, as described in f.5 below;
- A weekly electronic professional development newsletter with information about training opportunities, high-quality resources, and promising practices for instruction and programming;
- ABE foundations (available in person or online), a required orientation to Minnesota's ABE system;
- Sessions at state and regional conferences showcasing promising practices and models;
- Webinars showcasing promising practices and models; and
- Job-embedded professional development activities, including professional learning communities, study circles and peer observations.

5) **Describe how the state will use the funds to carry out permissible state leadership activities under section 223 of WIOA, if applicable**

Permissible State Leadership Activities

Some of the WIOA Adult Education Leadership funds will be used to support permissible leadership activities in a variety of areas including: professional development; volunteer training and outreach; technology and distance education training; assessment and support staff training; disability-related training and support; transitions and workforce development services; statewide initiatives; and racial equity in adult education.

Racial equity is a key priority for the Minnesota adult education system. In order to advance this priority, state funds have been allocated to support a grant focused on racial equity in adult education. This grant supports racial equity work at both the state and program level.

but

- f. **Assessing Quality. Describe how the eligible agency will assess the quality of providers of adult education and literacy activities under title II. Describe how the eligible agency will take actions to improve such quality, including providing the activities described in section 223(a)(1)(B) of WIOA. Describe how the eligible agency will use evaluations, data analysis, program monitoring, or other methods to improve the quality of adult education activities in the State.**

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

- 1) **The State Adult Education Management Information System (MIS)**
Data: Minnesota’s MIS, called SiD, balances both program quality and program compliance with state and federal expectations. In addition to required reports, local providers can use SiD to analyze student persistence, program outcomes, and other measures at the consortium, site, class and student level.
- 2) **A State Adult Education Grantee Report Card:** The report card notes actual performance and ranks providers by key program data measures, including measurable skill gain by population, cost of programming per individual served, intensity of service provided, and percentage of population served.
- 3) **A Program Improvement Process:** Programs will be identified for review based on rankings in the state adult education report card and will undergo a comprehensive review and monitored implementation of a program improvement plan that requires local providers to complete site visits, workshop activities, reports, and plans to strengthen program performance and quality. (For more information on Program Improvement, see the response to (D) above.)
- 4) **Intensive Program Application Cycle:** On a five- to six-year basis, adult education providers are required to complete an in-depth application as a method to adhere to state statute governing local adult education programming. In this intensive application, local providers describe their:
 - 1) Consortium,
 - 2) Program accountability procedures,
 - 3) Professional development priorities and activities,
 - 4) Proposed programming,
 - 5) Local program governance,
 - 6) Program collaboration with key stakeholders and partners,

- 7) Technology resources and integration,
- 8) Future plans, and
- 9) Performance.

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

5) Grantee Monitoring Site Calls and Visits: All grantees are subject to monitoring calls and site visits that focus on policy compliance and program quality through multiple methods:

- 1) All AEFLA grantees receive site visits on a rotating basis, at least once every five-to-six years, when the program participates in in-depth application process to continue receiving state adult education (ABE) funding to comply with state statute;
- 2) Monitoring visits based on items that get escalated by the MDE Adult Education team through the monthly data review process;
- 3) Providers with low performance participate in site visits through the program improvement process;
- 4) Local adult education providers that participate in state initiatives and/or receive special grants through state or federal funding typically receive site visits as part of their participation; and
- 5) Local providers request special technical assistance site visits as they face issues

6) ASSESSING THE QUALITY OF PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS:

- 1. Minnesota's Adult Education Supplemental Services system, which is funded with a combination of state and federal leadership funds provides training that supports local programs in implementing program components needed to meet the wide range of needs of Minnesota's adult education participants including: distance education, use of technology for instruction as well as program management; services related to serving students with disabilities; instructional methodology including EBRI and the Teaching Numeracy to Adults Cohort; content standards including CCRS, ACES and Northstar; IET, contextualization and career pathway programming; volunteer recruitment and training; assessment; partner collaborations including workforce, TANF and SNAP, etc. Information regarding the relevance, quality and success of each component is collected through an annual professional development

survey. In addition, biannual reporting regarding participation and locally collected participant evaluations are required of all Supplemental Services providers.

2. The statewide Supplemental Services noted above are available to all paid and volunteer staff.
3. Dissemination of information about models and promising practices are facilitated by Minnesota’s Supplemental Services providers. Each provider maintains a website of related resources and all providers provide content for Minnesota’s monthly PD Update newsletter. Minnesota also maintains a career pathway-related curriculum repository. Information regarding the success of the dissemination system is collected annually as part of the Professional Development Survey and via locally collected participant evaluations.

ADULT EDUCATION AND FAMILY LITERACY ACT PROGRAM CERTIFICATIONS

<i>The State Plan must include</i>	<i>Included?</i>
1. The plan is submitted by the State agency that is eligible to submit the plan;	Yes
2. The State agency has authority under State law to perform the functions of the State under the program;	Yes
3. The State legally may carry out each provision of the plan;	Yes
4. All provisions of the plan are consistent with State law;	Yes
5. A State officer, specified by title in the certification, has authority under State law to receive, hold, and disburse Federal funds made available under the plan;	Yes
6. The State officer who is submitting the plan, specified by the title in the certification, has authority to submit the plan;	Yes
7. The agency that is submitting the plan has adopted or otherwise formally approved the plan; and	Yes
8. The plan is the basis for State operation and administration of the program;	Yes

ADULT EDUCATION AND FAMILY LITERACY ACT PROGRAM ASSURANCES

The State Plan must include assurances that:	<i>Included?</i>
1. The eligible agency will expend funds appropriated to carry out title II of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) only in a manner consistent with fiscal requirements under section 241(a) of WIOA (regarding the supplement-not-supplant requirement);	Yes
2. The eligible agency will ensure that there is at least one eligible provider serving each local area, as defined in section 3(32) of WIOA;	Yes

3. The eligible agency will not use any funds made available under title II of WIOA for the purpose of supporting or providing programs, services, or activities for individuals who are not “eligible individuals” within the meaning of section 203(4) of WIOA, unless it is providing programs, services or activities related to family literacy activities, as defined in section 203(9) of WIOA;	Yes
4. Using funds made available under title II of WIOA to carry out a program for criminal offenders within a correctional institution, the eligible agency will give priority to serving individuals who are likely to leave the correctional institution within five years of participation in the program.	Yes
5. The eligible agency agrees that in expending funds made available under Title II of WIOA, the eligible agency will comply with sections 8301 through 8303 of the Buy American Act (41 U.S.C. 8301-8303).	Yes

AUTHORIZING OR CERTIFYING REPRESENTATIVE

CERTIFICATION REGARDING LOBBYING

Certification for Contracts, Grants, Loans, and Cooperative Agreements

The undersigned certifies, to the best of his or her knowledge and belief, that:

- 1) No Federal appropriated funds have been paid or will be paid, by or on behalf of the undersigned, to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of an agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with the awarding of any Federal contract, the making of any Federal grant, the making of any Federal loan, the entering into of any cooperative agreement, and the extension, continuation, renewal, amendment, or modification of any Federal contract, grant, loan, or cooperative agreement.
- 2) If any funds other than Federal appropriated funds have been paid or will be paid to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with this Federal contract, grant, loan, or cooperative agreement, the undersigned shall complete and submit Standard Form-LLL, "Disclosure of Lobbying Activities," in accordance with its instructions.
- 3) The undersigned shall require that the language of this certification be included in the award documents for all subawards at all tiers (including subcontracts, subgrants, and contracts under grants, loans, and cooperative agreements) and that all subrecipients shall certify and disclose accordingly. This certification is a material representation of fact upon which reliance was placed when this transaction was made or entered into. Submission of this certification is a prerequisite for making or entering into this transaction imposed by section 1352, title 31, U.S. Code. Any

person who fails to file the required certification shall be subject to a civil penalty of not less than \$10,000 and not more than \$100,000 for each such failure.

Statement for Loan Guarantees and Loan Insurance

The undersigned states, to the best of his or her knowledge and belief, that:

If any funds have been paid or will be paid to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with this commitment providing for the United States to insure or guarantee a loan, the undersigned shall complete and submit Standard Form-LLL, "Disclosure of Lobbying Activities," in accordance with its instructions. Submission of this statement is a prerequisite for making or entering into this transaction imposed by section 1352, title 31, U.S. Code. Any person who fails to file the required statement shall be subject to a civil penalty of not less than \$10,000 and not more than \$100,000 for each such failure.

Please download and sign the forms below. Please scan and return the forms to wioa@ed.gov at the same time you submit your State Plan via the portal.

1. SF424B - Assurances – Non-Construction Programs
(<http://www2.ed.gov/fund/grant/apply/appforms/appforms.html>)
2. Grants.gov - Certification Regarding Lobbying
(<http://www2.ed.gov/fund/grant/apply/appforms/appforms.html>)
3. SF LLL Form – Disclosure of Lobbying Activities (required, only if applicable)
(<http://www2.ed.gov/fund/grant/apply/appforms/appforms.html>)

<i>APPLICANT'S ORGANIZATION</i>	<i>Enter information in this column</i>
Applicant's Organization	Minnesota Department of Education
<i>PRINTED NAME AND TITLE OF AUTHORIZED REPRESENTATIVE</i>	<i>Enter information in this column</i>
First Name	Willie
Last Name	Jett
Title	Commissioner, Minnesota Department of Education
Email	brad.hasskamp@state.mn.us

SECTION 427 OF THE GENERAL EDUCATION PROVISIONS ACT (GEPA)

In the text box below, describe the steps the applicant proposes to take to ensure equitable access to, and participation in, its Federally-assisted program for students, teachers, and other program beneficiaries with special needs provide the information to meet the requirements of Section 427 of the General Education Provisions Act (GEPA), consistent with the following instructions posted at <https://www2.ed.gov/fund/grant/apply/appforms/gepa427.doc>.

The Minnesota Department of Education Grants Office ensures that a fair and equitable process is followed that allows all eligible entities the opportunity to apply for the grant.

The Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) requires that Adult Education grant applicants describe the race/ethnicity and other demographics of the student population served in comparison to the demographics of the geographic area served. In addition, applicants must describe how they plan to address equitable access to and participation in programming for all members of the communities they serve; how they will build a common understanding of equity among program staff; and what staff professional development regarding equity they will provide. MDE monitoring activities include reviewing: dis-aggregated enrollment data in comparison with K-12 Limited English Proficiency enrollment and local demographic data; agency outreach, intake and course placement practices; agency program course and progression structures; and implementation of the above noted plans.

The Minnesota Department of Education supports Adult Education providers in addressing equity by providing both program supports and professional development through a several competitive state and federally (leadership) funded Supplemental Services grants. The Supplemental Service grants are competed every three years and include grants focused on providing services for students with disabilities; using instructional technology including distance/asynchronous learning; and instructional methodology including evidence-based practices in reading (STAR) and math; and ELL instructional best practice. Program supports provided by Supplemental Services grantees include: a web site focused on providing services to participants with disabilities, an accommodations resource lending library, outreach materials, and statewide access to technical assistance from specially trained staff. Professional development opportunities available to all Adult Education program staff include Universal Design, inclusive programming, cultural competency, mental health, shared programming, career pathway development, course design and other topics. The Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) requires that Adult Education grant applicants describe the racial and other demographics of the student population served in comparison to the demographics of the geographic area served. In addition, applicants must describe how they plan to address equitable access to and participation in programming for all members of the communities they serve; how they will build a common understanding of equity among program staff; and what staff professional development regarding equity they will provide. MDE monitoring activities include reviewing: dis-aggregated enrollment data in comparison with K-12 Limited English Proficiency enrollment and local demographic data; agency outreach, intake and course placement practices; agency program course and progression structures; and implementation of the above noted plans. The Minnesota Department of Education supports Adult Education providers in addressing equity by providing both program supports and professional development through a several competitive state and federally (leadership) funded Supplemental Services grants. The Supplemental Service grants are competed every three years

and include grants focused on providing services for students with disabilities; using instructional technology including distance/asynchronous learning; and instructional methodology including evidence-based practices in reading (STAR) and math (Minnesota Numeracy Initiative); and ELL instructional best practice. Program supports provided by Supplemental Services grantees include: a web site focused on providing services to participants with disabilities, an accommodations resource lending library, outreach materials, and statewide access to technical assistance from specially trained staff. Professional development opportunities available to all Adult Education program staff include Universal Design, inclusive programming, cultural competency, mental health, shared programming, career pathway development, course design and other topics.

Vocational Rehabilitation

Program-Specific Requirements for State Vocational Rehabilitation Services Program

The Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Services Portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan must include the following descriptions and estimates, as required by sections 101(a) and 606 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended by title IV of WIOA.

(a) State Rehabilitation Council. All VR agencies, except for those that have an independent consumer-controlled commission, must have a State Rehabilitation Council (Council or SRC) that meets the criteria in section 105 of the Rehabilitation Act. The designated State agency or designated State unit, as applicable, has (select A or B):

[X] (B) has established a State Rehabilitation Council.

In accordance with Assurance 3(b), please provide information on the current composition of the Council by representative type, including the term number of the representative, as applicable, and any vacancies, as well as the beginning dates of each representative's term.

Council Representative	Current Term Number/ Vacant	Beginning Date of Term Mo./Yr.
Statewide Independent Living Council (SILC)	1	11/2023
Parent Training and Information Center	1	11/2023
Client Assistance Program	No term limit	05/2020
Qualified Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Counselor (Ex Officio if Employed by the VR Agency)	1	02/2022
Community Rehabilitation Program Service Provider	Vacant	
Business, Industry, and Labor	Vacant	

Business, Industry, and Labor	1	02/2022
Business, Industry, and Labor	1	02/2022
Business, Industry, and Labor	1	11/2023
Disability Advocacy Groups	1	12/2023
Disability Advocacy Groups	Vacant	
Disability Advocacy Groups	Vacant	
Current or Former Applicants for, or Recipients of, VR services	2	01/2023
Current or Former Applicants for, or Recipients of, VR services	2	05/2020
Current or Former Applicants for, or Recipients of, VR services	1	12/2023
Current or Former Applicants for, or Recipients of, VR services	Vacant	
Section 121 Project Directors in the State (as applicable)	Vacant	
Section 121 Project Directors in the State (as applicable)	No term limit	05/2020
State Educational Agency Responsible for Students with Disabilities Eligible to Receive Services under Part B of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)	1	11/2023
State Workforce Development Board	2	01/2023
VR Agency Director (Ex Officio)	N/A	

If the SRC is not meeting the composition requirements in section 105(b) of the Rehabilitation Act and/or is not meeting quarterly as required in section 105(f) of the Rehabilitation Act, provide the steps that the VR agency is taking to ensure it meets those requirements.

The State Rehabilitation Council has made recommendations to the Governor's office staff for current vacancies.

In accordance with the requirements in section 101(a)(21)(A)(ii)(III) of the Rehabilitation Act, include a summary of the Council's input (including how it was obtained) into the State Plan and any State Plan revisions, including recommendations from the Council's annual reports, the review and analysis of consumer satisfaction and other Council reports.

The Minnesota State Rehabilitation Council-General meets as a full council 10 times per year. Each meeting is planned to provide its members with education about VRS programs and projects, as well as to inform the council on status and trends. Much of the input from the SRC comes through dialogue that occurs during meetings and are captured in meeting minutes.

- Public Awareness was identified as an area of focus so the individuals we serve reflects the population of the State of Minnesota. During meetings held specifically

around this topic and analysis of the Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment, the SRC identified the following underserved populations for which there should be additional outreach efforts.

- Late diagnosed individuals with autism
- Students in a virtual school setting, private schools and home schooled
- Individuals who identify as Black, Indigenous, or People of Color
- Following analysis of VRS efforts around staff recruitment and retention, the SRC made recommendations around maintaining internal talent.
 - Improve recruitment efforts and application process for VR positions
 - Develop internal business resource groups
- During an annual review of community partnerships, the following recommendations were made to bolster relationships with external partners:
 - Ensure statewide coverage of community partners
 - Train providers on customized employment
 - Continue to build strong relationships with tribal nations
 - Educate employers about supporting employees with disabilities at all levels
 - Reach out to business DEI divisions and talent managers more frequently
 - The job coach shortage was identified as critical
- The SRC provided input during a focused session on the application to eligibility process at the April 2023 meeting.
 - Recommendations to improve services in general:
 - Involve youth and adults with disabilities in decision making
 - Ensuring consistent benefits coaching for participants
 - Recommendations to improve the application to eligibility process:
 - Improve communication and make it simple to understand
 - Develop an online portal for participants to track application status online
 - Make paperwork as painless as possible
- The SRC approved the opening of Category 4 at its June 2023 meeting.
- The SRC approved a moratorium on Consumer Financial Participation (CFP) at its June 2023 meeting, to be re-evaluated in March 2024.
- Reducing ethnic/racial disparities in service provision and outcomes was identified as a top priority in January 2023.

- The SRC would like VRS to explore the relationship between credential attainment of measurable skills gains (MSGs) and employment outcomes.

Provide the VR agency’s response to the Council’s input and recommendations, including an explanation for the rejection of any input and recommendations.

- Provide additional outreach efforts to identified groups.
 - VRS Response: VRS recognizes the need to provide additional outreach efforts to the groups identified as underserved in the CSNA and plans to bolster efforts in this area. A Communications & DEI Manager was hired to lead this work. VRS is very focused on building a workforce that best represents the participants we serve. VRS is actively hiring more employees with disabilities to fill open positions including through the C700 State of Minnesota Disability Hiring initiative. The C700 program ensures a non-competitive interview for people with disabilities who have a C700 certification through the State of Minnesota. Once on board, the C700 candidate has up to 700 hours to demonstrate their ability to meet the essential job functions. VRS is also building a workforce that represents BIPOC and 2SLGBTQIA participants through hiring efforts that include creative and expansive recruitment efforts. VRS works closely with our DSA Human Resources Specialists who are connected to an expansive array of marketing options to reach underrepresented communities. VRS recognizes that many underserved groups are hesitant to work with the government or consider entering a government building. VRS developed an In-Home Services workgroup to discuss, develop, pilot and implement training and guidance for VRS staff to meet with participants in their home. VRS’ goal is to expand the meeting location options for staff to meet with participants in order to create more person centered options, including where they are most comfortable.
- Improve recruitment efforts and application process for VR positions.
 - VRS Response: VRS has made great improvements in this area already through a number of measures, including:
 - Resources
 - Hiring dedicated HR recruitment/hiring staff – 2 for VRS in centralized agency
 - Designating a dedicated HR liaison with VRS to streamline communications, maintain an organizational chart, track all positions and vacancies, and navigate the internal personnel transaction record system
 - Process

- Updating job posting language to remove VR jargon, with more plain language.
- Using continuous postings versus time limited
- HR is sharing an agency-wide weekly bulletin listing all job vacancies
- HR created a landing webpage for DEED jobs, separated from all State of MN jobs
- Reconsidered minimum qualifications, including degree requirements for some positions
- Created an entry level Counselor role primarily to serve Pre-ETS
- Culture
 - VRS leaders hold weekly meetings with HR and share a digital workspace
 - Established telework/hybrid work environment and more flexibility
 - Initiated pay equity reviews
 - Initiated Pay Range Reassignment for multiple positions including counselors
 - Developed a staff engagement model utilizing focus groups
 - Are strengthening internal training and mentorship to develop skills and experience
 - Creating career pathways utilizing the existing classification pathways
- Monetary Incentives
 - Paid graduate level internships
 - Instituted hiring and referral incentives
 - Relocation expense reimbursement
 - Tuition reimbursement (75%) for VR graduate school courses
 - Achievement Awards
- Bolstered recruitment efforts
 - Linked-in recruiting
 - Non-profit and free job boards
 - Career Fairs – Veterans, Disability, People of Color
- Develop internal business resource groups

- VRS Response: VRS is not opposed to this suggestion but believes creation of business resource groups are best when they form organically. There is a general DEIA group that was created and formalized in the past year.
- Ensure statewide coverage of community partners
 - VRS Response: VRS is looking across the state to see where there are pockets without community partner choices. VRS is networking with staff, school personnel, and others in the field to encourage additional providers to become Community Rehabilitation Providers or Limited-Use Vendors. VRS is holding Community Rehabilitation Partner in-person meetings to ensure that VRS is listening and aware of the opportunities and challenges for Community Rehabilitation Providers. VRS is being intentional in setting expectations for VRS staff to be aware of and utilize vocational services available by providers that specialize in serving un-served and underserved populations.
- Train providers on customized employment
 - VRS Response: VRS continues to receive referrals of participants who are either earning or considering earning subminimum wages. Over 4,000 people continue to work in subminimum wages each year. This number does not include the hundreds of students VRS serves who have significant barriers to working in competitive, integrated employment. DEED-VRS partners with Minnesota State Operated Community Services (MSOCS) to deliver Minnesota Customized Employment (MN-CE) Training to interested providers statewide. This training is now offered at no cost to providers as an opportunity to engage more providers. MN-CE training is offered virtually at least three times per year. Each MNCE participant completes 9 training sessions, is connected to a “learning partner” who is a VRS participant in need of a Customized Employment Discovery process. MN-CE participants also receive mentoring hours to support the practical application learning and ensure that the learning partner has a completed CE-Discovery process. The MN-CE Training is Association of Community Rehabilitation Educators (ACRE) certified. Minnesota was the first state agency to become ACRE certified in Customized Employment. To provide Customized Employment services, Community Rehabilitation Provider practitioners must have completed ACRE certified Customized Employment training. In addition, the practitioner must pass a Competency Review Process which includes a review of the completed CE Discovery document. VRS’ Customized Employment Specialist utilizes a rubric to determine whether the CE practitioner meets standards.
- Continue to build strong relationships with tribal nations
 - VRS Response: VRS has recently renewed efforts to engage with tribal nations. Currently VRS’ relationship with the White Earth nation is strong and

effective. VRS' efforts to engage with the Red Lake Nation has been growing thanks to the efforts of Red Lake Schools teachers and VRS staff who are ensuring Pre-ETS and full-service VR are being provided to students. VRS' DSA has an American Indian liaison who is native. He has overall excellent relationship with many tribal nations in Minnesota. He has developed a process of communication with many of the tribal nations that is effective and respectful of tribal leaders' meeting expectations. VRS is meeting with the DSA tribal nation liaison to attend Tribal Nations meetings to share information about VRS. VRS is very interested in marketing its employment opportunities to the Tribal colleges as we are very interested in recruiting more native people to work for VRS.

- Educate employers about supporting employees with disabilities at all levels
 - VRS Response: VRS Program Specialists in Placement engage with employers on a regular basis and provide education on supporting employees with disabilities at all levels using tools like DEED's Disability inclusion: Bite-sized learning for employers modules and other disability resources. View here: <https://www.careerforcemn.com/disability-inclusion-bite-sized-learning-modules>
- Reach out to business DEI divisions and talent managers more frequently
 - VRS Response: VRS Program Specialists in Placement try to reach out to business DEI divisions on a regular basis to identify opportunities to partner.
- The job coach shortage was identified as critical
 - VRS Response: The workforce shortage of qualified disability employment services staff continues to be a significant challenge. VRS is in consistent communication with community rehabilitation providers regarding their workforce shortage challenges. One of the key challenges is having trained staff to deliver competent job coaching services. Community Rehabilitation Providers developed a job coach training prior to 2020, but the training has not been shared or provided. VRS is aware of another state VR program who developed a Job Coaching Training and will be exploring options to offer job coaching training to interested Community Rehabilitation providers.
- Involve youth and adults with disabilities in decision making
 - VRS Response: VRS continues to include participants in decision-making through its State Rehabilitation Council and focus groups. The VRS Youth Team is in planning stages to convene a youth advisory committee comprised of students/youth with disabilities.
- Ensuring consistent benefits coaching for participants
 - VRS Response: VRS continues to include benefits coaching as an integral service to help individuals under their benefits and the impact of work on

benefits. This will be accomplished for staff by offering opportunities through both internal and external trainings and resources to support or increase their knowledge of SSA, state and local public benefits. This echoes the agency strategies and key messages listed on the MN HUB website (<https://disabilityhubmn.org/for-professionals/benefits-planning/get-ready/agency-strategies/#article-start>), which also includes an opportunity to join the MN benefit planning learning community. All MN VRS individuals identified as receiving SSA, state and local public benefits will be informed of the Benefit Planning and options for services. These options may include basic information up to a complete analysis of their benefits, reflecting their current state of the benefits to demonstrating the impact of earnings or other income on their benefits.

- Improve communication and make it simple to understand
 - VRS Response: VRS completed a comprehensive review of all printed materials in 2020 to ensure the use of plain language. This practice will be ongoing. Additionally, VRS will undertake a digital transformation in the upcoming year to ensure its programs and forms are more easily located and accessible to a wider audience.
- Develop an online portal for participants to track application status online
 - VRS Response: VRS appreciates this input and will be exploring the creation of an online portal in the upcoming year.
- Make paperwork as painless as possible
 - VRS Response: VRS completed focus groups with staff and the SRC to gather input and will be reviewing its application and other forms in the upcoming year to streamline. Some of the ideas generated include:
 - Aligning the order of fields on the paper application and the case management system to streamline data entry.
 - Only including required fields on the application to streamline the intake process.
 - Eliminating the need for participants to enter the same information on multiple forms
 - Creating a one-pager describing the application to eligibility process with easy-to-follow visuals
- The SRC approved the opening of Category 4 at its June 2023 meeting.
 - VRS Response: Category 4 officially opened, effective October 1, 2023.
- The SRC approved a moratorium on Consumer Financial Participation (CFP) at its June 2023 meeting, to be re-evaluated in March 2024.

- VRS Response: The moratorium on CFP was effective July 1, 2023. VRS plans to watch data closely and re-evaluate with the SRC in March 2024.
- Reducing ethnic/racial disparities in service provision and outcomes.
 - VRS Response: VRS agrees this is a priority area and is taking several measures to decrease disparities in service provisions and employment outcomes.
 - VRS initiated a workgroup called Vocational Rehabilitation Youth Equity Workgroup (VYEW) specifically to look at the ethnic and racial disparities in the numbers of students/youth that VRS serves, service provision and outcomes. VRS is being intentional in taking steps to improve and increase the numbers of BIPOC students served, increasing the services they receive and increasing the number of employment outcomes that result. VYEW meets monthly to review and discuss key topics related to serving and supporting BIPOC students with disabilities, review metrics and make recommendations to the VRS Executive Leadership Team. VYEW is ongoing and the review of metrics is ongoing.
 - VRS is committed to hiring and retaining a diverse staff to better reflect the participants that we serve.
 - Diversity, Equity, Inclusion & Accessibility (DEIA) group was created and meets regularly.
 - DEIA manager was hired in 2023.
 - VRS has increased its training opportunities around serving underrepresented populations.
- Explore the relationship between credential attainment of measurable skills gains (MSGs) and employment outcomes.
 - VRS Response: VRS agrees this is an important area but thinks this may be better examined at a national level.

(b) Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment (CSNA). Section 101(a)(15), (17), and (23) of the Rehabilitation Act require VR agencies to provide an assessment of:

- (1) The VR services needs of individuals with disabilities residing within the State, including:**
- (1) Individuals with the most significant disabilities and their need for Supported Employment;**

Several initiatives are underway to serve individuals with the most significant disabilities. E1MN is Minnesota’s state agency partnership to advance Employment First outcomes for youth and

adults with disabilities. The Minnesota Department of Human Services, Department of Education, and the Department of Employment and Economic Development work together to deliver a more seamless and timely employment support system. The second year of the E1MN initiative recently concluded. Over 3,100 individuals on a Medicaid waiver received Vocational Rehab Services/State Services for the Blind (VRS/SSB) services last year, an 18% increase from the first year. Over 550 of those individuals found stable employment, a 49% increase from the year prior. Nearly half of all individuals who exited from VRS/SSB did so successfully.

In the 2021 special legislative session, the Minnesota Legislature set up the Task Force on Eliminating Subminimum Wages (Task Force). The Task Force completed its legislative report in February 2023, including twenty recommendations. Some of the recommendations include: improving transitions between VRS/SSB and waiver services and increasing collaboration and opportunities for work experiences between schools and VRS/SSB. Between 4,000 and 4,800 Minnesotans earned subminimum wages in 2022, one of the highest rates of subminimum wage earning in the country. In 2022, Minnesota received a six year, \$13M Disability Innovation Fund (DIF) grant, to serve individuals working or contemplating working in subminimum wage jobs.

One area of need is adults with serious mental illness. Minnesota VR has seen a decrease in adults applying for VR services and a need for additional engagement and training for new staff.

(2) Individuals with disabilities who are minorities and individuals with disabilities who have been unserved or underserved by the VR program;

Minnesota has identified racial disparities in the percent of VR applicants who complete their employment plan. Among youth, Hispanic/Latino youth are well represented but Black/African American youth are slightly underrepresented. Under the E1MN initiative, a comparison of VR participants with a Medicaid waiver with the overall waiver population indicates that Black/African American and Asian adults are underserved.

(3) Individuals with disabilities served through other components of the workforce development system; and

In Minnesota, the statewide workforce system is known as CareerForce. WIOA and state-funded employment programs collaborate to serve a diverse group of career-seekers. In particular, the Minnesota WIOA and state youth programs serve a high percentage of young people with disabilities and have high employment outcomes. The area of greatest opportunity is to increase the number of individuals with a disability using general Wagner Peyser career services, and their employment outcomes.

(4) Youth with disabilities, including students with disabilities and their need for pre-employment transition services. Include an assessment of the needs of individuals with disabilities for transition career services and pre-employment transition

services, and the extent to which such services are coordinated with transition services provided under IDEA.

Youth and students are a growing percent of VR participants served in addition to serving potentially eligible students. Extensive coordination occurs with individual schools as well as the Minnesota Department of Education, under a memorandum of understanding and a branded initiative known as E1MN. Statewide, a large gap in post-secondary completion exists for students with a disability. Stakeholders identified the following underserved groups:

- Students with the most significant disabilities, who need work experiences
- Students with mental health issues
- Students who are learning remotely and are harder to connect with
- Students who are in institutions (mental health or chemical dependency)
- Students who move frequently
- Individuals with a late diagnosis of Autism (after school age) who have limited supports
- Students with disabilities who don't have an IEP

Additional systemic needs or barriers were identified, including:

- Rural and suburban youth, in particular, struggle with transportation
- Families require education and support, including mental health support
- Need for more job coaching, especially evenings and weekends
- Need for more specialists trained in mental/behavioral health, chemical dependency, and learning disabilities.

(2) Identify the need to establish, develop, or improve community rehabilitation programs within the State.

Vocational Rehabilitation Services has identified four areas of capacity building with its community rehabilitation partners:

- 1) VRS purchases placement and retention services through a Performance Based Agreement (PBA) structure that was implemented in 2004. VRS has made several adjustments to the PBA structure to increase compensation to providers, however the overall rate amount of the PBA structure has remained the same since 2009. Due to inflation, including significant increases in cost of staffing and transportation, Community Rehabilitation Providers struggle to find highly skilled placement

specialists at the current PBA rates. As VRS looks to increase the number of individuals served in Minnesota and reach underserved communities, it must review its current payment structure to build capacity of skilled placement professionals ready to connect jobseekers and employers.

- 2) Another challenge is finding long term work site supports. VRS is a time limited service. VRS provides funding for job coaching services until the participant/employee no longer require intensive supports, however, long terms worksite supports, funded by Medicaid can continue indefinitely. Another workforce shortage challenge for Community Rehabilitation providers is the lack of staffing to support participant's ongoing worksite support needs. Funding is provided by Medicaid funding which is woefully inadequate to cover staffing costs. Unfortunately, the burden falls to the participant/employee/person and to VRS. VRS often continues to pay hourly job coaching hours to the community rehabilitation provider which is significantly higher than the Medicaid reimbursement rate.
- 3) There remains a great need to increase the resource of Benefit Planning (BP) to ensure the SSA beneficiaries in MN are aware of, including how to access, agencies in the MN BP network. In addition to the SSA beneficiaries, other support agencies, staff and the individual's family members often are not clear as to the local resources to help navigate the path of benefits. Lack of knowledge, or inaccurate shared information, can result in a negative situation of a possible overpayment and potential termination of benefits. Each benefit has its own set of rules which need to be followed to avoid negative or unplanned occurrence. Benefit planning helps identify the individual's specific benefit and what potential Work Incentives may be applicable for this person's situation. Transition aged students and their families often are not aware their work activities can have a potential impact on their SSA benefit. There is a need to engage youth early in their receipt of SSA benefits and to re-engage often during their employment journey. A youth/student specific Work Incentive is often missed due to lack of awareness. As MN moves towards the elimination of sub-minimum wage, many will choose a competitive employment option and there are not enough BP Coaches/Planners to meet the need in assisting individuals identify how their benefits will be affected by earnings.
- 4) In general, families and other caregivers would benefit from additional education and support to assist them to navigate systems of care, including the MNChoice Assessment, waiver services, Medical Assistance, and other public benefits. To advocate for and with individuals with disabilities, support for caregivers should address potential barriers such as low income, unemployment, mental health, transportation, language, and citizenship status, in addition to managing the complexity of these benefit systems.

(c) Goals, Priorities, and Strategies. Section 101(a)(15) and (23) of the Rehabilitation Act require VR agencies to describe the goals and priorities of the State in carrying out the VR and Supported Employment programs. The goals and priorities are based on (1) the most recent

CSNA, including any updates; (2) the State’s performance under the performance accountability measures of section 116 of WIOA; and (3) other available information on the operation and effectiveness of the VR program, including any reports received from the SRC and findings and recommendations from monitoring activities conducted under section 107 of the Rehabilitation Act. VR agencies must—

- (1) Describe how the SRC and the VR agency jointly developed and agreed to the goals and priorities and any revisions; and**

VRS took into account all input from the SRC while developing its goals and priorities. The SRC Chair was present at the first review of the goals and priorities with VRS leadership. Additional input was offered at SRC’s September 2023 meeting, and the final draft was approved by the council at its December 7, 2023 meeting.

- (2) Identify measurable goals and priorities in carrying out the VR and Supported Employment programs and the basis for selecting the goals and priorities (e.g., CSNA, performance accountability measures, SRC recommendations, monitoring, other information). As required in section 101(a)(15)(D), (18), and (23), describe under each goal or priority, the strategies or methods used to achieve the goal or priority, including as applicable, description of strategies or methods that—**

- (A) Support innovation and expansion activities;**
- (B) Overcome barriers to accessing VR and supported employment services;**
- (C) Improve and expand VR services for students with disabilities, including the coordination of services designed to facilitate the transition of such students from school to postsecondary life (including the receipt of VR services, postsecondary education, employment, and pre-employment transition services); and**
- (D) Improve the performance of the VR and Supported Employment programs in assisting individuals with disabilities to achieve quality employment outcomes.**

The Objectives describe our goals, and the Key Results are definable outcomes against which we measure our success on a 0-1 scale.

- A. Objective #1 PUBLIC AWARENESS – Expanding awareness of VR and its services to both adults and youth from the wider population of Minnesotans with disabilities who could benefit from services.

Rationale for inclusion in the State Plan: We want to increase outreach to create greater awareness and serve more people. We intend to use renewed resources to reverse the trend of decreased applications which was accelerated by COVID, and to effectively counteract the message of previously closed categories. Minnesota’s VR program had been impacted by Order of Selection restrictions to varying degrees since 1998. In 2023, all

categories were open for the first time in almost 25 years. Additionally, WIOA's intense focus on the most significant disabilities resulted in less focus on other categories. Beginning in 2016, staff capacity and attention was also drawn to addressing Section 511 and new Pre-ETS services which reduced program resources available for the wider population of Minnesotans with disabilities.

1994 – Minnesota established its Order of Selection

1998 – Category 4 closed

2002 –2005 – Categories 2 and 3 closed

January 2004 – July 2005 – Category 1 closed

2011– Categories 2 and 3 closed

2014 – Waiting list cleared but Categories 2, 3 and 4 remain closed

2020 – Categories 2 and 3 opened

2023 – Category 4 opened

1. *Key Result:* VRS has increased the total number of applicants for services.

Supporting strategies:

- Research other state's rebranding strategies.
- Dedicate resources for targeted outreach.
- Develop more ways for people to engage with VRS services.

2. *Key Result:* VRS has an increased number of applicants from underserved youth and adult populations.

Supporting strategies:

- Dedicate resources for targeted outreach to expand public awareness.
- Increase the number of partner relationships to promote greater awareness of VR program resources.

3. *Key Result:* VRS has an increased number of applicants from the fuller range of disabilities including disability populations who may not be familiar with VR services.

Supporting strategies:

- Continue to gather data on Minnesotans with disabilities (500,000 people self-reporting/11% of population) to better understand and apply the information that's available.
- Dedicate resources for targeted outreach.
- Increase the number of partner relationships to promote greater awareness of VR program resources.

4. *Key Result:* VRS has an increased number of applicants/participants interested in career advancement.

Supporting strategies:

- Review and apply learning from other states' career advancement service models to benefit Minnesota.
- Shift the agency culture to one that moves beyond assisting participants in securing an initial job and embraces career long services.
- Dedicate resources for targeted outreach to employers and previous participants.
- Develop career advancement services information and materials to share with both participants and employers.
- Develop career advancement service training for staff.
- Promote the new Employer Reasonable Accommodation Funds (ERAF) program and connections with business engagement services in VRS.

- B. Objective #2 PEOPLE – Creating and sustaining a strong network of internal talent and external partners whose shared passion accelerates the delivery of seamless disability employment and independent living services.

Rationale for inclusion in the State Plan:

- Internal talent: Effective disability employment and independent living services require talented people - talent with special expertise, training, and experience to help people with disabilities achieve their competitive integrated employment hopes and dreams, and to help Minnesota prepare and employ a nimbler and more responsive workforce. In recent years, VRS has experienced increasing competition for high potential/high performing talent and this trend is likely to become even more challenging due to multiple factors including retirement demographics, fewer people entering the VR field, and other competing career options. VRS needs to continue to strengthen its ability to recruit, develop and retain talent and to better represent the full diversity of the communities we serve.
 - External partners: Partners provide a critical extension of staff expertise and capacity to provide essential VR services and help VRS meet the federal requirement of providing access to quality services throughout the state. Partners also enhance the diversity of populations and communities served with desired/needed services.
1. *Key Result:* VRS talent is well positioned to deliver services by maintaining 90% or greater staffing capacity.

Supporting strategies:

- Increase targeted recruitment. Hiring will prioritize recruiting and retaining staff that represent the diversity of the individuals and communities VRS serves.
 - Continue to resource and fully utilize HR resources.
 - Continue to explore hiring and retention incentives.
- 2.** *Key Result:* Develop a team of highly effective VR professionals to increase employment outcomes and results for youth and adults.
- Examples of supporting strategies:
- Continue to enhance and standardize VRS talent onboarding and mentoring programs.
 - Develop resources and training to support ongoing staff development and ensure delivery of quality services, including mentor training/structure, based on a person-centered practice.
 - Review/analyze competencies for staff providing services, clarify expectations and create performance expectations and success measures.
- 3.** *Key Result:* Improved retention of VRS talent to best represent the full diversity of the communities we serve.
- Supporting strategies:
- Leverage the DEIA committee and consultants to identify strategies to enhance recruitment and retention.
 - Provide and promote leadership, career development, and advancement opportunities.
 - Develop and utilize stay surveys and exit surveys to learn more about reasons for staying or exiting the agency.
- 4.** *Key Result:* Strengthen relationships with community partners to increase choice of providers, and access to quality services.
- Supporting strategies:
- Recruit new community partners: Services that are culturally informed, affirming, and appropriate to the served individual's lived experience.
 - Increase capacity and retain Community Partners
 - Facilitate relationship building between VRS Staff and Community Partners.
- 5.** *Key Result:* VRS has increased the number of businesses providing paid work experience and employment opportunities for VR participants.
- Supporting strategies:

- Position VRS as a trusted expert source of information and services on disability employment for businesses.
 - Develop inclusive worksite training and certification for employers.
 - Increase outreach and engagement with businesses to develop and grow our relationships with employers.
 - Frame our outreach to businesses on the benefits of employing people with disabilities.
 - Implement new resources such as ERAF to support employers.
- (3) Objective #3 PROCESS – Customer-focused design drives improvement of our internal and workforce system processes.
- Rationale for inclusion in the State Plan: Leveraging insights gained from multiple sources including the Minnesota State Rehabilitation Council as well as a recent VRS participant survey, VRS is committed to simplifying what can be an overwhelming process for people seeking information and services from VRS and the broader workforce system. Continuous improvement priorities include supporting staff in effective design and delivery of person-centered services, engaging employees to improve processes such as the VRS application to eligibility experience, updating technologies, and modernizing tools and resources to better engage and serve more people through a wide variety of options. VRS is always actively researching, exploring, and implementing ways to make a greater impact.
1. *Key Result:* Increase customer satisfaction with VR processes.
Supporting strategies:
 - Research and evaluate customer satisfaction approaches and techniques.
 - Develop a comprehensive participant feedback process.
 2. *Key Result:* Improve process and customer experience through digital transformation.
Supporting strategies:
 - Evaluate and enhance the electronic interest form and rapid engagement workflow.
 - Explore, evaluate, and recommend VRS technology enhancements for internal and participant use.
 - Prioritize and implement initial round of VRS technology enhancements.
 3. *Key Result:* Streamline, strengthen and share a statewide VRS-school coordination process that ensures opportunity for students with disabilities.
Supporting strategies:

- Youth in Transition Toolkit (housed on Disability Hub MN)
 - Implement Workforce One (WF1) student tracking system:
 - Maintain and support the VRS Youth Equity Workgroup (VYEW):
 - Create a Youth Council.
4. Key Result: Increased interagency coordination and alignment among the broad network of partners to create a ‘no wrong door’ approach for individuals or employers engaging in the workforce system.
- Supporting strategies:
- Continue to manage and collaborate through effective Memorandum of Understandings (MOUs) with key partners.
 - As a member of the GWDB, effectively engage and coordinate with required WIOA partners for one stop comprehensive job opportunity centers around the state.
- (4) Objective #4 PERFORMANCE – Achieving the goal of more jobs for more people and meeting our federal requirements with fiscal integrity.
- Rationale for inclusion in the State Plan: As Minnesota’s VR general agency, VRS is entrusted with federal funds to improve the lives of people with disabilities. Increasing performance outcomes is an important way we demonstrate the relevance of our program and the positive impact that results from federal funding. We know the numbers and statistics reflect our ability to meet the needs of real people and businesses around the state. Performance measures help VRS staff and partners gauge our effectiveness in assisting people with all types of abilities and career goals to move forward with their career goals and to meet the needs of Minnesota’s businesses. To further enhance our performance, VRS is studying data on Minnesotans with disabilities to better understand where we can have greater impact as an agency and as part of the greater system to promote and expand opportunities for people with disabilities. Finally, the rigor and complexity of compliance with both state and federal fiscal requirements and grant programs requires the highest level of fiscal integrity to ensure the funds entrusted to VRS are fully utilized for the benefit of individuals with disabilities and communities throughout the state.
1. *Key Result*: Effective funds management based on customer data and trends for improved performance and federal compliance.
- Supporting strategies:
- Forecast expected spending levels for staffing and case services.
 - Utilize funds not spent on case services for strategic projects designed to improve employment outcomes for people with disabilities.

2. *Key Result:* Minnesota’s moving towards becoming the national leader in the employment rate of people with disabilities.
Supporting strategies:
 - Promote VR’s role in employment for people with disabilities.
 - Work with employers to create flexible job options customized for individuals with disabilities.

3. *Key Result:* Assess and understand disparities in service provision as identified in the Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment.
Supporting strategies:
 - Train staff to recognize and understand implicit bias to reduce negative impacts on service delivery and experiences.
 - Create mechanisms for applicants/students/participants/businesses to share feedback about their experience with VR and a platform to review and learn from that feedback.

4. *Key Result:* Improved effectiveness of Pre-ETS for potentially eligible and VR eligible students in order to increase successful employment outcomes.
Supporting strategies:
 - Establish initial youth performance benchmarks and identify best practices.
 - Develop reports that are accessible to all staff for monitoring data quality and performance.
 - Implement a communication plan to review data with internal and external stakeholders.
 - Provide annual staff training and ongoing support for analyzing data and reports.
 - Evaluate effectiveness of service provision and address system-wide disparities.

- (a) **Evaluation and Reports of Progress: VR and Supported Employment Goals. For the most recently completed program year, provide an evaluation and report of progress for the goals or priorities, including progress on the strategies under each goal or priority, applicable to that program year. Sections 101(a)(15) and 101(a)(23) of the Rehabilitation Act require VR agencies to describe—**
 - 1) **Progress in achieving the goals and priorities identified for the VR and Supported Employment Programs;**

GOAL 1. Provide quality services to youth and adults with disabilities for exploration, development and advancement in careers.

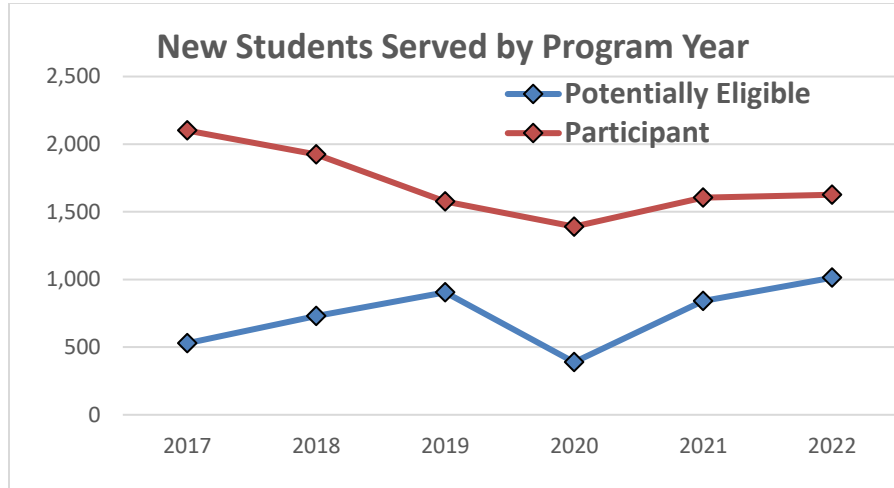
Objectives:

1. Quality pre-employment transition services are provided to potentially eligible students

Key Results:

- Pre-ETS Representative data reports demonstrate that outreach is provided to every school district/charter school in Minnesota.
 - This data is not collected in our case management system. However, a list was developed and is updated twice yearly that identifies the lead special education teacher, the Pre-ETS Rehab Representative, and the Transition Counselor for every school in the state. This ensures continued collaboration and availability of Pre-ETS across the state.
 - VRS also added new positions to support this work with youth:
 - A Pre-ETS Manager was hired to oversee youth activities.
 - Four Youth Specialists were hired to support the learning, mentoring and training of Pre-ETS Representatives and teams at a regional level. They have strong connections with the Department of Education, including at the state district and school levels.
 - Additional Pre-ETS Representatives were added to several teams across the state.
- Students and families are satisfied with the services they receive
 - Satisfaction surveys were given to students and families involved in Project Search.
 - Summary of results:
 - Number of sites evaluated in 2023: 6
 - Number of students who completed the survey: 12
 - Overall, 100% were somewhat or very happy with the help they received from the Provider Agency staff.
 - Number of parents/guardians who completed the survey: 15
 - Overall, 72.5% were somewhat or very happy with the help their son/daughter received from the Provider Agency staff.
- Baseline is established and annual goals are established and met for numbers of students served

- Goal setting for numbers served was greatly impacted by the pandemic. The numbers of potentially eligible and eligible students have recovered and increased since the pandemic. The graph below shows the number of new students who enrolled in services each year.



- VRS spent considerable time developing and implementing a Pre-ETS strategic plan
2. Annual goals for numbers of students served were established
- Compliance standards are established/defined via case reviews
 - Goal setting for numbers served was greatly impacted by the pandemic. However, we can point to the increase in the number of students being served over the past year, and in PY22, 60.3% of all participants served by VRS were youth between the ages of 15 and 24.
 - Participants are satisfied with the serves they receive
 - Progress in developing a comprehensive satisfaction survey were interrupted by the pandemic. VRS will be continuing this work with our updated goals/priorities.
 - Baseline is established and goals set for post-secondary education/training and obtainment of measurable skills gains
 - VRS eliminated Consumer Financial Participation (CFP) and anticipates supporting more people in post-secondary education.
 - MSG rates were negotiated with RSA
 - A system for measuring career advancement is established and annual goals are established and met
 - VRS is aware of this need, especially with focus in the past few years on other populations, such as youth and individuals on Medicaid waivers, and recognizes more work needs to be done in this area.

- Goals are established and met for statewide employment outcomes and job retention
 - Goal setting was greatly impacted by the pandemic. While youth tend to have a lower rate of employment at exit, they have overall higher employment performance outcomes at Q2 and Q4 after exit. For PY2022, performance results for youth were 910 successful exits with employment, 59.9% employment in Q2 and 61.5% employment in Q4. For PY2021, performance results for youth were 960 successful exits with employment, 57.6% employment in Q2 and 54.0% employment in Q4.
3. Quality services were provided to participants of state appropriated programs (State EE program, IPS grants, CIL grants, DHH grants)
- Key Results:*
- Satisfaction criteria are established and annual goals are established and met
 - Consumer satisfaction criteria are established by each of the State appropriated programs that are administered by VRS. Grantees of these programs are responsible for adhering to their respective regulations related to consumer satisfaction. During this period, all consumer satisfaction responses were collected by the grantees and assessed through the appropriate process. Survey results are maintained by the grantees and available at the request of VRS.
 - An Extended Employment Specialist was hired in 2023.
 - VRS was successful in securing additional one-time state funding over the next biennium for IPS to allow the projects to continue at their current level. VRS will seek to have this increase added to its base funding.

B. GOAL 2. Strengthen business engagement.

Objectives:

1. Connect VRS participants to competitive integrated employment

Key Results:

- Develop and utilize tools to be able to search VRS’s talent pool to efficiently connect VRS’s job seekers to job opportunities
 - We reviewed and evaluated tools and will be implementing Salesforce software for the DIF grant GoMN! pilot in 2024.
- Build new employer relationships and prioritize nurturing long-standing employer relationships statewide. Leverage Business Engagement Networks and opportunities to assist businesses with increased hiring needs

- Business Engagement Networks continue to be the main way to connect our community partners and VRS staff to businesses who are interested in hiring people with disabilities.
- VRS added three Business Engagement Specialist positions to ensure statewide connectivity.
- Increased competitive integrated employment outcomes.
 - VRS focused on increasing the number of 245D licensed providers in our network of providers to coordinate services and provide consistent support to increase competitive integrated employment outcomes for people on Medicaid waivers.
 - VRS and the departments of Education and Human Services collaboratively developed the employment first (E1MN) framework, which spells out which agency pays for what and when.
 - In the past year, VRS has increased its Pre-ETS Representative capacity, which has allowed us to have students considering employment options at a younger age. Early exposure and experiences result in higher success moving into competitive integrated employment.

2. Connect students with disabilities to work experiences

Key Results:

- A mechanism for tracking work-based experiences is established and baseline data is collected
 - Workforce One, VRS' client management application, is the mechanism for tracking work-based experiences. In 2023, VRS created a new report for staff to track the hours remaining on authorized work experience services. This report saves staff time and reduces errors. Close to 1800 individuals received a work experience service in FFY22, up 500 from FFY21.
- Develop and facilitate a disability employment collaborative to meet the needs of businesses
 - A business advisory council was never developed, due to disruption by the pandemic.
- Competitive work-based learning opportunities for students with disabilities
 - There has been a shift over the past few years away from in-house/enclave employment. With very few exceptions based on individual need, all of VRS work-based learning placements are competitive.
- Increased awareness about the benefits of hiring people with disabilities

- VRS, along with some business representatives from Mayo Health System, developed “Bite-size Learning” modules that feature the benefits of hiring people with disabilities.
- VRS is very active and engage businesses during National Disability Employment Awareness Month (NDEAM). In the most recent year, VRS and SSB hosted an event honoring 31 employers selected by VRS and SSB staff who are considered leaders by in employment of individuals with disabilities.

C. GOAL 3. Build a healthy organization in order to achieve our mission.

Objectives:

1. *Fiscal stability*

Key Results:

- Reduction in purchasing violations (MS16)
 - Field Operations Specialists monitor the MS16 violations that occur in VRS. Each time a violation occurs, staff must determine how the violation will be avoided in the future. There is also a statewide plan and recommendations on how to reduce purchasing violations, which will be implemented.
 - VRS has made significant progress in reducing the number of purchasing violations, 195 in CY2023, compared with 205 in CY2022 and 311 in 2019.
- Fiscal dashboards created and monitored to make decisions AND Actual spending reasonably tracks budgeted amounts
 - An initial dashboard was created using financial statement format plus projections for use by the leadership team with plans to find ways to share and communicate financials with all staff. A financial strategies workgroup meets bi-weekly to review the dashboard and ensure spending reasonably tracks budgeted amounts.
 - VRS has developed a new position for a director of fiscal forecasting and evaluation, hired in November 2023.
 - VRS will be retaining a financial consulting firm to assist with strategizing spending.
- Full 15% of Federal award is spend on Pre-ETS
 - VRS exceeded the 15% spending for Pre-ETS for FFY2023. We also have a stable plan to continue to meet the 15% requirement. Approximately 25% of the federal award was spent on qualifying pre-ETS expenditures during FFY2023.

2. *Employee engagement*

Key Results:

- Staff burden is reduced through technology development
 - There was a shift for all staff (n=422) to a hybrid work environment.
 - All staff now have a laptop bundle for portability.
 - All staff can work remotely and plug into a universal docking station in their primary work location.
 - iPhones – 393 total in rotation for staff
 - iPhone Replaced Project in Phase 1 - 104
 - iPhone Projected Replacement in Phase 2 - 142
 - 144 Portable Printer and Scanners – support roles and transition counselors in schools have portable printer/scanners for working remotely.
 - A mobile app for VRS' case management system was developed and released, available to staff and customers.
 - Electronic signature functionality was built into the case management system.
 - WF1 implemented the e-signature with AdobeSign for most common documents to give greater portability in obtaining signature from participants without having to print documents.
- Staff are trained in conflict resolution
 - All new staff are trained in Motivational Interviewing, which is a technique for conflict resolution.
 - The DSA offered conflict management training to all staff.
 - Courses are available in Yes LMS (learning management system) for conflict resolution:
 - Resolving Conflict, Creative Problem Solving,
 - Productive Disagreements - Leading Difficult Conversations,
 - Civility in the Workplace.

3. *Build collaboration within VRS and across DEED*

Key Results:

- A project management tool (Monday.com) is used to track and report progress on projects to enable collaboration between units
 - Monday.com was replaced with Microsoft Teams, which was rolled out to State staff statewide.

- VRS is also using Visio to create org charts and position tracking to aid with HR processes
4. *Build human resource capital*
- Key Results:*
- Plan developed to expand recruitment of qualified staff
 - VRS worked with HR partners to enhance hiring from 25% to 6% vacancy rate over the past year
 - Minimum qualifications for positions were reviewed and adjusted to recruit a broader candidate pool.
 - Job postings were reviewed and enhanced, including using plain language, to draw potential candidates.
 - Retention and recruiting bonuses were implemented.
 - A VRS DEIA committee was formed to play a pivotal role in creating culture that's more inclusive. This helps to recruit and retain more diverse staff at all levels of the organization. BIPOC hiring has increased
 - Efforts have been made to wider and targeted recruitment. This includes the use of the Handshake platform, which improves outreach and recruitment of staff at colleges/schools nationally
 - VRS implemented compensation for counselor interns.
 - Counselors have effective and professional counseling skills
 - Motivational Interviewing training is required for all new staff
 - VRS began using YesLMS (learning management system) platform with lots of resources
 - We proactively promote external opportunities for professional development
 - VRS implemented a CRC budget increase for elective trainings
 - VRS expanded its minimum qualifications to include related fields in addition to VR
 - Managers are responsible and hold expectations for mentoring, monitoring and developing counseling skills
 - VRS is offering Transformational Leadership training for leaders, increasing capacity to support staff in counseling,
 - DEED and other areas combine to build manager capacity
 - Counselors are proficient in aspects of disabilities for frequently served populations

- VRS promotes available resources and training for staff on an ongoing basis. There is a wide range of topics available in the learning management system, YesLMS
- VRS shares internal and external training opportunities with counselors
- VRS has staff specialists in areas of the largest populations we serve: Autism; Mental health, IDD
- There has been an increase in waiver services training.

D. GOAL 4. Strengthen collaboration through partner engagement.

Objectives:

1. *Coordinate and align services*

Key Results:

- Map of providers and services
 - VRS has attempted to create maps of providers and services, however, due to the increased complexities in service provision, we are exploring other ways to collect and maintain good provider information. VRS keeps a comprehensive list in SharePoint, which is available to staff.
- Referral and funding decision tree (who should pay for the service)
 - Under the E1MN initiative with the Departments of Education and Human Services, a process map was developed called the [Engage, Plan, Find, Keep](#) framework which clarifies roles and determines funding of services for those on Medicaid waivers.
 - The Disability Hub Work Toolkit has a section on [Supporting People on Waivers](#) that provides tools and resources to support understanding on the Engage, Plan, Find, Keep framework.
 - [E1MN Training](#) was launched in 2023 to support the E1MN referral and funding decisions for all roles.

2. *Timely and relevant communication and training*

Key Results:

- Fewer contract related inquiries and issues
 - VRS increased the size of its community partners team.
 - VRS launched monthly Partner Forums.
 - All communications to partners are sent via GovDelivery as well as posted to the website for community partners to easily find and access.
 - DSA Commissioner and Assistant Commissioner are actively interacting with local communities.

- More resources (FAQs, etc.) available to partners
 - A VRS Community Partners Committee with members from community partners across the state has provided strategic advisory to VRS on partner needs, issues and opportunities.
 - VR Community Learning Connections training series launched with LGBTQ+ series. The next topic will be on Unconscious Bias.
- Partners are trained in delivering Pre-Employment Transition Services and report satisfaction
 - Pre-ETS training has been developed for new and existing partners, as well as a “Guide on Pre-ETS.”

3. *Engage State Rehabilitation Council for input and feedback*

Key Results:

- Input and feedback provided to VRS leadership after each meeting for dissemination to VRS staff as needed
 - The SRC coordinator, and VRS senior leaders attend all monthly SRC meetings, as well as other key staff, who are scheduled to deliver information and answer questions.
 - The SRC chair presented and participated at the May 2023 Statewide VRS Managers Meeting.
- VRS regularly reports back to the SRC on how the council’s feedback is utilized
 - All reports for which SRC input was requested, such as the CSNA and Combined State Plan, are shared with the council for final approval before disseminating or submitting to RSA.
 - At the request of the council and as relevant, topics are revisited at subsequent meetings to provide updates.

(2) Performance on the performance accountability indicators under section 116 of WIOA for the most recently completed program year, reflecting actual and negotiated levels of performance. Explain any discrepancies in the actual and negotiated levels; and

Minnesota General and Blind agencies combined met or exceeded all common performance measures for PY2022. Minnesota General contributed significantly to these successful outcomes.

	PY2022 Actual Levels	PY2022 Negotiated Levels	Difference
Employment (Second Quarter After Exit)	57.8%	51.5%	6.3%
Employment (Fourth Quarter After Exit)	57.8%	49.6%	8.2%
Median Earnings (Second Quarter After Exit)	\$3,723	\$3,411	\$ 311
Credential Attainment Rate	44.0%	31.0%	13.0%
Measurable Skill Gains	50.6%	50.3%	0.3%

- (3) The use of funds reserved for innovation and expansion activities (sections 101(a)(18) and 101(a)(23) of the Rehabilitation Act) (e.g., SRC, SILC).
The needs of the SRC and SILC were fully funded.**

In 2022, VRS was awarded a Disability Innovation Fund grant in the amount of \$13 million to implement a demonstration project that will provide opportunities for individuals with disabilities who are currently working in or contemplating subminimum wage employment to explore opportunities in Minnesota’s growing transportation industry. The manager of the project, as well as a Business Engagement Specialist and an Adult Navigator have been hired and work is underway to implement the project in the Northeast region of the state. Project partners, including ICI-Boston and ICI-MN have developed training focused on educating/engaging individuals and families about moving from subminimum wage to competitive integrated employment. Contracts have been put into place with Community Rehabilitation Providers to participate in Progressive Employment activities and provide services to participants.

- (e) **Supported Employment Services, Distribution of Title VI Funds, and Arrangements and Cooperative Agreements for the Provision of Supported Employment Services.**

(1) Acceptance of title VI funds:

- (A) [X] VR agency requests to receive title VI funds.
- (B) [check box] VR agency does NOT elect to receive title VI funds and understands that supported employment services must still be provided under title I.

(2) If the VR agency has elected to receive title VI funds, Section 606(b)(3) of the Rehabilitation Act requires VR agencies to include specific goals and priorities with respect to the distribution of title VI funds received under section 603 of the Rehabilitation Act for the provision of supported employment services. Describe the use of title VI funds and how they will be used in meeting the goals and priorities of the Supported Employment program.

A. Estimate of the number of persons to be served

During Program Year 2024, about 500 individuals will be served with Title VI, Part B funds supplemented by Title I funds. Under the administrative rule that sets forth Minnesota's priority-for-service categories, all persons receiving supported employment have three or more serious functional limitations.

B. The contribution of state funding

Title VI B funds are used to provide supports after placement and before closure. Minnesota receives a state appropriation match for federal VR funding, which includes match for Title VI B funds. Additionally, the state legislature provides appropriations for three other programs that provide extended employment supports. The state-funded Extended Employment (EE) program that provides ongoing employment supports using state funding of \$18.325 million annually that flows to community rehabilitation programs. More than 80 percent of this state funding provides extended services for persons in competitive employment with supports. The Minnesota Extended Employment program serves all disability groups. An additional annual state appropriation of \$2,555,000 is dedicated to extended supported employment services for persons with serious mental illness since it has been historically difficult to obtain ongoing support services for this population. Another appropriation provides \$1,000,000 annually to provide long-term supported employment services for persons who are deaf, deaf blind or hard- of-hearing.

C. System complexity and limited capacity

Funding for supported employment, within which Title VI Part B funds play a relatively small part, is governed by myriad federal and state laws and rules covering many categories of services. For example, a network of private, not-for-profit organizations, licensed by the Minnesota Department of Human Services Disability Services Division, provides day training and habilitation services that may include supported employment. People with mental illness may receive work-related support through the State Comprehensive Mental Health Act. In these instances, each county determines the level of service that will be provided. Title VI B supported employment funds are distributed on a fee-for-service basis under fee schedules developed with service providers. VRS collaborates with the Departments of Education and Human Services and county and local service providers to facilitate access to other funding and service resources. During development of a vocational rehabilitation employment plan, the vocational rehabilitation participant and the service team design a supported employment framework that best meets the participant's needs. Planning for eventual long-term supports in the community is a crucial part of planning during VRS' time- limited period of service.

(3) Supported employment services may be provided with title 1 or title VI funds following placement of individuals with the most significant disabilities in employment. In accordance with section 101(a)(22) and section 606(b)(3) of the Rehabilitation Act, describe the quality, scope, and extent of supported employment services to be provided to individuals with the most significant disabilities, including youth with the most significant disabilities, and the timing of transition to extended services.

A. Statewide Collaboration:

VRS collaborates with MDE, DHS, and county and local service providers to offer statewide supported employment services. VRS is a partner in several state-level agreements that provide long-term supports. During development of an employment plan, VRS counselors and other service team members help consumers to select supported employment services that meet their needs. They identify which services will be provided by VRS, as well as the source of long-term supports in the community. VRS provides time-limited supports for up to 24 months, but an employment plan may be amended if additional time is needed to achieve job stability.

Transition from time limited supported employment services to extended services occurs when the individual:

- has completed time limited supported employment services on the individual plan for employment;
- has made substantial progress toward meeting the hours per week work goal established in the Supported Employment Plan; and
- is stable on the job.

The primary funding resources for long-term supports in the community following VRS case closure are county case managers, the state Extended Employment Program, DHS Medicaid-waiver funded services, and the Social Security Administration's Impairment-Related Work Expense exclusions and Ticket to Work funding for persons on SSI and/or SSDI. When necessary, VRS funds extended services to youth with the most significant disabilities for a period not to exceed four years, or until such time that the youth reaches age 25 and no longer meets the definition of a youth with a disability, whichever occurs first.

In FFY 2023, Minnesota served 410 individuals through supported employment services, spending approximately \$660,000 in title 1 or title VI funds. 35% of the individuals served were youth. In FFY 2025, Minnesota plans to serve an increased number of youth through supported employment services and a greater amount of expenditures overall. All persons receiving supported employment services will have three or more serious functional limitations (priority category one) and approximately half of the individuals will be youth with the most significant disabilities.

B. State-funded Extended Employment Program:

Minnesota's Extended Employment Program, administered by VRS, provides ongoing employment support services for individuals to maintain and advance in employment. The program is funded by a state appropriation of \$18,328 million a year. The direct services are

delivered by a network of 27 VRS Community Partners under performance-based contracts with VRS. These collaborations contribute significantly to the quality, scope, and effectiveness of the state's supported employment efforts. Minnesota General uses services provided through this program to youth with the most significant disabilities for state match purposes.

C. Individuals with Serious Mental Illness:

Minnesota VRS has been a leader in implementing the Evidence Based Practice of Supported Employment for persons with serious and persistent mental illness known as Individual Placement and Support (IPS). IPS receives \$5,055,000 in dedicated state funding, which is used for grants to local partnerships of mental health programs and employment providers (Community Rehabilitation Programs). These funds provide ongoing supports to persons with serious mental illness who are receiving community mental health services. Minnesota's programs utilize the IPS fidelity scale (2008) to guide program development and implementation as well as program evaluation and outcome measurement.

D. Individuals who are Deaf or Hard-of-Hearing:

A dedicated state appropriation provides up to \$1,000,000 annually to provide long-term supported employment services for persons who are deaf, deaf blind or hard-of-hearing.

- (4) Sections 101(a)(22) and 606(b)(4) of the Rehabilitation Act require the VR agency to describe efforts to identify and arrange, including entering into cooperative agreements, with other State agencies and other appropriate entities in order to provide supported employment services. The description must include extended services, as applicable, to individuals with the most significant disabilities, including the provision of extended services to youth with the most significant disabilities in accordance with 34 CFR 363.4(a) and 34 CFR 361.5(c)(19)(v).**

Under the designated state unit's strategic goal for effective partnerships, VRS seeks to expand its collaboration with other employment and disability services system partners to better coordinate and align services and assist business partners in building inclusive workplaces and developing best practices for recruitment and retention for individuals with disabilities requiring workplace supports.

- (f) Annual Estimates. Sections 101(a)(15) and 101(a)(23) of the Rehabilitation Act require all VR agencies to annually conduct a full assessment of their resources and ability to serve all eligible individuals before the start of the Federal fiscal year. In accordance with 34 CFR § 361.29(b), annual estimates must include the following projections:**

- (1) Estimates for next Federal fiscal year—**
(A) VR Program; and

Priority Category (if applicable)	No. of Individuals Eligible for Services	No. of Eligible Individuals Expected to Receive Services under VR Program	Costs of Services using Title I Funds	No. of Eligible Individuals Not Receiving Services (if applicable)
1	12200	11552	\$19,218,000	0
2	1708	1611	\$1,564,000	0
3	639	603	\$592,000	0
4	4	4	\$500	0

*Note, excludes potentially eligible students and the cost of their services.

(B) Supported Employment Program.

Priority Category (if applicable)	No. of Individuals Eligible for Services	No. of Eligible Individuals Expected to Receive Services under Supported Employment Program	Costs of Services using Title I and Title VI Funds	No. of Eligible Individuals Not Receiving Services (if applicable)
1	4200	500	\$700,000	0

Order of Selection.

[check box] The VR agency is **not** implementing an order of selection and all eligible individuals will be served.

Pursuant to section 101(a)(5) of the Rehabilitation Act, this description must be amended when the VR agency determines, based on the annual estimates described in description (f), that VR services cannot be provided to all eligible individuals with disabilities in the State who apply for and are determined eligible for services.

(A) For VR agencies that have defined priority categories describe—

(A) The justification for the order;

VRS is not implementing its Order of Selection but will maintain its priority categories to identify whether an eligible individual is an individual with a significant disability or an individual with the most significant disability.

(B) The order (priority categories) to be followed in selecting eligible individuals to be provided VR services ensuring that individuals with the most significant disabilities are selected for services before all other individuals with disabilities; and

1. Priority Categories

- Priority Category One (first priority for service) includes all individuals with a most significant disability, that is, persons whose condition results in serious limitations in three or more functional areas.
- Priority Category Two (second priority for service) includes all individuals with a significant disability that results in serious functional limitations in two functional areas.
- Priority Category Three (third priority for service) includes all individuals with a significant disability that results in a serious functional limitation in one functional area.
- Priority Category Four (fourth priority for service) includes all other eligible customers. These customers have a disability that makes them eligible for services, but they do not have a serious limitation in a functional area.

2. Functional Areas

Serious limitations in life skills in one or more of the following areas, as defined:

- Communication: the ability to effectively give and receive information through words or concepts, such as reading, writing, speaking, listening, sign language, or other adaptive methods
- Interpersonal skills: the ability to establish and maintain personal, family, and community relationships as it affects, or is likely to affect, job performance and security.
- Mobility: the physical and psychological ability to move about from place to place inside and outside the home, including travel to and from usual destinations in the community for activities of daily living, training, or work.
- Self-care: the skills needed to manage self or living environment, such as eating, toileting, grooming, dressing, money management, and management of special health or safety needs, including medication management, as they affect an individual's ability to participate in training or work—related activities.
- Self-direction: the ability to independently plan, initiate, organize, or carry out goal-directed activities or solve problems related to working.
- Work skills:
 - the ability to do specific tasks required to carry out job functions; and
 - the capacity to benefit from training in how to perform tasks required to carry out job functions.
- Work tolerance: the capacity or endurance to effectively and efficiently perform jobs requiring various levels of physical demands, psychological demands, or both.

3. Serious Limitation

- A serious limitation in a functional area means that, due to a severe physical or mental impairment, the individual's functional capacities in the specific area are restricted to the degree that they require services or accommodations not typically made for other individuals in order to prepare for, enter, engage in, or retain employment. Accommodations are defined as

special working conditions, job re-engineering, rehabilitation technology, or substantial support and/or supervision.

4. List of Physical or Mental Disabilities

Physical or mental disabilities resulting from amputation, arthritis, autism, blindness, burn injury, cancer, cerebral palsy, cystic fibrosis, deafness, head injury, heart disease, hemiplegia, hemophilia, respiratory or pulmonary dysfunction, intellectual disabilities, mental illness, multiple sclerosis, muscular dystrophy, musculoskeletal disorders, neurological disorders including stroke and epilepsy, paraplegia, quadriplegia, and other spinal cord conditions, sickle cell anemia, specific learning disability, and end-stage renal disease, or another disability or combination of disabilities determined on the basis of an assessment for determining eligibility and priority for services to cause comparable serious functional limitation.

- (C) **The VR agency’s goals for serving individuals in each priority category, including how the agency will assist eligible individuals assigned to closed priority categories with information and referral, the method in which the VR agency will manage waiting lists, and the projected timelines for opening priority categories. NOTE: Priority categories are considered open when all individuals in the priority category may be served.**

All priority categories are open.

- (2) **Has the VR agency elected to serve eligible individuals outside of the order of selection who require specific services or equipment to maintain employment?**

[check box]

[X] No

- (h) **Waiver of Statewideness. The State plan shall be in effect in all political subdivisions of the State, however, the Commissioner of the Rehabilitation Services Administration (Commissioner) may waive compliance with this requirement in accordance with section 101(a)(4) of the Rehabilitation Act and the implementing regulations in 34 CFR 361.26. If the VR agency is requesting a waiver of statewideness or has a previously approved waiver of statewideness, describe the types of services and the local entities providing such services under the waiver of statewideness and how the agency has complied with the requirements in 34 CFR 361.26. If the VR agency is not requesting or does not have an approved waiver of statewideness, please indicate “not applicable.”**

Not applicable

- (i) **Comprehensive System of Personnel Development. In accordance with the requirements in section 101(a)(7) of the Rehabilitation Act, the VR agency must develop and maintain annually a description (consistent with the purposes of the**

Rehabilitation Act) of the VR agency’s comprehensive system of personnel development, which shall include a description of the procedures and activities the VR agency will undertake to ensure it has an adequate supply of qualified State rehabilitation professionals and paraprofessionals that provides the following:

- (1) Analysis of current personnel and projected personnel needs including—
 - (A) The number and type of personnel that are employed by the VR agency in the provision of vocational rehabilitation services, including ratios of qualified vocational rehabilitation counselors to clients;
 - (B) The number of personnel currently needed by the VR agency to provide VR services, broken down by personnel category; and
 - (C) Projections of the number of personnel, broken down by personnel category, who will be needed by the VR agency to provide VR services in 5 years based on projections of the number of individuals to be served, including individuals with significant disabilities, the number of personnel expected to retire or leave the field, and other relevant factors.

Personnel Category	No. of Personnel Employed	No. of Personnel Currently Needed	Projected No. of Personnel Needed in 5 Years
Admin Director/managers	13	16	18
Rehabilitation Area Managers	21	22	25
Rehabilitation Specialists	31	41	46
Rehabilitation Counselors	163	168	188
Rehabilitation Representatives (Pre-ETS and Counselors-in-Training)	62	68	76
Placement Coordinators	27	31	35
Vocational Rehabilitation Technician	79	84	94

Administrative & Financial Support	11	12	13
Data Team Members	2	4	5
Other Field/Admin positions	5	5	6

- (D) Ratio of qualified VR counselors to clients: [1:52 counselors to participants]
- (E) Projected number of individuals to be served in 5 years: [14,437 participants]

(2) Data and information on personnel preparation and development, recruitment and retention, and staff development, including the following:

- (A) A list of the institutions of higher education in the State that are preparing VR professionals, by type of program; the number of students enrolled at each of those institutions, broken down by type of program; and the number of students who graduated during the prior year from each of those institutions with certification or licensure, or with the credentials for certification or licensure, broken down by the personnel category for which they have received, or have the credentials to receive, certification or licensure.**

Institute of Higher Education	Type of Program	No. of Students Enrolled	No. of Prior Year Graduates
St. Cloud State University	MS Rehabilitation Counseling	46	11
University of Wisconsin - Stout	MS Rehabilitation Counseling	15	15

- (B) The VR agency’s plan for recruitment, preparation and retention of qualified personnel, which addresses the current and projected needs for qualified personnel; and the coordination and facilitation of efforts between the VR agency and institutions of higher education and professional associations to recruit, prepare, and retain personnel who are qualified, including personnel from minority backgrounds and personnel who are individuals with disabilities.**

Internships commonly lead to permanent counseling positions. The staff development specialist devotes approximately 5% time as the point of contact for managers, professors, interns, supervising counselors, and Human Resources to coordinate intern placement and supervision, and for counselor recruitment. Other activities include presentations to students and informing

university personnel of counselor vacancies. VRS staff development is an active member of graduate counseling advisory committees at the University of Wisconsin - Stout and St. Cloud State University and communicates regularly with counseling program directors.

VRS provides tuition reimbursement for staff pursuing graduate degrees in rehabilitation counseling. Employees in the St. Cloud program and UW - Stout program also have access to the RSA grant to assist with some tuition costs.

VRS posts its vacancies at the State of Minnesota personnel openings website, Handshake, LinkedIn, MinnesotaJobs.com, and sometimes on the Minnesota counsel for nonprofits, RSA PIMS, Ramsey County Job Connect.

Minnesota post-retirement option: The post-retirement option, which permits a state retiree to work up to half time without losing insurance or retirement benefits, is a component of VRS retention and succession planning strategies.

As a key strategy for staff retention, VRS pays close attention to organizational vitality and staff morale. VRS works to maintain a high level of employee engagement through statewide staff communication about the vision, mission, values, strategic goals and agency achievements, and a robust training and development program. Specific strategies that VRS uses to support employee engagement include: monthly virtual All Staff Meetings, a DEI&A Committee, VRS Works and a variety of leadership opportunities, including the Emerging Leaders Institute and the Transformational Leadership Training. All Staff Meetings are important to keep all employees engaged in what's happening around the agency, learn about updates, hear from leadership, connect with each other, and share best practices. VRS Works are listening sessions, available for any staff to participate in and intended to facilitate discussion around what's working, what needs improvement, and cultivate creative solutions targeted to specific areas of the work. In addition, DEED completed an Employee Engagement survey in early 2023 and it's complete yearly. Survey response rate for VRS employees was 72% this administration. Findings indicate strong employee engagement on the key indicators measured. For example, 88% of VRS employees agreed that they look forward to coming to work each day, 98% agreed that they understand how their role contributes to the mission of VRS, and 95% agreed that they are continually learning in their current role. Staff also provided suggestions for specific improvements at DEED that would increase their job satisfaction; response themes addressing caseload sizes for counselors, increasing salary/pay to be competitive, and hiring more staff in a timely manner. DEED plans to repeat the survey annually as a measure of employee engagement and as a tool to identify needed improvements in organizational effectiveness.

Counselors and other staff are recruited and hired under Minnesota's competitive civil service system, including affirmative action to recruit and hire individuals with disabilities and members of the state's diverse cultural and ethnic populations. Voluntary disclosure of ethnic and cultural status provides the following 2023 data: 1% of VRS employees identify themselves as American Indian/Alaska Native, 4% Asian, 4% Black/African American, 2% Hispanic/Latino,

84% identify themselves as White, and 6% are non-specified or undisclosed. At present, 24% of VRS employees voluntarily disclose a disability. The State of Minnesota aspires to be a leader in employing individuals with disabilities. As a key strategy, the State of Minnesota offers the Connect 700 program. Connect 700 allows eligible individuals with disabilities the opportunity to demonstrate their ability to perform a specific position for up to 700 hours on the job.

Dedicated staff in the metro area offer vocational rehabilitation services to refugees who recently immigrated to Minnesota from countries such as Somalia, Ethiopia, Jamaica, Turkey, Congo, Guyana, Iraq, Nigeria, Egypt, Pakistan, Sudan and Eritrea. The New Americans staff consists of a rehabilitation counselor and one placement coordinator. They are themselves refugees from East African countries. Each member of the New Americans staff is multi-lingual and provides intensive supports from application through employment closure to the VRS consumers they serve.

VRS is working on increasing vocational rehabilitation services to the Twin Cities American Indian community. This work is led by a counselor who is a White Earth Anishinaabe Band Member. This counselor has extensive knowledge in providing services to both youth and adults with disabilities will enhance on- going learning and service provision not only American Indian youth and adults but American Indian programs focused on training, career development and employment. This counselor also provides ongoing consultation with VRS teams, VRS staff and co-counseling as needed with American Indian participants and those interested in applying for vocational rehabilitation services. In addition, VRS is making efforts to enhance and increase our VR presence and service delivery to the tribal nations statewide. VRS managers and staff serving these communities attend the yearly Minnesota Tribal Nations training.

Coordination with professional associations: VRS staff serve on the board of the Minnesota Rehabilitation Association (MRA) and serve on MRA conference planning committees. A significant number of staff attend MRA conferences each year. VRS encourages staff membership in professional associations, and many serve as officers and work on association committees.

For more on recruitment, reference section (d)4 above.

(C) Description of staff development policies, procedures, and activities that ensure all personnel employed by the VR agency receive appropriate and adequate training and continuing education for professionals and paraprofessionals:

- i. Particularly with respect to assessment, vocational counseling, job placement, and rehabilitation technology, including training implemented in coordination with entities carrying out State programs under section 4 of the Assistive Technology Act of 1998; and**

ii. Procedures for the acquisition and dissemination of significant knowledge from research and other sources to VR agency professionals and paraprofessionals and for providing training regarding the amendments to the Rehabilitation Act made by the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act.

The Staff Development team coordinates training and develops training programs to meet needs, as identified through interviews with staff, reports from area managers, regional directors, subject matter experts, recommendations from staff groups and committees, and consultations with the Executive Leadership Team (ELT). QA case review also yields training needs information. Staff Development and field managers meet regularly, as does the Policy Learning Team, to develop and guide staff development activity. In addition, the Staff Development and Quality Assurance Director is a member of the ELT. Training strategies can include 1:1 mentorship from agency subject matter experts, managers, and peers, on-demand and live courses in our learning management system, all staff meetings, quality assurance case reviews on individual case work, and policy transmittals. The Policy Learning Team is focused on increasing appropriate application and compliance with VRS policy and guidance through ongoing development and implementation of effective learning strategies, tools and dissemination. The team membership is made up staff who hold various roles throughout the agency and serve different areas of the state, bringing their diverse perspectives to training. The training is brought to leadership and managers first, then cascades out to staff. Quality Assurance work connects to these training topics and is a part of the strategic learning loop, and at times follow up with additional training.

New VRS employees are provided a robust onboarding training program, covering topics related to their unique role, agency culture, mission, and values. Required courses that are offered in a live virtual or in-person format include: VRS New Employee Orientation, Data Practices, Ethics, Person Centered Foundations, Cultural Awareness, Mental Health First Aid, Case Note Fundamentals, Transition 101, Introduction to Motivational Interviewing, and Purchasing Policies and Procedures. In addition to live courses, new employee onboarding includes training from the mentorship team, where they learn hands on the core components of their job. The mentorship team is led by the hiring manager and includes a peer mentor and subject matter expert. To supplement the learning from the mentorship team, there is also on-demand course work in our learning management system (YesLMS). There are currently 100 courses in YesLMS. Courses in YesLMS that new employees are required to take include: Employment Plan, Assessment of VR Needs, Closures and Exit Reasons, Informed Choice, Supported Employment, Data Security, Mandated Reporting, Violence and Disruptive Behavior Policy, and Pre-ETS Modules. Additional examples of courses available if needed for their individual development include: Medical Aspects of Disability, Intersecting Identities, Power, Privilege, and Implications for VR, History of Vocational Rehabilitation, Negotiation Skills for Employer Engagement, Disability Language and Etiquette, and an Overview of the ADA.

VRS offers tuition reimbursement for employees obtaining a graduate degree, certification program, or series of courses as long as the coursework ties directly to the business and programmatic needs of VRS.

Staff are encouraged to participate in leadership opportunities. VRS supports the DEED Emerging Leadership Institute and the Senior Leadership Institute. Currently, VRS is supporting all managers and some specialists to attend the Transformational Leadership Training. In addition to formal leadership programs, staff have opportunities to lead as peer mentors, participate in agency wide committees, co-lead staff training, act in liaison roles, and share best practices at all staff meetings.

In addition, annual performance reviews between supervisor and employee include a review of training and development needs of the employee. Every employee is required to develop and Individual Development Plan to assist in acquiring new knowledge, skills, and abilities on the job. Each employee is expected to attend a minimum of one elective continuing education program per year. VRS covers the cost of elective continuing education for staff, up to \$500 per fiscal year.

Looking forward, VRS plans to further enhance the current training and development opportunities. VRS will take the first steps towards building a robust counseling curriculum so counselors will have access to fundamental counseling skills practice to advanced level skills practice. VRS also plans to have on-going continuous improvement to the onboarding process and training, with initial focuses on enhancing our peer mentorship and training curriculum. A specific topic area of focus is career advancement for our customers. VRS also plans to offer statewide opportunities for teams to come together for team building, learn about their individual strengths, the strengths of the team, and how they can best work together. VRS also plans to continue to explore VR leadership training opportunities for staff at all levels.

- (3) Description of VR agency policies and procedures for the establishment and maintenance of personnel standards consistent with section 101(a)(7)(B) to ensure that VR agency professional and paraprofessional personnel are adequately trained and prepared, including—**
 - (A) Standards that are consistent with any national or State-approved or -recognized certification, licensing, registration, or other comparable requirements that apply to the profession or discipline in which such personnel are providing VR services; and**
 - (B) The establishment and maintenance of education and experience requirements, in accordance with section 101(a)(7)(B)(ii) of the Rehabilitation Act, to ensure that the personnel have a 21st century understanding of the evolving labor force and the needs of individuals with disabilities.**

Vocational rehabilitation counselors and other professional staff are hired through competitive process under the Minnesota civil service system.

Rehabilitation Counselors

- Master's degree in Rehabilitation Counseling, Counseling, Human Services, Sociology, Education, Social Work, Psychology, or other closely related field
- All of the agency's vocational rehabilitation counselors meet the state's standard.

Rehabilitation Representative

- Bachelor's degree in Rehabilitation Counseling, Counseling, Human Services, Sociology, Education, Social Work, Psychology, or other closely related field

Placement Coordinator

- One-year professional experience in which the primary focus was the provision of vocational services to persons with disabilities; or
- Bachelor's degree in Behavioral Science, Counseling, Vocational Evaluation, Job Placement, Vocational Rehabilitation, Education, Human Services, or a closely related degree; or
- Three years of paraprofessional experience in which the primary focus was the provision of vocational services to persons with disabilities. A Bachelor's degree substitutes for half of the experience requirement.

Vocational Rehabilitation Technician

- Software applications such as Microsoft Office Suite to manage, track, and report expenses, financial transactions, and invoices
- Basic accounting sufficient to review, analyze, and verify financial records, calculate monthly fees, and prepare financial summaries and reports
- Math (arithmetic) sufficient to add, subtract, multiply, and divide whole numbers, fractions, decimals; and calculate percentages
- Keyboarding to enter data in a database or spreadsheet comparable to the State's accounting system (SWIFT) and Workforce One platforms
- Communication to provide prompt, courteous, and accurate information to coworkers and all stakeholders
- Human relations to negotiate, collaborate, build, and maintain positive working relationships with coworkers, jobseekers, and vendors

Pre-ETS Representative

- Bachelor's degree in Rehabilitation Counseling, Counseling, Human Services, Sociology, Education, Social Work, Psychology, or other closely related field or,
- High school diploma/GED and one year experience working with youth with disabilities related to employment services in one or more of the following areas:

job exploration counseling, work-based learning, counseling on post-secondary options, workplace readiness training, and/or instruction in self advocacy.

(4) Method(s) the VR agency uses to ensure that personnel are able to communicate in appropriate modes of communication with or in the native language of applicants or eligible individuals who have limited English speaking ability.

VRS ensures that personnel and methods are available so that staff may communicate with individuals in a preferred language or other means of communication. Substantial numbers of VRS customers use languages other than English, including Cambodian, Lao, Vietnamese, Somali, Spanish, and American Sign Language. Translation of forms, information brochures and the availability of purchased interpreter services or a multilingual staff member ensures effective communication statewide.

Deaf and Hard of Hearing services are provided by highly qualified VRS staff including one State Coordinator for Deaf Services (who is also in a dual role as a Manager) and 21 staff who are conversationally fluent in American Sign Language. We have two Regional Directors, two VRS managers/supervisors, eight counselors, one placement specialist, three VR technicians, two Rehabilitation Representatives, an Office and Administrative Specialist, and two Occupational Communication Specialists (who are also certified sign language interpreters). Counselors and staff are using a variety of video options such as Zoom, MS Teams, videophones, FaceTime and texting to communicate with people and providers who use our services. Staff can use video remote interpreting by requesting them through interpreter referral agencies on the state master contract and then incorporating their services virtually through the participant's chosen platform. Counselors are also using videophones, FaceTime, Microsoft Teams, Google Meets and texting to communicate with people and providers who use our services.

(5) As appropriate, describe the procedures and activities to coordinate the designated State unit's comprehensive system of personnel development with personnel development under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.

Not Applicable

COOPERATION, COLLABORATION, AND COORDINATION (Section 101(a)(11) of the Rehabilitation Act)

(j) Coordination with Education Officials. In accordance with the requirements in section 101(a)(11)(D) of the Rehabilitation Act—

(1) Describe plans, policies, and procedures for coordination between the designated State agency and education officials responsible for the public education of

students with disabilities, that are designed to facilitate the transition of the students with disabilities from the receipt of educational services in school to the receipt of vocational rehabilitation services, including pre-employment transition services.

DEED-VRS and SSB are partners with the Minnesota Departments of Education (MDE) and Human Services (DHS) in the Employment First Minnesota (E1MN) effort. E1MN works toward a seamless system of employment services and supports being available to all persons with disabilities. State-level leadership and staff meet regularly to plan for training, technical assistance, resource development, and problem-solving related to collaboratively serving students and adults with disabilities. E1MN efforts are focused on eliminating barriers for accessing services and supports needed to prepare for, find, keep, and advance in competitive integrated employment.

This year E1MN partners created a Minnesota Transition Framework which defines high-quality transition programming, and a Youth in Transition Toolkit (housed on the Disability Hub MN website) which supports the framework. The toolkit is a one-stop shop for professionals to learn about the Transition Framework, understand the basics for transition programming (i.e., laws, roles, agency plans and policies), and get resources and tools to serve youth and families.

Furthermore, E1MN is planning for a new structure for regional work between the three agencies and local professionals that provide transition services to youth with disabilities, which will launch in early 2024. The goal is to invite all school, VR, waiver, and employment service provider staff in each region to learn about the Transition Framework and Youth in Transition Toolkit, to assess where they are at with transition programming, and create plans for improvement. State staff will provide training and technical assistance to teams as they implement their plans.

- (2) Describe the current status and scope of the formal interagency agreement between the VR agency and the State educational agency. Consistent with the requirements of the formal interagency agreement pursuant to 34 CFR 361.22(b), provide, at a minimum, the following information about the agreement:**
 - (A) Consultation and technical assistance, which may be provided using alternative means for meeting participation (such as video conferences and conference calls), to assist educational agencies in planning for the transition of students with disabilities from school to post-school activities, including pre-employment transition services and other vocational rehabilitation services;**
 - (B) Transition planning by personnel of the designated State agency and educational agency personnel for students with disabilities that facilitates the development**

- and implementation of their individualized education programs (IEPs) under section 614(d) of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act;
- (C) The roles and responsibilities, including financial responsibilities, of each agency, including provisions for determining State lead agencies and qualified personnel responsible for transition services and pre-employment transition services;
 - (D) Procedures for outreach to and identification of students with disabilities who need transition services and pre-employment transition services. Outreach to these students should occur as early as possible during the transition planning process and must include, at a minimum, a description of the purpose of the vocational rehabilitation program, eligibility requirements, application procedures, and scope of services that may be provided to eligible individuals;
 - (E) Coordination necessary to satisfy documentation requirements set forth in 34 CFR part 397 regarding students and youth with disabilities who are seeking subminimum wage employment; and
 - (F) Assurance that, in accordance with 34 CFR 397.31, neither the SEA nor the local educational agency will enter into a contract or other arrangement with an entity, as defined in 34 CFR 397.5(d), for the purpose of operating a program under which youth with a disability is engaged in work compensated at a subminimum wage.

DEED-VRS and State Services for the Blind (SSB) have a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) in place with the Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) which was signed in June 2020. This MOU outlines all topics required in 34 CFR 361.22(b). As was noted in the section prior, E1MN is the initiative that brings our agencies together, along with the Department of Human Services (DHS- the state's Medicaid agency) to plan and support for a seamless system of employment services and supports for students, youth, and adults with disabilities. The E1MN effort (which includes the Minnesota Transition Framework, Youth in Transition Toolkit (YITT), and E1MN regional structure) is also the means by which the MOU is put into action.

Specifically, topics within the MOU are being addressed as follows:

- Consultation and technical assistance: The E1MN regional effort will be a venue for "teams" (consisting of school, VR, county, and provider staff) to plan for system improvement and identify/request the technical assistance needs they have.
- Transition planning: One "shared practice" within the Transition Framework describes the "Youth Planning Process" and what steps should be taken by all partners in creating and implementing Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) and other agency plans. This will be emphasized in the E1MN regional work.

- Roles and responsibilities, including financial responsibilities, of each agency: The YITT has a section that reviews roles and responsibilities. This will be a central focus of the kickoff of the E1MN meetings.
- Procedures for outreach to and identification of students: The YITT, VRS outreach materials, VRS website, and school training presentations make clear that VRS can serve students age 14 and older and that early referrals are encouraged. VRS has two staff assigned to every high school and 18 to 22 transition program in the state, and it is the expectation that these staff meet with all possible school referring staff to explain: VRS services, how to make a referral, and how school and VRS can best collaborate in serving students. When referrals are made, VRS staff meet with students and parents/guardians (as applicable) to explain services and eligibility, provide an application packet, and discuss what next steps would be. Staff also do outreach in other creative ways such as attending school or community events, connecting with other youth-serving organizations, and more.
- Coordination with schools related to documentation requirements related subminimum wage employment: In the spirit of E1MN, VRS works with schools to message to students and families the expectation that all students with disabilities can achieve goals for competitive integrated employment. In the cases where a student and parents/guardians (as appropriate) have indicated a desire to pursue subminimum wage employment, VRS works with the student and their “team” (typically their IEP team) to review the documentation requirements. VRS has materials and a webpage to share with all parties that explains the process.
- Assurance that, in accordance with 34 CFR 397.31, neither the SEA nor the local educational agency will enter into a contract or other arrangement with an entity, as defined in 34 CFR 397.5(d), for the purpose of operating a program under which youth with a disability is engaged in work compensated at a subminimum wage: Minnesota schools that have MDE approved work-based learning programs must sign an assurance that they will follow, among other things, 34 CFR 397.31 (i.e. will not contract for nor support subminimum wage work experiences).

- (k) **Coordination with Employers. In accordance with the requirements in section 101(a)(11)(E) of the Rehabilitation Act, describe how the VR agency will work with employers to identify competitive integrated employment and career exploration opportunities in order to facilitate the provision of VR services; and transition services for youth and students with disabilities, including pre-employment transition services for students with disabilities.**

Excellence in job placement and retention services is fundamental to more fully living into DEED’s vision statement of “a healthy economy, where all Minnesotans have or are on a path to meaningful employment and a family sustaining wage, and employers are able to fill their ‘in

demand' jobs." Coordination with employers is also key to VRS' priority to embrace employers as key customers resulting in increased employment outcomes. This is accomplished in the following ways:

- Implementing and refining a VR client talent pool structural framework within the electronic case management system. The talent pool will be developed to gather and tap information to facilitate matching VRS clients to employment opportunities. VRS will secure approval and resources to develop the client talent pool structural framework as part of a larger rewrite of the case management system. Minnesota's electronic case management system has capacity to identify talent pool. VRS staff input key talent pool identification data which greatly enhances the ability for Placement staff to identify pools of candidates based on employer needs. VRS staff will benefit from training to correctly utilize the talent pool refinement tools available in WF1. DEED-VRS is currently piloting Salesforce as a part of the Disability Innovation Grant demonstration project as a way to track employer engagement. This pilot will allow VRS to see if Salesforce might meet our greater need to track our engagement with businesses.
- Developing and implementing low risk Hiring and retention options designed to increase employment outcomes and workforce diversity. DEED-VRS updated the process, policies guidance and definitions for an array of low risk hiring and retention options which are referred to as On-the-Job Work & Training Options in Policy and Guidance Manuals. This information, along with the Connect 700 hiring initiative was shared with Community Rehabilitation Partners through statewide training to ensure consistency of understanding and application.
- Leading and convening Business Engagement Networks (BEN's) focused on meeting the needs of business by providing a talent pool of candidates that can meet the needs of business utilizing a Single Point of Contact (SPOC) coordinated approach with VRS, Community Rehabilitation Providers, and Special Education Work Coordinators. WIOA Common Performance Measure 6 (effectiveness in serving employers) will be developed and addressed in an annual report. Following is a report of progress on the revised priorities: Minnesota VRS supported BEN's throughout the state to provide a Single Point of Contact (SPOC) to meet the needs of business and to enhance the skills of placement professionals. BEN's continue to reflect the needs of business representing the local areas of Minnesota including urban, metro and greater (rural) areas of the state as well as provide joint training to maintain qualified staff. BEN's also share job leads and plan events that connect job seekers to Business like tours, job fairs, and other opportunities to for placement staff to meet with local businesses.
- Disability Inclusion Bite-Sized Learning Modules are resources for employers that takes a topic and breaks it into short modules that can be presented in about 20 minutes. Each module features a video, the PowerPoint presentation used in the

video and a takeaway card to reinforce learning and provide links to additional resources. There are 5 current modules on [DEED's CareerForce website](#) on the following topics:

- Module 1: Defining Disability and the Americans with Disabilities Act
- Module 2: Recognizing and Implementing a Request for Reasonable Accommodations
- Module 3 – Self ID: Building a More Inclusive Culture
- Module 4: Inclusive Communication
- Module 5 – Mental Health Matters: Let's Talk

(1) **Interagency Cooperation with Other Agencies. In accordance with the requirements in section 101(a)(11)(C) and (K), describe interagency cooperation with and utilization of the services and facilities of agencies and programs that are not carrying out activities through the statewide workforce development system to develop opportunities for community-based employment in integrated settings, to the greatest extent practicable for the following:**

(1) **State programs (designate lead agency(ies) and implementing entity(ies)) carried out under section 4 of the Assistive Technology Act of 1998;**

The Minnesota STAR (System of Technology to Achieve Results) Program: The STAR Program, a program within the Minnesota Department of Administration, is funded by the Department of Health and Human Services in accordance with the Assistive Technology Act of 1998, as amended. Vocational Rehabilitation often refers people to STAR for a device demonstration. This allows consumers to compare benefits and features of a particular device or category of devices. Once a decision on a device is made, the person can borrow the device for 45 days to make sure it meets their needs before VR purchases the item. VR also maintains an agreement with STAR to provide VR assistive technology specialists with commonly used devices for use in doing assessments with consumers.

VRS ensures that a broad range of assistive technology services and devices will be provided to individuals with disabilities at each stage of the rehabilitation process and on a statewide basis through a rehabilitation Assistive Technology (A/T) Specialist. The VRS A/T Specialist provides onsite assistive technology assistance to staff and consumers. They also coordinate with the Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) to promote inclusion of assistive technology in Special Education services and transition plans. The A/T specialist is supported by one local Assistive Technology (AT) liaison on each VR team across the state. Placement coordinators assist employers in using rehabilitation technology to resolve employment barriers. The VRS website has an assistive technology page with links to nationally recognized websites. VRS coordinates closely with the STAR Program which operates an

equipment loan program that allows consumers to try the assistive technology for 30 days before VRS purchases the equipment.

VRS has also identified a need for a statewide Pre-ETS assistive technology lending library and is developing a plan to partner with STAR (System of Technology to Achieve Results) and plans to develop twenty Assistive Technology Workstations throughout the state for assistive technology to be available to all Participants statewide. The goal is to make assistive technology available and easily accessible to Pre-ETS students across the state. The coordination required to identify students in need of assistive technology, provide training to the student, their family and school staff and ensure receipt and return of assistive technology is a significant undertaking VRS is partnering with STAR Program, MDE and DHS to ensure there is no overlap of similar programs by creating a process map for the consideration of Assistive Technology needs for Pre-ETS and transition students.

(2) Programs carried out by the Under Secretary for Rural Development of the Department of Agriculture;

There currently is no formalized working relationship between the Department of Agriculture and Vocational Rehabilitation Services. The Minnesota USDA Rural Development Office does use technical economic and forecasting information provided by DEED to develop and market its services.

(3) Non-educational agencies serving out-of-school youth;

As two critical CareerForce partners, DEED-VRS and Workforce Development Areas (WDAs)/WIOA Title I programs (which are mandated to expend 75% of their federal funds on out-of-school youth) come together on the local and regional level to ensure needs of out-of-school youth are met. Cross referrals and dual enrollment happens as appropriate. Additionally, six of the sixteen Minnesota WDAs have a professional and technical contract with DEED-VRS to provide Pre-Employment Transition Services. Although these services are for in-school students, the benefit of this partnership ensures that if/when students are no longer in school, these youth can continue services through WIOA Title I and VR collaboratively as appropriate.

(4) State use contracting programs;

Not applicable.

(5) State agency responsible for administering the State Medicaid plan under title XIX of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1396 et seq.);

The State Medicaid plan under Title XIX of the Social Security Act; Medical Assistance, the state's Medicaid program, is administered by the Department of Human Services (DHS) Disability Services Division (DHS-DSD). Vocational Rehabilitation Services (VRS) and State Services for the Blind (SSB) collaborate closely with DHS in the provision of services for individuals who are on home and community-based waivers. In September 2019, DHS-DSD, VRS, and SSB signed a Memorandum of Understanding. The terms of the MOU are specific to individuals on a Medicaid waiver who are interested in competitive, integrated employment. Employment First and Person-Centered principles form the basis of the shared vision for how DEED-VRS/SSB and the Medicaid agency agree to provide employment services for people with disabilities in a coordinated manner. The purpose of the MOU and interagency cooperation is to align systems so that common customers – those who receive home and community-based service disability waivers and vocational rehabilitation services from VRS or SSB – can get seamless and timely supports to make informed choices and meet their competitive integrated employment goals. Implementation of the MOU agreements began July 1, 2021. DEED-VRS/SSB and the Medicaid agency have developed communication, stakeholder involvement, training and resources to ensure understanding of the responsibilities for each party supporting the person on a Medicaid waiver.

Under the MOU, the following coordination of services occurs:

A. Payment of Services

DEED-VRS/SSB is the primary payer for job-related services (services supporting job development, placement and employment stability) for common customers. Once employment stability is established, DHS-DSD will continue to pay for long-term supports to maintain employment for customers of all ages. DHS-DSD will also pay for services that assist people in making informed choices and developing informed employment goals.

B. Interagency Planning and Policy Development

DHS-DSD and VRS/SSB will use strategic planning, troubleshooting, consultation and technical assistance to ensure successful implementation of this agreement. Key areas include goal setting, systems development, coordination of services, quality assurance, data and stakeholder involvement. We will:

- Meet as an interagency steering committee to provide MOU oversight, set goals, review program services and financing options, identify promising practices and resolve disputes
- Support program liaisons from VRS/SSB and DHS-DSD to coordinate joint efforts in communication, quality assurance, training, and coordination of services, policies and procedures

- Create work groups as needed to provide advice and share expertise regarding practice enhancements
- Hold periodic staff meetings across agencies to ensure coordinated communication and address policy issues
- Establish an advisory committee that includes stakeholders from VRS/SSB, DHS-DSD, lead agency, and providers of both vocational rehabilitation services and waiver services to discuss progress and challenges with the MOU
- Jointly meet with stakeholders to collect feedback and identify areas for improvement
- Understand employment outcomes in our respective programs and develop a shared understanding of outcome measures and reporting procedures
- Promote the use of evidence-based practices and/or promising approaches to create a more closely aligned employment service system, increase quality and gather shared data on employment outcomes
- Identify common customers and practices that support positive employment outcomes

C. Eligibility, Referrals, and Customer Flow

DEED-VRS/SSB and DHS will continue to implement and refine the processes and practices developed under the Engage, Plan, Find, Keep framework. This includes promoting regional and local collaboration, E1MN training curriculum, and the tools and resources to support this work on the Disability HUB work toolkit.

D. Service Provider Networks

DEED-VRS/SSB and DHS will continue to work together to increase our statewide, shared network of employment service providers to improve access, support seamless transitions, and expand individuals' choices to high quality employment services. As part of this work, we agree to:

- Evaluate strategies for a common employment service provider pool. We will continue to explore options for creating a shared job search service provider pool to support seamless service delivery and prevent unnecessary interruptions as people move between supports funded by VRS/SSB and supports funded by DHS-DSD.
- Encourage dual enrollment of employment service providers. While DHS and DEED will continue to maintain separate employment service provider licensure/accreditation standards, we will make it easier for providers to understand our respective standards and develop strategies to provide ongoing communication and technical assistance to those interested in enrolling.

- Align and streamline process and efforts. We will explore opportunities to better align and streamline each agency's business processes and requirements to create consistency and efficiencies for dually enrolled employment service providers.
 - Coordinate communications and training. We will coordinate service provider communications and training to maintain consistent messaging and increase understanding of each agency's respective system and the shared customer flow outlined in this agreement.
 - Measure and promote provider performance. We will explore methods to assess and provide information on service provider performance to people with disabilities and their families to support informed selection of service providers.
 - Develop new providers. We will analyze data, set goals and collaborate on the development of employment service providers in underserved populations and areas of the state.
- (6) State agency responsible for providing services for individuals with developmental disabilities;**

The primary Minnesota agency responsible for services for individuals with disabilities is the Department of Human Services (DHS). In Minnesota, the Governor's Council on Developmental Disabilities serves to advocate for all persons with developmental disabilities by carrying out activities in major areas of emphasis. Minnesota's Olmstead Plan supports freedom of choice and provides a framework and a series of key activities that must be achieved to ensure Minnesotans with disabilities have opportunities to live, learn, work, and enjoy life in the most integrated setting desired by the person. Former Governor Mark Dayton appointed an Olmstead Subcabinet to develop and implement this plan. The Subcabinet consists of representatives of the MnSIC agencies listed above, the Housing Finance Agency, the Department of Transportation, the Ombudsman for Mental Health and Developmental Disabilities, and the Executive Director of the Governor's Council on Developmental Disabilities. VRS is involved in the following joint project with the above agencies:

Minnesota Customized Employment Training:

Customized Employment (CE) is an evidence-based alternative for helping people with significant disabilities to become successfully employed. At the foundation of CE is Discovery, which is a process for uncovering a person's strengths, interests and the conditions under which they will be successful in employment. DEED-VRS and DHS-Minnesota State Operated Community Services developed an Association of Community Rehabilitation Educator (ACRE) certified Customized Employment curriculum and training. It also includes mentoring supports to DEED, Community Rehabilitation Partner and School District staff to reach competent, practitioner level delivery of Customized Employment Services for persons requiring it that is sustainable, ongoing and cost effective for the state disability employment system. This training is offered at no cost, multiple times each year.

(7) State agency responsible for providing mental health services;

The Minnesota Department of Human Services (DHS) is responsible for coordinating mental health services for adults and youth. Minnesota's Mental Health system is a state mandated, county operated system. The State Mental Health Authority is responsible for ensuring that Minnesota's 87 counties, the local mental health authority, provide an array of community mental health services including: Basic clinical services, community services and supports, hospitalization and residential treatment. Funding for Minnesota's mental health system comes from health care insurance, including Medicaid, private insurance and MinnesotaCare, as well as county local tax levy funds, state mental health funds and Federal Block grant funds. The Minnesota VRS program has a long history of innovative collaboration with the State Mental Health Authority. This includes VR representation on the State Mental Health Advisory Council and the State Behavioral Advisory Council. The two agencies have collaborated to implement, sustain, and expand the evidence-based practice of supported employment, Individual Placement and Support (IPS). Starting with 4 local partnerships between mental health and employment providers in 2006, the IPS provider network in Minnesota, funded in part with state appropriations dedicated to IPS, has expanded to 20 IPS programs (partnerships between mental health agencies and employment service agencies) in 45 of Minnesota's 87 counties. Minnesota's VR and Behavioral Health Division are partners in the International IPS Learning Community.

(8) Other Federal, State, and local agencies and programs outside the workforce development system; and

Minnesota VR has a statewide network of eight private, nonprofit centers for independent living that operate in partnership with us. Each of these regional centers provides four core services: Information and Referral, Skills Training, Peer Counseling, and Advocacy. Additionally, these 8 IL centers are contracted to complete our Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), Section 511 work on the limitations on the use of subminimum wages. WIOA requires an annual conversation with individuals who are earning less than the federal minimum wage (\$7.25) about work options, career counseling, information, and referral information.

(9) Other private nonprofit organizations.

The VR program provides specialized, one-on-one employment services for individuals with disabilities. While VR program state-staff provide some services directly, the VR program also partners with businesses and organizations in local communities throughout the state to provide employment services. A Community Partner must have a Professional/Technical Master Contract (P/T Contract) with the VR program to provide services as a Community Partner for an individual in the VR program. The P/T Contract is the mechanism that contains the employment services structure, expectations, purchases, and pricing. The VR program purchases services such as vocational evaluation, skill training, internships, job development and job placement,

on-the-job training, and time-limited job coaching. Services must be consistent with an individualized plan for employment developed between counselor and participant, based on the participant's informed choices and offered in competitive, integrated settings.

A. Community Partners

Minnesota distinguishes between two categories of community rehabilitation providers: a "limited-use vendor" (LUV) and the unlimited use community rehabilitation program (CRP). This arrangement permits wide selection of services and system flexibility and emphasizes the use of providers accredited by the national Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF).

Community Partners designated as Community Rehabilitation Programs (CRPs) are accredited by CARF. Accreditation represents an industry assurance that the CRP meets or exceeds nationally and internationally recognized service standards and is focused on delivering the most favorable results for persons served. Per state rule, service providers that are CARF accredited have no pre-determined maximum budget cap for their P/T contract. A budget maximum is negotiated with the VR program as part of the contract application and negotiation process.

Community Partners designated as Limited-Use Vendors (LUVs) are service providers that are not CARF-accredited. Per state rule, VRS must limit the amount of business it does with LUVs through funding limits and shorter contract terms. Upon negotiation with the VR program, LUVs may conduct business up to \$100,000 a year with VRS after a Professional and Technical (P/T) Services Master Contract has been approved. Limited use providers (those without CARF accreditation) introduce competition and choice to the rehabilitation marketplace and provide an entry point for new providers in response to an unmet or emerging service need.

B. Written Assurances

Providers must provide written assurances about their organizational missions, operations (including audits and lines of authority), staff development and qualifications, services, fees, populations served, standards of professional practice, and adherence to customers' employment plans. They must also provide written assurance regarding vendor compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, Minnesota Human Rights Act and other employment law on individual rights, accessibility, occupational health and safety, and data privacy.

(3) VRS Support for Community Partners

VRS employs 4 program specialists to help maintain a mutually supportive professional relationship and to negotiate modifications to agreements with Community Partners. VRS and Community Partners work together to promote mutually held goals, including:

- Develop and maintain choices for participants.
- Meet workforce needs identified by the state's employers.
- Ensure that services are provided in competitive and integrated settings.
- Facilitate state-level planning and coordination of training needs of Community Partner staff.

- Facilitate communication between VRS and Community Partner staff at the administrative level.
- Increase Community Partner awareness of vocational rehabilitation issues at state and national levels.
- Identify and provide training for Community Partner and VRS staff.

VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION CERTIFICATIONS AND ASSURANCES

CERTIFICATIONS

States must provide written and signed certifications that:	
1.	The Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development is authorized to submit the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan under title I of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Rehabilitation Act), as amended by title IV of WIOA, ² and its State Plan supplement under title VI of the Rehabilitation Act;
2.	In the event the designated State agency is not primarily concerned with vocational and other rehabilitation of individuals with disabilities, the designated State agency must include a designated State unit for the VR program (Section 101(a)(2)(B)(ii) of the Rehabilitation Act). As a condition for the receipt of Federal funds under title I of the Rehabilitation Act for the provision of VR services, Minnesota Vocational Rehabilitation Services agrees to operate and is responsible for the administration of the State VR Services Program in accordance with the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan ³ , the Rehabilitation Act, 34 CFR 361.13(b) and (c), and all applicable regulations ⁴ , policies, and procedures established by the Secretary of Education. Funds made available to States under section 111(a) of the Rehabilitation Act are used solely for the provision of VR services and the administration of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan;
3.	As a condition for the receipt of Federal funds under title VI of the Rehabilitation Act for supported employment services, the designated State agency or the designated State unit when the designated State agency has a designated State unit, agrees to operate and is responsible for the administration of the State Supported Employment Services Program in accordance with the supplement to the VR services portion of the Unified or

² Public Law 113-128.

³ No funds under title I of the Rehabilitation Act may be awarded without an approved VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan in accordance with section 101(a) of the Rehabilitation Act.

⁴ Applicable regulations, in part, include the Education Department General Administrative Regulations (EDGAR) in 34 CFR parts 76, 77, 79, 81, and 82; 2 CFR part 200 as adopted by 2 CFR part 3474; and the State VR Services program regulations at 34 CFR part 361.

	Combined State Plan ⁵ , the Rehabilitation Act, and all applicable regulations ⁶ , policies, and procedures established by the Secretary of Education. Funds made available under title VI are used solely for the provision of supported employment services and the administration of the supplement to the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan;
4.	The designated State unit, or if not applicable, the designated State agency has the authority under State law to perform the functions of the State regarding the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement, and is responsible for the administration of the VR program in accordance with 34 CFR 361.13(b) and (c);
5.	The State legally may carry out each provision of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement.
6.	All provisions of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement are consistent with State law.
7.	The DSU Director Dee Torgerson has the authority under State law to receive, hold, and disburse Federal funds made available under the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement;
8.	The DSU Director Dee Torgerson has the authority to submit the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and the supplement for Supported Employment services;
9.	The agency that submits the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement has adopted or otherwise formally approved the plan and its supplement.

ASSURANCES

The designated State agency or designated State unit, as appropriate and identified in the State certifications included with this VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement, through signature of the authorized individual, assures the Commissioner, that

⁵ No funds under title VI of the Rehabilitation Act may be awarded without an approved supported employment supplement to the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan in accordance with section 606(a) of the Rehabilitation Act.

⁶ Applicable regulations, in part, include the citations in footnote 4, as well as Supported Employment program regulations at 34 CFR part 363.

it will comply with all of the requirements of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement, as set forth in sections 101(a) and 606 of the Rehabilitation Act. The individual authorized to submit the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement makes the following assurances:

The State Plan must provide assurances that:	
1.	Public Comment on Policies and Procedures: The designated State agency assures it will comply with all statutory and regulatory requirements for public participation in the VR Services Portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan, as required by section 101(a)(16)(A) of the Rehabilitation Act.
2.	Submission of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and Its Supplement: The designated State unit assures it will comply with all requirements pertaining to the submission and revisions of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement for the State Supported Employment Services program, as required by sections 101(a)(1), (22), (23), and 606(a) of the Rehabilitation Act; section 102 of WIOA in the case of the submission of a Unified State plan; section 103 of WIOA in the case of a submission of a Combined State Plan; 34 C.F.R. 76.140.
3.	<p>Administration of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan: The designated State agency or designated State unit, as appropriate, assures it will comply with the requirements related to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) the establishment of the designated State agency and designated State unit, as required by section 101(a)(2) of the Rehabilitation Act. (b) either a State independent commission or State Rehabilitation Council, as required by section 101(a)(21) of the Rehabilitation Act. (c) consultations regarding the administration of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan, in accordance with section 101(a)(16)(B) of the Rehabilitation Act. (d) the financial participation by the State, or if the State so elects, by the State and local agencies, to provide the amount of the non-Federal share of the cost of carrying out the VR program in accordance with section 101(a)(3). (e) as applicable, the local administration of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan, in accordance with section 101(a)(2)(A) of the Rehabilitation Act.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (f) as applicable, the shared funding and administration of joint programs, in accordance with section 101(a)(2)(A)(ii) of the Rehabilitation Act. (g) statewideness and waivers of statewideness requirements, as set forth in section 101(a)(4) of the Rehabilitation Act. (h) the requirements for cooperation, collaboration, and coordination, as required by sections 101(a)(11) and (24)(B); and 606(b) of the Rehabilitation Act. (i) all required methods of administration, as required by section 101(a)(6) of the Rehabilitation Act. (j) the requirements for the comprehensive system of personnel development, as set forth in section 101(a)(7) of the Rehabilitation Act. (k) the compilation and submission to the Commissioner of statewide assessments, estimates, State goals and priorities, strategies, and progress reports, as appropriate, and as required by sections 101(a)(15), 105(c)(2), and 606(b)(8) of the Rehabilitation Act. (l) the reservation and use of a portion of the funds allotted to the State under section 110 of the Rehabilitation Act for the development and implementation of innovative approaches to expand and improve the provision of VR services to individuals with disabilities, particularly individuals with the most significant disabilities as set forth in section 101(a)(18)(A). (m) the submission of reports as required by section 101(a)(10) of the Rehabilitation Act.
<p>4.</p>	<p>Administration of the Provision of VR Services: The designated State agency, or designated State unit, as appropriate, assures that it will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) comply with all requirements regarding information and referral services in accordance with sections 101(a)(5)(E) and (20) of the Rehabilitation Act. (b) impose no duration of residence requirement as part of determining an individual's eligibility for VR services or that excludes from services under the plan any individual who is present in the State in accordance with section 101(a)(12) of the Rehabilitation Act. (c) provide the full range of services listed in section 103(a) of the Rehabilitation Act, as appropriate, to all eligible individuals with disabilities in the State who apply for services or, if implementing an order of selection, in accordance with criteria established by the State for the order of selection as set out in section 101(a)(5) of the Rehabilitation Act.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (d) determine whether comparable services and benefits are available to the individual in accordance with section 101(a)(8) of the Rehabilitation Act. (e) comply with the requirements for the development of an individualized plan for employment in accordance with section 102(b) of the Rehabilitation Act. (f) comply with requirements regarding the provisions of informed choice for all applicants and eligible individuals in accordance with section 102(d) of the Rehabilitation Act. (g) provide vocational rehabilitation services to American Indians who are individuals with disabilities residing in the State, in accordance with section 101(a)(13) of the Rehabilitation Act. (h) comply with the requirements for the conduct of semiannual or annual reviews, as appropriate, for individuals employed either in an extended employment setting in a community rehabilitation program or any other employment under section 14(c) of the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938, as required by sections 101(a)(14) and 511 of the Rehabilitation Act. (i) meet the requirements in sections 101(a)(17) and 103(b)(2) of the Rehabilitation Act if the State elects to construct, under special circumstances, facilities for community rehabilitation programs. (j) with respect to students with disabilities, the State: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) has developed and will implement, <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (A) strategies to address the needs identified in the assessments; and (B) strategies to achieve the goals and priorities identified by the State, to improve and expand vocational rehabilitation services for students with disabilities on a statewide basis; and (ii) has developed and will implement strategies to provide pre-employment transition services (sections 101(a)(15),101(a)(25), and 113). (iii) shall reserve not less than 15 percent of the allocated funds for the provision of pre-employment transition services; such funds shall not be used to pay for the administrative costs of providing pre-employment transition services.
5.	<p>Program Administration for the Supported Employment Title VI Supplement to the State plan:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) The designated State unit assures that it will include in the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan all information required by section 606 of the

	<p>Rehabilitation Act.</p> <p>(b) The designated State agency assures that it will submit reports in such form and in accordance with such procedures as the Commissioner may require and collects the information required by section 101(a)(10) of the Rehabilitation Act separately for individuals receiving supported employment services under title I and individuals receiving supported employment services under title VI of the Rehabilitation Act.</p>
6.	<p>Financial Administration of the Supported Employment Program (Title VI):</p> <p>(a) The designated State agency assures that it will expend no more than 2.5 percent of the State's allotment under title VI for administrative costs of carrying out this program; and, the designated State agency or agencies will provide, directly or indirectly through public or private entities, non-Federal contributions in an amount that is not less than 10 percent of the costs of carrying out supported employment services provided to youth with the most significant disabilities with the funds reserved for such purpose under section 603(d) of the Rehabilitation Act, in accordance with section 606(b)(7)(H) and (I) of the Rehabilitation Act.</p> <p>(b) The designated State agency assures that it will use funds made available under title VI of the Rehabilitation Act only to provide supported employment services to individuals with the most significant disabilities, including extended services to youth with the most significant disabilities, who are eligible to receive such services; and, that such funds are used only to supplement and not supplant the funds provided under Title I of the Rehabilitation Act, when providing supported employment services specified in the individualized plan for employment, in accordance with section 606(b)(7)(A) and (D), of the Rehabilitation Act.</p>
7.	<p>Provision of Supported Employment Services:</p> <p>(a) The designated State agency assures that it will provide supported employment services as defined in section 7(39) of the Rehabilitation Act.</p> <p>(b) The designated State agency assures that</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">the comprehensive assessment of individuals with significant disabilities conducted under section 102(b)(1) of the Rehabilitation Act and funded under title I of the Rehabilitation Act includes consideration of supported employment as an appropriate employment outcome, in accordance with the requirements of section 606(b)(7)(B) of the Rehabilitation Act an individualized plan for employment that meets the requirements of section 102(b) of the Rehabilitation Act , which is developed and updated with title I funds, in accordance with sections 102(b)(3)(F) and 606(b)(7)(C) and (E) of the Rehabilitation Act.</p>

Vocational Rehabilitation – Minnesota State Services for the Blind

Program-Specific Requirements for State Vocational Rehabilitation Services Program

The Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Services Portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan must include the following descriptions and estimates, as required by sections 101(a) and 606 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended by title IV of WIOA.

- (a) **State Rehabilitation Council**. All VR agencies, except for those that have an independent consumer-controlled commission, must have a State Rehabilitation Council (Council or SRC) that meets the criteria in section 105 of the Rehabilitation Act. The designated State agency or designated State unit, as applicable, has (select A or B):

(A) is an independent State commission.

(B) has established a State Rehabilitation Council.

In accordance with Assurance 3(b), please provide information on the current composition of the Council by representative type, including the term number of the representative, as applicable, and any vacancies, as well as the beginning dates of each representative's term.

Council Representative	Current Term Number/ Vacant	Beginning Date of Term Mo./Yr.
Statewide Independent Living Council (SILC)	2	2/2022
Parent Training and Information Center	Vacant	6/2020
Client Assistance Program	1	2/2023
Qualified Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Counselor (Ex Officio if Employed by the VR Agency)	1	2/2023
Community Rehabilitation Program Service Provider	Vacant	6/2020
Business, Industry, and Labor	Vacant	7/2019
Business, Industry, and Labor	1	2/2022
Business, Industry, and Labor	1	6/2021
Business, Industry, and Labor	2	2/2022
Disability Advocacy Groups	2	2/2022
Disability Advocacy Groups	2	6/2021
Disability Advocacy Groups	1	9/2021
Current or Former Applicants for, or Recipients of, VR services	Vacant	6/2020
Section 121 Project Directors in the State (as applicable)	Vacant	6/2020

State Educational Agency Responsible for Students with Disabilities Eligible to Receive Services under Part B of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)	Vacant	2/2023
State Workforce Development Board	1	2/2022
VR Agency Director (Ex Officio)	Ex Officio	Permanent
Advocate for Individuals who are Blind with Multiple Disabilities	1	2/2023
DeafBlind Community Representative	1	2/2022

If the SRC is not meeting the composition requirements in section 105(b) of the Rehabilitation Act and/or is not meeting quarterly as required in section 105(f) of the Rehabilitation Act, provide the steps that the VR agency is taking to ensure it meets those requirements.

The Minnesota State Rehabilitation Council for the Blind (SRC-B) meets the first Thursday of every December, February, April, June, August, and October from 5:30 PM to 8:30 PM. SSB has historically had difficulty having council appointments approved by the Governor’s office due to changing administrations and frequently changing staff. SSB makes an effort to personally connect with the Boards and Commissions staff, providing information and education on SSB in an effort to increase the speed of the process. We currently have several open positions due to completed terms, retirements, or individuals leaving the employment tied to their council position.

In accordance with the requirements in section 101(a)(21)(A)(ii)(III) of the Rehabilitation Act, include a summary of the Council’s input (including how it was obtained) into the State Plan and any State Plan revisions, including recommendations from the Council’s annual reports, the review and analysis of consumer satisfaction and other Council reports.

The SRC-B develops and follows a yearly workplan to ensure that it carries out all its duties in a timely fashion. The majority of workplan entries occur on an annual or semiannual basis; however, as new recommendations from the council are made, they can be added.

The SRC-B has a standing “Customer Satisfaction and Goals & Priorities Committee,” which exists to carry out specific duties contained in federal regulations for the Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) program. These include conducting a review and an analysis of the effectiveness of and consumer satisfaction with:

- The functions of the Department of Employment and Economic Development;
- Vocational Rehabilitation services provided within the state (except adjustment to blindness and technology services), and
- The employment outcomes of persons served.

In collaboration with SSB, the committee evaluates the extent to which SSB achieved its goals and priorities, strategies used, and factors that impeded success and performance on the federal Workforce Investment Opportunity Act (WIOA) Primary Indicators of Performance. Jointly with other committees of the Council, and in partnership with SSB, it develops and, as necessary, revises a statement of goals and priorities. The committee reports quarterly to the full SRC-B and annually presents the VR Effectiveness Report to the SRC-B for review and approval. The VR Effectiveness Report contains: Part I – State’s Performance Under the Performance Accountability Measures of Section 116 of WIOA, Part II – Customer Satisfaction Survey Review, and Part III – Review of Goals and Priorities. The committee includes the VR Effectiveness Report in the Annual SRC-B report. The PY23 VR Effectiveness Report and the Annual SRC-B Report were presented to the SRC-B at the December 7, 2023, meeting and is available at <https://mn.gov/deed/ssb/involve/srcb/reports/index.jsp>.

A Budget Task Force annually works in collaboration with SSB to propose the SRC-B’s budget for next federal fiscal year. SSB provides the task force with the budget expenditures so that determinations can be made. The council’s budget for FFY24 was presented by the Budget Task Force and approved at the August 3, 2023 meeting.

In an effort to increase diversity, equity, and inclusion, the SRC-B developed a Task Force on Guest Speakers or Professional Development with the purpose of: adding to knowledge of how the council can learn more about SSB; finding community members representing Hmong, Hispanic, Somali, Native American cultures; and hearing from medical professionals regarding providing SSB information to individuals with vision loss. The task force reported to the council at the October 6, 2022, meeting and recommended that this group continue meeting regularly and be added to the annual work plan.

The Committee Structure Task Force annually works in collaboration with SSB to review the council committee charge and structure to determine if any changes are needed. At the June 2, 2023, meeting, the task force presented their report recommending the change in name of the Minority Outreach Committee to Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Committee. It was felt that the proposed name was more encompassing and positive. The SRC-B unanimously approved the change.

At the June 2, 2023, meeting, the SRC-B was presented a report by Jessica Burke, Consultant, Management Analysis & Development (MAD). SSB contracted with MAD as internal independent consultants to identify barriers that customers are facing and find ways to reduce them or eliminate those barriers. The council expressed their concerns with the report, specifically with the lack of effort to reach survey participants, and lack of accessibility in communication. As result, at the August 3, 2023, meeting, the council unanimously voted to send the *Recommendations for Improving DEI Practices Within Minnesota State Services for the Blind*, presented by the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee, to Jessica Burke.

A brief public hearing was held at the August 3, 2023, meeting regarding the order of selection (OOS) process and SSB's intent to end OOS. Unanimous support for the end of the order of selection process was given by the council.

Additionally at the August meeting, the council discussed the pros and cons of joining the National Coalition of State Rehabilitation Councils (NCSRC). The NCSRC had provided a report about membership and signing the resolution during the June 2, 2023, council meeting. Council members shared their concerns regarding NCSRC and the lack of accessibility. After the discussion, a motion to join NCSRC failed for the absence of a second. It was decided that the council would gather more information before reconsidering joining the coalition. The SSB SRC-B staff liaison and one council member attended the NCSRC 2023 fall conference in Savannah, Georgia, and they reported their observations during the December 7, 2023, council meeting. While the council recognized that it is important to be informed of new legislation and stay connected with the coalition, they remained reluctant to join and a vote was not called.

Sections pertaining to the proposed funding of establishment projects occurring at the 2200 University Avenue building were presented to the SRC-B on October 5, 2023, and were unanimously approved.

The Community Partners Outcomes and Measures Committee has conducted a review of the current ATB Customer Satisfaction Survey response rates. Their goal was to address low response rates and provide recommendations to enhance the effectiveness of post-training surveys. The committee developed three recommendations regarding data collection, survey delivery method, and survey timing and automation and presented them at the December 7, 2023 meeting.

Provide the VR agency's response to the Council's input and recommendations, including an explanation for the rejection of any input and recommendations.

Recommendation/Input

The PY22 VR Effectiveness Report and the Annual SRC-B Report were presented to the SRC-B and approved at the December 7, 2023, meeting.

SSB Response:

SSB has worked in collaboration with the SRC-B and the Customer Satisfaction and Goals & Priorities Committee to develop these reports.

Recommendation/Input

The council's budget for FFY24 was presented by the Budget Task Force and approved at the August 3, 2023, meeting.

SSB Response:

SSB has worked in collaboration with the SRC-B to develop the FFY24 budget. The council's budget has remained consistent for several years and is reasonable and appropriate.

Recommendation/Input

The task force on Guest Speakers or Professional Development reported to the council at the October 6, 2022, meeting and recommended that this group continue meeting regularly and be added to the annual work plan.

SSB Response:

SSB agrees with the task force and guest speakers or professional development activities have been added to the SRC-B Work Plan.

Recommendation/Input

At the June 2, 2023, meeting, the Committee Structure Task Force presented their report recommending the change in name of the Minority Outreach Committee to Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Committee.

SSB Response:

SSB is in agreement with this change. It is in line with our state and agency goals and is more encompassing and positive.

Recommendation/Input

At the August 3, 2023, meeting, the council unanimously voted to send the *Recommendations for Improving DEI Practices Within Minnesota State Services for the Blind*, presented by the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee, to Jessica Burke.

SSB Response:

SSB felt the recommendations were great and encompasses some items that have been discussed internally. SSB recommended that these recommendations come from the council directly to Jessica and SSB as they could carry more weight.

Recommendation/Input

Unanimous support for the end of the order-of-selection process was given by the council.

SSB Response:

We are in agreement with the SRC-B and it was announced that SSB would swiftly end the order of selection process. Order of selection ended on November 16, 2023.

Recommendation/Input

Council members shared their concerns regarding NCSRC and the lack of accessibility. After the discussion, a motion to join NCSRC failed for the absence of a second. It was decided that the council would gather more information before reconsidering joining the coalition.

SSB Response:

SSB is available to answer questions and provide information to the SRC-B as requested and will leave this decision with the council.

Recommendation/Input

Sections pertaining to the proposed funding of establishment projects occurring at the 2200 University Avenue building were presented to the SRC-B on October 5, 2023, and were unanimously approved.

SSB Response:

SSB agrees with the SRC-B.

Recommendation/Input

The Community Partners Outcomes and Measures Committee has conducted a review of the current ATB Customer Satisfaction Survey to address low response rates and provide recommendations to enhance the effectiveness of post-training surveys. The committee developed three recommendations regarding data collection, survey delivery method, and survey timing and automation and presented them at the December 7, 2023 meeting.

SSB Response:

SSB is reviewing the committee's recommendations in further detail. We acknowledge that the ATB Customer Satisfaction Survey is not providing the information it was intended to provide. There are multiple reasons for the low response rates, one of which is a low number of participants. SSB is working with the DEED Survey Coordinator, who oversees the administration of the current survey method, to investigate the possibilities of alternative survey delivery methods. Some ideas have included returning to delivering surveys via phone, and contracting with a third party to conduct focus groups. SSB will continue gathering information until it is able to make a determination.

(b) Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment (CSNA). Section 101(a)(15), (17), and (23) of the Rehabilitation Act require VR agencies to provide an assessment of:

(1) The VR services needs of individuals with disabilities residing within the State, including:

(A) Individuals with the most significant disabilities and their need for Supported Employment;

Supported Employment services are provided to SSB customers as needed. In PY2022, there were 55 customers with Supported Employment (SE) plans, 27 of which received Pre-ETS. In PY2023, there were 53 customers with SE plans, 29 of which received Pre-ETS. With regards to youth, SSB is committed to providing all students work experiences with or without supported employment services.

SSB uses Title I funds to provide SE services and is declining to receive FFY2024 SE funds. SSB is declining supported employment dollars, as the requirements for using those dollars are too restrictive. These funds have youth matching requirements, and the funds can only be used once the individual enters employment. Youth with significant disabilities often require more in-depth and comprehensive training before they are able and ready to enter into employment; therefore, they are often over the age of 25 by the time this occurs. Should there be flexibility on when the funds can be used and a change to the supported youth matching requirements, SSB will revisit declining funds.

(2) Individuals with disabilities who are minorities and individuals with disabilities who have been unserved or underserved by the VR program;

The Department of Administration, Minnesota State Demographic Center, released the [*The Economic Status of Minnesotans 2023, A Chartbook with Data for Minnesota's Largest Cultural Groups*](#), in March 2023.

The report presents newly tabulated data about the economic conditions and considerations of Minnesotans as a whole, as well as 17 more refined cultural groups, to help policymakers and the public understand and improve the economic conditions for Minnesota's residents. The report is especially helpful in that it provides data on cultural groups specific to Minnesota that are more refined than the standard racial groups used by the Census Bureau which are too broad and may not be relevant to our state.

Although 78.2% of the population of Minnesota is white, there is a diversity of cultural groups. In reviewing Table: Minnesota's Largest Cultural Groups in the report, the top 5 cultural groups, other than White, with the highest percent of the MN population and people can be found in the table below.

The category of "Multiple Cultural Groups" includes people belonging to more than one of these 17 cultural groups; Dakota, Ojibwe, Asian Indian, Chinese, Filipino, Hmong, Korean, Lao, Vietnamese, African-American, Ethiopian, Liberian, Somali, Mexican, Puerto Rican, Russian, and White. Additionally, the "African-American" cultural group that was constructed consists of only U.S. born Black/African-American individuals and their children.

Racial or Ethnic Group	Cultural Group	Percent of MN Population	People
Other/Multiple Groups	*Multiple Cultural Groups	3.9	216,300
Hispanic or Latino	Mexican	3.3	186,800
Black or African-Americans	African-American	3.2	179,800
Asian	Hmong	1.6	86,6000
Black or African-American	Somali	1.4	76,200

With the diversity in cultural groups in Minnesota, there are many languages spoken other than English. The top 5 languages not including English spoken in Minnesota are:

1. Spanish
2. Amharic, Somali, or Other Afro-Asiatic Languages
3. Hmong
4. Chinese
5. Vietnamese

It is difficult to get an accurate picture of the incidence of blindness, low vision and DeafBlindness in Minnesota as there are few sources of data collection sources and the most available is from 2019. The American Foundation for the Blind reported in their 2019 Prevalence Rates of Vision Difficulty, a total of 84,900 individuals. Of that total, 38,265 were male and 46,635 were female. The prevalence rates are broken down by age as follows:

Under 5	1,425
5-17	6,209
18-34	10,466
35-64	29,378
65-74	12,923
75 and older	24,499

2017 Minnesota Joint Disparity Study

The State of Minnesota conducted disparity studies in:

- 1999 (Mason Tilman)
- 2009 (MGT of America)
- 2017 (Keen Independent Research)
 - <https://mn.gov/admin/disparity-study/>

The 2017 Minnesota Joint Disparity Study examines whether discrimination affects minority- and women-owned firms in the marketplace and ways to address that discrimination. Although this purpose does not address individuals with disabilities specifically, it can still provide useful information. The Legislature has approved money to conduct an updated study.

The SRC-B Customer Satisfaction Survey Committee, in coordination with the Department’s survey specialist, added a demographic profile to the customer satisfaction survey results. This profile gives us additional information on the customer satisfaction by age, gender, race, ethnicity, geographic area, etc. The MnCSI (Minnesota Customer Satisfaction Index) measures percentage of satisfaction, with a higher number being higher satisfaction. Satisfaction for the most recent 2023 survey was overall higher for individuals who are BIPOC or Hispanic/Latinx.

2023 Customer Satisfaction Survey Demographic Profile

Gender	Total Population (663)	Valid Population (587)	Survey Respondents (186)	MnCSI (154)
Female	48%	48%	53%	77.7 (82)
Male	52%	52%	47%	78.9 (71)
(Blank)	--	--	--	--

Region	Total Population	Valid Population	Survey Respondents	MnCSI
Greater MN	39%	38%	39%	75.9 (63)
Metro	60%	61%	59%	79.8 (88)
NULL	<1%	1%	2%	81.4 (3)

SSB Status	Total Population	Valid Population	Survey Respondents	MnCSI
Successful Closure	7%	7%	8%	83.6 (15)
Unsuccessful Closure	3%	2%	1%	--

In-progress	88%	89%	90%	77.5 (138)
(Blank)	2%	1%	1%	--

Ethnicity	Total Population	Valid Population	Survey Respondents	MnCSI
Hispanic/Latino	7%	7%	5%	81.4 (8)
Not Hispanic/Latino	91%	91%	92%	78.0 (143)
Did not self-identify	2%	2%	2%	--
(Blank)	<1%	<1%	1%	--

Race	Total Population	Valid Population	Survey Respondents
American Indian or Alaska Native	1%	1%	1%
Asian	5%	5%	6%
Black or African American	20%	19%	12%
Hawaiian Native/Pacific Islander	--	--	--
Two or more races	1%	1%	1%
White	71%	71%	77%
Did not self-identify	2%	2%	2%
(Blank)	<1%	<1%	1%

BIPOC	Total Population	Valid Population	Survey Respondents	MnCSI
Yes	33%	33%	25%	82.7 (37)
No	65%	67%	75%	76.8 (117)
(Blank)	2%	--	--	--

Primary Impairment	Total Population	Valid Population	Survey Respondents	MnCSI
--------------------	------------------	------------------	--------------------	-------

Blindness	76%	76%	73%	79.5 (110)
Deaf-Blindness	7%	7%	9%	81.4 (12)
Other visual	17%	17%	18%	72.6 (31)
Other physical	--	--	--	--
(Blank)	<1%	<1%	1%	--

Veteran	Total Population	Valid Population	Survey Respondents	MnCSI
Veteran	1%	1%	1%	--
Not a Veteran	98%	98%	98%	78.7 (151)
(Blank)	1%	1%	1%	--

Age range	Total Population	Valid Population	Survey Respondents	MnCSI
Less than 18	9%	9%	7%	69.4 (4)
18-24	25%	26%	26%	84.3 (39)
25-44	32%	33%	30%	74.0 (48)
45-54	16%	16%	19%	81.2 (34)
55-59	8%	7%	6%	70.0 (11)
60 and above	11%	10%	11%	77.5 (18)

Education indicated	Total Population	Valid Population	Survey Respondents	MnCSI
None	1%	1%	1%	--
Less than High School	4%	4%	2%	--
High School	16%	15%	16%	81.7 (17)
High School Diploma/GED	35%	35%	31%	75.0 (48)
Vocational School Diploma/Cert	13%	13%	12%	72.4 (20)
Associate's Degree	6%	6%	8%	73.1 (12)

Bachelor’s Degree	15%	15%	16%	84.5 (25)
Grad School/Other PostSec License	11%	11%	15%	64.0 (27)
Did not identify	<1%	<1%	1%	--

In an effort to understand where there are areas of racial disparities within the customers SSB serves, an analysis was conducted by our data analyst consultant Michael Prideaux in early October 2023. The analysis examines a series of T Tests to determine if the difference between groups is statistically significant. The factors examined were the percent exiting successfully, exiting unable to locate, and the wage at exit. The analysis included data on participants served in PY 2021 and 2022 for the following pairs:

1. Black-White
2. Asian-White
3. Hispanic/Latinx-White
4. Native American/Alaska Native-White
5. Asian/Pacific Islander-White
6. Multiracial-White
7. Black, Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC)-White
8. Female-Male

The analysis’s main finding is a statistically significant disparity in the percentage of participants unable to be located between BIPOC participants at large and white participants. This disparity is likely driven by the disparities between Black and Hispanic participants and their white counterparts. Wages had no statistically significant disparities, likely due to sample size and the slight difference in wages at exit. Further investigation will be needed to determine the causes of the disparity.

SSB is aware that services for new Americans is an area of continued need. We know that outcomes are not as positive for new Americans and there is a lack of service providers available to meet the needs. In line with the MN Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED), SSB has an objective to focus on diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility, creating an agency that better meets the needs of the current and emerging workforce, including improving services to new Americans, underrepresented communities, and veterans. We’ve included this objective in our Goals, Priorities, and Strategies and this is in alignment with the WIOA combined State Plan Strategic Vision, Goals and Strategies for the entire state of Minnesota.

SSB serves a small number of Veterans as most individuals receive services through the Veterans Administration. We currently have 10 customers identified as Veterans and believe that services are adequate to meet their needs.

SSB currently serves 49 DeafBlind individuals and with another 26 categorized as having a dual sensory loss.

In 2021, the Minnesota Commission of the Deaf, DeafBlind & Hard of Hearing (MNCDHH) partnered with Wilder Research to conduct a needs assessment and create a data-informed strategic plan, with the goal of better supporting DeafBlind children and youth in Minnesota. The key finding was Minnesota lacks a cohesive system for supporting Deafblind children and youth. Professionals identified a number of system and practice issues, with the most prominent being a lack of communication and coordination among professionals who serve DeafBlind children and youth including:

- A lack of communication among service providers
- A lack of DeafBlind-specific knowledge and skills among professionals who serve DeafBlind children and youth
- A lack of professional support and guidance for families and loved one of DeafBlind children and youth

Professionals also reported a piecemeal “system” for serving Deafblind children and their families that is comprised of slightly coordinated institutions, organizations, and people. Several suggestions for better supporting DeafBlind children and youth in Minnesota were given including:

- Promote coordinated services and the sharing of information among service providers
- Help children with combined hearing and vision loss and their families coordinate services
- Provide education about deafblindness to parents and providers
- Offer social connection and emotional support for DeafBlind children and youth and their families
- Prepare DeafBlind youth for the transition to community-based services at age 21
- Contribute to legislative and policy-focused activities that could improve the lives of DeafBlind children

SSB has worked to develop more options in service providers specializing in DeafBlindness. A contract has been established with Helen Keller National Center (HKNC) for ATB with the potential for additional services being investigated. Additionally, there has been discussion of growth by potentially hiring providers in the state of Minnesota for service provision and

potentially establishing an in-state location for training. An HKNC employment services staff is becoming ACRE Certified to become a Customized Employment provider.

Despite these strides, there continues to be a lack of providers with the knowledge and skills to provide the specialized services needed by DeafBlind individuals and even less so, those that can communicate directly in their language.

SSB continues to see an enormous lack of the availability of Adult Basic Education centers (ABE) that provide ELL services with braille to blind and visually impaired individuals. For many new Americans, learning English is a first step before Adjustment To Blindness (ATB) training, higher education and/or employment, and self-sufficiency. Minnesota has a robust ABE program however it is not equipped to serve individuals with disabilities. Minnesota's ELL centers/programs are very limited, under-funded, and in need to receive resources to learn, set-up, and provide accommodation, needs, and services to Minnesota's growing blind, visually impaired, and deafblind customers in need of ELL programs that can provide them the disability accommodations they need to be successful. The unique dual needs of learning ATB skills (adaptive way to access print) while learning beginning level ELL skills is missing from 2 out of the 3 ATB centers offered in Minnesota. The need is great for students to continue learning adaptive daily skills while learning ELL skills. Minnesota needs several more ABE centers that are able to provide ELL classes with braille for blind, visually impaired, and DeafBlind students to meet the needs.

(3) Individuals with disabilities served through other components of the workforce development system; and

Blind, visually impaired, and DeafBlind individuals are served in all components of the workforce development system, both as universal customers and in eligibility-based programs. In Minnesota, we call this system CareerForce, while other states refer to this as the American Job Centers. In Minnesota, universal customers are served by CareerForce partners, including the WIOA Title I and III programs in the local workforce development areas. There are close to 50 CareerForce locations throughout the state offering classes, workshops, pre-employment services, etc. SSB has a presence in 6 CareerForce locations with 10 SSB Workforce Development Unit (WDU) staff officed in CareerForce locations. A small percentage of the individuals who utilize the CareerForce locations are blind, visually impaired, or DeafBlind. A SSB recent analysis of referrals from CareerForce Centers from Program Year 2020 to 2022 revealed only 2 verified referrals.

Although CareerForce Centers are available and their use is encouraged, many individuals who are blind, visually impaired, or DeafBlind do not feel comfortable utilizing the CareerForce locations and choose to work with SSB directly. Staff at local CareerForce locations often do not have the training or skills to help with the accessible computer systems. SSB staff are

recognized as more knowledgeable in the area of blindness and accessible technology. SSB’s service model is to work directly with individuals in their communities at the location of their choosing using the method they prefer (whether in-person or virtual). Rarely do individuals show up at a CareerForce location seeking services. With transportation being a primary barrier for the vast majority of our customers, the “we come to you” approach is more customer-centric.

(4) Youth with disabilities, including students with disabilities and their need for pre-employment transition services. Include an assessment of the needs of individuals with disabilities for transition career services and pre-employment transition services, and the extent to which such services are coordinated with transition services provided under IDEA.

An important and unique group of possible customers for State Services for the Blind are students and youth with disabilities. This category includes students ages fourteen up until their 22nd birthday eligible for pre-employment transition services, and youth through age twenty-four.

Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) has indicated in their “Unduplicated Child Count” report for fiscal year 2023 that there are approximately 248 students in secondary education who are blind, visually impaired, or DeafBlind. This number only includes those students whose primary disability is blindness or DeafBlindness.

Table 1

Table 1 includes data on the number of Pre-ETS students (Participant and Potentially Eligible) served by SSB in Program Years 2018 through 2022. SSB does not serve a large number of Pre-ETS potentially eligible customers. Overall, we saw a decrease in numbers between 2018 and 2021, then have started to see a gradual increase from 2021 and are now back to our pre-pandemic levels of customers eligible per year and are getting closer to our pre-pandemic numbers of customers served per year. It is worth noting that in PY2020 although the number served decreased, the number of Pre-ETS participants increased and has continued that trend. We believe this is a testament to the adaptability and creativity of our staff who began offering a wide variety of virtual programming. Note that the data is a snapshot in time and actual numbers may vary plus or minus a few students.

	PY2018	PY2019	PY2020	PY2021	PY2022
Number of Individuals Determined Eligible	224	176	191	210	260

Number of Total Participants With an IPE	913	870	815	834	847
**Number of Pre-ETS Potentially Eligible Students with a Disability	12	17	12	10	10
Number of Students with a Disability With an IPE	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD
Number of Youth with a Disability With an IPE	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD

**Pre-ETS Potentially Eligible per year total includes any individual who was in the Pre-ETS referral status at any point during the year.

Table 2

The data in Table 2 provides the percentage of customers who were served in each Pre-ETS Category by Potentially Eligible and Participants (Pre-ETS only) in FFY23.

Pre-ETS Service Category	Potentially Eligible	Participants (Pre-ETS only)	Participants (Pre-ETS + Potentially Eligible)
Instruction in Self-Advocacy	25%	44%	43%
Job Exploration Counseling	50%	42%	41%
Post Secondary Counseling	50%	42%	41%
Work-Based Learning	13%	38%	37%
Workplace Readiness Training	38%	49%	48%
Total All Students	63%	79%	78%

Table 3

From the data in Table 3, of the dollars spent in FFY2023 in each Pre-ETS category by potentially eligible and participants, participant expenditures for Work-Based Learning, and Workplace Readiness Training activities constitute the majority of our spending.

Pre-ETS Service Category	Potentially Eligible	Participants	Totals
Instruction in Self-Advocacy	\$0	\$4,599.8	\$4,599.8
Job Exploration Counseling	\$0	\$7,276.52	\$7,276.52
Post Secondary Counseling	\$0	\$516.83	\$516.83
Work-Based Learning	\$0	\$59,546.54	\$59,546.54
Workplace Readiness Training	\$1,632.58	\$219,321.86	\$220,954.44
Total All Students	\$1,632.58	\$286,661.75	\$288,294.33

****Table 3

Assessments

SSB developed a Pre-ETS student self-assessment which gives an opportunity for students to share their understanding of their preparedness for college, careers, and work in relation to the Pre-ETS categories. With this student self-assessment, the results provide two key pieces of information:

- 1) The results indicate where the student believes their strengths and weaknesses are, and thus provide a sense of direction for staff to validate the student's strengths and work towards improving the weak areas.
- 2) The self-assessment can be used as a post-assessment when administered a second time. This allows students and team members to see the student's growth as a result of having received Pre-ETS. The results will demonstrate if the if the methodologies were effective or if service delivery has room for improvement.

The self-assessment may be facilitated by SSB staff, teachers, providers, or completed independently by students with the results compiled by SSB. It can be provided to both potentially eligible and eligible students.

The self-assessment serves as a powerful tool to help guide both students and team members in which area or service to focus on, as well as track learning progress. This assessment is delivered on a case-by-case basis and used as appropriate. IEP team members, parents, and other supports can assist with the process when deemed appropriate by the team.

SSB staff are required to complete a comprehensive assessment before IPE development, and this assessment reinforces counselors to consider IEP goals within this assessment and address

areas of need as best fit. Counselors are required to address all five core Pre-ETS areas within this assessment and note all of the services an eligible student requires to make progress toward an employment goal or projected goal.

For potentially eligible students, a similar assessment is completed to determine which of the five core Pre-ETS the student would require. Ongoing assessment and review is conducted to determine any additional Pre-ETS the student would need or which Pre-ETS have concluded.

Every high school student is eligible to engage in SSB's in-house assessments for assistive technology, orientation and mobility, and independent living needs that are critical for success. These assessments are required for seniors in high school as they plan to transition into activities beyond secondary education. Training is then coordinated in relation to the needs displayed in the assessment with education officials and other team members as appropriate.

Coordinating to determine needs

SSB staff attend IEP and IEP 3-year evaluation meetings when invited and collect these documents for review to coordinate with team members and provide services in collaboration with IDEA. SSB staff work with students and their families, IEP case managers, teachers of the blind and visually impaired, orientation and mobility specialists, and other IEP team members to supplement services provided by IDEA in order to assist with goal acquisition. SSB is able to provide additional activities outside of the classroom and school day through in-house service provision and community partners to strengthen and reinforce IEP goals needed for high school success and preparedness for the workplace. SSB staff consult with IEP members when providing additional activities that supplement IEP activities that align with IPE goals to ensure understanding of instruction from both agencies.

SSB's Pre-ETS and Transition Coordinator attends Statewide Vision Network meetings hosted by the specialist for the blind/visually impaired (BVI) with the Department of Education to stay engaged and up to date on BVI instruction throughout the state. They sit on the BVI Advisory Committee to collaborate and develop additional opportunities for students in and out of the classroom. The Pre-ETS and Transition Coordinator and other SSB staff as appropriate also attend the annual Minnesota Division on Vision Impairments TBVI and COMS Conference in the fall every year to network and collaborate with teachers statewide.

Identified needs and how they are being addressed

SSB has identified three gaps that need to be filled; these gaps were identified in previous needs assessments and still are ongoing needs.

1. Students being unprepared for post-secondary training.
2. Spending the 15% set aside.
3. Services for students who have multiple challenges.

As is generally the case, identifying gaps does not imply that nothing is currently being done in these areas. Rather, the intent here is to indicate that the need for more attention is a priority. SSB has developed contracts with various community partners to help assess Pre-ETS and transition needs while providing innovative transition programming to address those needs. SSB's Pre-ETS and transition staff has also expanded to ensure needs are assessed and addressed.

SSB has expanded its Pre-ETS and transition staff to ensure it continues to meet the needs of students throughout the state and make certain that our work is managed under consistent supervision. A Pre-ETS and Transition Program Manager was hired to manage the Pre-ETS budget, contracts, and policy, as well as supervise the Pre-ETS and transition direct service staff. A second Work Opportunities Navigator located in Greater Minnesota who is available to deliver the five core Pre-ETS to all students was also added. SSB is in the process of hiring a Multiple Systems and Pathways Coordinator, who will be responsible for helping students with the most significant of disabilities and their families navigate the complex federal, state, and local services and resources to transition from school to work.

These 3 new staff comprise the complement of 1 Pre-ETS and Transition Manager, 1 Pre-ETS and Transition Coordinator, 2 Work Opportunities Navigators, 3 dedicated Pre-ETS and Transition counselors in the seven-county metro area, and 1 dedicated Pre-ETS Assistive Technology Specialist. All counselors outside of the metro area serve both students and adults.

In addition to the roles mentioned above, we have staffed positions for orientation and mobility training, job coaching, and rehabilitation teaching that are available to students. SSB has 1 employment specialist who specializes in working with DeafBlind Pre-ETS students.

SSB has a continued need for additional service providers and allows applications for contracts through the Request For Proposal (RFP) process, as SSB continues to seek out impactful opportunities for students to engage in through local and national organizations.

The COVID-19 pandemic has brought about additional community partners to provide Pre-ETS virtually in ways that had not been options before. Virtual work-based learning experiences are offered through ReSOURCE/LEAP, a community partner out of Vermont. They provide opportunities for students to engage in hands-on work experiences where students actively engage in pre-employment transition skill building including career mentorship, communication, teamwork, problem-solving, professionalism, time management, goal setting, leadership, and more. They also offer workplace readiness training in various areas to help low vision, blind, and DeafBlind students build valuable skills needed for the workforce.

SSB has contracted with the local nonprofit Wilderness Inquiry. They have partnered with SSB to provide outdoor education and experiences while instructing on self-advocacy and workplace readiness training. As of the fall of 2023, two summer canoe trips have been coordinated, and a winter activity for students to engage in self-advocacy instruction and peer mentoring opportunities is being discussed.

SSB has contracted with Envision Foundation for their all-virtual College Success Program (formerly offered through Learning Ally). The all-virtual College Success Program offers a holistic support system that utilizes the knowledge and experience of experts in the blindness field as well as blind or visually impaired college graduates to help guide students as they transition from high school to college and employment. That support system includes:

- Resources – Robust, carefully crafted, and designed to address situations encountered by blind or visually impaired college students.
- Mentorship – Mentors, who are recent college graduates who are blind or visually impaired themselves, help their mentees navigate college experiences and a job hunt that is unique to them and provide them with as much or as little support as they'd like.
- Meetups – Held virtually, these meetups are opportunities for students to connect with their peers to talk about issues, ask questions, network, make connections, and more.
- Audiobook Solution – College Success Program membership includes access to Learning Ally's Audiobook Solution with over 80,000 human-read audiobooks.

Sky's The Limit Communications through David DeNotaris is contracted with SSB. David and his partner Eileen Rivera Ley provided two days of instruction in self-advocacy and personal finance with SSB students in June of 2023 and more trainings are planned. This contract affords both virtual and in-person Pre-ETS in four of the five required areas. This flexibility allows SSB to bridge some of the gaps in delivering services in greater Minnesota through virtual programming as students in rural areas frequently miss out on programming held in the Twin Cities.

SSB recently developed a contract with Perkins School for the Blind that will allow aspiring college students to engage in their College Success: Compass Program to work on college readiness and valuable workplace readiness skills. Vanward Consulting Services will also partner with SSB to offer students opportunities in job exploration counseling, workplace readiness training, and work-based learning opportunities.

SSB's Pre-ETS and transition team is planning to create an ambassador program to enhance opportunities for self-advocacy instruction and peer mentoring opportunities. Staff realize how important mentorship opportunities are for students and how students connect and develop friendships across the state when events take place that bring students together. The objectives of this program will be to bring students together more frequently to increase opportunities for students to connect and learn from each other. Mentors will be supported through the SSB Pre-ETS and transition team, and these students will also help with recruiting efforts for

programming. SSB recognizes that students are more likely to engage in programming when they know others who are attending or are invited by their peers versus counselors and other SSB staff.

The Summer Transition Program (STP), a joint collaboration between the Minnesota Department of Education, Local Education Agencies, and SSB, is a program for students who are entering their last or second to last year of high school and have extended school year services identified in their IEP. This is typically a two-week residential program held at the University of St. Thomas in St. Paul MN, and students engage in a variety of training that aligns with their IEP and IPE goals, hitting all five required Pre-ETS areas. STP returned to in-person the summer of 2022 after hiatus due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Skills are assessed by the IEP team (including vocational rehabilitation counselors), and this program is recommended for those with goals that align with this training opportunity. Students will participate in STP, work on their IEP goals, and participate in additional training important for success in the community. Students are offered to work with SSB's Work Opportunities Navigators to engage in a work-based learning experience following the residential completion of STP. For the summer of 2022 there were 17 students registered and 20 were registered for the summer of 2023.

To meet the identified needs for youth and students with disabilities, SSB plans to continue offering a wide variety of activities to help them prepare for competitive integrated employment. Some of these activities include:

- Adjustment to blindness training or workplace readiness training offered in-house and through community partners.
- Hosting the annual College 101 event, where current and former low-vision, blind, and DeafBlind students form a panel and discuss their experiences in post-secondary in front of aspiring college students and parents.
- SSB is planning to resume its career fair previously held every other year. This will be a social event where low vision, blind, and DeafBlind individuals in the workforce come together and offer their experiences and mentorship to high school students with vision loss.
- SSB is in discussions with the University of Minnesota to host a post-secondary assistive technology workshop in the spring of 2024. This will be for aspiring and current college students to learn about assistive technology skills needed for success in higher education.

Another challenge is spending the 15% set aside. SSB continues to identify, develop, and implement creative effective approaches to spending this money. Despite the development of some very innovative programs, it is a struggle to spend all the dollars due to the relatively small number of Pre-ETS students. While each year, we have successfully met (and somewhat exceeded) our 15% requirement both as an agency and a state, we know we have to continue to monitor our budget carefully to ensure we continue to meet the requirement.

To accurately outline and address solutions for the concerns highlighted above, SSB continues to develop a yearly Pre-ETS Blueprint using the framework put into place by WIOA. The Pre-ETS Blueprint outlines SSB's plans to address the five required activities and nine authorized activities as required by WIOA. It outlines our set-aside forecasting formula, which allows for us to offer authorized in addition to the required.

The third gap in services relates to students who have multiple challenges. These students may not initially be referred to SSB since their primary disability may create more barriers than vision loss. Once they are connected with SSB, the programs might not fit their individual needs. Because our expertise is in blindness rather than other disabilities, we need to seek partners who can augment the programs with support for those students.

SSB is involved in the E1MN partnership that was launched on July 1st, 2021. E1MN is Minnesota's state partnership dedicated to advancing employment-first outcomes for youth and adults with disabilities. This partnership evolved from Minnesota's Employment First policy adopted by the Olmstead Subcabinet in 2014. E1MN is led by the State of Minnesota Departments of Education (MDE) Career and Technical Education and Special Education Unit, Employment and Economic Development (DEED) Vocational Rehabilitation Services (VRS) and State Services for the Blind (SSB) Divisions, and Human Services (DHS) Disability Services Division (DSD). SSB serves a very small number of customers through this partnership compared to VRS due to the low incidence of blindness or blindness not being the primary disability.

DEED entered into a Memorandum of Understanding with DHS,DSD on July 1, 2021, and continues to be involved in interagency work for the E1MN partnership to ensure individuals receiving Medicaid waiver services and vocational rehabilitation services have seamless employment service delivery to achieve competitive integrated employment. MDE is also present for this work focusing on transition students to develop education and training, as well as resources for students and their families, vocational rehabilitation staff, schools and educators, and team members at DHS supporting students with disabilities preparing for and entering employment.

SSB's new Multiple Systems and Pathways Navigator position will be dedicated to working with students with multiple and/or complex needs. This position will assist with the coordination of various different agencies as systems these students can utilize to achieve their employment, independent living, and recreational and leisure goals. Work in this area will ensure SSB follows Minnesota's Employment First policy and is grounded in person-centered principles. This policy is included in Minnesota's Olmstead Plan and envisions a future where all people with disabilities can achieve competitive integrated employment.

In summary, there are three identified gaps related to students and youth with disabilities. They are students being unprepared for post-secondary training, dealing with the challenges of allocating and effectively spending 15% of federal dollars, and better serving students with multiple challenges. Additionally, we face challenges from a lack of community partners to provide services, especially in greater MN. Our state contracting requirements make it difficult to bring in programs that would contribute to spending our 15% set aside and promote new community providers who desire contracting with us, potentially in greater MN. Minnesota State Services for the Blind is already aware of these gaps and is working on addressing them. We continue to work to gain a better understanding of these efforts in the next cycle of this process.

(2) Identify the need to establish, develop, or improve community rehabilitation programs within the State.

State Services for the Blind operates as the Designated State Unit in Minnesota, with the Department of Employment and Economic Development as the Designated State Agency. Due to circumstances within the State and consistent with the requirements of 34 CFR 361.29(a)(1)(ii), SSB has determined it necessary to engage in activities to establish, develop, or improve facilities for community rehabilitation programs (CRPs) (hereinafter “establishment projects”) in the State for the purpose of providing vocational rehabilitation (VR) services to applicants and eligible individuals, as well as pre-employment transition services (Pre-ETS) to students with disabilities who are eligible or potentially eligible for the VR program. In assessing the need for establishment projects in the State, SSB has determined it may be necessary to incur capital expenditures to acquire equipment or improve the field offices of SSB, which satisfy the definition of a CRP at 34 CFR 361.5(c)(8), in order to ensure the continuity of quality service delivery to individuals with disabilities seeking to receive services under the VR program. The State assures it will submit requests for prior written approval to RSA for those costs that exceed the capital expenditure threshold applicable to the State, or for any capital improvements necessary to ready the space for its intended use under the VR program, consistent with requirements set forth in 2 CFR part 200.

The availability of community partners (the term used by Vocational Rehabilitation Services and State Services for the Blind in replace of “vendors”) varies by service and location within the state. There are currently over 30 total community partners that SSB contracts with that provide Adjustment To Blindness (ATB) and Employment-Related services. Three of those are facilities that offer comprehensive ATB training with an optional residential component; for purposes of this document, we refer to them as “community rehabilitation programs”.

State Rule allows SSB to utilize the master contracts Vocational Rehabilitation Services (VRS) have developed with community partners as well. This allows SSB customers more service providers to choose from, which is especially needed in greater Minnesota where there are fewer choices. ATB community partners in rural Minnesota are becoming more difficult to access; providers have retired or otherwise left the industry, or they have limited flexibility with scheduling during non-business hours.

With the greater emphasis being placed on transition aged youth, the need for more transition programs has been identified. Contracts have been developed with seven community partners to provide Pre-ETS and transition programs to students. Services are meant to augment work done by school districts with activities on evenings, weekends, and summer breaks. Since October 2015, SSB has contracted with two Adjustment to Blindness training centers to provide transition programs to students. Since October 2019, a third center began offering a modified version of their full/part time comprehensive Adjustment to Blindness training program to better serve students. With our most recent contracting cycle, which began July 1, 2022, we increased our outreach and trainings efforts to encourage all current and new community partners to include Pre-ETS and transition-related services as appropriate. All contracted offerings are reviewed annually to ensure that they continue to meet the needs of the students and are adjusted accordingly.

SSB is experiencing a reduction in the amount of Orientation and Mobility instructors available. We have had a couple retire and one leave us for employment in another state. Although we have an incoming contract, there is not enough potential new community partners to meet our needs. SSB will need to recruit new qualified O&M instructors and will be looking at ways to offer incentives. SSB has also been working to increase service providers that can provide services to our DeafBlind customers. We have recently developed a contract with the Helen Keller National Center for ATB and Employment-Related services and are exploring the possibility of an in state training center.

Due to an almost 25% decrease in adjustment to blindness service providers since COVID, Minnesota Blind SSB has been hiring their own in-house staff to provide some of those services. Specifically, we have hired two rehabilitation teachers, one for the VR program and one for the Older Blind program. Rehabilitation teachers provide training in all things related to independence in the home and community, including product identification, safe cooking and cleaning techniques, etc.

While our rehabilitation teachers do go into people's homes, there is also a need to have our own rehabilitation teaching space at SSB, which would allow for a safe, neutral location and group lessons. This space could also be used by our service providers for the same purpose. In the past, we could use space offered by community centers, churches, libraries, etc. Since the advent of COVID-19, most places have become restrictive to limit the number of additional people in their buildings.

In addition, as a result of the pandemic, a large shift was made towards a hybrid service delivery model. This means offering services through a variety of methods, including virtual. Many of our meetings and trainings with customers, community partners, and council members are either virtual or a combination of virtual and in-person. Our current infrastructure at our 2200 University headquarters does not allow for accessible hybrid meetings, which means our customers and partners do not have as much flexibility in their ability to choose how they receive their services. This means we need to make improvements to our building to allow for flexibility in service delivery, including improving the technology in our conference rooms and making any further adjustments and improvements to the space. Our customer service survey results shows that customers are overwhelmingly satisfied with being able to receive hybrid and virtual services, as transportation is a huge barrier.

(c) Goals, Priorities, and Strategies. Section 101(a)(15) and (23) of the Rehabilitation Act require VR agencies to describe the goals and priorities of the State in carrying out the VR and Supported Employment programs. The goals and priorities are based on (1) the most recent CSNA, including any updates; (2) the State’s performance under the performance accountability measures of section 116 of WIOA; and (3) other available information on the operation and effectiveness of the VR program, including any reports received from the SRC and findings and recommendations from monitoring activities conducted under section 107 of the Rehabilitation Act. VR agencies must—

(1) Describe how the SRC-B and the VR agency jointly developed and agreed to the goals and priorities and any revisions; and

The SRC-B has a standing “Customer Satisfaction and Goals & Priorities Committee” which reviews and makes recommendations regarding customer satisfaction, goals and priorities, and VR effectiveness. The committee reports quarterly to the full SRC-B. In preparing the strategies for the goals and priorities, the SRC-B committees are requested to submit their recommendations to SSB. In 2023, there were no recommendations from the committees to review, and SSB and the Customer Satisfaction and Goals & Priorities Committee jointly developed goals and priorities for the program year 2024. They were presented to the SRC-B at the October 5, 2023, meeting and received a unanimous vote of approval.

(2) Identify measurable goals and priorities in carrying out the VR and Supported Employment programs and the basis for selecting the goals and priorities (e.g., CSNA, performance accountability measures, SRC recommendations, monitoring, other information). As required in section 101(a)(15)(D), (18), and (23), describe under each goal or priority, the strategies or methods used to achieve the goal or priority, including as applicable, description of strategies or methods that—

- (A) Support innovation and expansion activities;**
- (B) Overcome barriers to accessing VR and supported employment services;**
- (C) Improve and expand VR services for students with disabilities, including the coordination of services designed to facilitate the transition of such students from school to postsecondary life (including the receipt of VR services, postsecondary education, employment, and pre-employment transition services); and**
- (D) Improve the performance of the VR and Supported Employment programs in assisting individuals with disabilities to achieve quality employment outcomes.**

The following goals and priorities are established to guide our work in the listed areas. They mirror the overall State Plan vision, goals, and strategies. We recognize that measuring progress and outcomes are essential to knowing how we are doing and to adjust along the way. Each area will have multiple staff and stakeholder participants who will determine what measures to apply so ongoing final reports clearly show results.

- 1. Improve Partnerships. Increase interagency coordination with local and state workforce partners so individuals who are blind, low vision, and DeafBlind and employers have a customer-centric, positive experience no matter which “door” they enter. The basis for this goal/priority is SSB’s Evolve: VR Initiative.
- Implement an outreach and training campaign that increases the relationships and engagement between Community Partners and SSB staff, so customers quickly receive needed services by:
 - 1. Building a Community Partner Search Tool in WF1 so staff can quickly locate service providers.
 - 2. Hosting regularly scheduled Community Partner and WDU staff training sessions that focus on a certain service type and inviting partners who provide that service to introduce themselves and their services.
 - 3. Developing a schedule to regularly engage with Workforce partners to remind and educate them about how best to work with and refer individuals to SSB.
- Develop a universal application and process by:
 - 1. Creating a digital, accessible referral process that quickly and easily connects customers to a WDU staff.

2. Designing an electronic application that is easy to complete and deliver to WDU staff.
2. Increase the Workforce Participation Rate. Build relationships with businesses that lead to career opportunities with family sustaining wages for individuals who are blind, low vision, and DeafBlind. It is recognized that services prior to job placement in the individuals plan may include internships and work opportunities that build a work foundation that leads to meaningful and career path employment. The basis for this goal/priority is SSB's Evolve: VR Initiative.
 - Redesign how we prepare job seekers and connect them with vacancies by implementing the Rapid Placement Model that places customers into their chosen field as quickly as possible by:
 1. Reimagining WDU's employment services model so the framework meets the needs of customers, businesses, and staff
 2. Establishing a system and process that connects customers to vacancies quickly and efficiently
 3. Better utilizing the WF1 Talent Pool page so job leads are easily shared with customers
 4. Engaging fully with E1MN to develop and use relationships with long-term support providers to accelerate customers transition to those supports.
3. Focus on Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility. Create an agency that better meets the needs of the current and emerging workforce, including improving services to new Americans, underrepresented communities, and veterans. The basis for this goal/priority is SSB's Evolve: VR Initiative.
 - Develop new and nurture existing partnerships with entities that represent underserved groups, including:
 - Organizations that serve veterans
 - Communities of color
 - English Language Learners
 - Tribal communities
 - Individuals with severe and persistent mental illness
 - Justice involved
 - Individuals with complex and significant disabilities
 - Immigrants and refugees
4. Marketing Work Ready Individuals to Employers. Identify and implement innovative and evidence-based practices and service-delivery approaches so that individuals

with disabilities have the same opportunities in the labor market as everyone else. The basis for this goal/priority is SSB's Evolve: VR Initiative.

- Utilize all available opportunities to encourage eligible employers to use the Employer Reasonable Accommodation Fund for potential and existing employees with disabilities.
- Develop and launch a public outreach and engagement campaign using multiple modes of communication to broadcast to employers that hiring blind, visually impaired, and DeafBlind people is essential to solving their workforce shortage.
- Create a Rapid and Continuous Engagement framework so customers can begin receiving services quickly and sustain their momentum while they are engaged in services. This framework may include:
 - Rapid Eligibility Model
 - Rapid Assessment Model
 - Continuous Engagement Model
 - Rapid Placement Model

SSB has determined it necessary to engage in activities to establish, develop, or improve facilities for community rehabilitation programs (CRPs) (hereinafter "establishment projects) in the State for the purpose of providing vocational rehabilitation (VR) services to applicants and eligible individuals, as well as pre-employment transition services to students with disabilities who are eligible or potentially eligible for the VR program. These activities will be required to meet our above-described goals and priorities.

For example, due to an almost 25% decrease in adjustment to blindness service providers since COVID, which impacts achieving our goals and strategies, SSB has been hiring their own in-house staff to provide some of those services. Specifically, we have hired two rehabilitation teachers, one for the VR program and one for the Older Blind program. For that reason, infrastructure improvements need to be completed, including a cafeteria remodel into a rehabilitation teaching space, which will allow for better availability to serve customers. This flexibility allows for our customers to receive their services quickly and in a safe environment.

In addition, as a result of the pandemic, a large shift was made towards a hybrid service delivery model. This means offering services through a variety of methods, including virtual. Many of our meetings and trainings with customers, community partners, and council members are either virtual or a combination of virtual and in-person. Our current infrastructure at our 2200 University headquarters does not allow for accessible hybrid meetings, which means our customers and partners do not have as much flexibility in their ability to choose how they receive their services. This means we will need to make improvements to our building to allow for flexibility in service delivery.

- (d) **Evaluation and Reports of Progress: VR and Supported Employment Goals.** For the most recently completed program year, provide an evaluation and report of progress for the goals or priorities, including progress on the strategies under each goal or priority, applicable to that program year. Sections 101(a)(15) and 101(a)(23) of the Rehabilitation Act require VR agencies to describe—
- (1) **Progress in achieving the goals and priorities identified for the VR and Supported Employment Programs;**

2022 – 2023 Goals, Priorities, and Strategies

- (1) **Priority: Competitive Integrated Employment**

Strategies:

- A. Implement a model for coordinating employer services with DEED Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) partners, including:
- Title I- Adult/Dislocated Worker; Youth
 - Title III- Job Seeker Services
 - Title IV- Vocational Rehabilitation Services
 - SSB is working with DEED partners and stakeholders to develop a Client Relationship Management tool. Currently partners are determining the cost to use Minnesota IT for consulting and services and what funding they can commit. Once this is finalized the planning process will begin by identifying partner business and customer needs and how to assemble these into a cohesive product.
 - Monitor the Employer One Stop online virtual hub representing all partners and available services and determine any modifications and adjustments needed to ensure its effectiveness.
 - Monitor the E1MN section of the Disability HUB website for DEED outreach and marketing and determine any modifications and adjustments needed to ensure its effectiveness.

Review:

We have made considerable progress on designing a model for better, more coordinated employer services across our department. For example, we now have regional meetings across DEED divisions related to serving businesses and connecting them with workforce services, including talent recruitment.

There has been unfortunately no progress on the Client Relationship Management (CRM) tool. We also were not able to create the Employer OneStop hub as we envisioned, since the Department put resources were instead put towards improving the CareerForceMN.com

platform. However, we have identified a new avenue to accomplishing both items, which includes leveraging the new labor exchange system that is being designed.

Several partners within DEED expressed interest in obtaining a CRM, such as Salesforce, to better track our contacts with businesses. A few divisions within DEED already had Salesforce, and other divisions did not see the benefit. While it has limits, it is a good tool for tracking the employer relationship side of our work. Instituting a new system across partners, which includes funding agreements and joint policies, is a large-scale effort that requires consensus. While we had Commissioner's Office support, we did not have consensus across all partners. We are undergoing a digital transformation project, which includes a new labor exchange system, and there was fear a CRM would require dual entry. We are now determining if the new labor exchange, which will integrate with CareerForceMN.com, could meet our needs instead. We are confident that the digital transformation work within DEED will result in a system that will allow us to better engage with businesses and track those contacts. In addition, we believe that instead of creating a new system, that once modified, our existing CareerForceMN.com, will act as the hub we envisioned. SSB is on the steering committee for this entire project, which allows us provide input and share feedback.

Under the E1MN initiative with the Departments of Education and Human Services, a process map was developed called the [Engage, Plan, Find, Keep](#) framework, which clarifies roles and determines funding of services for those on Medicaid waivers. [E1MN Training](#) was launched in 2023 to support the E1MN referral and funding decisions for all roles. The Disability Hub Work Toolkit has a section on [Supporting People on Waivers](#) that provides tools and resources to support understanding on the Engage, Plan, Find, Keep framework. The Disability Hub is a premiere website site that is constantly being updated and refreshed. This specific strategy has been successfully completed.

- B. Implement ongoing training, tracking, and oversight of Measurable Skills Gains (MSG) and credential attainment of students to reach negotiated targets.
 - Monitor staff tracking of their customers and input of appropriate documentation by in depth review of staff input of customers MSG's and credentials between enrollment and disenrollment.
 - Ensure accuracy in reporting and validity of the MSGs and credentials claimed.
 - Train staff as needed regarding data fixes necessary for these measures.

Review:

While we have made considerable progress as it relates to reporting on and tracking MSGs and credential attainment, we still have a long way to go. Based on recent data reports from RSA, SSB is below the mean when it comes to our performance rates for these two measures. We

attribute this primarily to incomplete and inaccurate tracking by staff in our case management system.

We have employed several strategies to mitigate this. Our Quality Assurance Specialist does in depth reviews of the MSGs and credentials claimed after each semester, while also flagging staff of potential MSGs that have not yet been claimed. Additionally, multiple reminders are sent as MSG deadlines approach. These reminders include instruction on what needs to be collected as well as links to previous trainings. Throughout the year, additional training is provided to counselors on MSGs and credentials. Our case management system has several reports available to staff that assist in identifying potential MSGs and credentials. However, while these strategies have helped us double our MSG rate from the previous program year, they are not fully resolving the issues we have. This coming year, we will be looking at the following activities:

- Full system integration between our case management system and the National Student Clearinghouse (NSC). We already have access to the NSC data however, it is a manual process and by integrating the data into Workforce One, we can make it automated.
 - Hiring an administrative support specialist to assist the quality assurance specialist in case reviews, which will include fixing data entry errors in the system and tracking down supporting documentation. We will still be communicating those errors to counselors, but we know many of the errors are occurring because counselors are incredibly busy managing their caseloads. This is one small thing we can do to reduce administrative burden and increase our accuracy in reporting.
- C. In coordination with the Advisory Task Force on State Employment and Retention of Employees with Disabilities, develop and implement methods for the hiring and retention of blind, visually impaired, and deafblind customers into state government including using Connect 700 and Supported Worker programs.
- Monitor the recommendation document submitted by the Advisory Taskforce to the Legislative subcommittee. Recommendations included items and proposed statutory changes that will specifically support the hiring and retention of blind, visually impaired, and DeafBlind customers, including:
 - A requirement for all technology and digital content to be accessible and provided in a timely manner;
 - Job posting language to be nondiscriminatory (including not requiring a driver's license when one is not actually needed);
 - Hiring managers are made aware of the state Accommodation Fund;
 - Reasonable accommodations are provided to allow full participation;

- State Services for the Blind and Vocational Rehabilitation Services must be consulted when it comes to any updates or changes to the Connect 700 policy;
- Training of staff on inclusive environments, digital accessibility standards, and the Americans with Disabilities Act.

State Services for the Blind will continue to work with Minnesota Management and Budget to ensure these recommendations are carried out.

Review:

All strategies in this area are considered complete. This past Legislative session put all the Advisory Taskforce recommendations into the applicable statutes, which includes:

- Strengthening state accessibility requirements
- Nondiscriminatory job posting language, including changing the driver’s license requirements to instead say “reliable form of transportation” or equivalent (unless the position is a driving position)
- Better awareness of the Centralized Accommodation Fund
- Consultation with VRS/SSB on changes to the C700 program prior to implementing them
- Mandatory disability training requirements for all levels of staff

The Advisory Taskforce will be reconvening at the start of 2024 to review progress made and conduct oversight on progress made on the above items.

(2) Priority: Internal Controls and Quality Assurance

Strategies:

- A. Enhance the case review process to allow for real time results that can be put in SharePoint and allow for trends and patterns that can shape training and accountability and policy process.

- Case reviews will be conducted by the Quality Assurance specialist.

Review:

As of November 2023, our case review tool has been integrated into our case management system. This allows for a streamlined case review procedure, ability for reviews to be stored in a central location, the option for running reports and more easily identifying trends that can shape future training or inform policy updates and program decisions. Case reviews are conducted monthly by the Quality Assurance specialist, as well as one supervisor on a rotating basis. This strategy is considered successfully completed.

- B. Create a data dashboard to allow for real-time reporting of performance and demographics.
- We will be continuing the work on developing the data dashboard by reviewing existing tools that may be available to meet this need compared to building our own. The expectation is to have completed this project well within the year.

Review:

While we have made some progress in this area, we are not as far along as we wanted to be. Our data analyst went on a one-year extended leave, so we have relied on other department data analysts to assist when they are available. We have, however, been able to work with DEED's Performance and Technical Management division to begin building data dashboards in Power BI. We have one report fully completed, which is the post-pandemic application and successful closure trend report. We have a list of other reports we would like to have in a more comprehensive dashboard, once we have the staffing level to do so. We are in the process of hiring a second data analyst who will have a larger focus on the creation of data dashboards and tools.

(3) Priority: Under-Represented Populations

Strategies:

- Increase minority applicants for vocational rehabilitation services who otherwise would not have applied because of statewide outreach with the minority communities. Use applicant data on race, ethnicity, gender, and religion to measure against closure rates to determine if there are trends in unsuccessful closures among a particular protected class.
- Once measurements are established, an action plan will be developed to identify what gaps exist and how to reduce them.

Review:

We have made considerable progress in our intentional and targeted outreach efforts toward underserved and underrepresented communities; however, we still need to do more. The following activities highlight this progress:

- The State Rehabilitation Council for the Blind (SRC-B) revitalized and renamed the Minority Committee to the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee; this group is tasked with helping SSB reach and serve more individuals from BIPOC communities.
- We added a demographic profile to our customer satisfaction survey so we can track satisfaction by age, gender, race, and ethnicity; satisfaction results show **higher** satisfaction with our services if you are Hispanic/Latino, BIPOC, or DeafBlind.

- We are hiring a second outreach coordinator who will be able to devote time in connecting with those communities who are historically underserved; this includes our Tribal communities.
- Our data shows that we are serving more individual from BIPOC communities than in the past; however, across the board, these communities have higher unsuccessful closures.
- We established a contract with a new orientation and mobility specialist contractor who is fluent in Somali.
- We have launched our Literacy for All campaign in our Communication Center; this means we are offering more accessible materials in languages other than English. We have been able to translate our brochures in multiple languages, both written and via audio. In addition, we are in the early stages of supporting the Language Revitalization efforts through the Minnesota Department of Education, which is an effort to revitalize the Dakota and Ojibwe languages.

A work group was created to investigate applicant and closure data and identify gaps and trends. This group spent a considerable amount of time reviewing historical data from the last 3 to 5 years. They even dug into case notes to determine what led to the unsuccessful closure. Through that considerable amount of research, they identified the biggest area of need had to do with serving new Americans and refugees. DEED is fortunate to have the Office of New Americans, and the work group met with the Assistant Commissioner for that office to learn more about this population, including cultural components.

It was identified that many staff lack cultural awareness, especially when it comes to how we describe our services and the purpose of our program. We also have a significant lack of service providers who know how to bridge the language and cultural barriers, especially when that barrier is partnered with a vision loss or blindness. We are not yet sure what we can do to develop community partners with this skill set, but we are considering the creation of “community liaisons” who can be a cultural bridge between SSB staff and the communities.

All of our staff are receiving ongoing training as it relates to diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility, but this training is geared more towards their employment through the State of Minnesota and less around how to engage with and serve customers. We are considering implementing the ABCs of Cultural Competence to staff, which is a training offered through UA Currents.

(4) Priority: Transition and Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS)

Strategies:

- A. Develop a longitudinal study on all youth (ages 25 and younger) case closures. Identify factors that contribute to successful or unsuccessful outcomes.

- The Transition Subcommittee of the SRC-B has requested the data on case closures specifically for student and youth 25 and under with successful and unsuccessful closures.
- When the data is received, the Transition Subcommittee will evaluate to identify factors that contribute to successful or unsuccessful outcomes.
- Based on the factors we will begin to develop strategies to address how better to ensure successful outcomes.

Review:

These strategies were not implemented, and thus this has not been successfully completed. Due to SSB staffing changes and shifts in leadership of the committee, this work was unable to be started. The committee still plans to move forward with the study once the second SSB data analyst has been hired.

(5) Priority: Staff Training and Development

Strategies:

- A. Provide a comprehensive and structured training curriculum for new employee onboarding and ongoing staff training by the designated trainer.
 - The designated trainer is developing the comprehensive and structured training curriculum for new employee onboarding and ongoing staff training. Expected outcomes are:
 - On boarding and training packages specific to each role that make up the Workforce Development Unit (WDU)
 - An annual training and development schedule for the WDU as a whole and for specific unit roles and functions
 - Acquiring data about training effectiveness and adjusting as needed

Review:

SSB hired a dedicated staff development specialist, who oversees our annual training plan, as well as ad-hoc and on-demand training. Our trainer has improved the existing onboarding training, creating a robust and comprehensive onboarding for all new WDU staff. Counselor and VR-Tech training plans have been created along with plans geared more toward the other roles in WDU and other units that require a less comprehensive training.

The trainer has also created an annual training plan to ensure unit staff are receiving the necessary training to continue to do their work and develop in their roles. This includes monthly counselor only training sessions that focus on topics specific to counselors and provide counselors a venue to collaborate with one another regularly. At times, training topics may be relevant to other unit roles, and the staff in those roles are invited to attend those sessions.

Additionally, there is a training newsletter that goes out weekly and identifies training opportunities that may be valuable to unit staff.

We have been able to procure the YesLMS platform, which houses all of our training. YesLMS puts together content for us, and we can modify the content to meet our needs or upload our own. CEUs are available for many of them.

We have successfully completed this strategy.

- B. Increase the level of awareness of the importance of timely communication with customers in response to customer comments on the Customer Satisfaction Survey (CSS)
- The Customer Outcomes and Goals & Priorities Committee, together with SSB staff, will monitor the frequency of comments on subsequent surveys.
 - SSB staff will investigate other internal controls that could be useful in identifying any communication timeliness problems.

Review:

Each year when the results of the annual customer satisfaction survey are released, SSB leadership reviews each and every comment. While timeliness in communication continues to be a frequently referenced issue, it appears to be targeted towards only one or two specific staff and not the entire work unit. For that reason, we have been able to address those instances on a case-by-case basis. Overall, due to steps we have taken and continue to take to reduce administrative burden on staff, we see less complaints about communication responsiveness. Staff turnover was another major factor in communication timeliness. At one point, we were down several counselors and VR-Techs, and we had a turnover rate of more than 30%. At the time of this review of our goals and priorities, we are almost fully staffed with less than 5% turnover. Caseloads are at an average of 45, and we have no counselor vacancies.

We also have a number of internal controls in place to monitor this on an ongoing basis.

Timely communication in internal controls via caseload reviews

Internal control:

Every caseload review includes the date of the last live contact each customer had with SSB, as well as the date that the next live contact is due by (the 90-day mark) if it's within the next 30 days. The dates under 'Next Live Contact' might be highlighted (or noted for those with a visual impairment) yellow or red - yellow indicating the next live contact due date is coming up within the next month, or red indicating that the due date has passed and we did not make live contact with the customer within 90 days of the last live contact. However, even if a due date is red, a counselor may have still made attempted contacts which is always noted for the counselor and supervisor to see. Any concerns that are identified, including a lot of past due dates *without* attempted contacts, are emailed to the supervisor who is asked to review the report with the counselor.

Trends:

We have not seen any overall trends or changes in this area. Counselors are overall consistent in how much red or yellow they have on their individual caseload reviews, whether that's a lot or none at all.

Timely communication in internal controls via intensive case reviews

Internal control:

Every intensive case review includes reviewing the items listed below:

- Correspondence with customer, vendors and other SSB staff is professional, and responses are sent in a timely manner.
- Counselor maintained contact with customer at least once every 90 days, OR, if customer did not respond to contact attempts, counselor continued to try to engage customer until contact could be made.

Trends:

Counselor review ratings on these items have not included any non-compliant; they are always mostly compliant and most often, compliant ratings.

(2) Performance on the performance accountability indicators under section 116 of WIOA for the most recently completed program year, reflecting actual and negotiated levels of performance. Explain any discrepancies in the actual and negotiated levels; and

Performance Indicators	PY22 Actual SSB	PY22 Actual Combined	PY22 Negotiated
Employment (Second Quarter After Exit)	39%	58%	51.5%
Employment (Fourth Quarter After Exit)	35%	58%	49.6%
Median Earnings (Second Quarter After Exit)	\$7,326.00	\$3,722.50	\$3,411.00
Credential Attainment Rate	34%	44%	31%
Measurable Skill Gains	41%	51%	50.3%

There were no discrepancies identified.

(3) The use of funds reserved for innovation and expansion activities (sections 101(a)(18) and 101(a)(23) of the Rehabilitation Act) (e.g., SRC, SILC).

SSB uses funds reserved for innovation and expansion activities for its State Rehabilitation Council for the Blind (SRC-B). For FFY 2024, the SRC-B has budgeted \$35,730 with the majority of its budgeted line items for Interpreters, Court Reporting and Transcription, council member compensation and travel expenses for SRC-B meetings, and council member conference related expenses including registration and out of state travel expenses. SSB’s council is very active and interested in the state of VR at the local, state and federal level; therefore, funding is budgeted to send at least one to two council members to the spring and fall CSAVR/NCSAB conferences.

STATE REHABILITATION COUNCIL			
FOR THE BLIND FFY 2024			
	FFY2024	FFY 2024	FFY2024
COUNCIL BUDGET	Budgeted	Spent	Balance
410706 Board/Council Member Comp	\$ 6,000	-	\$ 6,000
Conference Per Diem Per 2 Participants x 4 conferences			
411313 Court Reporter & Transcriber	\$ 3,100	-	\$ 3,100
411319 Educational-Instruction Serv	\$ 1,360		\$ 1,360
411601 Travel Expense - In-State (uber, mileage, food)	\$ 1,000	-	\$ 1,000
411602 Living Expense - In-State (hotel only)	\$ 400		\$ 400
411605 Private Auto Mileage In State	\$ 700	-	\$ 700
411701 Travel Expense Out of State (Air,Uber,Mileage & Food)	\$ 5,000	-	\$ 5,000
411702 Living Expense Out of State(hotel)	\$ 4,500	-	\$ 4,500
411705-Private mileage (Out of State)	\$ -	-	\$ -
413001- Awards/Supplies	\$ 350	-	\$ 350

411803 Regist Fees-Conf-Sem Out StP	\$ 4,000	-	\$ 4,000
413006 Food (Not Food Service)	\$ 1,500	-	\$ 1,500
415001 Repair To Equip And Furniture	\$ -		\$ -
430001 Other Purchased Services (Interpreters) including	\$ 7,820	-	\$ 7,820
Veritext - Close Captioning			
430007 Transportation Paid to Vendor	\$ -		
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	\$ 35,730	\$ -	\$ 35,730

(e) Supported Employment Services, Distribution of Title VI Funds, and Arrangements and Cooperative Agreements for the Provision of Supported Employment Services.

(1) Acceptance of title VI funds:

- (A) [check box] VR agency requests to receive title VI funds.
- (B) [ü] VR agency does NOT elect to receive title VI funds and understands that supported employment services must still be provided under title I.

(2) If the VR agency has elected to receive title VI funds, Section 606(b)(3) of the Rehabilitation Act requires VR agencies to include specific goals and priorities with respect to the distribution of title VI funds received under section 603 of the Rehabilitation Act for the provision of supported employment services. Describe the use of title VI funds and how they will be used in meeting the goals and priorities of the Supported Employment program.

Minnesota State Services for the Blind does not elect to receive title VI funds and understands that supported employment services must still be provided under title I.

(3) Supported employment services may be provided with title 1 or title VI funds following placement of individuals with the most significant disabilities in employment. In accordance with section 101(a)(22) and section 606(b)(3) of the Rehabilitation Act, describe the quality, scope, and extent of supported employment services to be provided to individuals with the most significant

disabilities, including youth with the most significant disabilities; and the timing of transition to extended services.

Minnesota State Services for the Blind does not elect to receive title VI funds and understands that supported employment services must still be provided under title I.

Supported employment services promoting the integration of people with the most severe disabilities into employment in Minnesota have become increasingly available. The scope and quality of supported employment services have improved as more entities become aware of the benefits of ongoing employment supports for individuals with the most significant disabilities. The recent implementation of E1MN has provided a more seamless system between waiver and vocational rehabilitation. However, the demand for supported employment exceeds the capacity of systems in Minnesota to provide the necessary extended ongoing employment supports. In addition to the goals for Title VI Part B described in Section N, SSB will continue to engage in capacity building and technical assistance efforts with other state agencies and community service providers. For example, SSB is currently identifying solutions to increase the availability of job coaches, especially job coaches that are available to provide long-term supports. One thing we implemented was an increase to the rates we pay providers. Additionally, SSB hired two in-house job coaches to help supplement the job coaching offered by our providers.

SSB provides up to 24 months of supported employment services, beginning after job placement, to allow the youth to attain job stabilization, prior to the transition to extended services. SSB may provide more than 24 months of supported employment services if the need for additional time is identified in the IPE. SSB may act as the direct extended services provider to a youth with a most significant disability until the youth reaches age 25 or receives 4 years of extended services through the VR agency, whichever occurs first. SSB then arranges for another extended services provider to continue delivering extended services to youth. SSB does not fund or directly provide extended services to individuals who are not youth with most significant disabilities.

When vocational rehabilitation services are completed, a customer transitions to extended services. That transition occurs when the individual achieves the goals set out in their supported employment IPE, when they reach stability on the job, and when a service provider agrees to begin providing the needed ongoing employment supports. In most cases, the transition from vocational rehabilitation services to extended services occurs within three months. In Minnesota, the sources of ongoing support primarily include the counties, community rehabilitation programs, or other private non—profit organizations. SSB provides up to 24 months of supported employment services after job placement, unless additional time is needed for the individual to achieve job stabilization and transition to extended services. SSB may directly provide extended services to youth with most significant disabilities for up to four

years, or until the youth reaches age 25, whichever occurs first. SSB does not provide extended services to individuals who are not youth with disabilities.

- (4) Sections 101(a)(22) and 606(b)(4) of the Rehabilitation Act require the VR agency to describe efforts to identify and arrange, including entering into cooperative agreements, with other State agencies and other appropriate entities in order to provide supported employment services. The description must include extended services, as applicable, to individuals with the most significant disabilities, including the provision of extended services to youth with the most significant disabilities in accordance with 34 CFR 363.4(a) and 34 CFR 361.5(c)(19)(v).**

DEED-VRS/SSB entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the DHS Disability Services Division (DHS-DSD) as of September 23, 2019. The purpose of the MOU was to improve employment services, including the transition to extended services, for individuals with the most significant of disabilities. As highlighted in the MOU, DEED & DHS agreed to work together to align systems so that common customers who receive home and community-based service (HCBS) disability waivers and vocational rehabilitation services (VRS) from DEED-VRS or SSB get seamless and timely supports to make informed choices and meet competitive integrated employment goals.

From these efforts, a model was developed called E1MN (Employment First Minnesota). E1MN works to deliver a seamless and timely employment support system for youth and adults with disabilities so they understand their options and get what they need to achieve and maintain competitive integrated employment. E1MN is led by the State of Minnesota Departments of Education (Career and Technical Education and Special Education), Employment and Economic Development (Vocational Rehabilitation Services and State Services for the Blind) and Human Services (Disability Services Division). E1MN coordinates their work through steering committees for adults (out of school) and youth (in school).

A framework was developed as part of E1MN that describes the continuum of employment services called Engage-Plan-Find-Keep. This framework shows how waiver employment services and supports through Vocational Rehabilitation Services/State Services for the Blind support people at different stages of their path to employment.

<https://disabilityhubmn.org/media/sqsbrsac/e1mn-efpk-framework.pdf>.

The overall strategies of E1MN include:

- Align our systems — policies, programs, funding, providers and roles — to better coordinate services and Employment First approaches.
- Connect partners to solve problems, remove barriers and transform services.
- Use data and information to drive our work and seek continuous improvement.
- Build on existing strengths and great ideas while developing new resources to share.

- Engage with our shared customers and stakeholders to share our work and incorporate their insights.
- Work with local and culturally specific partners to improve and assure access and equity.
- Build a unified voice through shared communications, training and support to foster consistent practices and messages for all stakeholders.
- Support families in setting a positive trajectory for employment and independence for their child.
- Incorporate person-centered tools and practices to help create a common language and experience for our shared customers.

Minnesota State Services for the Blind has several professional/technical contracts with local providers that offer supported employment services, including customized employment and job coaching. There is a goal as part of E1MN to get as many providers as possible to have both a professional/technical contract with DEED-SSB/VRS and a 245(d) license through DHS. That way, the same provider can work with the individual through their entire continuum of employment services (job search, job placement, short-term supports, and long-term extended services). Unfortunately, many providers find the 245(d) license process to be lengthy, confusing, and expensive. In order for our goal to be successful, DHS has been looking at ways to streamline the process in the future.

In addition to what has been described above, Minnesota VRS has a unique state-only funding appropriation to providing ongoing employment supports to individuals with disabilities called the Extended Employment program. SSB eligible customers have been able to take advantage of this available funding if they do not otherwise qualify for waiver-based, long-term employment services (e.g. job coaching).

(f) **Annual Estimates.** Sections 101(a)(15) and 101(a)(23) of the Rehabilitation Act require all VR agencies to annually conduct a full assessment of their resources and ability to serve all eligible individuals before the start of the Federal fiscal year. In accordance with 34 CFR § 361.29(b), annual estimates must include the following projections:

(1) Estimates for next Federal fiscal year—

(A) VR Program; and

Priority Category (if applicable)	No. of Individuals Eligible for Services	No. of Eligible Individuals Expected to Receive Services under VR Program	Costs of Services using Title I Funds	No. of Eligible Individuals Not Receiving Services (if applicable)
-----------------------------------	--	---	---------------------------------------	--

N/A	250	875	\$3,400,000.00	0
-----	-----	-----	----------------	---

(B) Supported Employment Program.

Priority Category (if applicable)	No. of Individuals Eligible for Services	No. of Eligible Individuals Expected to Receive Services under Supported Employment Program	Costs of Services using Title I and Title VI Funds	No. of Eligible Individuals Not Receiving Services (if applicable)
N/A	25	60	\$230,000.00	0

(g) Order of Selection.

[X] The VR agency is **not** implementing an order of selection and all eligible individuals will be served.

Minnesota State Services for the Blind will not be implementing an order of selection.

Pursuant to section 101(a)(5) of the Rehabilitation Act, this description must be amended when the VR agency determines, based on the annual estimates described in description (f), that VR services cannot be provided to all eligible individuals with disabilities in the State who apply for and are determined eligible for services.

(1) For VR agencies that have defined priority categories describe—

(A) The justification for the order;

Minnesota State Services for the Blind will not be implementing an order of selection.

(B) The order (priority categories) to be followed in selecting eligible individuals to be provided VR services ensuring that individuals with the most significant disabilities are selected for services before all other individuals with disabilities; and

Minnesota State Services for the Blind will not be implementing an order of selection.

(C) The VR agency’s goals for serving individuals in each priority category, including how the agency will assist eligible individuals assigned to closed priority categories with information and referral, the method in which the VR agency will manage waiting lists, and the projected timelines for opening priority categories. NOTE: Priority categories are considered open when all individuals in the priority category may be served.

Minnesota State Services for the Blind will not be implementing an order of selection.

- (2) Has the VR agency elected to serve eligible individuals outside of the order of selection who require specific services or equipment to maintain employment?**

[check box] Yes

[x] No

Minnesota State Services for the Blind will not be implementing an order of selection.

- (h) Waiver of Statewideness. The State plan shall be in effect in all political subdivisions of the State, however, the Commissioner of the Rehabilitation Services Administration (Commissioner) may waive compliance with this requirement in accordance with section 101(a)(4) of the Rehabilitation Act and the implementing regulations in 34 CFR 361.26. If the VR agency is requesting a waiver of statewideness or has a previously approved waiver of statewideness, describe the types of services and the local entities providing such services under the waiver of statewideness and how the agency has complied with the requirements in 34 CFR 361.26. If the VR agency is not requesting or does not have an approved waiver of statewideness, please indicate “not applicable.”**

Not Applicable

- (i) Comprehensive System of Personnel Development. In accordance with the requirements in section 101(a)(7) of the Rehabilitation Act, the VR agency must develop and maintain annually a description (consistent with the purposes of the Rehabilitation Act) of the VR agency’s comprehensive system of personnel development, which shall include a description of the procedures and activities the VR agency will undertake to ensure it has an adequate supply of qualified State rehabilitation professionals and paraprofessionals that provides the following:**

(1) Analysis of current personnel and projected personnel needs including—

- (A)** The number and type of personnel that are employed by the VR agency in the provision of vocational rehabilitation services, including ratios of qualified vocational rehabilitation counselors to clients;
- (B)** The number of personnel currently needed by the VR agency to provide VR services, broken down by personnel category; and
- (C)** Projections of the number of personnel, broken down by personnel category, who will be needed by the VR agency to provide VR services in 5 years based on

projections of the number of individuals to be served, including individuals with significant disabilities, the number of personnel expected to retire or leave the field, and other relevant factors.

Personnel Category	No. of Personnel Employed	No. of Personnel Currently Needed	Projected No. of Personnel Needed in 5 Years
Director	1	0	0
Deputy Director	1	0	1
Supervisor	5	0	0
Pre-ETS Coordinator	1	0	0
Rehabilitation Counselor	14	0	10
Pre-ETS Rehabilitation Counselor	3	0	1
Vocational Rehabilitation Technician	11	0	5
Employment Specialist	4	0	1
Pre-ETS Work Opportunities Navigator	2	1	1
Job Coach	2	0	1
Rehabilitation Teacher	1	0	1
Orientation and Mobility Instructor	2	0	1
Assistive Technologist	5	0	1
Data Analyst	1	1	1
Quality Assurance Specialist	1	0	1
Training and Development Specialist	1	0	1
Payer	2	0	1

Fiscal Staff	3	0	1
Outreach Coordinator	2	0	1
Contracts Specialist	2	0	0

(D) Ratio of qualified VR counselors to clients: [1:39]

(E) Projected number of individuals to be served in 5 years: [920]

	PY2018	PY2019	PY2020	PY2021	PY2022
Number Served	913	870	815	834	847
Number Determined Eligible	224	176	191	210	260
Pre-ETS Potentially Eligible	12	17	12	10	10

The projected number of individuals to be served in the 5 years is 920 which would account for approximately a 10% – 20% increase each year, keeping consistent with the previous years. This would put SSB beyond the 913 that was seen in 2018 and is in line with the SSB Evolve: VR Initiate and outreach efforts. The current number of open cases at any given time ranges between 675-690. SSB saw a decrease in the numbers of customers determined eligible and served between 2018 and 2021 due to the COVID-19 Pandemic, then started to see a gradual increase from 2021. SSB is now back to pre-pandemic levels of customers eligible per year approaching pre-pandemic numbers of customers served per year. SSB does not serve a large number of Pre-ETS potentially eligible individuals per year with a current total of 4.

(2) Data and information on personnel preparation and development, recruitment and retention, and staff development, including the following:

(A) A list of the institutions of higher education in the State that are preparing VR professionals, by type of program; the number of students enrolled at each of those institutions, broken down by type of program; and the number of students who graduated during the prior year from each of those institutions with certification or licensure, or with the credentials for certification or licensure,

broken down by the personnel category for which they have received, or have the credentials to receive, certification or licensure.

Institute of Higher Education	Type of Program	No. of Students Enrolled	No. of Prior Year Graduates
University of WI - Stout	Rehab Counseling	15	15
St. Cloud University	Rehab Counseling	21	11

(B) The VR agency’s plan for recruitment, preparation and retention of qualified personnel, which addresses the current and projected needs for qualified personnel; and the coordination and facilitation of efforts between the VR agency and institutions of higher education and professional associations to recruit, prepare, and retain personnel who are qualified, including personnel from minority backgrounds and personnel who are individuals with disabilities.

SSB’s recruitment and retention strategies include the following:

- Participating with the CSAVR Performance and Accountability committee to collectively review data, ideas, and best practices.
- Utilizing the findings from the Penn State study “Recruitment and Retention of State Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors: A Mixed Method Analysis” to inform our problem solving.
- Incorporating the strategies built in to our Evolve VR project as it relates to personnel which is to:
 - A. Develop a job vacancy outreach plan including connections with long-term training grant recipients and higher education programs,
 - B. Implement hiring and referral bonuses,
 - C. Establishing a formal rehabilitation counselor internship program,
 - D. Use our department Innovation Lab to work with counselors and their support staff to reimagine their roles,
 - E. Re-evaluate and redesign the organizational structure to ensure we have the right roles with the right responsibilities to meet the needs of customers and the program, and
 - F. Provide tuition reimbursement for staff interested in getting their bachelors/masters degrees in vocational rehabilitation.

The overarching intent with these strategies is to:

- Foster a program, environment, and culture that talented and qualified professionals seek out and want to work for,
- Design an organizational structure that meets the needs of the program and the people we serve, and
- Restore the vocational rehabilitation counselor role to be a counselor, not a case manager.

(C) Description of staff development policies, procedures, and activities that ensure all personnel employed by the VR agency receive appropriate and adequate training and continuing education for professionals and paraprofessionals:

- i. **Particularly with respect to assessment, vocational counseling, job placement, and rehabilitation technology, including training implemented in coordination with entities carrying out State programs under section 4 of the Assistive Technology Act of 1998; and**
- ii. **Procedures for the acquisition and dissemination of significant knowledge from research and other sources to VR agency professionals and paraprofessionals and for providing training regarding the amendments to the Rehabilitation Act made by the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act.**

[text box]

All WDU staff members new to SSB receive Introduction to Blindness, Visual Impairment, and DeafBlindness —Phase 1 and Phase 2 Training on the essential aspects of blindness and visual impairment within three months of hire. Minnesota statutory language requires all Rehabilitation Counselors to successfully complete a minimum of 6 weeks of intensive training under supervision from an adjustment to blindness center. The 6 weeks of training provides classes in all curriculum areas of the training centers. The curriculum includes training in; Communication Skills including Braille and Assistive Technology Instruction, Travel Training, Independent Living Skills, including techniques of daily living and adaptive leisure instruction, Facilitated Structured Group Discussion on topics centering on the impact of blindness on employment, independent living and social interactions, and Other Optional Training Activities which include achieving a personal goal agreed upon by the participant, their SSB supervisor, and staff of the approved vendor. An example of the specific curriculum includes:

1. Communication Skills.
 - a. Fully understanding the importance and use of uncontracted and contracted Unified English Braille.
 - b. Exposure to the uncontracted Braille alphabet and numbers using a slate and stylus, and orientation to the alphabet with the Perkins Brailier.

- c. Exposure to using speech output and magnification computer programs and devices.
- d. Identify the positives and negatives of various technology packages, what each does, and the functions they carry out, including operating systems, screen readers, magnification, and mobile technology.
- e. Identifying and using the Radio Talking Book and National Library Service play back equipment.
- f. Exposure to alternative methods of communication for DeafBlind individuals.

2. Travel Training.

- a. Understanding the importance and use of the long white cane.
- b. Traveling without assistance using the long white cane in familiar areas, including crossing controlled and uncontrolled intersections.
- c. Using public bus and train transit, if available in the community.
- d. DeafBlind traveling techniques.

3. Independent Living Skills.

- a. Independently place telephone calls.
- b. Using measurement tools and hand and power tools to construct a simple wooden item.
- c. Cleaning techniques which can include sweeping, cleaning furniture, vacuuming, etc.
- d. Telling time using non-sighted techniques (e.g., Braille watch, talking watch).
- e. Identifying coins and bills and using a check writing guide.
- f. Techniques for maintenance of household items.
- g. Managing one's wardrobe including coordinating items, identifying and sorting clothing, maintenance and cleanliness.
- h. Organizing kitchen cupboards and drawers to safely find and identify various cooking ingredients, supplies and utensils.
- i. Preparing meals using basic kitchen tools (e.g., microwave, electric mixer, etc.) and essential food preparation and cooking techniques.
- j. DeafBlind Independent Living Skills.

4. Facilitated Structured Group Discussion.

- a. Participating in discussions with other students and staff on topics centering on blindness, visual impairment, and DeafBlindness and its impact on employment, independent living, and social interactions.

5. Other Optional Training Activities.

- a. Achieving a personal goal agreed upon by the participant, their SSB supervisor, and staff of the approved vendor.

SSB and WDU specific staff also go through six weeks of onboarding after they come back from sleep shade training. Onboarding consists of 6 modules containing a multitude of reading, watching presentations, attending meetings, completing blindness and low-vision specific trainings online, competing activities and passing quizzes. This includes meetings and completing activities with their assigned employment specialist and assistive technologist. They shadow assistive technology specialists to learn more about the work they do with customers. The new employee learns about not only vocational rehabilitation in terms of its history, but also SSB specific policies and procedures through activities, quizzes, and case study. The case study allows them to use their knowledge of the policies and procedures and implement that with a new system many are unfamiliar with called WorkForce One (WF1). This includes reviewing eye reports, uploading documents to the system, writing case notes, calculating Customer Financial Participation (CFP), completing vendor referrals, and more.

New Employee Onboarding Summary:

Module 1:

- Read policy chapters about General Requirements, Information & Referral, Informed Choice, Data Practices, Mandates Reporting and Case Documentation & Record of Service.
- Activities: Upload an accessible document to WF1, understand DRIVE Case Noting Framework, create case notes when given a scenario
- Quizzes: Is this Competitive and Integrated Employment?, Data Practices, Case Documentation

Module 2:

- Read policy chapters about referral, intake, and application, eligibility & OOS, Comprehensive Assessment & IPE Development, Comparable benefits, and Customer Financial Participation (CFP)
- Activities: Complete the “Frank Your Name Here” Case Study: Referral Intake & Application, Eligibility, Comprehensive Assessment & IPE Development, discuss comparable benefits for Frank, complete Frank’s CFP
 - Techs do not complete IPEs. I would go in and create that within the user profile they’re working under.
- Staff Trainer begins scheduling meetings with folks around the office to build the new employees network.

Module 3:

- Read policy chapters about general service provision, other services such as interpretation, maintenance, personal assistance, transportation, vehicle modifications, etc.
- Activities: calculate the cost of school with the Staff Trainer, complete three authorizations in WF1 for ATB, college tuition, and Metro Mobility
- Quizzes: Everything Around Service Provision, CFP and Schooling Quiz
- Staff Trainer continues scheduling meetings with folks around the office to build the new employees network.

Module 4:

- Read policy chapters about Pre-ETS, Translation Services, Subminimum Wage, and Vendor Guidance.
- Activities: Completing a referral for Frank, and leaning more about Pre-ETS by reading the Marc Marcus Case Study and completing an ROI, Pre-ETS authorization, and grade uploading for Marc.
- Staff Trainer continues scheduling meetings with folks around the office to build the new employees network.

Module 5:

- More policy reading.

Module 6:

- Learning about other disabilities and resources, like our WF1 Connect Mobile App, autism, neurodivergence, traumatic brain injuries, etc.

New employees are also asked to meet with their team and read and analyze corresponding policy chapters for each individual on their team to understand how their team works, the responsibilities of those on the teams members, and what individual customers may need from the team at any given time for any customer. In addition to this, a weekly newsletter highlighting upcoming opportunities for internal and external trainings and webinars that relates to vocational rehabilitation, accessibility, health and wellness, etc. external and internal training opportunities is sent to current staff so they can keep up to date on skills, research, and also Certified Rehabilitation Counselor (CRC) continuing education units if they so require. Staff may request, for development purposes, additional or more advanced training activities that will be considered on a case-by-case basis and that reflect organizational needs and resources.

In collaboration with other offices of the Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED), SSB utilizes a collaborative model when looking at employee performance and creates a dialogue between supervisor and staff. Together, they create goals for the upcoming year and put plans into place that will help the individual reach those goals. A final component is completing a review of any essential professional and employment-related

training that is either desired by the employee or required by the employer. Ongoing in-service training offerings give employees a wide variety of options for enhancing and improving skills. This new DEED department wide initiative calls for employee led Individual Development Plans (IDP) that are organized into two main categories: Skills and Professional Development, and Inclusive customer Service (for employees) or Inclusive Leadership (for people leaders).

WDU Annual Training Plans are developed and updated every year in August to prepare for ideas and trainings to have for the next year. They include ideas for the WDU Quarterly Meetings, online accessible training platform YesLMS, and Counselor-Only Training Sessions (COTS). Future areas of focus for training include:

- Supported Decision Making
- Person-Centered Practices
- APH ConnectCenter
- HIPAA and Customer Confidentiality
- Readyng an Eye Report (COTS)

The Counselor-Only Training Sessions (COTS) are held monthly with varying scheduled topics, speakers, or dedicated time for Counselors to connect and help each other and share resources. The COTS are informal and an excellent teach building opportunity. WDU Quarterly Meetings are held 3-4 times per year with varying topics including speakers, WDU updates, new employee introductions, etc. All WDU staff are expected to attend the meetings or review the recordings which are posted to the unit's SharePoint site.

Additional DEED Human Resources requires mandatory annual trainings for all employees. Some employees may be asked to complete additional trainings based on their role or leadership authority. Most employees complete the following trainings:

- Code of Ethics
- Appropriate Use of Electronic Communications
- Prohibition of Harassment and Discrimination
- Security Awareness
- Preventing Sexual Harassment
- Workplace Violence
- Acknowledgements:
 - Code of Ethics
 - Mobile Device Use Policy
- Workplace Violence Prohibited Policy

In 2021 the WDU created a full-time staff training position to develop accessible online training curriculum to ensure staff understand and apply federal and state policies, agency expectations and standards, and strategic goals and initiatives. The trainer modified existing curriculum to meet the needs for on-boarding new staff, addressing ongoing training and development needs

of staff requiring remedial or corrective training, and facilitation of unit wide training sessions on a regular basis. The trainer is utilizing SharePoint and other electronic methods for sharing on-going information and opportunities for staff development through other available resources. SSB's accessible electronic training platform, YesLMS, is an example of a resource available to staff where free optional or required training can be accessed. In addition, staff use the policy management system, DocTract, for reading policies during onboarding, for ongoing training, and whenever they need to reference policies and procedures. We expect this outcome will result in stronger foundational competencies for new staff and overall higher levels of consistency and application of program requirements and service provision.

SSB has begun collaborating with Vocational Rehabilitation Services (VRS) to provide training to staff and Community Partners to ensure staff are aware of best practices in the VR and blindness education fields. Agency combined trainings on the new E1MN initiate and E1PBA was an example of this new higher level of collaboration with VRS.

SSB collaborates with technology vendors who provide demonstrations to staff on new products and devices. SSB assistive technology specialist are encouraged to attend assistive technology conferences so they may stay current on the latest technology available in the field and share that knowledge with other SSB staff. Additionally, SSB has a Technology Resource Lab that is kept up to date with current technology so that customers and staff can have hands on experience with it.

SSB is also very fortunate to have a library within our Department of Employment of Economic Development (DEED). Specialized library services provide SSB and VRS with a weekly *DEED Library Alert* which is a service to inform staff of news, research and developments of interest.

- (3) Description of VR agency policies and procedures for the establishment and maintenance of personnel standards consistent with section 101(a)(7)(B) to ensure that VR agency professional and paraprofessional personnel are adequately trained and prepared, including—**
 - (A) Standards that are consistent with any national or State-approved or -recognized certification, licensing, registration, or other comparable requirements that apply to the profession or discipline in which such personnel are providing VR services; and**
 - (B) The establishment and maintenance of education and experience requirements, in accordance with section 101(a)(7)(B)(ii) of the Rehabilitation Act, to ensure that the personnel have a 21st century understanding of the evolving labor force and the needs of individuals with disabilities.**

Policies and procedures are in place relating to the establishment and maintenance of standards to ensure personnel needed by SSB are appropriately and adequately prepared and trained. Such policies and procedures, including negotiated labor agreements with exclusive bargaining representatives, also cover the selection, retention, development, and termination of staff employed by SSB, and includes requirements of State law concerning the classification of SSB positions by Minnesota Management and Budget.

The academic degree standard for a vocational rehabilitation counselor at SSB is the Master's degree in rehabilitation counseling or a closely related field, with graduate-level coursework in each of the following: theories and techniques of counseling; medical/psycho-social aspects of disability; assessment; and occupational information or job placement.

SSB works closely with its Human Resources to ensure only those individuals who have earned a Master's degree in rehabilitation counseling, or a closely related field, qualify for placement on eligible lists for rehabilitation counselor. Therefore, all counselors fully meet the position standard and SSB does not have any expenditures for staff training to obtain a graduate degree in rehabilitation counseling. SSB does not anticipate any factors that would adversely affect the ability to hire qualified staff.

SSB does not require Certified Rehabilitation Counselor (CRC) certification; however several staff have obtained and maintain this credential. Management recognizes the importance of professional affiliations and provides in-house and external opportunities for training with CRC continuing education units available.

New employees come to SSB with a variety of knowledge, skills and abilities. Nearly all need SSB to provide them with additional information and training to ensure they have the tools and resources to do their job. Minnesotans expect SSB to be “experts” in the field of blindness, low vision and DeafBlindness. We are the one public organization providing such services. Therefore, SSB has an obligation to train staff on the essential aspects of blindness, visual impairment, and DeafBlindness. To meet that expectation, SSB has a comprehensive training program consisting of:

- Introduction to Blindness, Visual Impairment, and DeafBlindness —PHASE I. Responsibilities of SSB staff do vary, but there are minimum requirements for all positions and are part of this course which is required of all new employees.
- Introduction to Blindness, Visual Impairment, and DeafBlindness —PHASE II. “Under the blindfold” and with simulators are training activities which will be required of some new staff as determined by SSB management.
- Continuing Education in Blindness, Visual Impairment, and DeafBlindness —PHASE III. Training consists of specialized and ongoing training related to blindness and vision loss and will be required of staff as determined by SSB management.

SSB ensures that personnel understand the evolving labor force. Minnesota’s Labor Market Information Office within the Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED) collects employment, wage and industry information from throughout the state, then analyzes

it to provide information employers and others can use to make decisions and plan. SSB uses the Labor Market Information Office to provide labor market training to its personnel. Other opportunities exist for staff to participate in such as area or city specific Business Engagement Networks or other specialized trainings.

(4) Method(s) the VR agency uses to ensure that personnel are able to communicate in appropriate modes of communication with or in the native language of applicants or eligible individuals who have limited English speaking ability.

SSB assures that all materials are available to staff in the desired format. Print material is made available to staff in braille and other alternate formats such as print in native language, large print, and electronic. SSB is fortunate to have Braille and Audio services onsite and can produce high quality Braille and digital recordings in short timeframes. Minnesota is also fortunate to have several spoken and written language transcription services as well as American Sign Language and Tactile Sign Language interpreter services available who contract with the State for use with non-English speaking individuals and/or DeafBlind individuals. Communication Access Real-time Translation (CART) services is another available option through state contract to ensure communication access.

(5) As appropriate, describe the procedures and activities to coordinate the designated State unit's comprehensive system of personnel development with personnel development under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.

- SSB regularly provides optional and required in house staff training in the areas of Pre-ETS and working with youth to ensure all staff receive appropriate and adequate training and continuing education including any additional guidance provided by RSA. Additional training opportunities outside of SSB are encouraged and supported.
- Counselors may be asked to make presentations at staff meetings in areas of their expertise which included DeafBlind best practices, person centered services, motivational interviewing, and transition best practices.
- SSB employment, assistive technology, and counseling staff work with other Minnesota state departments on the hiring and integration into their workplaces of blind, visually impaired, and DeafBlind individuals as part of achieving Minnesota Governor's executive order for increasing the number of employees with disabilities in the state government workforce.
- SSB staff provided training to educators on the Employment First Minnesota (E1MN) initiative, which activate interagency collaboration for student success.
- SSB staff participated in monthly trainings for educators through state-wide communities of practice, Minnesota Access Center Office Hours, (sponsored by Minnesota Department of Education), regional meetings hosted by regional low-incidence facilitators, and other state-wide professional conferences and workshops.

- SSB has a Pre-ETS resources toolkit for counselors state-wide. The toolkit lists specific resources in each of the five required Pre-ETS activities.
- SSB collaborates with Work-Based Learning Coordinators to better align the schools' work planning and the vocational rehabilitation program.
- The Work Opportunity Navigators will train and consult with employers to provide guidance about adding student interns and workers who may be blind, visually impaired, and Deafblind to their workforce.

COOPERATION, COLLABORATION, AND COORDINATION (Section 101(a)(11) of the Rehabilitation Act)

- (j) **Coordination with Education Officials. In accordance with the requirements in section 101(a)(11)(D) of the Rehabilitation Act—**
- (1) **Describe plans, policies, and procedures for coordination between the designated State agency and education officials responsible for the public education of students with disabilities, that are designed to facilitate the transition of the students with disabilities from the receipt of educational services in school to the receipt of vocational rehabilitation services, including pre-employment transition services.**

Technical Assistance and Consultation DEED's VRS and SSB and MDE's Special Education and Career and College Success staff will provide technical assistance and consultation regarding these five required pre-employment transition services made available to students with disabilities who need them in grade nine until the 22nd Birthday statewide:

- Job exploration counseling to assist students with disabilities in understanding their work related strengths and interests and what career possibilities there are;
- Work-based learning experiences, which may include in-school or after school opportunities, or experience outside the traditional school setting (including internships), that is provided in an integrated environment in the community to the maximum extent possible;
- Counseling on opportunities for enrollment in comprehensive transition or postsecondary educational programs at institutions of higher education;
- Workplace readiness training to develop social skills and independent living; and
- Instruction in self-advocacy (including instruction in person-centered practices), which may include peer mentoring (including peer mentoring from individuals with disabilities working in competitive integrated employment).

Partnership with SECCSD DEED's VRS and SSB and MDE's Special Education and Career and College Success Divisions agree to share responsibility for ensuring that schools are aware of and how to use the tools to support students with disabilities to receive current information about their strengths, interests and preferences in order to make informed choices about competitive integrated employment prior to leaving school. DEED's VRS and SSB and MDE's Special Education and Career and College Success Divisions agree to share responsibility for ensuring that schools which serve students with disabilities receive information about the benefits of providing career information.

MSIC Coordinated services for youth in special education Minnesota law mandates a coordinated system of services for youth, birth to the 22nd Birthday, who are involved in special education. The Minnesota System for Interagency Collaboration (MnSIC) was formed to develop and implement this system. SSB staff participate on subcommittees that develop service strategies for students and recommendations for governance and coordination of state and local collaborative efforts.

CTIC Approximately 70 local CTICs promote statewide interagency coordination to remove system barriers and expand community services. CTICs include parents, students, advocacy groups, local businesses, county government, post— secondary education, vocational education, community education, corrections, SSA health care, and other local service providers. SSB staff serve on CTICs, thereby helping to improve and expand vocational services that result in employment outcomes.

Serving all public, private, and charter high schools in Minnesota SSB counselors are active participants on transition planning teams so that each eligible or potentially eligible student with a disability can access VR services. DEED's VRS and SSB counselors attend meetings for the development of Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) when invited. Counselors will use the IEPs with students to assist in developing the individualized plans for employment (IPE).

Outreach Outreach efforts include working with school nurses, guidance counselors, case managers, principals, social workers, 504 personnel, community agencies and work experience coordinators to identify students with disabilities who are not in special education programs. For SSB, connecting with students through teachers of the blind and visually impaired is a primary way to ensure that we are serving students. A referral of all potentially eligible students is sought as soon as possible so that employment services can begin well before the student leaves school.

Assistive Technology On an annual basis, the MDE Assistive Technology Steering Committee submits a request for technology to SSB for the MDE lending library. This lending library is located at the Minnesota State Academy for the Blind and is available for transition-aged

students who are blind, low vision, or DeafBlind to use as part of their pre-employment transition services. In addition, when a student with a disability transitions into a work environment or postsecondary program, SSB may purchase any assistive technology device that the SSB's former school district purchased on the child's behalf.

- (2) Describe the current status and scope of the formal interagency agreement between the VR agency and the State educational agency. Consistent with the requirements of the formal interagency agreement pursuant to 34 CFR 361.22(b), provide, at a minimum, the following information about the agreement:**
 - (A) Consultation and technical assistance, which may be provided using alternative means for meeting participation (such as video conferences and conference calls), to assist educational agencies in planning for the transition of students with disabilities from school to post-school activities, including pre-employment transition services and other vocational rehabilitation services;**
 - (B) Transition planning by personnel of the designated State agency and educational agency personnel for students with disabilities that facilitates the development and implementation of their individualized education programs (IEPs) under section 614(d) of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act;**
 - (C) The roles and responsibilities, including financial responsibilities, of each agency, including provisions for determining State lead agencies and qualified personnel responsible for transition services and pre-employment transition services;**
 - (D) Procedures for outreach to and identification of students with disabilities who need transition services and pre-employment transition services. Outreach to these students should occur as early as possible during the transition planning process and must include, at a minimum, a description of the purpose of the vocational rehabilitation program, eligibility requirements, application procedures, and scope of services that may be provided to eligible individuals;**
 - (E) Coordination necessary to satisfy documentation requirements set forth in 34 CFR part 397 regarding students and youth with disabilities who are seeking subminimum wage employment; and**
 - (F) Assurance that, in accordance with 34 CFR 397.31, neither the SEA nor the local educational agency will enter into a contract or other arrangement with an entity, as defined in 34 CFR 397.5(d), for the purpose of operating a program under which youth with a disability is engaged in work compensated at a subminimum wage.**

Vocational Rehabilitation Services (VRS), State Services for the Blind (SSB), and Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) have a memorandum of understanding (MOU) to achieve better coordination between schools and VR services and to create a bridge from the school to VRS or SSB prior to school exit. The intent of the agreement is to:

- Provide consultation and technical assistance to Local Education Agencies (LEAs) in planning for the transition of students with disabilities from school to post-school activities including postsecondary education, training, competitive integrated employment and independent living.
 - Provide secondary transition planning by personnel of DEED alongside secondary special education and career and college readiness staff through the delivery of pre-employment transition services and vocational rehabilitation services under the Rehabilitation Act and transition services under the IDEA.
 - Define the roles and responsibilities, including financial responsibilities, of each agency, including provisions for pre-employment transition services, vocational rehabilitation services and IDEA transition services.
 - Designate procedures for outreach to and identification of students with disabilities who are in need of pre-employment transition services and/or vocational rehabilitation services. Outreach to students should occur as early as age 14.
 - Outline services and documentation requirements set forth in section 511 of the Rehabilitation Act, as added by the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), with regard to youth with disabilities who are seeking subminimum wage employment.
 - Provide assurance that neither the SEA nor the LEA will enter into an arrangement with an entity holding a special wage certificate under section 14(c) of the Fair Labor Standards Act for the purpose of operating a program under which a youth with a disability is engaged in work at a subminimum wage.
- (k) Coordination with Employers. In accordance with the requirements in section 101(a)(11)(E) of the Rehabilitation Act, describe how the VR agency will work with employers to identify competitive integrated employment and career exploration opportunities in order to facilitate the provision of VR services; and transition services for youth and students with disabilities, including pre-employment transition services for students with disabilities.**

SSB works with employers to identify employment and career exploration opportunities in competitive and integrated settings. SSB has four employment specialists who work with employers to identify their needs in finding, attracting, and retaining an inclusive workforce. Employment specialists partner with employers to find qualified candidates, as well as provide education on creating a diverse workforce, worksite analysis, training on disability employment-related topics, identifying improvements to promote inclusive hiring practices, providing information and referrals to other title partners, and job retention services for employees with a vision loss.

SSB employment specialists routinely attend and develop networking events to promote disability awareness and inclusivity training as well as provide resources and technical assistance to employers in Minnesota and nationwide. SSB staff presented to State of Minnesota agency senior leadership and national and regional company leaders on the advantages of hiring people who are blind, visually impaired, and DeafBlind. SSB provided business services to recruit, onboard, and retain individuals with disabilities to multinational, national, and local employers. Education to employers includes how to recruit, onboard, and retain qualified candidates by creating and maintaining an inclusive and disability-friendly workplace through services like worksite assessments, resources, and technical assistance like on-site accessibility testing of employer computer systems and data bases in addition to information accessibility support, at no charge. Providing these services to businesses helps support relationships with employers and enhance the exchange of labor market information to assist in the development of individual plans for employment and self-employment decision making.

SSB actively participates and provides leadership and guidance to local and national groups devoted to connecting employers to qualified individuals with disabilities in cooperation with other DEED entities and title partners related directly to services to businesses. This is done through the Council of State Administrators of Vocational Rehabilitation (CSAVR) and the CSAVR National Employment Team (NET), Statewide Business Engagement Networks (BENs), Chambers of Commerce, national self-employment networking and policy-making groups, and Disability: IN. In return, the state provides advance communication of employment opportunities, improved communications about the State's employment processes, assistance with mock interviews, and training to improve candidate performance in the hiring process. Various partners participate in career fairs, community outreach events, job information sessions, training sessions, resource sharing, and more. SSB staff routinely partner with other State of Minnesota agencies to provide training and modules for employers statewide. This includes partnering with the Department of Labor's Apprenticeship Office, America's Job Center, and other title partners. SSB staff participated in the development of online virtual learning modules available to all employers statewide on Minnesota's America's Job Center labor exchange website, titled Bite Sized Learning Modules. These modules are specific to employers and were developed following a period of input from Minnesota businesses.

The NET through CSAVR is comprised of one point of contact for each of the 78 rehabilitation programs nationwide. The sole purpose of this team is to connect with employers on a national level including private employers and federal partners. The NET enables SSB to connect with new employers monthly and receive correspondence and job leads from twelve or more employers each month. Each year SSB has customers hired by employers through NET employer connections. SSB also frequently acts as the subject matter expert and resource for other state programs that connect directly to employers across Minnesota. SSB utilizes the relationships with these business partners to supplement the efficiency of contracted

Community Rehabilitation Providers, giving more than six one-on-one presentations with employers last year.

The Pre-ETS and transition team at State Services for the Blind is comprised of a Pre-ETS and Transition Program Manager, VR counselors specializing in Pre-ETS and transition, a Pre-ETS and Transition Coordinator, Work Opportunities Navigators specifically serving students and youth, an assistive technologist, support staff, and additional specialists, including Orientation and Mobility instructors and job coaches (these specialists serve students and adults).

SSB has implemented a model for transition called BRIDGE to Success that is implemented with all eligible and potentially eligible transition students. BRIDGE encapsulates SSB's philosophy upon which our youth services are built. BRIDGE stands for:

- Basic Skills
- Role Models
- Initiative
- Discovery
- Goal Setting
- Experiences

In particular, our team connects with employers to provide job exploration counseling and work-based learning experiences.

Job exploration counseling: SSB's Work Opportunity Navigators reach out to community employers to identify job shadows and job tours to facilitate career exploration for students. SSB's Pre-ETS and Transition Coordinator facilitates a Career Expo event, where blind, low vision, and deafblind employees from various sectors of the workforce come together and network with students about their journey to employment and working in the community. SSB staff connect with employers to gain an understanding of what occupations needs are open in their business and network to match students with employers for informational interviews. Work Opportunity Navigators bring students into businesses to talk with employers and to network with employers by learning about job openings and community occupations in demand while coaching students on networking and professionalism skills needed when approaching potential employers.

Work-based learning experiences: Transition Navigators connect with employers to identify work opportunities that are available for students. SSB's transition team connects students with regional work programs, such as Step Up for students in Minneapolis and BrookLynk for students in the northwest metro. Students work with internal SSB staff and community rehabilitation providers to engage in work experiences from volunteering to obtaining internships. Work Opportunities Navigators, Pre-ETS and Transition Coordinator, and counselors compile a list of summer internship opportunities in the community and then

conduct targeted outreach to students who qualify for various opportunities. SSB staff let students know about the opportunities as well as assists with applications.

SSB Work Opportunity Navigators support students through orientation and training when work opportunities are developed. SSB staff engage in the interactive process between students and employers to help address and problem-solve accessibility barriers that may present in the workplace to ensure student success and employer understanding of how to accommodate and work with the strengths of students. For example, SSB has two in-house job coaches who connect with employers to provide workplace readiness training and job coaching when a need arises during a work-based learning experience. For students who need more frequent support, SSB works with community partners to authorize for those services. SSB staff connect with managerial staff to check in and follow up after work experiences are underway to ensure student success and development throughout work experiences.

SSB participates in Project SEARCH, which is a business led collaboration that enables young adults with disabilities to gain and maintain employment through training and career exploration.

A 9–12-month program, Project SEARCH provides total immersion in a large community business. Students with disabilities are offered a workforce alternative for their last year of high school.

The Project SEARCH partnership includes a local host business, a school, VRS/SSB, a Community Service Provider and a disability services agency. The business provides an on-site training classroom, business liaison and rotational internships for on the job training. The school provides an instructor and job skills trainer(s).

(I) Interagency Cooperation with Other Agencies. In accordance with the requirements in section 101(a)(11)(C) and (K), describe interagency cooperation with and utilization of the services and facilities of agencies and programs that are not carrying out activities through the statewide workforce development system to develop opportunities for community-based employment in integrated settings, to the greatest extent practicable for the following:

(1) State programs (designate lead agency(ies) and implementing entity(ies)) carried out under section 4 of the Assistive Technology Act of 1998;

The Minnesota STAR (System of Technology to Achieve Results) Program, a program within the Minnesota Department of Administration, is funded by the Department of Health and Human Services in accordance with the Assistive Technology Act of 1998, as amended. SSB often refers people to STAR for a device demonstration. This allows customers to compare benefits and features of a particular device or category of devices. Once a decision on a device is made, the person can borrow the device for 30 days to make sure it meets their needs before SSB purchases the item. SSB and VRS has an executed Memorandum Of Understanding (MOU) with STAR to provide assistive technology specialists with commonly used devices for use in doing assessments with customers. During this next Combined State

Plan period, there is a plan to update and refresh the MOU, as it has been some time since that has last been done.

(2) Programs carried out by the Under Secretary for Rural Development of the Department of Agriculture;

There currently is no formalized working relationship between the Department of Agriculture and State Services for the Blind. The Minnesota USDA Rural Development Office does use technical economic and forecasting information provided by DEED to develop and market its services.

(3) Non-educational agencies serving out-of-school youth;

SSB does not have any cooperative agreements with agencies serving out-of-school youth.

(4) State use contracting programs;

Since the mid-1990s, Minnesota state agencies have been legislatively encouraged to purchase goods and services from small businesses operated by individuals with disabilities. In 2007, the Legislature enacted a set-aside program, providing that 19 percent of the total value of all state janitorial contracts be awarded to community rehabilitation organizations approved by VRS as service providers under the VRS Extended Employment Program. During the 2010 legislative session, the set-aside program was expanded to include document imaging, document shredding, mailing, collating, and sorting services. Further, the amount of each contract awarded under this section may exceed the estimated fair market price for the same goods and services by up to 6 percent. SSB has utilized these contracting programs in the past when we transitioned to an entirely electronic system and required mass document scanning, collating, and shredding services.

(5) State agency responsible for administering the State Medicaid plan under title XIX of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1396 et seq.);

The State Medicaid plan under Title XIX of the Social Security Act; Medical Assistance, the state's Medicaid program, is administered by the DHS Disability Services Division (DHS-DSD). Vocational Rehabilitation Services (VRS) and State Services for the Blind (SSB) collaborate closely with DHS in the provision of services for individuals who are on home and community based waivers. In September 2019, DHS-DSD, VRS, and SSB signed a Memorandum of Understanding. The terms of the MOU are specific to individuals on a Medicaid waiver who are interested in competitive, integrated employment. Employment First and Person-Centered principles form the basis of the shared vision for how DEED-VRS/SSB and the Medicaid agency agree to provide employment services for people with disabilities in a coordinated manner.

The purpose of the MOU and interagency cooperation is to align systems so that common customers – those who receive home and community-based service disability waivers and vocational rehabilitation services from VRS or SSB – can get seamless and timely supports to make informed choices and meet their competitive integrated employment goals. Implementation of the MOU agreements began July 1, 2021. DEED-VRS/SSB and the Medicaid agency developed communication, stakeholder involvement, training and resources prior to launch to ensure understanding of the responsibilities for each party supporting the person on a Medicaid waiver. Under the MOU, the following coordination of services occurs:

Payment of Services DEED-VRS/SSB is the primary payer for job-related services (services supporting job development, placement and employment stability) for common customers. Once employment stability is established, DHS-DSD will continue to pay for long-term supports to maintain employment for customers of all ages. DHS-DSD will also pay for services that assist people in making informed choices and developing informed employment goals.

Interagency Planning and Policy Development DHS-DSD and VRS/SSB will use strategic planning, troubleshooting, consultation and technical assistance to ensure successful implementation of this agreement. Key areas include goal setting, systems development, coordination of services, quality assurance, data and stakeholder involvement. We will:

- Meet as an interagency steering committee to provide MOU oversight, set goals, review program services and financing options, identify promising practices and resolve disputes
- Support program liaisons from VRS/SSB and DHS-DSD to coordinate joint efforts in communication, quality assurance, training, and coordination of services, policies and procedures
- Create work groups as needed to provide advice and share expertise regarding practice enhancements
- Hold periodic staff meetings across agencies to ensure coordinated communication and address policy issues
- Establish an advisory committee that includes stakeholders from VRS/SSB, DHS-DSD, lead agency, and providers of both vocational rehabilitation services and waiver services to discuss progress and challenges with the MOU
- Jointly meet with stakeholders to collect feedback and identify areas for improvement
- Understand employment outcomes in our respective programs and develop a shared understanding of outcome measures and reporting procedures

- Promote the use of evidence-based practices and/or promising approaches to create a more closely aligned employment service system, increase quality and gather shared data on employment outcomes
- Identify common customers and practices that support positive employment outcomes

Eligibility, Referrals, and Customer Flow DEED-VRS/SSB and DHS will continue to implement and refine the processes and practices developed under the Engage, Plan, Find, Keep framework. This includes promoting regional and local collaboration, E1MN training curriculum, and the tools and resources to support this work on the Disability HUB work toolkit.

Service Provider Networks DEED-VRS/SSB and DHS will continue to work together to increase our statewide, shared network of employment service providers to improve access, support seamless transitions, and expand individuals' choices to high quality employment services. As part of this work, we agree to:

- Evaluate strategies for a common employment service provider pool. We will continue to explore options for creating a shared job search service provider pool to support seamless service delivery and prevent unnecessary interruptions as people move between supports funded by VRS/SSB and supports funded by DHS-DSD.
- Encourage dual enrollment of employment service providers. While DHS and DEED will continue to maintain separate employment service provider licensure/accreditation standards, we will make it easier for providers to understand our respective standards and develop strategies to provide ongoing communication and technical assistance to those interested in enrolling.
- Align and streamline process and efforts. We will explore opportunities to better align and streamline each agency's business processes and requirements to create consistency and efficiencies for dually enrolled employment service providers.
- Coordinate communications and training. We will coordinate service provider communications and training to maintain consistent messaging and increase understanding of each agency's respective system and the shared customer flow outlined in this agreement.
- Measure and promote provider performance. We will explore methods to assess and provide information on service provider performance to people with disabilities and their families to support informed selection of service providers.
- Develop new providers. We will analyze data, set goals and collaborate on the development of employment service providers in underserved populations and areas of the state.

(6) State agency responsible for providing services for individuals with developmental disabilities;

The primary Minnesota agency responsible for services for individuals with developmental disabilities is the Department of Human Services (DHS).

In Minnesota, the Governor's Council on Developmental Disabilities serves to advocate for all persons with developmental disabilities by carrying out activities in major areas of emphasis.

Minnesota's Olmstead Plan supports freedom of choice and provides a framework and a series of key activities that must be achieved to ensure Minnesotans with disabilities have opportunities to live, learn, work, and enjoy life in the most integrated setting desired by the person. Former Governor Mark Dayton appointed an Olmstead Subcabinet to develop and implement this plan. The Subcabinet consists of representatives of the MnSIC agencies listed above, the Housing Finance Agency, the Department of Transportation, the ombudsman for mental health and developmental disabilities, and the executive director of the Governor's Council on Developmental Disabilities.

(7) State agency responsible for providing mental health services;

The Minnesota Department of Human Services (DHS) is responsible for coordinating mental health services for adults and youth. Minnesota's Mental Health system is a state mandated, county operated system. The State Mental Health Authority is responsible for ensuring that Minnesota's 87 counties, the local mental health authority, provide an array of community mental health services including: basic clinical services, community services and supports, hospitalization and residential treatment. Funding for Minnesota's mental health system comes from health care insurance, including Medicaid, private insurance and MinnesotaCare, as well as county local tax levy funds, state mental health funds and Federal Block grant funds. Minnesota's Mental Health and Drug and Alcohol Divisions merged to provide a combined state administration for adult and children's mental health and alcohol and drug abuse. The emphasis is on moving to integrated care approaches.

(8) Other Federal, State, and local agencies and programs outside the workforce development system; and

Following is a discussion of State Services for the Blind's collaborative arrangements with federal, state and local agencies and with private entities that are not formal components of the statewide workforce investment system.

Olmstead Subcabinet The Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED) is active on the Governor's subcabinet to implement the Olmstead Plan that was approved by the U.S. District Court on September 29, 2015. The subcabinet "embraces the Olmstead

decision as a key component of achieving a better Minnesota for all Minnesotans and strives to ensure Minnesotans with disabilities will have the opportunity, both now and in the future, to live close to their families and friends, to live more independently, to engage in productive employment and to participate in community life" (2013 vision statement). The employment section of the plan listed two population-level indicators: 1) Increase the employment rate of persons with disabilities so it is comparable to the employment rate of persons without disabilities and 2) Increase the employment earnings of persons with disabilities so they are comparable to the earnings of persons without disabilities.

Disability Agency Forum SSB is an active member of the Disability Agency Forum, which is a group of small disability organizations throughout Minnesota. Representation includes Commission for Deaf/HOH/DB, Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services, Minnesota Council on Disability, Governor's Council on Developmental Disabilities, STAR, Office of Accessible Technology, Olmstead Implementation Office, and SSB.

Technically Accessibility Advisory Committee SSB provides representation on the TAAC, which is a group that assists with the accessibility of technology throughout the State of Minnesota.

Minnesota Council on Disability SSB provides ex-officio membership to the Minnesota Council on Disability (MCD). MCD's mission is to serve people with disabilities in Minnesota through development of effective policy, training, technical resources and collaborations with public and private stakeholders. Their vision is "a barrier-free Minnesota where every person with a disability has full access to all aspects of life."

Statewide Independent Living Council. SSB is an ex-officio member of the SILC. The Minnesota Statewide Independent Living Council (MNSILC) provides statewide planning and policies necessary to provide independent living services to people with disabilities.

Cooperative agreements with the White Earth Nation Tribal VR program and the Red Lake Nation Tribal VR program VRS and SSB provide information, technical assistance, training opportunities, and support to the state's two tribal VR programs. A formal process is in place for referral and transfer of cases in accordance with best practices ensuring choice. Although not a part of the formal written agreement, the Social Security Administration's Area Work Incentive Coordinator plays a crucial role in providing technical assistance on benefits planning.

Professional Vocational Rehabilitation Counseling Organizations Active participation relating to ongoing professional development for staff and to counselor recruitment takes place through well-established working relationships with and memberships on the boards of the Minnesota Rehabilitation Association, including the Minnesota Rehabilitation Counseling Association chapter.

(9) Other private nonprofit organizations.

SSB holds master contracts with three full—time Community Rehabilitation Providers (CRPs) that are considered private nonprofit organizations. These contracts focus on providing adjustment to blindness training and employment related services, as well as other services to blind, visually impaired, and DeafBlind customers. SSB discusses with providers during the development of master contracts the scope of services, programs and rates.

As required by statute, SSB contracts with CRPs to provide the minimum of six weeks intensive training under sleep shades from an adjustment to blindness center for rehabilitation counselors. As of mid-2023, all three CRPs in the Minnesota are able to provide this training. Contracts have also been developed with CRPs to provide transition programs to students. Services are meant to augment work done by school districts with activities on evenings and weekends.

Additionally, SSB continues to implement our “Community Partner + SSB Staff Forums” four times per year as an opportunity to provide updates about agency happenings, discuss trends in findings from monitoring visits and provide training on pertinent topics such as data practices, navigating the state system for job placement and Customized Employment.

VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION CERTIFICATIONS AND ASSURANCES

CERTIFICATIONS

States must provide written and signed certifications that:	
1.	The (enter the name of designated State agency or designated State unit, as appropriate,) is authorized to submit the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan under title I of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Rehabilitation Act), as amended by title IV of WIOA, ⁷ and its State Plan supplement under title VI of the Rehabilitation Act;
2.	In the event the designated State agency is not primarily concerned with vocational and other rehabilitation of individuals with disabilities, the designated State agency must include a designated State unit for the VR program (Section 101(a)(2)(B)(ii) of the Rehabilitation Act). As a condition for the receipt of Federal funds under title I of the Rehabilitation Act for the provision of VR services, the (enter the name of designated State agency or the designated State unit when the designated State agency has a designated State unit) ⁸ agrees to operate and is responsible for the administration of the State VR Services Program in accordance with the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan ⁹ , the Rehabilitation Act, 34 CFR 361.13(b) and (c), and all applicable regulations ¹⁰ , policies, and procedures established by the Secretary of Education. Funds made available to States under section 111(a) of the Rehabilitation Act are used solely for the provision of VR services and the administration of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan;
3.	As a condition for the receipt of Federal funds under title VI of the Rehabilitation Act for supported employment services, the designated State agency or the designated State unit when the designated State agency has a designated State unit, agrees to operate and is responsible for the administration of the State Supported Employment Services Program in accordance with the supplement to the VR services portion of the

⁷ Public Law 113-128.

⁸ All references in this plan to "designated State agency" or to "the State agency" relate to the agency identified in this paragraph.

⁹ No funds under title I of the Rehabilitation Act may be awarded without an approved VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan in accordance with section 101(a) of the Rehabilitation Act.

¹⁰ Applicable regulations, in part, include the Education Department General Administrative Regulations (EDGAR) in 34 CFR parts 76, 77, 79, 81, and 82; 2 CFR part 200 as adopted by 2 CFR part 3474; and the State VR Services program regulations at 34 CFR part 361.

	Unified or Combined State Plan ¹¹ , the Rehabilitation Act, and all applicable regulations ¹² , policies, and procedures established by the Secretary of Education. Funds made available under title VI are used solely for the provision of supported employment services and the administration of the supplement to the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan;
4.	The designated State unit, or if not applicable, the designated State agency has the authority under State law to perform the functions of the State regarding the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement, and is responsible for the administration of the VR program in accordance with 34 CFR 361.13(b) and (c);
5.	The State legally may carry out each provision of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement.
6.	All provisions of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement are consistent with State law.
7.	The (enter title of State officer below) has the authority under State law to receive, hold, and disburse Federal funds made available under the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement;
8.	The (enter title of State officer below) has the authority to submit the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and the supplement for Supported Employment services;
9.	The agency that submits the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement has adopted or otherwise formally approved the plan and its supplement.

ASSURANCES

The designated State agency or designated State unit, as appropriate and identified in the State certifications included with this VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement, through signature of the authorized individual, assures the Commissioner, that it will comply with all of the requirements of the VR services portion of the Unified or

¹¹ No funds under title VI of the Rehabilitation Act may be awarded without an approved supported employment supplement to the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan in accordance with section 606(a) of the Rehabilitation Act.

¹² Applicable regulations, in part, include the citations in footnote 4, as well as Supported Employment program regulations at 34 CFR part 363.

Combined State Plan and its supplement, as set forth in sections 101(a) and 606 of the Rehabilitation Act. The individual authorized to submit the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement makes the following assurances:

The State Plan must provide assurances that:	
1.	<p>Public Comment on Policies and Procedures: The designated State agency assures it will comply with all statutory and regulatory requirements for public participation in the VR Services Portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan, as required by section 101(a)(16)(A) of the Rehabilitation Act.</p>
2.	<p>Submission of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and Its Supplement: The designated State unit assures it will comply with all requirements pertaining to the submission and revisions of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement for the State Supported Employment Services program, as required by sections 101(a)(1), (22), (23), and 606(a) of the Rehabilitation Act; section 102 of WIOA in the case of the submission of a Unified State plan; section 103 of WIOA in the case of a submission of a Combined State Plan; 34 C.F.R. 76.140.</p>
3.	<p>Administration of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan: The designated State agency or designated State unit, as appropriate, assures it will comply with the requirements related to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (n) the establishment of the designated State agency and designated State unit, as required by section 101(a)(2) of the Rehabilitation Act. (o) either a State independent commission or State Rehabilitation Council, as required by section 101(a)(21) of the Rehabilitation Act. (p) consultations regarding the administration of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan, in accordance with section 101(a)(16)(B) of the Rehabilitation Act. (q) the financial participation by the State, or if the State so elects, by the State and local agencies, to provide the amount of the non-Federal share of the cost of carrying out the VR program in accordance with section 101(a)(3). (r) as applicable, the local administration of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan, in accordance with section 101(a)(2)(A) of the Rehabilitation Act.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (s) as applicable, the shared funding and administration of joint programs, in accordance with section 101(a)(2)(A)(ii) of the Rehabilitation Act. (t) statewideness and waivers of statewideness requirements, as set forth in section 101(a)(4) of the Rehabilitation Act. (u) the requirements for cooperation, collaboration, and coordination, as required by sections 101(a)(11) and (24)(B); and 606(b) of the Rehabilitation Act. (v) all required methods of administration, as required by section 101(a)(6) of the Rehabilitation Act. (w) the requirements for the comprehensive system of personnel development, as set forth in section 101(a)(7) of the Rehabilitation Act. (x) the compilation and submission to the Commissioner of statewide assessments, estimates, State goals and priorities, strategies, and progress reports, as appropriate, and as required by sections 101(a)(15), 105(c)(2), and 606(b)(8) of the Rehabilitation Act. (y) the reservation and use of a portion of the funds allotted to the State under section 110 of the Rehabilitation Act for the development and implementation of innovative approaches to expand and improve the provision of VR services to individuals with disabilities, particularly individuals with the most significant disabilities as set forth in section 101(a)(18)(A). (z) the submission of reports as required by section 101(a)(10) of the Rehabilitation Act.
<p>4.</p>	<p>Administration of the Provision of VR Services: The designated State agency, or designated State unit, as appropriate, assures that it will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) comply with all requirements regarding information and referral services in accordance with sections 101(a)(5)(E) and (20) of the Rehabilitation Act. (j) impose no duration of residence requirement as part of determining an individual's eligibility for VR services or that excludes from services under the plan any individual who is present in the State in accordance with section 101(a)(12) of the Rehabilitation Act. (k) provide the full range of services listed in section 103(a) of the Rehabilitation Act, as appropriate, to all eligible individuals with disabilities in the State who apply for services or, if implementing an order of selection, in accordance with criteria established by the State for the order of selection as set out in section 101(a)(5) of the Rehabilitation Act.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (l) determine whether comparable services and benefits are available to the individual in accordance with section 101(a)(8) of the Rehabilitation Act. (m) comply with the requirements for the development of an individualized plan for employment in accordance with section 102(b) of the Rehabilitation Act. (n) comply with requirements regarding the provisions of informed choice for all applicants and eligible individuals in accordance with section 102(d) of the Rehabilitation Act. (o) provide vocational rehabilitation services to American Indians who are individuals with disabilities residing in the State, in accordance with section 101(a)(13) of the Rehabilitation Act. (p) comply with the requirements for the conduct of semiannual or annual reviews, as appropriate, for individuals employed either in an extended employment setting in a community rehabilitation program or any other employment under section 14(c) of the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938, as required by sections 101(a)(14) and 511 of the Rehabilitation Act. (i) meet the requirements in sections 101(a)(17) and 103(b)(2) of the Rehabilitation Act if the State elects to construct, under special circumstances, facilities for community rehabilitation programs. (j) with respect to students with disabilities, the State: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) has developed and will implement, <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (A) strategies to address the needs identified in the assessments; and (B) strategies to achieve the goals and priorities identified by the State, to improve and expand vocational rehabilitation services for students with disabilities on a statewide basis; and (ii) has developed and will implement strategies to provide pre-employment transition services (sections 101(a)(15), 101(a)(25), and 113). (iii) shall reserve not less than 15 percent of the allocated funds for the provision of pre-employment transition services; such funds shall not be used to pay for the administrative costs of providing pre-employment transition services.
5.	<p>Program Administration for the Supported Employment Title VI Supplement to the State plan:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (c) The designated State unit assures that it will include in the VR services portion of

	<p>the Unified or Combined State Plan all information required by section 606 of the Rehabilitation Act.</p> <p>(d) The designated State agency assures that it will submit reports in such form and in accordance with such procedures as the Commissioner may require and collects the information required by section 101(a)(10) of the Rehabilitation Act separately for individuals receiving supported employment services under title I and individuals receiving supported employment services under title VI of the Rehabilitation Act.</p>
<p>6.</p>	<p>Financial Administration of the Supported Employment Program (Title VI):</p> <p>(c) The designated State agency assures that it will expend no more than 2.5 percent of the State's allotment under title VI for administrative costs of carrying out this program; and, the designated State agency or agencies will provide, directly or indirectly through public or private entities, non-Federal contributions in an amount that is not less than 10 percent of the costs of carrying out supported employment services provided to youth with the most significant disabilities with the funds reserved for such purpose under section 603(d) of the Rehabilitation Act, in accordance with section 606(b)(7)(H) and (I) of the Rehabilitation Act.</p> <p>(d) The designated State agency assures that it will use funds made available under title VI of the Rehabilitation Act only to provide supported employment services to individuals with the most significant disabilities, including extended services to youth with the most significant disabilities, who are eligible to receive such services; and, that such funds are used only to supplement and not supplant the funds provided under Title I of the Rehabilitation Act, when providing supported employment services specified in the individualized plan for employment, in accordance with section 606(b)(7)(A) and (D), of the Rehabilitation Act.</p>
<p>7.</p>	<p>Provision of Supported Employment Services:</p> <p>(c) The designated State agency assures that it will provide supported employment services as defined in section 7(39) of the Rehabilitation Act.</p> <p>(d) The designated State agency assures that</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">the comprehensive assessment of individuals with significant disabilities conducted under section 102(b)(1) of the Rehabilitation Act and funded under title I of the Rehabilitation Act includes consideration of supported employment as an appropriate employment outcome, in accordance with the requirements of section 606(b)(7)(B) of the Rehabilitation Act an individualized plan for employment that meets the requirements of section 102(b) of the Rehabilitation Act , which is developed and updated with title I</p>

	funds, in accordance with sections 102(b)(3)(F) and 606(b)(7)(C) and (E) of the Rehabilitation Act.
--	---

	Vocational Rehabilitation Program Unable to Complete Until May 2024 Based on Negotiations With The Rehabilitation Services Administration			
	Program Year:		Program Year:	
	Expected Level	Negotiated Level	Expected Level	Negotiated Level
Employment (Second Quarter after Exit) ²²				
Employment (Fourth Quarter after Exit) ²²				
Median Earnings (Second Quarter after Exit) ^[7]				
Credential Attainment Rate				
Measurable Skill Gains				

	All WIOA Core Programs			
	Program Year:		Program Year:	
	Expected Level	Negotiated Level	Expected Level	Negotiated Level
Effectiveness in Serving Employers				

Additional Indicators of Performance
1.
2.
3.
4.

[1] Public Law 113-128.

[2] All references in this plan to "designated State agency" or to "the State agency" relate to the agency identified in this paragraph.

[3] No funds under title I of the Rehabilitation Act may be awarded without an approved VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan in accordance with section 101(a) of the Rehabilitation Act.

[4] Applicable regulations, in part, include the Education Department General Administrative Regulations (EDGAR) in 34 CFR parts 76, 77, 79, 81, and 82; 2 CFR part 200 as adopted by 2 CFR part 3474; and the State VR Services program regulations at 34 CFR part 361.

[5] No funds under title VI of the Rehabilitation Act may be awarded without an approved supported employment supplement to the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan in accordance with section 606(a) of the Rehabilitation Act.

[6] Applicable regulations, in part, include the citations in footnote 4, as well as Supported Employment program regulations at 34 CFR part 363.

[1] Public Law 113-128.

[2] No funds under title I of the Rehabilitation Act may be awarded without an approved VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan in accordance with section 101(a) of the Rehabilitation Act.

[3] Applicable regulations, in part, include the Education Department General Administrative Regulations (EDGAR) in 34 CFR parts 76, 77, 79, 81, and 82; 2 CFR part 200 as adopted by 2 CFR part 3474; and the State VR Services program regulations at 34 CFR part 361.

[4] No funds under title VI of the Rehabilitation Act may be awarded without an approved supported employment supplement to the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan in accordance with section 606(a) of the Rehabilitation Act.

[5] Applicable regulations, in part, include the citations in footnote 4, as well as Supported Employment program regulations at 34 CFR part 363.

VII. Program-Specific Requirements for Combined State Plan Partner Programs

Strengthening Career and Technical Education for the 21st Century (Perkins V)

Notice to Reviewers: Following the enactment of Perkins V legislation in July, 2018, Minnesota submitted a four-year State Plan covering the period of July 1, 2020 through June 30, 2024. With the end date of the initial Perkins V State Plan approaching, states were given the option of writing a new four-year state plan covering the period of July 1, 2024 through June 30, 2028 (Option #1), or continuing annual revisions of the original plan (Option #2). Using option #2, this plan is an annual revision to the original Four-Year State Plan. In addition to the changes/updates made here, all information regarding development of the original plan remains as well, for historical purposes. Please note that throughout this revised plan, the first Four-Year State Plan is referred to as the original or initial plan. Although Minnesota has elected to submit an annual revision to the original Four-Year State Plan, State-Determined Performance Levels (SDPL) were established for the next four program or fiscal years (2024-2027).

Vision

Advancing career and technical education empowers every learner to realize a rewarding career.

Mission

Quality career and technical education ensures every learner has equitable access to career-connected learning through a network of knowledgeable partners.

The Carl D. Perkins Act was reauthorized by Congress as the *Strengthening Career and Technical Education for the Twenty First Century Act* (Perkins V). Perkins V went into effect July 1, 2019. Minnesota used fiscal year 2020 beginning on July 1, 2019, to transition to the new requirements of the law. The reauthorization presented an opportunity for Minnesota to reaffirm its commitment to career and technical education with the formation of a new vision and mission as documented above.

Minnesota has structured its implementation of federal Perkins funding through a consortium model with three key components: Minnesota State, Minnesota Department of Education, and local consortia. This model of governance and distribution of funds has provided a tradition of alignment of secondary and postsecondary partners started under Perkins IV and continues with the *Strengthening Career and Technical Education for the 21st Century Act* (Perkins V). Minnesota State, the eligible agency, will continue to oversee the administration and implementation of the state's Perkins grant in partnership with the Minnesota Department of

Education. Through the Perkins V state plan, the State has an opportunity to exercise a variety of leadership levers to advance the state’s vision for Career and Technical Education (CTE).

Perkins V provides opportunities to model, incentivize support, and drive change. Key goals that comply with the Perkins V federal legislation and state needs include:

- Align local/regional CTE work with the completion of a comprehensive local needs assessment (CLNA) at minimum, once every 2 years, requiring funding decisions to be driven by data including aligning programs of study with high-skill, high-wage and in- demand current and emerging occupations.
- Support the recruitment, preparation, retention, training and professional development of teachers and faculty, administrators, specialized personnel, and paraprofessionals to meet both traditional and alternative state certification and licensure requirements.
- Continue an equal percent distribution of funds to undergird equity of educational opportunity for both secondary and postsecondary learners at the local consortia level
- Target innovation and improvement using reserve funding as allowed in Perkins V. This includes leveraging the reserve fund for rural and high-CTE-concentrated consortia to spur innovation, support programs of study, encourage alignment and collaboration, and address equity gaps.
- Set separate updated state-determined performance levels for secondary and postsecondary partners. This necessitates technical assistance at the state and local consortia.
- Support an expansion of data review and performance expectations for categories of student groups and special populations as defined by ESSA.
- Continue to support consortia funding for CTE exploration with middle school students.

Programs of study is a federal Perkins term that means “a coordinated, non-duplicative sequence of academic and technical content at the secondary and postsecondary level...”

(Perkins V, Section 3(41)). This requirement for programs of study is unique to Perkins law yet builds on the pathways work referenced in the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA).

In general, there are finite fiscal resources to provide high-quality career and technical educational opportunities for Minnesota students. The *Strengthening Career and Technical Education for the 21st Century Act*, as dedicated federal funding, does provide leverage for

supporting the critical role of the state in providing educational opportunities for our CTE students. However, the workload requirement of the CLNA, new performance indicators, the expansion of special population categories, the rising cost of equipment and supplies needed for CTE programming, and the scarcity of qualified instructors all necessitate that Perkins V will continue to ensure equitable opportunities for students' career and college success. Partnerships with other state agencies such as the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED) and the Minnesota Department of Labor and Industry (DLI), as well as community-based organizations and other state initiatives such as the Minnesota State Centers of Excellence or Career and College Readiness, will continue to be part of the successful implementation of CTE.

What follows is the State's response to fulfilling the requirement for implementing Perkins V. The state of Minnesota is submitting this document in accordance with the US Department of Education's guide for the submission of state plans. The plan and all attachments are available on the [Public Comment Notice](#) webpage.

(a) Plan Development and Consultation

1) Describe how the state plan was developed in consultation with the stakeholders and in accordance with the procedures in section 122i(2) of Perkins v. See text box 1 for the statutory requirements for state plan consultation under section 122(c)(1) of Perkins v.

As the eligible agency for the administration of Career and Technical Education in the state, Minnesota State Colleges and Universities, or Minnesota State, works closely in partnership with the Minnesota Department of Education's Career and College Success Division and local consortia to administer Perkins V throughout the state. Local consortia consist of participating school districts and two-year state colleges located within 23 distinct geographic areas encompassing the entire state. Through a collaborative partnership, together we ensure the successful development and implementation of the state plan. Because of this partnership of three, career and technical education initiatives have historically been proactive in aligning activities between secondary and postsecondary CTE programs, and promoting student success and seamless transitions from secondary to postsecondary educational opportunities. As an example of this alignment, Minnesota has a program of study rubric that promotes concurrent enrollment, articulation agreements, and demonstrated authentic work experiences between school districts and community colleges/technical colleges and community employers. Additionally, extensive professional development will continue to support secondary and postsecondary partnerships for the development and continuous improvement of programs and Programs of Study, the recruitment and retention of educational professionals, and equity of access and services for every student.

One of the biggest challenges for Minnesota in the development of the Four-Year Perkins V plan is providing the right timing and balance between the needs and requirements of the state and the needs of local consortia. To achieve that balance, Minnesota's Perkins V plan development

and consultation is the result of a combination of state and local efforts. The primary components of the plan development consisted of an extensive collaboration among the state staff, secondary and postsecondary, business and industry, and community partners. Structurally, the work began with a facilitated broad-based planning group to set the vision, mission, principles, and identify five strategic work groups: Advancing CTE, Career-connected Learning, Integrated Network, Equity and Inclusion, and Knowledgeable Experts. The plan development and the strategic workgroups involved state executive leadership work, consultation with our consortia leaders, public meetings, and incorporation of local input.

While consultations occurred at the state level with interested community representatives, advisory groups, superintendents, postsecondary academic administrators, teachers and faculty, the governor's office through the educational liaison, the Tribal Nation Education Council, and business groups, both engagement and consultation also occurred at the regional and local level through completion of the comprehensive local needs assessment work by all 23 Perkins consortia. Frameworks, critical questions, continuous improvement rubrics, equity plans--required components of the Perkins V plan--were developed at the state level with consultation and customization at the local level to address local students, community, and workforce needs. To facilitate the consultation process, Minnesota began its Perkins V work with the development of the comprehensive local needs assessment.

The Advancing CTE strategic work group was charged with developing a framework for the comprehensive local needs assessment (CLNA) and was also responsible for accountability, outreach, and promoting the CTE story through awareness and communication. The Career Connected Learning group reviewed and revised the state's career pathways projects with a priority on the development of shared standards and definitions of program quality and the integration of work-based learning (WBL). The career preparation aspects of career-connected learning also fell into the work of this group. The integrated network group was intended to provide more intentionality in our relationships with the multiple federal, state, and local networks necessary for successful CTE work. Equity and Inclusion, an integral part of the work of all the strategic work groups, focused on service partnerships, providing resources, and data management. The Knowledgeable Experts group oversees the critical professional development and technical assistance role of Perkins V. Teacher licensure preparation programs and minimum qualifications, the mentor/mentee project, consortia leadership, and responding to local requests are the tasks of this group.

Much research, input, and development went into the creation of Minnesota's Comprehensive Local Needs Assessment (CLNA) Guide and Framework. The needs assessment is viewed as one of the most significant levers for change introduced with Perkins V. The CLNA changes the dynamics and habits of Perkins IV with the requirement to base budget development on its outcomes. Aligning business priorities has always been an essential component of Perkins work with an increasing need to make that connection through the comprehensive local needs

assessment. The *Comprehensive Local Needs Assessment Guide and Framework* are available on the [Public Comment Notice](#) webpage.

Beginning in October of 2018, day-long workshops, webinars, face-to-face meetings, and virtual mentoring, along with professional development prepared local consortia leaders and work groups for the relevancy of, and work required, to complete the CLNA. The CLNA Guide provides Minnesota Perkins consortium leaders with context on how to conduct the CLNA and translates language of the law into concrete, actionable steps for conducting a rigorous needs assessment that meets the Strengthening Career and Technical Education for the 21st Century Act requirements. When the CLNA is complete, a consortium will have findings that provide an accurate picture of local CTE programs and learners. It creates an incredible opportunity to:

- assist students toward achieving career success,
- align Perkins budgets with priorities and ensure that programs are aligned with and validated by local/regional workforce needs and economic priorities,
- ensure that consortium programs are serving all learners equitably and to focus resources on programs that lead to high-skill, high-wage, or in-demand occupations while addressing disparities or gaps in performance,
- build on other process improvement efforts such as ESSA, WIOA, World's Best Workforce etc., and
- provide a structured way to engage programmatic partners regularly around the quality and impact of consortium CTE programs and systems.

Ultimately, the local needs assessment process is about helping applicants make a formal shift from merely collecting and reporting information to using information strategically to drive decisions about consortium CTE programs that lead to success for students, employers, and the community.

To mentor consortia in the implementation of the CLNA, Minnesota uses a six-step process: prepare, explore, assess, prioritize, communicate, and evaluate. The Perkins state executive team focuses on the continuous improvement of processes so that local consortia can complete their work efficiently and effectively. The gathering of the local programmatic partnership groups and the prioritization of regional work comes from these efforts. From the CLNA data gathering and analysis, consortia formulate actions to address gaps and enhance successes. Resources needed to implement those actions are the basis for the development of the local budget request.

The information obtained from both the CLNA and the full set of consortia applications includes the reflection of local consultations. This information is reviewed by the state leadership team. Final strategies and actions for the work of the state are guided by feedback from that submission. The information also informs state leadership regarding professional development and technical assistance needs.

- 2) Consistent with section 122(e)(1) of Perkins v, each eligible agency must develop the portion of the state plan relating to the amount and uses of any funds proposed to be reserved for adult career and technical education, postsecondary career and technical education, and secondary career and technical education after consultation with the state agencies identified in section 122(e)(1)(a)-(c) of the act. If a state agency, other than the eligible agency, finds a portion of the final state plan objectionable, the eligible agency must provide a copy of such objections and a description of its response in the final plan submitted to the secretary. (section 122(e)(2) of Perkins v)**

Minnesota has structured its implementation of federal Perkins funding through a three-pronged model: Minnesota State, Minnesota Department of Education, and the local consortia. This model of governance and distribution of funds has provided a tradition of alignment of secondary and postsecondary partners that will continue with the *Strengthening Career and Technical Education for the 21st Century Act* (Perkins V).

Minnesota State, the eligible agency, continues to oversee the administration and implementation of the state's Perkins grant with our Minnesota Department of Education partners. The Perkins V Four-Year State Plan will continue to advance Minnesota's vision for Career Technical Education (CTE) by maintaining the 50:50 fiscal split between secondary and postsecondary, the fifteen percent level for reserve funding, and the utilization of data-driven decisions through the CLNA process.

The major responsibility for postsecondary career and technical education resides with the Minnesota State Workforce and Economic Development Division. The work is done in partnership with Academic and Student Affairs (ASA) units; specifically, research, educational innovations, and student affairs. These ASA units support CTE work for such initiatives as early college opportunities, program approvals and transfer, data research and reporting, accessibility services, faculty credentialing, and financial aid--all essential for the success of our learners. The CTE unit also works closely with the Equity and Inclusion division of Minnesota State, especially in the execution of the federal OCR requirements and overall professional development committed to support, protect, and encourage inclusive opportunities through the system.

As a separate but partnered agency, the Minnesota Department of Education, Career and College Success Division, Office of Career and Technical Education provides oversight for secondary education. The CTE unit advances educational initiatives in collaboration with other secondary agency Divisions including Indian Education, School Support, Academic Standards and Instructional Effectiveness, Research and Assessment, Equity and Achievement, Early Learning and State Library Services. Initiatives included:

- Farm to Table Culinary Curriculum
- CTE Safety Protocol development and communication
- Collaboration with PELSB to implement the Tiered Licensing System

- CTE Levy technical support for school districts
- CTE curriculum framework development for all CTE program areas
- Professional development on continuous improvement
- Integration of quality program assessment measures in school district Program Approval processes
- Data research reporting and analysis support for local school districts

The CTE Unit also participates as part of the Minnesota Department of Education Academic Success Team comprised of curriculum and instruction, school support, assessment, and other agency divisions.

The Perkins allocation for the state of Minnesota was approximately \$21.3 million in FY 2023-24. Minnesota State is the fiscal agent for the grant and, as such, utilizes 5% of the allocation for Administration. Using Perkins V funding levers to help drive meaningful change, Minnesota's Perkins V plan demonstrates that the consortia model empowers equal partnerships to make joint decisions to collaboratively plan and implement CTE programs and services. The initial Perkins V state plan reflected changes in the funding distribution model as shown below; this updated PY2024-2027 plan will continue with the same distribution percentages.

- 1) Distribution of the 85% of the state allocation provided to the local consortia applicants:
 - Basic Revenue: 85% (of the 85%) will be distributed utilizing the current formula process
 - Reserve Revenue: 15% (of the 85%) will be distributed between rural and high numbers of CTE concentrators
 - Secondary/postsecondary split: 50:50 in all calculations, basic and reserve
- 2) State Leadership: the secondary/postsecondary split of state leadership funds will be distributed as 42% secondary and 58% postsecondary.
 - State Institutions and Nontraditional will continue to be part of the leadership funds allocated to postsecondary. Minnesota State also will continue to fund major state-wide work such as the annual conferences, and communication and software supporting the local applications with that higher percentage of leadership funds.

Planning teams and Perkins state leadership researched and considered utilizing the RFP process to distribute the 15% reserve funding competitively to provide potentially larger investments to consortia selected to receive this funding. Feedback received on this was not supportive of the change prior to the submission of the first Perkins V state plan. Minnesota also considered alternative ways to distribute reserve funding with the PY2024-2027 four-year

state plan update, but data showed that percentage changes would negatively impact rural consortia. As a result, state leadership decided to continue the formula distribution model at this time.

3) Describe opportunities for the public to comment in person and in writing on the state plan. (section 122(d)(14) of Perkins v)

The required public comment period for the 2024 state plan and 2024-2028 state-determined performance levels is expected to take place December 2023 - January 2024 for a period no less than 30 days in length. The [Public Comment Notice](#) webpage provides the purpose, guiding principles, documents, timeline, and form for submitting feedback. The *Minnesota Perkins V Public Comment Engagement Plan* will be followed to notify and seek feedback from a broad representation of the public including, but not limited to, secondary and postsecondary educators and staff, students, parents, community members and industry partners.

[Note to reader: The following information documents the public comment process for the original Perkins V four-year state plan established in 2020.]

Opportunities for public comment in person and in writing were provided through face-to-face meetings and webpages with questions, state documents, and provisions to allow individuals to provide written comments. Multiple public meetings were held at various times and locations to provide a wide range of opportunities for individuals to attend. A neutral contractor was hired to facilitate the public hearings to avoid any perception of control of the discussion by state leadership. Comments were collected and routed to the state leadership team for actions. Direct comments were provided to state leadership through email correspondence. These were sent to the facilitator for inclusion in the feedback report.

Notifications of public hearings and the webpage address for input, including the performance indicators, were provided electronically to the following:

- Adult Basic Education
- Association of School District Homeless Liaisons
- Business and Industry Groups:
 - Minnesota Precision Manufacturing Association
 - Minnesota Hospital Organization
 - Minnesota Construction
 - Hospitality Minnesota
 - Minnesota Technology Association
 - Minnesota Bankers Association
- FCCLA

- General Public through Facebook, twitter
- Minnesota Business Professionals of America (BPA) board
- Minnesota Centers of Excellence: distribution to industry partners through the centers Minnesota Chambers of Commerce
- Minnesota DECA Board
- Minnesota Governor's Office
- Minnesota State Academic and Student Affairs personnel including:
 - Administrators
 - Faculty Development
 - Academic Advisors
 - Accessibility Coordinators
 - PSEO and concurrent enrollment directors
 - Veterans
 - Students
- Minnesota State Board of Trustees
- Minnesota Superintendents
- Perkins consortium Leaders and coordinators
- Professional Associations: MnACTE, MACTA
- Secondary Teacher List by MDE specialists
- SkillsUSA MN Board
- Special Education Directors
- Student Organization Advisors
- Variety of community organizations and foundations
- WIOA Partners:
 - Department of Labor
 - Department of Employment and Economic Development
 - Department of Human Services
 - Department of Corrections
 - Adult Basic Education

In addition, the front banner of the Minnesota State webpage highlighted the public hearing and provided a space for general and specific comments. The text provided is the following:

Minnesota State and Minnesota Department of Education invite you and the members of the community to attend and participate in public hearings to discuss the changes to the Strengthening Career and Technical Education for the 21st Century Act (Perkins V). The focus of Perkins V is the alignment of systems and program improvement (Section 122(a)(3) State Plan requirement of The Act).

We are seeking your input on:

- proposed state determined performance levels,
- the alignment of programs of study to industry needs,
- financial distribution of funds
- increasing student access to high-quality education, and
- supporting the full continuum of offerings from career exploration through preparations to meet the changing needs of learners and employers.

During the public meetings, Minnesota State Staff provided an overview of the Perkins V plan and a neutral facilitator solicited feedback through a series of questions. Responses to the questions and an overview of discussion points have been collected in report form.

In addition to the series of public comment meetings, state staff met with Minnesota Tribal Nations Education Committee (TNEC) whose mission is to “strengthen, protect, and advance the overall education experiences and opportunities for all tribal (American Indian) students, families, and communities of Minnesota.” The notes of that discussion are included in the comment report attached. At the recommendation of that group, Tribal Nation contacts were cross-walked to current Perkins consortia so that Perkins leaders, in their CLNA work, would be inclusive of the Tribal Nation leadership.

Feedback on accountability factors occurred in a parallel but separate process, coming together in the public hearings and the posting of the full 4-year plan.

Secondary

Secondary and postsecondary accountability involves a collaboration between two agencies, each with its own data systems and internal processes. Therefore, transition planning for secondary accountability required a dual decision-making process. The process for identifying and defining secondary performance indicators occurred in two phases.

Phase one included an extensive information gathering process as well as documenting feedback from internal state staff. The purpose was to thoughtfully compile information and identify meaningful and specific questions to gather input during phase two. State CTE

specialists attended five two-hour-long, in-person meetings in which they reviewed data files, policy documents, and ESSA requirements in addition to considering existing data collection system and other available data sources. Staff considered all information and materials they reviewed through the lens of our state’s recently updated mission and vision for Career and Technical Education as well as the following questions.

Does this data and information:

- 1) advance our statewide goals for CTE?
- 2) support all of our CTE students and approved programs?
- 3) support the needs of our Business and Industry partners as well as local communities?
- 4) align with the Perkins V legislation?
- 5) align with other existing state legislation?

Products from the phase one internal secondary CTE state staff meetings included a refined list of key decision-points, discussion questions to pose to the advisory group, and a list of materials and resources to broaden engagement.

Phase 2 involved sharing the previously identified information with secondary representatives to collect and compile their recommendations. The “Perkins V Secondary Accountability Technical Advising Committee” included secondary consortia leaders; postsecondary partners; local CTE policy and advocacy groups; school counselors; work-based learning (WBL) coordinators; high school teachers; principals; superintendents from rural, suburban, and large metro districts; business and industry leaders from each sector of the CTE Career wheel; Workforce Center staff; and Tribal leaders. During spring 2019, approximately thirty advisory group members engaged in three four-hour in-person meetings. All resources and materials were made available within a secure site so participants could access the information at any point. During the facilitated in-person meetings, advisory group members discussed data sources, reviewed simulated historical data, and considered policy and legislative documents in small groups.

Advisory group members were asked to consider all information through the lens of the questions listed above as well as the following questions: Are all performance indicator definitions/measures valid, reliable, meaningful, and possess a high degree of integrity and transparency? Are they equitable across all student groups? Following each meeting, members were encouraged to discuss options and implications with their constituents and gather additional feedback that would ultimately inform their recommendations to the state.

Recommendations for specific performance indicator definitions were collected using an online survey tool; recommendations for the CTE Concentrator definition and program quality measures were collected using paper and pencil to document full thoughts and ideas. There

were clear recommendations to the state regarding performance indicator definitions, updated CTE Concentrator definition, and the program quality indicator that was preferred.

Following the rollout of the full scope of the Perkins accountability system and performance-level methodology, recommendations made by the original workgroup came under review. Group members, district leaders, local partners, and state leadership staff probed the implications of each potential program quality indicator. Further discussion and questions, data, and state-level priorities were analyzed. These discussions resulted in MDE leadership carefully reviewing initial recommendations and making changes to the indicators. Original members of the technical advisory group as well as all secondary consortia leaders were invited to provide feedback on whether the state should move forward with the previously recommended optional “Other” indicator or if other solutions should be considered at the state level. Additional comments and feedback were gathered regarding the optional program quality performance indicator via a survey tool. Results of that survey prompted MDE leadership to make changes based on the deeper research. The new indicators were posted, and the comment period extended to meet the 60-day requirements.

Postsecondary

In developing postsecondary operational definitions and identifying data sources for participants, concentrators, and each indicator, the state created an accountability workgroup consisting of state research staff for secondary and postsecondary, the State Director of Career Technical Education, and the Interim Associate System Director of Career Technical Education. The workgroup met as needed, generally at least once a month, to provide updates regarding ongoing work, brainstorm solutions to issues that arose, and clarify any questions about process and timelines. Members of the workgroup then consulted with regional partners and determined our operational definitions and data sources were substantively similar. Consortia coordinators were given the opportunity to review and comment on legislative definitions and proposed operational definitions at the Minnesota Association of Career and Technical Administrators (MACTA) meeting in April (2019). Throughout May and June, as work on revising operational definitions, identifying data sources, and developing datasets progressed, key consortia coordinators and institutional research staff were engaged in phone calls and online meetings to provide feedback. In July, at a meeting of all consortia coordinators, the final draft of definitions and data sources used to develop the accountability datasets was presented and discussed. Finally, consortia coordinators and institutional research staff were presented with the final details regarding the accountability indicators in September.

State Determined Performance Levels (Secondary and Postsecondary)

In developing state-determined performance levels, in addition to the regular workgroup meetings, we consulted with regional partners in June and August and determined our methodology for establishing performance levels is relatively similar. We also consulted with DEED throughout June specifically to better understand the statistical adjustment model used for the WIOA Performance Accountability System and discuss how it might apply to Perkins

accountability indicators. An online meeting was held in September with consortia coordinators and institutional research staff where questions and feedback were discussed. In October, the state-determined performance levels were presented at regional public hearings and published on the Minnesota State website with a form that allows the public to submit comments. The state-determined performance levels with revisions from the public comment were presented at a meeting with all consortia coordinators in November.

Sensitive to the lack of public input, Minnesota also leveraged existing meetings and communications to solicit unstructured input, such as:

- CTE Consortia Leadership meeting
- Governor’s Workforce Development Board meeting
- Local Program Advisory Committee meetings
- Governor’s Workforce Development Board meeting
- State CTE staff planning meetings
- Manufacturing Cluster meetings
- Minnesota State Centers of Excellence meetings
- Minnesota State Academic and Students Affairs webinars, conferences, unit meetings
- One-on-one outreach
- Regional and local Comprehensive Local Needs group meetings
- Regional Superintendents meetings
- State CTE staff planning meetings,
- WIOA State plan partnership meetings

Though multiple dates, times, and methodologies for input were presented, the State received few comments or suggestions. A neutral third party provided a summary overview of the consultation work collected. Three separate documents were available for review on the Minnesota State webpage: Minnesota Perkins V, EXECUTIVE SUMMARY, Public Comment Report; Minnesota Perkins V Secondary & Post-Secondary Indicator Report Summary; and Complete Discussion Notes. The conversation with the Tribal Nation Education Council did not follow the questions used in the public hearing but rather became a more general conversation about better communication and alignment with career and technical education initiatives.

(b) Program Administration and Implementation

1) State's Vision for Education and Workforce Development

- A. Provide a summary of state-supported workforce development activities (including education and training) in the state, including the degree to which the state's career and technical education programs and programs of study are aligned with and address the education and skill needs of the employers in the state identified by the state workforce development board. (Section 122(d)(1) of Perkins v)**

The State of Minnesota continues to support workforce development activities through the collaborative work led by the Governor's Workforce Development Board (GWDB), the Minnesota Association of Workforce Boards (MAWB) and the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED) through the unified public workforce system under the name CareerForce. In addition, specific grants through the Minnesota Department of Labor and Industry (DLI) and the Office of Higher Education support career pathways, teacher recruitment, and students directly. Both Minnesota State and the Minnesota Department of Education are also partners in this work.

Key workforce development activities include:

CareerForce

In a collaborative effort led by the GWDB, MAWB, and DEED, a unified public workforce system continues to unify Minnesota's workforce development services through the almost 50 CareerForce locations around the state and the online labor exchange, career services and resources. [CareerForceMN](#) features innovative career planning tools, workforce development resources, and customized labor market information for career seekers, businesses, and workforce staff and partners. The site supports the CareerForce mission to facilitate thriving career solutions for individuals, employers, communities, and Minnesota, promoting equitable access to prosperity for all. With a CareerForceMN account, users can set career goals; like, save, and share content; and initiate CareerForce Connections.

Governor's Workforce Development Board (GWDB)

GWDB continues to focus on addressing the workforce shortage with emphasis on interagency coordination and equitable system as reflected in the proposed 2024-2027 WIOA State Plan Goals:

- Increase interagency coordination and alignment around shared goals, maximizing efficiency and coordination of workforce funding and programs and improving system integration, and creating a "no wrong door" approach for individuals or employers engaging in the workforce system.
- Build employer-led industry-sector partnerships across the state to create or expand responsive and equitable workforce development programs and career pathways with embedded work-based learning (WBL) or on-the-job training, including

Registered Apprenticeships, focused on closing gaps in participation and representation based on race, ethnicity, disability, gender, veteran status, and age.

- Create a more inclusive, equitable, accessible, and proactive workforce system to serve all Minnesotans, preparing employers and the current and emerging workforce for the changing nature of work including new and emerging technology, changing labor market demands, and for the state’s shifting demographics, including our new Minnesotans.

Workforce Development Scholarships

The Minnesota Legislature continues to fund Workforce Development Scholarships for students enrolled in high-demand educational programs leading to employment in six industries – advanced manufacturing, agriculture, health care, information technology, early childhood education, and transportation. The scholarships are available to new students entering associate degree, diploma, or certificate programs at any of the 26 Minnesota State community and technical colleges or to students completing two terms and transferring to an eligible program at one of the seven Minnesota State Universities. The scholarships cover approximately half the cost of tuition and fees for the required credits. The State Higher Education Bill (HF 2073) passed during this 2023 legislative session continues funding for these scholarships and adds construction, education, and public safety to the list of eligible programs.

Data from the most recent reporting year (*Workforce Development Scholarship Report to Legislature – February 2023*):

- In the 2021 – 2022 academic year, 1,955 students (1,918 college students and 37 university students) received a Workforce Development Scholarship for an award total of \$3,921,997.
- In Fall 2022, 1,149 college students received a first-year award for a total of \$1,440,039 and 283 college students received a second-year award (\$352,750). Twenty-nine university students received a scholarship (\$36,250) for a total of 1,461 scholarship students in fall 2022.
- In the 2021 – 2022 academic year, students receiving Workforce Development Scholarships were enrolled in the following program areas:
 - Healthcare Services – 48 percent
 - Advanced Manufacturing – 13 percent
 - Transportation – 12 percent
 - Information Technology – 11 percent
 - Early Childhood – 6 percent
 - Agriculture – 4 percent

- Other technical/liberal arts percent – 6 percent

Workforce Development Scholarship Recipients: Degrees Awarded by Industry and Fiscal Year*					
Industry	FY 19	FY 20	FY 21	FY 22	Total by Industry
Advanced Manufacturing	11	110	243	284	648
Agriculture	1	18	40	57	116
Construction	-	-	-	6	6
Early Childhood Education	-	5	26	79	110
Health Care Services	7	137	398	633	1,175
Information Technology	-	30	108	163	301
Law Enforcement	-	-	-	1	1
Transportation	-	15	138	192	345
Total	19	315	953	1,415	2,702

**Workforce Development Scholarship Report to Legislature – February 2020, 2021, 2022, and 2023*

[DEED Training Grant Programs](#)

The Minnesota Jobs Skills Partnership (MJSP) provides short-term training for long-term employment and offsets training-related expenses. Grants include the Partnership Program, which provides up to \$400,000 to educational institutions that partner with businesses to develop job training or retraining for existing employees, the Job Training Incentive Program which provides up to \$200,000 to new or expanding businesses, and the Pathways Program that provides grants of up to \$400,000 to educational institutions or nonprofit organizations that partner with businesses to provide training, new jobs, and career paths for low-income people.

Dual-Training Pipeline Grant

In support of the implementation of the [Minnesota Dual-Training Pipeline](#) administered by the MN Department of Labor and Industry (DLI), the 2015 Minnesota Legislature established the [Dual Training Grant](#) administered by the MN Office of Higher Education (OHE). The Dual Training Grant (Minnesota Statutes 136A.246) is a funding source that generates collaborative and strategic educational solutions between employers and related-instruction providers across Minnesota in the industries of advanced manufacturing, agriculture, health care services, and information technology. It pairs on-the-job training with related instruction to generate a

comprehensive platform for learning. Employers, or organizations of employers, may apply for grants to reimburse expenses related to instruction toward attaining an industry-recognized degree, certificate, or credential for their employees.

Concurrent Enrollment

- The Office of Higher Education administers the [Concurrent Enrollment Grant Program](#) to develop new concurrent enrollment courses and expand existing concurrent programs. Concurrent enrollment courses are college courses taught in high school by qualified high school teachers during the regular school day and offered through a partnership between a high school and a college or university. The grant program was established by the 2015 Minnesota Legislature. The most recent 2023 higher education omnibus bill continues to fund the grant program with \$340,000 each year of the 2024-2025 biennium to support the development of new concurrent enrollment courses in career and technical education.
- The Minnesota Department of Education administers the following grant programs related to concurrent enrollment:
 - [Expanded Concurrent Enrollment Grants](#): This grant program provides funding for the development or expansion of concurrent enrollment courses that encourage secondary school students, especially American Indian and students of color, to pursue teaching careers by developing and offering dual-credit postsecondary course options in schools for “Introduction to Teaching” or “Introduction to Education” courses consistent with [Minnesota Statutes 2022, section 124D.09, subdivision 10](#). This program was established by the 2017 Minnesota Legislature and continues to be funded with \$475,000 each year of the 2024-2025 biennium.
 - Statewide Concurrent Enrollment Teacher Training Program: This is a single-source grant for the concurrent enrollment teacher partnership under [Minnesota Statutes, section 122A.76](#). \$375,000 is available each year of the 2024-2025 biennium for the development and implementation of a continuing education program to allow eligible teachers to attain the requisite graduate credits necessary to be qualified to teach concurrent enrollment courses.
 - [Expansion of Rigorous Course Opportunities and Support Grants](#): In 2022, \$3.6 million in federal funding was provided for a three-year grant program through CFDA 84.425U, ARP Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ARP ESSER) Funds to expand access to rigorous course opportunities for students of color, indigenous students, and students with a disability, as well as students in greater Minnesota to prepare and train for career or college. These rigorous courses included: Advanced Placement (AP), International Baccalaureate (IB), and courses provided through Postsecondary Enrollment Options (PSEO), including Early Middle College and

Concurrent Enrollment programs that provide Career Technical Education coursework and/or career pathway opportunities.

Get Ready Program

[Get Ready](#) helps students from low-income backgrounds, indigenous communities, and communities of color realize their aspirations through education and career advancement. Get Ready operates in middle and high schools across multiple districts in Minnesota. Get Ready is funded primarily by the U.S. Department of Education through a federal GEAR UP grant (Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs). The Minnesota Office of Higher Education administers the Program. The federal GEAR UP program has two objectives: 1) student graduation from high school, and 2) student transition into college (including all types of postsecondary institutions) upon high school graduation.

Minnesota State Scholarships

The 2023 legislature established two significant scholarship programs in the Higher Education Bill to increase students' access to postsecondary education. The North Star Promise provides free tuition to students attending a public higher education institution or tribal college. Students with family-adjusted gross income below \$80,000 are eligible. The Minnesota American Indian Scholarships include \$8.5 million each year of the 2024-2025 biennium to provide a first-dollar tuition and fee-free pathway for eligible Minnesota American Indian students to complete an undergraduate education.

Support for Teachers

Several grants were included in the 2023 Minnesota Higher Education Bill to support teachers with funding available for underrepresented teacher candidates, student teaching stipends for low-income students teaching in a license shortage area or rural school district, and teacher loan repayment for teachers who teach in a rural district or license shortage area.

The 2023 K-12 Education Bill included funding focused on recruiting, retaining, and diversifying the teacher workforce. The Minnesota Indian Teacher Training Program (MITTP) Grant provides funding (scholarships or stipends) to assist American Indians in becoming teachers. The bill also appropriated funding for a grant to Black Men Teach to establish partnerships with public elementary schools with the goal of increasing the number of black male teachers to 20% of the teachers at each school site. Finally, grant funding supports Grow Your Own – Teacher Diversity to develop programs that encourage secondary school students, especially students of color and American Indian students, to pursue teaching, allowing funding for PSEO courses for “Introduction to Teaching” or “Introduction to Education.”

B. Describe the state’s strategic vision and set of goals for preparing an educated and skilled workforce (including special populations) and for meeting the skilled workforce needs of employers, including in existing and emerging in-demand industry sectors and occupations as identified by the state, and how the state’s career and technical education programs will help to meet these goals. (Section 122(d)(2) of Perkins v)

As one of the few states submitting a WIOA Combined State Plan, Minnesota has taken a coordinated, unified approach to workforce development. The Governor has proposed a “One Minnesota Plan” with a mission to improve the lives of all Minnesotans by working collaboratively to implement policies that achieve results benefitting all citizens. A key priority is for state agencies and community partners to collaborate to achieve common goals. We are doing that in Minnesota and submitting this revised Perkins V State Plan as part of the Combined WIOA State Plan is a testament to that effort. Note the WIOA State Plan Goals for 2024-2027 and how they mirror Perkins V goals in many ways:

- Increase interagency coordination and alignment around shared goals, maximizing efficiency and coordination of workforce funding and programs and improving system integration, and creating a “no-wrong-door” approach for individuals or employers engaging in the workforce system.
- Build employer-led industry sector partnerships across the state to create or expand responsive and equitable workforce development programs and career pathways with embedded work-based learning or on-the-job training, including Registered Apprenticeships, focused on closing gaps in participation and representation based on race, ethnicity, disability, gender, veteran status, and age.
- Create a more inclusive, equitable, accessible, and proactive workforce system to serve all Minnesotans, preparing employers and the current and emerging workforce for the changing nature of work including new and emerging technology, changing labor market demand, and for the state’s shifting demographics, including our new Minnesotans.

Perkins V goals include many of the same priorities, including interagency coordination and alignment around shared goals which is evident in our secondary/postsecondary partnerships throughout the state to promote CTE programs of study. Indeed, the partnership between Minnesota Department of Education and Minnesota State to bring secondary and postsecondary Career and Technical Education programs and programs of study together is a perfect example of this. Students have clear pathways to transition from secondary to postsecondary to career.

Perkins V is deeply rooted in partnerships between business/industry and education through work-based learning opportunities provided for students, which is so important that Minnesota has chosen participation in work-based learning (5S3) as our Perkins quality indicator. Industry engagement and partnership is a required component of the Perkins V law in identifying and developing career pathways and programs of study. One practical example of this is that by

serving on CTE program advisory committees at the local level, business and industry representatives provide field expertise, guidance, and resources to ensure that CTE programs are reflective of what is currently happening in industry.

Minnesota State has set a critical goal of eliminating the educational equity gaps at every Minnesota State college and university by 2030. This audacious goal requires systems and culture change, innovation, advocacy and leadership, and partners across the state to accomplish. All of this is supported by Perkins V, with its focus on reducing performance gaps for students, especially those who are members of special populations. Through these and other programs in the state, we are all working together for the same goal of meeting workforce needs of the present and the future.

Preparing people for career and life success and meeting the skilled workforce needs of the state requires a close connection among the entities that recruit, support, educate, train, and develop youth and adults. It means ensuring that all individuals possess the knowledge and skills to enter the workforce and have options for strengthening these capabilities over the course of their careers. This preparation and support requires a network of educators, employers, and service providers to make up a local, regional, and state-wide network.

Formulated as part of the transition year's work, Minnesota developed specific statements to guide the Perkins V work. The established vision, mission, and principles for CTE in Minnesota continue to align with the State's WIOA strategic vision, goals, and strategies, underscoring the partnership between the state agencies in this workforce development space. Agency collaboration under the [Minnesota Employment First Policy](#) (E1MN) further supports efforts to prepare a skilled workforce including all Minnesotans.

Below are the vision, mission, principles, and strategic directions for the Minnesota Perkins plan.

Our Vision: Advancing career and technical education empowers every learner to realize a rewarding career.

Our Mission: Quality career and technical education ensures every learner has equitable access to career-connected learning through a network of knowledgeable partners.

Our Principles: We are committed to ensuring:

- An equity lens for all decision-making
- Inclusion of all stakeholders
- Being bold, innovative, and focused on continuous improvement
- Responsiveness to the evolving labor market

The five strategic directions developed by Minnesota State, the Minnesota Department of Education, and the entire planning team validated and guided the work of the Perkins V plan. The Strategic Directions are the following:

Advancing Career and Technical Education

- Comprehensive Needs Assessment
- Accountability
- Outreach
- Awareness and Communication

Career-Connected Learning

- Career Pathways
 - Programs of Study
- Career Preparation
 - Work-based Learning (WBL)

Integrated Network

- Business and Industry
- State and federal programs; state agencies
- Educational Partners
- Consortia/Minnesota State/Minnesota Department of Education

Equity and Inclusion

- Service Partnerships
- Providing resources
- Data/data management

Knowledgeable Experts

- Professional development/technical assistance
- Licensure Preparation Programs
- Mentor/mentee relationships
- Consortia leadership

Our Minnesota focus is on increasing student success by:

- Providing high-quality programs of study connected to high-skill, high-wage, in-demand careers

- Increasing the focus on service to special populations, including the use of statewide Perkins leadership funds and an expansion of community partnerships
- Requiring data-informed decision-making regarding local programs, services, and spending
- Supporting local innovation and program of study improvement through increased reserve funding
- Providing focus and support to recruiting, training, and retaining educational professionals

Preparing students for post-high school graduation opportunities has long been the priority of school districts across the nation; however, the past few decades have generally aimed at “college for all,” with the assumption that “college” means a four-year degree. Our reality is now driven by global economic needs and the challenge to meet domestic and global workforce demands for jobs that require a combination of academic knowledge and technical skills. Of the careers requiring some type of education, a significant number of them are now requiring a two-year technical degree and/or credential or certification. Additionally, occupations need a workforce of life-long learners to keep up-to-date with technology and career area knowledge changes. Current trends are breaking down the silos in which education and workforce sectors often operate, thus leading the Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) to strengthen support to schools and districts in creating the [World’s Best Workforce](#) (WBWF) to ensure that school districts and charter schools in Minnesota enhance student achievement through teaching and learning supports.

MDE has identified the skills and accountability measures of the WBWF, Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), and Career and Technical Education (CTE) and crafted a new vision for career and college readiness with due emphasis on career readiness domains and competencies. This vision has guided the continued implementation of the [Minnesota Career and College Readiness \(CCR\) Resource Guide](#) for schools, students, and partners to use while supporting student learning. Embracing a well-rounded view of education is necessary to drive educational and workforce goals and policies. Taking many perspectives into consideration, MDE developed a holistic vision of career and college readiness:

A sufficiently prepared student is one who has the knowledge, skills, mindset, and experiences in the academic, workplace, and personal/social domains to keep learning and, beyond secondary school, to successfully navigate toward and adapt to an economically viable career.

To prepare an educated and skilled workforce, including special populations, and to meet the skilled workforce needs of employers, including both existing and emerging in-demand industry sectors and occupations as identified by the State, the CCR Resource is one resource to guide schools and districts through holistic school or district program planning decisions. It can be

used either as a systematic guide or as individual pieces that best fit with the current phase of planning or improvement efforts. Four domains and competencies represent Minnesota’s vision of career and college readiness: Employability Skills, Mindsets and Social Awareness, Career Development, and Transitional Knowledge.

MDE is committed to establishing coherence between Perkins, the state CTE Vision, the state CCR Vision, WBWF, and ESSA. For example, one can view the “big picture” of preparing all students for education, training, and careers and where the secondary Perkins performance indicators fit within the identified CCR Resource. Career readiness indicators are measured in the secondary system. All the measures are grounded in the commitment and subsequent measures of equity access, participation, representation, and outcomes for all students.

In summary, Minnesota State and MDE recruit and prepare students in CTE through a progression of educational opportunities for students, teachers, and support staff. The progression aligns with the goals of Perkins V to utilize the CLNA in developing local or regional workforce strategies; supporting the recruitment, preparation, retention, and training of educational professionals; and providing incentives for innovation and improvement of POS. These provisions align with the recognition that rural consortia and consortia with high numbers of CTE students may need additional support to meet the state-determined performance indicators and provide equity of access for all students.

- C. Describe the State’s strategy for any joint planning, alignment, coordination and leveraging of funds between the State’s career and technical education programs and programs of study with the state’s workforce development system, to achieve the strategic vision and goals described in Section 122(d)(2) of Perkins v, including the core programs defined in section 3 of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (29 U.S.C. 3102) and the elements related to system alignment under section 102(b)(2)(b) of such act (29 U.S.C. 3112(b)(2)(b)); and for programs carried out under this title with other federal programs, which may include programs funded under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 and the Higher Education Act of 1965. (section 122(d)(3) of Perkins v)**

As a partner with Minnesota’s Combined State Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) plan, CTE is actively engaged in workforce development planning, coordination, and alignment activities with leadership from both Minnesota State and MDE, partnering with the Governor’s Workforce Development Board (GWDB). The GWDB is responsible for advising the Governor on Minnesota’s workforce system and represents key leaders from business, education, labor, community-based organizations, and government. The GWDB has a statutory responsibility under WIOA, which provides leadership on opportunities and key workforce strategies for the state. The GWDB provides a venue to build a shared vision and mission. The GWDB is mandated and funded by WIOA and further defined by Minn. Stat., Sect. 116L.665.

In addition, state staff contribute to a variety of workforce initiatives and groups. At the regional and local levels, there is cross-planning, alignment, and coordination with Perkins leadership serving on workforce boards and regional workforce personnel serving on the Perkins leadership teams. These relationships are essential to effective and authentic work in completing the comprehensive local needs assessments. As a strong, local-control state, local or regional work is necessary to achieve the core programs and elements related to the system alignment described in Perkins V and WIOA.

[MDE's Adult Education](#) (ABE) Team oversees services to learners not in the K12 education system to provide English language instruction, diploma options, and postsecondary and career preparation. Many Minnesota two-year colleges are partners with ABE providers with programming and support to help adult learners transition into CTE programs upon attainment of their diploma (high school or high school equivalency). Many Adult Education graduates continue their postsecondary education in CTE programs available at postsecondary institutions.

Perkins V reinforces Minnesota State's and MDE's shared common efforts when it comes to engaging with the Governor's Workforce Development Board (GWDC) and other partners to prepare learners to successfully transition to employment or postsecondary opportunities. The Perkins V initiative, along with other partners, including industry associations and business collations such as chambers of commerce and Minnesota State's Centers of Excellence, engage business and industry for work-based learning (WBL) opportunities, participate in and expand sector partnership efforts championed by business and industry, assist with the design of career pathways, and support collaboration with business and industry to increase opportunities for industry-recognized credentials. The shared interests and overlapping goals between CTE and ESSA ensure that the two federally funded programs share responsibility for secondary student success. Additionally, Perkins V and WIOA share the goal of recognized postsecondary credential attainment for learners.

D. Describe how the eligible agency will use State leadership funds made available under section 112(a)(2) of Perkins v for each of the purposes under section 124(a) of the act. See text box 2 for the required uses of state leadership funds under section 124(a) of perkins v. (section 122(d)(7) of Perkins v)

Minnesota will use leadership funds to support initiatives and activities aligned with our strategic directions and the key elements identified in the CLNA that drive Minnesota's local application plans. Our approach builds upon successful practices established in previous CTE state plan initiatives, while also embracing the general authority granted by Perkins V. These state leadership activities are designed to meet the requirements stipulated by the Perkins V. Activities include:

- Offering technical assistance and professional development to eligible recipients in the implementation of Perkins V plans tailored to their unique needs. This is achieved through monthly webinars and scheduled visits – either virtual or in-person – conducted by a dedicated team of secondary and postsecondary state staff.
- Providing incentive grants to eligible recipients utilizing effective practices in preparing non-traditional and special populations students for careers that are high-skill, high-wage, and in-demand. Recipients are asked to share promising practices at the *CTE Works!* state-wide conference and other professional development events.
- Distributing funds through a Request for Proposal (RFP) process aimed at delivering CTE programming within state-run institutions, such as juvenile justice facilities and correctional institutions. Recipients are asked to share promising practices at the *CTE Works!* state-wide conference and other professional development events.
- Convening the annual statewide *CTE Works! Summit*, a high-priority professional development activity bringing together leaders and educators across the full spectrum of education, workforce, industry, and community organizations. This conference stands as a cornerstone event, emphasizing the exchange of innovative ideas, best practices, and fostering growth and excellence in education and industry alike.
- Targeting technical assistance to local Perkins consortia through a statewide Perkins Leaders Meeting. This annual event focuses on changes to federal and state legislative efforts providing professional development and technical assistance to Perkins Coordinators who are responsible for the administration and implementation of the Perkins federal grant.
- Funding initiatives for the recruitment, preparation, and retention of career and technical education teachers, faculty, specialized instructional support personnel, or paraprofessionals.
- Creating more opportunities for secondary teachers to meet the CTE and work-based learning (WBL) licensure and certification requirements.
- Supporting training for state staff on federal requirements, best practices, and skill development to effectively support sub-award recipients.
- Providing state staff time to continuously improve Minnesota Perkins operations, forms, and processes.
- Providing statewide grant management and distribution of funds.

2) Implementing Career and Technical Education Programs and Programs Of Study

- A. Describe the career and technical education programs or programs of study that will be supported, developed, or improved at the state level, including descriptions of the programs of study to be developed at the State level and made available for adoption by eligible recipients. (Section 122(d)(4)(a) of Perkins v)**

Minnesota's Perkins V Plan was built on the solid foundation of a development and review process implemented through Perkins IV. Minnesota established a collaborative system in the State's high school and college Career and Technical Education programs. The current system is organized into 23 local consortia. The consortium model brings together secondary teachers and postsecondary faculty and staff, along with business and industry partners, to guide the development, implementation, and continuous improvement of programs of study. Perkins V is an opportunity for our collaborative system to continue ensuring open communication lines between secondary and postsecondary institutions, as well as balancing the labor market needs of the community, region, and State.

The diversity of Minnesota's economy is a success story. Analysis of current economic growth points to strengths across several sectors—from national competitiveness in agriculture and manufacturing to impressive growth in healthcare and professional business services.

Minnesota's resilient economy provides momentum for continued support of career and technical education programs including programs of study in all 16-career clusters. The framework for this continued work includes:

- Marketing
- Business, Management and Administration
- Hospitality and Tourism
- Finance
- Agriculture, Food, and Natural Resources
- Arts, Audio/Video Technology, and Communication
- Information Technology
- Transportation, Distribution, and Logistics
- Architecture and construction
- Manufacturing
- Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics
- Health Science
- Education and Training

- Human Services
- Government and Public Administration
- Law, Public Safety, Corrections and Security.

The comprehensive local needs assessment assists the local consortium in the prioritization and validation of the economic cluster and related programs of study that meet local or regional needs. These plans will be based on data-driven decisions made with their local and regional partners.

Minnesota has defined a Program of Study (POS) as a coordinated, non-duplicative sequence of academic and technical content at the secondary and postsecondary levels that:

- incorporates challenging State academic standards,
- includes both academic and technical knowledge and skills that are aligned with State- approved frameworks including employability skills,
- is aligned with local and regional needs of current and emerging occupations,
- progresses in specificity (beginning with all aspects of an industry or career cluster) and leads to more occupation-specific instruction,
- has multiple entry and exit points that incorporates credentialing, and
- culminates in the attainment of a recognized postsecondary credential.

Support for the development and implementation of programs of study at the local consortia level is provided through state-approved frameworks, career and college readiness resources, work-based learning (WBL) guides, and intentional professional development with teachers, faculty, and Perkins leadership. In addition, individual technical assistance is provided by state staff of Minnesota State and Minnesota Department of Education. Teachers and faculty review programs to ensure industry aligned competencies and certifications.

B. Describe the process and criteria to be used for approving locally developed programs of study or career pathways (see Text Box 3 for the statutory definition of career pathways under section 3(8) of Perkins V), including how such programs address State workforce development and education needs and the criteria to assess the extent to which the local application under section 132 will—

Minnesota’s school districts and the two-year colleges of Minnesota State were self-formed into Perkins consortia under Perkins IV to promote collaborative planning and implementation of Career and Technical education programs within their regions. The consortia model supports broader engagement within a region as decisions are made to determine which programs of study would best address the workforce needs of the communities.

In identifying initial membership in the State's Perkins consortia, Career and Technical Education leaders were asked to consider the following for their region of the state:

1. Career and Technical Education program improvement
2. Anticipated Programs of Study
3. Dual and concurrent enrollment opportunities
4. Collaborative history and culture
5. High school to college matriculation patterns
6. Geographic proximity
7. Continuation of effective collaborative activities that promote high school to college transition
8. A decision-making model that would equitably and effectively address Career and Technical Education programming.

As the state continues to implement the Strengthening Career and Technical Education in the 21st Century Act (Perkins V), the consortia model will be the system of delivery for quality Career and Technical Education including addressing workforce development needs and education goals by approving and assessing quality programs of study.

i. promote continuous improvement in academic achievement and technical skill attainment;

Initially Minnesota formed five work groups aligned with the strategic directions to guide our implementation of Perkins V: Advancing CTE, Career-Connected Learning, Integrated Network, Equity and Inclusion, and Knowledgeable Experts. The purpose of the Career-Connected Learning Work Group was to provide recommendations and decisions that re-set/guided the state in career pathway development from career exploration to employment. Career Connected Learning provided context to core academics through integrated, applied and experiential learning with an exposure to Career and Technical Education and a balanced secondary and postsecondary experience. One of the goals of the group included the development of a checklist and two rubrics that defined the minimum criteria for State-recognized programs of study, the second identified strengths or potential opportunities in their State-recognized Programs of Study, and the third provided measures for continuous improvement for all programs of study. The minimum criteria rubric advanced and refined the previous Rigorous Program of Study checklist that Minnesota implemented in 2012, the MDE program approval guidelines, and the quality standards from the research of national organizations including Advance CTE.

The elements of the rubric (*State-Recognized Programs of Study Guide* on the [Public Comment Notice](#) webpage) to meet the minimum standard for a State-recognized CTE program of study include the following:

1. Course standards accurately align to the academic, technical, and employability skills learners must master for entry and success in a given career pathway: Content standards, frameworks and competencies define what students are expected to know and be able to do to enter and advance in college and/or careers comprise the foundation of a POS.
2. Program of Study incorporates active involvement from an integrated network of partners: Ongoing relationships among education, business, and diverse community partners bolster POS design, implementation, evaluation and maintenance.
3. Secondary program(s) meets MDE program approval requirements and incorporates courses that lead to postsecondary credits/credentials: Secondary programs have appropriately-licensed teachers and advisory committees, develop and ensure access to equitable student leadership opportunities, and provide career exploration activities leading to postsecondary credits/credentials.
4. Postsecondary academic program meets Minnesota State board policy and Higher Learning Commission requirements: A cohesive arrangement of college-level for-credit courses and experiences, designed to accomplish predetermined objectives, lead to the awarding of a degree, diploma, or certificate.
5. Materials, Equipment and Resources: Facilities, equipment, technology and materials used in the program of study reflect current workplace, industry and/or occupational standards and practices for installation, use, maintenance, and safety.
6. Incorporates authentic work experiences at the secondary and/or postsecondary level that are valued by industry: POS engage students in authentic work-based learning experiences that demonstrate progressive occupational learning aligned to industry workforce needs.
7. Program of Study development, improvement and advocacy are supported by findings from a comprehensive local needs assessment: Systems and strategies for gathering, analyzing, and disseminating needs assessment data are effective for guiding the improvement of POS, and available in plain language to promote POS.

A consortium has a minimum requirement of six state-recognized programs of study. The process for approval of CTE programs of study begins with secondary program approval by the Minnesota Department of Education (MDE). Approved secondary programs are then reviewed by MDE on a 5-year revolving schedule. At the postsecondary level, initial program approval for new CTE college programs is completed by the Minnesota State System Office. Follow-up program review is conducted at the campus level according to Minnesota State and college

policies and procedures according to accreditation standards. All consortia submit their programs of study for review on an annual basis as part of the local application for funding. The continuous improvement efforts of the local consortia are documented using the POS Continuous Improvement rubric.

Postsecondary

Minnesota State program approval policy:

[Board of Trustee Policy 3.36 Academic Programs](#)

Part 6. Academic Program Approval

Approval of the chancellor is required for new academic programs, changes to existing academic programs, suspension of academic programs, and closure of academic programs at system colleges and universities.

An approved academic program shall include curricular requirements for earning an academic award, such as credits in general education, a major and/or minor, and all prerequisite courses. The Minnesota State system office shall maintain the academic program inventory and the Office of the Chancellor shall annually report to the Board of Trustees on the status of the inventory. The annual report to the Board will include data and analysis of programs measured against program goals established by the Office of the Chancellor. The goals will be based on aligning program offerings to workforce needs statewide, regionally, and locally in collaboration with the Department of Employment and Economic Development and the Governor's Workforce Development Board (GWDB), including data from the State Demographer. Only academic programs approved by the Chancellor as recorded in the academic program inventory may be offered by Minnesota State colleges and universities.

Secondary

Minnesota Department of Education [Program Approval](#)

Districts, Intermediates, Cooperatives, and Charter Schools submit a Program Approval Form to the Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) if they are:

- Applying for a new program.
- Making updates to an existing program.
- Districts up for five-year renewal.

The programs and courses listed within a district's Program Approval Database are the programs and courses that will be reported to MDE in the P-file (Perkins data submission). All programs receive review conducted by the Minnesota Department of Education on a five-year cycle.

- ii. **expand access to career and technical education for special populations; and**

The Perkins V strategies to meet the challenges of our special populations come from the analysis at the local or regional level derived from the CLNA and performance gap data. Local consortia are required to document and evaluate how their intentional activities expand access to Career and Technical Education (CTE) for special populations as identified in the comprehensive local needs assessment. The State continues to provide professional development to consortia as defined by the *Strengthening Career and Technical Education for the 21 Century Act*, consortia data review and analysis, applicable national research projects, and recommendations for interventions.

A newly launched [Equity Scorecard](#) developed by the Minnesota State Office of Equity and Inclusion and the Institutional Research Team help to understand the size and scope of inequities across our campuses and system using key performance indicators. The Equity Scorecard provides another lens to understand the disparities in student success and other key performance indicators that may be aligned to the Perkins CTE performance indicators. This tool has the potential to be leveraged with CTE data to identify action steps that support the success of our underrepresented CTE students by recognizing institutional factors.

The State will continue to support set-aside funding for services to corrections and disabilities for youth and adult populations through competitive community grants and collaborative efforts. These efforts should increase and strengthen partnerships that:

- ensure equitable support for learners to access and persist in training and job preparation;
- foster collaboration for access, equity, and inclusiveness for youth and adult learners with disabilities or those who are justice-involved across agencies and community partners;
- share practices and scale initiatives that address challenges in education and work readiness of those individuals served;
- expand the diversification of collaboration with educators, counselors, coaches, and community service providers that help prepare individuals from marginalized communities for employment and postsecondary career and technical education (CTE).

A component of providing *access for all* to programs is the Office of Civil Rights compliance requirements. Minnesota has demonstrated a long-standing commitment to equity and ensuring that members of special populations are provided equal access to programs. Each year Minnesota State conducts a minimum of four Office of Civil Rights (OCR) compliance reviews. The major purposes of the OCR Compliance Review are to ensure that community colleges are providing equal access to CTE through vigorous enforcement of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, Section 504 of the Vocational Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and Title II of The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). In addition to conducting a minimum of four local OCR On-Site Compliance Reviews each year, Minnesota

State provides ongoing technical assistance to community college staff members on equal access.

The Minnesota Department of Education is required to submit to the United States Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights (OCR), a Biennial Civil Rights Compliance Report. It is MDE's responsibility to conduct comprehensive on-site reviews of school districts to address issues of discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex and disability in vocational education programs. Specialists with the Compliance and Assistance Division within the Minnesota Department of Education will review Minnesota school districts on a cyclic time frame.

iii. support the inclusion of employability skills in programs of study and career pathways. (Section 122(d)(4)(B) of Perkins V)

Employability skills are a required component of curriculum and instruction in all career and technical programs, and are addressed and validated through the inclusion of work-based learning (WBL) experiences within programs of study and career pathways and all aspects of MDE's Career and College Readiness work.

WBL provides students the opportunity to become engaged with occupations, employers, and career pathways. There is significant importance for both secondary and postsecondary students to participate in WBL opportunities. The experience gives students a first-hand look into prospective or chosen careers as well as experience in developing employability skills. Students can participate in career exploration to full immersion either in or outside of the traditional school setting. This rich experience for students helps guide them to well-suited career choices. The state supports the local consortium's implementation of WBL in the programs of study. One of the minimum requirements for State-recognized Program of Study recognition by the state is the inclusion of a WBL opportunity for students. The state supports WBL at the consortium level by providing funding to the consortium to both develop and improve these opportunities for students and provide for professional development and technical assistance.

Opportunities to build career awareness, explore careers, and develop employability, critical thinking and problem-solving skills are provided through work-based learning (WBL) experiences. Local consortia have a range of WBL strategies in programs of study, including simulation, portfolio development, and capstones or employer-aligned experiences such as industry speakers and tours, job shadows, internships, project work, or field experience. WBL is an instructional strategy within the continuum of experiential learning (p. 8, [Work-Based Learning Handbook](#)), which involves an appropriately licensed teacher through the Minnesota Professional Educator Licensing and Standards Board (PELSB), who closely supervises the worksite activities, convenes an advisory committee, and is responsible for the required

Training Plan, Training Agreement, safety training, seminar course, evaluation of student competencies, and recordkeeping.

The work-based learning (WBL) experience is connected to CTE coursework within a career pathway and the career and technical student organizations (when available) of the career pathway, including, but not exclusively, the WBL career seminar. Training Plans for a particular work experience detail the scope and sequence of occupational competencies and employability skills for entering an occupation or postsecondary education. If a student completes multiple work experiences, the training plan should include a progression of acquisition of higher-level competencies. Each student participating in an employer-aligned WBL opportunity must have a training plan prepared by the WBL coordinator and the employer, with competencies identified by the team. These identified competencies must match proposed deliverables/outcomes specified in the training agreement for an identified employment opportunity. Training plans are required to be kept on file at the local school district and be available for review upon request.

This array of opportunities provides Minnesota students with strategies to become career ready. Students with disabilities have opportunities to participate in WBL, however, there may be times when students with disabilities will require specially designed instruction to meet their educational needs. If an Individualized Education Program (IEP) team determines that is an appropriate service, the district may access additional state funding to modify curriculum and purchase special equipment for students with disabilities enrolled in a WBL program. To be eligible for this funding a district must have an approved Access to Career and Technical Education-Special Education (ACTE-SPED) WBL program. WBL experiences provide students with opportunities to build career awareness, explore careers, employability skills, and develop critical thinking and problem-solving skills.

Minnesota has codified employability skills within its definition of career and college readiness. Career and college readiness is defined by Minnesota Statutes, section 120B.30, as:

For purposes of statewide accountability, 'career and college ready' means a high school graduate has the knowledge, skills, and competencies to successfully pursue a career pathway, including postsecondary credit leading to a degree, diploma, certificate, or industry-recognized credential and employment. Students who are career and college ready are able to successfully complete credit-bearing coursework at a two- or four-year college or university or other credit bearing postsecondary program without need for remediation.

- C. Describe how the eligible agency will—**
 - i. make information on approved programs of study and career pathways (including career exploration, work-based learning opportunities, early college high schools, and dual or concurrent enrollment program opportunities) and guidance and**

advisement resources, available to students (and parents, as appropriate), representatives of secondary and postsecondary education, and special populations, and to the extent practicable, provide that information and those resources in a language students, parents, and educators can understand;

At the state level, career pathway inventories are available through [MN Programs of Study](#) with information on college credit options, career exploration resources, and the full listing of programs of study by high school, college, career, or pathway. The pathways can be sorted by any of the listed fields. Consortia make more in-depth, local career pathway information available to students, parents, teachers, and faculty.

ii. facilitate collaboration among eligible recipients in the development and coordination of career and technical education programs and programs of study and career pathways that include multiple entry and exit points;

The State is committed to providing support to local consortia and partners to build career pathways that demonstrate the opportunity for multiple entry and exit points. The availability of multiple entry and exit points provides the opportunity for students to enter a career pathway at various stages in their educational experience. The State does not have the authority to mandate to colleges or high schools the structure of the programs and the creation of degree options. However, the State does collectively encourage programs to structure credential attainment in a stackable format. This allows students to enter and stop-out at various life points without losing previously obtained experience as well as provide opportunities for students to gain both experience in the industry and educational experiences. This includes the ability of singular institutions to offer only portions of a program because of limited physical or human resources. The state encourages collaboration and partnerships between educational institutions to provide credential attainment in a variety of ways and encourages institutions to honor transfers, articulations, dual enrollment agreements, and award credits for prior learning experiences, or competency-based education.

Some circumstances are beyond the control of the CTE units and are governed by other regulatory agencies such as regional accreditation (HLC), state statute, or board of trustee policy. Programs of study provide students with opportunities to stack their credentials and earn credits for prior educational or work experiences. This may be a degree completion or preparation for completion of an industry recognized credential or re-certification. Institutions are developing programs that have smaller parsed courses that allow students to enroll in courses (or parts) that are needed to complete credentials without having to “re-enroll” and participate in programs that are not needed because of experience or educational completions.

The State reviews all State-recognized Programs of Study and provides technical assistance to re-design programs to include multiple entry and exit points. The Continuous Improvement Rubric for “program quality” is aligned with Minnesota State, MDE, and the program approval process for schools to self-evaluate the quality of their programs and programs of study in their school district’s (not a state evaluation tool). One of the metrics in this tool is to review the

multiple entry and exit points. There are many efforts throughout Minnesota State to enhance the entry and exit points in career pathways for various populations such as Veterans and ex-offenders.

Minnesota requires consortia formation between secondary and postsecondary. This obligates partners to collaborate on the development of a joint local Perkins application. This application details how each consortium will use funds to develop, coordinate, and implement CTE programs and programs of study. This requirement by the state has been a successful tool in having eligible recipients work together to leverage resources. Efforts to coordinate and improve State-recognized Programs of Study include consortia collaboration with secondary, postsecondary, [Adult Basic Education](#) (ABE), and workforce agencies.

The State supports application and plan development by monitoring and providing feedback on each local plan. In addition, the annual Perkins leadership meetings are designed to support local consortia coordinators with time to network and share learning. Professional development includes sessions on fiscal collaboration with other revenue streams and partners.

The alignment of secondary and postsecondary professional development provides an opportunity to merge work around multiple entry and exit points. For instance, State-recognized Programs of Study are designed to move students through secondary and postsecondary courses in a particular industry. Although this is a good model, it limits access for adult learners, dislocated workers, and others. The only entry point they have is postsecondary and, unfortunately, too many end up in developmental education instead of postsecondary coursework.

A recent federal law, [Ability to Benefit](#) (ATB), allows individuals who don't have a high school diploma, GED, or equivalent to receive federal grants, loans, and work-study funding to help pay for college. Minnesota State was approved in August 2022 to begin implementing this program. Seven Minnesota State colleges and universities now participate in creating greater access to higher education in career and technical education pathways for adult learners who find themselves without a high school diploma or equivalent.

- iii. **use State, regional, or local labor market data to determine alignment of eligible recipients' programs of study to the needs of the State, regional, or local economy, including in-demand industry sectors and occupations identified by the State board, and to align career and technical education with such needs, as appropriate;**

Each consortium is required to conduct local and regional needs assessment throughout the state on a biennial basis. The state utilizes the data collected from local and regional needs assessment to influence conversation at regional levels. This provides some data required to make informed decisions about State-recognized Programs of Study. The State also has several

resources to align State-recognized Programs of Study to local and regional labor market data. State staff developed a process for conducting an analysis of consortium programs of study. This analysis helps consortia determine which programs of study are offered throughout their region. Perkins state leadership conduct professional development for the consortia leaders and provide technical assistance to utilize a variety of labor market data resources to triangulate both quantitative and qualitative data to analyze what programs are vital to the region. Regional labor market data assists consortium leadership in determining how to support the programs that are deemed high-wage, high-skill, or in-demand and how to align programs to meet the needs of the local needs assessment. There are many resources and collaborations occurring throughout the state to address occupations that are deemed high-wage, high-skill, or in-demand. For example, manufacturing and health care continue to rise to the top as in-demand careers in labor market data information. The state will continue supporting partnerships and collaboration between students, community, and employers in these fields.

Funding sources may be directed to consortia to examine and implement the use of current technology, equipment, or training aids that align directly to local, regional, state, and national standards within the economy. Consortia applications document how they have determined what these needs are and how they came to these conclusions with the support of advisory committees. Programs that do not meet the local needs assessment or the definitions of size, scope and quality may need to seek other sources of funds for equipment or materials to maintain programs.

iv. ensure equal access to approved career and technical education programs of study and activities assisted under this Act for special populations;

The State will continue to ensure equal access to approved career and technical education for all students with evidence-based practices proven to be successful in the state. Access to Career Technical Education-Special Education (ACTE-SPED) aid is available for contracted services and special equipment to enable students to access CTE courses. Information is disseminated to consortia so that they can continue to access this aid. The State collaborates with consortium leaders to identify best practices for educational program delivery to diverse populations across large geographic boundaries. This includes guidance for small institutions with limited economic means for delivering needed career and technical education programs because of factors that are beyond the State's ability to control.

Campus Accessibility Coordinators continue to be a resource for postsecondary transition and technical assistance for addressing the needs of students with disabilities. State and national partnerships that provide sources of technical assistance and professional development for postsecondary CTE leaders include: The Minnesota Institute for Community Integration, the Minnesota Inclusive in Higher Education Consortium hosted by the University of Minnesota and Think College Career & Technical Assistance CTE Affinity group.

The availability of resources can be scarce in extremely rural regions. In addition, the diversity of career and technical programs offered in the consortia is vastly different. One of the elements of the local needs assessment reviews the issues of access to special populations.

This provides regional data for the consortia to determine strategies on closing the gap associated with access and opportunities for students in special populations.

Equity gap analysis tools developed by NAPE and Advance CTE are shared with consortia to help identify gaps or barriers for special populations' access to career and technical education. Gap analysis allows the state and local consortia to determine strategic approaches to reducing or eliminating barriers to career and technical educational programming. The state will continue to provide incentive funding for consortia to improve access and opportunity to special populations and to those that have been able to improve and maintain proven career and technical programming and related activities.

The State encourages local consortia to establish stronger working relationships with community-based organizations and adult basic education to expand career and technical opportunities to underserved populations as defined in the law. The state will continue to support consortia efforts to expand career and technical education offerings beyond the traditional school building. This includes distance delivery of education through various modalities and utilization of industry supported facilities to eliminate one of the physical barriers. It is evident that many of the barriers to access are caused by the lack of career and technical education teacher licensure or credentialing opportunities. Multiple initiatives are in place to address CTE teacher shortages.

The State continues to fund support services for students with a variety of needs and provide opportunities for students of all abilities to participate in career and technical education wherever practical and applicable. Professional development for educators is provided to aid in the development of curriculum and programs to meet the needs of learners of all ability levels.

- v. coordinate with the State board to support the local development of career pathways and articulate processes by which career pathways will be developed by local workforce development boards, as appropriate;**

Local workforce development boards participate in all CTE work in Minnesota and the extent of the involvement is locally controlled. At minimum, workforce development board members participate in the CLNA. The Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED) regional labor market analysts and career pathway counselors are active participants in this work. The [Career Pathways Tool](#) developed and hosted by DEED is utilized to connect educational programming with labor market data to help align educational outcomes with the employment opportunities. The interactive tool provides access to state-wide or regional exploration of career fields and cluster employment projections, the education demand in these occupations, and wage data. Local and regional relationships exist between the regional career pathway specialists to assist in providing information for educational programming and career advisement for our learners.

Consortia members participate in career and technical education advisory boards. Workforce center personnel are also part of the local Perkins governance teams in many consortia. Correspondingly, many of our consortia leaders serve on their regional or local workforce development boards.

Minnesota State and Minnesota Department of Education have separate processes for developing and approving career and technical education programs and each State agency has the authority to approve or deny the application based on a variety of criteria. This process does not discriminate between career and technical education or general education programs. The state currently requires consortia to possess six State-recognized Programs of Study. The state does not dictate or mandate that certain consortia offer certain programs. The consortia determine which pathways are best suited to meet the needs of the students and the region. Secondary and postsecondary approval requires the engagement of a local advisory committee in the ongoing delivery of CTE programs. The State provides resources for programs to utilize in the creation of local advisory committees. Finally, labor market data is required to support the creation of postsecondary career pathways.

Once programs are completed and approved, the program is required to participate in a program review process. State-recognized Programs of Study are reviewed annually to ensure all the required components exist. The State also strongly encourages the participation in State career pathway collaborative meetings where secondary teachers, postsecondary faculty, and industry experts develop, edit, and approve competencies and assessments to validate the skills needed for entering graduates.

The State continues to review processes to improve the performance in the areas of career pathway development, program of study development, and local workforce board and education collaboration and partnership. In addition to these mentioned strategies, consortia throughout the State conduct local needs assessments and evaluate the findings. This process influences the decisions to add, improve, modify, or delete career pathways and/or state approved programs of study. It also influences postsecondary program modification through involvement of established workforce boards.

As part of the development of a continuous improvement rubric, one metric includes evaluating the level of engagement by local workforce boards. The metric evaluates industry and workforce board involvement in the establishment and modifications of career pathways to meet local needs assessments and the needs of the local workforce development boards.

- vi. **support effective and meaningful collaboration between secondary schools, postsecondary institutions, and employers to provide students with experience in, and understanding of, all aspects of an industry, which may include work-based**

learning such as internships, mentorships, simulated work environments, and other hands-on or inquiry-based learning activities; and

The State places a strong emphasis on the incorporation of work-based learning (WBL), mentoring, internships, and simulated work environments into career pathways as part of State-recognized Programs of Study. Many consortia have developed strong collaborations or partnerships with business and industries to provide experiential learning opportunities for students. Consortia provide opportunities for students to engage with business and industry on a variety of levels from exploration to employment in various stages of their education. Engagement with industry experts offers teachers and faculty the opportunity to learn alongside the students, including access to externships to learn more about relevant industry skills to teach students.

One of the metrics the State has examined is the incorporation of work-based learning (WBL) for students as a program quality indicator. This may include simulated work environments such as health care simulation laboratories or other simulated industry experiences. The State continues to investigate the impact of requiring that all identified State-recognized Programs of Study (which includes both the secondary and postsecondary levels) provide the opportunity for some form of WBL for students including youth apprenticeships, internships, co-operative experiences, clinical and practicum experiences, entrepreneurships, work simulations, or other forms of WBL. In addition, every State-recognized Program of Study already includes career exploration, preparation, and guidance provided by both educators and industry professionals. Several of the consortia are using Perkins funding to provide opportunities for rigorous, long-term, and sustained career exploration with hands-on experiences that are relevant and current in the industry. The state will continue to provide technical support and professional development for these types of WBL opportunities. In addition, Minnesota State, Minnesota departments of Education, Employment and Economic Development, and Human Services partner to provide secondary schools with collaborative guidance to ensure that WBL experiences meet requirements of WIOA, Olmstead and other labor laws.

The state provides technical assistance, evidence-based practice, and resources on proven strategies for local school districts and colleges to implement more and create new WBL experiences for students.

vii. improve outcomes and reduce performance gaps for CTE concentrators, including those who are members of special populations. (Section 122(d)(4)(C) of Perkins V)

Secondary and postsecondary reports highlighting performance gaps are made available to local recipients to help prioritize needs in the CLNA and application process. Technical assistance is provided to help interpret performance data and develop strategies to improve outcomes and reduce performance gaps for CTE concentrators. In addition, the state prioritizes the use of Reserve funds to address performance gaps.

The state continues to link CTE coursework to hands-on relevant work-based learning (WBL) experiences, using a scaffolded framework of employability skills development as part of the

work experience seminar. The enhanced connection to WBL and development of employability skills has the potential to increase student retention, engagement, graduation rates and academic performance.

Consortia continue to be encouraged to strengthen intentional connections to regional workforce development centers within consortia and local school districts to identify workforce skill training needs for all students/workers including special population students. Programs of study are reviewed for their responsiveness to local needs assessments and delivered with fidelity to address workforce and workplace needs.

D. Describe how the eligible agency, if it opts to do so, will include the opportunity for secondary school students to participate in dual or concurrent enrollment programs, early college high school, or competency-based education. (Section 122(d)(4)(d) of Perkins v)

Minnesota has been increasing postsecondary opportunities for students through multiple approaches and offers dual enrollment opportunities for students under the [Postsecondary Education Options \(PSEO\) Act](#), which includes postsecondary courses taught at the college and/or at the high school through Concurrent Enrollment. By participating in these dual enrollment options, high school students complete both high school graduation requirements and college requirements that allow for greater flexibility when they enter the postsecondary setting full-time. Students may benefit from cost-savings and shorter time-to-credential. State law and consortium regional articulation agreements support planning and funding early college opportunities and ease the transition from secondary to postsecondary.

Eligibility for secondary students to access PSEO on a college campus includes participation in postsecondary CTE programs for 10th, 11th, and 12th grade students. Transcripts at the secondary and postsecondary levels document course completion. Tuition, fees, and books for PSEO students who earn dual credit are paid by the Minnesota Department of Education to the colleges and universities in which PSEO students are enrolled. The state also provides support to pay the cost of transportation for low-income students attending college courses on a postsecondary campus. In addition to financial provisions to support access to college course-taking opportunities for students, policy holds both institutional partners accountable for offering support services to students both prior to and during enrollment in the PSEO program.

The Minnesota Department of Education developed a [Postsecondary Enrollment Options Reference Guide](#), updated November 2021, which provides definitions of postsecondary options, eligibility of students, and participation requirements including students with Individualized Education Programs (IEP). The guide also includes information for students, parents, districts, and postsecondary institutions. The Minnesota Automated Reporting Student System (MARSS) collects enrollment and demographic student data using a unique student identification system. The system allows MDE to track student enrollment and postsecondary enrollment option participants.

Minnesota's Concurrent Enrollment partnerships offer thousands of Minnesota students access to rigorous college courses at their local high school. Research shows that high school students who participate in accelerated learning options, such as concurrent enrollment, benefit greatly from:

- Exposure to high expectations.
- Participation in challenging courses.
- The momentum gained by earning college credits while still in high school.

Minnesota's Concurrent Enrollment program has one of the most extensive policy structures in the country to support high school instructors teaching college courses. All concurrent enrollment programs must adopt and implement the National Alliance of Concurrent Enrollment Partnership's (NACEP) program standards and receive accreditation (Minn. Stat. 124D.091, Subd.1). Secondary and postsecondary institutions are required to sign a concurrent enrollment agreement that provides for the following assurances: determination of qualifications and responsibilities of high school instructors; postsecondary supports for instructors, resources needed to support teaching and learning; regular communication and professional development between postsecondary faculty and high school instructors; and approval of high school instructors to teach college courses by the college or university partner.

Partnerships developed between university faculty and high school teachers provide learning and training opportunities that may not otherwise exist. Additionally, concurrent enrollment students stay at the high school instead of leaving to attend classes at a university. This allows the student to continue their learning within their high school community and eliminates the transportation barrier that might be experienced if the student needs to travel to the local college. Finally, through participation in concurrent enrollment, high schools establish themselves as education leaders by setting high standards, providing outstanding offerings, and preparing students for the 21st century.

All twenty-six two-year colleges in the Minnesota State system participate in dual enrollment and offer these opportunities to high school students. In 2022, over 46,500 high school students gained over 448,000 college credits via dual enrollment, and participation in dual enrollment has grown by 62% since 2013. This statistic includes career and technical educational coursework.

Professional development is an essential part of successful dual enrollment activities. The Minnesota State system office provides a variety of professional development opportunities for internal staff and external partners specific to dual enrollment opportunities and requirements. Monthly webinars for campus concurrent enrollment directors include sharing best practices, providing policy guidance, and presenting information relevant to effective program implementation. Additionally, Minnesota's NACEP-affiliated chapter, Minnesota Concurrent Enrollment Partnerships (MnCEP), offers annual winter and summer conferences, providing

opportunities to learn more about NACEP standards, how to implement them, and how to prepare a strong portfolio for accreditation.

For PSEO programming, where high school students take college courses on the college campus, bi-monthly PSEO Connect meetings and an annual summer convening provide professional development opportunities for college program coordinators and staff on the specific program needs of this model. Technical assistance is provided as specialized support for PSEO programming with students enrolled in the state-approved alternative high schools.

Two major challenges persist with dual enrollment:

1. The barriers created by the misalignment of secondary teacher licensure requirements and postsecondary minimum qualifications in the same or similar content areas.
 2. The recruitment and support of nonwhite students into dual enrollment opportunities.
- E. Describe how the eligible agency will involve parents, academic and career and technical education teachers, administrators, faculty, career guidance and academic counselors, local businesses (including small businesses), labor organizations, and representatives of Indian Tribes and Tribal organizations, as appropriate, in the planning, development, implementation, and evaluation of its career and technical education programs. (Section 122 (d)(12) of Perkins V)**

The groups listed in Section 122(d)(12) of Perkins V continue to be engaged in the planning, development, implementation, and evaluation of career and technical education programs through the established CLNA process. In addition, one of the minimum requirements of State-Recognized Programs of Study is to engage an integrated network of partners. These groups assist with identifying and prioritizing local needs in the CLNA process. Participating as members of secondary and postsecondary advisory committees, the groups assist in the development and continuous improvement of programs of study. All Programs of Study are published on the [Minnesota State Programs of Study Search](#) webpage to increase awareness of programs offered to members of the public.

- F. Include a copy of the local application template that the eligible agency will require eligible recipients to submit pursuant to section 134(b) of Perkins V. See text box 4 for the statutory requirements for local applications under section 134(b) of Perkins V.**

In compliance with section 134(b) of Perkins V the local application template was developed for the original Perkins V plan. The template has been revised and updated based on user feedback. The final document will be submitted to OCTAE with the 2024 State Plan. The current draft of the *Local Perkins Application Template* is on the [Public Comment](#) webpage.

- 1. Include a copy of the comprehensive local needs assessment template and/or guidelines that the eligible agency will require of eligible recipients to meet the requirements of section 134(c) of Perkins V. See text box 5 for the requirements for the comprehensive local needs assessment under section 134(c) of Perkins V.**

To meet the requirements of section 134(c) of Perkins V the Comprehensive Local Needs Assessment Guide and Framework have been developed for the original Perkins V plan. The CLNA Framework has been revised and updated based on user feedback. The final document will be submitted to OCTAE with the 2024 State Plan. The current draft of the *Comprehensive Local Needs Assessment Framework* is on the [Public Comment](#) webpage.

- 2. Provide the eligible agency's definition for "size, scope, and quality" that will be used to make funds available to eligible recipients pursuant to section 135(b) of Perkins V.**

For the implementation of this updated Perkins V plan, Minnesota has reviewed its criteria for defining consortia using the lens of size, scope, and quality. The consortium's configuration moving forward will need to meet the criteria below:

Criterion 1: Membership:

- Minimum of one school district plus one postsecondary Minnesota State College

Criterion 2: Programs of Study

- Minimum of 6 State-recognized Programs of Study
 - Of these 6 POS, a minimum of 4 career fields must be represented
 - All components of 3 of the 4 POS by career field must be provided within the consortium

Criterion 3: Student Enrollment

- Greater than 1,000 CTE participants at the secondary level
- Greater than 1,800 FYE at the postsecondary level

The definitions and headcount used for participants and FYE are based on 2023 academic numbers.

Criterion 4: Consortia Allocation

- Federal legislation requires that no consortium receive less than \$50,000.
- If, by formula, a consortium would receive less than this amount, they would need to reconfigure their constituency to remain viable.

Minnesota defines size, scope, and quality at the program level as documented below. However, the State will continue to review and potentially revise these components as we collect information from the comprehensive local needs assessments.

Size

- Size is the most context-dependent variable, so specific numbers are not provided. This includes parameters/resources that affect whether the program can adequately address student-learning outcomes, such as:
 - Number of students within a program
 - Number of instructors/staff involved with the program
 - Number of courses within a program
 - Available resources for the program (space, equipment, supplies)

Scope

- Programs of study are part of or working toward inclusion within a clearly defined career pathway with multiple entry and exit points (minimum of 6 State-Recognized Programs of Study offered within a consortium).
- Programs of study are aligned with local workforce needs and skills.
- Postsecondary programs connect with secondary career and technical education via articulation agreements and/or dual credit, etc.
- Programs develop not only specific work-based skills, but also broadly applicable employability skills.

Quality

- A program must meet two out of the following three criteria: the program develops (1) high-skilled individuals, (2) individuals who are competitive for high-wage jobs, and (3) individuals who are trained for in-demand occupations.
 - High-skilled: programs that result in industry-recognized certificates, credentials, or degrees
 - High-wage: a high wage is anything that is above the median wage for all occupations (\$47,986 based on 2021 data from the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development)
 - In-demand: occupations identified in DEED's [Occupations in Demand](#) and/or through local needs assessment.
- A program or activity must work toward closing student equity gaps in access and completion (e.g., reducing barriers to students, implementing guided pathways, providing recruitment).

- A program must work toward effectively using data to inform and improve student learning.
- Approved programs meet the requirements of MDE or Minnesota State policies and rules.
- Implementation of a continuous program improvement process approved in the local application.
- Activities must support or be collaborations with POS.

Waivers to uses of funds that do not meet the size, scope, and quality criteria at the consortia or local level will be handled on an individual basis at the time of the local application review or as consortia make requests to change their original submissions.

1) Meeting The Needs Of Special Populations

A. Describe the eligible agency’s program strategies for special populations, including a description of how individuals who are members of special populations—

i. will be provided with equal access to activities assisted under this Act;

All Minnesota students deserve high-quality learning opportunities that lead to workforce readiness and access to further learning. The pursuit of educational equity recognizes the historical conditions and barriers that have prevented opportunity and success in learning for students based on their race, gender, language, disability, income, and other social conditions. All stakeholders must work intentionally and collaboratively to correct these realities. Our Perkins principles state that we are committed to ensuring an equity lens for all decision-making. Minnesota’s World’s Best Workforce, the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), and Minnesota’s Commitments to Equity require meaningful inclusion of all students in the system and holding every public school accountable for the outcomes of each student group.

Equity is different from equality. Although equality demands that everyone is treated the same, equity recognizes the unique identity of a student that is too often impacted by racism, bigotry, or bias. Equity corrects these realities through conversations, actions, and distribution or redistribution of resources based on individual and group needs to eliminate structures and barriers to ensure equitable outcomes. By eliminating systemic barriers and biases, well-implemented Career and College Readiness (CCR) programs improve outcomes for underserved students and benefit everyone. Commitments to equity provide the framework for school- and district-level actions that will result in greater access, participation, representation, and attainment of CCR skills for all students.

Applying specifically to Perkins funded activities, all local consortia applications are reviewed by Minnesota State and Minnesota Department of Education staff to ensure that discrimination against members of special populations in learning, student recruitment and support services,

and physical accessibility is not apparent in written goals, objectives, strategies, or policies. It is an expectation that each local consortium will identify how the needs of special populations of students will be met to ensure that each learner can be successful and experience the same rigorous career and technical education programs leading to high skill, high wage, or in-demand occupations.

Minnesota will continue to emphasize developing strategies that focus not just on prioritizing student recruitment but also on adopting evidence-based approaches and resources that ensure learner success. This work includes three broad categories:

1. Shared Practices
 - a. Sharing practices for supporting students in special populations, especially students with disabilities, English language learners, the homeless, and non-traditional CTE programs. Outreach through campuses and community-industry partnerships, for example, will be utilized to educate local consortia and support partnerships for communities of practice to address equity in CTE programs.
 - b. Provide professional development to educators and faculty--through our annual CTE conference, webinars, and other venues-- on effective tools and strategies for supporting learners and ensuring equity and access to effective support services, without regard to race, color, national origin, gender or (dis)ability.
 2. Technical Assistance
 - a. Provide support to institutions challenged with performance or compliance areas by hosting technical assistance sessions, resources, etc., to address their challenges and ensure the success of special populations.
 - b. Provide one-on-one consultation or other assistance to address barriers to access and participation in CTE programs. Partnerships from local and national sources are leveraged to examine equity challenges, priorities, and research.
 3. Partner Engagement
 - a. Extend outreach to include community and industry input on meaningful and quality CTE opportunities and experiential learning. Provide opportunities for funding through an RFP grant process to support these efforts and scale practices.
 - b. Active engagement and participation with Minnesota State committees and other partners also focused on equity and access for student populations.
- ii. **will not be discriminated against on the basis of status as a member of a special population;**

Under Perkins V, Minnesota will continue the adherence to the Office of Civil Rights guidelines and requirements. OCR Guidelines require each state agency receiving federal financial assistance that offers or administers vocational education programs to develop and implement a program to monitor compliance to Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. Compliance

to the law will include review of institution documents and publications containing Title VI, Title IX, and Section 504 policy statement(s) of nondiscrimination; language or media used in public notifications other than English if necessary; and statement(s) or write-up(s) used to notify public of nondiscrimination in career and technical opportunities including date(s) issued.

Minnesota State has adopted the general philosophy that this compliance program be perceived and projected as an opportunity to put students first and to improve the learning environment through activities that allow the system to examine the status of existing conditions, identify problems that exist, plan and implement correction and/or improvement, and provide the changes as opportunities for improvement across the Minnesota State system.

In addressing our secondary student population, the Minnesota Department of Education Civil Rights Compliance Review program is designed to ensure that all groups and populations have an equal opportunity to access their education:

- Review data and records, interview staff and students, administer a survey, and examine facilities for accessibility.
- Prepare a Letter of Findings, detailing areas that are out of compliance, and assist with the development of a Voluntary Compliance Plan that outlines what will be done to come into compliance.
- Assist with completing the items on a voluntary compliance plan, including providing technical assistance and sample policies and procedures.
- Provide technical assistance to consortia to help address challenges that improve the success of special populations. This may include strategies as one-on-one sessions to support improvement plan development, sharing resources, or utilizing experts for specific special populations.

Secondary

The Minnesota Department of Education is required to submit to the United States Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights (OCR), a Biennial Civil Rights Compliance Report. It is MDE's responsibility to conduct comprehensive on-site reviews of school districts to address issues of discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex and disability in vocational education programs. Specialists with the Compliance and Assistance Division within the Minnesota Department of Education will review Minnesota school districts on a cyclic time frame.

Postsecondary

Minnesota State has demonstrated a long-standing commitment to equity and ensuring that members of special populations are provided equal access to programs. Each year Minnesota State conducts a minimum of four Office of Civil Rights (OCR) compliance reviews. The major purposes of the OCR Compliance Review are to ensure that community colleges are providing equal access to CTE through vigorous enforcement of civil rights in compliance with the

requirements of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, Section 504 of the Vocational Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and Title II of The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). In addition to conducting a minimum of four local OCR On-Site Compliance Reviews each year, Minnesota State provides ongoing technical assistance to community college staff members on equal access.

Both the Minnesota Department of Education and Minnesota State provide professional development to staff and Perkins consortia leadership as well as teachers and faculty. The Office of Equity and Inclusion and the Office of General Counsel also provide professional development.

The Minnesota State Board of Trustee Policy 1B1 addresses Equal Opportunity and Nondiscrimination in Employment and Education. Individual campuses are also required to apply the Minnesota State Board of Trustee Policy or implement a local policy providing not less than the system criteria.

Minnesota State Board of Trustee Policy 1B1

Part 1. Policy Statement.

Subpart A. Equal opportunity for students and employees. Minnesota State Colleges and Universities has an enduring commitment to enhancing Minnesota's quality of life by developing and fostering understanding and appreciation of a free and diverse society and providing equal opportunity for all its students and employees. To help effectuate these goals, Minnesota State Colleges and Universities is committed to a policy of equal opportunity and nondiscrimination in employment and education.

Special Populations

MDE's Equity Statement follows: Educational equity is the condition of justice, fairness and inclusion in our systems of education so that all students have access to the opportunities to learn and develop to their fullest potential. The pursuit of educational equity recognizes the historical conditions and barriers that have prevented opportunity and success in learning for students based on their races, incomes, and other social conditions. Eliminating those structural and institutional barriers to educational opportunities requires systemic change that allows for distribution of resources, information and other support depending on the student's situation to ensure an equitable outcome. For example, within the Minnesota Department of Education there is an effort to improve alignment of CTE work and ESSA initiatives. We support and collaborate with state specialists and educators in our special education division, homeless student liaison staff, as well as our English learner division all of whom have a strong start toward reducing and eliminating gaps in performance.

Minnesota State has this goal: "By 2030, Minnesota State will eliminate education equity gaps at every Minnesota State college and university."

Minnesota's Perkins V priorities align with Equity 2030's focus areas:

- Enhancing access and student success
- Providing Minnesota with the talent it needs
- Anchoring the communities and regions we serve

Meeting the needs of special populations under Perkins V involves similar efforts to Minnesota State Equity 2030 goals:

- Improve outcomes for student populations
- Data disaggregation (analysis)
- Technical assistance to address systemic inequities
- Provide recommendations for equity-minded approaches

iii. **will be provided with programs designed to enable individuals who are members of special populations to meet or exceed State determined levels of performance described in section 113, and prepare special populations for further learning and for high-skill, high-wage, or in-demand industry sectors or occupations;**

One of the strategies in place to help special populations meet or exceed state levels of performance involves providing awareness of and recruitment into programs of high-skill, high wage, or in-demand sectors or occupations. Continuous professional development including webinar series on special populations, collaborative projects, and state leadership conferences for our coordinators provide multiple opportunities for shared practices, tools, and strategies.

Minnesota has developed, supported, and encouraged the use of electronic career guidance tools for raising awareness of career options. Examples of guidance tools for learners to explore and build individual career plans include the [Minnesota Career Information System](#) (MCIS), [CareerWise](#), and the [Disability Hub](#), sponsored by the Minnesota Department of Human Services and multiple state agencies. The website has transition information for students with disabilities, including information about [E1MN](#)--Minnesota's state agency partnership to advance Employment First outcomes for youth and adults with disabilities.

Minnesota State continues to provide CTE equity capacity-building grants. This funding program supports consortia efforts for actionable steps in addressing equity priorities identified in the CLNA. Funding supports capacity issues pertaining to activities, such as policy analysis and review (e.g. the review or establishment of equitable processes), community engagement and partnerships.

Minnesota uses many data tools to provide research and additional useful information about career options available. These tools also provide information on non-traditional careers, and career options for ex-offenders. Examples include:

1. Career profile integration – [Accountant example](#) (includes job counts, top employers, top skills, top certifications, and links to job postings)

2. Industry profile integration – [Utilities business example](#) (includes top employers, links to job postings)
3. Minnesota State CAREERwise – [Integrated job search tool](#) (includes job postings and multiple options to filter data)
4. [Minnesota Career Information System](#) (MCIS) – online career exploration system, including Junior (middle school), Special Education, and Adult Basic Education versions
5. Tools and insights into career clusters through the lens of [employer demand](#)

In summary, efforts to address equity in CTE will focus on four pillars that are guided by federal requirements:

- Professional development programs (capacity and competency)
- Address equal access to activities under this Act (existing programs)
- Programs that help special populations meet or exceed state performance (interventions and innovation)
- Non-discrimination (compliance)

To provide actions in support of these four pillars, the Minnesota Perkins team engages in the following:

- Professional Development for faculty, teachers, counselors, and staff to address disparities including underrepresentation in nontraditional career programs. Further professional development on the impact of poverty and implicit bias on classroom teaching practices, student engagement and advising. Education Innovation Faculty development can also serve as a source for delivering equity training.
- Technical Assistance to local consortia on equity assessment of programs of study, supports for special populations and campus or school environment. The Minnesota State Office of Equity and Diversity can serve as one of many resources for technical assistance.
- Community and Employer Engagement to broaden outreach to community-education-employer partnerships (and communications) about the opportunities and value of CTE for career development and work preparation.
- System approaches to support shared best practices among diverse geographic regions of state on strategies and delivery methods proven effective in expanding the educational experiences and nontraditional career options for special populations. Use of incentivized support to replicate or scale proven practices. Community organizations, workforce centers and state agencies are invited via RFP process and state register notification to apply for funding to support corrections and disabilities services.

- Compliance and Non-discrimination: both internal and external partners, such as OCR compliance officers, are engaged to identify and develop system strategies and technical assistance needed for addressing disparities or equity related performance gaps.
- Provide incentive and capacity-building funding to support innovation for initiatives that increase the success of special populations. Metrics and measurements related to support requires the disaggregation of Perkins data regarding performance on core indicators and the support for the redistribution of funds to support equity.

iv. will be provided with appropriate accommodations; and

Equal opportunity to enter CTE programs, services, and activities requires equal access for learners with special needs as compared to the general student population. Such provisions are reviewed for compliance throughout all required accountability indicators. Specific strategies to address learner accommodations include auxiliary or related aids and services, modified instructional equipment, and modified or adapted course offerings. Accommodations are provided for persons with disabilities in regular or special needs occupational programs. Accommodation services are publicized and encouraged by teachers, faculty and staff. Students with IEPs are assessed for career interests and abilities. The IEP reflects [career] education and training leading to the outcome of competitive, integrated employment (ACTE-SPED, MN Department of Education).

v. will be provided instruction and work-based learning opportunities in integrated settings that support competitive, integrated employment. (Section 122(d)(9) of Perkins V)

Work-based learning (WBL) provides appropriate accommodations for students of various ability levels. All students, regardless of abilities, must have impactful experiences. WBL experiences provide:

- Guidance to schools and employers on perceptions of quality WBL and value to all student populations.
- WBL experiences and activities that offer high quality content and curriculum, including a range of levels from exploration (experiential learning) to work experience, career preparation and instruction that is “stackable” and explores multiple aspects of a targeted industry or occupation.
- WBL that has quality content and learning experiences as an integral part of CTE, supporting meaningful career development.

At the secondary level, appropriate accommodations, and support for a competitive, integrated work environment for students with disabilities are undergirded by [Minnesota’s Olmstead Plan](#). Named after a United States Supreme Court decision, the Olmstead Plan is a statewide comprehensive plan to provide people with disabilities opportunities to live, learn, work, and

enjoy life in integrated settings. The plan calls out multiple education related goals, including those listed below, requiring the support of Career and Technical Education at the secondary level:

- By June 30, 2025, the number of students with developmental cognitive disabilities, ages 19-21 that enter competitive integrated employment through the ECBC will be 1,513.
- By June 30, 2025, the percentage of students with disabilities who have enrolled in an integrated postsecondary education setting within one year of leaving high school will increase to 34.8% (from baseline of 29.8%).

To that end, secondary career and technical education programs will provide appropriate accommodations and support for a competitive, integrated work environment through a variety of strategies targeted specifically at work-based learning (WBL) programs. These strategies will increase the quality of programs, enhance educator expertise, and capitalize on partnerships with other state agencies.

High Quality Work-based Learning Programs

Every five years, school districts will engage in a formal program approval process for work-based learning (WBL) programs specifically designed for students with disabilities. The program approval process, as outlined by administrative rule, identifies the minimum requirements needed to ensure all students engage in a well-designed work experience aligned to their interests and skills. Once a school district's program is approved, the district may access additional state funding to modify curriculum and purchase special equipment for students with disabilities enrolled in the WBL program.

Educator Expertise

The Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) will provide direct technical assistance to teachers who work with students with disabilities to ensure work-based learning (WBL) programs are well-designed to align with students' interests and skills. Additionally, MDE will coordinate professional development for WBL coordinators with programming related to competitive, integrated work environments.

Partnerships

Minnesota Department of Education staff will continue to work closely with colleagues as part of the E1MN partnership. E1MN is led by the State of Minnesota Departments of Education (Career and Technical Education and Special Education), Employment and Economic Development (Vocational Rehabilitation Services and State Services for the Blind), and Human Services (Disability Services Division) to ensure each agency, when possible, uses similar language and processes when working with school districts to provide high quality work-based learning (WBL) experiences for students with disabilities and to eliminate barriers that prevent school districts from offering these programs.

J. Preparing Teachers and Faculty

- i. Describe how the eligible agency will support the recruitment and preparation of teachers, including special education teachers, faculty, school principals, administrators, specialized instructional support personnel, and paraprofessionals to provide career and technical education instruction, leadership, and support, including professional development that provides the knowledge and skills needed to work with and improve instruction for special populations. (section 122(d)(6) of perkins v)**

We will continue to prioritize the recruitment, retention, and preparation of CTE educators and support them in their professional and educational development so they can teach, lead, support, and work with a diverse range of students, including special populations and communities of color, immigrant and refugee communities, Tribal Nations, and indigenous people.

The [2023 Biennial Minnesota Teacher Supply and Demand Report](#) prepared by the Minnesota Professional Educator Licensing Standards Board (PELSB) found that Minnesota school districts are facing a shortage of licensed teachers across grade levels and in most disciplines. Licensure areas with a high percentage of teachers on special permission (out of their licensure area or without a standard teaching license) include Career and Technical Education fields, world languages, special education, and STEM. The report also noted that the percentage of teachers of color remains stagnant while the percentage of students of color continues to grow. Particularly concerning is the teacher shortage in all CTE licensure areas.

Continued focus that supports these efforts include:

- Provide more support for teaching and learning resources for college technical faculty.
- Supporting initiatives focused on prospective CTE teachers of color as they pursue licensure.
- Emphasizing culturally responsive teaching and learning strategies for all educators.
- Continue to convene a [statewide CTE conference](#) serving secondary and postsecondary educators, industry partners, and CTE leaders focused on sharing evidence-based practices in CTE.
- Assessing pathways for non-licensed educators (paraprofessionals) to pursue CTE licensure.
- Provide mentoring and coaching for new CTE teachers.
- Support activities and collaborations across organizations that actively strive to retain CTE educators.

- Increase and diversify the secondary educator workforce across the state through local legislative grant funds.
- Support professional learning communities for new CTE teachers.
- Support local professional and educational development pursuits for all educators.
- Support alternative paths to CTE teacher licensure.
- Collaborate with local CTE professional organizations who support CTE educators and administrators.

Secondary

- The Minnesota [Career and Technical Educators Teacher Induction Program](#) (CTE TIP) program is a partnership with the Minnesota Association of Career and Technical Educators (MNACTE) designed to help teachers gain the knowledge and resources they need to be successful in the secondary CTE classroom. CTE TIP functions as a professional learning community to support the development, efficacy, success, resilience, and retention of new CTE teachers. Mentoring and professional networking is offered through in-person conferences and virtual settings.
- The Minnesota Department of Education recently launched the [Educator Workforce and Development Center](#). The Center will lead implementation and establishment of programs being built or expanded out of the 2023 legislative session and the continued oversight of existing workforce education programs and will focus on programs to support districts, schools, communities, and Tribal Nations in work to recruit, diversify, develop, and retain educators. Center staff will build partnerships with other state agencies and the education community.
- Through multiple state grants, the Minnesota Department of Education will continue to increase and diversify the educator workforce with the support of the governor's office through its [Increase and Diversify the Educator Workforce Initiative](#). Specific goals and activities are determined in alignment with local Perkins CLNA results combined with the overall needs of the state.
- Education for students with disabilities, appropriate accommodations, and support for a competitive, integrated work environment for students with disabilities are undergirded by Minnesota's Olmstead Plan. Secondary career and technical education programs provide appropriate accommodations and support for a competitive, integrated work environment through a variety of strategies targeted specifically at work-based learning (WBL) programs. These strategies will increase the quality of programs, enhance educator expertise, and capitalize on partnerships with other state agencies.
- Minnesota's first [alternative teacher preparation program](#), coordinated through Lakes Country Service Cooperative (LCSC), include the Career and Technical Education Core program, Teacher Coordination of Work-Based Learning,

Construction Careers, Transportation Careers, and Manufacturing Careers licensure programs.

Postsecondary

- The [Minnesota State Network for Educational Development](#) (NED) provides professional and educational development resources for all college and university educators, including college technical faculty, to promote and sustain academic excellence by providing relevant programs relating to classroom climate, content, teaching practices, equity, and assessment. Technical faculty can access these courses and workshops online at no cost. All courses are designed by faculty and staff for faculty and staff, cultivating a peer-to-peer learning community.
- Technical college faculty have access to on-site professional and educational development resources on their campus through a Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL). Some CTLs offer mentoring through communities of practice based on discipline.
- [FY2023 Minnesota State System Office Workplan](#) supports and enhances the ability and capacity of campuses and system to attract, retain, and develop a diverse and inclusive workforce able to meet the current and future educational needs more effectively.
- Continued partnership with the eight [Minnesota State Centers of Excellence](#), each serving a major industry that faces serious workforce challenges in IT, Healthcare, Manufacturing, Energy, Transportation, Agriculture, and Engineering.
- The [Minnesota State Office of Equity and Inclusion](#) supports all CTE leaders, staff, deans, and faculty by providing professional development in a wide range of equity topics that help leaders better understand the diverse range of students we serve.

By addressing these challenges and supporting the work of local Perkins consortia, Minnesota State and MDE collectively work towards attracting and retaining the best and brightest technical education professionals, ensuring that our students receive the best, most affordable, high-quality education available.

c. Fiscal Responsibility

1. Describe the criteria and process for how the eligible agency will approve eligible recipients for funds under this Act, including how—

A. each eligible recipient will promote academic achievement;

Continuing Minnesota’s consortium model, eligible recipients must offer Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs that include rigorous, coherent CTE content aligned with challenging academic standards. All approved State-recognized programs of study must include opportunities for both academic and technical skill attainment, which, ideally are integrated.

The *State-recognized Program of Study Guide* includes the requirement that “course standards accurately align to the academic, technical, and employability skills learners must master for entry and success in a given career pathway.” This articulates that the foundation of a program of study is the academic skills student must have to enter and advance in career and/or college.

Academic skills as the foundation of a program of study is further emphasized in the Minnesota Department of Education’s work on Career and College Readiness (CCR). In March 2016, MDE, in collaboration with the Regional Educational Laboratory (REL) Midwest and the Midwest Comprehensive Center (MSCC), brought together a group of educators and administrators to articulate what career and college readiness means for Minnesota students. Minnesota’s vision of CCR is that a well-rounded view of education is needed to drive educational and workforce goals and policies. Taking many perspectives into consideration through feedback, the Minnesota CCR Work Group developed a holistic vision of career and college readiness:

A sufficiently prepared student is one who has the knowledge, skills, mindset, and experiences in the academic, workplace, and personal/social domains to keep learning and, beyond secondary school, to successfully navigate toward and adapt to an economically viable career.

Clearly, academic skills are at the very foundation of career and college readiness. CCR resources developed by MDE and distributed to secondary districts provide a comprehensive set of guidance, strategies, and tools for engaging districts and schools in equity-oriented CCR program planning and a continuous improvement process.

B. each eligible recipient will promote skill attainment, including skill attainment that leads to a recognized postsecondary credential; and

Historically, reporting of technical skills assessment has been part of an intentional review process in Minnesota for more than a decade. The technical skill assessment project began with a pilot group of five programs of study completing a comprehensive review of foundational and academic knowledge, skills, and technical competencies needed to gain employment in selected careers. Through this collaborative process, secondary teachers, postsecondary faculty, business/industry experts validated the appropriate competencies, and technical skill assessments that would support these competencies. Minnesota continued completion of this process of bringing the secondary and postsecondary teaching staff together with their business and industry partners twice to analyze each of the 72 career pathways. The review process continued to update and validate competencies and the identification of assessments with over 600 secondary teachers and 500 post-secondary faculty along with business and industry representatives participating. The TSA reports were an essential component of the Perkins IV work.

In the implementation of Perkins V, skill attainment remains a priority of the work. The documentation of skill attainment will continue to be an element required for designation as a

State-recognized Program of Study and as an element of program review at secondary and postsecondary institutions.

All State-recognized POS have a pathway leading to a recognized postsecondary credential. The definition of recognized postsecondary credential utilized is the WIOA definition. Under WIOA the term “recognized postsecondary credential” means a credential consisting of an industry-recognized certificate or certification, a certificate of completion of an apprenticeship, a license recognized by the State involved or Federal Government, or an associate or baccalaureate degree.

In addition, Minnesota continues to validate the definitions of program quality and determine baseline data for CTE concentrators. The complete accountability system, secondary and postsecondary, monitors academic performance and completion rates including CTE subpopulations. Professional development and technical assistance are provided for consortia to develop and implement continuous improvement plans.

The State-recognized Programs of Study require an approved MDE CTE program and an approved Minnesota State program. An approved program must meet state requirements, including the academic and technical knowledge and skill components. In a similar fashion, a postsecondary approved diploma or associate degree award consists of general education and technical courses. The program approval process for both has elements of interaction with business and industry through the requirement of program advisory committees.

C. each eligible recipient will ensure the local needs assessment under section 134 takes into consideration local economic and education needs, including, where appropriate, in-demand industry sectors and occupations. (Section 122(d)(5) of Perkins V)

As part of a local application, consortia must include a comprehensive local needs assessment (CLNA) as per Perkins V requirements to be an eligible recipient of funds. All elements documented in Perkins V will be required: student performance; sufficient size, scope, and quality; progress toward programs and programs of study; recruitment, retention, and training of CTE professionals; and equity of access. The state’s definition of size, scope, and quality, and alignment to labor market include parameters for identification of high- skilled, high-wage, and in-demand occupations. Both Minnesota’s *Comprehensive Local Needs Assessment Guide* and the *CLNA Framework* provide guidance to ensuring that local economic and education needs are taken into consideration. State leadership reviews the applications and has a dialogue with applicants to ensure section 122 is observed. On an on-going basis, the consortium monitoring process reviews the evidence that the CLNA data and implemented actions took local economic and education needs into consideration.

State staff review research, consult with other states, and glean promising practices from the states' experience with WIOA and ESSA needs assessments to continuously improve the CLNA process and associated forms and guide to increase consortia success in gathering, analyzing, and implementing actions from the CLNA. Professional development regarding the form, guide, and process is offered in webinars and through technical assistance.

The joint secondary and postsecondary applications submitted by consortia must provide performance targets and strategies for continuous improvement of academic achievement and technical skill attainment linked to comprehensive local needs assessment.

- 2) Describe how funds received by the eligible agency through the allotment made under section 111 of the Act will be distributed—**
 - A. among career and technical education at the secondary level, or career and technical education at the postsecondary and adult level, or both, including how such distribution will most effectively provide students with the skills needed to succeed in the workplace; and**

State Administration: 5%

Administration allocation is spent on activities related to developing the State Plan, reviewing applications, monitoring consortia, compliance oversight, supporting fiscal and data systems required to implement Perkins V, etc.

State Leadership Activities: 10%

Leadership funds are split between the Minnesota Department of Education (42%) and Minnesota State (58%). From the postsecondary leadership funds, set-asides specified in Section 112(a)(2) of Perkins V are earmarked to serve individuals in state institutions, prepare individuals for non-traditional fields, and for recruitment of special populations into CTE programs.

Distribution to Local Education Agencies (Consortia): 85%

In Minnesota, funds received by the eligible agency under section 111 will be allocated to local consortia according to the following allotments and calculations. These distribution methods are expected to provide the resources needed for student success in the workplace throughout the state, including the maximum of 15% in reserve funds to incentivize innovation and quality of programs of study. The reserve fund calculation will be split by formula to target both rural areas and applications serving high numbers of CTE students.

Eighty-five percent of the funds received by the state will be distributed to local applicants through the basic and reserve funding allocations under Sections 131 and 132.

Basic funding: Eighty-five percent of the 85% distributed to local applicants will be distributed as basic funding, with secondary programs receiving 50% of the 85% and postsecondary receiving 50% of the 85%. The 50:50 split represents a philosophical commitment by Minnesota

State and Minnesota Department of Education leadership to advancing equal opportunity and economic empowerment for both partners in the consortium.

Reserve funding: Fifteen percent of the 85% will be distributed to secondary and postsecondary programs on a 50:50 basis as reserve funding. These funds take into consideration “rural” and high numbers by adding the square mileage of the consortia as part of the calculations. Allocation amounts to the whole consortium are based on a 50% sum of the area for member districts in the consortium area if/as the consortium has greater than 50 square miles of area served.

- B. Among any consortia that may be formed among secondary schools and eligible institutions, and how funds will be distributed among the members of the consortia, including the rationale for such distribution and how it will most effectively provide students with the skills needed to succeed in the workplace. (Section 122(d)(8) of Perkins V)**

While consortia will submit a single application and receive an overall award, the calculations for the consortium will be based on:

Local Consortium Formula Allocation amounts:

Secondary formula:

- Most recent U. S. Census data for the population by school district of individuals aged 5- 17
- Most recent U. S. Census data for the population by school district of individuals aged 5- 17 in households of poverty
- Description (70% District population 5-17 in poverty/state population 5-17 in poverty times the total secondary formula amount) plus 30% district population 5-17/state population 5-17 times the total secondary formula amount for the state from the OCTAE allocation - 50% is calculated for each district. The secondary consortium formula = the sum of the amounts calculated for each district member of the consortium.

Postsecondary formula:

- Most recent data for CTE Postsecondary Pell Recipients
- Description (Pell recipients in the college in Perkins eligible programs/ Pell recipients in the state in Perkins eligible programs times the total postsecondary formula amount for the state from the OCTAE allocation - 50% is calculated for each college. The postsecondary consortium formula = the sum of the amounts calculated for each college member of the consortium.

For all calculations, the year representing “most recent” is consistent across all formulas.

- 3) **For the upcoming program year, provide the specific dollar allocations for each eligible recipient made available by the eligible agency for career and technical education programs and programs of study under section 131(a)-(e) of the act and describe how these allocations are distributed to local educational agencies, areas career and technical education schools and educational service agencies within the state. (Section 131(g) of Perkins V)**
- 4) **For the upcoming program year, provide the specific dollar allocations for each eligible recipient made available by the eligible agency for career and technical education programs and programs of study under section 132(a) of the Act and describe how these allocations are distributed to eligible institutions and consortia of eligible institutions within the state.**
- 5) **Describe how the eligible agency will adjust the data used to make the allocations to reflect any changes in school district boundaries that may have occurred since the population and/or enrollment data was collected, and include local education agencies without geographical boundaries, such as charter schools and secondary schools funded by the bureau of Indian education. (Section 131(a)(3) of Perkins V)**

When a school district changes boundaries, splits or merges, Minnesota revises formula populations as soon as the new population information is available. The process for a district or college changing to a new consortium is outlined in Section 4 of the [Operational Guide](#). Minnesota State partners with MDE to obtain any population data changes if school district boundaries change. Charter schools with approved CTE programs or secondary schools funded by the Bureau of Indian Education are incorporated into consortia.

- 6) **If the eligible agency will submit an application for a waiver to the secondary allocation formula described in section 131(a)—**
 - A. **Include a proposal for such an alternative formula; and**
 - B. **Describe how the waiver demonstrates that a proposed alternative formula more effectively targets funds on the basis of poverty (as defined by the office of management and budget and revised annually in accordance with section 673(2) of the community services block grant act (42 U.S.C. 9902(2)) to local educational agencies with the state. (Section 131(b) of Perkins V).**
 - C. **Also indicate if this is a waiver request for which you received approval under the prior Carl D. Perkins career and technical education act of 2006 (Perkins IV).**

Minnesota will not be submitting a waiver to the secondary allocation formula.

- 7) **If the eligible agency will submit an application for a waiver to the postsecondary allocation formula described in section 132(a)—**
 - A. **Include a proposal for such an alternative formula; and**
 - B. **Describe how the formula does not result in a distribution of funds to the eligible institutions or consortia with the state that have the highest numbers of economically disadvantaged individuals and that an alternative formula will result in such a distribution. (Section 132(b) of Perkins V).**
 - C. **Also indicate if this is a waiver request for which you received approval under the prior Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act of 2006 (Perkins IV).**

Minnesota will not be submitting a waiver to the postsecondary allocation formula.

- 8) **If the eligible agency will award reserve funds to eligible recipients under section 112(c) of Perkins V, describe the process and criteria for awarding those funds.**

Fifteen percent of the 85% distributed to local education agencies (consortia) is allocated for reserve funds. Minnesota apportions reserve funding to the whole consortium based on: a) 50% on the sum of the area for member districts in the consortium/area for all districts in the state, b) 37.5% on the sum of secondary participants for member districts in the consortium/total secondary CTE participants in the state, and c) 12.5% on the sum of postsecondary participants for member districts in the consortium/total CTE postsecondary participants in the state based on the following data:

- School district area to account for certain district consolidations
- Most recent data for CTE Secondary Participants
- Most recent data on Perkins CTE Participants

State priorities will guide the use of reserve funding by consortia. Consortia are required to invest reserve funds in alignment with annually reviewed state priorities.

- 9) **Provide the state's fiscal effort per student, or aggregate expenditures for the state, that will establish the baseline for the secretary's annual determination on whether the state has maintained its fiscal effort, and indicate whether the baseline is a continuing level or new level. If the baseline is new, please provide the fiscal effort per student, or aggregate expenditures for the state, for the preceding fiscal year. (Section 211(b)(1)(d) of Perkins V)**

Using aggregate numbers of state support for CTE, which is calculated by excluding tuition revenue and allocating indirect expenses, the maintenance of effort for 2018 is equal to

\$124,944,120.00. Since establishment of a baseline was a one-time MOE expenditure adjustment for the first year of Perkins V (7/1/19 to 6/30/20), there is no subsequent update to this information.

d. Accountability for Results

- 1) Identify and include at least one (1) of the following indicators of career and technical education program quality—**
 - A. the percentage of CTE concentrators (see Text Box 6 for the statutory definition of a CTE concentrator under section 3(12) of Perkins V) graduating from high school having attained a recognized postsecondary credential;**
 - B. the percentage of CTE concentrators graduating high school having attained postsecondary credits in relevant career and technical education programs and programs of study earned through a dual or concurrent enrollment program or another credit transfer agreement; and/or**
 - C. the percentage of CTE concentrators graduating from high school having participated in work-based learning. (Section 113(b)(2)(A)(iv)(I) of Perkins V)**
- 2) Include any other measure(s) of student success in career and technical education that are statewide, valid, reliable, and comparable across the State. (Section 113(b)(2)(A)(iv)(II) of Perkins V) Please note that inclusion of “other” program quality measure(s) is optional for States.**
- 3) Provide the eligible agency’s measurement definition with a numerator and denominator for each of the quality indicator(s) the eligible agency selects to use.**

During May 2019, the Perkins V Secondary Accountability: Technical Advising Committee convened for three in-person meetings to discuss key questions and decision points around the updated legislation. This group represented a variety of secondary perspectives. Options for performance indicators and data sources were shared with the advisory group, who then discussed the issues and provided recommendations to MDE.

The advisory group also provided recommendations for future work such as improving secondary, postsecondary, and business and industry partnerships so that additional industry-recognized credentials could be identified and implemented. This would enhance the connection between Perkins V and WIOA and provide more ‘Career Ready’ opportunities for students.

Once the full scope of the accountability system and methodology for determining levels of performance were finalized, the previous recommendations made by the advisory group were then further analyzed by state leadership. Based on data review, state level priorities, and the additional feedback survey information collected from members of the original secondary

advisory group as well as secondary consortium leaders, and in consultation with state leadership, it was determined that the optional other program quality indicator (5S4) identified as the technical skill attainment and/or industry-recognized credential should not be included in the secondary accountability system.

The final decision was to include (5S3) Program Quality: Work-Based Learning, definition as follows:

Numerator: Number of CTE Concentrators who successfully completed one or more work-based learning courses prior to graduation.

Denominator: Number of CTE Concentrators who graduated high school.

- 4) Provide on the form in Section V.B., for each year covered by the state plan beginning in program year (PY) 2020-21, state determined performance levels for each of the secondary and postsecondary core indicators, with the levels of performance being the same for all CTE concentrators in the state. (Section 113(b)(3)(a)(i)(i) of Perkins V)**

State Determined Performance Levels (SDPL) Form

State Name: Minnesota

SECONDARY Indicators	Baseline Level, 2020	Performance Levels by Program Year							
		2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28
1S1: Graduation Rate (four-year)	92.21%	54.95%	54.99%	55.08%	55.26%	92.70%	92.85%	93.01%	93.17%
2S1: Academic Proficiency: Reading/Language Arts	0.00%*	11.27%	11.33%	11.45%	11.68%	53.09%	53.31%	53.54%	53.77%
2S2: Academic Proficiency: Mathematics	0.00%*	9.08%	9.11%	9.17%	9.29%	36.47%	36.72%	36.98%	37.24%
3S1: Post-Program Placement	65.70%	48.43%	48.49%	48.61%	48.84%	55.06%	55.45%	55.84%	56.23%
4S1: Nontraditional Program Concentration	36.31%	9.44%	9.49%	9.59%	9.79%	28.15%	28.44%	28.73%	29.02%
5S3: Program Quality: Work-Based Learning	13.08%	4.33%	4.34%	4.37%	4.41%	13.19%	13.68%	14.18%	14.68%

*NOTE: Due to the COVID-19 peacetime emergency, MCA (Minnesota Comprehensive Assessment) testing was canceled, therefore, no Reading or Mathematics academic achievement data are available during SY2019-20.

		Performance Levels by Program Year							
POSTSECONDARY Indicators	BASELINE LEVEL, 2020	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28
1P1: Postsecondary Retention and Placement	90.77%	91.12%	81.98%	81.98%	81.98%	91.03%	91.26%	91.49%	91.72%
2P1: Earned Recognized Postsecondary Credential	50.68%	50.60%	45.58%	45.58%	45.58%	53.01%	53.69%	54.38%	55.07%
3P1: Nontraditional Program Enrollment	13.98%	14.00%	12.54%	12.54%	12.54%	17.37%	17.59%	17.81%	18.03%

- 5) **Describe the procedure the eligible agency adopted for determining state determined levels of performance described in section 113 of Perkins V, which at a minimum shall include—**
 - A. **Description of the process for public comment under section 113(b)(3)(b) of Perkins V as part of the development of the state determined levels of performance (see text box 7 for the statutory requirements for consultation on state determined performance levels under section 113(b)(3)(b) of Perkins V);**
 - B. **An explanation for the state determined levels of performance that meet each of the statutory requirements in text box 8;**
 - C. **A description of how the state determined levels of performance set by the eligible agency align with the levels, goals and objectives other federal and state laws, (section 122(d)(10) of Perkins V).**
- 6) **As part of the procedures for determining state determined levels of performance, describe the process that will be used to establish a baseline for those levels.**

For the original Minnesota Perkins V plan (2020), multiple statistical approaches were reviewed to establish state and local performance levels, including the statistical adjustment model used for the WIOA Performance Accountability System, trend extrapolation, and statistically significant increases using simulated historical data. After consultation with representatives from consortia, stakeholders, and regional partners, it was determined that the most appropriate approach for Minnesota was to set the proposed state performance level for each accountability indicator using a factor of the standard deviation of simulated historical data. This procedure allows for the determination of what level would constitute “meaningful progress” for each indicator, establishing statistically significant improvement relative to the baseline by the fourth year of the plan.

At both the secondary and postsecondary levels, simulated historical accountability datasets were created using specifications and definitions per the *Strengthening Career and Technical Education for the 21st Century Act*. These data were used to set the baseline year (the most recent year for which accountability results were available). Then, a conservative rate of growth

(i.e., slower growth during first two years, followed by more aggressive growth the final two years) was applied to determine the annual performance levels. A conservative growth rate was adopted for the first two years in recognition that programs and strategies implemented under Perkins V would require some lead-time before the full impact on rates would be observed, but at the same time the methodology incorporates continuous improvement each year.

The same overall methodology was used to determine state performance levels for both secondary and postsecondary indicators, with the following exceptions:

- The number of historical years of data that were available varied by indicator, with some indicators having as few as two years of historical data available, but most indicators having five or six years of historical data; and
- The factor of the standard deviation used differed for some of the indicators.

Although using the standard deviation of simulated historical data was the best approach identified, we also recognized some caveats associated with the methodology. Those caveats, along with other external factors that could impact indicators and result in potential amendments to performance levels, were noted:

- Simulated historical data for some indicators were limited to only two or three years due to substantial changes in the data over time or unavailability of historical data going back more than a couple of years. The factor of the standard deviation was adjusted to account for the limitation. However, once additional years of data are observed, there may be evidence that the standard deviation of the simulated historical data was substantially different (higher or lower) than what would have been derived with additional data points.
- We may find the methodology needs modification even for indicators where six years of simulated historical data were available. Statistically, even six observations is a small number and may yield an over- or under- estimate of average random variation. After the first two years, we may need to adjust the factor of standard deviations such that it more accurately reflects the observed random variance. Given we anticipate lower programmatic impact in the first two years of the plan due to the time it takes to realize change, we would use those data to reassess the random variance and request adjustments accordingly.
- This methodology presumes conservative growth in the first two years with more aggressive growth in the final two years of the plan. As such, we assumed a doubling of improvement each year of the plan. These presumptions were based on a logical understanding of the process implementing new initiatives, but the actual numeric weights for the annual change were an educated guess. As we move forward with data collection, differences in observed speed of improvement may necessitate performance level adjustments.
- This methodology presumes the make-up of students in the denominator (CTE concentrators) and economic conditions will remain relatively constant over the

next four years. Any substantial changes to either of these things may necessitate an adjustment of performance levels.

- Changes in core elements driving an indicator, such as changes to the Minnesota Standards in Reading/Language Arts, Mathematics standards, updates to the Minnesota Comprehensive Assessment (MCA) tools, or changes in the employment market would likely impact performance levels.
- Other changes to data collection, data quality, or data availability could also substantiate requests to adjust performance levels.

Minnesota does meet the statutory requirements specified for the state-determined performance levels. The performance levels are specified as percentages for each secondary and postsecondary core indicator and the levels require meaningful progress toward improving the performance of all CTE concentrators over the grant timeframe. The state performance levels were subject to the public comment process and responses to the comments are included in section D4.

Regarding the extent to which the state-determined levels of performance advance the eligible agency's goals, as set forth in the State plan (3a) and how the SDPLs align with levels, goals, and objectives of other federal and state laws, 1P1 is a similar, but broader measure of placement of program completers in WIOA. The Perkins V indicator includes both employment placement AND continuing postsecondary education and other parameters we are currently unable to capture – military, peace corps, advanced training, etc. Indicator 2P1 is a measure of completion as Minnesota has defined it, which aligns with WIOA completion measure and is related to state credential attainment goals.

[Note to reader: The following information documents the procedure for determining SDPLs for the 2024 Perkins V four-year state plan.]

A. Description of the process for public comment under section 113(b)(3)(b) of Perkins V as part of the development of the state determined levels of performance (see text box 7 for the statutory requirements for consultation on state determined performance levels under section 113(b)(3)(b) of Perkins V);

The required public comment period for the program year 2025-2028 SDPLs is expected to take place December 8, 2023 through January 7, 2024. Comments will be collected throughout the public comment period in an online form where individuals will have the opportunity to comment on all three requirements under section 113(b)(3)(B) of Perkins V, or individuals can send emailed comments directly to an account created to collect this feedback. Constituent groups will be notified of the public comment period and invited to provide comments on the online form primarily through email communications. Minnesota will provide written responses as required when the public comment period ends.

B. An explanation for the state determined levels of performance that meet each of the statutory requirements in text box 8;

Calculating SDPLs and Baseline Percentages

Each SDPL is expressed as a percentage based on dividing the numerator for each indicator by the denominator for each indicator and multiplying this by 100.

For determining State determined levels of performance for Minnesota’s second four-year State Plan under Pekins V, Minnesota was instructed by the USDOE Office of Career, Technical and Adult Education (OCTAE) to follow section 113(b)(3)(A)(i)(III)(ee) of Perkins V legislation in establishing the baseline for SDPLs for the second four-year state plan under Perkins V, which interprets the establishment of SDPLs for the second four-year state plan to be treated as Allowable Adjustments under Section 113(b)(3)(A)(i)(III) clause(ii). Section 113(b)(3)(A)(i)(III)(ee) of Perkins V states SDPLs shall, when being adjusted pursuant to clause (ii), be higher than the average actual performance of the two most recently completed program years.

Minnesota calculated the average actual performance of the two most recently completed program years for each secondary and postsecondary indicator by summing the percentage value of the actual performance in program year 2022 and program year 2023 and dividing this by two for each indicator to express the average actual performance as a percentage. This calculated average served as the baseline from which SDPLs were set for the entire time covered by the second four-year state plan (i.e, program years 2025-2028).

Meaningful Progress on Performance

At the September 27, 2023 Perkins V Collaborative Convening meeting, the USDOE Office of Career, Technical and Adult Education (OCTAE) indicated while there is not an official legislative definition for “continuous meaningful progress,” SDPLs for indicators cannot remain flat from year to year. However, OCTAE acknowledged that indicators for which performance is already at a high rate (e.g., 94%), increases from year to year may be minimal compared to indicators where actual performance is not approaching a ceiling and there is more room for annual growth.

At both the secondary and postsecondary levels, Minnesota applied a conservative growth model, either based on a statistical model or standard deviation(s) of change over time, depending on historical performance on the indicator. The methodology was applied over the four years of the state plan, starting with the average of the actual performance of the two most recently completed years as the baseline. Minnesota also reviewed additional data to assist in providing context on determining the SDPLs. More detailed explanations of the information that was taken into consideration in determining SDPLs for each postsecondary and secondary indicator are provided below.

Determining Secondary SDPLs

Several methodologies were explored for determining secondary SDPLs for the four years covered by the state plan, including both a Linear Probability Model (slope of historical data) and a Standard Deviation Model (which was used to set SDPLs for previous state plan). Standard Deviations (SD), or a fraction of a SD, was implemented for each performance indicator based on model fit. Multiple models were considered in terms of how to distribute continuous improvement increases across the years of the grant. Ultimately, a linear model based on historical trends, with equally apportioned increases each year provided the best fit and met the greatest number of established criteria.

1S1: Four-Year Graduation Rate – Based on this modeling process, our most assertive SDPLs were proposed for this indicator in order to achieve one standard deviation of growth across the four years of the new grant. Although our performance outcomes are already high and therefore growth is more challenging to realize, based on a review of the national Perkins Collaborative Research Network (PCRN) data, it was determined that there is still potential for further improvement. Additionally, in reviewing local data trends for this indicator, it was discovered that the numerator is in fact growing, a higher number of CTE Concentrators are indeed graduating in comparison with prior years—however, it is also the case that the denominator is currently out-pacing the growth of the numerator as more high school students become CTE Concentrators in pursuit of learning marketable skills. We hope to address this growth challenge in the coming grant years and also ameliorate any remaining student group gaps.

2S1 and 2S2: Academic Achievement – Declining outcomes for our academic achievement performance indicators have continued to persist post COVID-19 for both Reading/English Language Arts and Mathematics, as do the existing performance gaps for disaggregated student groups. This will be a priority for secondary education in the coming grant years; however, we do not know yet what to expect in terms of the potential rate of growth. Given the amount of focus needed and the level of on-going uncertainty surrounding these performance measures, we have chosen to propose very conservative SDPLs.

3S1: Post-Program Placement – Additional circumstances which may have unknown future impact include estimates in the Birthrate/Demographic Cliff. The current School Year 2023 saw the highest number of twelfth grade students that we will have had the opportunity to educate. Following the current year, we anticipate the number of twelfth grade student to decline by approximately five thousand students, followed by a slight increase during grant year 2024-25, after which point the population of twelfth grade students begins to decline sharply, particularly during the last two years of the new state plan, and does not appear to recover during the foreseeable future. In fact, this general pattern of declining enrollment holds true across all high school grades nine through twelve. In terms of enrollment and engagement with CTE programming, our percentages are remarkably consistent despite fluctuations in the overall general population; therefore, we remain hopeful that the impact on CTE enrollment will be minimal. However, there may be unknown impacts to some performance indicators more than

others. For example, post-secondary enrollment has been decreasing across the last few years, most specifically for two-year enrollment and with a declining population on the horizon, this makes the need to be intentional even greater and the opportunity to grow ever more challenging. There are initiatives in place that we hope will assist in recruiting and retaining postsecondary enrollment and employment; even so, the potential for continuous improvement remains unknown. Given this, we are proposing the most conservative estimates possible for this indicator.

4S1: Nontraditional Completion – Based on current data and future population estimates, Minnesota is already performing at a high rate for this indicator and our potential for improvement, based on our currently assigned CIP codes and ratio of programs, is minimal. Given this, we are proposing conservative estimates for this indicator.

5S3: Program Quality: Work-Based Learning – Although this performance indicator is closely tied to local economic opportunities and therefore deserves caution, we have experienced our highest post-COVID-19 rebound in student outcomes for this indicator. Further, growth and continuous improvement have been realized across all disaggregated student groups. Though there may be potential impacts due to the Birthrate/Demographic Cliff previously discussed, we remain cautiously optimistic and are therefore proposing one standard deviation of growth across the four years of the new state plan.

In addition to the Birthrate/Demographic Cliff, there are other local initiatives that may have both positive and negative impacts on our CTE Concentrator population. For example, many Dual-Enrollment initiatives encourage students to complete college level courses while still in high school that may result in unintentional consequences including competition for course time thus decreasing the opportunity to become a CTE Concentrator. This may have a negative impact across all performance indicators, or this could create the possibility for students to finish a degree prior to high school graduation, thus not needing to enroll in a post-secondary program which may mean further decreases in 3S1: Post-Program Placement.

Even so, there are many other initiatives which we hope will off-set any negative impacts to performance outcomes, such as the possibility of including CTE Concentrators into the ESSA system thus highlighting the value of CTE programming, Personal Finance courses will now be required for graduation thus potentially increasing the CTE Concentrator population and interest in certain programs of study, the Computer Science Education Advancement program may assist in attracting students to our CTE career pathways, and further, CTSO grants, as well as additional funding for Teacher Recruitment and Retention, could all play a vital role in assisting our programs, teachers, and students toward their continuous improvement goals. Although uncertainty and many future unknowns persist, sharing the results of the data review process with our secondary consortium leaders as well as leadership at the Minnesota Department of Education has provided us with insights into where the strengths and challenges exist such that we are now well-positioned to focus our efforts where needed most and

celebrate good work where accomplishments have been realized while continuing to implement our continuous improvement strategies.

Determining Postsecondary SDPLs

Several methodologies were explored for determining postsecondary SDPLs for the four years covered by the state plan, including the same methodology that was explored for setting SDPLs for the first state plan (two standard deviations of growth applied through a conservative, aggressive, s-shaped or linear approach over four years), a Linear Probability Model, and a moving average using ARIMA (autoregressive integrated moving average) model.

After exploring these methodologies, it was determined that a model with conservative linear growth over four years would be most suitable for establishing “meaningful progress” for each indicator, with the future forecast informed by the historical performance on Minnesota’s postsecondary indicators, which have overall shown slow, steady growth. However, there are at least a couple of upcoming circumstances that may impact both Minnesota’s CTE enrollment and student outcomes in unknown ways. This includes impending decreases in the college age demographic, referred to as the “demographic cliff” in higher education, while at the same time an implementation of Minnesota’s new North Star Promise last dollar scholarship (a.k.a. free tuition) program. It’s unclear how the combination of these two things will impact general enrollment in higher education in Minnesota’s public higher education institutions, but even more specifically what the impact will be on CTE program enrollment and performance. Therefore, a conservative approach was used to establish SDPLs. For each of the three core indicators, the SDPLs for grant years 5 through 8 were established using the slope of the regression line of both pre-Perkins V and Perkins V data (i.e., linear probability model). The baseline/starting point was the average of the two most recent years of performance (i.e., the average of performance from grant years 2 and 3). Additional considerations for each postsecondary indicator are also highlighted below.

1P1 – During recent work related to a merger of colleges in our system, we found an error in the code that generates the numerator for this indicator across all institutions, so we anticipate slightly higher performance rates because of finding and resolving that error, which was undercounting students who were continuing their education at the same institution from which they graduated. In fact, Minnesota already showed slightly higher performance rates for 2023 due to the correction.

2P1 – Minnesota State system has several ongoing initiatives that could impact performance on this indicator, but these initiatives will take time to produce the desired results. In addition to initiatives specific to CTE/Perkins, there has long been a systemwide focus on increasing credential attainment. This started even before the 2015 Minnesota Legislature enacted legislation setting a target that 70% of MN adults aged 25-44 will attain a postsecondary certificate or degree by 2025. In addition, several system-supported initiatives likely influence/will continue to impact credential completion, including:

- reverse transfer,
- UAchieve Schedule and Graduation Planner,
- Math Pathways and Course Placement adjustments, and
- implementation of proactive advising solutions such as Starfish or Navigate.

In June 2019, Minnesota State implemented Equity 2030 and set goals to reduce equity gaps in completion rates by 2030; the system and system institutions continue devoting resources to Equity 2030 work and improving completion rates for underrepresented students. More related to CTE programs, in Fall 2018, the Minnesota State Legislation started funding Workforce Development Scholarships for students. This program provides scholarships to students in high-demand educational programs that lead to employment in industries that overlap significantly with CTE programs, and the funding is time-limited, which may help promote more timely program completion among recipients. Finally, the new North Star Promise program begins in the 2024-25 school year, which is a last dollar scholarship that will be available to Minnesota residents who have a family AGI below \$80,000 and attend a Minnesota public higher education institution. At this time, it's unclear how this new scholarship program will specifically impact CTE program enrollment and completion rates.

3P1 - In September 2023, Minnesota State applied the 2020 Nontraditional Occupations Crosswalk to state program data, with the impact being on grant year 4 forward. The update to the nontraditional designations resulted in improvement on the state's performance on this indicator by several percentage points for grant year 4/reporting year 2024 when performance rates were compared pre- and post-implementation. However, it's also important to note that grant year 4 data are still in-progress, so the final impact of this change remains to be seen. To account for improved performance observed so far, Minnesota added 2.5% to the 14.65% calculated minimum baseline (i.e., the average of the performance on 3p1 from grant years 2 and 3) to get a new baseline of 17.15%. This 2.5% increase was calculated by adjusting the average numerator from the two years used in establishing the baseline, along with the average denominator from the same period, to reflect the net change observed in both numerator and denominator for grant year 4/reporting year 2024, following the application of the 2020 Nontraditional Occupations Crosswalk. The new baseline was used as the starting point for establishing state SDPLs for grant years 5-8.

Comparing Minnesota's SDPLs to Other States

In establishing the secondary and postsecondary SDPLs for the four years covered by the state plan, Minnesota took into account how its SDPLs and performance on the indicators compares to SDPLs of other states. More detailed explanations of this state-to-state comparison, as well as additional comparisons, are provided below, first for secondary SDPLs and then for postsecondary SDPLs.

Secondary SDPL Comparisons

To inform the process of establishing secondary SDPLs for program years 2025-2028, Minnesota reviewed:

- MN trend performance data (modeled historical data and Perkins V).
- Enrollment data, both current students in the system as well as projected future high school enrollment based on current grade school enrollment trends. These data were leveraged to anticipate when the 'Birthrate Cliff/Demographic Cliff' would begin to have potential impacts on high school CTE initiatives and programming.
- Enrollment trends for both Participants & CTE Concentrators.
- Trends in achievement data
- Existing performance gaps, by disaggregated student groups.
- No recent Attendance data were available for review due to COVID-19 disruptions in prior years.
- Perkins Collaborative Research Network (PCRN) Performance rates and SDPLs from Year 1 and Year 2 for other states implementing similar Performance Indicator definitions, processes, and assessment where assessment information was provided; range of performance and ranking of Minnesota's outcomes in comparison with similar states and territories, as well as increases and decreases in performance across the two years of data where available. A different grouping of states emerged from the analysis of each performance indicator. The data available on the PCRN tool was very helpful and informative in the process of determining where we could potentially challenge ourselves and where Minnesota is already excelling.
- Reviewed multiple methodological options for determining SDPLs in the context of statistical soundness, current and future educational contexts, population forecasting, predetermined criterion for each performance indicator, as well as discussion and feedback from secondary consortium leaders.

Postsecondary SDPL Comparisons

To inform the process of establishing postsecondary SDPLs for program years 2025-2028, Minnesota reviewed:

- Performance rates and SDPLs from Year 1 for other states in our ACTE region III (Iowa, Illinois, Indiana, Minnesota, Missouri and Wisconsin); range of performance and SDPLs for each indicator for all 53 states and territories and where Minnesota fell in the range.
- Year 3 SDPLs from states with similar Perkins Grant funding levels as MN (\$20-\$29M) from the September 27, 2023 Perkins Collaborative Convening.
- Minnesota State enrollment and completion data, specifically at system two-year institutions.

- Perkins participant and concentrator enrollment, indicator performance trend data, and general CTE enrollment/program completion data.
- Several methodologies for setting targets.
- Several methodologies for establishing local (consortium) targets after the state performance targets are established.
- Through the process of comparing both Minnesota’s indicator SDPLs and actual performance with the State levels of performance and actual performance for other states, none of the differences observed suggested Minnesota’s proposed SDPLs or methodology were inadequate or extreme. Where differences were observed, further exploration suggested the differences are likely due to the fact Minnesota uses a three-year cohort model for measuring accountability performance and many other states do not, or differences in the way the metrics were operationalized/defined.

SDPL Alignment with Federal and State Goals

As one of the few states submitting a WIOA Combined State Plan, Minnesota has taken a coordinated, unified approach to workforce development. The governor has proposed a “One Minnesota Plan” with a mission to improve the lives of all Minnesotans by working collaboratively to implement policies that achieve results benefitting all citizens. A key priority is for state agencies and community partners to collaborate to achieve common goals. We are doing that in Minnesota and submitting this revised Perkins State Plan as part of the Combined WIOA State Plan is a testament to that effort. Note the WIOA State Plan Goals for 2024-2027 and how they mirror Perkins V goals in many ways:

- Increase interagency coordination and alignment around shared goals, maximizing efficiency and coordination of workforce funding and programs and improving system integration, and creating a “no-wrong-door” approach for individuals or employers engaging in the workforce system.
- Build employer-led industry sector partnerships across the state to create or expand responsive and equitable workforce development programs and career pathways with embedded work-based learning or on-the-job training, including Registered Apprenticeships, focused on closing gaps in participation and representation based on race, ethnicity, disability, gender, veteran status, and age.
- Create a more inclusive, equitable, accessible, and proactive workforce system to serve all Minnesotans, preparing employers and the current and emerging workforce for the changing nature of work including new and emerging technology, changing labor market demand, and for the state’s shifting demographics, including our new Minnesotans.

Perkins V goals include many of the same priorities, including interagency coordination and alignment around shared goals which is evident in our secondary/postsecondary partnerships throughout the state to promote CTE programs of study. Indeed, the partnership between Minnesota Department of Education and Minnesota State to bring secondary and postsecondary Career and Technical Education programs and programs of study together is a perfect example of this.

Perkins V is deeply rooted in partnerships between business/industry and education through work-based learning opportunities provided for students, which is so important that Minnesota has chosen Work-based learning (5S3) as our Perkins quality indicator. As described earlier in this plan, Minnesota State has set a critical goal of eliminating the educational equity gaps at every Minnesota State college and university by 2030. This audacious goal requires systems and culture change, innovation, advocacy and leadership, and partners across the state to successfully accomplish. All of this is supported by Perkins V, with its focus on reducing performance gaps for students, especially those who are members of special populations. Finally, through these various programs in the state, we are all working together for the same goal of meeting workforce needs of the present and the future.

7) Provide a written response to the comments regarding state determined performance levels received during the public comment period pursuant to section 113(b)(3)(b) of Perkins V. (Section 113(b)(3)(b)(iii) of Perkins V)

As part of the written response, include a description of any the changes made to the State determined performance levels as a result of stakeholder feedback.

The public comment process for the original Perkins V Four-Year Plan was documented in the *Minnesota Perkins V Public Comment Report*, February 10, 2020. The required public comment period for the program year 2025-2028 SDPLs is expected to take place December 2023 - January 2024 for a period no less than 30 days in length. Minnesota will provide written responses as required when the public comment period ends.

8) Describe how the eligible agency will address disparities or gaps in performance as described in section 113(b)(3)(c)(ii)(ii) of Perkins V in each of the plan years, and if no meaningful progress has been achieved prior to the third program year, a description of the additional actions the eligible agency will take to eliminate these disparities or gaps. (section 122(d)(11) of Perkins V)

As part of the written response, and pursuant to the Report of the Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions (HELP), the eligible agency could indicate that it will analyze data on the core indicators of performance to identify gaps in performance, explain how they will use evidence-based research to develop a plan to provide support and technical assistance to eligible recipients to address and close such gaps, and how they will implement this plan. The eligible agency is not required to submit a new State plan prior to the third program year in order to address this requirement.

Secondary

Minnesota Department of Education continues to develop dynamic reports which allow consortium leaders and district staff to quickly identify any gaps in performance that may exist between federally reported student groups. These reports are updated annually in order to monitor trends in performance as well as progress toward closing any existing gaps. Webinars, group presentations, and individual assistance are provided in order to ensure that secondary consortium leaders understand the measures used within the reports as well as how to interpret the information. The goal of providing this assistance is to ensure that consortium leaders are able to facilitate conversations with CTE teachers and district administrators so that meaningful gaps can be identified and are actionable.

Challenges in identifying performance gaps are outlined in the Postsecondary section and also apply to the secondary reports. Solutions to these issues will be addressed by providing consortium leaders with a 'heat map' of performance gap trends, organized by performance indicator and disaggregated student group. Larger, more meaningful, performance gaps will be highlighted for ease in interpreting the information and consortium leaders will be given the opportunity to receive technical support and assistance as needed. We feel that providing this information in this format is critical for use in prioritizing the needs and work around reducing and eliminating performance gaps, most especially in preparation for engaging in CLNA work and strategic programmatic decision making.

Postsecondary

Minnesota State reviews postsecondary reports available at the state and consortia level that compare performance on the indicators to the SDPLs to identify subgroups, special populations, and/or clusters that have gaps in performance compared to the SDPLs. However, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Minnesota State requested and received OCTAE approval to adjust postsecondary SDPLs for grant years 2 through 4 in spring/summer 2022. Minnesota State expected the COVID-19 pandemic to negatively impact performance on the postsecondary indicators for grant years 2 through 4, so consequently lowered the SDPLs to reflect this negative impact throughout the remaining years of the grant (through year 4). While the Perkins V legislation requires states to address disparities or gaps in performance as described in section 113(b)(3)(C)(ii)(II) of Perkins V each of the plan years (i.e., requiring comparing performance on the indicators to the SDPLs), identifying gaps in performance using only this method can lead to interpreting decreases in gaps as being caused by improving performance when, in reality, decreases in gaps could actually be due to the adjustment/lowering of the SDPLs for grant years 2 through 4. To remedy this possible misinterpretation when analyzing gaps data, Minnesota also prepares and reviews reports at the state and consortia level that compare performance on the indicators to the performance of all CTE Concentrators. This

comparison allows the state or consortia to identify additional subgroups, special populations, and/or clusters that have gaps in performance compared to the performance of all concentrators measured for each indicator, not just the SDPLs established for each metric.

At the state level, after review of the data, the postsecondary data team summarizes and reviews the findings with the state CTE leadership team to assist them in identifying special populations and demographic groups that have persistent and meaningful gaps in performance on the indicators. The state leadership team then identifies the additional actions the state will take to eliminate these disparities or gaps.

Priorities

Both Minnesota State and the Minnesota Department of Education are committed to addressing disparities or gaps in performance of our students. MDE's Equity Statement follows: Educational equity is the condition of justice, fairness, and inclusion in our systems of education so that all students have access to the opportunities to learn and develop to their fullest potential. The pursuit of educational equity recognizes the historical conditions and barriers that have prevented opportunity and success in learning for students based on their races, incomes, and other social conditions. Eliminating those structural and institutional barriers to educational opportunities requires systemic change that allows for distribution of resources, information and other support depending on the student's situation to ensure an equitable outcome.

Minnesota State has this goal: "By 2030, Minnesota State will eliminate education equity gaps at every Minnesota State college and university."

Under the umbrella of these statements and goals, multiple initiatives are in place to address disparities or gaps in performance. For example, within the Minnesota Department of Education there is an effort to better align CTE work and ESSA initiatives. We support and collaborate with state specialists and educators in our special education division, homeless student liaison staff, as well as our English learner division, all of whom work toward reducing and eliminating gaps in performance.

There is also state legislation annually requiring each district to identify any existing gaps in performance as well as to document strategies for closing those gaps. Secondary consortium leaders are able to access a summary of their districts' publicly available World's Best Workforce and Achievement and Integration plans in order to determine whether CTE students would benefit from additional support of existing district goals and strategies or whether more is needed in order to support CTE teachers and students more specifically. Finally, it is also anticipated that secondary staff would utilize and share forward any resources produced by Advance CTE, Regional Education Laboratory (REL), or Midwest Comprehensive Center in support of continuous improvement for all CTE students.

With these overarching goals, and the principle of equity within our state’s Perkins Plan, our work will align with and continue to focus on:

- Disaggregation of student data metrics to inform equity work and develop mechanisms to share data and review
- Providing consultative and communicative structures
- Incentivize innovations to enhance access, improve student engagement and support, mitigate policy barriers, and expand workforce diversity and strategic talent management

The reserve allocation distributed to local consortia at 15% is one opportunity for financial support for this equity work. In addition, the state will continue to invest leadership funds to support professional development and technical assistance at the state and local levels. Individual consortia interventions will arise from the CLNA.

Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)

The Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) state plan was updated and approved by the Administration for Children and Families for 2023 – 2025.

States that include TANF in the Combined State Plan must outline how the State will meet the requirements of Section 402 of the Social Security Act including how it will:

- a) **Conduct a program designed to serve all political subdivisions in the state (not necessarily in a uniform manner) that provides assistance to needy families with (or expecting) children and provides parents with job preparation, work, and support services to enable them to leave the program, specifically cash assistance, and become self-sufficient (Section 402(a) (1) (a) (i) of the Social Security Act).**

The Minnesota peacetime emergency initiated with Governor Waltz’s Executive Order 20-01 on March 13, 2020 expired on July 1, 2021. The state legislature granted public assistance programs 60 days after the end of the state peacetime emergency to unwind waivers that were designed to accommodate the effect of the pandemic on people’s lives and on the operations of local and tribal human services. Related operational changes were promulgated in Bulletins #20-68-12, issued April 10, 2020: *Waiver of Requirements for cash programs during COVID-19 response*, and in Bulletin#21-11-02, issued July 21, 2021: *End of COVID-19 Waivers for cash assistance programs*.

In 2020, the commissioner waived certain requirements for applications and interviews, verification, changes to existing applications and reporting. The changes also reduced barriers for families applying for cash assistance, relieved eligibility workers of after-the-fact verifications and ensured that participants did not have to repay cash assistance overpayments caused by state, local agency or eligibility system errors. In addition, process improvement was

put in place to reduce the number of face-to-face contacts in county and tribal offices while making it easier for Minnesotans in sudden financial crisis to receive assistance.

Regulatory and statutory authority basis for the changes described above are found in: Minnesota Statutes, Chapter 256J Minnesota Statutes; Chapter 256P Laws of Minnesota 2020, 1st Spec. Sess. chapter 7 Laws of Minnesota 2021; chapter 30 Laws of Minnesota 2021, 1st Spec. Sess. chapter 7; Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act Consolidated Appropriations Act; and 2021 American Rescue Plan Act of 2021.

Minnesota Family Investment Program (MFIP)

The Minnesota Family Investment Program (MFIP), Minnesota's Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program, provides temporary (60 months or less) cash and food assistance to:

- Families with children under age 18 (up to age 19 if in secondary education or vocational school full-time), and pregnant women with their spouses when financially eligible.
- Grandparents, aunts, uncles, cousins or other relatives who take responsibility for children whose parents cannot or will not. These adult relatives may receive assistance through MFIP for children in their care, and may choose to be on the MFIP grant or to apply for a child-only grant. When the non-parental caregiver receives assistance only for children, the income and assets of the relative caregivers are not considered and the case is not subject to the 60-month lifetime limit.

MFIP helps families work toward economic stability and greater self-sufficiency. MFIP provides help with child care costs, employment services, opportunities for education and training for workforce preparation, and a grant to supplement family income. MFIP encourages employment by providing work incentives, and promotes personal responsibility by expecting families to actively pursue employment. Some of the family's earned income is disregarded before calculating the MFIP grant. The monthly disregard amount is \$65 of earned income per wage earner plus 50 percent of the remaining earned income of the assistance unit. The remaining earnings are subtracted from the Family Wage Level grant standard, which is 10 percent higher than the standard allowed for families who receive only unearned income. For applicants, the Family Wage is the single standard used when determining MFIP eligibility regardless if the applicant has earnings or not.

Child care is a key component in Minnesota's strategy to help families leave and remain off public assistance. In Minnesota, the Child Care Assistance Program provides financial assistance to families to support access to child care that is affordable so that parents can work and/or attend school, and children are well cared for and ready for school.

Minnesota Family Investment Program families who participate in work activities such as work, job search, education, or social services activities that are approved in their employment plans are eligible to receive childcare assistance. In addition, Transition Year child care is available to

eligible families for a full year after their MFIP case closes to help families move toward economic stability. MFIP child care and Transition Year child care assistance are fully forecasted in the state's budget.

The Basic Sliding Fee program is available for non-MFIP/DWP income-eligible families and is funded through a capped allocation. If a family finishes their Transition Year child care assistance and there is a waiting list in their county for the Basic Sliding Fee program, the Transition Year bridge program will continue to provide them child care assistance until they reach their turn for Basic Sliding Fee child care assistance.

Families receiving MFIP benefits and/or services are encouraged to apply for health care coverage at the same time they apply for MFIP. Families receiving cash assistance and those not receiving cash assistance can apply for the Medical Assistance program and the MinnesotaCare program (Minnesota's health care program for the uninsured).

Families who receive MFIP must cooperate with their local child support agency to establish and enforce their child support orders. In federal fiscal year 2021, the child support program agencies collected more than \$550 million in child support. Through the child support pass-through, the program collected and distributed to MFIP families more than \$9.7 million in child support. Minnesota passes through 100 percent of current the child support payments made to the families receiving MFIP. Child support payments are treated as unearned income when calculating MFIP eligibility and benefits. Up to \$100 per month in child support payments for a family with one child, and up to \$200 per month for a family with two or more children is excluded from unearned income budgets when calculating a household's income for benefit determination.

MFIP combines cash and food benefits per the provisions of a waiver from the United States Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Services. Families who are not eligible for MFIP can apply for the federal Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP).

Diversionary Work Program (DWP)

The Diversionary Work Program provides help to families in crisis who are new to public assistance by supporting them in their efforts to immediately obtain and retain employment. DWP may be provided to families in crisis for a maximum of four months once in a 12-month period. Families with children under age 18 (up to age 19 if in secondary or vocational school full-time), or pregnant women and their spouses are eligible for DWP if they have not received cash assistance in the previous 12 months.

Eligibility for DWP begins the date a signed application form is received by the county agency. State statute requires financial workers to hold the interview for an applicant who appears to be eligible for DWP within five working days of the receipt of the application. If it appears that child care is necessary to enable a parent to work or look for work, and the parent has not applied for child care, the application for child care assistance must be completed before the interview with the financial worker is completed.

As soon as possible, but no later than 10 working days before being notified by the county agency that the applicant is financially eligible for DWP, the employment services provider must meet with the applicant and develop an employment plan. The county agency must issue DWP benefits within one working day after receiving notice that an employment plan has been signed

DWP supports families during a crisis situation and is not intended to meet recurrent needs. The short-term supports provided may include temporary help with rent, utilities or other housing costs and a personal allowance. Other supports for which families might be eligible are Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, health care and child care assistance. After four months of DWP, a family without a job or very low income may apply for MFIP. Families also may be eligible to continue Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, health care and child care assistance.

Families who receive DWP are required to cooperate with their local child support agency to establish and enforce their child support orders. Although families on DWP are required to cooperate with their child support agency, child support is not assigned to the state. All child support is passed through to the family. Up to \$100 in child support payments for a family with one child, and up to \$200 for a family with two or more children is excluded from unearned income budgets when calculating a household's income for benefit determination.

DWP is a non-recurrent short-term benefit available for a maximum of four consecutive months. Because DWP benefits are meant to address the family's crisis and divert them from long-term assistance, receipt of DWP does not count against the 60-month TANF time limit.

- b) Require a parent or caretaker receiving assistance to engage in work (defined by the state) once the state determines the parent or caretaker is ready to engage in work, or once he or she has received 24 months of assistance, whichever is earlier, consistent with the child care exception at 407(e)(2) (Section 402(a)(1)(a)(ii) of the Social Security Act).**

Minnesota Family Investment Program (MFIP)

Caregivers must begin participating in work activities within 30 days of being determined eligible for MFIP. Counties have the option of requiring that work activities begin sooner.

MFIP uses a combination of work incentives and required work activities such as job search, short-term training or subsidized work. Sanctions enforce work activity requirements and include grant reductions, vendor payments of shelter costs from the grant, and even case closure (when there are seven occurrences of noncompliance). When a case is closed, the financial worker re-determines the family's continued eligibility for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program. MFIP must remain closed for a minimum of one full month when closed for sanction reasons. Before ending a family's assistance, because of sanction, the county agency must review the case to determine if the employment plan is still appropriate, and must attempt to meet with the participant face-to-face.

Diversionary Work Program (DWP)

The goal of the Diversionary Work Program is to provide short-term, necessary services and supports to families, which will lead to unsubsidized employment, increased economic stability, and reduced risk of those families needing longer term assistance under MFIP. All parents, including both parents in a two-parent family, are required to develop and sign an employment plan before the family is approved for DWP. Most parents must seek full-time work immediately when approved. Employment services can help the family identify and address issues that may prevent the parents from obtaining or retaining employment. DWP employment service providers help parents find work that fits with the employment plan. The employment plan may include limited training that can be completed in four or fewer months.

Minnesota stresses work as the means to address the family's ongoing needs and places a high priority on starting to work or increasing the number of hours a person is employed. That is why the child care application must be completed during the DWP interview process and why the applicant must develop an employment plan prior to receiving any cash benefits.

When a participant fails to comply with the DWP employment plan or with child support enforcement without good cause, the DWP case is closed. The family is not eligible for MFIP during the DWP disqualification period and the case remains closed unless the parent comes into compliance within the four consecutive months of the DWP eligibility period. The disqualification of the family from DWP does not affect receipt of Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program or health care benefits.

- c) Ensure that parents and caretakers receiving assistance engage in work in accordance with section 407 (Section 402(a)(1)(a)(iii) of the Social Security act). Consistent with the required strategic elements discussed in section II (a)(2) herein, provide a specific analysis of how the state's workforce development activities are addressing employment and training services for parents or caretakers receiving assistance.**

Minnesota Family Investment Program (MFIP)

Minnesota ensures that parents receiving assistance through MFIP engage in work activities through three mechanisms: requiring all adults receiving MFIP assistance to develop an individualized employment plan that identifies the activities the adult will participate in and that meets the hours required for participation (256J.561, subd.2); imposing sanctions if the participant does not comply with the work requirements (256J.46); and offering employment services to all adults receiving assistance.

Minnesota requires parents and caregivers to submit pay stubs and documentation verifying participation in work activities as detailed in the State's Work Verification Plan. DHS and DEED jointly operate MFIP employment and training services. DHS also releases regular management

indicator reports to counties in order for the counties to track state-mandated performance measures for MFIP.

Child care assistance is available to all MFIP participants who engage in work activities in an approved employment plan.

Minor caregivers under the age of 18 who have not received a high school diploma or its equivalent are required to engage in appropriate educational programs and are provided with child care assistance and supportive services to enable successful participation. Caregivers ages 18 and 19 can choose whether they want to complete their high school education or participate in work activities leading to employment. Whichever choice is made, child care assistance is available to enable the parents to participate in the chosen activity.

Bilingual employment and training services and work literacy language programs may be available for those lacking English proficiency, although the lack of proficiency in English is not necessarily presumed to be a barrier to employment. Interpreter services are provided when necessary.

Diversionsary Work Program (DWP)

DWP stresses that work is the means for families to meet their ongoing needs and provides support services as needed to help participants in crisis obtain and retain employment. After establishing financial eligibility, participants must meet with an employment counselor and develop an employment plan in order to be found eligible to receive assistance through DWP. Work activities available for participants include, but are not limited to: job search, job readiness assessment, job readiness assistance, job clubs, job counseling, job coaching, job skills training, work experience, subsidized employment, on-the-job training, job placement, educational programs and post-employment follow-up services. Education for DWP recipients is allowed, but the education program must be completed within the four-month DWP period or an education activity cannot be approved as part of the employment plan. Participants who do not comply with their employment plans have their cases closed.

- d) Take such reasonable steps as the State deems necessary to restrict the use and disclosure of information about individuals and families receiving assistance under the program attributable to funds provided by the federal government (Section 402(a)(1)(a)(iv) of the Social Security Act).**

Minnesota Family Investment Program, and Diversionsary Work Program

Data on recipients is classified as private and may not be disclosed pursuant to Minnesota Statutes, Chapter 13. Access to Minnesota's eligibility computer system (MAXIS) is defined by a security role that is attached to a worker's ID, and access to information is defined and limited by worker job responsibilities. A personal logon ID cannot be issued until the worker completes a state-developed orientation course. The orientation includes a review of data privacy and ethics as they pertain to client information. All county, state and contracted agency staff working in the Minnesota Family Investment Program must complete annually two data privacy

courses designed to increase compliance with data practices and security, and meet federal training requirements for all those with access to DHS information and networks. Mastery of these courses is now required prior to receiving access to DHS systems including the new eligibility system, MMIS, MAXIS and MEC2. In addition, printed reports distributed by the state are reviewed individually to ensure data provided to the requestor are appropriate for the recipient of the report.

e) Establish goals and take action to prevent and reduce out-of-wedlock pregnancies, with special emphasis on teenage pregnancies (Section 402(a)(1)(a)(v) of the Social Security Act).

Minnesota's female population ages 15 to 44 in 2018 was estimated at 1,074,005. Of the total resident births (67,348), 45,869 were to married women, 21,467 were to women who were not married, and 12 were unknown. Thus, the out-of-wedlock birth rate in Minnesota for 2018 was 20.0/1000 for women ages 15 to 44. The out-of-wedlock birth rate in Minnesota for 2017 was 20.6/1000, for 2016 was 21.3/1000, for 2015 was 21.3/1000, for 2014 it was 21.4/1000, and for 2013 it was 21.7/1000 women. The out-of-wedlock birth rate for Minnesota has remained relatively stable over the last several years with a slight trend downward. Minnesota still continues to face significant challenges in trying to lower its out-of-wedlock birth rate.

Minnesota has focused significant attention on reducing unintended pregnancies, particularly those occurring to teens and young adults who are less likely to be married or prepared to care for a child. While Minnesota's teen pregnancy rate compares well to national rates, it masks significant and persistent racial and ethnic disparities. African American and American Indian youth are three to four times more likely to have a child when they are a teen than is a white youth. In an effort to address these disparities, the Minnesota legislature provided the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) with \$2 million annually in TANF funds that support non-profit and government agencies in reducing the disparities in teen pregnancy rates in Minnesota.

Minnesota Department of Health receives \$999,106 annually in federal a Title V Abstinence Education Grant (AEGP) funding to support evidenced based efforts to delay sexual activity in youth. Minnesota's program is a coordinated countywide approach in St. Paul-Ramsey County, Hennepin County, Watonwan County, Beltrami County and other rural and urban American Indian communities. The program has three components: direct service to youth in schools and community settings through Teen Outreach Program, *Making a Difference*, Project *AIM andLive it!* Curriculum; reaching out to parents in the community through *It's That Easy: A Guide to Raising Sexually Healthy Children Parent Education Training*; and the *Making Authentic Connections* Program, which trains parents and others in making authentic connections in relationships with youth.

Minnesota Department of Health also receives a federal Personal Responsibility Education Program (PREP) grant (\$887,189 annually). The MN PREP sub-awardees serve male and female

youth in the following target populations: the juvenile justice system; attending area learning centers (ALC); in or aging out of foster care; runaway and homeless; with HIV/AIDS; pregnant, mothers' and fathers' who are under 21 years of age; Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Queer/Questioning (LGBTQ); American Indians; youth experiencing racial and ethnic disparities; culturally underrepresented; out of school; at risk of being trafficked for commercial sexual exploitation; and residing in areas of high teen birth rates. The overarching goals of this program are to decrease teen pregnancies and STI rates among participating teens, focusing on ages 15-19, and to increase healthy youth behaviors and life-skills in teens 10-19 years of age. This is accomplished through the implementation of high quality, medically-accurate and evidence-based programs. It also assists high- risk adolescents to successfully transition from youth to adulthood by providing supplemental adult preparation topics such as adolescent development, healthy life skills, healthy relationships and financial literacy.

Efforts are also directed at increasing access to family planning services for individuals who are low- income and at high risk for unintended pregnancies. Minnesota's Family Planning Special Projects (FPSP) grant program is administered by MDH. Funded through the state Legislature, the current two-year grant cycle made available \$12,706,000 (including \$2,312,000 in TANF funding) to 27 community family planning clinics across the state. Grantees include one county-operated clinic and one university-operated clinic, ten local public health agencies, and fifteen non-profit organizations. In State Fiscal Year 2017, FPSP provided family planning counseling services to 34,682 women, 6,468 men, and 109 client who identified as Transgender or Gender Nonconforming who were low-income and at risk for unintended pregnancy. FPSP grantees provided 30,813 men and women and those identified as Transgender or Gender Nonconforming with a contraceptive method – 24 percent of whom were age 19 or younger. To assist individuals in accessing subsidized family planning services, Minnesota Department of Health also funds a 1-800 family planning hotline. In State Fiscal Year 2017, the hotline responded to 3,600 inquiries.

Federal Title X funds totaling \$3.1 million comes to Minnesota through direct grants to Planned Parenthood of Minnesota, North Dakota and South Dakota, and Ramsey Public Health. Access to subsidized family planning services has also been increased through the Minnesota Family Planning Program. The Minnesota Family Planning Program (MFPP) increases access to family planning services for low-income Minnesotans and helps reduce the number of unintended pregnancies. The program is available to people who are not enrolled in Medical Assistance. In 2016, the program served more than 21,000 people, with a monthly average enrollment of about 12,000. Total spending for the program was just over \$9 million. Federal Medicaid funding for most services is at a 90-percent matching rate. The MFPP was implemented beginning July 1, 2006, as a federal waiver demonstration project approved by the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS). The Affordable Care Act (ACA) established a new Medicaid eligibility group and the option for states to provide family planning services under the Medicaid State Plan. The 2014 Minnesota Legislature directed DHS to seek federal

authority to operate the MFPP under the Minnesota Medicaid State Plan. Effective January 1, 2017, the MFPP became a Medicaid State Plan program.

Other state efforts supporting reducing unintended pregnancies include The Family Home Visiting Program administered by MDH. Approximately \$8 million in federal TANF funds are directed to the Family Home Visiting Program. The Family Home Visiting program administered by MDH provides funding to all of Minnesota's local public health agencies and to nine of the 11 tribal governments to support home visiting services to families at or below 200 percent of poverty. The goal of the program is to prevent child abuse and neglect, reduce juvenile delinquency, promote positive parenting and resiliency in children and promote family health and economic self-sufficiency. The program has a strong focus on providing family supports that reduce the risk of teen pregnancies and working with pregnant or parenting teens to delay subsequent pregnancies.

These family home visiting efforts are augmented by receipt of approximately \$9.2 million (FFY18) in federal Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting Program funds. Beginning in July 2019, a total of \$18.7 million in Minnesota state funding will support implementation of the evidence based home visiting models such as Nurse Family Partnership, Healthy Families America and Family Spirit, Parents as Teachers and Family Connects.

- f) Conduct a program designed to reach state and local law enforcement officials, the education system, and relevant counseling services, that provides education and training on the problem of statutory rape so that teenage pregnancy prevention programs may be expanded to include men (Section 402(a)(1)(a)(vi) of the Social Security Act).**

The state of Minnesota considers sexual violence, including statutory rape, a public health problem. Sexual violence is defined as any of the following conditions: statutory rape, date/acquaintance rape, same-sex assault, child sexual abuse, incest, pornography, prostitution, sexual exploitation by professionals, stalking, sexual harassment, and any other sexual activity in which a person is forced, coerced or manipulated without her/his consent.

In order to address this problem, the state passed provisions that outline consequences for sexual violence including age of consent laws (for further details, see Minnesota Statute 609.342 at <https://www.revisor.mn.gov/statutes/?id=609.342>)

In addition, statewide partnerships approach sexual violence in a holistic manner that work towards the elimination of violent sexual behaviors including statutory rape.

These efforts are provided under the leadership of a statewide stakeholder workgroup involving the following organizations and grassroots advocacy entities:

- Minnesota Department of Health (MDH)
- Minnesota Department of Human Services (DHS)
- Department of Corrections (DOC)

- Representatives of county and local legal, health, law enforcement and abuse prevention organizations and workgroups
- MDE and representatives of local school districts
- Minnesota Coalition Against Sexual Assault
- The MN Men's Action Network (Alliance to Prevent Sexual and Domestic Violence)

These statewide public/private collaborative efforts support and fund annual conferences, periodic meetings, and ad hoc taskforces to shape the development of sexual violence prevention curriculum that is available and distributed to communities, youth, and professionals. To this end, a collaborative effort between MDH, Men As Peacemakers in Duluth and the Gender Violence Institute in Clearwater had been created to develop a network of men and male leaders involved in primary prevention practices. These efforts are currently coordinated by Minnesota Department of Health, the Bush Foundation and the Minnesota Department of Public Safety.

- g) Implement policies and procedures as necessary to prevent access to assistance provided under the state program funded under this part through any electronic fund transaction in an automated teller machine or point-of-sale device located in a place described in Section 408(a)(12), including a plan to ensure that recipients of the assistance have adequate access to their cash assistance (Section 402(a)(1)(a)(vii) of the Social Security Act).**

The State of Minnesota has taken several steps to ensure the requirements of Section 4004 of the Middle Class Tax Relief and Job Creation Act of 2012 are as follows:

Enforcing a complementary state law (MN Statute 256.987, Subdivision 2) which prohibits the purchase of tobacco products and liquor with any EBT transactions in specific prohibited spaces, Minnesota developed an EBT brochure that carries this warning: ***"It is illegal for an EBT user to buy or attempt to buy tobacco products or alcoholic beverages with the EBT card. If you do, it is fraud, and you will be removed from the program. Do not use an EBT card at a gambling establishment or at a retail establishment that provides adult-oriented entertainment in which performers disrobe or perform in an unclothed state."*** Minnesota also developed plain language brochures that explain how to access benefits through an EBT card or EFT so clients can choose which option works for them. These brochures provide guidance and resources for applicants and recipients on how to access and how to problem-solve by calling toll-free phone numbers anytime they encounter access issues no matter where they live across the state..

Families and individuals have an option to access their benefits either as a direct deposit or EBT so they can meet their basic needs. These basic needs include food, shelter, clothing, utilities, and transportation. These funds are given either as direct deposit or until families and

individuals can support themselves. Furthermore, counties/tribes that deliver MFIP/TANF benefits and services are instructed to communicate to all program participants state expectations around EBT card use restrictions at both application and at recertification stages.

A search is done quarterly through the EBT Data Warehouse system, specifically narrowed to include search fields of retailer name and/or Point of Sale machine names, and location of retailers that clients should not be accessing their cash benefits at. The results are further reviewed to see if the cash withdrawal transactions are done at a retailer that has an assigned Food and Consumer Services (FCS) number that indicates they are a registered retailer with US Food and Nutrition Service (FNS). The results without a FCS number affiliated with the retailer/Point of Sale machine are submitted to Fidelity National Information Services, Inc. (FIS) to review further and block ongoing cash withdrawals if possible. The known locations are reviewed monthly to see if they have been successfully blocked for usage.

Ongoing monitoring occurs by generating quarterly reports. Prohibited retailers and POS machines are continuously identified and blocked as needed.

Findings of noncompliance at the retailer level are resolved by blocking the ability to conduct EBT transactions. At the participant level, findings of non-compliance are addressed through fraud investigations at the county level who have the ability to prosecute such offenses for fraud and unlawful EBT use. The disqualification of the EBT cardholder from the program he/she was participating may also occur.

- h) Ensure that recipients of assistance provided under the state program funded under this part have the ability to use or withdraw assistance with minimal fees or charges, including an opportunity to access assistance with no fee or charges, and are provided information on applicable fees and surcharges that apply to electronic fund transactions involving the assistance, and that such information is made publicly available (Section 402(a) (1) (a) (viii) of the Social Security Act).**

While there are client restrictions regarding EBT access and use of TANF benefits, Minnesota is required by federal law to ensure that applicants and recipients are provided adequate access to cash assistance with minimal or no fees or charges for withdrawal. Clients pay electronic fees similar to non-TANF clients. Clients get four free EBT cash withdrawals per month, and eFunds then charges \$1 for subsequent cash withdrawals. This fee is not charged until the client's fifth cash withdrawal. Clients are given the EBT Training Brochure by county workers and/or County Card Issuers (DHS-3315A). Furthermore, if clients request training in addition to the brochure, counties provide an EBT training video to walk clients through the process.

- i) Indicate whether the state intends to treat families moving from another state differently from other families under the program, and if so how (Section 402(a) (1) (b) (i) of the Social Security Act)**

To be eligible for MFIP or DWP, an assistance unit must have established residency in Minnesota. An assistance unit is considered to have established residency in Minnesota when a child or caregiver has resided in this state for at least 30 consecutive days with the intention of

making the person's home here and not for any temporary purpose. A county must waive the 30-day residency requirement when unusual hardship would result from denial of assistance. Families that have move from other states to Minnesota, and who establish state residency, are treated the same as all the other MFIP participants.

j) Indicate whether it intends to provide assistance to non-citizens, and if so include an overview of the assistance (Section 402(a) (1) (b) (ii) of the Social Security Act).

Persons who are either United States citizens or qualified non-citizens are eligible for TANF benefits per the provisions of section 431 of the PRWORA, as amended (8 U.S.C. 1641), if they meet all other program eligibility criteria. Qualified non-citizens who entered the United States before Aug. 22, 1996 are considered to be eligible for federally funded cash assistance if they are Lawful Permanent Residents (LPRs); paroled for one year or more; victims of battery and/or cruelty; or conditional entrants prior to April 1, 1980. Qualified non-citizens who entered on or after Aug. 22, 1996 are considered to be ineligible for federally funded MFIP/DWP cash assistance for five years. The following non-citizens may be eligible for federal funding without considering the date of admission to the U.S. if they meet all other program requirements: refugees, asylees, veterans and persons on active duty in the U.S. Armed Forces, their spouses or unmarried dependent children, non-citizens whose deportation/removal is being withheld, Cuban or Haitian entrants and certain Amerasians.

All lawfully residing non-citizens who are not eligible for federal funding may be eligible for state funding if they meet other program eligibility requirements for state funded cash assistance. LPRs age 18 through 69 who are funded under state dollars and who have been in the country for four or more years must meet one of the following requirements to remain eligible: Enrollment in literacy, English as a second language or citizenship classes; applied for admission to such classes and on a waiting list; applied for a waiver from U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) of the English language or civics requirements of the citizenship test; submitted an application for citizenship to USCIS and waiting for a testing date or swearing-in ceremony; or have been denied citizenship due to failure to pass the test after two or more attempts or because of an inability to understand the rights and responsibilities of becoming a U.S. citizen as documented by the USCIS or the county agency.

k) Set forth objective criteria for the delivery of benefits and the determination of eligibility and for fair and equitable treatment, including an explanation of how it will provide opportunities for recipients who have been adversely affected to be heard in a State Administrative or appeal process (Section 402(a)(1)(b)(iii) of the Social Security Act).

Eligibility

An applicant for MFIP or for DWP must meet the eligibility requirements specified in Minnesota Statutes Sections 256J.01 through 256J.95 before receiving benefits and services. All requirements under Section 408 of the Social Security Act, as amended by the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996, are included in Minnesota law.

Assistance is provided equitably to all program recipients in accordance with state and federal law. Neither MFIP nor DWP requires basis of eligibility tests, such as the previous Aid to Families with Dependent Children 100-hour rule requirement for two-parent families.

The asset limit for both programs is \$10,000 for applicants and \$10,000 for participants. One vehicle per assistance member age 16 or older is not counted towards the asset limit. Other assets that do not count towards the asset limit include personal goods and savings in a tax-free ABLE account, up to \$14,000 per year. For MFIP and DWP, statewide payment standards are based on the number of eligible persons in the assistance unit.

Persons convicted of a drug offense committed after July 1, 1997 may receive cash assistance subject to the conditions set forth in Minnesota Statutes 256J.26.

Minnesota Family Investment Program (MFIP)

Time Limits

There is a 60-month lifetime limit for receiving MFIP assistance with exceptions in certain situations. Time limit exceptions apply to the months in which individuals are living in Indian country (as defined in Section 1151 of Title 18, U.S.C.) or a Native Alaskan Village where the not-employed rate is over 50 percent per the provisions under 45 CFR 264.1((b)(1)(ii)).

Under the MFIP program, some families are funded with segregated state funds and are exempt from the 60-month lifetime limit. Included are caregivers age 60 and over as well as minor caregivers under the age of 18 and caregivers 18 or 19 who are complying with education requirements. The months a person received cash assistance as part of the MFIP field trials are also exempted from the 60-month time limit.

Hardship Extensions

Extensions of the 60-month time limit are possible if any of the following hardship conditions are met:

- The participant is suffering from an illness, injury or incapacity which has been certified by a qualified professional when the illness, injury or incapacity is expected to continue for more than 30 days, and severely limits the participant's ability to obtain or maintain suitable employment.
- The participant is a caregiver whose presence in the home is required because of an illness, injury or incapacity of another member in the assistance unit, a relative in the household, or a foster child in the household when the illness or incapacity and the need for a person to provide assistance in the home has been certified by a qualified professional and is expected to continue for more than 30 days.
- The participant is a caregiver with a child or an adult in the assistance unit who meets the disability or medical criteria for home care services or waived services or meets the criteria for severe emotional disturbance under Minnesota statutes.

- The participant is a caregiver who is employed the number of hours required by DHS with a household income that does not exceed program standards.
- The participant is determined to be hard-to-employ because the individual belongs to any of the following groups:
 - A person diagnosed by a qualified professional as a person with developmental disability or mental illness, and the condition severely limits the person's ability to obtain or maintain suitable employment.
 - A person assessed by a vocational specialist or the county agency to be unemployable.
 - A person assessed to have an IQ below 80 assessed by a vocational specialist or a county agency to be employable, but the condition severely limits the person's ability to obtain or maintain suitable employment.
 - A person who is determined by a qualified professional to be Learning Disabled and the condition severely limits the person's ability to obtain or maintain suitable employment. The initial approval of a learning disability extension must have been or confirmed within the previous 12 months. Learning disabilities do not include learning problems that are primarily the result of visual, hearing or motor handicaps, mental retardation and emotional disturbance or due to environmental, cultural or economic disadvantage.
 - A person assessed to have an IQ below 80 assessed by a vocational specialist or a county agency to be employable, but the condition severely limits the person's ability to obtain or maintain suitable employment.
 - A person who is determined by a qualified professional to be Learning Disabled and the condition severely limits the person's ability to obtain or maintain suitable employment. The initial approval of a learning disability extension must have been or confirmed within the previous 12 months. Learning disabilities do not include learning problems that are primarily the result of visual, hearing or motor handicaps, mental retardation and emotional disturbance or due to environmental, cultural or economic disadvantage.

Appeals

Applicants and recipients of MFIP and DWP are notified in writing of their rights and the process to follow to secure a fair hearing. When an applicant is denied services, or a participant disagrees with a county or tribal agency decision, the applicant or participant may submit a request for a hearing to the county or tribal agency or directly to the DHS Appeals Office. State Human Services judges will conduct a hearing in person at the county office or by telephone. Decisions are issued by the Commissioner within 90 days of the request for a hearing. Under certain conditions, a participant may continue to receive benefits pending an appeal decision. Reasonable expenses incurred by a recipient because of the appeal are reimbursed upon request (Minnesota Statute 256.045, Administrative and Judicial Review of Human Services Matters).

- l) **Indicate whether the state intends to assist individuals to train for, seek, and maintain employment (Section 402(A) (1) (B) (V) of the Social Security Act)—**
 - 1) **Providing direct care in a long-term care facility (as such terms are defined under section 1397j of this title); or**
 - 2) **In other occupations related to elder care, high-demand occupations, or occupations expected to experience labor shortages as, determined appropriate by the state for which the state identifies an unmet need for service personnel, and, if so, shall include an overview of such assistance.**

Minnesota intends to assist individuals in training, seeking and maintaining employment as a result of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act of 2010 (ACA). Minnesota uses its Pathways to Prosperity program initiatives to create career pathways programs in high-demand career fields. The Pathways to Prosperity program provides grants to local partners to operate as part of the state’s employment services system. Funding is available to low income families on MFIP to assist with compliance with their work requirements.

- m) **Provide for all MOE-funded services the following information: the name of the program benefit or service, and the financial eligibility criteria that families must meet in order to receive that benefit or service. In addition, for TANF MOE-funded services (co-mingled or segregated MOE) describe the program benefit provided to eligible families (SSP services do not have to include a description but the Department of Health and Human Services encourages it) (§263.2(b)(3) & §263.2(c) preamble pages 17826-7)**

Program Name: Temporary Assistance for Needy Families

Grantee Name: MINNESOTA

Report Name: ACF-204

Funding/Grant Period: 2201MNTANF

Report Period: 10/01/2021 to 09/30/2022

Report Status: Submitted

Report Sections

- 1. *Attachment A*
- 2. *Attachment BMFIP*
- 3. *Attachment BEmployment and Training*
- 4. *Attachment BBasic Sliding Fee Child Care*
- 5. *Attachment BHead Start*

6. *Attachment BMN Working Family Credit*
7. *Attachment BConsolidated Fund Emergency Needs*
8. *Attachment BState Administration*
9. *Attachment BCounty Administration*
10. *Attachment BCredit for K-12 Education Expenses*
11. *Certification*

General Instructions:

Each State must provide the information indicated below on its TANF program regardless of the funding source -- i.e., no matter whether the State used segregated Federal TANF funds, segregated State TANF funds, or commingled funds to pay for the benefit or service. If the State elects to report on other benefits or activities provided through other program funding streams, please mention it after the TANF- funded benefits or activities for each item.

1. The State's definition of each work activity.

See Attachment ACF-204 FFY22 MN Part A-1 Attachment.pdf

2. A description of the transitional services provided to families no longer receiving assistance due to employment.

Each Minnesota County must offer Transition Year Child Care and Transition Year Extension Child Care to working families who are no longer eligible for MFIP or DWP benefits. Families receiving CCAP may stay on the program during a 12 month eligibility periods if their income is below 85% of the State Median Income which is about 325%-350% of the Federal Poverty Guidelines, depending on the family size. Families who have completed their transition year of child care assistance and who are eligible, but on waiting list for the Basic Sliding Fee (BSF) Program are eligible for child care assistance through Transition Year Extension. A family may participate in Transition Year Extension for the length of time necessary for the family to be moved to the BSF program.

3. A description of how a State will reduce the amount of assistance payable to a family when an individual refuses to engage in work without good cause pursuant to 45 CFR 261.14 of this chapter.

See Attachment ACF-204 FFY22 MN Part A-3 Attachment.pdf

4. The average monthly number of payments for child care services made by the State through the use of disregards, by the following types of child care providers:

i. Licensed/regulated in-home child care: 0

ii. Licensed/regulated family child care: 0
iii. Licensed/regulated group home child care: 0
iv. Licensed/regulated center-based child care: 0
v. Legally operating (i.e., no license category available in State or locality) in-home child care provided by a non-relative: 0
vi. Legally operating (i.e., no license category available in State or locality) in-home child care provided by a relative: 0
vii. Legally operating (i.e., no license category available in State or locality) family child care provided by a non-relative: 0
viii. Legally operating (i.e., no license category available in State or locality) family child care provided by a relative: 0
ix. Legally operating (i.e., no license category available in State or locality) group child care provided by a non-relative: 0
x. Legally operating (i.e., no license category available in State or locality) group child care provided by a relative: 0
xi. Legally operated (i.e., no license category available in State or locality) center-based child care. 0
<p>5. If the State has adopted the Family Violence Option and wants Federal recognition of its good cause domestic violence waivers under 45 CFR 260.50-58, then provide (a) a description of the strategies and procedures in place to ensure that victims of domestic violence receive appropriate alternative services and (b) an aggregate figure for the total number of good cause domestic waivers granted.</p> <p>Minnesota has adopted the Family Violence Option under Subpart B of part 260 and wants recognition of its good cause Domestic Violence waivers. (a) Being a victim of domestic violence is not a category for exemption from Employment Services (ES) and unless otherwise exempt, past or current victims of domestic violence are referred to ES. Victims of domestic violence who want to be exempt from the 60-month time limit and want to waive regular ES requirements must develop a specialized employment plan (EP). The participant develops the EP, with the assistance and collaboration of a person trained in domestic violence and a job counselor. The primary goal of the specialized EP is to ensure the safety of the caregiver and the children. The plan includes activities designed to lead to self-sufficiency provided the activities do not endanger the safety of anyone in the unit. The employment plan is reviewed by the county or by the job counselor every three months, or more often if circumstances warrant. The review determines if the activities in the plan continue to be appropriate and if the participant is able to safely comply with the plan. As long as a participant is complying with an EP, the participant is exempt from the 60-month time limit. (b)The aggregate number of domestic violence waivers granted in FFY 2021 in Minnesota is 1,507.</p>

6. A description of any nonrecurrent, short-term benefits (as defined in 45 CFR 260.31(b)(1)) provided, including:

i. The eligibility criteria associated with such benefits, including any restrictions on the amount, duration, or frequency of payments;

ii. Any policies that limit such payments to families that are eligible for TANF assistance or that have the effect of delaying or suspending a family's eligibility for assistance;

iii. Any procedures or activities developed under the TANF program to ensure that individuals diverted from assistance receive information about, referrals to, or access to other program benefits (such as Medicaid and food stamps) that might help them make the transition from welfare to work.

See Attachment ACF-204 FFY22 MN Part A-6 Attachment.pdf

7. A description of the grievance procedures the State has established and is maintaining to resolve displacement complaints, pursuant to section 407(f)(3) of the Social Security Act. This description must include the name of the State agency with the lead responsibility for administering this provision and explanations of how the State has notified the public about these procedures and how an individual can register a complaint.

This information is in MN Statute 256J.72 and is addressed in Minnesota's most recent TANF Plan (see appendix for statute language).

8. A summary of State programs and activities directed at the third and fourth statutory purposes of TANF (as specified at 45 CFR 260.20(c) and (d) of this chapter).

a. Summarize below, the State programs and activities directed at preventing and reducing the incidence of out-of-wedlock pregnancies and establishing annual numerical goals for preventing and reducing the incidence of these pregnancies (TANF purpose 3):

See Attachment ACF-204 FFY22 MN Part A-8 Attachment.pdf

b. Summarize below, the State programs and activities directed at encouraging the formation and maintenance of two-parent families (TANF purpose 4):

N/A

9. An estimate of the total number of individuals who have participated in subsidized employment under §261.30(b) or (c) of this chapter. 11

10. A description of EBT policies and practices in the following four areas: (1) procedures for preventing the use of TANF assistance via electronic benefit transfer transactions in any liquor store; any casino, gambling casino, or gaming establishment, and any retail establishment which provides adult oriented entertainment in which

performers disrobe or perform in an unclothed state for entertainment;(2) how the state identifies the locations specified in the statute;(3) procedures for ongoing monitoring to ensure policies are being carried out as intended; and

(4)how the state plans to respond to findings of non-compliance or program ineffectiveness.

(1) Procedures for preventing the use of TANF assistance via electronic benefit transfer transactions in any liquor store; any casino, gambling casino, or gaming establishment, and any retail establishment which provides adult oriented entertainment in which performers disrobe or perform in an unclothed state for entertainment; The State of Minnesota has taken several steps to ensure the requirements of Section 4004 of the Middle Class Tax Relief and Job Creation Act of 2012 are as follows: (a) Enforcing a complimentary state law (MN Statute 256.987, Subdivision 2) which prohibits the purchase of tobacco products and liquor with any EBT transactions, (b) informing EBT users of their responsibilities and limitations with EBT card use, and (c) directing counties that deliver MFIP/TANF benefits and services to communicate to program participants expectations around EBT card use restrictions at application and recertification. (2) How the state identifies the locations specified in the statute; A search is done quarterly through the EBT Data Warehouse system, specifically narrowed to include search fields of retailer name and/or POS machine names and location of retailers that clients should not be accessing their cash benefits at. The results are further reviewed to see if the cash withdrawal transactions are done at a retailer that has an assigned FSC number that indicates they are a registered retailer with FCS. The results without a FCS number affiliated with the retailer/POS machine are submitted to FIS to review and block ongoing cash withdrawals if possible. The known locations are reviewed monthly to see if they have been successfully blocked for usage. (3) Procedures for ongoing monitoring to ensure policies are being carried out as intended; Ongoing monitoring occurs by generating quarterly reports (see # 2 above for details). Prohibited retailers and POS machines are continuously identified and blocked as needed. (4) How the state plans to respond to findings of non-compliance or program ineffectiveness. Findings of noncompliance at the retailer level are resolved by blocking the ability to conduct EBT transactions as described in #2. On a personal level, findings of noncompliance are addressed through fraud investigators at the county level and the ability to prosecute such an offense for fraud and unlawful EBT use. The disqualification of the EBT cardholder from the program they were a participant can also occur.

Program Information

Provide the following information for EACH PROGRAM (according to the nature of the benefit or service provided) for which the State claims MOE expenditures. Complete and submit this report in accordance with the attached instructions.

1. Name of Benefit or Service Program:

Minnesota Family Investment Program (MFIP)

2. Description of the Major Program Benefits, Services, and Activities:

[MN Statutes 256J.02 - 256J.74] Grants to Individuals - MFIP grants provide integrated cash and food assistance to families with children or to pregnant women while the caregiver works toward becoming self-sufficient. Caregivers are expected to participate in employment services requirements.

3. Purpose(s) of Benefit or Service Program:

MFIP grants provide basic assistance to eligible families. The combined cash and food benefit program also includes an earned income disregard factor that has been shown to encourage work.

4. Program Type. (Check one)

TANF State

5. Description of Work Activities (Complete only if this program is a separate State program):

N/A

6. Total State Expenditures for the Program for the Fiscal Year: \$149,194,069

7. Total State MOE Expenditures under the Program for the Fiscal Year: \$89,650,107

8. Total Number of Families Served under the Program with MOE Funds: 14,355

This last figure represents (Check one):

The average monthly total for the fiscal year. The total served over the fiscal year.

9. Financial Eligibility Criteria for Receiving MOE-funded Program Benefits or Services:

Pregnant women or a caregiver with a child under age 18, or under age 19 if the child is in secondary education. The resource limit is \$2,000 for applicants and \$5,000 for participants. Income eligibility is with 115 percent of FPG adjusted for family size. Participants must be citizens or legal non-citizens.

10. Prior Program Authorization: Was this program authorized and allowable under prior law? (Check one)

Yes No

11. Total Program Expenditures in FY 1995 (NOTE: Provide only if response on question 10 is No): \$0

Program Information

Provide the following information for EACH PROGRAM (according to the nature of the benefit or service provided) for which the State claims MOE expenditures. Complete and submit this report in accordance with the attached instructions.

1. Name of Benefit or Service Program:

Employment and Training Services

2. Description of the Major Program Benefits, Services, and Activities:

These grants are state funds provided to counties to pay for Employment Services for MFIP and DWP participants.

3. Purpose(s) of Benefit or Service Program:

Grants are given to counties to provide various services to MFIP and DWP recipients to assist them in becoming employed. The services include, but are not limited to job search, job club, GED, employment related education, work literacy, case management, job retention, and job or skills update.

4. Program Type. (Check one)

TANF State

5. Description of Work Activities (Complete only if this program is a separate State program):

N/A

6. Total State Expenditures for the Program for the Fiscal Year: \$8,000,000

7. Total State MOE Expenditures under the Program for the Fiscal Year: \$7,295,639

8. Total Number of Families Served under the Program with MOE Funds: 7,160

This last figure represents (Check one):

The average monthly total for the fiscal year. The total served over the fiscal year.

9. Financial Eligibility Criteria for Receiving MOE-funded Program Benefits or Services:

To be eligible for the program, the recipient must be an adult or minor caregiver receiving an MFIP or a DWP grant.

10. Prior Program Authorization: Was this program authorized and allowable under prior law? (Check one)

Yes No

11. Total Program Expenditures in FY 1995 (NOTE: Provide only if response on question 10 is No): \$0

Program Information

Provide the following information for EACH PROGRAM (according to the nature of the benefit or service provided) for which the State claims MOE expenditures. Complete and submit this report in accordance with the attached instructions.

1. Name of Benefit or Service Program:

Basic Sliding Fee Child Care

2. Description of the Major Program Benefits, Services, and Activities:

[MN Statutes 119B, 119A] The BSF program assists low-income working families who are not participating in MFIP or DWP with child care costs.

3. Purpose(s) of Benefit or Service Program:

The purpose of the BSF child care assistance is to help pay the child care costs while low-income non MFIP/DWP families work, look for work or attend educational programs.

4. Program Type. (Check one)

TANF State

5. Description of Work Activities (Complete only if this program is a separate State program):

N/A

6. Total State Expenditures for the Program for the Fiscal Year: \$54,885,795

7. Total State MOE Expenditures under the Program for the Fiscal Year: \$53,881,677

8. Total Number of Families Served under the Program with MOE Funds: 2,816

This last figure represents (Check one):

The average monthly total for the fiscal year. The total served over the fiscal year.

9. Financial Eligibility Criteria for Receiving MOE-funded Program Benefits or Services:

Families may enter the BSF program if their income is less than or equal to 175% of the federal poverty guidelines, adjusted for family size. Families moving from Transition Year to BSF are considered to have met the income entry requirement in the first subprogram in which they participated.

Families may receive child care assistance until their income reaches 250% of the federal poverty guidelines, adjusted for family size. Eligible families may receive BSF child care assistance for children under the age of 13 or, for children with a disability, under the age of 15. Parents must be working, looking for work, or in an authorized education/training activity.

10. Prior Program Authorization: Was this program authorized and allowable under prior law? (Check one)

Yes No

11. Total Program Expenditures in FY 1995 (NOTE: Provide only if response on question 10 is No): \$0

Program Information

Provide the following information for EACH PROGRAM (according to the nature of the benefit or service provided) for which the State claims MOE expenditures. Complete and submit this report in accordance with the attached instructions.

1. Name of Benefit or Service Program:

Head Start

2. Description of the Major Program Benefits, Services, and Activities:

[MN Statutes 119A.50] Head Start is a federal and state funded child and family development program, helping low-income families become self-reliant while also helping prepare their children for school success.

3. Purpose(s) of Benefit or Service Program:

The purpose of the Head Start program is to provide comprehensive child development services to children, with a special focus on helping preschoolers develop the early reading and math skills required to be successful in school.

4. Program Type. (Check one)

TANF State

5. Description of Work Activities (Complete only if this program is a separate State program):

N/A

6. Total State Expenditures for the Program for the Fiscal Year: \$24,192,052

7. Total State MOE Expenditures under the Program for the Fiscal Year: \$5,700,000

8. Total Number of Families Served under the Program with MOE Funds: 426

This last figure represents (Check one):

The average monthly total for the fiscal year. The total served over the fiscal year.

9. Financial Eligibility Criteria for Receiving MOE-funded Program Benefits or Services:

Head Start eligibility requires that at least 90% of children enrolled be from low income families as defined by the federal poverty level. State funding to supplement the federal Head Start program is authorized under Minnesota Statute 119A.52.

10. Prior Program Authorization: Was this program authorized and allowable under prior law? (Check one)

Yes No

11. Total Program Expenditures in FY 1995 (NOTE: Provide only if response on question 10 is No): \$11,500,000

Program Information

Provide the following information for EACH PROGRAM (according to the nature of the benefit or service provided) for which the State claims MOE expenditures. Complete and submit this report in accordance with the attached instructions.

1. Name of Benefit or Service Program:

Minnesota Working Family Credit

2. Description of the Major Program Benefits, Services, and Activities:

[MN Statute 290.0671] MN Working Family Credit. This program provides a tax benefit to eligible low-income families through a refundable income tax credit.

3. Purpose(s) of Benefit or Service Program:

The purpose of the program is to provide economic support to low-income families as well as to encourage employment among low-income parents.

4. Program Type. (Check one)

TANF State

5. Description of Work Activities (Complete only if this program is a separate State program):

N/A

6. Total State Expenditures for the Program for the Fiscal Year: \$220,028,993

7. Total State MOE Expenditures under the Program for the Fiscal Year: \$89,675,692

8. Total Number of Families Served under the Program with MOE Funds: 80,427

This last figure represents (Check one):

The average monthly total for the fiscal year. The total served over the fiscal year.

9. Financial Eligibility Criteria for Receiving MOE-funded Program Benefits or Services:

A family that qualifies for the federal Earned Income Credit also qualifies for the MN Working Family Credit.

10. Prior Program Authorization: Was this program authorized and allowable under prior law? (Check one)

Yes No

11. Total Program Expenditures in FY 1995 (NOTE: Provide only if response on question 10 is No): \$0

Provide the following information for EACH PROGRAM (according to the nature of the benefit or service provided) for which the State claims MOE expenditures. Complete and submit this report in accordance with the attached instructions.

1. Name of Benefit or Service Program:

Consolidated Fund Emergency Needs

2. Description of the Major Program Benefits, Services, and Activities:

Short-term, nonrecurring shelter and utility needs that are excluded from the definition of assistance under TANF, for families who meet the MFIP residency requirements.

3. Purpose(s) of Benefit or Service Program:

Grants provide short-term, basic help to eligible families who find themselves in a crisis or emergency situation.

4. Program Type. (Check one)

TANF State

5. Description of Work Activities (Complete only if this program is a separate State program):

N/A

6. Total State Expenditures for the Program for the Fiscal Year: \$422,410

7. Total State MOE Expenditures under the Program for the Fiscal Year: \$422,410

8. Total Number of Families Served under the Program with MOE Funds: 222

This last figure represents (Check one):

The average monthly total for the fiscal year. The total served over the fiscal year.

9. Financial Eligibility Criteria for Receiving MOE-funded Program Benefits or Services:

Families with a minor child, a pregnant woman, or a non-custodial parent of a minor child receiving assistance with an income below 200% of the federal poverty guideline for a family of the applicable size are eligible for services funded under the Consolidated Fund.

10. Prior Program Authorization: Was this program authorized and allowable under prior law? (Check one)

Yes No

11. Total Program Expenditures in FY 1995 (NOTE: Provide only if response on question 10 is No): \$0

Program Information

Provide the following information for EACH PROGRAM (according to the nature of the benefit or service provided) for which the State claims MOE expenditures. Complete and submit this report in accordance with the attached instructions.
1. Name of Benefit or Service Program: State Administration
2. Description of the Major Program Benefits, Services, and Activities: The funds represent the state share of the administrative costs of running the MFIP program as allocated through the states approved cost allocation plan.
3. Purpose(s) of Benefit or Service Program: The purpose of state administration is to oversee county administration of the MFIP program to ensure that clients are served under federal and state guidelines.
4. Program Type. (Check one) TANF State
5. Description of Work Activities (Complete only if this program is a separate State program): N/A
6. Total State Expenditures for the Program for the Fiscal Year: \$2,537,157
7. Total State MOE Expenditures under the Program for the Fiscal Year: \$2,537,157
8. Total Number of Families Served under the Program with MOE Funds: 14,355
This last figure represents (Check one): The average monthly total for the fiscal year. The total served over the fiscal year.

<p>Provide the following information for EACH PROGRAM (according to the nature of the benefit or service provided) for which the State claims MOE expenditures. Complete and submit this report in accordance with the attached instructions.</p>
<p>9. Financial Eligibility Criteria for Receiving MOE-funded Program Benefits or Services:</p> <p>State staff administers TANF program rules and regulations by supervising county administration of TANF funds.</p>
<p>10. Prior Program Authorization: Was this program authorized and allowable under prior law? (Check one)</p> <p>Yes No</p>
<p>11. Total Program Expenditures in FY 1995 (NOTE: Provide only if response on question 10 is No): \$0</p>

Program Information

<p>Provide the following information for EACH PROGRAM (according to the nature of the benefit or service provided) for which the State claims MOE expenditures. Complete and submit this report in accordance with the attached instructions.</p>
<p>1. Name of Benefit or Service Program:</p> <p>County Administration</p>
<p>2. Description of the Major Program Benefits, Services, and Activities:</p> <p>The funds represent the County share of the administrative costs of running the MFIP program as allocated through the states approved cost allocation plan.</p>
<p>3. Purpose(s) of Benefit or Service Program:</p> <p>The purpose of county administration is to provide eligibility determination, case maintenance, fraud control and prevention, and related administrative services.</p>
<p>4. Program Type. (Check one)</p> <p>TANF State</p>
<p>5. Description of Work Activities (Complete only if this program is a separate State program):</p>

N/A
6. Total State Expenditures for the Program for the Fiscal Year: \$15,189,996
7. Total State MOE Expenditures under the Program for the Fiscal Year: \$15,189,996
8. Total Number of Families Served under the Program with MOE Funds: 14,355
This last figure represents (Check one):
The average monthly total for the fiscal year. The total served over the fiscal year.
9. Financial Eligibility Criteria for Receiving MOE-funded Program Benefits or Services:
County staff administers the TANF program rules and regulations under federal and state guidelines.
10. Prior Program Authorization: Was this program authorized and allowable under prior law? (Check one)
Yes No
11. Total Program Expenditures in FY 1995 (NOTE: Provide only if response on question 10 is No): \$0

Program Information

Provide the following information for EACH PROGRAM (according to the nature of the benefit or service provided) for which the State claims MOE expenditures. Complete and submit this report in accordance with the attached instructions.
1. Name of Benefit or Service Program:
Credit for K-12 Education Expenses
2. Description of the Major Program Benefits, Services, and Activities:
The Credit for K-12 Education Expenses [MN Statutes 290.0674] is a refundable tax credit which is equal to 75% of eligible education expenses for a qualifying child in kindergarten through grade 12.
3. Purpose(s) of Benefit or Service Program:
Eligible expenses include fees or tuition for instruction outside the regular school day or school year, such as tutoring and educational summer camps. Also eligible are costs required for the regular school day for textbooks, instructional materials, and

transportation costs paid to others. Private school tuition does not qualify for the credit, although it does qualify for the subtraction. Eligible expenses also include personal computer hardware and educational software, limited to a maximum of \$200 per family.

4. Program Type. (Check one)

TANF State

5. Description of Work Activities (Complete only if this program is a separate State program):

N/A

6. Total State Expenditures for the Program for the Fiscal Year: \$5,447,044

7. Total State MOE Expenditures under the Program for the Fiscal Year: \$4,740,171

8. Total Number of Families Served under the Program with MOE Funds: 17,887

This last figure represents (Check one):

The average monthly total for the fiscal year. The total served over the fiscal year.

9. Financial Eligibility Criteria for Receiving MOE-funded Program Benefits or Services:

The maximum credit of \$1,000 times the number of children in kindergarten through grade 12 is allowed to taxpayers with total household income of

\$33,500 or less. For taxpayers with one or two children, the maximum credit is phased out for household income between \$33,500 and \$37,500. For taxpayers with more than two children, the phase-out range for the maximum credit is increased by \$2,000 for each additional child.

10. Prior Program Authorization: Was this program authorized and allowable under prior law? (Check one)

Yes No

11. Total Program Expenditures in FY 1995 (NOTE: Provide only if response on question 10 is No): \$0

This certifies that all families for which the State claims MOE expenditures for the fiscal year meet the State's criteria for "eligible families."

Signature

This certifies that all families for which the State claims MOE expenditures for the fiscal year meet the State's criteria for "eligible families."
Name Christopher M. Ricker
Title Social Service Finance Director
Date Submitted 01/30/2023
Approved OMB No. 0970-0248 Form ACF-204, expires 11/30/2022.

TANF Certifications

States that include TANF in the Combined State Plan must provide a certification by the chief executive officer of that State, that during the fiscal year, the State will:

The State Plan must include	Include
1. Operate a child support enforcement program under the State Plan approved under part D. (section 402(a)(2) of the Social Security Act);	Yes
2. Operate a foster care and adoption assistance program under the State Plan approved under part E, and that the State will take such actions as are necessary to ensure that children receiving assistance under such part are eligible for medical assistance under the State Plan under title XIX. (section 402(a)(3) of the Social Security Act);	Yes
3. Specify which State agency or agencies will administer and supervise the program referred to in paragraph (1) for the fiscal year, which shall include assurances that local governments and private sector organizations (section 402(a)(4) of the Social Security Act)—	
3. (A) have been consulted regarding the plan and design of welfare services in the State so that services are provided in a manner appropriate to local populations; and	Yes
3. (B) have had at least 45 days to submit comments on the plan and the design of such services;	Yes

<p>4. Provide each member of an Indian tribe, who is domiciled in the State and is not eligible for assistance under a tribal family assistance plan approved under section 412, with equitable access to assistance under the State program funded under this part attributable to funds provided by the Federal Government. (section 402(a)(5) of the Social Security Act);</p>	<p>Yes</p>
<p>5. Establish and enforce standards and procedures to ensure against program fraud and abuse, including standards and procedures concerning nepotism, conflicts of interest among individuals responsible for the administration and supervision of the State program, kickbacks, and the use of political patronage. (section 402(a)(6) of the Social Security Act);</p>	<p>Yes</p>
<p>6. (optional) Establish and Enforcing standards and procedures to (section 402(a)(7) of the Social Security Act).—</p>	
<p>6.i. screen and identify individuals receiving assistance under this part with a history of domestic violence while maintaining the confidentiality of such individuals;</p>	<p>Yes</p>
<p>6.ii. refer such individuals to counseling and supportive services; and</p>	<p>Yes</p>
<p>6.iii. waive, pursuant to a determination of good cause, other program requirements such as time limits (for so long as necessary) for individuals receiving assistance, residency requirements, child support cooperation requirements, and family cap provisions, in cases where compliance with such requirements would make it more difficult for individuals receiving assistance under this part to escape domestic violence or unfairly penalize such individuals who are or have been victimized by such violence, or individuals who are at risk of further domestic violence.</p>	<p>Yes</p>

**Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP E&T) and Work Programs
Authorized Under Sections 6(D)(4) And 6 6(O) of the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008**

- i. **General requirements: the state agency must prepare and submit an employment and training (E&T) plan to its appropriate Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) regional office. The E&T plan must be available for public inspection at the state agency headquarters. A state agency may include its plan for the SNAP E&T program in a combined plan under WIOA but will require FNS roval prior to implementation and must continue to make a copy of the plan available for public inspection. If a state includes snap E&T in a combined plan under WIOA, the State agency will detail the following for each year covered by the combined plan:**
 - 1) **The nature of the E&T components the State agency plans to offer and the reasons for such components, including cost information. The methodology for state agency reimbursement for education components must be specifically addressed;**

The following is a list of activities provided under Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Employment and Training (SNAP E&T). Current budgeting doesn't identify expenses by these categories.

Some areas of the state have a shortage of remedial education funds. In other areas, specialized programs have been established to service SNAP E&T populations. Minnesota is quite generous in supporting federal ABE funds. Even with state support, the influx of welfare reform has created a burden on resources and staff in some areas and in serving high-barrier populations thus any SNAP E&T funds are supplementing, not supplanting federal, state, or local funds. Minnesota only allows reimbursement for ABE/GED services provided to participants aged 21 or over. These services must be substantially differentiated from those already provided by existing education programs currently being offered at no cost to the general public. If these services are provided to persons other than E&T participants, the costs charged to E&T must be the same.

Component	Definition
Non-Education/Non-Work	Supervised Job Search (SJS)- An activity in which the participant is primarily engaged in actively applying for work, building connections with prospective employers, and/or attending hiring events and other networking opportunities. Supervised job search activities must have a direct link to increasing the employment opportunities of individuals engaged in the activity. Participants may conduct these activities at any location appropriate to the activity, including, but not limited to their

home, job sites, public facilities, or their SNAP E&T provider locations. Providers must attempt to make contact with the participant at least once per week, and must successfully make contact at least once per month in order to continue participation in this activity. Providers must retain a summary of job search activities performed (including activity type, positions applied for or follow-up steps taken (if any), and any application barriers that may have arisen).

Providers must establish, in consultation with the participant, individual goals for the number of applications or contacts made each month. This standard should take into account the participant's location and barriers. Providers must demonstrate through case notes or other means that they have engaged in regular meaningful communication with the participant about their job search. Supervised Job Search focuses on searching for and applying for jobs with direct supervision and is not intended to be a long-term activity. For a time-limited participant: Supervised Job Search and Job Search Training are not countable activities unless they make up less than 50% of the required 80 hours per month. If combining Supervised Job Search or Job Search Training in order to meet the work requirement, 51% or more of the time must be spent in:

- A SNAP E&T activity other than Supervised Job Search or Job Search Training
- Title I of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA)
- The Trade Adjustment Assistance program
- A program of employment and training for veterans operated by the Department of Labor or the Department of Veterans Affairs (this does not include Jobs for Veterans),
- Paid employment
- Volunteering

Since this activity alone does not meet the work requirement for time-limited recipients, hours do not need to be recorded for this activity unless it is combined with another source of countable hours, such as employment or education. If the plan is to combine activities to earn additional months of benefits, this must be reflected in the EP and case noted.

Job Search Training (JST)- An activity that strives to enhance the job search skills of participants by providing instruction and mentoring in job seeking techniques, increasing motivation and self-confidence for work, and understanding employer needs. Job search training activities

are approvable if they directly enhance the employability of the participants. A direct link between the job search training activities and job readiness must be established. The activity may consist of employability assessments, job placement services, one-on-one case management to reduce employment barriers, application assistance, and training in aspects of the job search process including resume writing, interviewing, appropriate dress, social skills, and using job search technology. Job Search Training is not intended to be a long-term activity.

For a time-limited participant: Supervised Job Search and Job Search Training are not countable activities unless they make up less than 50% of the required 80 hours per month. If combining Supervised Job Search or Job Search Training in order to meet the work requirement, 51% or more of the time must be spent in:

- A SNAP E&T activity other than Supervised Job Search or Job Search Training
- Title I of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA)
- The Trade Adjustment Assistance program
- A program of employment and training for veterans operated by the Department of Labor or the Department of Veterans Affairs (this does not include Jobs for Veterans),
- Paid employment
- Volunteering

Since this activity alone does not meet the work requirement for time-limited recipients, hours do not need to be recorded for this activity unless it is combined with another source of countable hours, such as employment or education. If the plan is to combine activities to earn additional months of benefits, this must be reflected in the EP and case noted.

Workfare (W)- A work activity in which Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) recipients perform work in a private or public non-profit agency as a condition of eligibility. In lieu of wages, workfare participants receive compensation in the form of their household's monthly benefit allotment. The primary goal of workfare is to improve employability and encourage individuals to move into regular employment while returning something of value to the community. Workfare assignments cannot replace or prevent the employment of regular employees and assignments must provide the same benefits and working conditions provided to regular employees

performing comparable work for comparable hours. The maximum number of hours of work each month is determined by dividing the household's SNAP benefit allotment by the federal or state minimum wage, whichever is higher (in Minnesota, the higher state minimum wage of large employers must be used). The county or tribal human services office, or Employment Services Provider (ESP) must round the number of hours arrived at through this computation down to the next full hour. For time-limited participants, the work requirement is considered to be met when the maximum number of hours are obtained. This activity requires the provider to enter into a worksite agreement which specifies days/hours of work and responsibilities of the participant and supervisor.

Self-Employment Training (SET)- An activity that improves the employability of participants by providing training in setting up and operating a small business or other self-employment venture. Participants receive technical assistance in developing business plans and in creating financial marketing

Job Retention (JR)- Services provided to SNAP E&T participants who have secured employment after participating in another E&T activity; only individuals who have received other employment and/or training services under the E&T program are eligible for job retention services. Individuals must have received SNAP benefits in the month of or the month prior to starting job retention services. This activity is meant to help participants who have secured employment achieve satisfactory performance, retain employment, or to increase earnings over time. Such services and reimbursable participant costs may include, but are not limited to:

- Case management
- Life skill classes
- Referrals to other services
- Dependent care assistance
- Transportation assistance
- Clothing required for the job
- Equipment or tools required for the job
- Test fees
- Union dues
- Licensing and bonding fees

Individual circumstances may warrant job retention services that begin at various times, such as on the day a job offer is accepted, the day the individual reports the information to their E&T case manager, the first day of the job, or other time based on the availability and type of services. Retention services must be provided for a minimum of 30

	<p>days, but not more than 90 days. The provider may identify when the 90 days of job retention services start, however, the household must have been receiving SNAP in the month of or the month prior to beginning job retention services.</p> <p>Job retention services are available to a participant for each new job or promotion the individual obtains, as long as the improvement was gained as a result of participation in SNAP E&T. For example, if a person gains employment through a new job, receives 90 days of job retention services, and then later finds a different job, they would generally not be eligible for a new 90-day period of job retention services. However, if the individual re-engaged in SNAP E&T services and then gains new employment, they would be eligible for additional job retention services. There may be circumstances where a person participates in job search, gains employment and receives 30 to 90 days of job retention services. This person may later reengage with SNAP E&T after a job loss to search for work or obtain career or technical training to find a better job and could qualify for an additional 90 days of job retention services.</p>
<p>Educational Programs</p>	<p>Basic Education and/or Foundational Skills Instruction (EPB)- Programs that offer academic instruction and education services below the post-secondary level that increase an individual’s ability to read, write, and perform mathematics or other activities necessary for the attainment of a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent; transition to postsecondary education and training; and obtain employment. Such programs include Adult Basic Education (ABE), basic literacy, and high school equivalency (GED).</p> <p>Career and/or Technical Education Programs or Other Vocational Training (EPC)- Organized activities at the post-secondary level that provide individuals with the academic and technical knowledge and skills necessary to prepare for further education and for careers in current or emerging employment sectors. Programs are primarily designed for those who are beyond the age of compulsory high school attendance. Ideally, such programs should be employer-driven and lead to industry-recognized certificates or credentials. Post-secondary training is limited to a 2-year associate degree level or lesser and may not include a 2-year associate degree intended for transfer into a 4-year degree program or any other additional educational program, such as an Associate of Arts.</p> <p>Classroom training and educational activities may be included in an EP, but are limited to a 2-year associate career or technical degree or lesser. This may include prerequisite courses (other than a remedial</p>

course which may be considered basic education and/or foundational skills instruction) that meet the requirements of a career or technical education program. For a post-secondary education program to be approved, the ESP must ensure that:

- The goals in the participant's EP could be met with the post-secondary training.
- There is a market for employees with the proposed training where the participant will (or is willing to) reside upon completion of the program.
- The participant can meet the requirements for admission into the program.
- There is a reasonable expectation that the participant will complete the training program based on such factors as their current assessment, previous education, training, work history, current motivation, and circumstances.

English Language Acquisition (EPEL)- Designed to help English language learners achieve competence in reading, writing, speaking, and comprehension of the English language.

Integrated Education and Training (EPIE)/Bridge Programs- Programs that provide adult education and literacy activities concurrently and contextually with workforce preparation activities and workforce training for a specific occupation or group of occupations for the purpose of educational and career advancement. IET/Bridge programs are designed to build the foundational skills of people whose academic abilities do not meet the minimum requirements of a traditional post-secondary degree or certificate program. IET/Bridge programming provides enhanced support and programming for people through contextualized foundational instruction. For example, for a participant entering a Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA) program, the reading instruction would be focused on healthcare terms and vocabulary. There may be an ABE/ESL/ELL instructor in the classroom teaching alongside the CNA instructor.

Work Readiness Training (EPWRT)- Intensive programs that include skill assessment and educational remediation services that prepare individuals for the workforce. Work readiness skills may include both foundational cognitive skills such as reading for information, applied mathematics, locating information, problem solving, and critical thinking and non-cognitive skills, or soft skills, which are defined as personal characteristics and behavioral skills that enhance an individual's interactions, job performance, and career prospects such as adaptability, integrity, cooperation, and workplace discipline.

	<p>Work readiness training includes intensive programs that include skill assessment and educational remediation services that prepare people for the workforce. Work readiness skills may include both foundational cognitive skills such as reading for information, applied mathematics, locating information, problem solving, and critical thinking and non-cognitive skills, or soft skills, which are defined as personal characteristics and behavioral skills that enhance a person's interactions, job performance, and career prospects such as adaptability, integrity, cooperation, and workplace discipline. Work readiness training is intended to increase employability, but does not result in a recognized credential.</p>
<p>Work Experience</p>	<p>Work Activity (WA)- An activity that provides a person with an opportunity to acquire the general skills, knowledge, and work habits necessary to obtain employment in exchange for SNAP benefits. The purpose of work activity is to improve the employability of those who cannot find unsubsidized full time employment. A work activity can be arranged within the private for-profit sector, the non-profit sector, or the public sector whereas workfare must take place at a public or private non-profit institution. Work activity is a training program and should have clearly defined learning goals, such as a curriculum, clearly articulated outcome goals, intentional day-to-day activities that are designed to improve someone’s skills and employability, and a planned start date and end date.</p> <p>Households that include work activity participants may not work more hours monthly than the total obtained by dividing the household’s monthly SNAP allotment by the higher of the applicable Federal or State minimum wage (in Minnesota, the higher state minimum wage of large employers must be used). The ESP must round the number of hours arrived at through this computation down to the next full hour. Unlike workfare, participating in this activity for the maximum amount of hours may not meet the work requirement for time-limited participants; these individuals may need to do additional activities in order to meet the 80 hour per month requirement.</p> <p>Work-Based Learning, On-the-Job Training (WBLOJT)- A work placement made through a contract with an employer or registered apprenticeship program sponsor in the public, private non-profit, or private sector. Through the on-the-job training (OJT) contract, occupational training is provided for the participant in exchange for the reimbursement, typically up to 50 percent of the wage rate of the</p>

participant, for the extraordinary costs of providing the training and supervision related to the training. An OJT contract must be limited to the period of time required for a participant to become proficient in the occupation for which the training is being provided. In determining the appropriate length of the contract, consideration should be given to the skill requirements of the occupation, the academic and occupational skill level of the participant, prior work experience, and the participant's individual employment plan. Wages are reimbursed at a set percentage by the organization to the employer for the length of the contract. OJT also carries the expectation that the participant will be hired by the employer in a permanent position when the contract ends.

Work-Based Learning, Pre-Apprenticeship (WBLPA)- Training and curriculum based on industry standards, approved by the employer operating the apprenticeship program (typically referred to as a program sponsor). This includes education and pre-vocational services that prepare participants to meet the minimum qualifications for entry into a registered apprenticeship program. Pre-Apprenticeship programs provide individuals with the basic and technical skills necessary to enter an apprenticeship program and should be directly linked to an apprenticeship program.

Work-Based Learning, Apprenticeship (WBLA)- A combination of on-the-job training and related instruction in which workers learn the practical and theoretical aspects of a skilled occupation that provides the industry-specific knowledge needed to perform highly skilled work. Apprenticeship programs can be sponsored by individual employers, joint employer and labor groups, and/or employer associations

Work-Based Learning, Internship (WBLI)- A planned, structured learning experience that takes place in a workplace for a limited period of time. An internship must be a learning experience that applies knowledge gained in the classroom, and teaches skills or knowledge that can be transferred to other employment settings. An internship has a defined beginning and end, and a job description with desired qualifications. Internships and may be paid or unpaid, as appropriate and consistent with other laws, such as the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA). An internship may be arranged within the private for profit sector, the non-profit sector, or the public sector.

Work-Based Learning, Transitional Jobs (WBLTJ)- A transitional job is one that provides a work experience for a limited period of time, that is wage paid and subsidized, and is in the public, private, or non-profit sectors for those individuals with barriers to employment who are chronically unemployed or have inconsistent work history. These jobs

	are designed to enable an individual to establish a work history, demonstrate work success in an employee-employer relationship, and develop the skills that lead to unsubsidized employment.
Other Activities	<p>Employability Assessment- Employability assessments are mandatory for all participants. The purpose of an Employability Assessment is to collect and evaluate information to identify a participant’s employment goals, barriers, and support service needs. The information collected from this assessment is the basis for the EP. The assessment must be completed prior to placement in an activity, and as often as necessary throughout the participant’s engagement in the program. The assessment should consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The participant's literacy level (see NOTE below). • The participant's ability to communicate in the English language. • The participant’s education and employment history. • The estimated length of time it will take the participant to obtain employment. • The participant's employment-related skills and abilities, barriers to employment, steps necessary to overcome the participant's barriers to employment and any special services needed to meet the participant’s needs.

- 2) **An operating budget for the federal fiscal year with an estimate of the cost of operation for each federal fiscal year covered by the Combined Plan. Any State agency that requests 50 percent federal reimbursement for State agency E&T administrative costs, other than for participant reimbursements, must include in its plan, or amendments to its plan, an itemized list of all activities and costs for which those federal funds will be claimed, including the costs for case management and casework to facilitate the transition from economic dependency to self-sufficiency through work. Costs in excess of the federal grant will be allowed only with the prior approval of FNS and must be adequately documented to assure that they are necessary, reasonable and properly allocated. A State must submit a plan amendment to request budget adjustments at least 30 days prior to planned implementation;**

SNAP E&T Operating Budget for FFY 2024

Expense Category	Non-Federal Share	Federal Share	Total
I. Direct Program and Admin Costs			
Salary/Wages (State agency only)		\$439,130.00	\$439,130.00

Fringe Benefits		\$149,517.00	\$149,517.00
Non-capital equipment		\$35,000.00	\$35,000.00
Materials		\$10,000.00	\$10,000.00
Travel		\$10,229.00	\$10,229.00
Building Space			
Equipment and other capital expenditures			
<i>Subtotal - State agency costs only</i>		\$643,876.00	\$643,876.00
Contractual Costs	\$2,570,783.76	\$2,751,767.76	\$5,322,551.52
County and Tribal Nation Administered Program Admin Cost	\$418,603.50	\$798,946.50	\$1,217,550.00
Total Direct Program and Admin Costs	\$2,989,387.26	\$4,194,590.26	\$7,183,977.52
II. Indirect Costs:			
Indirect Costs			
III. In-kind contribution			
State in-kind contribution			
Total Administrative Costs	\$2,989,387.26	\$4,253,455.26	\$7,242,842.52
IV. Participant Reimbursements			
Dependent Care (including costs from contracts/partners and county or Tribal Nation administered programs)	\$1,000.00	\$1,000.00	\$2,000.00
Transportation & Other costs (including costs from contracts/partners and county or Tribal Nation administered programs)	\$616,083.00	\$649,583.00	\$1,265,666.00
State Agency Cost for Dependent Care			
Total Participant Reimbursements	\$617,083.00	\$650,583.00	\$1,267,666.00

V. Total Costs	\$3,606,470.26	\$4,904,038.26	\$8,510,508.52
-----------------------	----------------	----------------	----------------

- 3) **The categories and types of individuals the State agency intends to exempt from E&T participation, the estimated percentage of work registrants the State agency plans to exempt, and the frequency with which the State agency plans to reevaluate the validity of its exemptions;**

Item	Description	Amount or Percentage
I.	Anticipated number of work registrants in the State during the Federal FY (unduplicated count):	140,000
II.	Estimated number of planned State option exemptions from E&T:	140,000
	List below planned State option exemption categories and the number of work registrants expected to be included in each during the Federal FY.	
	1. All work registrants	140,000
III.	Percent of all work registrants exempt from E&T	100%
IV.	Anticipated number of E&T mandatory participants	0
V.	Anticipated number of voluntary E&T participants	2,000
VI.	Anticipated number of ABAWDs in the State during the Federal FY24 (excluding the ones residing in waived area)	70,000
VII.	Anticipated number of ABAWDs in waived areas of the State during the Federal FY	10,000
VIII.	Anticipated number of ABAWDs to be exempted under the State's 10 percent ABAWD exemption allowance during FY24	25,000
IX.	Number of potential at-risk ABAWDs expected in the State during the Federal FY (line VI–VIII)	35,000

- 4) **The characteristics of the population the State agency intends to place in E&T;**

Based on estimates from FFY23 SNAP E&T participation, the state expects to annually place:

Characteristic	Characteristic Detail	Percentage	Total Number
-----------------------	------------------------------	-------------------	---------------------

Voluntary vs. Mandatory	Voluntary Participants	100%	
	Mandatory Participants	0%	0
Education	Received high school diploma or equivalency (HSE) prior to participation in E&T	81.6%	1,490
	Did not receive HSE prior to participation	14.84%	271
	Unknown	3.56%	65
Race	White	964	52.79%
	Black or African American	521	28.53%
	Native American or Alaska Native	147	8.05%
	Asian	53	2.9%
	Hawaiian Native or other	3	0.16%
	Multi-Race	73	4.0%
Ethnicity	Hispanic or Latinx	10.19%	186
Speak English as a second language	Limited English Proficiency- Yes	6.96%	127
	Limited English Proficiency- No	93.04%	1,699
Gender	Male	761	41.86%
	Female	1,056	57.83%
Age	Between 18-21	195	10.68%
	Between 22-39	940	51.48%
	Between 40-54	515	28.2%
	55 or older	168	9.2%
Disability Status	Yes, Employment Barrier	7.67%	140

5) The estimated number of volunteers the State agency expects to place in E&T;

Minnesota operates a voluntary SNAP E&T program and anticipates serving 2,000 participants in FFY24.

6) The geographic areas covered and not covered by the E&T plan and why, and the type and location of services to be offered;

Minnesota operates a voluntary SNAP E&T program and intends to offer services to all interested SNAP recipients who meet eligibility criteria. Many of the SNAP E&T components are available in most counties in Minnesota and the DHS SNAP E&T team is working actively to increase the number and range of SNAP E&T providers in the state in rural counties. Where services are not available it is due to limitations of 100% funding and a lack of state-contracted providers. DHS is actively seeking ways to expand the breadth and depth of SNAP E&T services statewide. In FFY24, Minnesota is wrapping two projects:

1. A rapid cycle evaluation project with USDA and Mathematica focused on boosting rural participation.
2. A three-year federally funded DATA Grant project with Seattle Jobs Initiative (SJI) and Third Sector Capital Partners (TSCP) with a priority of increasing program engagement and participation equitably (including cross-state).

The state plan covers all areas of the state.

7) The method the state agency uses to count all work registrants as of the first day of the new fiscal year;

Work registrant data is gathered from the DHS Data Warehouse using Structured Query Language (SQL) developed and approved by FNS regional and national staff. County or Tribal Nation eligibility workers use work registration codes when approving SNAP eligibility in MAXIS on the STAT/WREG panel, and ESPs use WF1 to record participant level data and activities. The MAXIS codes meet federal exemption code definitions in 7 CFR 273.7.

Completing the FNS-583 Report:

Line 1: Count of all work registrants whose case was active on September 30th at midnight. This number provides an accurate count of those on board on October 1st. It does not include new applications processed on this date.

Line 2: Count of distinct persons by minimum report month where the report month is greater than the start of the FFY.

Line 3: Count of distinct persons with ABAWD status enrolled in a qualifying component where "Report Month" is equal the 1st month of quarter, the 2nd month of the quarter and the 3rd month of quarter.

Line 4: Count of distinct persons with ABAWD status enrolled in a non-qualifying component and non-ABAWDs in any component, and ABAWDs not subject to the time limit in any activity.

Line 5: Distinct count of persons in each month of the quarter with ABAWD status of B for banked month.

Line 6: Count of distinct persons by component.

Line 7: Distinct count of people in the activities table with a start date before the end of the FFY and end date after the first of the FFY, or no end date.

8) The method the state agency uses to report work registrant information on the quarterly form FNS-583;

DHS employs a state-wide data system (MAXIS) to generate work registrant reports at the state level. County and Tribal Nation income maintenance workers input information into MAXIS via an online system. All SNAP E&T providers use a shared data system (Workforce One) to report participation in SNAP E&T.

State data staff at DHS access work registrant data from both MAXIS and Workforce One through the DHS Data Warehouse using SQL developed and approved by FNS regional and national staff.

- 9) The method the State agency uses to prevent work registrants from being counted twice within a federal fiscal year. If the State agency universally work registers all snap applicants, this method must specify how the State agency excludes those exempt from work registration under 7 C.F.R. §273.7(b)(1). If the State agency work registers nonexempt participants whenever a new application is submitted, this method must also specify how the state agency excludes those participants who may have already been registered within the past 12 months as specified under 7 C.F.R. §273.7(A)(1)(I);**

Numbers for each month are recorded separately. This ensures that numbers used in Line 1 of FNS-583 form are only used once during the federal fiscal year. Again, by programming MAXIS and Workforce One to calculate monthly reports using only SSNs, Minnesota is assured of an unduplicated count.

- 10) The organizational relationship between the units responsible for certification and the units operating the E&T components, including units of the statewide workforce development system, if available. FNS is specifically concerned that the lines of communication be efficient and that noncompliance by the participant be reported to the certification unit within 10 working days after the noncompliance occurs;**

DHS is responsible for both SNAP certification and operation of SNAP E&T. DHS supports an interface which allows the eligibility system (MAXIS) to communicate information automatically to the employment services system, Workforce One (WF1). However, WF1 is unable to communicate information back to MAXIS. As a result, E&T providers must communicate directly with county and tribal eligibility staff.

SNAP E&T policy and practice requires that providers communicate with county and tribal eligibility staff as soon as possible, but no more than 10 days, after discovering information that might affect the participant's eligibility for benefits. This information includes communication upon meeting hourly participation requirements, securing employment, issuance of a provider determination, or another change in status that might affect benefits. DHS provides a standard form for reporting changes, but counties, tribes, and E&T providers are encouraged to develop systems collaboratively to ensure that status changes are reported once known to the agency.

- 11) The relationship between the State agency and other organizations it plans to coordinate with for the provision of services, including organizations in the**

statewide workforce development system, if available. Copies of contracts must be available for inspection;

Minnesota's SNAP E&T program is overseen by the Department of Human Services in collaboration with DEED. The units operating E&T components include:

1. Organizations and tribes contracted with DHS;
2. Organizations contracted with DEED for limited funding reimbursement;
3. Organizations contracted with counties;
4. County and Tribal Nation operated workforce services.

Each organization plays a unique role in supporting the SNAP E&T program. DHS provides policy guidance, receives and distributes funds, provides connection to the SNAP eligibility system, ensures alignment with SNAP policy, and leads the statewide expansion of the program. DEED provides opportunities for on-ramps to contracting and provides connection and alignment to the statewide workforce system. Counties and Tribal Nations process direct referrals, receive and act on case-specific information received from E&T providers, provide referral and connection to SNAP E&T providers, and may directly sub-contract with additional organizations for expanded E&T services. SNAP E&T providers offer case management, training, education, and other assistance to individuals through referral or reverse referral, inform counties and tribes of case changes that may affect eligibility including provider determinations, and refer SNAP E&T participants to other social services and employment supports through co-enrollment. Minnesota considers SNAP E&T providers part of the "welfare system" and providers are expected to share information with SNAP eligibility units in accordance with SNAP policy.

12) The availability, if appropriate, of E&T Programs for Indians living on reservations after the State agency has consulted in good faith with appropriate Tribal Organizations;

Minnesota DHS consults annually with Minnesota Tribal Nations and regularly conducts provider outreach with Tribal Nations, tribal member-serving organizations, and tribal colleges. Since FFY23, DHS has been contracted with the Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe to provide SNAP E&T services. Minnesota allocates 100% funds to tribes who administer SNAP on the same formula basis as those funds allocated to counties. Tribal consultation has identified two primary barriers to offering SNAP E&T directly through tribes:

1. Lack of non-federal funding for workforce services on tribal reservations and
2. Complexity of program administration.

Minnesota is committed to continuing to reduce these barriers in collaboration with Tribal Nation partners.

- 13) **If a conciliation process is planned, the procedures that will be used when an individual fails to comply with an E&T program requirement. Include the length of the conciliation period; and**

N/A

- 14) **The payment rates for child care established in accordance with the Child Care And Development Block Grant Provisions of 45 CFR 98.43, and based on local market rate surveys.**

Minnesota SNAP E&T policy allows childcare reimbursement in cases where the individual cannot qualify for existing childcare support programs, is in need of childcare before their childcare support application can be processed, or to cover a gap in existing childcare support funds.

- 15) **The combined (federal/state) state agency reimbursement rate for transportation costs and other expenses reasonably necessary and directly related to participation incurred by E&T participants. If the State agency proposes to provide different reimbursement amounts to account for varying levels of expenses, for instance for greater or lesser costs of transportation in different areas of the state, it must include them here.**

All participants complete an employment plan. In working with participants, providers issue participant reimbursements on a case-by-case basis using SNAP E&T policy guidelines. These guidelines include a list of allowable reimbursements and providers are expected to demonstrate that costs are reasonable and necessary for participation in a SNAP E&T activity.

- 16) **Information about expenses the state agency proposes to reimburse. FNS must be afforded the opportunity to review and comment on the proposed reimbursements before they are implemented.**

At the provider's option, Minnesota makes available all participant reimbursements currently allowable by FNS. Additional reimbursements are reviewed by the state, in consultation with FNS, on a case-by-case basis.

- ii. **Able-Bodied Adults Without Dependents (ABAWD): A State agency interested in receiving additional funding for serving able-bodied adults without dependents (ABAWDS) subject to the 3- month time limit, in accordance with 7 C.F.R. §273.7(D)(3), must include the following for each federal fiscal year covered by the Combined Plan under WIOA:**

- 1) **Its pledge to offer a qualifying activity to all at-risk ABAWD applicants and recipients;**

N/A

- 2) **Estimated costs of fulfilling its pledge;**

N/A

- 3) **A description of management controls in place to meet pledge requirements;**

N/A

- 4) **A discussion of its capacity and ability to serve at-risk ABAWDs;**

N/A

- 5) **Information about the size and special needs of its ABAWD population; and**

N/A

- 6) **Information about the education, training, and workfare components it will offer to meet the ABAWD work requirement**

N/A

- c) **Optional Workfare: State agencies or other political subdivisions must describe in detail in the plan how the political subdivision, working with the State agency and any other cooperating agencies that may be involved in the program, will fulfill the provisions of 7 C.F.R. §273.7(m). If a State opts to operate an optional workfare program or modify an existing optional workfare program, through a Combined Plan under WIOA, it must provide the following:**

- 1) **State agencies or political subdivisions submitting a workfare plan must submit with the plan an operating budget covering the period from the initiation of the workfare program's implementation schedule to the close of the Federal fiscal year for each year covered by the Combined Plan. In addition, an estimate of the cost for one full year of operation must be submitted together with the workfare plan for each Federal fiscal year covered by the Combined Plan.**
- 2) **If workfare plans are submitted by more than one political subdivision, each representing the same population (such as a city within a county), FNS will determine which political subdivision will have its plan approved. Under no circumstances will a SNAP recipient be subject to more than one SNAP workfare program. If a political subdivision chooses to operate a workfare program and represents a population which is already, at least in part, subject to a SNAP workfare program administered by another political subdivision, it must establish**

in its workfare plan how SNAP recipients will not be subject to more than one SNAP workfare program.

- d) **Voluntary Workfare:** State agencies and political subdivisions may operate workfare programs whereby participation by SNAP recipients is voluntary. In such a program, the penalties for failure to comply, as provided in 7 C.F.R. §273.7(f), will not apply for noncompliance. The amount of hours to be worked will be negotiated between the household and the operating agency, though not to exceed the limits provided under 7 C.F.R. §273.7(m)(5)(ii). In addition, all protections provided under 7 C.F.R. §273.7(m)(6)(i) shall continue to apply. Those State agencies and political subdivisions choosing to operate such a program shall indicate in their workfare plan how their staffing will adapt to anticipated and unanticipated levels of participation for each Federal fiscal year covered by the Combined Plan under WIOA. FNS will not approve plans which do not show that the benefits of the workfare program, in terms of hours worked by participants and reduced SNAP allotments due to successful job attainment, are expected to exceed the costs of such a program. In addition, if FNS finds that an approved voluntary program does not meet this criterion, FNS reserves the right to withdraw approval.

29 7 CFR § 273.7(m)

30 7 CFR § 273.7(m)(8)

67

- e) **Comparable Workfare:** The State agency or political subdivision must provide a description of its program, including a methodology for ensuring compliance with 7 C.F.R §273.7(m)(9)(ii) for each Federal fiscal year covered by the Combined Plan under WIOA.
- f) **Process:** The State agency must submit amendments to the SNAP E&T segment of the Combined Plan for FNS approval at least 30 days prior to the planned implementation in order to receive federal SNAP E&T funding for the activities not covered by the approved Combined Plan.
- g) **Plan Modifications:** If FNS determines that the performance of a State agency with respect to employment and training outcomes is inadequate, FNS may require the State agency to make modifications to the State E&T plan to improve the outcomes.

Funding Disclaimer: Funds may not be available when SNAP E&T portions of a Combined State Plan under WIOA are approved. FNS's obligation after approving a SNAP E&T plan submitted as part of a Combined State Plan is contingent upon the availability of an appropriation from which payment can be made. Any FNS funding resulting from an approval of a SNAP E&T plan submitted as part of a Combined State Plan is subject to FNS receiving

sufficient funds (in the Program Financial Control System for FNS) to fund this and all prior approved SNAP E&T plans submitted as part of a Combined State Plan in their entirety in the time and date order received. Federal reimbursement to States for 50 percent of State administrative expenditures and for participant reimbursements is subject to the above conditions.

Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA)

There are no program-specific state planning requirements for TAA. If the state includes TAA in a Combined State Plan, the state must incorporate TAA in its responses to the common planning elements in sections II, III, IV, and V of the WIOA State Plan requirements instrument.

Has the state incorporated TAA into the sections indicated above?

Yes

Jobs for Veterans State Grants

The Jobs for Veterans' State Grants (JVSG) are mandatory, formula-based staffing grants to States (including DC, PR, VI and Guam). The JVSG is funded annually in accordance with a funding formula defined in the statute (38 U.S.C. 4102A (c) (2) (B) and regulation and operates on a fiscal year (not program year) basis, however, performance metrics are collected and reported quarterly on a Program Year basis (as with the ETA-9002 Series). Currently, VETS JVSG operates on a multi-year grant approval cycle modified and funded annually.

In accordance with 38 U.S.C. § 4102A(b)(5) and § 4102A(c), the Assistant Secretary for Veterans' Employment and Training (ASVET) makes grant funds available for use in each State to support Disabled Veterans' Outreach Program (DVOP) specialists and Local Veterans' Employment Representatives (LVER) staff. As a condition to receive funding, 38 U.S.C. § 4102A(c)(2) requires States to submit an application for a grant that contains a State Plan narrative, which includes:

- (a) How the State intends to provide employment, training and job placement services to veterans and eligible persons under the JVSG;**
- (b) The duties assigned to DVOP specialists and LVER staff by the State; specifically implementing DVOP and LVER duties or roles and responsibilities as outlined in 38 U.S.C. § 4103A and 4104. These duties must be consistent with current guidance;**

- (c) **The manner in which DVOP specialists and LVER staff are integrated into the State’s employment service delivery system or American Job Center;**
- (d) **The Incentive Award program implemented using the 1% grant allocation set aside for this purpose, as applicable;**
- (e) **The populations of eligible veterans to be served, including any additional populations designated by the Secretary as eligible for services, and any additional populations specifically targeted by the State Workforce Agency for services from one-stop delivery system partners (e.g., Native American veterans; veterans in remote rural counties or parishes);**
- (f) **How the State implements and monitors the administration of priority of service to covered persons;**
- (g) **How the State provides or intends to provide and measure, through both the DVOP and American Job Center staff: (1) job and job training individualized career services, (2) employment placement services, and (3) job-driven training and subsequent placement service program for eligible veterans and eligible persons;**
- (h) **The hire date along with mandatory training completion dates for all DVOP specialists and LVER staff; and,**
- (i) **Such additional information as the Secretary may require.**

Veterans and eligible spouses receive priority of service in all Minnesota CareerForce locations. Also, veterans and eligible spouses who are also recipients of public assistance, other low-income individuals, or individuals who are basic skills deficient would receive first priority of service with the WIOA Adult formula funds.

Priority is given in the following order:

1. First, to veterans and eligible spouses who are also funded in the groups given statutory priority for WIOA Adult formula funds. This means that veterans and eligible spouses who are also recipients of public assistance, other low-income individuals, or individuals who are basic skills deficient would receive first priority of services with the WIOA Adult formula funds.
2. Second, to non-covered persons (that is, individuals who are not veterans or eligible spouses) who are included in the WIOA’s priority groups.
3. Third, to veterans and eligible spouses who are not included in the WIOA’s priority groups.
4. Fourth, to any other populations identified by the Governor or Local Board for priority.

5. Last, to non-covered persons outside the groups given priority under the WIOA.

Veterans and other eligible persons, defined as covered persons, are ensured Priority of Service (POS) upon entering the CareerForce System with the implementation of the following services:

- Identified at the point of entry to programs & services
- Made aware of priority of service
- Made aware of the full array of programs and services available to them
- Take precedence over non-covered persons in accessing and obtaining services.

Veteran

Veterans who have served at least **one day** in the active military, naval, or air service, who were discharged or released from service under any condition other than a condition classified as dishonorable, and who are otherwise eligible for participation in programming are included as covered persons. This definition includes Reserve units and National Guard units activated for Federal Service.

Spouses of Veterans

An “eligible spouse” means a spouse of any of the following:

- a. A spouse of any veteran who died of a service-connected disability;
- b. A spouse of any member of the Armed Forces serving on active duty who, at the time of application for the priority, is listed in one or more of the following categories and has been so listed for a total of more than 90 days;
 - i. Missing in action;
 - ii. Captured in the line of duty by a hostile force; or
 - iii. Forcibly detained or interned in the line of duty by a foreign government or power.
- c. A spouse of any veteran who has a total disability resulting from a service-connected disability, as evaluated by the Department of Veterans Affairs; or
- d. A spouse of any veteran who died while a disability was in existence.

Implementing and Monitoring Priority of Service Compliance

Priority of Service to Covered Persons means when customers self-attest they are a veteran or an eligible spouse, they are given precedence over eligible non-covered persons for the receipt of employment, training, and placement services provided under new or existing qualified job training programs. Veterans or eligible spouses receive access to the services or resources before noncovered persons. If the service or resource is limited, the veteran or Covered Person receives access to the service or resource instead of or before the non-covered person. For example, this could mean:

- The Covered Person receives access to the service or resource earlier in time than the non-covered person; or
- If the service or resource is limited, the Covered person receives access to the service or
- resource before the non-covered person.

Priority of Service is monitored by the State Veterans Services Coordinator in collaboration with CareerForce to ensure priority of service is provided in all Minnesota CareerForce locations.

Monitoring activities include on-site visits, interviews with staff, and regular reviews of local office plans, and if available policies related specifically to “Priority of Service for Covered Persons.” USDOL will also conduct visits and federal audits, as scheduled. The JVSG staff submit Quarterly Managers Reports to the local office managers that identify Priority of Service for Covered Persons and will identify issues and resolutions to Priority of Service as necessary.

Local Veterans Employment Representatives (LVER) staff provides ongoing training to CareerForce staff and partners statewide to ensure a successful implementation and understanding of Priority of Service for Covered Persons.

In addition, LVER staff reviews how Priority of Service is being implemented within each of the Minnesota CareerForce locations in their respective regions and offers guidance on how/where to improve Priority of Service efforts if necessary. The goal is to make certain that local CareerForce front desk staff is well versed on veteran priority of service.

Point of Entry — signage at all CareerForce locations advises Veterans and other eligible persons of Veterans Priority of Service (POS). Information on Priority of Service is also provided during various program orientations, by staff, and during workshops. LVER staff trains and updates local CareerForce staff and management on the provisions of POS and Public Law 107-288.

Questionnaire — given to Veterans to assist reception to identify Veterans with significant barriers to employment. The Minnesota Veterans Questionnaire is given to Veterans to assist reception area staff in identifying Veterans with significant barriers to employment. This questionnaire is also available online on the Veterans Resources landing page on the CareerForceMN.com website: <https://www.careerforcemn.com/veterans>.

Non-JVSG staff conducts the triage by reviewing the questionnaire responses. We ask all customers who come to the CareerForce locations if they ever served in the US Military. If the answer is yes, we ask them to complete the Veterans Questionnaire. Non-JVSG staff does the initial assessment, reviews the questionnaire, and makes appropriate referrals based on the responses to the questionnaire.

The JVSG staff is trained and instructed not to perform intake duties or point-of-entry functions normally assigned to other CareerForce partner staff.

Veterans with Significant Barriers to Employment (SBE)— All veterans with SBE will be referred to and will receive assistance and individualized career services from a DVOP or in the absence of the DVOP, a designated individualized career services provider. Veterans are eligible for DVOP services if they meet the criteria for having a significant barrier to employment or if they are designated as a special population. VPL 03-14, including changes 1 and 2, and the companion TEGL 19-13 define the criteria for having significant barriers to employment (SBEs) and provide expansion and clarification of SBEs. Veterans Questionnaire needs to be assessed by non-JVSG staff only. Veterans with SBEs should be referred to a DVOP or identified as individualized career services providers when a DVOP is not available. New guidance identifies a distinction between LVERs and DVOPs; the term “Veteran Staff or Veterans Representative” is no longer acceptable per VPL 03-14 including change 2. You must identify DVOP or LVER staff per DOL refocusing.

Referral Process — All other non-SBE Veterans will be referred to a trained partner staff person within the CareerForce who will provide job search information/assistance, program information, and priority referral to services and resources.

Access to U.S. DOL-funded programs — Veterans and other eligible persons entitled to POS will be referred to U.S. DOL-funded programs immediately. If a waiting list for the program exists, the Veteran will be put at the top of the list for service.

Workshops — all workshops available in the CareerForce through CareerForce will have open slots available to Veterans up to the day the workshop is scheduled.

State Job Bank — Veterans and current and former Military members are able to identify themselves as such and are listed at the beginning of searches done by recruiters and employers. Employers are also able to self-designate as "Veterans Friendly Employer" so that Veterans can do keyword searches to find employers seeking Veterans for hire.

Training of Partner Staff — Non-JVSG staff is trained specifically as the point of contact for Veterans not receiving individualized career services from DVOPs. To ensure that CareerForce reception staff is deeply familiar with the priority of service provisions for veterans, all staff participates in priority of service training provided by LVERs and via webinars provided by the JVSG program. Front desk CareerForce staff received the WIOA JVSG Desk Reference flyer. Staff, particularly those who work at the reception desks, are encouraged to participate in the online training and instructor-led training provided by the National Veterans Training Institute (NVTI) geared toward educating one-stop staff about the veterans service and priority of service.

Several processes will be used to monitor POS statewide and within each area of the State in which covered programs operate:

- Information provided by DVOP/LVER staff or customers,

- DVET onsite visits (including U.S. DOL—VETS audits with the State Director of Veterans Employment Programs,
- Managers Quarterly Reports.

Services are made available and provided within the CareerForce and through other service providers to eligible Veterans, transitioning service members, Chapter 31 participants, other eligible persons, and other such groups targeted for special consideration, including Veterans with significant barriers to employment.

A Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) has been developed between MN VA Veteran Readiness and Employment (VR&E) and the Jobs for Vets program to facilitate an effective referral process and ensure Veterans are receiving priority services.

Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP)

a) Economic Projections and Impact

- 1) **Discuss long-term projections for jobs in industries and occupations in the state that may provide employment opportunities for older workers. (20 cfr 641.302(d)) (may alternatively be discussed in the economic analysis section of strategic plan.)**

The Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP) is a paid community service and work-based program for income eligible job seekers ages 55 and older. It provides service-based training at local nonprofit organizations and government agencies to prepare them for permanent, unsubsidized employment. Due to their experience, older workers (55 and older) have considerable skills and talents to offer the State economy. According to the Minnesota State Demographic Center, the workforce will expand significantly from an increase in the number of older workers 55+ (Table 1). Yet if older workers don't remain in the workforce and their talents aren't leveraged, the labor force will shrink over the next 5-10 years. Minnesota needs to build and retain the skills of aging workers in order to sustain economic growth.

Table 1. Minnesota Labor Force Projections, 2023-2033 Change Percent

	2023 Labor Force Projection	2033 Labor Force Projection	2020-2033 Change Numeric	2020-2033 Change Percent
55 to 64 years	524,342	443,208	-81,134	-15.5%
65 to 74 years	167,645	172,651	+5,006	+3.0%
75 years & over	29,343	41,861	+12,518	+42.7%

Overall 55+	721,330	657,720	-63,610	-8.8%
--------------------	----------------	----------------	----------------	--------------

Source: Minnesota State Demographic Center

The Local Workforce Development Areas (LWDA), under the leadership of the Governor’s Workforce Development Board, places a strong emphasis on identifying jobs in industries and occupations throughout the State that will likely provide employment opportunities for older workers. To ensure job readiness, it’s vital that Minnesota DEED’s SCSEP sub-grantees/operators (hereafter referred to as “providers”) have access to current labor market information (LMI) that they can use to effectively assist program participants in developing realistic job goals and marketable skills sets.

SCSEP providers have access to in-service trainings through DEED’s local regional labor analysts, featured publications, and online labor market tools such as: Occupational Employment Statistics Cost of Living Calculator, Occupations in Demand, Job Vacancy Survey, Career and Education Explorer, Graduate Employment Outcomes, MySkillsMyFuture, Match Jobs to Experience, O*Net OnLine, and CareerForceMN.com. These tools provide current information on the quarterly census of employment and wages, staffing patterns, employment statistics, local area unemployment statistics, comparisons (e.g. statewide and regional), business finder, and quarterly employment demographics.

Projected Occupations for Older Workers:

Table 2 below lists the occupations that are expected to have the most job openings from 2020 to 2030, according to DEED’s employment projections data. The top 4 occupations are potentially very suitable for older workers; these include Office and Administrative Support, Food Preparation and Serving Related, Sales and Related, and Personal Care and Service. Other occupations that are projected to have an abundance of job openings that may be suitable for older workers include Building and Grounds Cleaning and Maintenance; and Installation, Maintenance, and Repair.

Table 2: Long-Term Occupation Projections, Minnesota, 2020 – 2030.

Title	Estimate Year Employment 2020	Projected Year Employment 2030	Percent Change	Total Change	Labor Force Exit Openings	Occupational Transfer Openings	Total Hires
Food Preparation and Serving Related Occupations	196,413	230,396	17.3	33,983	162,071	217,975	414,029

Office and Administrative Support Occupations	353,547	337,006	-4.7	-16,541	164,380	213,556	361,395
Sales and Related Occupations	272,390	265,840	-2.4	-6,550	137,391	213,165	344,006
Transportation and Material Moving Occupations	217,673	233,084	7.1	15,411	106,855	174,737	297,003
Healthcare Support Occupations	165,026	195,744	18.6	30,718	110,552	106,395	247,665
Production Occupations	205,773	205,003	-0.4	-770	76,945	146,522	222,697
Management Occupations	225,287	237,754	5.5	12,467	67,446	118,849	198,762
Business and Financial Operations Occupations	194,738	206,660	6.1	11,922	52,881	117,080	181,883
Educational Instruction and Library Occupations	164,751	178,355	8.3	13,604	70,050	78,790	162,444
Personal Care and Service Occupations	85,350	97,909	14.7	12,559	57,296	71,279	141,134
Healthcare Practitioners and Technical Occupations	192,413	207,998	8.1	15,585	50,559	58,859	125,003
Building and Grounds Cleaning and Maintenance Occu	88,554	93,911	6	5,357	52,792	66,026	124,175

Construction and Extraction Occupations	120,028	124,959	4.1	4,931	36,430	82,315	123,676
Installation, Maintenance, and Repair Occupations	105,222	109,437	4	4,215	33,714	68,391	106,320
Computer and Mathematical Occupations	103,199	115,793	12.2	12,594	22,665	54,036	89,295
Community and Social Service Occupations	65,252	72,662	11.4	7,410	23,361	44,718	75,489
Arts, Design, Entertainment, Sports, and Media Occ	50,051	54,147	8.2	4,096	19,503	32,872	56,471
Protective Service Occupations	46,767	49,561	6	2,794	21,676	30,495	54,965
Architecture and Engineering Occupations	55,462	58,392	5.3	2,930	13,817	27,807	44,554
Life, Physical, and Social Science Occupations	28,259	30,029	6.3	1,770	5,840	20,047	27,657
Farming, Fishing, and Forestry Occupations	16,818	16,596	-1.3	-222	6,965	18,898	25,641
Legal Occupations	22,327	23,964	7.3	1,637	6,339	8,952	16,928
Total, All Occupations	2,975,300	3,145,200	5.7	169,900	1,299,528	1,971,764	3,441,192

Source: <https://mn.gov/deed/data/data-tools/employment-outlook/>

2) Discuss how the long-term job projections discussed in the economic analysis section of strategic plan relate to the types of unsubsidized jobs for which SCSEP participants will be trained and the types of skill training to be provided. (20 CFR 641.302(d))

To identify unsubsidized jobs and the required training within occupations projected to be in high demand for older workers, SCSEP providers review LMI data regularly and work with their participants to strategize plans on how to ensure eligibility for these positions. This section describes the unsubsidized jobs within occupations projected to be in high-demand, the types of skill training for these positions, and the approach that providers take to develop a preparation plan for participants.

Unsubsidized Jobs Suitable for SCSEP participants:

As listed in Table 2 in the previous section, the top 4 occupations projected to be in high demand between 2020 – 2030 include Office and Administrative Support, Food Preparation and Serving Related, Sales and Related, and Personal Care and Service. Unsubsidized jobs within these occupations are provided in Figure 1 below. They include Combined Food Preparers, Personal Care Aides/Assistants, Retail Salespersons, Cashiers, Servers (Waiters and Waitresses), Customer Services Representatives, Janitors and Cleaners, and Office Clerks. Other unsubsidized jobs that may be a good fit for SCSEP participants include Stock Clerks, Childcare Workers, Home Health Aides, and Nursing and Teaching Assistants

Figure 1:

Skill Training for In-Demand Jobs:

To ensure participants are trained and well prepared to transition from subsidized to unsubsidized employment, SCSEP career counselors will continue to work diligently to identify online and local in-person training programs. Examples of unsubsidized jobs for SCSEP participants and the associated skill training are described below:

- Occupation: Office and Administration Support
- Jobs: Customer Service Representative, Office Clerk

To perform office and administrative support positions effectively, SCSEP participants complete specific training in technology programs and/or apprenticeships of a few months to a year to learn from experienced workers. The acquired skills from apprenticeships may include customer and personal service as well as proficiency in customer relationship management (CRM) software, such as Austin Logistics CallTech, Blackbaud The Raiser's Edge, or Salesforce. Preparation may also include training in database user interface and query software, such as Microsoft Access or Oracle. A high school diploma or equivalent is usually required for office and administration support jobs.

- Occupation: Food Preparation and Serving Related
- Jobs: Cashiers, Waiters/Waitresses

Candidates are usually required to have at least a high school diploma or equivalent for food preparation and serving-related positions. Some previous work-related skill, knowledge, or experience is usually needed as well. On-the-job training in these occupations is typically anywhere from a few months to a year of working with experienced employees. Other preparation may include training in accounting or bookkeeping software, database user interface and query software such as ReliaSoft Prism, Microsoft Office, or handheld computer device software.

- Occupation: Sales and related
- Jobs: Retail Salespersons, Cashiers

As previous work-related skill, knowledge, or experience is usually needed for sales positions, SCSEP participants receive on-the-job training with experienced workers, typically lasting a few months to a year. A formal apprenticeship program may be completed for these occupations, particularly to receive skill training in sales and marketing, customer and personal service, persuasion, and negotiation. Preparation can also include training in database user interface and query software such as FileMaker Pro, gift registry software, or Microsoft Access; electronic mail software such as IBM Notes or Microsoft Outlook; or point of sale (POS) software such as iQmetrix RQ4 Retail Management System, or Plexis. A high school diploma or equivalent is typically required.

- Occupation: Personal Care and Service
- Jobs: Home Health Aides, Nursing Assistants

To prepare SCSEP participants for a position as a Home Health Aide, career counselors identify local employers who will provide training or an apprenticeship (typically under 2 years) with experienced staff to instruct on how to care for and assist others, and document and record information. Preparation typically also includes training in database user interface and query software such as Microsoft Access or Oracle; electronic mail software such as Microsoft Outlook; or medical software such as AIG OASIS. Home Health Aides usually have at least a high school diploma or equivalent.

The requirements for Nursing Assistants are typically a high school diploma or equivalent, and a post-secondary non-degree award such as a Certified Nursing Aide/Assistant (CNA). Training in accounting software such as Billing; electronic mail software such as Microsoft Outlook; and medical software such as Epic Systems may also be completed.

Source: <https://www.onetonline.org/find/>

SCSEP Approach to Skill Training:

SCSEP career counselors work with, and will continue to work with, participants to develop an Individual Employment Plan (IEP) after assessing their skills and abilities. Participants’ interests and aptitudes are matched with high-demand jobs in the local labor market, and an appropriate host agency for a community service assignment (CSA) is identified. The IEP lists the steps needed to achieve the job readiness goals to ensure participants will exit to an unsubsidized position.

Identification of an appropriate host agency and CSA is an ongoing process. It requires providers to be aware of local community needs, agencies/organizations that can act as hosts, and the quality of the training that the participant will receive. Participants receive most of their training at their assigned host agency. Staff provide the training at no cost to the program. They deliver it through demonstration, hands-on practice, and instruction. Host agency staff may also register participants for local in-person and online workshops and seminars. Additionally, contracts (referred to as On-the-Job Experience (OJE) contracts) are used to further develop job-related goals and interests if needed.

If it aligns with the IEP, providers identify extra vocational training for participants, including classes on time management, communication and active listening, job-searching skills, and application and interviewing techniques. These trainings may be provided by a career development specialist, where available, or taught by SCSEP counselors. To increase the likelihood of unsubsidized job placement, counselors work closely with area employers, and sometimes job developers, to identify or even create openings that meet the needs of both participants and employers.

- 3) Discuss current and projected employment opportunities in the State (such as by providing information available under §15 of the Wagner-Peyser Act (29 U.S.C. 491-2) by occupation), and the types of skills possessed by eligible individuals. (20 CFR 641.325(c))**

Skills Required for In-Demand Jobs:

As previously discussed, the projection data shows there will be several occupations with job openings suitable for SCSEP participants up through 2030 (Table 2 and Figure 1). DEED’s Match Jobs to Experience data tool and O*NET OnLine provide the typical required education level and skill sets for in-demand jobs. The skills eligible candidates possess for a sample of jobs within the top occupations predicted to be in high demand are listed below (Table 3).

Table 3: Projected In-Demand Occupations, Jobs, and Skills for Eligible Candidates

Occupation	Unsubsidized Jobs	Education Level / Training	Skill Sets
------------	-------------------	----------------------------	------------

<p>Office and Administrative Support</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Customer Services Representatives • Office Clerks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High school diploma or equivalent • Customer relationship management (CRM) software • Database user interface and query software • Enterprise resource planning (ERP) software 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CRM, ERP, and database user/query software proficiency • Clerical • Customer and Personal service • Communication and Active listening • Critical thinking • Team collaboration
<p>Combined Food Preparation and Serving</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cashiers • Waiters/Waitresses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High school diploma or equivalent • On-the-job training with experienced workers • Accounting / bookkeeping software • Database user interface and query software • Handheld computer device software 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Customer and Personal service • Administrative and Management • Accounting / bookkeeping • Database user/query proficiency • Time management • Communication and Active Listening • Team collaboration
<p>Sales and Related</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Retail Salespersons • Cashiers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High school diploma or equivalent • On-the-job training with experienced 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sales and Marketing • Database user/query proficiency

		<p>workers or formal apprenticeship</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Database user interface and query software • Electronic mail software • Point of sale (POS) software 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Customer and Personal service • Persuasion • Negotiation • Communication and Active Listening
<p>Personal Care and Service</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Home Health Aides • Nursing Assistants 	<p>Home Health Aides:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High school diploma or equivalent • On-the-job training or formal apprenticeship • Database user interface and query software • Electronic mail software • Medical software <p>Nursing Assistant:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Postsecondary non-degree award, such as a CNA • Accounting / bookkeeping software • Electronic mail software 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Medicine and Patient care • Customer and Personal Service • Monitoring • Public Safety and Security • Critical Thinking • Decision-making • Communication and Active Listening • Time Management

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Medical software 	
--	--	--	--

Sources: <https://mn.gov/deed/data/data-tools/match-jobs-experience/>;
<https://www.onetonline.org/find/>

(b) Service Delivery and Coordination

1) A description of actions to coordinate SCSEP with other programs. This may alternatively be discussed in the state strategies section of the strategic plan, but regardless of placement in document, must include:

A. Planned actions to coordinate activities of SCSEP grantees with WIOA Title I programs, including plans for using the WIOA one-stop delivery system and its partners to serve individuals aged 55 and older. (20 CFR641.302(g), 641.325(e))

Through Minnesota’s Combined State Plan, Minnesota SCSEP and the WIOA statewide offices that serve the older worker population will continue its partnership to ensure the maximum number of eligible individuals will have an opportunity to participate in SCSEP. To serve individuals 55 and older, the partnership will continue to implement the following activities and strategies:

- Refer potential participants to SCSEP and inform them of the training opportunities available through the program
- Encourage co-enrollment of SCSEP and WIOA programs to ensure participants receive adequate support services, and comprehensive training and employment services
- Coordinate and make referrals to other state and national providers
- Engage SCSEP providers in implementing WIOA and other workforce strategies
- Serve as board members (where applicable) for LWDAs.
- Promote joint sponsorship of job fairs and participation at the job fairs.
- Assist in developing strategic workforce plans
- Perform JobLink referrals
- Contact local businesses and employers to serve as potential host agencies
- Sponsor the co-development of job-readiness seminars.
- Utilize CareerForce to bring together members of senior communities through meetings, the development of resources (e.g. web resources, publications, and

promotional materials) and forums (meetings and roundtables) to encourage collaboration and eliminate service gaps

- Develop SCSEP content for CareerForceMN.com that highlights the benefits of hiring older workers and supports the needs of older workers

CareerForce joins together providers of workforce development services to create the one-stop delivery system. The partnership brings together state, county, and private nonprofit workforce development services to provide a seamless and comprehensive system for job seekers and employers. As Minnesota's career development and talent matching resource, CareerForce connects individuals to opportunities by helping employers find the workers they need to grow and thrive. It continually works to enhance services to employees and employers, prioritizing equity at the center of everything it does. CareerForce is a business-led network of private, public and nonprofit partners throughout Minnesota committed to helping individuals start, advance or change their career; employers attract, develop and retain talent; and Minnesota thrive economically by continuing to build its world-class workforce. In person, on the phone and online, CareerForce provides tailored resources to help meet the needs of all Minnesota's career seekers and employers.

As part of the SCSEP State Plan, DEED will continue to promote coordination and collaboration between SCSEP and the WIOA one-stop system. SCSEP providers will continue to actively partner with CareerForce. Local collaborations vary by region, ranging from the placement of SCSEP employment and training staff at statewide CareerForce sites to co-sponsoring training and outreach events to assisting with outreach to more rural residents of the state. Providers will also continue to collaborate with CareerForce sites at job fairs and share job leads, as well as work together to engage the business community in initiatives that tap older workers.

B. Planned actions to coordinate activities of SCSEP grantees with the activities being carried out in the state under the other titles of the Older Americans Act (OAA). (20 CFR 641.302(H))

Minnesota will continue to cultivate partnerships with Area Agencies on Aging (AAA) and OAA funded service providers. Minnesota's AAAs are regional organizations that provide the services, support, and information for just about everything that older adults and their families could need. Minnesota has 7 AAAs across the state, which serve as connections to older Minnesotans and the community support they require (<https://mn.gov/board-on-aging/about-us/area-agencies/>).

These partnerships will continue to provide opportunities for cross referrals of eligible SCSEP participants and designation of aging network sites as host agencies. The partners assist SCSEP participants with support services such as transportation, respite, and case management services to boost their well-being and help them live independently in their home environment and the community. AAA partners also provide preventive health services such as disease-prevention and

health-promotion services at senior centers or alternative sites. Services are designed to help older individuals prevent or manage their health conditions and promote healthier lifestyles. See section (F)(4) below for more information about joint activities of Minnesota SCSEP and statewide AAAs.

C. Planned actions to coordinate SCSEP with other private and public entities and programs that provide services to older Americans, such as community and faith-based organizations, transportation programs, and programs for those with special needs or disabilities. (20 CFR 641.302(I))

To assist job-seeking individuals and ensure they have access to transportation, housing, health, and other workforce development services, DEED will continue to foster partnerships with a variety of community-based organizations and referral sources.

Transportation Programs:

To overcome transportation challenges, DEED will continue to coordinate with the Department of Transportation, partner state agencies, AAAs, transit authorities and local transportation coordination programs, such as Ticket To Work and Transit Link, to ensure SCSEP providers have resources that support participants' ability to make it to work. On the state level, a top priority area of the Governor's Council for an Age-Friendly Minnesota is transportation (see section 2 below for more information about the Governor's Council). With the guidance of several national and state transportation experts such as the AARP, Road Safety Academy, National Highway Transportation Safety Association, and University of North Carolina Highway Safety Research Center, communities will become more livable for older individuals by creating safer and more pedestrian-friendly/walkable environments, and improving access to public transportation.

Other activities and efforts to mitigate or overcome transportation challenges include providing participants with Metro passes, gas cards, and purchasing car parts to accommodate individuals with disabilities through local community-based support organizations. Minnesota SCSEP will continue to identify transportation challenges for participants and work with local providers and resources to identify or develop solutions.

Community, Faith-Based, Volunteer Organizations and Programs for People with Disabilities:

To ensure priority to those most-in-need (MIN), such as individuals with disabilities, DEED will coordinate activities with community, faith-based, and volunteer organizations that provide tailored resources to meet their unique needs and preferences. Strong collaborations with community action partnerships (CAP) agencies, Chambers of Commerce, city offices, Bridges of Hope, Lutheran Social Services, public libraries, Salvation Army, homeless shelters, and county social service agencies exist and provide needed support to participants. Examples of other partner organizations include:

- Living At Home Network (focuses on helping seniors maintain good health)

- Faith Community Nurse Network of the Greater Twin Cities (combines professional nursing and spiritual care)
- Centers for Independent Living (assists people with vision loss, or other disabilities, function at home, work and in their communities)

At the state level, DEED will continue to participate in the Governor’s Council for an Age-Friendly Minnesota which, as previously described, coordinates public- and private-sector age-friendly actions to promote healthy aging. Other collaborations with state agencies and initiatives include:

- Minnesota Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services Division (DHHSD)
- DEED Unemployment Insurance
- DEED State Services for the Blind (SSB)
- DEED Vocational Rehabilitation Services (VRS)

To highlight a few of these partnerships:

- SSB: Facilitates the achievement of vocational and personal independence by Minnesotans who are blind, visually impaired, or DeafBlind. SSB’s Senior Services Aging Eyes partnership fosters successful partnerships with community senior-service organizations. In 2018, the SSB received the Minnesota State Innovation in Government Award, organized by the Humphrey Institute's Public and Nonprofit Leadership Center and the Bush Foundation, for an initiative that provides training and a kit of low vision aids and devices to community members who work with seniors. The kit enables partners to provide practical assistance to seniors in the early stages of vision loss. SSB has trained more than 400 service providers to recognize and provide simple services for seniors who are newly diagnosed with vision loss. Through these partnerships, 714 seniors were served in 2017.
- VRS: Provides employment services to anyone with disabilities age 14 and up (Table 4). SCSEP providers work closely with the VRS to document severe disability and frail MIN status. VRS staff is also working closely with a group of individuals who are 55 and older and seeking employment. While PY19 data for this age group isn’t currently available, Table 4 below shows there was 71 percent change in disabled individuals 65 and older who sought VRS services from PY15 to PY18, a hopeful indicator that more and more MIN individuals are accessing services that will help them find sustainable employment. DEED’s VRS unit also has grant funds to support Independent Living services for persons of any age.

Table 4: Number of People with Disabilities Who Accessed VRS by Age

Age group	# served in PY13	# served in PY15	% change PY13 to PY15	# served in PY18	% change PY15 to PY18
Youth	7,466	7,906	5.90%	9,061	14.60%
14-18	5,095	5,371	5.40%	5,833	8.60%
19-21	1,658	1,812	9.30%	2,435	34.40%
22-24	713	723	1.40%	793	9.70%
Adult	7,986	7,827	-2.00%	7,090	-9.40%
25-64	7,928	7,734	-2.40%	6,931	-10.40%
65+	58	93	60.30%	159	71.00%
Total	15,452	15,733	1.80%	16,151	2.70%

DEED will continue to strengthen collaborations with community-based, faith-based, and volunteer programs as well as organizations that serve individuals with disabilities to ensure SCSEP providers and participants have easy access to needed resources.

D. Planned actions to coordinate SCSEP with other labor market and job training initiatives. (20 CFR 641.302(J))

Labor Market Information:

As described earlier, Minnesota provides in-service trainings with DEED’s local regional labor analysts, publications, and online labor market tools such as: Occupational Employment Statistics Cost of Living Calculator, Occupations in Demand, Job Vacancy Survey, Career and Education Explorer, Graduate Employment Outcomes, MySkillsMyFuture, Match Jobs to Experience, O*Net OnLine, and CareerForceMN.com. These resources and tools provide current information on the quarterly census of employment and wages, staffing patterns, employment statistics, local area unemployment statistics, comparisons (e.g. statewide and regional), business finder, and quarterly employment demographics. Once key industries and potential jobs are identified, SCSEP providers can use this information to build employer contacts, identify or design appropriate training programs, and create employment plans with goals that are consistent with regional job opportunities.

Training Initiatives and Opportunities:

DEED and its national and state providers develop strategic partnerships with workforce strategy consultants, city councils, and economic development agencies (both municipal and private) to foster collaborations with host agencies for community service and training opportunities. Other training opportunities exist through community colleges, community education providers, CareerForce locations, and retired professionals.

Minnesota also works with small businesses within the private sector to provide customized training. Over the last decade, small businesses have generated 60 to 80 percent of net new jobs annually. In many areas, small businesses may be the only source of jobs for job seekers, particularly in rural areas and when workers are low-income and elderly. Working with small businesses to provide customized training has proven to be a successful placement model; providers can replicate this model in new and current SCSEP areas.

E. Actions the state will take to ensure that SCSEP is an active partner in the one-stop delivery system and the steps the state will take to encourage and improve coordination with the one-stop delivery system. (20 CFR 641.335)

See Section (b)(1)(A) above for a description of how Minnesota SCSEP will continue to actively partner in the WIOA one-stop delivery system information.

F. Efforts the state will make to work with local economic development offices in rural locations.

Going forward, DEED will continue to work with chambers of commerce, economic development offices and small business development centers across the state, especially in rural regions, to prepare older workers for in-demand jobs, support education and training needs and promote the benefits of older workers. The many resources, tools, and strategies described earlier will also support local business development efforts in rural areas.

2) The state's long-term strategy for engaging employers to develop and promote opportunities for the placement of SCSEP participants in unsubsidized employment. (20 CFR 641.302(E)) (may alternatively be discussed in the state strategies section of strategic plan.)

To develop and promote training and unsubsidized employment opportunities, Minnesota SCSEP will continue to implement the following strategies at a state and local level:

Co-enroll SCSEP participants in WIOA programs and Pathways to Prosperity (P2P) training options. P2P is coordinated in partnership with local employers, SOAR Career Solutions, Adult Education, and Lake Superior College, and provides individuals the skills needed to compete for entry level employment in the healthcare or construction fields.

Develop a referral relationship with employers

Invite employers as guest speakers at SCSEP quarterly meetings

Encourage participants to meet with selected employers through Business of The Day events, Job Fairs, hiring events and Job Club

Meet with employers at Job Fairs to explain SCSEP and the benefits of hiring older workers

Direct contact with employers on behalf of a specific participant through job development activities

Ensure resumes entered into MinnesotaWorks.net are viewable by employers

Partner with CareerForce and community partners for job placement activities

Feature SCSEP during LWDB meetings

Increase collaboration among DEED workforce strategy consultants and local employers to improve work retention of aging employees

Train employers to effectively communicate the type of skills they need, in ways that do not hinder older applicants

Provide DEED-sponsored workshops for employers on how to establish on-the-job training and focus on knowledge-transfer strategies

Demonstrate how volunteer work at desirable organizations/companies helps aging job seekers connect with potential employers

Encourage employers to network with schools that teach skills they need in their workforce

Increase opportunities for aging workers to do small business development and become entrepreneurs

Develop a strategy and model for success, including both paid and unpaid work

Co-enroll SCSEP participants in WIOA programs and Pathways to Prosperity (P2P) training options. P2P is coordinated in partnership with local employers, SOAR Career Solutions, Adult Education, and Lake Superior College, and provides individuals the skills needed to compete for entry level employment in the healthcare or construction fields.

Develop a referral relationship with employers

Invite employers as guest speakers at SCSEP quarterly meetings

Encourage participants to meet with selected employers through Business of The Day events, Job Fairs, hiring events and Job Club

Meet with employers at Job Fairs to explain SCSEP and the benefits of hiring older workers

Direct contact with employers on behalf of a specific participant through job development activities

Ensure resumes entered into MinnesotaWorks.net are viewable by employers

Partner with CareerForce and community partners for job placement activities

Feature SCSEP during LWDB meetings

Increase collaboration among DEED workforce strategy consultants and local employers to improve work retention of aging employees

Train employers to effectively communicate the type of skills they need, in ways that do not hinder older applicants

Provide DEED-sponsored workshops for employers on how to establish on-the-job training and focus on knowledge-transfer strategies

Demonstrate how volunteer work at desirable organizations/companies helps aging job seekers connect with potential employers

Encourage employers to network with schools that teach skills they need in their workforce

Increase opportunities for aging workers to do small business development and become entrepreneurs

Develop a strategy and model for success, including both paid and unpaid work

Co-enroll SCSEP participants in WIOA programs and Pathways to Prosperity (P2P) training options. P2P is coordinated in partnership with local employers, SOAR Career Solutions, Adult Education, and Lake Superior College, and provides individuals the skills needed to compete for entry level employment in the healthcare or construction fields.

Develop a referral relationship with employers

Invite employers as guest speakers at SCSEP quarterly meetings

Encourage participants to meet with selected employers through Business of The Day events, Job Fairs, hiring events and Job Club

Meet with employers at Job Fairs to explain SCSEP and the benefits of hiring older workers

Direct contact with employers on behalf of a specific participant through job development activities

Ensure resumes entered into MinnesotaWorks.net are viewable by employers

Partner with CareerForce and community partners for job placement activities

Feature SCSEP during LWDB meetings

Increase collaboration among DEED workforce strategy consultants and local employers to improve work retention of aging employees

Train employers to effectively communicate the type of skills they need, in ways that do not hinder older applicants

Provide DEED-sponsored workshops for employers on how to establish on-the-job training and focus on knowledge-transfer strategies

Demonstrate how volunteer work at desirable organizations/companies helps aging job seekers connect with potential employers

Encourage employers to network with schools that teach skills they need in their workforce

Increase opportunities for aging workers to do small business development and become entrepreneurs

Develop a strategy and model for success, including both paid and unpaid work

To promote and strengthen retention, DEED ensures that unsubsidized employment activities align with service delivery models via providers' close working relationships with employers and participants after placement. Retention strategies also include making sure initial placements meet participant and employer needs (i.e. employer expectations match participant skill levels, interests, and work ethics), conducting follow-up just after placement and periodically thereafter to ensure satisfaction among both participant and employer (i.e. employers are expected to provide a healthy and safe environment for participants), providing counseling when issues arise on the job, and offering support services when needed.

**3) The state's long-term strategy for serving minority older individuals under SCSEP.
(20 CFR 641.302 (C))**

Minnesota strives to ensure that SCSEP opportunities are spread across cultural, racial, gender, and geographic boundaries. Providers will continue to make it a priority to recruit and select individuals from under-resourced, minority groups. Recruitment strategies change with the climate and conditions for the older worker population, particularly minority older workers, but efforts are ongoing and persistent.

Providers will use three primary channels to recruit minority populations:

- Hire and train outreach staff to identify and recruit. These staff will continue to work closely with community leaders, members of culturally-specific organizations, and certain state and national providers that have considerable experience in recruiting and providing services to low income minorities. For example, to recruit Native American participants, Minnesota state and national providers such as the National Indian Council on Aging (NICOA) and Center for Workforce Inclusion (CWI), and Minnesota Chippewa Tribe (MCT), target recruitment efforts directly on Native American reservations located within the boundaries of their service areas. They also work closely with cultural brokers and interpreters to ensure job opportunities are spread across cultural, racial, gender, and geographic boundaries by providing translation services and program information translated into Spanish, Somali, Hmong, Vietnamese, Lao, Arabic, and Russian to CareerForce locations, and other appropriate agencies. When needed, they have access to a language line that contracts with qualified interpreters.
- Work with other WIOA programs, county public assistance departments, VRS departments, AAAs, and other community-based organizations to increase referrals. CareerForce locations throughout Minnesota also provide referrals.
- Disseminate program information via local and culturally-specific agencies and outlets that serve MIN populations, such as Native American reservation social service organizations; newsletter, radio, and television outlets (Insight News, Minnesota Spokesman Recorder, The Circle, Latino Midwest News, Asian American Press, JMOJ); grocery stores; public assistance case workers, public health workers; clergy; and rural neighborhood workers.

DEED, and its state and national providers, have a long history of successfully recruiting participants, partnering with host agencies, and providing workforce development services to these demographics. Providers also offer support services, such as transportation, medical services, free meals, wellness classes, legal aid, elder-abuse prevention, tax preparation, and socialization, to address barriers to employment.

Minnesota provides continuous technical assistance to providers to help them identify minority individuals. To evaluate the efforts of SCSEP providers to serve minorities, data is regularly reported by state and national providers in the Grantee Performance Management System (GPMS). Additionally, the DOL provides an annual report that summarizes an analysis of the data reported from state and national providers on their service to minorities.

4) A list of community services that are needed and the places where these services are most needed. Specifically, the plan must address the needs and location of those individuals most in need of community services and the groups working to meet their needs. (20 CFR 641.330)

Using current LMI data on the unemployment rates for Minnesota, we're able to identify the SCSEP counties with unemployment rates above the state average (3.2% - 3.3%). As of October 2023, these counties included: Cottonwood County at 4.8 percent, Koochiching at 3.9 percent, Aitkin at 3.7 percent, Clearwater at 3.6 percent, Hubbard, Mahnomen, and Mille Lacs at 3.5 percent, Itasca, Lake, Pine, Wadena, and Waseca at 3.4 percent. For more detailed information, see Table 5 in section (c)(1) below.

The community or support services SCSEP participants, particularly MIN individuals, tend to access are often transportation support (gas cards or bus passes), and housing and food assistance. SCSEP participants also need professional clothing so they can dress appropriately for interviews, meetings, CSAs, and eventual employment. Partner agencies and organizations that provide needed support services to program participants include, but are not limited to:

- Ticket To Work
- Transit Link
- Fare For All
- Dress for Success
- Project for Pride in Living
- Community Action Partnership
- Senior Linkage Line
- Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)
- Area food shelves
- Chambers of Commerce
- Arrowhead Area Agency on Aging – Duluth, MN
- Central Minnesota Council on Aging – Sartell, MN
- Dancing Sky Area Agency on Aging – Warren, MN
- Metropolitan Area Agency on Aging – Arden Hills, MN
- Minnesota Indian Area Agency on Aging – Cass Lake, MN
- Minnesota River Area Agency on Aging – Mankato, MN

- Southeastern Minnesota AAA – Rochester, MN
- 5) The state’s long-term strategy to improve scsep services, including planned long-term changes to the design of the program within the state, and planned changes in the use of SCSEP grantees and program operators to better achieve the goals of the program. This may include recommendations to the department as appropriate. (20 CFR 641.302(K))**

Minnesota Governor Walz is committed to creating an age-friendly state. In December 2019, he signed Executive Order 19-38 to establish the Governor’s Council on an Age-Friendly Minnesota (Governor’s Council). The Order initiated Minnesota’s path to becoming designated as an Age-Friendly State by the AARP Network of Age-Friendly States & Territories program. The Governor’s Council will guide the development of a comprehensive assessment and action plan to coordinate work across state, local and tribal governments, non-profits, communities, businesses and others in support of aging adults in Minnesota. Representatives from state agencies and boards will participate on the Governor’s Council and create strategic partnerships to develop and implement the actions plans. Participating state agencies and boards include:

- The Minnesota Board on Aging
- Department of Commerce
- Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED)
- Minnesota Department of Health (MDH)
- Minnesota Housing Finance Agency
- Department of Human Services (DHS)
- Minnesota Department of Transportation
- Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs
- Metropolitan Council

The Governor may appoint other members seeking representation from older adults, direct service caregivers, businesses, experts on aging, local governments, and tribal communities. Other parties may participate in a non-voting capacity.

Minnesota will make changes to the SCSEP in collaboration with the Governor’s Council. With the priority areas guiding the work, DEED plans to actively partner with the agencies and boards listed above to create new or refine existing objectives and strategies to improve workforce delivery and support services for the state’s older workers. This will include a focus on:

- Transportation to increase the availability of reliable ways of getting to and from work
- Housing to provide the needed support services to assist participants while searching for and completing training assignments

- Social Participation, and Respect and Social Inclusion to help mitigate the effects of social isolation and mental health issues among the senior population and, by doing so, improve the likelihood of obtaining and retaining employment
- Work and Civic Engagement to create opportunities for older workers to be actively engaged in community life and to work for pay or volunteer their skills
- Communication and Information to increase the availability of information through a variety of methods since not everyone is tech-savvy, and not everyone has a smartphone or home-based access to the internet
- Community and Health Services to ensure older workers can access the services they require to maintain or improve their health and wellbeing

To align with the priority areas listed above, DEED, along with the national and state SCSEP providers, will modify existing strategies and partnerships (as described in sections (b)(1)(A-C) above) and implement new strategies as needed. Alignment with the priority areas will improve services to MIN individuals and increase job placement and retention outcomes (as described in sections (2-4) above). Further, DEED is considering opening the program to new providers who have a proven track record of providing effective workforce development services to older workers. This strategy will create the opportunity to introduce new experience and expertise that could also improve services to MIN individuals and increase job placement and retention outcomes.

6) The state’s strategy for continuous improvement in the level of performance for SCSEP participants’ entry into unsubsidized employment, and to achieve, at a minimum, the levels specified in OAA Section 513(A)(2)(E)(II). (20 CFR 641.302(F))

Minnesota SCSEP has many strategies and a variety of services to increase the likelihood of placement into unsubsidized employment. DEED plans to address performance issues by developing a plan and establishing benchmarks for continuous improvement. Expanding on section 2 above, the following are possible strategies at the state and local levels to increase the number of participants placed in unsubsidized employment:

- Employer Engagement and Job Opportunities:
 - Promote SCSEP to the business community by developing jobs in high-growth industries with cold calling, emailing, and consultative marketing techniques to identify employer needs and respond with solutions, and highlighting the benefits of older workers
 - Target marketing based on participants’ skills and job interests
 - Perform excellent customer service by responding to employers with timely, pre-screened referrals.

- Job Fairs create promising opportunities for local SCSEP providers to meet potential employers and promote SCSEP and the benefits of hiring and retaining older workers.
- Job Clubs assist participants in developing proactive job search strategies including employer targeting, networking, cold calling, resume writing, practice interviewing, voicemail etiquette, and active listening. Job clubs promote peer-to-peer support, collaborative job search practices, and encourages members to access the resources available through the local workforce system.
- Job Search Cooperatives meet on a regular basis to encourage cold calling. Members form a team and conduct marketing campaigns for fellow members. In the process of marketing other members, they improve their own job search skills.
- On the Job Experience (OJE) contracts detail the specific skills required to bridge the gap between employers' expectations and participants' skills. This approach tends to be more commonly used with small businesses. It's a very effective first step in developing relationships with employers through consultative marketing techniques.
- Statewide Strategies – DEED will:
 - Develop partnerships with agencies and grants that serve justice involved individuals
 - Host biannual roundtables to create an opportunity for providers to come together and discuss common participant barriers and ways to mitigate or overcome them
 - Increase awareness of SCSEP at the state and national level, and collaborate with providers to increase awareness at the local level. SCSEP isn't widely known among workforce development professionals, community service organizations, and eligible populations. Although SCSEP was recently added to the CareerForce website (CareerForceMN.com), which will increase its visibility, DEED will identify other partnerships with local senior centers and gerontology centers and experts to promote the program and develop unique strategies to communicate the benefits of hiring older workers.

After the program becomes more visible and more employers experience the benefits of hiring older workers, it's anticipated that the job placement target will be met or exceeded.

c) Location and Population Served, Including Equitable Distribution

1) Describe the localities and populations for which projects of the type authorized by Title V are most needed. (20 cfr 641.325 (d))

Using current LMI data, we're able to identify the SCSEP counties with unemployment rates above the state average of 3.2 percent in 2023. As of October 2023, these counties included: Cottonwood County at 4.8 percent, Koochiching at 3.9 percent, Aitkin at 3.7 percent, Clearwater at 3.6 percent, Hubbard, Mahnomen, and Mille Lacs at 3.5 percent, Itasca, Lake, Pine, Wadena, and Waseca at 3.4 percent. (Table 5).

Table 5: SCSEP Counties by Labor Force, Employment, Unemployment, and Unemployment Rate

MN County	Labor Force	Employment	Unemployment	Unemployment Rate
Aitkin County	7,488	7,211	277	3.70%
Anoka County	199,995	194,348	5,647	2.80%
Becker County	19,731	19,296	435	2.20%
Beltrami County	25,233	24,548	685	2.70%
Benton County	21,695	21,107	588	2.70%
Big Stone County	2,472	2,408	64	2.60%
Blue Earth County	43,389	42,492	897	2.10%
Brown County	13,922	13,597	325	2.30%
Carlton County	17,707	17,188	519	2.90%
Carver County	60,101	58,543	1,558	2.60%
Cass County	14,704	14,258	446	3%
Chippewa County	6,389	6,235	154	2.40%
Chisago County	30,110	29,277	833	2.80%
Clay County	37,807	37,077	730	1.90%
Clearwater County	4,544	4,379	165	3.60%
Cook County	2,877	2,801	76	2.60%
Cottonwood County	7,043	6,707	336	4.80%
Crow Wing County	33,706	32,735	971	2.90%
Dakota County	244,111	237,492	6,619	2.70%
Dodge County	12,303	12,010	293	2.40%
Douglas County	21,576	21,057	519	2.40%
Faribault County	7,372	7,191	181	2.50%
Fillmore County	11,921	11,667	254	2.10%
Freeborn County	16,301	15,863	438	2.70%
Goodhue County	26,943	26,286	657	2.40%
Grant County	3,376	3,300	76	2.30%
Hennepin County	711,402	690,210	21,192	3%

Houston County	10,756	10,517	239	2.20%
Hubbard County	10,243	9,880	363	3.50%
Isanti County	21,784	21,156	628	2.90%
Itasca County	21,358	20,630	728	3.40%
Jackson County	5,553	5,402	151	2.70%
Kanabec County	9,225	8,933	292	3.20%
Kandiyohi County	23,094	22,602	492	2.10%
Kittson County	2,328	2,267	61	2.60%
Koochiching County	5,664	5,443	221	3.90%
Lac qui Parle County	3,539	3,469	70	2%
Lake County	5,124	4,952	172	3.40%
Lake of the Woods County	2,373	2,297	76	3.20%
Le Sueur County	16,013	15,587	426	2.70%
Lincoln County	3,107	3,055	52	1.70%
Lyon County	14,516	14,229	287	2%
Mahnomen County	2,315	2,234	81	3.50%
Marshall County	5,538	5,411	127	2.30%
Martin County	9,709	9,441	268	2.80%
McLeod County	19,338	18,827	511	2.60%
Meeker County	13,905	13,571	334	2.40%
Mille Lacs County	12,672	12,234	438	3.50%
Morrison County	17,298	16,812	486	2.80%
Mower County	21,000	20,471	529	2.50%
Murray County	4,779	4,650	129	2.70%
Nicollet County	22,360	21,893	467	2.10%
Nobles County	11,171	10,864	307	2.70%
Norman County	3,272	3,194	78	2.40%
Olmsted County	93,176	91,151	2,025	2.20%
Otter Tail County	31,270	30,470	800	2.60%
Pennington County	8,741	8,554	187	2.10%

Pine County	14,186	13,706	480	3.40%
Pipestone County	4,874	4,778	96	2.00%
Polk County	16,626	16,249	377	2.30%
Pope County	6,599	6,458	141	2%
Ramsey County	287,520	279,090	8,430	2.90%
Red Lake County	2,173	2,122	51	2.30%
Redwood County	7,733	7,525	208	2.70%
Renville County	8,586	8,365	221	2.60%
Rice County	37,793	36,909	884	2.30%
Rock County	6,191	6,082	109	1.80%
Roseau County	7,871	7,665	206	2.60%
Saint Louis County	101,074	98,147	2,927	2.90%
Scott County	85,137	82,843	2,294	2.70%
Sherburne County	53,411	51,935	1,476	2.80%
Sibley County	8,351	8,134	217	2.60%
Stearns County	90,433	88,157	2,276	2.50%
Steele County	18,606	18,038	568	3.10%
Stevens County	5,456	5,339	117	2.10%
Swift County	4,953	4,811	142	2.90%
Todd County	13,878	13,477	401	3%
Traverse County	1,703	1,661	42	2.50%
Wabasha County	12,675	12,386	289	2.30%
Wadena County	6,147	5,935	212	3.40%
Waseca County	8,734	8,433	301	3.40%
Washington County	146,069	142,255	3,814	2.60%
Watonwan County	6,830	6,677	153	2.20%
Wilkin County	3,605	3,527	78	2.20%
Winona County	28,766	28,078	688	2.40%
Wright County	77,217	75,234	1,983	2.60%
Yellow Medicine County	5,128	4,995	133	3%

DEED will work with SCSEP providers in these areas to strengthen strategies to increase employment opportunities. Current objectives and strategies include:

- Utilize the equitable distribution report provided on www.SCSEPed.org to monitor and track equitable distribution
- Recruit host agencies in underserved counties
- Conduct outreach to participants who have the greatest barriers to employment in underserved areas
- Enroll more participants in underserved areas and close enrollments in over-served areas
- Increase specialized training and job development activities in underserved areas
- Discuss the potential to move state program participants located in over-served areas to the national program
- Advertise within local community papers, utilizing TV PSA's, providing flyers, pamphlets, and other marketing tools that will aid in educating city/county government agencies
- Strengthen partnerships with agencies, employers, city/county officials, and community organizations that focus on community improvement and employment for older workers

With many seniors postponing retirement and seeking new work opportunities, it is critical to partner with all possible workforce participants to increase accessible and suitable positions.

2) List the cities and counties where the project will be conducted. Include the number of SCSEP authorized positions and indicate where the positions changed from the prior year.

There are 2 national and 10 state SCSEP providers in Minnesota. The national grantees include CWI, and NICOA. DEED subgrants program services to the following 10 providers: Anoka County Job Training Center, Arrowhead Economic Opportunity Agency (AEOA), City of Duluth, Minnesota Chippewa Tribe (MCT), Minnesota Valley Action Council (MVAC), National Able Network Inc., Rural MN CEP, Scott County Health and Human Services, Somali Community Resettlement Services (SCRS), and Southwestern Minnesota Opportunity Council (SMOC).

Minnesota uses Census data by county and annual program appropriations to calculate the number of authorized positions, or slots, that are allocated to each county. The number of authorized positions is proportional to the number of eligible people in the county compared to the eligible state population. For every authorized position, one or more individuals can receive services during the program year. Table 6 below lists Minnesota's SCSEP providers

Table 6: Minnesota SCSEP Providers, PY23 Authorized Positions, and Counties Served

963 Total Authorized Positions – 87 Counties Statewide

MN SCSEP Providers – State and National	City	PY23 Authorized Positions (AP)	Change in AP	Counties Served
State - Anoka County Job Training Center	Blaine	17 State	0	Anoka
State - Arrowhead Economic Opportunity Agency	Virginia	7 State	+2	Itasca, Koochiching, Lake, St. Louis
State - City Of Duluth Workforce Development	Duluth	10 State	0	St. Louis
State - InterCounty Community Council (ICCC)	Oklee	0 State	-7	Retired at end of PY22 (last year)
State - Minnesota Chippewa Tribe	Cass Lake	5 State	0	Becker, Carlton, Cass, Cook, Itasca, Koochiching, Mahnommen, Mille Lacs, St. Louis
State - Minnesota Valley Action Council	Mankato	38 State	+1	Blue Earth, Brown, Faribault, Martin, Nicollet, Watonwan

State - National Able Network Inc.	Golden Valley	62 state	+3	Carver, Dakota, Hennepin, Becker, Beltrami, Benton, Big Stone, Cass, Chippewa, Clay, Clearwater, Crow Wing, Douglas, Goodhue, Hubbard, Kandiyohi, Kittson, Lac Qui Parle, Lincoln, Lyon, Marshall, Morrison, Norman, Otter Tail, Pennington, Polk, Pope, Redwood, Renville, Rice, Roseau, Stearns, Swift, Todd, Wabasha, Wadena, Wilkin, Winona, Yellow Medicine.
State - Rural Minnesota CEP, Inc.	Detroit Lakes	15 State	+2	Becker, Beltrami, Cass, Clay, Clearwater, Crow Wing, Douglas, Grant, Hubbard, Lake of the Woods, Mahnommen, Morrison, Otter Tail, Pope, Stevens, Todd, Traverse, Wadena, Wilkin
State - Scott County Workforce Center	Shakopee	5 State	0	Scott
State - Southwestern Minnesota Opportunity Council	Worthington	21 State	0	Cottonwood, Jackson, Murray, Nobles, Pipestone, Rock
State - Somali Community Resettlement Services	Minneapolis	16 State	0	Washington, Olmstead.
National - Center for Workforce Inclusion (CWI)	Blaine	25 National	0	Anoka

– Anoka County Job Training Center				
National - Center for Workforce Inclusion (CWI) – Duluth Workforce Development	Duluth	26 National	0	St. Louis
National - Center for Workforce Inclusion (CWI) – East Side Neighborhood Service, Inc.	Minneapolis	181 National	0	Hennepin
National - Center for Workforce Inclusion (CWI) – Motivation, Education & Training	New Caney, TX	516 National	+1	Aitkin, Becker, Beltrami, Benton, Big Stone, Carlton, Cass, Chippewa, Chisago, Clay, Clearwater, Cook, Crow Wing, Dakota, Dodge, Fillmore, Freeborn, Goodhue, Houston, Hubbard, Isanti, Itasca, Kanabec, Kandiyohi, Kittson, Koochiching, Lac qui parle, Lake, Le Sueur, Lincoln, Lyon, McLeod, Marshall, Meeker, Mille Lacs, Morrison, Mower, Norman, Olmsted, Otter Tail, Pennington, Pine, Polk, Pope, Ramsey, Redwood, Renville, Rice, Roseau, St. Louis, Sherburne, Sibley, Stearns, Steele, Swift, Todd, Wabasha, Wadena, Waseca, Washington, Wilkin, Winona, Wright, Yellow Medicine

National - National Indian Council on Aging	Albuquerque, NM	19 National	0	Hennepin, Ramsey, and St. Louis
---	-----------------	-------------	---	---------------------------------

3) Describe any current slot imbalances and proposed steps to correct inequities to achieve equitable distribution.

There are no current slot imbalances. If a SCSEP provider would like to change their number of slots, DEED will work with them and the other providers to redistribute the slots as appropriate.

4) The state’s long-term strategy for achieving an equitable distribution of SCSEP positions within the state that:

A. Moves positions from over-served to underserved locations within the state in compliance with 20 CFR 641.365.

Minnesota maintains strong relationships with national sponsors, including CWI and NICOA, operating within the state. Collaboration channels are established to facilitate the redistribution of positions whenever necessary. Discussions are held to address mutual concerns, develop an equitable distribution plan, and consider all factors that may impede the fair allocation of slots. Activities are also coordinated with the State Board on Aging, Job Service, and WIOA administrators. Importantly, any surplus slots will be allocated to underserved counties, and any slot reductions will come from over-served counties.

B. Equitably serves both rural and urban areas.

In general, rural areas have higher unemployment rates than other areas and competition for available jobs is more intense. Without up-to-date and in-demand skills, older job seekers are unlikely to find work. Further, trainings and support services cannot be fully provided by host agencies without cost from other community resources.

Minnesota will continue to ensure that rural and urban areas are served equitably by working closely with SCSEP providers who are highly experienced in providing services to rural populations, such as Center for Workforce Inclusion. As previously described, DEED will expand training with the small businesses that are the primary private sector employers of SCSEP participants. In many areas, small businesses may be the only source of jobs for job seekers. Transportation is a major problem for many rural participants, particularly for those in rural areas who do not have cars. More support service dollars will expand staff ability to work with community partners to address this problem.

C. Serves individuals afforded priority for service under 20 CFR 641.520. (20 CFR 641.302(A), 641.365, 641.520)

Priority groups include those who are 65 or older, have a disability, are limited English proficient or have low literacy skills, reside in a rural area, have veteran status (or in some cases, spouses of veterans), have low employment prospects, have failed to find employment after using services provided through the WIOA one-stop delivery system, released from incarceration in the last five years, and are homeless or are at risk of homelessness. To ensure an equitable distribution of slots that serve and support these individuals, Minnesota will continue to customize promotional and outreach campaigns that address their unique needs and preferences. DEED will use recruitment strategies that have proven to be effective such as hiring outreach staff to identify and recruit MIN individuals, work closely with WIOA and CAPs to increase referrals, and disseminate program information to local and culturally-specific agencies and outlets that serve MIN populations. DEED will also continue to provide technical assistance to, collaborate with and evaluate the efforts of its providers. See section (b)(3) above for information about services to minority individuals under SCSEP.

5) The ratio of eligible individuals in each service area to the total eligible population in the state. (20 CFR 641.325(A))

The total number of Minnesotans 55 years of age and older is anticipated to increase by nearly 500,000 people between the 2018 American Community Survey (ACS) 5-year estimates and the 2040 population projections, as supplied from the Minnesota State Demographic Center. As such, the population 55 years of age and older in Minnesota is projected to expand by 32 percent, or 2.5 times faster than total population growth in the state (13 percent). By 2040, approximately one-third of Minnesotans will be 55 years of age and older. By 2040, approximately one-fifth of Minnesotans will be 65 years of age and older.

According to the 202 ACS survey, twice as many Minnesotan older women live in poverty than men, with 17% of men relying exclusively on Social Security compared to over 33% of women. Nationally, SCSEP is currently funded at a level to serve only .05 percent of the eligible population yet these trends underscore the importance of the SCSEP, the only federal training program that serves low-income older workers on Minnesota’s workforce menu of programs.

See Table 7 for the ratio of eligible individuals in each Minnesota SCSEP service area to the total eligible population.

Table 7: Ratio of Eligible Individuals in Minnesota Service Areas To Total Eligible Population

County	Ratio	Population 55+	Total Population
Total	30%	1,695,432	5,695,292
Aitkin	52%	8,264	15,859

Anoka	29%	104,059	363,985
Becker	36%	12,719	35,202
Beltrami	29%	13,319	46,274
Benton	26%	10,636	41,300
Big Stone	42%	2,176	5,161
Blue Earth	25%	17,120	69,022
Brown	36%	9,345	25,880
Carlton	32%	11,780	36,362
Carver	27%	28,673	107,216
Cass	43%	13,131	30,288
Chippewa	36%	4,465	12,466
Chisago	31%	17,665	56,927
Clay	24%	15,599	65,307
Clearwater	35%	3,010	8,541
Cook	47%	2,627	5,611
Cottonwood	36%	4,139	11,481
Crow Wing	39%	25,852	66,558
Dakota	28%	125,027	439,179
Dodge	28%	5,912	20,893
Douglas	38%	14,954	39,081
Faribault	38%	5,334	13,931
Fillmore	36%	7,624	21,251
Freeborn	38%	11,592	30,857
Goodhue	35%	16,821	47,697
Grant	38%	2,335	6,091
Hennepin	27%	346,143	1,270,787
Houston	38%	7,212	18,826
Hubbard	42%	9,041	21,479
Isanti	31%	12,946	41,257
Itasca	40%	18,229	45,054

Jackson	38%	3,804	9,990
Kanabec	37%	5,988	16,145
Kandiyohi	33%	14,524	43,686
Kittson	42%	1,751	4,191
Koochiching	44%	5,324	12,072
Lac qui Parle	43%	2,894	6,736
Lake	44%	4,787	10,915
Lake of the Woods	45%	1,688	3,786
Le Sueur	33%	9,361	28,795
Lincoln	38%	2,166	5,630
Lyon	30%	7,493	25,352
McLeod	33%	12,286	36,727
Mahnomen	30%	1,611	5,389
Marshall	37%	3,328	9,017
Martin	39%	7,787	19,960
Meeker	35%	8,204	23,352
Mille Lacs	33%	8,849	26,680
Morrison	35%	12,033	34,023
Mower	31%	12,365	40,082
Murray	41%	3,362	8,170
Nicollet	29%	9,977	34,380
Nobles	29%	6,473	22,194
Norman	36%	2,328	6,457
Olmsted	29%	46,450	162,307
Otter Tail	40%	24,200	60,072
Pennington	33%	4,566	13,995
Pine	38%	11,056	29,090
Pipestone	34%	3,184	9,380
Polk	33%	10,143	31,128
Pope	41%	4,612	11,312

Ramsey	27%	147,770	547,202
Red Lake	37%	1,436	3,912
Redwood	35%	5,412	15,428
Renville	36%	5,361	14,707
Rice	29%	19,357	67,152
Rock	34%	3,257	9,659
Roseau	34%	5,219	15,294
St. Louis	35%	69,347	200,122
Scott	24%	36,749	151,347
Sherburne	24%	23,668	97,820
Sibley	34%	5,121	14,950
Stearns	28%	43,914	158,622
Steele	32%	11,882	37,396
Stevens	28%	2,746	9,682
Swift	37%	3,666	9,806
Todd	38%	9,545	25,277
Traverse	40%	1,328	3,345
Wabasha	38%	8,193	21,460
Wadena	34%	4,733	14,108
Waseca	31%	5,913	18,953
Washington	30%	79,454	268,651
Watonwan	34%	3,855	11,205
Wilkin	35%	2,279	6,454
Winona	30%	15,182	49,792
Wright	25%	36,324	142,543
Yellow Medicine	35%	3,378	9,569

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2023 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

6) The relative distribution of eligible individuals who:

A. Reside in urban and rural areas within the state

The overall current distribution of urban and rural older workers is 65% and 35%, respectively. More detailed information is forthcoming.

B. Have the greatest economic need

According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Minnesota’s overall poverty rate averaged about 3.2 percent in 2023. As discussed in section (c)(1) earlier, the SCSEP counties with unemployment rates above the state average included: Cottonwood County at 4.8 percent, Koochiching at 3.9 percent, Aitkin at 3.7 percent, Clearwater at 3.6 percent, Hubbard, Mahnomon, and Mille Lacs at 3.5 percent, Itasca, Lake, Pine, Wadena, and Waseca at 3.4 percent. (Table 5).

Table 9 lists the state counties with unemployment rates above average and their ratio of eligibility to the total population. Every county with a high unemployment rate also has a potentially SCSEP-eligible population (based on the age criterion of 55+) of at least 31%. Hubbard, Koochiching, and Lake of the Woods have SCSEP-eligible populations of at least 40%; and 50% of Aitkin’s total population is potentially eligible.

Section (c)(1) above provides a list of strategies that DEED will work collaboratively with its national and state providers to implement to increase employment opportunities in these counties.

Table 9: SCSEP-Eligible Minnesota Counties with High Unemployment Rates

MN County	Unemployment Rate	Ratio of Eligible Individuals (55 years +)
Aitkin	3.70%	52%
Clearwater	3.60%	35%
Cottonwood	4.80%	36%
Hubbard	3.50%	42%
Itasca	3.40%	40%
Koochiching	3.90%	44%
Lake	3.40%	44%
Mahnomon	3.50%	30%
Mille Lacs	3.50%	33%

Pine	3.40%	38%
Wadena	3.40%	34%
Waseca	3.40%	31%

C. Are Minorities

The relative distribution of PY22 Minnesota SCSEP participants who are minorities is provided in Table 10 below.

Table 10: Relative Distribution of PY19 MN SCSEP Participants Who Are Minorities

	GROUP	YTD No.	YTD %
Ethnicity	Hispanic, Latino or Spanish origin	3	1
Race	American Indian or Alaska Native	6	3
	Asian	1	0
	Black or African American	18	10
	Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	0	0
	White	135	80
	Two or More Races	3	1
	TOTAL	166	

To provide context, the breakdown of Minnesota’s 55 and older population by minority group is provided in Table 11. *Table data updates forthcoming*

Table 11: Minnesota’s 55 and Older Population by Minority Group

	White alone, not Hispanic	Black alone, not Hispanic	Asian and Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander alone, not Hispanic	American Indian or Alaska Native alone, not Hispanic	Two or More Races	Hispanic or Latino, all races
55 to 64 years	TBD	TBD	TBD`	TBD	TBD	TBD
65 to 74 years	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD
75 years & over	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD

D. Are Limited English Proficient

The breakdown of Minnesota’s population who are LEP is provided in Table 12. The English proficiency is defined as those who either speak only English or speak “very well”. Any proficiency below “very well” is considered “limited”. Table data updates forthcoming

Table 12: Minnesota’s 55 and Older Population by LEP Status

	English Proficient	Limited
55 to 64 years	TBD	TBD
65 to 74 years	TBD	TBD
75 years & over	TBD	TBD

E. Have the greatest social need. (20 CFR 641.325(b))

See Table 13 for the relative distribution of PY22 MN SCSEP participants who have the greatest social need.

The term “greatest social need” is defined by the OAA to mean the need caused by noneconomic factors, which include—(A) Physical and mental disabilities; (B) Language barriers; (C) Cultural, social, or geographical isolation, including isolation caused by racial or ethnic status, that— (i)

restricts the ability of an individual to perform normal daily tasks; or (ii) threatens the capacity of the individual to live independently.

Table 13: Relative Distribution of PY22 MN SCSEP Participants with The Greatest Social Need

GROUP	YTD No.	YTD %
Family income at or below the poverty level	107	64
Individuals with disabilities	44	26
Individuals with limited English proficiency	86	51
Individuals with low literacy skills	18	10
Individuals residing in rural areas	74	44
Individuals with low employment prospects	136	2
Individuals who failed to find employment after using WIA Title I	17	2
Individuals age 75 and over at date of report	28	16
Individuals who are homeless or at risk of homelessness	63	37
Displaced homemakers	4	2
Veterans (or eligible spouse of veteran)	21	12
Post-9/11 era veterans	2	1
Individuals receiving public assistance	108	64
Individuals with severe disability	5	2
Individuals who are frail	5	2
Individuals old enough for but not receiving SS Title II	4	2
Individuals with severely limited employment prospects in areas of persistent unemployment	8	4
Formerly Incarcerated	3	1
TOTAL	733	

- 7) A description of the steps taken to avoid disruptions to the greatest extent possible, when positions are redistributed, as provided in 20 CFR 641.365; when new census or other reliable data become available; or when there is over-enrollment for any other reason. (20 CFR 641.325(I), 641.302(B))**

The national grants competition and performance standards create possibilities for authorized positions/slots to be redistributed. If slots are redistributed, every effort will be made to ensure a seamless transition to the new SCSEP provider. The transition of enrolled participants to unsubsidized employment will occur before their slot is moved to the new location, or participants will continue to work with their current SCSEP program until they're exited. As described in a previous section, slots will be reduced and recruitment activities will end in overenrolled areas, and increased in under-enrolled areas, which should also help mitigate disruption to individuals.