

# Minnesota on the Move: The World's Best Workforce



## 2015 WorkForce Center Report

Report to the Legislature as required by Minnesota Statutes 116L.665, Subd. 4

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## About this Report

The 2015 WorkForce Center Report is the collaborative work of the Governor's Workforce Development Council (GWDC) Executive Committee, the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED), and the Minnesota Workforce Council Association.

This report fulfills Minnesota Statutes 116L.665, Subdivision 4. The recommendations were approved by the GWDC Executive Committee in January 2015.

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Laura Beeth, Chair  
Brenda Cassellius  
Katie Clark Sieben  
Steven Ditschler  
Twyla Flaws, Vice Chair  
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## About the Governor's Workforce Development Council

The Governor's Workforce Development Council works to strengthen Minnesota's workforce. Made up of leaders from business, education, labor, community organizations, and government, the GWDC forges practical solutions to Minnesota's workforce challenges and provides leadership on projects of strategic importance to the state. In particular, the Council ensures employers play an active role in improving education and training programs, and provides a venue for the workforce stakeholders to build a shared vision and strategic alliances.

As Minnesota's state Workforce Investment Board, the GWDC is mandated and funded by the federal Workforce Investment Act and further defined by Minnesota Statutes, section 116L.665.

More information can be found at [www.gwdc.org](http://www.gwdc.org).

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# Minnesota on the Move: The World's Best Workforce

2015 WorkForce Center Report

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This document can be made in available in alternative formats upon request.



January 2015

Dear Governor Dayton and Members of the Minnesota Legislature:

We are pleased to submit *Minnesota on the Move: The World's Best Workforce* to you, as it represents a collaborative partnership to ensure that the vital services carried out by Minnesota's WorkForce Center system meet the needs of the state's residents in an ever-changing educational, training, and employment environment. New partnerships bring new ideas, along with greater alignment, leveraging of resources, and better communication. It is our hope that this document will serve as a guide to workforce development leaders, as well as private employers and the education and human services communities.

The report contains four sections offering 1) A brief history of workforce development in Minnesota, 2) Performance and demographic data, 3) Highlights of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) and what this legislation means for Minnesota, and 4) Plans for strategic service delivery in coordination with state and federal agencies.

We are confident that, collectively, our state has the knowledge and experience to accomplish the goals and strategies outlined in this report. Infrastructure investments and a single, unified brand for all WorkForce Centers will take the state of Minnesota to a new level, resulting in successful outcomes moving forward into the future. We respectfully ask for your consideration of our recommendations and your support.

Sincerely,

Katie Clark Sieben

Commissioner, Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development

Laura Beeth

Chair, Governor's Workforce Development Council

Cathy Weik

Chair, Minnesota Workforce Council Association

# INTRODUCTION

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For nearly two decades Minnesota has been recognized as a national leader in workforce development. Minnesota's commitment in the workforce development system is evidenced not only by investments in Minnesota's WorkForce Center system but also by the quality of our workforce. Minnesota's WorkForce Centers provide critical services and resources demonstrated by serving nearly 584,000 individuals in 2013.<sup>1</sup>

However, Minnesota's WorkForce Centers are finding it increasingly difficult to meet the demands from job seekers and employers. Minnesota is faced with challenges as baby boomers age, with nearly 500,000 current skilled Minnesota workers hitting retirement age over the next 10 years.<sup>2</sup> Overall, there are 1.6 unemployed job seekers for each job vacancy statewide indicating that the labor market is tightening due to these baby boomers retiring and continued job growth.<sup>3</sup>

This further underscores the need to remove the barriers to gainful employment that too many of our citizens face. Moving Minnesota Forward means our WorkForce Centers need to meet the demand of employers in addition to serving a broader, diverse group of job seekers. While Minnesota's unemployment rate is at only 3.7 percent, unemployment for persons of color, and in particular, African Americans still remains at 11.2 percent. The system needs to be responsive, offering a vast array of individualized services delivered virtually as well as through WorkForce Centers. The system must provide resources to address the barriers that confront people of color, people with disabilities, people with out-of-date skills, and people whom have been unemployed for a significant length of time. Recent declines in unemployment mean that Minnesota's economy is running closer to its full potential than before. But by looking at race, age, gender, and additional measures of unemployment, we can see there is still more work to be done.<sup>4</sup>

Minnesota businesses have a great need for skilled workers. Results from the Department of Employment and Economic Development Employer Satisfaction Survey showed only 30 percent of employers who had placed a job posting felt they had the right number of applicants. Furthermore, 68 percent reported they had too few applicants. Minnesota's labor projections support the need for adults to get the right postsecondary credentials and skills for successful employment. Minnesota needs to educate and train our workers, who will require longer-term training rather than short-term crisis intervention.

Minnesota's WorkForce Center system operates under the federal Workforce Investment Act (WIA) of 1998. This law placed the emphasis on short-term training and rapid re-employment. In July, 2014, the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) was passed, replacing the Workforce Investment Act. The new law focuses on the changing economic conditions and the growing demand for longer-term training aligned to high-growth and emerging industries. The release of draft rules associated with the law is anticipated in January 2015, with transition to full implementation by July 1, 2016. Therefore at the time of this publication there is limited information to fully understand the impact for Minnesota. The Governor's Workforce Development Council's 2017 report to the Minnesota Legislature will provide an inclusive update on Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act transition and full implementation.

*Minnesota on the Move: The World's Best Workforce* represents the commitment to Minnesota's workforce system through a shared vision. On behalf of the Governor's Workforce Development Council, the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development and the Minnesota Workforce Council Association offer four recommendations to ensure the success of Minnesota's workers and businesses:

- Recommendation 1  
Enhance Minnesota Workforce Center system partnerships through better alignment, increased leveraging of resources, broader partnerships and improved communications.
- Recommendation 2  
Minnesota needs to invest in technology and infrastructure to support Minnesota Workforce Centers and to build capacity throughout the WorkForce Center system.
- Recommendation 3  
Minnesota needs to support a WorkForce Center system that is responsive to business. Broadened services and access to employers will in turn result in better services and resources for all job seekers.
- Recommendation 4  
Minnesota should consider a single, unified brand for Minnesota's Workforce Centers and system. A new, single brand will provide a common understanding of Minnesota's system to better serve jobseekers and businesses.

# **Section 1: WORKFORCE CENTER HISTORY**

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## Minnesota's Early Vision

The concept of developing a “one-stop center” for delivering workforce services in Minnesota began in the late 1980's and early 1990's. Minnesota was viewed as a pioneer in 1994 when the state received a federal Department of Labor grant for implementation of “one-stop centers”. In 1995 the Minnesota WorkForce Center system was adopted and legislation passed that created the Governor's Workforce Development Council replacing the Governor's Job Training Council. The creation of a system of Minnesota one-stops is credited to the administration of Gov. Arne Carlson and the Minnesota Department of Economic Security, then headed by DES Commissioner R. Jane Brown. By December of 1998, Minnesota opened its fifty-third WorkForce Center.

## Passing of the Workforce Investment Act

President Bill Clinton signed the pillar of American job training programs, the Workforce Investment Act, in 1998, calling it “a big step forward in making sure that every adult can keep on learning for a lifetime.”

The Workforce Investment Act (WIA) aimed to reform federal job training programs and create a new, comprehensive workforce investment system. The reformed system was intended to be customer-focused, help Americans access the tools they need to manage their careers through information and high quality services, and help U.S. companies find skilled workers. The Workforce Investment Act aimed to improve the quality of the workforce and enhance the productivity and competitiveness of the nation.

Programs originally housed in separate locations were to be brought together in one central location in a community. This allowed for comprehensive, integrated, and individualized services for employers, job seekers, or those seeking economic independence. The Workforce Investment Act gives priority to programs that prepare youth and unskilled adults for entry into the labor force, particularly to those economically disadvantaged individuals who face barriers to employment and who are in need of such training to obtain prospective employment.

## Authority

Under WIA, the Governor has the responsibility to designate local workforce service areas (WSAs), which are administered locally by Workforce Investment Boards (WIBs). The Governor gives consideration to:

- The extent to which the areas are consistent with labor market areas
- The extent to which the areas are consistent with regional economic development areas
- Whether the areas have the necessary federal and non-federal resource to administer employment and training activities

Moreover, the Governor can permit automatic designation of existing local areas and may approve request of any unit of general local government for the designation if state board recommends designation. The state must provide re-designation assistance.

## One-Stop Partners

There are several programs and activities identified in the Workforce Investment Act that mandate availability of services to customers through the One-Stop Delivery System. One-Stop Program Partners required under Title I act under the Workforce Investment Act:<sup>5</sup>

- **Adult**  
18 years and older, are eligible for core services.
- **Dislocated Worker**  
An individual who: Has been terminated or laid off, or has received a notice of termination or layoff from employment; Is eligible for or has exhausted unemployment insurance; Has demonstrated an appropriate attachment to the workforce, but not eligible for unemployment insurance and unlikely to return to a previous industry or occupation; Has been terminated or laid off or received notification of termination or layoff from employment as a result of a permanent closure or substantial layoff; is employed at a facility, where the employer has made the general announcement that the facility will close within a 180 days; was self-employed (including employment as a farmer, a rancher, or a fisherman) but is unemployed as a result of general economic conditions in the community or because of a natural disaster.

- **Youth**  
Includes eligible low-income youth, ages 14-21, who face barriers to employment. Funds for youth services are allocated to state and local areas based on a formula distribution. Service strategies, developed by workforce providers, prepare youth for employment and/or post-secondary education through strong linkages between academic and occupational learning. Local communities provide youth activities.
- **Veterans Employment and Training Programs**
- **Unemployment Insurance**
- **Indian and Native American Programs**
- **Migrant and Seasonal Farmworker Programs**
- **National Emergency Grants**

Elective additional partners:

- Temporary Assistance For Needy Families (TANF), known in Minnesota as the Minnesota Family Investment Program (MFIP)
- USDA Supplemental Nutrition Assistant Program Employment and Training Programs (SNAP E&T)

Additional workforce Titles II, III, IV, V included under WIA:

- **Title II – Adult Education and Literacy**  
The Division of Adult Education and Literacy (DAEL) promotes programs that help American adults get the basic skills they need to be productive workers, family members, and citizens. The major areas of support are Adult Basic Education, Adult Secondary Education, and English Language Acquisition. These programs emphasize basic skills such as reading, writing, math, English language competency, and problem-solving.
- **Title III – Wagner-Peyser (employment services)**  
Provides a variety of employment related labor exchange services including but not limited to job search assistance, job referral, and placement assistance for job seekers, re-employment services to unemployment insurance claimants, and recruitment services to employers with job openings. Services are delivered in one of three

modes including self-service, facilitated self-help services and staff assisted service delivery approaches. Depending on the needs of the labor market other services such as job seeker assessment of skill levels, abilities and aptitudes, career guidance when appropriate, job search workshops and referral to training may be available.

- **Title IV- Vocational Rehabilitation Services**  
Helps individuals with physical or mental disabilities to obtain employment and live more independently through the provision of such supports as counseling, medical and psychological services, job training and other individualized services, giving priority to individuals who are significantly disabled.

## Federal Funding

Workforce Investment Act funds programs under titles one, three, and four. Formula grants are directed to states, which in turn provide program dollars to the local Workforce Service Areas for service delivery by formula. A portion of funds from each funding stream, which has varied over the term of the Workforce Investment Act, is reserved at the state level for statewide activities (discretionary funds), and an additional portion of the dislocated worker funds is reserved at the state level for rapid response activities. The adult funding stream incorporates a priority of service for public assistance recipients and other low-income individuals when funds are limited. Veterans have been added as a priority population as a result of the Jobs for Veterans Act of 2002. There are no state matching requirements under the Workforce Investment Act.

## Federal Funds to Local Providers

The state provides funding through funding formulas to support the one-stop service delivery system that brings together multiple workforce development programs and services to pay for the provision of employment and training services for eligible individuals.

The Department of Labor, over time, has made provisions with several improvements on the restrictive requirements under the Workforce Investment Act.<sup>6</sup>



## Services provided through One-Stop Career Centers (WorkForce Centers)

- *Core services* - Includes outreach, job search and placement assistance, and labor market information available to all job seekers.
- *Intensive services* - Includes more comprehensive assessments, development of individual employment plans and counseling and career planning.
- *Training services* - Customers are linked to job opportunities in their communities, including both occupational training and training in basic skills. Participants use an “individual training account” to select an appropriate training program from a qualified training provider.
- *Additional Services* - “Supportive” services such as transportation, childcare, dependent care, housing and needs-related payments are provided under certain circumstances to allow an individual to participate in the program.
- *“Rapid Response”* - Services at the employment site for employers and workers who are expected to lose their jobs as a result of company closings and mass layoffs.

Individuals whose layoff was created or affected by international trade, may access information and services under the Trade Act programs.

States are responsible for program management and operations including enrollment, service delivery, and certification of training providers.

## Targeted Populations

Priority for intensive and training services must be given to recipients of public assistance and other low-income individuals.

In addition to unemployed adults, employed adults can also receive services to obtain or retain employment that allows for self-sufficiency. State and local areas are responsible for establishing procedures for applying the priority and self-sufficiency requirements.

## Workforce Investment Act (WIA) - Minnesota WorkForce Centers

In Minnesota, the Workforce Investment Act One-Stop centers are known as Minnesota WorkForce Centers (WFCs). The Minnesota WorkForce Center system is a partnership made up of state, local, government, and community non-profit agencies. As in other states, the Governor has the authority to establish the workforce service areas (WSAs) to oversee local WorkForce Centers. Minnesota grandfathered in the sixteen workforce service areas that existed prior to the Workforce Investment Act, which represent various political jurisdictions such as county government, city government, or joint powers agreements. The chief local elected official in each workforce service areas is responsible for appointing a local Workforce Investment Board (WIB). Local Workforce Investment Board members represent the private sector (who must make up a majority of the board), organized labor, vocational rehabilitation, public assistance, community-based organizations, public employment, education, and economic development. The Workforce Investment Boards are responsible for providing policy guidance and oversight for activities conducted by WorkForce Centers in partnership with local elected officials. There is a minimum of one WorkForce Center in each of the sixteen Workforce Service Areas.

## Minnesota’s WorkForce Center Partners

- Job Services
- Rehabilitation Services
- State Services for the Blind
- Local Job Training Provider

Each Center is required to have all core partners represented on site. In many instances, funding does not allow for all partners to have fulltime staff within the local WorkForce Centers. In several cases, other core partners have joined the four partners listed above to meet the local or regional needs of customers.

Under the Workforce Investment Act, federal funding is the primary support for Minnesota’s WorkForce Centers. This funding comes with much regulation and provides many restrictions. Partnerships supporting the WorkForce Centers extend from the local level to the federal level, with

funding from other sources. Minnesota has been very resourceful in identifying other funding to leverage, which in turn is invested in staffing, physical costs of the center, and services to individuals.

## Minnesota's Shared Vision

Minnesota's vision is to provide a skilled workforce for our economy through an accessible, integrated employment and training system for all Minnesotans. Within this vision there is recognition of the need to focus on two main customers: employers and job seekers. In 2003, Minnesota's WorkForce Centers established five main goals<sup>7</sup>:

- **GOAL 1:** Emphasize quality outcomes and customer satisfaction from job seekers and employers.
- **GOAL 2:** Provide tools for customers to make informed, career training and hiring choices through effective assessment and labor market information.
- **GOAL 3:** Support customer service through the establishment of an information system that promotes the sharing of information and maximization of resources.
- **GOAL 4:** Replicate and expand the innovative efforts already existing to provide comprehensive, high quality employment and training services.
- **GOAL 5:** Include all Minnesotans as full participants in the economic fabric to enhance the state's position in the global marketplace.

By 2002, Minnesota had, in large measure, achieved its original vision. Minnesota led the nation in building a physical network of 53 WorkForce Centers that covered all of the state, engaging a multitude of partners, bringing several once-separate programs and services into a single location. Minnesota's Centers have a common "look and feel", are generally well-equipped, and in many cases, serve as the hub for workforce services in the communities in which they are located. As noted in the chronology, there are many aspects of Minnesota's Centers, which have led the national development of successful "one-stop".<sup>8</sup>

Throughout time, Minnesota has continued to ensure the system will provide the comprehensive, quality services needed for new demands. Minnesota's WorkForce Centers have experienced significant changes from the time of their inception to adjust to the swings in Minnesota's economy.

## The Evolution of Minnesota's WorkForce Centers

- 2001 The WorkForce Center Sustainability Study addressed the likelihood of the WorkForce Centers being sustained over time.<sup>9</sup>
- 2002 The GWDC Creating System Excellence Committee developed a credentialing process and standards for WorkForce Centers.<sup>10</sup>
- 2002 MDES Commissioner, Earl Wilson, reiterated the agency's desire to have WorkForce Centers co-located with MnSCU campuses where appropriate.<sup>11</sup>
- 2002 Standards for the affiliate sites for WorkForce Centers are developed.<sup>12</sup>
- 2003 Minnesota WorkForce Center Strategic Plan: Six Dimensions, Multiple Lenses: A guide to Local Decision Making.<sup>13</sup>
- 2003 MDES Policy, Planning, and Measures Office, developed the Employer Customer Satisfaction Survey.<sup>14</sup>
- 2003 Departments of Economic Security and Trade and Economic Development merged.<sup>15</sup>
- 2003 Minnesota Job Skills Partnership Board, developed standards for the state-funded workforce development programs and common measures.<sup>16</sup>
- 2003 Getting To Preeminence Report, A Workforce Program Inventory, better program alignment.<sup>17</sup>
- 2004 DEED's WorkForce Center System Strategic Action Plan, developed in partnership with WFC partners and local elected officials. Establishes new strategies to adapt to the needs of the economy.<sup>18</sup>
- 2005 Minnesota WorkForce Center System Business Plan, a business plan to address co-location (One-Stops) and management structures of WorkForce Centers.<sup>19</sup>
- 2005 Investment Advisory for Minnesota's Workforce Investment Portfolio, Governor Pawlenty presents two strategic objectives to focus our investments and one "tactical shift" intended to give local and regional leaders greater flexibility in delivering workforce development services.<sup>20</sup>
- 2006 Governor's Workforce Development Council Policy Advisory, recommendations to address the future workforce demographic shifts, aging population, growth in diverse populations and needs for training, and industry sector strategies.<sup>21</sup>
- 2006 Integrating Individuals with Disabilities into the Workforce.<sup>22</sup>
- 2007 Re-Imagining Minnesota's Workforce Development System, a new vision for transforming the current system into an agile, next-generation model that is responsive to the needs of employers and workers.<sup>23</sup>
- 2008 Preparing Minnesota's Workforce for Tomorrow's Economy, strategies needed for the WFC system to adapt to economic conditions.<sup>24</sup>
- 2009 Minnesota's WorkForce Centers Resource Area Study, WorkForce Centers Resource Areas system Improvement.<sup>25</sup>
- 2011 Working to Close the Skills Gap, WorkForce Centers role in addressing the workforce skills gaps.<sup>26</sup>
- 2012 All Hands on Deck, GWDC Policy Report, outlines fifteen recommendations to address the skills gap for Minnesota.<sup>27</sup>
- 2013 The Most Competitive Workforce in the World, career pathways and credential attainment to build a competitive workforce.<sup>28</sup>
- 2014 Building Partnerships to Overcome Barriers, Developing Skills to Thrive in a Changing Economy, career pathways and experiential learning strategies and a comprehensive inventory of Minnesota models.<sup>29</sup>

## Section 2:

# PROGRAMS, PERFORMANCE, and SATISFACTION

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Minnesota WorkForce Centers provide services, resources, and programs throughout Minnesota. Each Center offers all mandated services and programs under the Workforce Investment Act. Additional programming or services may vary dependent on local or regional needs of individuals or employers.

Minnesota has nearly recovered from the recession, but that does not mean our work is any less important. Job seekers struggle with obtaining employment that pays family sustaining wages while employers struggle to find workers with the appropriate skills sets and training. The statewide unemployment rate of 3.7% is deceptively low as the disparities in unemployment rates between white individuals and individuals of color persist at significant and unacceptable levels.

# Minnesota WorkForce Centers

Minnesota is committed to focusing on continuous improvement efforts to address five barriers to employment:

- Racial disparities
- Long-term unemployment
- Youth unemployment
- Access to professional and social networks; and
- Placement into employment at family sustaining wages

Outcomes (SFY 2013) for customers of WorkForce Center services include:

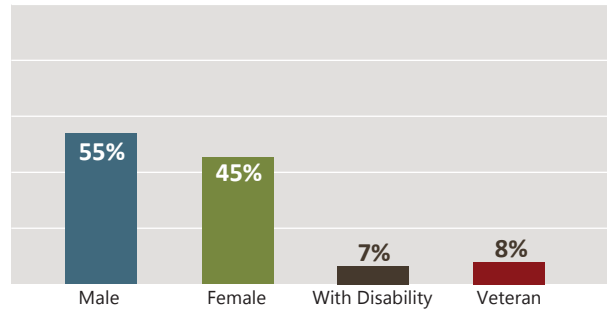
- Nearly 92,300 job seekers found a job within 90 days of their last service with an average yearly wage of \$29,538.

Demographic information<sup>30</sup> for universal customers not enrolled in an eligibility-based workforce development program is as follows:

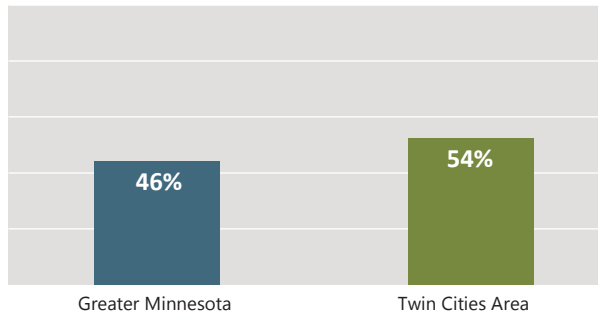
## Funding Source and Allocation

- SFY 2013 funding was \$11.867M from federal funds.

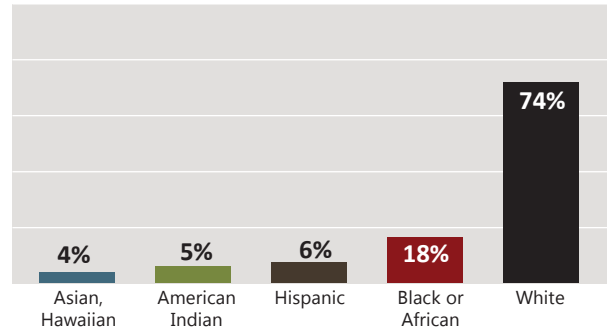
**WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM CUSTOMERS BY GENDER, DISABILITY STATUS AND VETERAN STATUS**



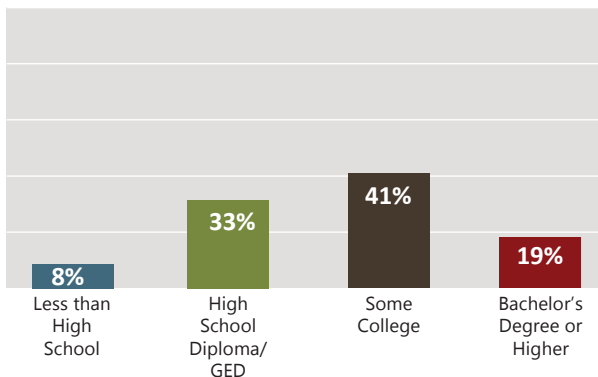
**DISTRIBUTION OF WORKFORCE CENTER CUSTOMERS IN MINNESOTA**



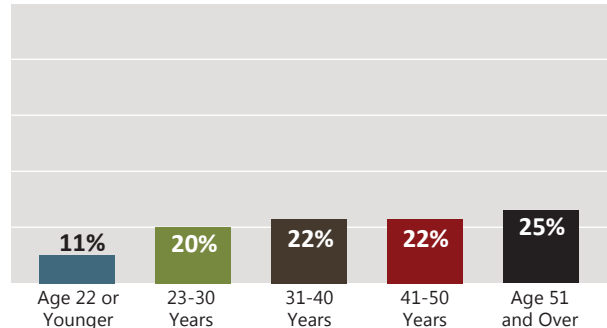
**WORKFORCE CENTER CUSTOMERS BY RACE AND ETHNICITY**



**WORKFORCE CENTER CUSTOMERS BY EDUCATION**



**WORKFORCE CENTER CUSTOMERS BY AGE**



Source: Office of Policy, Planning, and Measures, Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED).

# MinnesotaWorks.net

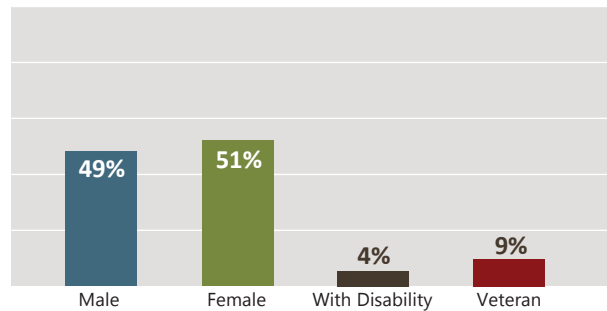
Online services for job seekers are also available to all Minnesotans through MinnesotaWorks.net, the state's no-fee job bank for job seekers and employers.

In SFY 2013, MinnesotaWorks.net:

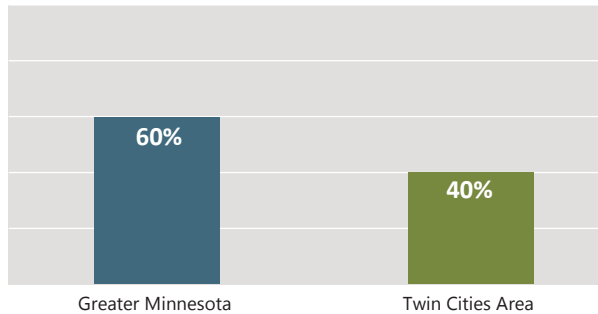
- Had 347,020 total job openings posted, and
- Opened 114,628 new job seeker accounts and 1,904 new employer accounts.

Demographic information<sup>31</sup> for MinnesotaWorks.net users is as follows:

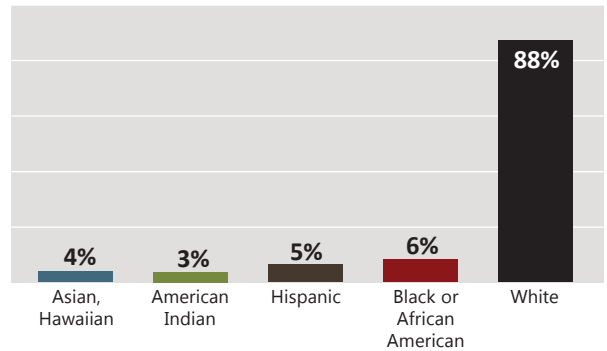
**MinnesotaWorks CUSTOMERS BY GENDER, DISABILITY STATUS AND VETERAN STATUS**



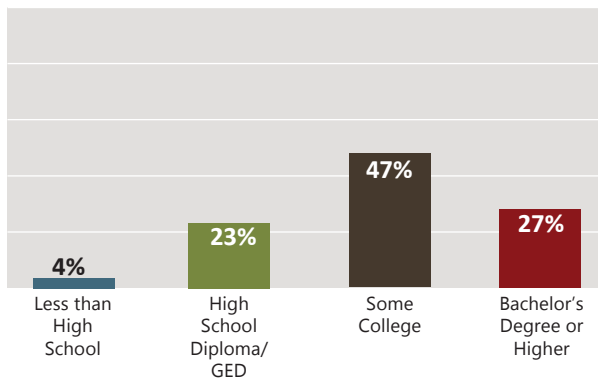
**DISTRIBUTION OF MinnesotaWorks CUSTOMERS IN MINNESOTA**



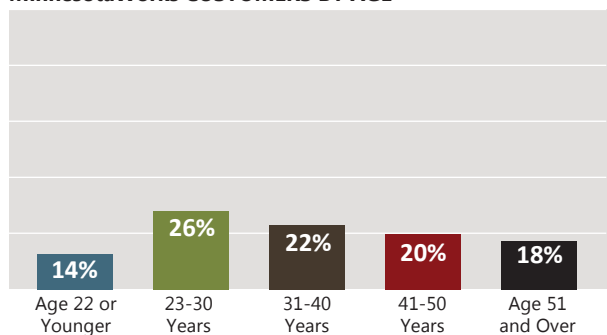
**MinnesotaWorks CUSTOMERS BY RACE AND ETHNICITY**



**MinnesotaWorks CUSTOMERS BY EDUCATION**



**MinnesotaWorks CUSTOMERS BY AGE**



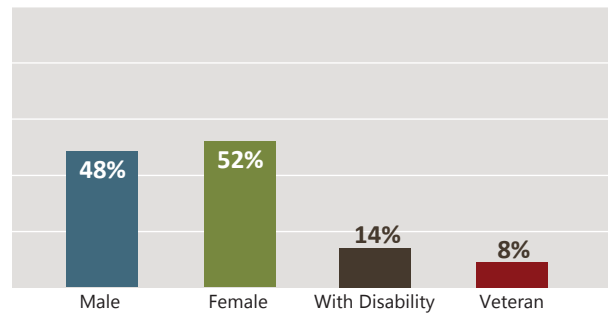
Source: Office of Policy, Planning, and Measures, Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED).

## Workforce Development Program Overview

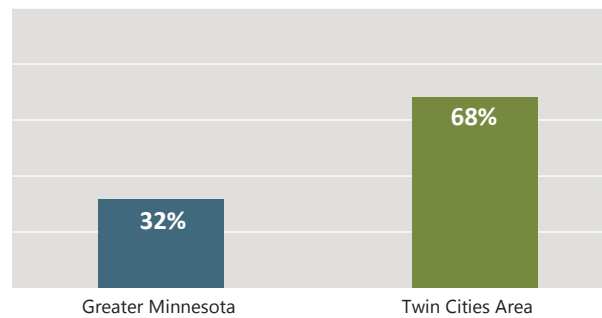
While Minnesota WorkForce Centers serve all Minnesotans, our primary focus is on disadvantaged workers, or those with barriers to employment. Almost 50,000 Minnesotans each year receive workforce development services through eligibility-based programs. Services range from skills evaluations and career guidance to on-the-job and classroom training. This number does not include individuals receiving Minnesota Department of Human Services-administered income assistance programs who are required to complete employment services with DEED, representing an additional 70,000 individuals.

Demographic information<sup>32</sup> for this customer segment is as follows:

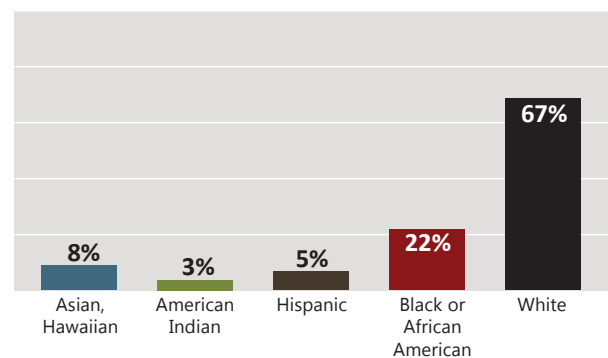
**WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM CUSTOMERS BY GENDER, DISABILITY STATUS AND VETERAN STATUS**



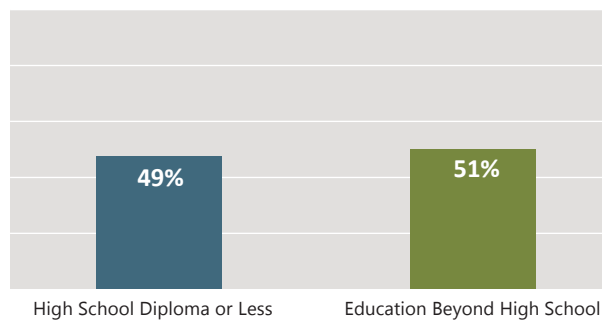
**DISTRIBUTION OF WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM CUSTOMERS IN MINNESOTA**



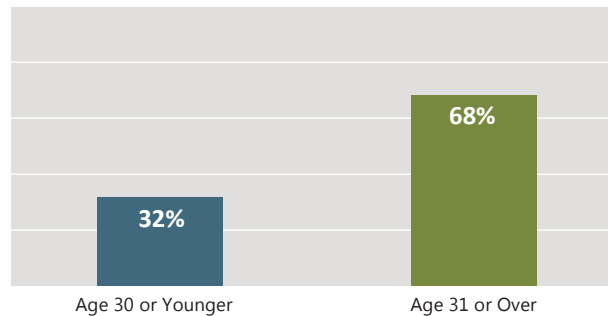
**WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM CUSTOMERS BY RACE AND ETHNICITY**



**WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM CUSTOMERS BY EDUCATION**



**WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM CUSTOMERS BY AGE**



Source: Office of Policy, Planning, and Measures, Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED).

## Workforce Development Programs

### Overview of Minnesota's WorkForce Center customers in 2013:

- More than 280,000 customers were served in WorkForce Centers, eligibility-based programs, or through MinnesotaWorks.net.
- One out of every five (26%) Minnesotans served by our workforce development programs and services is from a community of color.
  - » Of all of DEED's workforce development programs, participants from communities of color represent 18 percent to 87 percent of customers served, depending on program.
- Percent of participants coming from communities of color in select DEED eligibility-based programs in:
  - » Dislocated Worker Program (state and federal) – 18.0% (3,128 participants)
  - » WIA Adult – 50.0% (1,903 participants)
  - » Adult Workforce Development Programs – 69.0% (1,127 participants)
  - » FastTRAC – 53.8% (574 participants)
  - » Youth Workforce Development Competitive Grant Program – 87.2% (2,412 participants receiving case management services)
  - » Minnesota Youth Program – 38% (3,076 participants)
  - » WIA Youth – 44% (3,583 participants)
  - » Youth Build – 70% (472 participants)
  - » Vocational Rehabilitation Services – 21.7% (4,200 participants)
- 117,902 received job search resources through Job Service.
- More than 124,400 Minnesotans served by our workforce development program and services found a job with a Minnesota company.
- About 22% of unemployed Minnesotans received a WorkForce Center service.

- Individuals who received assistance through Minnesota's network of WorkForce Centers earned more than \$3.4 billion in taxable income for Minnesota's economy.

### WIA Adult Program

The WIA Title 1-B Adult program provides employment and training assistance to adults who face significant barriers to employment. Minnesota's adult program prioritized individuals on public assistance, those with limited income, and veterans.<sup>33</sup>

Performance measures include four criteria:

- The rate of customers entering employment;
- The rate of customers retaining employment for at least six months;
- The rate of customers receiving a credential following completion of the program; and
- The customer's average earnings for six months after exit.

TABLE 3: WIA Adult Program Performance Outcomes

Performance Measure	PY 2013 Goal	PY 2013 Outcome	PY 2013 Target Ratio
Number of Customers Served		2,031	
Entered Employment	81.5%	86.3%	105.9%
Employment Retention	86.0%	88.3%	102.7%
Average Earnings	\$12,800	\$13,550	105.9%
Credential and Employment Rate	73.0%	78.8%	107.9%

Source: WIA Annual Report PY 2013

### Dislocated Worker Program

Program year 2013 (July 1, 2013–June 30, 2014) brought challenges and opportunities for the Dislocated Worker program for Minnesota. One of the most persistent principal challenges is a high number of long-term unemployed program



participants.

In an effort to continually improve services to job seekers, the Dislocated Worker program in Minnesota sought to maintain high levels of performance through collaboration with other programs, utilization of labor market information, and streamlining enrollment of participants in employer-coordinated training, such as On-the-Job-Training (OJT).

The Dislocated Worker program helps individuals return to work after a layoff or other challenging life circumstance. To be eligible for the Dislocated Worker program, an individual must typically be eligible for Unemployment Insurance. Seasonal workers, however, are eligible for Unemployment Insurance in Minnesota but are not eligible for the Dislocated Worker program.<sup>34</sup>

## WIA Dislocated Worker Performance Results

Minnesota met the target ratio (at least 80 percent of standard) in each of the four performance measures. The state fell short, however, of exceeding performance in the average earnings standards. Each of these standards represented an increase in performance standards for fiscal year 2013.

TABLE 2: WIA Dislocated Worker Program Performance Outcomes

Performance Measure	PY 2013 Goal	PY 2013 Outcome	PY 2013 Target Ratio <sup>1</sup>
Number of Customers Served		4,540	
Entered Employment	85.0%	89.0%	104.7%
Employment Retention	92.5%	93.2%	100.8%
Average Earnings	\$20,000	\$18,986	94.9%
Credential and Employment Rate	69.0%	75.03%	108.7%

<sup>1</sup>Target Ratio is defined as the PY 2013 outcome divided by the PY 2013 goal x100.

Source: WIA Annual Report PY 2013

## Youth Programs

Minnesota supports partnerships to leverage resources and opportunities to help young people—the future workforce—attain the skills, knowledge and aptitudes to become productive workers. The high

quality of Minnesota’s youth programs influences, the participation of youth, the satisfaction and retention of youth workers, and the impact programs have on young people, families and the community.<sup>35</sup>

Eligibility for Workforce Investment Act youth services require an individual to be between the ages of 14 -21, low-income, and have one or more of the following barriers:

- Deficient in basic skills
- School dropout
- Homeless, runaway or foster child
- Pregnant or parenting
- Offender
- Requires additional assistance to complete an education program, or secure and hold employment

## WIA Youth Performance Results

With fluctuations in federal funding, local Workforce Investment Boards have prioritized services to the neediest youth. Minnesota Youth with disabilities are served at a level that is over three times the national average; foster youth, juvenile offenders, homeless youth and runaways, approximately twice the national average; American Indian youth, five times the national average; and Asian American youth, 2.5 times the national average.

TABLE 1: WIA Youth Performance Standards and Outcomes

WIA Youth Program Performance Measure	PY 2013 Goal <sup>1</sup>	PY 2013 Outcome	PY 2013 Target Ratio <sup>2</sup>
Younger Youth Skill Attainment	94.0%	95.4%	101.5%
Younger Youth Diploma/Equivalent	88.0%	88.4%	100.5%
Younger Youth Placement and Retention	82.0%	91.7%	111.8%
Older Youth Entered Employment	75.0%	83.0%	110.7%
Older Youth Retention	87.0%	91.2%	104.8%
Older Youth Wage Gain	\$4,800	\$5,786	120.5%
Older Youth Credential	58.0%	58.3%	100.5%

<sup>1</sup>State-level goals, as approved by the U.S. Department of Labor.

<sup>2</sup>Target ratio is defined as the PY 2013 result, divided by the PY 2013 goal\*100.

Source: WIA Annual Report PY 2013

## WIA Customer Satisfaction

Minnesota's WorkForce Center system uses one index to express customer satisfaction with its services: The Minnesota Customer Satisfaction Index (MnCSI), which is based largely on the American Customer Satisfaction Index (ACSI), as used in the private sector. The two primary indicators are the level of satisfaction employers and job seekers have with the programs.

The following questions are based on a scale of 1 (lowest or least satisfied) to 10 (highest or most satisfied), which are averaged and generate a single number, the actual MnCSI, which falls on a scale of 0 to 100.

- What is your overall satisfaction with the services?
- To what extent have the services met your expectations?
- How well did the services you received compare with the ideal set of services?

During calendar year 2013, job seeking customers (WIA Adult, Dislocated Worker and Youth customers) reported a MnCSI score of 77.0 and employers reported a MnCSI score of 75.0.

## Additional Customer Satisfaction

WIA Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth customers are also asked about their satisfaction with services. Between April 2013 and March 2014:

- 79 percent of customers were very satisfied or satisfied that the services helped improve their job-seeking skills;
- 73 percent of customers were very satisfied or satisfied that the services helped them with career planning; and
- 63 percent of customers were very satisfied or satisfied that the services received helped them find a job.

## Employer Satisfaction

Employers who have placed a job order on MinnesotaWorks.net or received a visit from a business services specialist are also asked about their satisfaction and likelihood of recommending WorkForce Center services. On the 0-100 scale of the Minnesota Customer Satisfaction Index (MnCSI), employers posting job orders (for the state sample) and employers receiving business services reported satisfaction numbers with MnCSI scores of 76.7 and 79.5.

Highlights from October 2012 to September 2013 include:

- 47 percent of the employers surveyed, who posted job orders on MinnesotaWorks.net, filled the position with an applicant from MinnesotaWorks.net;
- 95 percent of respondents said they would definitely or probably recommend a colleague to post with Minnesota's Job Bank/WorkForce Center the next time they had an opening; and
- 98 percent were very satisfied or satisfied that the business service representative understood their business needs and/or concerns.

The Minnesota WorkForce Center system continues to provide excellent services and perform at or above negotiated WIA performance rates while focusing on continuous improvement. Business satisfaction overall is quite high during this period however only 30 percent of employers felt they had the right number of applicants, with 69 percent reporting too few. The demands from employers for a skilled workforce continue to increase at the same time the WFC system is responding to the increasing needs of individuals whom face the greatest barriers.

# **Section 3: THE WORKFORCE INNOVATION AND OPPORTUNITY ACT**

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**New opportunities for innovation and collaboration**

## The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act

President Barack Obama signed Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act into law on July 22, 2014. The new law is designed to help job seekers access employment, education, training, and support services to achieve success in the labor market and to match employers with the skilled workers they need to compete in the global economy. Congress passed the Act by a wide bipartisan majority. It is the first legislative reform of the public workforce system in more than 15 years. Every year the key programs that form the pillars of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act help tens of millions of job seekers and workers, connecting to good jobs and acquire the skills and credentials needed to obtain them.<sup>36</sup>

Originally authorized in 1998, the federal Workforce Investment Act (WIA) was long overdue for reauthorization. The Workforce Investment Act focused on short-term training and re-employment but struggled to meet industry's need for skilled employers who may require longer-term training, some post-secondary education, or certification or credential attainment. Administrative barriers under the law made it difficult for providers to assist individuals who require access to multiple programs or services, which undermined the law's vision for cross-program alignment. Additionally, steady declines in funding (formula funding) of nearly 30% over the last decade have made it ever more difficult to meet individual needs.<sup>37</sup> Many state and local systems have adopted innovative strategies despite the limitations of current law. These efforts will be greatly strengthened with updated new federal policy to reflect these best practices.

### Highlights of Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Reforms

- **Aligns Federal Investments to Support Job Seekers and Employers**  
WIOA establishes unified strategic planning across “core” programs, which include Title I Adult, Dislocated Worker and Youth programs; Adult Education and Literacy programs; the Wagner-Peyser Employment Service; and Title I of the Rehabilitation Act programs
- **Aligns Goals and Increases Accountability and Information for Job Seekers and the Public**

WIOA aligns the performance indicators for core programs, and adds new ones related to services to employers and postsecondary credential attainment. Performance goals must reflect economic conditions and participant characteristics. It makes available data on training providers' performance outcomes and requires third party evaluations of programs.

- **Fosters Regional Collaboration to Meet the Needs of Regional Economies**  
WIOA requires states to identify economic regions within their state, and local areas are to coordinate planning and service delivery on a regional basis.
- **Helps Employers Find Workers with the Necessary Skills**  
WIOA emphasizes engaging employers across the workforce system to align training with needed skills and match employers with qualified workers. The Act adds flexibility at the local level to provide incumbent worker training and transitional jobs as allowable activities and promotes work-based training, for example by increasing on-the-job training reimbursement rates to 75 percent. The law also emphasizes training that leads to industry-recognized post-secondary credentials.
- **Supports Access to Services**  
To make services easier to access, the WIOA requires co-location of the Wagner-Peyser Employment Service in American Job Centers (One-Stops), AJCs and adds the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families program as a mandatory partner. WIOA establishes dedicated funding from AJC partner programs to support the costs of infrastructure and other shared costs that support access to services. It asks the Secretary of Labor to establish a common identifier for the workforce system to help workers and employers find available services. In addition, WIOA allows local areas to award pay for performance contracts so providers of services get paid for results. It also allows direct contracts to higher education institutions to provide training
- **Targets Workforce Services to Better Serve Job Seekers**  
WIOA promotes the use of career pathways and sector partnerships to increase employment in in-demand industries and occupations. To help local economies target the needs of job seekers, WIOA

intends to allow 100 percent of WIOA funds to transfer between the Adult and Dislocated Worker programs. WIOA adds basic skills deficient as a priority category for Adult services. WIOA also focuses Youth program services on out-of-school youth requiring 75 percent of the funds to be spent on this population. The Act strengthens services for unemployment insurance claimants. It also merges WIA core and intensive services into a new category of career services, clarifying there is no required sequence of services. The Act allows Governors to reserve up to 15 percent of formula funds for activities such as innovative programs.

- **Improves Services to Individuals with Disabilities**

WIOA increases access to high quality services for individuals with disabilities for workforce services to prepare them for competitive integrated employment. It requires better employer engagement and promotes physical and programmatic accessibility to employment and training services for individuals with disabilities. Youth with disabilities receive extensive pre-employment transition services to obtain and retain competitive integrated employment. It creates an Advisory Committee on strategies to increase competitive integrated employment for individuals with disabilities

- **Strengthens the Governing Bodies that Establish State, Regional and Local Workforce Investment Priorities**

WIOA streamlines membership of business-led, state and local workforce development boards. The Act emphasizes the role of boards in coordinating and aligning workforce programs and adds functions to develop strategies to meet worker and employer needs. WIOA proposes changes to state and local board structures while maintaining each states' Governor authority.

## WIOA Programs

Overall, WIOA intends to bring together in strategic coordination:

- Employment and training services for adults, dislocated workers, and youth and Wagner-Peyser employment services administered by the

U.S. Department of Labor (USDOL) through formula grants to Minnesota; and

- Adult education and literacy programs and Vocational Rehabilitation state grant programs that assist individuals with disabilities in obtaining employment administered by the U.S. Department of Education (DoED).

## What It Means for Minnesota

Minnesota is one of many states that have demonstrated success with innovative solutions under WIA. Several of the highlights under WIOA have been or are being addressed through the WorkForce Center system partners. It is important to understand that while Minnesota has developed creative solutions to meet job seeker and employer needs, we still face many challenges.

Minnesota is well-positioned to meet several requirements broadly outlined in WIOA. For several years, Minnesota has developed local and state plans, developed and invested reporting systems, served businesses and industries, and created innovative solutions, such as career pathways including Minnesota FastTRAC.<sup>38 39</sup>

Minnesota has been recognized as a national leader in developing and implementing career pathways. The most recent GWDC publication, *Building Partnerships to Overcome Barriers*, highlights best practices across the state in career pathways and experiential learning.<sup>40</sup> Moreover, Minnesota's FastTRAC program reflects WIOA's priorities. Strategic alignment and the leveraging of resources to meet the needs of low-income Minnesotans in achieving credential attainment and gainful employment, reflect the primary outcomes of FastTRAC as well as WIOA.<sup>41</sup> Collectively, the passage WIOA presents new opportunities for Minnesota to re-envision how its education and training pipeline serves the needs of individuals, employers, and more broadly, the Minnesota economy.

## Next Steps

Under the leadership of DEED, a WIOA team has been established to analyze, evaluate, identify opportunities, and make recommendations for the transition and implementation of the new law. The partners represented in this report constitute this team, all of whom have the primary responsibilities

for administration and/or delivery of programs and services under WIOA. Every opportunity will be seized to ensure Minnesota's WorkForce Center system will have the resources available to enable individuals and employers to successfully compete in today's economy and achieve economic success. Minnesota's history of strong partnerships, collaboration, and finding solutions for difficult problems stands on its own. Minnesota's WorkForce Center system will thrive under WIOA.

# Section 4: MINNESOTA'S STRATEGIC SERVICE DELIVERY

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## Goals and Recommendations

## Minnesota Workforce Center Partners

Minnesota's WorkForce Center System has provided excellent services and resources for more than a decade. This statewide network of career and talent professionals find, develop, and connect qualified job seekers with employers every day. Minnesota's forty-eight centers serve well over 20,000 individuals monthly. As noted in Section One of this report, the WorkForce Center system's evolution has been substantial over the years. The system responded to significant economic shifts, from recession and high unemployment to our current low level of unemployment.

### Call to Action

Having stated the strength of Minnesota's system, increasing demands on the system require immediate action. Many Minnesotans face significant barriers.

In 2014, the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development and the Minnesota Workforce Council Association began working together to help Minnesota's WorkForce Center system develop strategies to address current challenges and meet these needs of job seekers and employers.

This "strategic service delivery" project was well underway when the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act passed in July. In November 2014, the Governor's Workforce Development Council joined leadership the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development, the Minnesota Workforce Council Association, and the stakeholder groups to prioritize the goals and strategies identified through earlier meetings. The effort resulted in shared objectives for Minnesota's WorkForce Center System and four major goals with strategies for action:

- A powerful statewide network of career and talent professionals who find, develop, and connect qualified jobseekers with Minnesota employers.
- Competitive advantages to employers in recruiting, hiring, training and retaining talent.
- Connections for youth and young adults to learn academic, life, and work skills, identify career paths, and achieve meaningful employment.
- Minnesota jobseekers with personalized and expert career guidance, skills training, and job search services.
- Collaborative efforts to address disparate impact of training and employment opportunities for underserved/under-represented populations.



## Strategic Service Delivery Brings Together Unified Goals and Strategies:

### GOAL 1

Reinvent and modernize the WorkForce Center System, including increasing access to online and electronic services.

#### Strategies:

1. Define the standard of services offered in physical, brick-and-mortar WorkForce Centers.
2. Provide a flexible, demand-driven system that can address job seeker and employer needs taking into account regional and sector needs.
3. Expand delivery of services by providing online workforce center services for job seekers and employers.
4. Ensure the accessibility of all buildings and services offered in the Minnesota WorkForce Center System.
5. Create connections and opportunities to increase the number of youth and adults accessing our services.
6. Establish protocols (job seeker, employer) providing customers a single point of contact and entry into the WorkForce Center System.

### GOAL 2

Better meet the workforce needs of employers.

#### Strategies:

1. Adopt a business services culture that promotes responsiveness and timeliness.
2. Assist employers with long-term workforce planning and provide services to meet their needs.
3. Identify and implement scalable and sustainable best practices around high-demand clusters and sectors.
4. Align services and improve communication among partners performing business outreach.
5. Expand use of incumbent worker training.

### GOAL 3

Increase alignment, connections and communications with WorkForce Center system partners.

#### Strategies:

1. Ensure affiliated state agencies and educational institutions are aligned with the WorkForce Center System.
2. Work with businesses to promote experiential learning opportunities, such as apprenticeships, internships and customized training programs.
3. Revise planning and intake documents to reflect the System's goals and strategies.
4. Align measures with System goals.
5. Align program standards to allow for coordination among workforce development stakeholders.
6. Implement a comprehensive WorkForce Center System staff and partner training program.
7. Establish a policy of sharing best practices.
8. Increase the usage of stacked credentials, such as FastTRAC and other proven creative career pathway strategies.

### GOAL 4

Raise awareness and usage of the WorkForce Center System with consistent messaging and branding, relevant to key audiences and customers.

#### Strategies:

1. Create a clear web presences that explains the Minnesota WorkForce Council System.
2. Incorporate our statement of purpose into all communications.
3. Develop a consistent description of the services provided by the WorkForce Center system and use throughout the system.
4. Promote the WorkForce Center System through media relations and social media.
5. Establish quarterly statewide events focused on reaching target audiences.

## Minnesota on the Move

The Governor's Workforce Development Council, with the support of the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development and the Minnesota Workforce Council Association, offers four recommendations for the WorkForce Center System to provide the services and resources to best assist all Minnesotans.

### RECOMMENDATION 1

Enhance Minnesota Workforce Center system partnerships through better alignment, increased leveraging of resources, broader partnerships and improved communications.

### RECOMMENDATION 2

Minnesota needs to invest in infrastructure and technology to support Minnesota Workforce Centers and to build capacity throughout the WorkForce Center system.

- Funding for WorkForce Centers comes through several distinct program streams. Overall, federal funding has not kept pace with the rising costs of basic infrastructure and maintenance of the 48 Centers in Minnesota. Workforce development partners are committed to evaluating and identifying opportunities to broaden access through affiliate sites (such as public libraries).
- Funding should be considered for supporting the infrastructure costs of Minnesota WorkForce Centers.
- Minnesota must consider investing in technology. WorkForce Centers have the ability to reach a broader audience of job seekers and businesses through technology. Virtual services and resources expand access and minimize costs of physical locations.

### RECOMMENDATION 3

Minnesota needs to support a WorkForce Center system that is responsive to business. Broadened services and access to employers will in turn result in better services and resources for all job seekers.

- A business plan should be developed to outline the strategies, actions, and resources needed to meet performance outcomes.
- The plan should include building partnerships and collaboration with businesses for career pathways opportunities, experiential learning, internships, and apprenticeships.

### RECOMMENDATION 4

Minnesota should consider a single, unified brand for Minnesota's Workforce Center System. A new, single brand will provide a common understanding of Minnesota's system to better serve jobseekers and businesses.

- A professional marketing team should conduct the research and analysis of other state models, and develop a full marketing plan with a budget and identified resources.
- Minnesota should consider investing in the branding of Minnesota's system.
- Florida provides a textbook example. In the first year of Florida's Workforce System Branding Initiative/Statewide Investment by CareerSource Florida, \$498,400 in federal funds was used for brand research and development.
- In the second year, \$1.93 million in federal funds were used for brand implementation, including \$1.5 million divided among 24 regional workforce boards to support local brand transition costs, distributed based on board size.

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**Minnesota on the Move: The World's Best Workforce**  
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