

**GUIDE TO**

**MINNESOTA**

*Department of  
Economic Security*

*1999*

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November 1998

# MINNESOTA DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC SECURITY

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# STATE OF MINNESOTA

OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR  
130 STATE CAPITOL  
SAINT PAUL 55155

ARNE H. CARLSON  
GOVERNOR

To the Incoming Administration:

I want to offer you my heartiest congratulations and wish you well in your new leadership role in the Minnesota Department of Economic Security. As you begin your term, I am happy to report that in the past eight years Minnesota's workforce development system has undergone monumental change. This change has not only assisted hundreds of thousands of people to achieve economic security, but has also saved taxpayers millions of dollars.

Significant accomplishments include:

- The Minnesota WorkForce Center System. These are "one stop" centers strategically placed throughout the state that merge state, local and private non-profit employment and training related services under one roof, resulting in enhanced and coordinated services to employers and job seekers.
- Basis for the federal Workforce Investment Act. This new 1998 law used Minnesota's transformed workforce development system as its national model.
- Enhanced technology. Minnesota leads the country in state-of-the-art workforce development technology that has allowed many department services to be accessed via the Internet, including hundreds of thousands of job listings. Also, employers are now able to access job seeker resumes directly.
- Implementation of a Total Quality Organization. The department is committed to excellence in all its services. Customer satisfaction is a hallmark of the department; recent surveys of both job seekers and employers indicate over 95 percent are very satisfied with the services they receive.
- Simplification of Reemployment Insurance (RI) law. Based on the premise that you should not need a lawyer to understand and interpret our laws, our entire RI statute has been totally rewritten to make it current, practical and accessible.

Many challenges remain. The work of the past eight years provides a solid base to build on. I wish you and your administration the best, as your work will so directly affect our economy.

Warmest regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Arne H. Carlson".

ARNE H. CARLSON  
Governor

AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYER

PRINTED ON RECYCLED PAPER

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**Office of the  
Commissioner**



**Voice: (651) 296-3711  
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To the new Commissioner:

Welcome to the Minnesota Department of Economic Security, and heartiest congratulations on your appointment to head this great organization. You have an exciting and rewarding four years ahead of you. I want to be among the first to wish you well.

I have considered it a privilege to have served Governor Carlson as Commissioner of the Minnesota Department of Economic Security. Being able to change systems to provide better government is something that most citizens only dream about -- especially when they are frustrated! It has been an incredible experience to actually have had the opportunity to do something.

You will find that the department has a highly motivated, professional staff. I know they join me in congratulating and welcoming you. No doubt, you are aware that Minnesota's workforce development programs have recently been transformed from a complicated, fragmented and duplicative maze of programs to a cost-effective, results-oriented and customer-friendly service delivery system. So, the department has undergone a radical facelift. But there is still plenty of work to be done!

I hope that the information provided in the Agency Briefing Book will serve you well as you step forward into your new responsibilities. Please feel free to call on me for additional background or insights. Having experienced the almost overwhelming responsibility of getting to know this very large department eight years ago, I want nothing more than for you to have a smooth and successful transition.

Good luck and best wishes.

Sincerely,

R. Jane Brown  
Commissioner

RJB/bk

# Summary

## History

The Minnesota Department of Economic Security (MDES) was created in 1977 as a merger of the former Departments of Employment Services and Vocational Rehabilitation, the Governor's Manpower Office and the Economic Opportunity Office. State Services for the Blind was added in 1985, and the department was renamed the Department of Jobs and Training. The original name, Minnesota Department of Economic Security, was restored by the Legislature in 1994 since it fully reflects the role, mission and responsibility of the department.

Beginning in 1994, the department completely transformed the delivery of employment and training services through the implementation of Minnesota WorkForce Centers: one-stop facilities that bring together state, local, and private non-profit employment and training related services under one roof. Based on local partnerships, these centers provide a seamless and comprehensive workforce system to job seekers and employers. The WorkForce Center System transforms a complicated, fragmented and duplicative maze of programs into a cost-effective, results-oriented, and customer-friendly service delivery system. By the end of 1998, there will be 53 WorkForce Centers open across the state, completing the consolidation of nearly 300 separate offices. In some cases, there had been as many as six separate offices in a single community.

Because of its leadership role in establishing "one-stop" career centers, the U.S. Department of Labor asked the department to host a national conference to help other states learn how to reconstruct their complex employment and training systems into customer friendly one-stop environments. This highly successful conference brought nearly 2,500 participants from around the country to Minneapolis in late July 1998. Additionally, the federal Workforce Investment

Act, signed into law August 1998, is based on Minnesota's transformed workforce development system.

To facilitate the development of the WorkForce Center System, MDES re-organized internally into "branches," in place of divisions, in 1995. These include: Workforce Preparation, Workforce Exchange, Workforce Rehabilitation Services, State Services for the Blind, Workforce Center System Branch, Support Branch, and the Business and Information Branch. The branches provide employment-related assistance for both job seekers and employers, reemployment insurance, veterans' employment services, job training, dislocated workers' services, welfare-to-work services, displaced homemakers' services, youth employment and training services, labor market information, disability determination, employment and independent living assistance for people with physical and visual disabilities, along with providing internal agency support services.

In 1998, the department employs approximately 1,800 employees and administers a budget of over \$622 million in state and federal monies for all programs.

## Vision, mission, values, goals

In 1992, the department began the journey to become a Total Quality Organization, committed to excellence in all its services. Two primary customers were identified: job seekers and employers. In 1996, the department expanded that effort to the local partners with the Workforce Excellence Initiative based on the Malcolm Baldrige quality processes.

As part of the initiative development, Jim Buckman, co-director of the Quality Leadership Center, University of Minnesota, led the department's management team through a strategic planning process using the Malcolm Baldrige framework. The Baldrige framework addresses all key requirements needed to achieve operational excellence: leadership, strategic planning, customer and market focus, human

resource development and management, process management, and business results. After going through this process, the management team recrafted the department's mission, vision, values and strategic goals to reflect the redesign of the new service delivery system—the Minnesota WorkForce Centers.

### **Vision:**

A World Class Workforce Through Customer-Focused Services that Anticipate the Dynamic Workforce Needs of Employers and Job Seekers.

### **Mission:**

Helping People Help Themselves Achieve Economic Security

### **Values:**

- Customer Success—Our customers receive the diverse services they want/need for growth and independence.
- Trust—We achieve the highest integrity and greatest return on the public investment through partnerships and efficient use of resources.
- Excellence—We practice and recognize continuous learning, process improvement and management by fact.
- Professionalism—We take pride in the creative contribution, leadership and diverse expertise of our staff, their commitment to the customer and to personal and to personal and professional development.

### **Strategic Goals:**

- Increase customer satisfaction.
- Reduce the time it takes to fill employer job orders with a qualified job seeker.
- Reduce the time it takes to place job seekers in appropriate employment.
- Increase system-wide access to job opportunities.
- Increase the size and skill diversity of the job

seeker pool.

- Increase system responsiveness and capacity by increasing the percentage of customers who “self serve” at least some portion of their service.
- Improve responsiveness to field/internal customer requests.

### **Key legislators and legislative committees**

The department's policy issues are reviewed by the House Economic Development and International Trade Committee chaired by Representative Mike Jaros and the Labor-Management Relations Committee chaired by Representative Richard Jefferson (who is not seeking re-election in 1998.) Budget issues are addressed in the House Economic Development Finance Division chaired by Representative Steve Trimble. In the Senate, all policy issues are reviewed by the Jobs, Energy and Community Development Committee chaired by Senator Steven Novak. Budget issues are reviewed by the Economic Development Budget Division chaired by Senator Tracy Beckman.

In the House, key Republican legislators are Representative Bob Gunther (for department policy) and Representative Hilda Betterman (for labor issues). (Rep. Betterman is not seeking re-election in 1998.) In the Senate, key Republicans are Senator Arlene Lesewski and Senator Ed Oliver.

### **Key issues**

The most pressing problem facing the Minnesota economy is the workforce shortage. This shortage of workers, particularly skilled, high-tech workers, is seriously affecting Minnesota businesses. Minnesota's seasonally-adjusted unemployment rate for August, 1998 was 2.1 percent, the lowest on record. Minnesota's unemployment rate is consistently below the national rate; Minnesota ranked lowest of all fifty states in unadjusted and seasonally adjusted unemployment rates in August, 1998.

Minnesota has a chronic shortage of qualified workers among the general population and, at the same time, an unacceptably high level of unemployment among certain targeted populations. Efforts must address the employment and training requirements of Minnesotans in these groups, which include the disabled, minorities, and welfare recipients.

MDES has conducted two surveys about worker shortages in the last year. The first, in November 1997, was an informal survey of WorkForce Center managers, Chambers of Commerce, employers' groups, private businesses, Workforce Development Councils and economic developers. It confirmed that many employers are having difficulty finding and hiring workers. A second survey, conducted in May 1998, measured whether there is a shortage of information technology (IT) workers in Minnesota. Again, the existence of a shortage was confirmed.

The first survey found that shortage occupations run the gamut from highly skilled computer professionals and electricians to entry-level cashiers, food service workers and home health aides. In some cases the shortage was due to a lack of qualified workers and in other cases it seemed that issues such as wage rates, working conditions, part-time status, low benefits, lack of transportation and/or the unavailability of child care were behind the shortage. For lower-end jobs, a growing economy and slower workforce growth are the true drivers: available workers move to the better jobs, leaving vacancies in the entry level positions. Rather than a "reserve army of the unemployed" keeping wages low, there is a reserve pool of vacant jobs, pushing wages up.

In the case of high-skill jobs, the issue appears to be the shortage of skills rather than the shortage of people. Skills take time and money to develop. People prepared to make an investment in obtaining new skills often don't know which occupations are in shortage, what kind of training they need, and/or where training can be found. Sometimes training programs don't exist. Non-computer, high-skill jobs in current shortage

include welders, electricians and machinists. Most IT occupations appear to be experiencing shortages, though the shortages may be most extreme for systems analysts, computer programmers and Local Area Network (LAN) and other support professionals. Among surveyed firms hiring IT workers, 57 percent were having problems finding qualified employees and 73 percent had raised wages in an effort to find and retain workers.

Simultaneous with the low unemployment rate, new technology, globalization and the demand for greater profitability and productivity churn the workforce, creating new jobs on one hand and dislocating workers on the other. (Over 12,000 Minnesotans received dislocated worker services last year.) Often times, the newly-created jobs call for new skills that job seekers do not have.

As previously stated, the WorkForce Center System in Minnesota was established to provide statewide one-stop employment and training resources and services. The initial Minnesota WorkForce Centers development was funded, for the most part, by a competitive three-year grant from the U.S. Department of Labor in the total amount of \$8.9 million. This federal grant expired on June 30, 1998. An additional \$3,500,000 was received from the Minnesota State Legislature, and that will end on June 30, 1999.

The Minnesota WorkForce Center System is now serving over 1.3 million walk-in customers per year. The centers are highly successful and they play a critical role in the economy by matching Minnesota's employers' workforce needs with job seekers' skills. These activities are even more crucial today with Minnesota's unprecedented workforce shortage. The system is being used like a public library system with a new "universal" customer base utilizing them. This is a dynamic group that is looking for better jobs, newly reentering the job market, looking for part-time work or looking to begin work when they finish school. They not only want access to the resource rooms and technology, but also want to



participate in classes, seminars and assessment counseling, etc. These new, extremely important, customers have created an unfunded mandate on the system.

Overwhelmingly, the federal dollars the department receives are targeted to specific populations of people, who make up about 10 percent of our service population. The department needs to serve the other 90 percent of customers who do not fit the specific program guidelines for those at-risk, economically disadvantaged or unemployed. In addition, due to the high workforce shortage, employers are using the WorkForce Center System more than ever to identify potential employees. Additional funding is of critical importance to serving these new customers.

The user-friendly MDES home page, **www.des.state.us**, permits a free workforce exchange between employers and job seekers via the Internet. It contains links to Minnesota Job Net, Minnesota Job Bank (electronic job listings) and America's Talent Bank, a site that allows employers to review electronic resumes of job seekers. Customer access to our services via the Internet will exceed 20 million "hits" in 1998. Among state agencies, this is the second most frequently visited website (after the lottery.)

Besides increased funding, the department can also alleviate the workforce shortage in the following ways:

- Continue to strengthen collaboration efforts, both on-site and electronically, among government agencies and program providers. This movement will not only help in workforce preparation, but also in life-long learning for career planning and retention in the workforce. Collaboration benefits both the worker and the employer. At the state level, we must also remain respectful of local community planning issues, services and needs.

- Bolster funding for Labor Market Information services. Regional Labor Market Analysts provide information regarding local job markets to employers, job seekers, educators, students and policy makers. They gauge local skill shortages and surpluses, analyze trends in regional economies, and distribute this information by speaking to local education and training providers about skill gaps and surpluses, organizing printed and electronic materials about jobs, creating and updating local and regional Web pages that are linked to MDES's home page and assisting with business expansion and location decisions. The delivery of high quality information to help Minnesotans make good decisions about their work life is a critical element of workforce competitiveness. (Federal funding for this service ended on June 30, 1998.)

The second major issue is the implementation of the new federal Workforce Investment Act. Co-authored in the Senate by Paul Wellstone, the legislation is the result of four years of bipartisan effort to retool the nation's job training system. Minnesota's entire congressional delegation supported the bill, and the President signed it into law on August 7, 1998.

The new law was modeled after the Minnesota WorkForce Center System. It consolidates 60 separate federal job-training programs into three block grants and creates a comprehensive workforce development system. It ensures that these programs are both effective and accountable.

Since the Workforce Investment Act is a system-wide change, the MDES management team is currently evaluating new opportunities to improve customer service or organizational efficiency and effectiveness; changes we will have to make in order to comply with requirements of the new legislation; changes to state statutes; and regulatory language recommendations to facilitate our implementation of the new Act.

## Constituencies

WorkForce Center System services help unemployed persons searching for jobs, employers looking for qualified employees, employed workers searching for new opportunities, persons eligible for reemployment insurance, students exploring career options or searching for work, human resource managers needing to educate themselves on employment laws and regulations, public assistance clients looking to achieve self-sufficiency, senior citizens in search of employment, displaced homemakers, dislocated workers needing retraining, disadvantaged youth in need of jobs and training, disabled persons needing job training or seeking to live self-sufficiently, blind or visually impaired people who need training to live independently, and blind or visually impaired people wanting non-visual information and/or assistive technology. To enhance customer outcomes, MDES is working with its customers to clearly define outcome measures to better determine the success of services and promote continuous improvement.

Key constituencies are, therefore, are employers, job seekers, workers, youth, students, the general public, unions, funding sources at the federal and state levels, the U.S. Department of Labor and the U.S. Department of Education, and non-profit advocacy groups too numerous to mention.

## Boards, Commissions and Task Forces

The following councils are mandated by law:

### **The Governor's Workforce Development Council (GWDC)**

This 33 member council replaced the Governor's Job Training Council and advises the Governor on workforce development policies, long range planning strategies regarding Minnesota's workforce and the coordination and integration of service delivery on a statewide basis. The council consists of individuals from business, community-based organizations, labor, local

elected officials and public members.

On the local level, Minnesota has 17 designated Workforce Service Areas created by federal law for the purpose of administering federal, state and local employment and training services. Each service area has a local workforce council (also known as a Private Industry Council or PIC) whose membership includes local government, business, labor and education representatives. The local workforce council is responsible for providing policy guidance for, and exercises oversight with respect to, activities conducted by the local WorkForce Centers in partnership with local units of government within the Workforce Service Area and the Commissioner of Economic Security. These councils represent the coordination of all the local partners charged with the Minnesota WorkForce Center System.

### **Rehabilitation Advisory Council for the Blind**

This council advises the commissioner about programs of State Services for the Blind. The council is limited to 15 members, a majority of whom must be blind or visually disabled.

### **Juvenile Justice Advisory Committee**

This committee is the supervisory board for the Department of Economic Security with respect to preparation and administration of the state plan and award of grants. The committee consists of eighteen members who must have training, experience, or special knowledge concerning the prevention and treatment of juvenile delinquency or the administration of juvenile justice.

### **State Rehabilitation Advisory Council**

This 16 member council advises the department on the performance of Minnesota's vocational rehabilitation programs, particularly relating to eligibility and the extent, scope, and effectiveness of services. The council also advises and assists in preparation of the State Plan for Vocational Rehabilitation Services, analyzes consumer satisfaction with vocational rehabilitation services, and reports to the Governor and the U.S. Commissioner of Education on the status of vocational rehabilitation programs.

### **Statewide Independent Living Council**

This council jointly develops and submits, in conjunction with Rehabilitation Services and State Services for the Blind, the State Plan for Independent Living. It also monitors, reviews, and evaluates the implementation of the State Plan.

### **YouthBuild Advisory Committee**

This committee recommends to the Commissioner eligible organizations to receive program grants to provide education and training services to targeted youth, evaluating final reports to each organization and providing recommendations to the legislature.

The department also has other advisory groups:

### **Reemployment Insurance Advisory Committee**

This committee is appointed by the Commissioner and reviews proposals, conducts studies and makes recommendations on matters affecting reemployment insurance laws, rules and policies. Membership consists of four members each from the legislature, business and labor.

### **The Operator Management Committee**

This committee is an eight member, elected body of licensed blind vendors who actively participate pursuant to federal mandate with State Services for the Blind (SSB) in: major administrative and policy and program development decisions affecting overall administration of the state's vending facility program, the development and administration of a state system for the transfer and promotion of blind vendors, the development and training and retraining programs for blind vendors, and sponsoring meetings and instructional conferences for blind vendors.

### **State Job Service Employer Steering Committee (JSEC)**

This is a statewide advisory task force comprised of eight representatives from the local JSECs which support Job Service offices throughout the state. It identifies issues and provides ongoing feedback on Job Service and Reemployment Insurance programs, works with the branch to

prioritize and address these issues, coordinates employer resources and efforts on state and national legislation, and works with the National Employers' Council on major issues and policy development.

## **Activity Summary**

As stated previously, the department's mission is to help people help themselves achieve economic security. The department furthers economic security by providing programs and services that foster economic independence and self-sufficiency through an integrated employment and training system. Customers find these services at their local Minnesota WorkForce Center, the place where federal, state and local employment and training related programs can be accessed. These include the Minnesota Job Service, the Minnesota Reemployment Insurance program, Private Industry Councils, the Minnesota Job Training Partnership Act programs, Vocational Rehabilitation Services, State Services for the Blind, youth and veterans programs, welfare-to-work and school-to-work programs. Also participating are other community-based organizations, nonprofit organizations, the employer community, the technical and community college system, and state, county and local health, education and social service providers.

The services and programs administered by the department will be described in further detail in the description of the branches.

## **Priority Projects**

Continuation of WorkForce Center System - The number one priority for the department in the last several years has been the development of the Minnesota WorkForce Center System. The hallmark of the integrated WorkForce Center System is increased customer satisfaction, through greatly improved services, at a significant reduction in cost compared to the previous delivery strategy. On-going customer satisfaction

surveys indicate that over 95 percent of WorkForce Center customers (both job seekers and employers) are very satisfied with the services they received. This is in sharp contrast to the days of long lines and general lack of customer service at the former "unemployment offices."

Other priority projects include:

Year 2000 conversion (Y2K) - The project involves the renovation and testing of all of the department's main computer software supporting all major programs. This involves changes to approximately 5 million lines of code to correctly process dates that cross the century boundary, the testing of that code under multiple year 2000 dates and the installation of the finished product.

A significant amount of software has already been or must be converted prior to January 1, 1999 because of the need to set dates forward into 2000. The remainder of the software is planned to be completed by June 30, 1999.

All personal computer workstations and off-the-shelf or custom software must be tested and possibly upgraded or replaced prior to January, 2000. In addition, all equipment using computer chip technology must also be tested and possibly upgraded before that time.

Contingency planning for problems that may be encountered will be an ongoing project through 1999. This planning has to include not only possible internal software or equipment failures but in addition, infrastructure failures including loss of electrical, telephone or network services, or the failure of the department's vendors, suppliers or business partners to fulfill their commitments.

Employment Service Labor Exchange Systems Project - This project is the first component of a "one stop operating system" that will allow all the business units of the Minnesota WorkForce Center System to share necessary information and to provide better, more seamless services to

customers. Completion of this project is also critical to addressing the Y2K issues that the current systems cannot handle.

Data Unification Management Project - This project will build a data warehouse and supporting infrastructure that will automate the extraction, transformation and load processes of all relevant data within MDES. The data warehouse will be designed to support ad hoc querying and online analytical processing (OLAP) of data from multiple agencies (currently Department of Human Services and MDES); it will contain consolidated department-wide data with links to DHS data, about customers and the services they use, in order to measure outcomes, performance indicators, and allow for a better understanding of our customers and business.

# Budget and personnel

An organizational chart displaying the entire department, along with number of personnel and budget, can be found on the next page.

# MINNESOTA DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC SECURITY

9/30/98

\$ in thousands  
Estimated SFY 1999 Expenditures

Non-State	State	Total
5.0	0	5.0
585	0	585

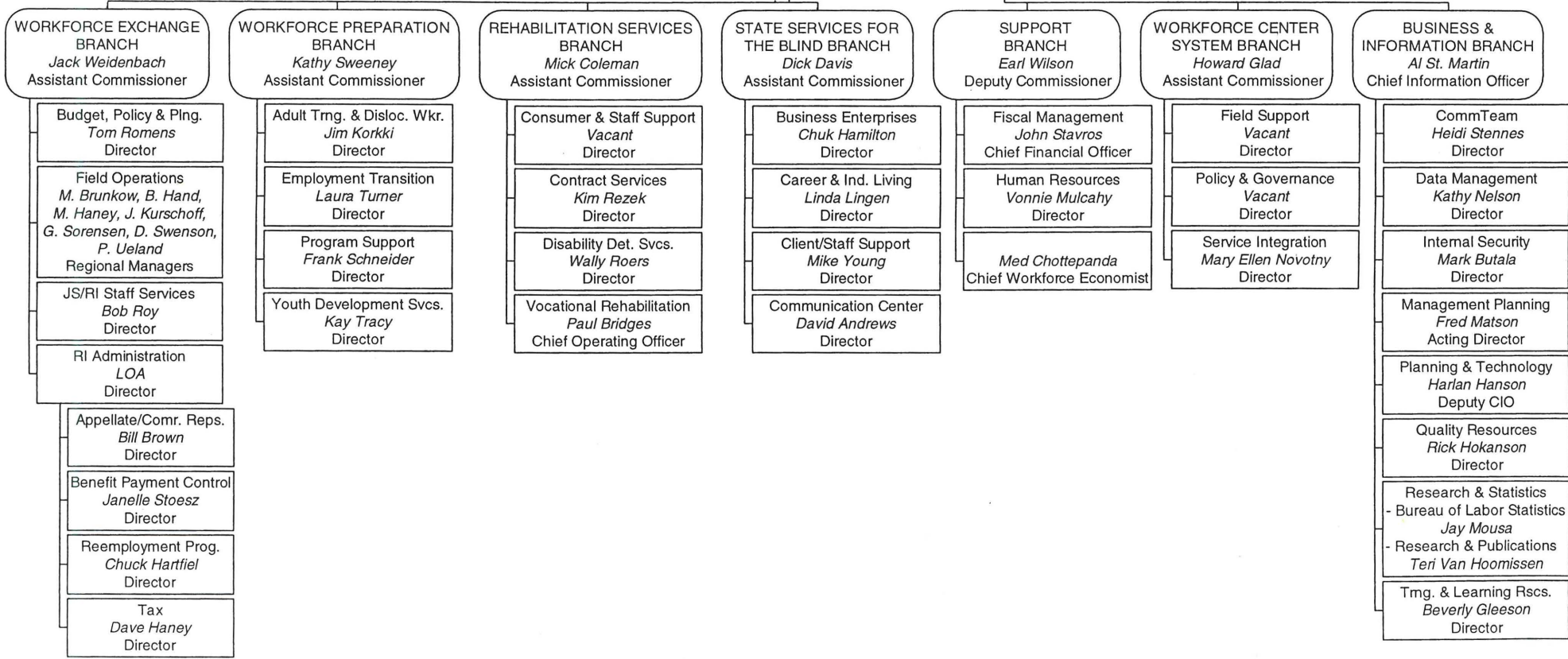
**R. Jane Brown**  
COMMISSIONER

	Non-State	State	Total
Total MDES FTE	1,714.7	83.5	1,798.2
Total MDES \$	584,512	37,722	622,264

*Joyce Anderson*, Administrative Assistant  
*Donnette Hilton*, Executive Assistant  
Vacant, Executive Assistant

**Earl Wilson**  
DEPUTY COMMISSIONER

*Joanne Cogswell*  
Administrative Assistant



FTE	Non-State	State	Total
	833.5	0	833.5
\$	423,403	0	423,403

Non-State	State	Total
41.8	13.1	54.9
83,252	10,418	93,670

Non-State	State	Total
499.9	3.2	503.1
52,902	10,910	73,812

Non-State	State	Total
60.1	56.4	116.5
8,514	3,792	12,306

Non-State	State	Total
68.6	7.7	76.3
4,250	431	4,681

Non-State	State	Total
7.0	0	7.0
706	0	706

Non-State	State	Total
198.8	3.1	201.9
10,853	2,171	13,024

# Agency branches

## Description of Branches

For complete program information, please refer to the Program Fact Sheets, affectionately called “burgundy border sheets.” These program summaries are updated annually, with the latest version scheduled for December, 1998.

### Workforce Exchange Branch

The Workforce Exchange Branch (WEB) provides systems, organization and support for statewide labor exchange in the WorkForce Center System. The branch’s mandate is to provide labor exchange service to all employers and job seekers in Minnesota. The branch provides customer focused service to meet the needs of employers, job seekers and our WorkForce Center Partners. This branch also administers Reemployment Insurance (RI), formerly known as Unemployment Insurance. The combination of information services, self service, staff assisted services and automated processes will ensure WEB's ability to provide long-term excellence in customer service and satisfaction.

Administrative funding comes from the federal government in the amount of \$51 million. In addition, the branch contracts with other entities to provide services locally in the amount of \$4 million. Unemployment trust fund payments are expected to total approximately \$370 million in the coming year. Programs of this branch serve approximately 300,000 individuals and 130,000 employers with a variety of services.

The Workforce Exchange Branch is organized into four areas:

1) Budget, Policy and Planning develops and monitors budgets for Job Service and Reemployment Insurance activities, coordinates strategic planning and policy development, directs Total Quality Management and customer

feedback systems, provides the lead in state and federal legislative activities, provides staff development and training, and administers marketing and communications efforts.

2) Field Operations oversees the operations of the local offices throughout Minnesota, implements strategic plans; assures compliance; and provides for the development of staff, technology and processes to assure necessary services and outcomes. There are seven regions located throughout the state.

3) Job Service/Reemployment Staff Services provides lead staff and administers special projects; coordinates technology development; and assures coordination with department, state and federal technology efforts.

4) Reemployment Insurance Administration oversees the following offices:

Appellate/Commissioner Representatives: This office administers activity associated with RI appeals. It hears and decides appeals of claimants and employers from determinations issued by the benefit and tax offices.

Benefit Payment Control: This office reviews RI payments made, identifies and collects possible overpayments, and investigates possible misrepresentation made by claimants and employers.

Tax: This office administers all activities related to reemployment tax activities. It determines employer liability and maintains employer accounts for reemployment insurance taxes including employer account numbers, address files, quarterly tax and payment reports, benefit charges and tax rates. It also makes the determination of whether a person is an independent contractor or an employee of a business.

Reemployment Programs: This office administers America’s Job Bank, SkillsNet, Alien Labor Certification, Veterans employment and Work

Opportunity Tax Credit. It also administers Reemployment Insurance intake, eligibility determination and claims processing, and Trade Adjustment Assistance.

America's Job Bank (AJB) is an important initiative of this branch. AJB, available on the Internet, includes four components: 1) The job bank which contains listings of available jobs and information pertinent to those jobs; 2) The talent bank that allows job seekers to develop an electronic resume, which can be matched against jobs in the "bank" and which can be viewed by employers seeking workers; 3) America's Career InfoNet which provides a wide variety of labor market information; and 4) The Learning Exchange, scheduled to be added to the AJB in the fall of 1998, which includes information about education and training resources throughout the country.

A top priority of the branch is the Reemployment Insurance remote initial claims system. The remote initial claims system will allow persons filing claims do so through a telephone transaction with an interactive voice response unit and staff. Remote claims taking via the Internet is also a part of this project. The branch received a \$1 million federal grant for this project, which mirrors efforts underway in a number of other states. Completion of this project will enhance customer service and provide for stronger linkages between the RI system and reemployment activities carried out in the Minnesota WorkForce Center System.

### **Workforce Preparation Branch**

The Workforce Preparation Branch administers and supports programs that are delivered by local community-based providers including Workforce Development Councils, Indian Reservation Governments, governmental units, and other community groups to plan and deliver services to individuals in need. These funds are a substantial resource for local WorkForce Centers to assist individuals and employers in meeting their employment and training needs.

Approximate funding for the year 1997/1998 is over \$93 million. 138,000 individuals were served in fiscal year 1998.

The branch is organized into four units. They include:

- 1) Adult Training and Dislocated Workers unit designs, measures and evaluates services to dislocated workers and other adult workers who are served at the Minnesota WorkForce Centers and independent grantee offices. Programs include: JTPA Title IIA which includes older workers and vocational education. In addition, there is the state supplement to IIA, EDWAA Title III and the state dislocated worker program, Victims of Torture; Enterprise Zone; and Older Americans (SCSEP).
- 2) Employment Transition unit provides state level administrative oversight for programs which prepare public assistance recipients, displaced homemakers and hard-to-serve populations for work. Programs include the Minnesota Family Investment Program (MFIP), the federal Welfare to Work Program (WtW), the Displaced Homemaker Program, the Food Stamp Employment and Training Program (FSET), Occupational Industrializational Centers (OIC) and other specially focused programs to assist persons in gaining and maintaining self-sufficiency.
- 3) Program Support unit provides branch-wide services, including fiscal management and budget coordination, contract administration, and office management. Unit personnel also monitor federal and state laws and regulations impacting branch support services, and provide input to program administrators in these areas of responsibility. The unit also provides data processing services, communications and local area network service to the branch.
- 4) Youth Development Services unit designs and implements services to youth in the areas of keeping students in school, work experience, employment opportunities, and transition between



school and future careers. It also designs and implements prevention and intervention programs and services for youth who are at risk or who have already been involved with the Juvenile Justice System. Programs include Youth Intervention Program; Juvenile Justice Program; JTPA Title IIB Summer Youth Employment and Training Program; JTPA Title IIC Youth Training Program; Minnesota YouthBuild Program; Minnesota Youth Works/Americorps Program; Minnesota City Grants Program; Truancy and Curfew Centers.

### **Rehabilitation Services Branch**

The Rehabilitation Services branch assists Minnesotans with disabilities to reach their goals for working and living in the community.

Approximate funding for Federal Fiscal Year 1998 is \$10.9 million in state and local funds and \$52.9 million in federal funds. There are approximately 500 MDES employees in this branch.

Programs of Rehabilitation Services provide a variety of services to over 81,000 individuals who have disabilities. The services include but are not limited to vocational planning, employment information and referral service, and guidance in maintaining employment.

The branch is composed of four units:

- 1) Consumer and Staff Services provides coordinated training, program evaluation, planning and development, fiscal services, and technology resources to RS customers and staff.
- 2) Contract Services has administrative responsibility for the human and financial resources used to achieve Extended Employment and Independent Living programs. The Extended Employment Program provides on-going employment support services to individuals in a variety of work settings including community rehabilitation program sites, community-based group sites, and community-based individual

sites. The Independent Living Program provides comprehensive services to people with severe disabilities to enhance their ability to live independently, function in their homes and with their families, and to participate in their communities.

3) Disability Determination Services determines whether persons applying for Social Security Disability Insurance and Supplemental Security Income qualify for benefits. The criteria used in this process are determined by the Social Security Administration.

4) Vocational Rehabilitation provides basic vocational rehabilitation services to consumers including vocational counseling, planning, training, guidance and placement, as well as certain special services based on individual circumstances.

### **State Services for the Blind**

State Services for the Blind fosters the achievement of vocational and personal independence by blind and visually impaired persons of all ages.

Funding is approximately \$12.3 million from state, federal and local sources. There are 116 full-time equivalent employees.

State Services for the Blind (SSB) programs serve over 30,000 persons. These services were designed to make it possible for blind and visually impaired persons to achieve their employment, personal and information access goals. Many individuals served had additional disabilities.

The branch is organized into four units:

- 1) Business Enterprises provides self-employment opportunities for blind persons receiving vocational rehabilitation services by establishing lunch rooms, vendeterias or vending machine routes in federal, state, public and private buildings.

2) Career and Independent Living Services administers direct rehabilitation services that are available to blind and visually impaired people of all ages when their loss of vision impedes their vocational, educational or personal independence.

3) Client/Staff Support supports other branch programs to assist individuals in reaching their rehabilitation goals. Services include: certification of legal blindness for homestead and tax benefits, THE STORE (an outlet for adaptive aids and devices), advisory council support, program development and evaluation, financial management, purchasing, contract management, and administrative and technical support.

4) Communication Center provides access to print information and to accessible media. Books and materials are brailled and taped for Minnesotans of all ages. Radio Talking Book is a Minnesota-based radio reading service broadcasting 24 hours of newspapers, best sellers and magazines every day of the year. Dial-In News provides access to newspapers by touchtone telephone.

### **Support Branch**

The Support Branch provides overall department administration support . The branch employs 77 people. Approximate funding is \$4.6 million.

Services include:

1) Fiscal Management provides budgeting, contract, subgrant encumbrance, invoice payment, payroll, financial reporting, purchasing, leasing, building management, warehousing inventory control, forms and records management, mail handling, duplicating and travel coordination.

2) Human Resources handles personnel administration, oversees administration of various labor agreements and coordinates human services planning and the employee appraisal system. A critical function for our commitment to full compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) also resides in the Human Resources

office of Affirmative Action/ADA that serves internal and external customers with ADA compliance advice and oversight.

3) Chief Workforce Economist researches labor market information, workforce planning and economic security.

### **WorkForce Center System Branch**

The WorkForce Center System branch provides the structure, organization and support for a statewide workforce development system nationally recognized as the vanguard of one-stop service delivery systems. It provides an in-depth menu of employment and training services which serves employers and individuals based on their needs rather than through a bureaucratic system based on programmatic or geographic eligibility or funding boundaries.

This system is a state and local partnership comprised of the Minnesota Department of Economic Security and seventeen local Workforce Service Areas. Primary partners include Job Service/Reemployment Insurance and Veterans programs, Rehabilitation Services, State Services for the Blind, local Workforce Councils/Private Industry Councils and local elected officials who work with the Job Training Partnership Act, Dislocated Worker and Older Worker Programs. This multi-partnered system also includes county governments, post-secondary and secondary education, county social service agencies, Community Action Agencies, Displaced Homemaker programs, and many other locally based service providers.

The branch is organized into three units:

1) The Field Support unit is responsible for the development, implementation, integration and support of the Minnesota WorkForce Center System infrastructure, consisting of all 53 Centers, an expanding network of WorkForce Center System Affiliates, and statewide WorkForce Center System access sites. Services provided include partner and needs analysis, team

building, site selection and planning, lease acquisition, cost allocation, coordination of remodeling, interior design furniture, hardware and software, acquisition efforts, accessibility assurance, marketing and system quality control.

2) The Policy and Governance unit provides policy and governance guidance pursuant to the Workforce Investment Act and its ramifications within the WorkForce Center System. This unit also staffs the Governor's Workforce Development Council.

3) The Service Integration unit coordinates WorkForce Center site and system planning, and integration, connectivity and integration of site partner services. The branch staffs the WorkForce Center System Issues Team, a multi-dimensional body tasked with raising and addressing partner concerns and issues. It chairs the Resource Area Advisory Group, a cross-branch team dedicated to identifying and recommending the best available materials and programs to meet customers' needs. It also chairs the Best Practices Advisory Group, whose responsibility is to look for opportunities, and expand upon successful initiatives which have the potential to improve customer service and outcomes system-wide.

Since the delivery of services under the Minnesota WorkForce Center System cuts across programmatic and funding boundaries to best meet the needs of our customers, the Assistant Commissioners of all branches meet on a frequent basis to ensure that program resources are properly aligned to meet those needs. This group is called STAR, for "Strategic Tactical Alignment of Resources." It is analogous to a Board of Directors.

### **Business and Information Branch**

This branch organizes into one entity the resources necessary for MDES offices to plan and prepare for their future. It also serves as the infrastructure for the delivery of technology services and the ongoing development of

employees to meet their emerging job requirements. There are 202 employees in the branch. Approximate funding is nearly \$11 million in federal funds and \$2.2 million in state funds. (The state funding is not on-going; it is for Year 2000 and WorkForce Center technology implementation.)

Services include:

1) CommTeam develops, produces, edits and distributes all department-wide communications, including the MDES homepage. In addition, it assists branches with program specific publications. The CommTeam also directs the department's marketing efforts.

2) Data Management office inventories collected data within the department and researches/recommends appropriate hardware and software for making the data most accessible and user-friendly. This office provides leadership in interagency data sharing in a jointly operated data warehouse with the Department of Human Services.

3) Internal Security office facilitates data privacy data access, and data security. It is also responsible for internal investigations.

4) Management Planning office facilitates department-wide planning and evaluation efforts, project management and group problem solving, and policy and procedure development.

5) Planning and Technology office is responsible for development, operation and support for all data systems and data exchange networks within the department and the Minnesota WorkForce Center System.

6) Quality Resources office is responsible for increasing customer satisfaction through the use of total quality management principles in all phases of department business.

7) Research and Statistics office collects data and

conducts economic and employment-related studies and surveys for the state and the U.S. Department of Labor. It includes the Minnesota Occupational Information Coordinating Committee.

8) Training and Learning Resources office is responsible for carrying out organizational learning and coordination of staff development plans and mentoring.

# Other

## Physical Plant

Unlike most other state agencies, MDES owns, occupies and manages several of its buildings.

These are :

- Headquarters building located in downtown St. Paul at 390 N. Robert.
- Minnesota WorkForce Center – North Minneapolis (1200 Plymouth Avenue North).
- Minneapolis WorkForce Center – South Minneapolis (777 E. Lake Street).
- RI Processing Center in St. Cloud.

These four buildings are worth approximately \$15 million dollars.

In addition, there are 50 leased WorkForce Centers throughout the state. State Services for the Blind occupies a leased headquarters site on University Avenue, which includes a radio station. The Disability Determination unit also leases space in the Metro Square Building in downtown St. Paul. There are also four leased RI processing centers statewide.

Equipment owned by the department includes:

- Mainframe computer and accessories at headquarters, worth about \$2 million.
- Approximately 2,600 personal computers, including laptops, and printers, worth about \$8 million.
- Workstations, chairs, etc. for all staff, purchased during the last five years, worth about \$7.2 million.
- Mailing and copying equipment worth about \$1 million.

## And in conclusion...

It is our belief that work should be fun! We believe this motto has served us well, and we hope that you adopt this credo also.

