



# Task Force on Workforce Development System Reform Interim Report

As required by Laws of Minnesota 2025, 1<sup>st</sup> Spec. Sess. chapter 6,  
Article 4, Section 37

February 15, 2026

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## Introduction

The Task Force on Workforce Development System Reform (hereafter, “Task Force”) was created during the 2025 legislative session. Members of the House and Senate committees with jurisdiction over the Department of Employment and Economic Development (“DEED”) recognized the complexity of Minnesota’s workforce development system. Lawmakers raised the desire to take a more active role in influencing the state’s workforce development strategy by making strategic investments, coordinating funding streams, and creating programs that meet the needs of workers and employers statewide. In order to better understand the various layers to the workforce development system, the legislature established the Task Force to holistically analyze Minnesota’s workforce development system alongside the Governor’s Workforce Development Board (“GWDB”) and DEED.

Laws of Minnesota 2025, 1<sup>st</sup> Spec. Sess. chapter 6, Article 4, Section 37 sets out the scope and duties of the Task Force. The Task Force is made up of two members of the House of Representatives, two members of the Senate, four members of the GWDB, and the commissioner of DEED.

The Task Force has five duties under session law: (1) review existing workforce development programs in Minnesota, including those funded by the federal and state governments, (2) study the current system for funding workforce development efforts, (3) investigate potential metrics for evaluating workforce development program outcomes, (4) make recommendations for changes to practices, programs, funding, and laws related to state workforce development efforts, and (5) propose draft legislation to implement any of the task force’s recommendations.

Additionally, the Task Force must gather input from communities with high unemployment rates, workforce development providers, the state ethnic councils, and the state demographer.

## Task Force Members/Report Vote

<b>Name</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Role</b>	<b>Vote</b>
Matt Varilek	Commissioner	Member	Yes
Dave Baker	Representative	Co-Chair/ House of Representatives Appointee	Yes
Misun Bormann	Southeast Minnesota Workforce Development Board	Co-Chair/Governor’s Workforce	Yes

		Development Board appointee	
Dave Pinto	Representative	House of Representatives Appointee	Absent
Bobby Joe Champion	Senator	Senate Appointee	Absent
Carla Nelson	Senator	Senate Appointee	Absent
Carol Anderson	Rural Minnesota Concentrated Employment Program	Governor's Workforce Development Board appointee	Yes
Michael Berndt	Dakota-Scott Workforce Development Board	Governor's Workforce Development Board appointee	Yes
Nicole Mattson	Hennepin-Carver Workforce Development Board	Governor's Workforce Development Board appointee	Yes

## Task Force Meetings

### Task Force Meeting #1: August 13, 2025

The inaugural Task Force meeting in August 2025 included member introductions, gaining a high-level understanding of the workforce development system, and sketching out plans for building shared knowledge through presentations and discussions at subsequent meetings.

### Task Force Meeting #2: October 30, 2025

The October Task Force meeting centered on crafting a guiding theme for the Task Force's work ahead. The Task Force developed the following problem statement:

*The Task Force on Workforce Development System Reform will evaluate how effectively Minnesota's workforce development system addresses the evolving needs of employers and job seekers to prepare the workforce for in-demand jobs through transparent, equitable, efficient and responsive services. The Task Force will identify and recommend improvements in*

*funding, programming, and reporting to improve system effectiveness and ensure our state’s workforce development system leads the nation.*

### Task Force Meeting #3: December 12, 2025

The December Task Force meeting heard presentations on “State and Regional Labor Market Information” from DEED’s Labor Market Information Team and a “State Demographics Overview” from the State Demographer. Following the presentations, the Task Force heard from a panel of workforce development professionals from the Department of Employment and Economic Development, Department of Labor and Industry, HIRED, and Workforce Development, Inc. Panelists discussed the importance of aligning programs with labor market needs, engaging employers as part of workforce development planning, and opportunities

### Task Force Meeting #4: February 6, 2026

Building off the August gathering, the February Task Force meeting took a deeper dive into federal and state workforce development. DEED presented an overview of federal funding, the Workforce Development Fund, the Minnesota Job Skills Partnership Program, and state workforce programs. At the federal level, Minnesota receives funding through the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act to serve adults, youth, and dislocated workers. This funding has been on the decline over the last several years due to Minnesota’s low unemployment rate. The presentation also discussed the Workforce Development Fund and how this funds state workforce development programs including the Minnesota Job Skills Partnership program, various competitive grant programs, and direct appropriations.

## Looking Ahead

### Stakeholder Engagement

Session law directs the Task Force to seek input statewide from communities with high unemployment rates or low workforce participation rates, workforce development providers, state ethnic councils, and the State Demographer. As of the February 6, 2026 meeting, the Task Force has engaged the State Demographer and some workforce development providers. The Task Force will look to build on this following the 2026 legislative session.

## Recommendations

The Task Force does not have any recommendations or proposed legislation at this time. The final report, due January 15, 2027, will contain the Task Force's final legislative recommendations.