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PURPOSE AND PROGRAMS

MINNESOTA DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC SECURITY

390 North Robert, St. Paul, Minnesota 55101

I. Program Philosophy And Purpose

The Department of Economic Security develops, implements and coordinates public employment and income policies and programs for the state of Minnesota. The Department assists people in need of employment training, vocational rehabilitation, job placement and temporary financial assistance services so that they can find meaningful work and become self-supporting.

The Department and its programs contribute to the well being of Minnesota's residents as well as to the overall economy of the state. By providing the opportunity to help people help themselves, whether they are unemployed or underemployed, low income or disabled, the Department attempts to provide Minnesotans with an opportunity to share in the state's high quality of life.

Minnesota has a diverse economy based in mining, manufacturing, agriculture and industry services. The state also has a wealth of human resources with the skills, knowledge, experience and desire to work. The Department of Economic Security helps both employers and potential employees by matching the needs of employers with the needs of job seekers.

The Department provides temporary financial assistance, job training, vocational rehabilitation and job placement for the unemployed or underemployed. Programs and services are provided to all Minnesota residents — regardless of age, race, sex, color, creed or disability. Specialized services and programs are developed to meet the employment, training and rehabilitation needs of Native Americans, displaced homemakers, welfare recipients, veterans, migrants, heads of households, aged persons, youth and the disabled.

For those whose physical, mental or emotional disabilities are a handicap to employment, the Department provides both training and placement. The Department is committed to educate

the community on the capabilities of the disabled; to develop an awareness of their civil and personal rights; and to remove economic, social, architectural, transportation or attitudinal barriers. Vocational Rehabilitation ensures that disabled persons have equal opportunities and access to state services, programs and facilities.

The Minnesota Legislature has enacted laws so that unemployment does not become a serious menace to the health and welfare of the people of the state. The unemployment tax system systematically accumulates funds from employers to provide benefits to former workers for periods of unemployment. Unemployment Insurance benefits help to maintain purchasing power of individuals and to limit the serious social consequences of unemployment. Temporary financial support helps the unemployed to meet their immediate living needs while employment services are provided by the Department and until new jobs can be obtained.

II. Program Operations

Program operations in the Department of Economic Security have one major objective: jobs for Minnesotans. The Department's goal is to improve public services that provide employment for persons who are unemployed, underemployed, low income and disabled. To accomplish this, the Department:

- provides statewide income assistance to eligible unemployed;
- facilitates the return of the unemployed and underemployed into the statewide job market;
- provides statewide services designed to help persons with disabilities overcome vocational handicaps and return to gainful employment in private industry, government or sheltered work situations;

- provides employment training to unemployed, underemployed and disadvantages individuals who reside in Economic Development Regions 1 and 6 through 10 and promotes coordination among all CETA local sponsors;
- acts as special advocate in state government for the poor in an attempt to make programs more responsive to their needs.

The Department seeks to help clients obtain these services more conveniently through:

- decentralized program decision-making;
- clear and less complicated procedures;
- well-trained, sensitive staff;
- co-location of local staff and services.

The Department continuously strives to better respond to clients' needs by:

- improving the provision and coordination of services to persons with multiple problems;
- strengthening the provision of training to clients who are not ready for employment before they move into job placement programs.
- insuring prompt attention to persons who desire a single service or who identify their own needs;
- improving communication with clients, employers and Department employees.

The Department's leadership role is to coordinate all public agency efforts which contribute to full employment in Minnesota.

This involves developing statewide employment, job training and vocational rehabilitation policies that will coordinate plans and procedures of the various public programs and their delivery systems.

The Department of Economic Security must coordinate and fully use available resources to enable it to offer anyone within a service area, who is available to work, a chance to prepare for a decent job. This includes people who have the skills needed to get a job as well as those who need specialized employment, training and rehabilitative assistance. The Department helps the client attain the goal of self-support through competitive employment. Where this goal is inappropriate due to a disability, the Department provides long-term financial assistance through subsidized employment in private, community sheltered workshops.

Employment And Training Division

The Employment and Training Division's main task is to assist job seekers in finding suitable jobs. This help is provided immediately or after necessary training and other job preparation services are provided. The Department also helps em-

ployers find qualified workers.

Major programs of this division include the Job Service, provision of claims services and Comprehensive Employment and Training (CETA). Related programs include Public Service Employment (PSE); Help Through Industry Retraining Program (HIRE); Disabled Veterans Outreach Program (DVOP); Work Incentive Program (WIN); Food Stamps; and a variety of youth programs such as Job Corps.

Numerous placement services are made available to employers. The Job Bank, a statewide computerized system listing daily job openings, provides the widest possible exposure for employer job needs. Other services include valid applicant tests to aid employers' hiring processes; recruitment programs for situations requiring mass hiring; access to other state employment services for the hard-to-find applicant; a large pool of applicants for temporary or part-time employment requirements; and subsidized on-the-job training.

The Job Service operates through a network of 63 geographical locations and up to 50 intervening points throughout the state.

CETA Balance of State services are provided in 54 rural counties through 14 local offices and five branches in the state's Economic Development Regions 1 and 6 through 10. Participants are trained for jobs so that they can become self-sufficient in an occupational field suitable to their interests and abilities. After long-range planning for their employment development, participants are funded for training in classrooms, on the job and in public service. Supportive services may be provided to keep participants in training and to help them find unsubsidized jobs.

Vocational Rehabilitation Division

The main program of this division is vocational rehabilitation for physically, mentally and emotionally handicapped persons throughout the state of Minnesota. Federal law mandates that services be provided first to persons who are the most severely handicapped. The goal is to help each person who goes through the vocational rehabilitation process attain a specific employment goal.

Clients are served through 35 field offices throughout the state. Services begin with an orientation to the Vocational Rehabilitation program. The client is assigned to a counselor and receives individualized counseling and guidance, vocational evaluation and diagnosis, medical evaluation, vocational training, job placement and follow-up. Procedures for delivery of services fully involve the client and utilize community resources and facilities.

A unique component of vocational rehabilitation is the cooperative arrangement with public

schools and state hospitals for the mentally ill and mentally retarded. These agreements help provide broader and more timely vocational rehabilitation services. The resources of both the referring agency and the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation are fully used to accomplish the client's rehabilitation.

The division provides informational, technical and financial aid to rehabilitation facilities, sheltered workshops and work activity centers. The staff also works with community groups to establish programs in rehabilitation facilities. Work activity center programming, based primarily in developmental achievement centers, is supported cooperatively by the departments of Public Welfare and Economic Security. The Office of Rehabilitation Facilities Services certifies sheltered employment and work activity programs statewide.

The Disability Determination Office adjudicates claims for Disability Insurance and Supplemental Security Income Benefit programs under sections of the Social Security Act.

Unemployment Insurance Division

The Unemployment Insurance Division pays unemployment benefits to persons temporarily and involuntarily out of work and collects employer taxes for the unemployment fund.

The division administers the following programs:

- the regular state Unemployment Insurance (UI) program for public and private sector employees;
- unemployment compensation for federal civilian employees (UCFE);
- unemployment compensation for members of the military (UCX);
- federal/state extended benefits (EB) when the unemployment rate is high enough so that additional benefits are provided beyond those of the above programs;
- trade readjustment assistance (TRA), additional financial benefits for persons who lose their jobs because of increased foreign imports;
- disaster unemployment assistance (DUA) for people who cannot work because of a natural disaster;
- combined wage claims (CWC) for people who have worked in more than one state;
- interstate benefits (IB) for people who worked in Minnesota but who have moved to another state and vice versa;
- special unemployment assistance (SUA) for people not covered by another program.

The division also provides training allowances for Work Incentive (WIN), Comprehensive Employment and Training (CETA) and Trade Act participants in those programs which are administered by the Employment and Training Division and some other CETA prime sponsors.

Two levels of administrative appeal from any division determination is provided to claimants for all of the above programs. In order to insure due process, the appeals are handled by professional employees of the Department, who do not report to any of the program directors.

Statewide CETA Coordination Office

The Statewide CETA Coordination Office promotes coordination among the CETA prime sponsor delivery system and other related employment and training systems. This effort includes the Governor's Council on Employment and Training (GCET) and Governor's discretionary funds for vocational education and innovative training programs.

The goal of the Statewide CETA Coordination is improvement of services to all clients — unemployed, underemployed and economically disadvantaged — not just those funded under isolated and independent CETA programs.

Office Of Economic Opportunity

The State Economic Opportunity Office advises the Governor and the Department on anti-poverty matters, mobilizes and coordinates anti-poverty resources, provides technical assistance to the Community Action Agencies (CAPS) and other Community Services Administration (CSA) grantees. The office staff participates in research and demonstration projects to develop alternative delivery systems for low income persons.

The office provides information on the causes and conditions of poverty in the state of Minnesota to the Governor, the legislature, other state agencies and the federal Community Services Administration's regional and national offices. It mobilizes and coordinates anti-poverty resources by developing written agreements with other state agencies involved in serving the poor and contracts with agencies for statewide coordination of programs serving the poor.

The office advocates for the poor by working for their representation on state boards, committees and agencies and developing career opportunities for them whenever possible. It also provides and researches information that will help develop programs which will benefit the poor. The office makes training available for Community Action Agencies using on-site training and technical assistance as well as regular communications.

ORGANIZATION

Minnesota Department of Economic Security

OFFICE OF THE COMMISSIONER
Michael O'Donnell, Commissioner
Donald Buckner, Deputy Commissioner
————— Phone: 612/296-3711 —————

Governor's Council on
Employment and Training
Vocational Rehabilitation
Council
Balance of State Advisory
Council
State Job Service Advisory
Council
Veterans Representatives
Vocational Rehabilitation
User Task Force
Work Equity Task Forces

Affirmative Action
Client and Employee Advocacy
Office of Economic Opportunity
Public Information and Education
Statewide CETA Coordination

EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING
James L. Haynes, Assistant Commissioner
Phone: 612/296-8756
Job Service
Balance of State CETA
Work Incentive
Work Equity

VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION
Marijo Olson, Assistant Commissioner
Phone: 612/296-5616
Client Services
Long-term Sheltered Workshops
(Facilities)
Disability Determination

UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE
Barbara Beerhalter, Assistant Commissioner
Phone: 612/296-6791
Benefits Branch
Tax Branch
Appeals Branch

MANAGEMENT SERVICES
Gary G. Dodge, Assistant Commissioner
Phone: 612/296-3700
Business and Financial
Data Processing
Research and Statistics