

WIOA STATE PLAN FOR
THE STATE OF MINNESOTA

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OVERVIEW

Under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), the Governor of each State must submit a Unified or Combined State Plan to the U.S. Secretary of Labor that outlines a four-year workforce development strategy for the State's workforce development system. The publicly-funded workforce system is a national network of Federal, State, regional, and local agencies and organizations that provide a range of employment, education, training, and related services and supports to help all jobseekers secure good jobs while providing businesses with the skilled workers they need to compete in the global economy. States must have approved Unified or Combined State Plans in place to receive funding for core programs. WIOA reforms planning requirements, previously governed by the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 (WIA), to foster better alignment of Federal investments in job training, to integrate service delivery across programs and improve efficiency in service delivery, and to ensure that the workforce system is job-driven and matches employers with skilled individuals. One of WIOA's principal areas of reform is to require States to plan across core programs and include this planning process in the Unified or Combined State Plans. This reform promotes a shared understanding of the workforce needs within each State and fosters development of more comprehensive and integrated approaches, such as career pathways and sector strategies, for addressing the needs of businesses and workers. Successful implementation of many of these approaches called for within WIOA requires robust relationships across programs. WIOA requires States and local areas to enhance coordination and partnerships with local entities and supportive service agencies for strengthened service delivery, including through Unified or Combined State Plans.

OPTIONS FOR SUBMITTING A STATE PLAN

A State has two options for submitting a State Plan — a Unified State Plan or a Combined State Plan. At a minimum, a State must submit a Unified State Plan that meets the requirements described in this document and outlines a four-year strategy for the core programs. The six core programs are—

- the Adult Program (Title I of WIOA),
- the Dislocated Worker Program (Title I),
- the Youth Program (Title I),
- the Adult Education and Literacy Program (Title II),
- the Wagner-Peyser Act Program (Wagner-Peyser Act, as amended by title III), and
- the Vocational Rehabilitation Program (Title I of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended by Title IV).

Alternatively, a State may submit a Combined State Plan that meets the requirements described in this document and outlines a four-year strategy for WIOA's core programs plus one or more of the Combined Plan partner programs. When a State includes a Combined State Plan partner program in its Combined State Plan, it need not submit a separate plan or application for that particular program. If included, Combined State Plan partner programs are subject to the "common planning elements" (Sections II and III of this document) where specified, as well as the program-specific requirements for that program. The Combined State Plan partner programs are—

- Career and technical education programs authorized under the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act of 2006 (20 U.S.C. 2301 et seq.)
- Temporary Assistance for Needy Families Program (42 U.S.C. 601 et seq.)
- Employment and Training Programs under the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (Programs authorized under section 6(d)(4) of the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 (7 U.S.C. 2015(d)(4)))
- Work programs authorized under section 6(o) of the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 (7 U.S.C. 2015(o))
- Trade Adjustment Assistance for Workers Programs (Activities authorized under chapter 2 of Title II of the Trade Act of 1974 (19 U.S.C. 2271 et seq.))
- Jobs for Veterans State Grants Program (Programs authorized under 38, U.S.C. 4100 et seq.)
- Unemployment Insurance Programs (Programs authorized under State unemployment compensation laws in accordance with applicable Federal law)
- Senior Community Service Employment Program (Programs authorized under Title V of the Older Americans Act of 1965 (42 U.S.C. 3056 et seq.))
- Employment and training activities carried out by the Department of Housing and Urban Development
- Community Services Block Grant Program (Employment and training activities carried out under the Community Services Block Grant Act (42 U.S.C. 9901 et seq.))*
- Reintegration of Ex-Offenders Program (Programs authorized under section 212 of the Second Chance Act of 2007 (42 U.S.C. 17532))

* States that elect to include employment and training activities carried out under the Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) Act (42 U.S.C. 9901 et seq.) under a Combined State Plan would submit all other required elements of a complete CSBG State Plan directly to the Federal agency that administers the program. Similarly, States that elect to include employment and training activities carried by the Department of Housing and Urban Development and programs authorized under section 6(d)(4) and 6(o) of the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 that are included would submit all other required elements of a complete State Plan for those programs directly to the Federal agency that administers the program.

HOW STATE PLAN REQUIREMENTS ARE ORGANIZED

The major content areas of the Unified or Combined State Plan include strategic and operational planning elements. WIOA separates the strategic and operational elements to facilitate cross-program strategic planning.

- The **Strategic Planning Elements** section includes analyses of the State's economic conditions, workforce characteristics, and workforce development activities. These analyses drive the required vision and goals for the State's workforce development system and alignment strategies for workforce development programs to support economic growth.
- The **Operational Planning Elements** section identifies the State's efforts to support the State's strategic vision and goals as identified in the Strategic Planning Elements section. This section ensures that the State has the necessary infrastructure, policies, and activities to meet its strategic goals, implement its alignment strategy, and support ongoing program development and coordination. Operational planning elements include:
 - State Strategy Implementation,
 - State Operating Systems and Policies,
 - Assurances, and
 - Program-Specific Requirements for the Core Programs, and
 - Program-Specific Requirements for the Combined State Plan partner programs.

When responding to Unified or Combined State Plan requirements, States must identify specific strategies for coordinating programs and services for target populations.* While discussion of and strategies for every target population is not expected, States must address as many as are applicable to their State's population and look beyond strategies for the general population.

* Target populations include individuals with barriers to employment, as defined in WIOA Sec. 3, as well as veterans, unemployed workers, and youth.

Minnesota is submitting a Combined Plan. Targeted populations include people of color and individuals with disabilities

I. WIOA STATE PLAN TYPE

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

Unified State Plan. This plan includes the Adult Program, Dislocated Worker Program, Youth Program, Wagner-Peyser Act Program, Adult Education and Family Literacy Act Program, and Vocational Rehabilitation Program. No

Combined State Plan. This plan includes the Adult Worker Program, Dislocated Worker Program, Youth Program, Wagner-Peyser Act Program, Adult Education and Family Literacy Act Program, and Vocational Rehabilitation Program as well as one or more of the optional combined State Plan partner programs identified below. Yes

COMBINED PLAN PARTNER PROGRAM(S)

Indicate which Combined Plan partner program(s) the state is electing to include in the plan.

Career and technical education programs authorized under the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act of 2006 (20 U.S.C. 2301 et seq.) Yes

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

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

Work programs authorized under section 6(o) of the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 (7 U.S.C. 2015(o)) Yes

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

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

Unemployment Insurance Programs (Programs authorized under State unemployment compensation laws in accordance with applicable Federal law) No

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

Employment and training activities carried out by the Department of Housing and Urban Development No

Community Services Block Grant Program (Employment and training activities carried out under the Community Services Block Grant Act (42 U.S.C. 9901 et seq.)) No

Reintegration of Ex-Offenders Program (Programs authorized under section 212 of the Second Chance Act of 2007 (42 U.S.C. 17532)) No

II. STRATEGIC ELEMENTS

The Unified or Combined State Plan must include a Strategic Planning Elements section that analyzes the State's current economic environment and identifies the State's overall vision for its workforce development system. The required elements in this section allow the State to develop data-driven goals for preparing an educated and skilled workforce and to identify successful strategies for aligning workforce development programs. Unless otherwise noted, all Strategic Planning Elements apply to Combined State Plan partner programs included in the plan as well as to core programs.

A. ECONOMIC, WORKFORCE, AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES ANALYSIS

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

1. ECONOMIC AND WORKFORCE ANALYSIS

A. ECONOMIC ANALYSIS

The Unified or Combined State Plan must include an analysis of the economic conditions and trends in the State, including sub-State regions and any specific economic areas identified by the State. This must include-

I. EXISTING DEMAND INDUSTRY SECTORS AND OCCUPATIONS

Provide an analysis of the industries and occupations for which there is existing demand.

II. EMERGING INDUSTRY SECTORS AND OCCUPATION

Provide an analysis of the industries and occupations for which demand is emerging.

III. EMPLOYERS' EMPLOYMENT NEEDS

With regard to the industry sectors and occupations identified in 1 and 2 above, provide an assessment of the employment needs of employers, including a description of the knowledge, skills, and abilities required, including credentials and licenses.

NOTE: Tables and figures can be seen in the online version of the state combined plan at <http://www.gwdc.org/wioa/index.html>

WORKFORCE TRENDS

Over the last 50 years of the past century, our state and national economies benefited from a rapidly growing workforce, driven by the entry of baby boomers into their prime working years and by the dramatic rise in female labor force participation. These gains provided businesses with an adequate, and often surplus, pool of job seekers from which to draw. Between 1976 (when state-level measurement began) and 2001, Minnesota saw its labor force increase by nearly 993,000 workers, an average of just under 40,000 per year.

But those conditions began to change at the turn of the century as the first baby boomers reached age 55 and female participation rates levelled off. Between 2001 and 2015, our labor force growth slowed to an average of about 12,000 new workers per year, a rate less than a third that of the prior 25 years.

This slowing growth will be the defining characteristic will challenges us in the years to come. The U.S. Census Bureau estimates that there will be nearly 50,000 more Minnesota residents who will reach the age of 65 by 2030 than there are youth who will reach 16 by that time. So if we had to rely solely on our existing populace, Minnesota would see its prime working age population fall by 50,000 by 2030. These estimates clearly show that the number of people available through natural growth in our working age population will fall well short of the needs of businesses looking to grow. (Table 1)

Table 1. Minnesota's Labor Force Projections, 2015–2030

| | 2015 Labor Force Projection | 2030 Labor Force Projection | 2015–2030 Change Numeric | 2015–2030 Change Percent |
|-------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| – | | | | |
| 16–19 years | 139,938 | 153,866 | +13,928 | +10.0% |
| 20–24 years | 274,329 | 267,537 | –6,792 | –2.5% |
| 25–44 years | 1,245,784 | 1,280,645 | +34,861 | +2.8% |
| 45–54 years | 661,860 | 643,042 | –18,818 | –2.8% |
| 55–64 years | 535,988 | 487,175 | –48,813 | –9.1% |
| 65–74 years | 126,182 | 200,349 | +74,167 | +58.8% |
| 75 years & over | 20,845 | 34,587 | +13,742 | +65.9% |
| Total Labor Force | 3,004,926 | 3,067,201 | +62,275 | +2.1% |

Source: Minnesota State Demographic Center

Thanks to the sharp rise in the number of older workers, Minnesota’s State Demographic Center projects that our workforce will expand by an average of just over 4,000 people per year over the next 15 years (see Table 1). That growth is one–tenth what we averaged between 1976 and 2001, and one–third the rate we experienced since 2001. However, these projections assume that participation rates in our older age groups will experience increases over the next 15 years. If these participation rate increases do not occur and instead hold constant at current participation rates for workers 55 and above, our labor force would shrink over the next 10 years by about 11,000 before finally starting to grow by 21,000 between 2025 and 2030. This would further reduce total labor force gains to a total of 10,000 over the next fifteen years, a growth we used to experience every three months during the 1980s and 1990s.

Alongside this dramatic slowdown and projected graying of our state’s workforce is another significant change in our state’s demographic makeup that has long been under way: increased racial diversity among our working age population. Over the past 15 years, Minnesota’s white population has grown by 4.2 percent while its populations of color have grown at rates far exceeding that, including our black (69.2%), Asian (61.8%) and Hispanic (84.3%) populations (see Table 2).

Table 2. Race and Hispanic Origin, 2014

| | Number (MN) | Percent (MN) | Change from 2000–2014 (MN) | Percent (US) | Change from 2000–2014 (US) |
|---------------------------------|-------------|--------------|----------------------------|--------------|----------------------------|
| – | | | | | |
| Total | 5,383,661 | 100.0% | +9.4% | 100.0% | +11.6% |
| White | 4,585,781 | 85.2% | +4.2% | 73.8% | +9.6% |
| Black or African American | 290,545 | 5.4% | +69.2% | 12.6% | +14.2% |
| American Indian & Alaska Native | 56,490 | 1.0% | +2.8% | 0.8% | +3.6% |
| Asian & Other Pac. Islander | 232,964 | 4.3% | +61.8% | 5.2% | +52.7% |
| Some Other Race | 78,863 | 1.5% | +19.8% | 4.7% | –3.9% |
| Two or More Races | 139,018 | 2.6% | +68.0% | 2.9% | +33.7% |
| Hispanic or Latino | 264,265 | 4.9% | +84.3% | 16.9% | +50.3% |

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2010–2014 American Community Survey

These changes are expected to continue and even accelerate in the coming years, especially among those Minnesotans of working age.

To illustrate the magnitude of these changes, consider that the number of white Minnesotans between the ages of 18 and 64 fell by 6,875 between 2013 and 2014, while the number of black Minnesotans within that age range rose by about 10,500 and the number of Minnesotans reporting their race as something other than white alone increased by nearly 28,000.

The reasons for these stark differences in the growth of working age populations by race are at least twofold: First, the white population is “aging out” into its retirement years at a much faster rate than our minority population. Second, there continues to be a significant influx of foreign-born immigrants who are typically in that working age cohort. Again using 2013 to 2014 as an example, the number of foreign-born blacks of all ages well over 90 percent of whom come from Africa, increased by about 14,000.

The State Demographic Center projects that between now and 2030, our minority population will grow by 37.3 percent, while the white alone population will grow by 4.1 percent, most of which will be 65 and older. While it is difficult to project the racial breakout of our workforce 15 years from now, especially as much of the growing diversity is driven by foreign immigration, it is clear that what little growth we are likely to see in our workforce will come in large part – if not entirely from – our minority workers.

Despite long-standing awareness that our populations of color generally, and our black community in particular, have failed to benefit fully from an improving economy, disparities persist and by many measures have worsened. According to 2015 Current Population Survey data, even after six years of economic recovery, Minnesota’s unemployment rate among blacks stood at 14.1 percent while the rate for whites was 2.9 percent. This ratio of black to white unemployment was the worst disparity in the nation! At the same time, our black labor force participation rate stood at 91 percent of the white rate, a ratio that was third worst among the 50 states.

To illustrate the impact that minorities will have on our labor force growth, suppose the black workforce grows at the projected 33.6 percent rate between now and 2030. This would increase the number of blacks in our labor force from its current 148,780 to 198,770. Also suppose we were able to close the gaps between black and white participation rates and unemployment rates so that, in 2030, they are both at the current rates held by whites. This would result in an annual increase in our employment growth by nearly 1,400 over each of the next 15 years, which adds up to over 20,000 additional workers.

Similarly, increasing labor force participation rates and reducing unemployment rate disparities for other race groups, people with disabilities, both younger and older workers, and people with lower educational attainment would lead to notable increases in the size of the state’s available labor force. Helping minorities and other groups with barriers to employment will be critical to ensuring that Minnesota’s employers are able to find workers and our economy is able to continue growing.

This will be especially important in Greater Minnesota, which has an older population than the Twin Cities, with 16.4 percent of the population aged 65 years and over, compared to 11.8 percent in the metro area. Greater Minnesota also has a lower percentage of people in the prime working years, as well as much less racial diversity than the Twin Cities.

While every region in the state saw an increase in the number of jobs held by minorities over the past 20 years, only 8 percent of jobs in Greater Minnesota are held by minorities, compared to 18 percent in the Twin Cities. Outside the metro area, the most diverse workforces are found in the Southeast and Southwest regions of the state, while the Northeast has the least diverse workforce overall. However, the racial disparities in unemployment are found in every region throughout the state, making it an opportunity for growth regardless of location.

In sum, the data show that current population and aging trends will lead to a tight labor market over the next two decades – with some local areas already experiencing labor force declines. The challenges our state will face over the next 15 years are so great that we’ll need to tackle them with a multi-pronged approach to attract and retain workers of all demographic characteristics. Retaining older workers beyond traditional retirement age, attracting and retaining young talent, removing barriers faced by workers of all abilities, welcoming immigrants from other countries, and educating and training the workers we do have are all necessary to overcome these challenges.

Because minority populations in Minnesota will continue to grow faster than the white population, particularly in the younger working age populations, the labor force will continue to diversify rapidly. Recognizing that the rapidly increasing share of existing workers are people of color, it becomes obvious that we must address this problem of persistent racial disparities directly.

If these disparities continue unabated, disadvantaged groups won’t be the only ones who suffer. Businesses and the economic well-being of every resident of our state also will be affected. So working on solutions to close these racial gaps between our state’s white population and its populations of color is not only the right thing to do, it’s the necessary thing to do if we’re to provide our economy and its employers with the workforce necessary for success.

LABOR FORCE PARTICIPATION AND UNEMPLOYMENT RATES

Regardless of the state of the economy, Minnesota has consistently reported lower unemployment rates than the United States as a whole. According to Local Area Unemployment Statistics, Minnesota’s unemployment rate hovered just below the national rate from 2005 to 2008, before rising as high as 7.8 percent in 2009, then dropping back to pre-recession levels by 2014 (see Figure 1). Within the state, the Twin Cities, Southeast and Southwest had the lowest rates in 2015, while the highest rates have consistently been found in Northern Minnesota. (Table 3)

Table 3. Employment Characteristics, 2014

| – | Number (MN) | Labor Force Partic. Rate (MN) | Unemp. Rate (MN) | Labor Force Partic. Rate (US) | Unemp. Rate (US) |
|--|-------------|-------------------------------|------------------|-------------------------------|------------------|
| Total Labor Force | 2,977,637 | 70.1% | 6.5% | 63.9% | 9.2% |
| 16 to 19 years | 148,882 | 51.1% | 18.7% | 37.4% | 27.1% |
| 20 to 24 years | 292,121 | 81.8% | 10.2% | 73.6% | 15.3% |
| 25 to 44 years | 1,239,120 | 88.1% | 5.8% | 82.3% | 8.4% |
| 45 to 54 years | 685,555 | 87.3% | 5.0% | 80.4% | 7.0% |
| 55 to 64 years | 486,134 | 71.8% | 4.9% | 64.3% | 6.6% |
| 65 to 74 years | 104,315 | 26.6% | 4.1% | 25.3% | 6.2% |
| 75 years & over | 19,955 | 5.9% | 3.5% | 6.0% | 5.7% |
| Employment Characteristics by Race & Hispanic Origin | – | – | – | – | – |
| White alone | 2,607,068 | 70.2% | 5.6% | 63.8% | 7.9% |

| | Number (MN) | Labor Force Partic. Rate (MN) | Unemp. Rate (MN) | Labor Force Partic. Rate (US) | Unemp. Rate (US) |
|--|-------------|-------------------------------|------------------|-------------------------------|------------------|
| Black or African American | 137,313 | 68.0% | 16.4% | 62.2% | 16.1% |
| American Indian & Alaska Native | 24,118 | 59.4% | 17.4% | 58.9% | 15.9% |
| Asian or Other Pac. Islanders | 121,498 | 70.6% | 7.2% | 65.4% | 7.1% |
| Some Other Race | 39,691 | 76.2% | 11.0% | 69.5% | 11.6% |
| Two or More Races | 46,714 | 69.5% | 13.2% | 65.2% | 13.4% |
| Hispanic or Latino | 125,615 | 75.0% | 10.1% | 67.5% | 11.0% |
| Employment Characteristics by Veteran Status | – | – | – | – | – |
| Veterans, 18 to 64 years | 141,601 | 77.7% | 6.9% | 75.2% | 6.2% |
| Employment Characteristics by Disability | – | – | – | – | – |
| With Any Disability | 136,879 | 51.0% | 14.0% | 41.3% | 17.8% |
| Employment Characteristics by Educational Attainment | – | – | – | – | – |
| Population, 25 to 64 years | 2,409,831 | 84.0% | 5.4% | 77.6% | 7.7% |
| Less than H.S. Diploma | 116,282 | 65.8% | 13.1% | 60.9% | 14.0% |
| H.S. Diploma or Equivalent | 532,306 | 79.1% | 7.3% | 73.3% | 9.9% |
| Some College or Assoc. Degree | 852,521 | 85.3% | 5.6% | 79.5% | 7.9% |
| Bachelor's Degree or Higher | 909,603 | 89.2% | 3.1% | 86.0% | 4.1% |

Source: 2010–2014 American Community Survey, 5–Year Estimates

Minnesota has much higher labor force participation rates than the United States, ranking third highest in the nation in 2014. By age, Minnesota has higher labor force participation rates than the nation in all but the oldest age group, and had lower unemployment rates for all age groups (see Table 3). While participation rates are dropping overall, most notably in the 16 to 54 year age groups, rates in the older age cohorts may increase over the next 10 years.

Although we have higher labor force participation rates than the nation for every race group, Minnesotans that are black, American Indian, or two or more races have higher disparities in participation when compared to whites than exist nationwide. Minnesota also has larger unemployment disparities in all minority groups, which could be a potential source of workers moving forward if rates improve.

One–year estimates from the 2014 American Community Survey show that unemployment rates were also higher for younger people, especially those from 16 to 24 years of age, and for people with lower educational attainment. In 2014, people with less than a high school diploma had an unemployment rate of 9.4 percent, compared to high school graduates at 5.6 percent, people with some college or associate's degrees at 3.6 percent, and workers with a bachelor's degree or higher, at 2.2 percent.

About 314,000 of Minnesota's working age population (between the ages of 16 and 64) have disabilities. Altogether, nearly 140,000 people with disabilities are in Minnesota labor market. However, their rate of unemployment, at 14 percent, far exceeds the overall unemployment rate in Minnesota (the comparable number was 6.5 percent for the same time period). People with disabilities also have a much lower labor force participation rate than the general population, at 51 percent compared to 70 percent. Over 60 percent of workers with disabilities work in the private sector although the non–profit sector has the highest concentration of disabled workers at 9.4 percent of its total workforce in Minnesota.

Minnesota’s veterans have a higher unemployment rate than nonveterans, but they have a higher participation rate than nonveterans as well. Moreover, their unemployment rate has been trending down in comparison to the overall unemployment rate over the past few years.

While no population level employment data exists for ex–offenders in Minnesota, an estimated three–fourths of ex–offenders nationwide remain jobless up to a year after release. Applying this share in Minnesota, about 5,730 of the 7,640 inmates released from Minnesota’s prisons in 2014 remained unemployed in 2015. While this high unemployment rate is in part driven by employers’ reluctance to hire them, this population is also impacted by very low educational attainment as well as employment gaps and lack of workforce experience due to their absence from the labor force while in prison.

HOUSEHOLD INCOMES, WAGES AND COST OF LIVING

Household incomes are higher in Minnesota than the nation. In 2014, Minnesota’s median household income was \$60,828, compared to \$53,482 for the U.S. Just over 41 percent of households in Minnesota had incomes below \$50,000 in 2014, compared to about 47 percent nationwide. One–third of households in Minnesota earned between \$50,000 and \$100,000, compared to 30 percent nationally. More than one–fourth of households in Minnesota earn more than \$100,000 per year, compared to 23 percent of households in the nation (see Figure 2).

However, not all race groups enjoyed the same level of prosperity. Incomes were lower for minority households, with the exception of Asians. The median income for blacks dropped to \$27,026 in 2014, well below the national median and less than half of the median income for white households. American Indians and people of some other or two or more races also had lower incomes compared to whites (see Figure 3). Incomes were also lower in Greater Minnesota, with just under half of households earning below \$50,000 per year, compared to less than 40 percent of households in the Twin Cities.

As calculated using DEED’s Cost of Living tool, the basic needs budget for an average family – which consists of two adults and one child with one full–time worker and one part–time worker – was \$50,988 in 2015. Workers in this family scenario would need to earn \$16.34 per hour to meet a basic cost of living (see Table 4).

Table 4. Family Yearly Cost, Worker Hourly Wage, and Family Monthly Costs, 2015

| Region | Family Cost of Living (yr) | Wage Required (hr) | Child Care (mo) | Food (mo) | Health Care (mo) | Housing (mo) | Transportation (mo) | Other (mo) | Taxes (mo) |
|-------------|----------------------------|--------------------|-----------------|-----------|------------------|--------------|---------------------|------------|------------|
| Minnesota | \$50,988 | \$16.34 | \$443 | \$772 | \$405 | \$907 | \$1,039 | \$235 | \$448 |
| Twin Cities | \$55,896 | \$17.92 | \$602 | \$783 | \$411 | \$1,022 | \$1,037 | \$252 | \$551 |
| Central | \$49,884 | \$15.99 | \$311 | \$753 | \$402 | \$861 | \$1,175 | \$226 | \$429 |
| Northeast | \$43,560 | \$13.96 | \$245 | \$758 | \$393 | \$764 | \$968 | \$213 | \$289 |
| Northwest | \$43,464 | \$13.93 | \$220 | \$760 | \$399 | \$700 | \$1,047 | \$204 | \$292 |
| Southeast | \$45,300 | \$14.52 | \$285 | \$761 | \$396 | \$794 | \$987 | \$218 | \$334 |
| Southwest | \$41,352 | \$13.25 | \$209 | \$766 | \$398 | \$701 | \$933 | \$205 | \$234 |

SOURCE: DEED COST OF LIVING TOOL

In comparison, the median hourly wage for all jobs in the state was \$18.65 in the first quarter of 2015, ranging from a low of \$15.42 in Northwest Minnesota to a high of \$20.49 in the Twin Cities. Median wages for all regions are higher than the wage required to meet a basic needs (see Table 5).

Table 5. Occupational Employment Statistics by Region, 2015

| – | Cost of Living | Median Hourly Wage | Estimated Regional Employment |
|------------------------|----------------|--------------------|-------------------------------|
| State of Minnesota | \$16.34 | \$18.65 | 2,730,020 |
| Twin Cities Metro Area | \$17.92 | \$20.49 | 1,691,650 |
| Central Minnesota | \$15.99 | \$16.66 | 263,270 |
| Northeast Minnesota | \$13.96 | \$16.58 | 141,800 |
| Northwest Minnesota | \$13.93 | \$15.42 | 203,060 |
| Southeast Minnesota | \$14.52 | \$17.74 | 253,990 |
| Southwest Minnesota | \$13.25 | \$15.48 | 177,030 |

Source: DEED Cost of Living, Occupational Employment Statistics

However, there is still a portion of households that are living on wages that are below the regional cost of living.

Even as Minnesota’s workplace continues to diversify, the growth rate of minority worker wage income has lagged behind minority employment growth. Wage growth lower than job growth is another way of saying the minority employment increase over the last two decades has occurred disproportionately in lower paid jobs.

The minimal improvement in the average gain for minorities shows that there hasn’t been much change in the wage mix of jobs held by minorities over the last two decades. While the share of all jobs held by minority workers increased from 7.4 percent two decades ago to 14.2 percent in 2014, the share of total wage income paid to minority workers increased from 5.5 to 10.7 percent. There has been almost no decline in the wage gap for minority groups in Minnesota, despite the minority workforce accounting for an expanding share of the state’s workforce.

Even looking only at workers who have recently graduated from college, minorities are more likely to be found in lower wage industries than whites, and minorities are less likely to be working in a job related to their field of study. Increasing the diversity of workers within moderate and high paying industries could improve minority worker earnings, particularly over time.

JOB VACANCIES AND OCCUPATIONS IN DEMAND

Employers in Minnesota reported 98,000 job vacancies in the second quarter of 2015, which is the second highest number ever recorded, and more than three times the number reported during the recession. Statewide, there were now just 1.2 unemployed people for each vacancy, which is the third lowest ratio on record and suggests that the labor market remains tight as baby boomers retire and job growth continues at a moderate pace (see Figure 4).

The economy has improved across the state, with employers in the Twin Cities reporting 50,880 vacancies, while Greater Minnesota had 47,117 vacancies – nearly four times more than during the recession. As such, employers have reported challenges finding qualified workers for their openings, but DEED research demonstrated that some of these hiring difficulties also come from demand side

factors such as uncompetitive wages, unattractive locations or work shifts, or limited recruiting strategies.

The Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development's Occupations in Demand tool shows hundreds of occupations with relatively high demand across Minnesota, with training and education requirements ranging from short-term, on-the-job training to post-secondary education to advanced degrees. These occupations are spread across different sectors in each region, typically concentrated in major industries. For example, food prep workers, customer service representatives, registered nurses, and software developers are among the top occupations in demand based on the consistent need for workers in different industries. Much of the current demand is found in health care, retail trade, accommodation and food services, educational services, and manufacturing.

Minnesota is projected to see job growth of 7.0 percent from 2012 to 2022, compared to 6.2 percent in Greater Minnesota and 7.6 percent projected growth in the Twin Cities. That's a gain of 204,999 new jobs statewide. Minnesota will also need to fill 673,520 openings for existing jobs left vacant by retirements and other career changers. The number of replacement openings is expected to dwarf the number of new jobs in every group except personal care and service, health care, health care support, and construction (see Figure 5).

INDUSTRY TRENDS AND PROJECTIONS

Minnesota ended 2014 with 126,815 more jobs than it had in 2004. Since the 2008 recession, Minnesota has enjoyed a solid recovery, adding more than 166,000 jobs for a growth rate of 6.5 percent over the five year period from 2010 to 2014. Employment in the Twin Cities grew 6.8 percent, up 104,500 jobs, while Greater Minnesota expanded 6 percent, adding 61,500 jobs over the period (see Figure 6).

Central Minnesota was the fastest growing region of the state, while the Twin Cities saw the largest amount of growth. Both Northeast and Southwest Minnesota had not recovered all of the jobs lost during the recession, while Northwest and Southeast had seen steady job growth.

Statewide, Minnesota was home to 164,409 businesses providing 2,729,438 jobs through 2014, with a total payroll of just over \$140 billion. Nearly 60 percent of statewide employment is located in the Twin Cities metro region. Average annual wages are \$51,584 across the state, but are about \$7,000 higher in the Twin Cities and about \$10,000 lower in Greater Minnesota (see Table 6).

Table 6. Minnesota Industry Employment, 2014

| Geography | Number of Firms | Number of Jobs | Total Payroll | Average Annual Wage | Change in Jobs 2010–2014 | Percent Change 2010–2014 | Change in Jobs 2013–2014 | Percent Change 2013–2014 |
|--------------------|-----------------|----------------|-------------------|---------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| State of Minnesota | 164,409 | 2,729,438 | \$140,857,248,755 | \$51,584 | +166,047 | +6.5% | +37,321 | +1.4% |
| Greater Minnesota | 86,055 | 1,087,891 | \$45,405,206,957 | \$41,737 | +61,541 | +6.0% | +16,204 | +1.5% |
| Twin Cities Metro | 78,354 | 1,641,547 | \$95,452,041,798 | \$58,136 | +104,506 | +6.8% | +21,117 | +1.3% |

Source: DEED Quarterly Census of Employment & Wages (QCEW)

Health care and social assistance is easily the largest employing industry in Minnesota, accounting for 16.7 percent of total employment. Manufacturing is the second largest industry in the state, and Greater Minnesota has a much higher concentration of manufacturing employment than the Twin Cities. Retail trade and the related accommodation and food services industry provided about 19 percent of total jobs in the state, while educational services is the fifth largest industry. Other important industries include public administration, professional and technical services, finance and insurance, administrative support and waste management services, wholesale trade and construction.

The recovery was widespread, with 19 of the 20 industries adding jobs since 2010, led by huge gains in health care and social assistance, manufacturing, construction, professional and technical services, administrative support (which includes temporary staffing agencies) and waste management services, management of companies, and retail trade and accommodation and food services (see Table 7).

Table 7. Minnesota Industry Employment Statistics, 2014

| Number of Firms 2014 Annual Data | Number of Jobs 2014 Annual Data | Percent of Jobs 2014 Annual Data | Total Payroll 2014 Annual Data | Avg. Annual Wage | Change in Jobs 2010–2014 | Percent Change 2010–2014 | Change in Jobs 2013–2014 | Percent Change 2013–2014 |
|----------------------------------|---------------------------------|----------------------------------|--------------------------------|------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 164,409 | 2,729,438 | 100.0% | \$140,857,248,755 | \$51,584 | +166,047 | +6.5% | +37,321 | +1.4% |
| 14,048 | 454,738 | 16.7% | \$21,144,800,181 | \$46,488 | +34,722 | +8.3% | +7,951 | +1.8% |
| 8,012 | 311,905 | 11.4% | \$19,053,127,782 | \$61,048 | +19,702 | +6.7% | +4,677 | +1.5% |
| 18,871 | 288,966 | 10.6% | \$7,850,864,668 | \$27,144 | +10,591 | +3.8% | +2,059 | +0.7% |
| 11,301 | 219,895 | 8.1% | \$3,652,205,389 | \$16,588 | +15,795 | +7.7% | +2,903 | +1.3% |
| 3,924 | 218,818 | 8.0% | \$10,101,891,266 | \$46,072 | +3,489 | +1.6% | +449 | +0.2% |
| 19,887 | 141,749 | 5.2% | \$11,885,980,709 | \$83,772 | +16,964 | +13.6% | +4,999 | +3.7% |
| 9,167 | 136,563 | 5.0% | \$12,716,330,442 | \$93,132 | +1,916 | +1.4% | -3,343 | -2.4% |
| 7,889 | 135,522 | 5.0% | \$4,591,154,568 | \$33,852 | +12,335 | +10.0% | +843 | +0.6% |
| 13,523 | 132,011 | 4.8% | \$10,164,289,250 | \$77,012 | +8,117 | +6.6% | +1,428 | +1.1% |
| 3,295 | 126,331 | 4.6% | \$6,472,785,850 | \$51,220 | +966 | +0.8% | +2,509 | +2.0% |
| 16,189 | 114,283 | 4.2% | \$6,731,579,149 | \$58,760 | +19,115 | +20.1% | +6,919 | +6.4% |
| 5,460 | 96,040 | 3.5% | \$4,708,374,157 | \$48,984 | +4,121 | +4.5% | +2,708 | +2.9% |
| 15,741 | 87,371 | 3.2% | \$2,618,499,566 | \$29,952 | +4,235 | +5.1% | +1,955 | +2.3% |
| 1,319 | 78,676 | 2.9% | \$9,075,988,953 | \$115,336 | +8,037 | +11.4% | +1,728 | +2.2% |
| 3,477 | 56,371 | 2.1% | \$3,821,807,951 | \$67,756 | -1,537 | -2.7% | -662 | -1.2% |
| 3,036 | 49,508 | 1.8% | \$1,492,026,464 | \$30,264 | +1,007 | +2.1% | +500 | +1.0% |
| 6,055 | 39,461 | 1.4% | \$2,166,060,466 | \$54,964 | +3,380 | +9.4% | -298 | -0.7% |
| 2,569 | 20,565 | 0.8% | \$700,305,798 | \$33,956 | +2,018 | +10.9% | -39 | -0.2% |
| 422 | 14,280 | 0.5% | \$1,363,564,607 | \$95,576 | +202 | +1.4% | -123 | -0.9% |
| 227 | 6,382 | 0.2% | \$545,611,539 | \$85,540 | +1,159 | +22.2% | +159 | +2.6% |

Source: DEED Quarterly Census of Employment & Wages (QCEW)

As noted, Minnesota's economy is expected to grow 7 percent from 2012 to 2022, a gain of 204,999 jobs. The largest and second-fastest growing industry will be health care and social assistance, which may account for 46 percent of total projected growth from 2012 to 2022.

The state is also projected to see fast job growth in construction, professional and technical services, administrative support and waste management services, retail trade, accommodation and food services, finance and insurance, and wholesale trade. These industries will need to focus on attracting and recruiting new workers to fill their needs. In contrast, the state is expected to see job cuts in public administration, utilities, manufacturing, and information (see Table 8).

Table 8. Minnesota Industry Projections, 2012–2022

| Industry | Estimated Employment 2012 | Projected Employment 2022 | Percent Change 2012–2022 | Numeric Change 2012–2022 |
|------------------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Total, All Industries | 2,915,401 | 3,120,400 | +7.0% | +204,999 |
| Health Care & Social Assistance | 410,004 | 503,800 | +22.9% | +93,796 |
| Construction | 94,835 | 118,520 | +25.0% | +23,685 |
| Professional & Technical Services | 130,505 | 149,410 | +14.5% | +18,905 |
| Admin. Support & Waste Mgmt. | 131,644 | 148,610 | +12.9% | +16,966 |
| Retail Trade | 283,040 | 293,860 | +3.8% | +10,820 |
| Accommodation & Food Services | 205,312 | 215,630 | +5.0% | +10,318 |
| Finance & Insurance | 138,413 | 147,150 | +6.3% | +8,737 |
| Wholesale Trade | 128,759 | 134,860 | +4.7% | +6,101 |
| Educational Services | 54,652 | 59,800 | +9.4% | +5,148 |
| Other Services | 124,752 | 129,750 | +4.0% | +4,998 |
| Arts, Entertainment & Recreation | 51,767 | 56,010 | +8.2% | +4,243 |
| Real Estate, Rental & Leasing | 38,873 | 42,920 | +10.4% | +4,047 |
| Management of Companies | 74,576 | 76,740 | +2.9% | +2,164 |
| Agriculture, Forestry, Fish & Hunt | 24,423 | 25,060 | +2.6% | +637 |
| Mining | 6,242 | 6,760 | +8.3% | +518 |
| Transportation & Warehousing | 79,203 | 79,655 | +0.6% | +452 |
| Public Administration | 373,564 | 372,520 | -0.3% | -1,044 |
| Utilities | 12,699 | 11,620 | -8.5% | -1,079 |
| Manufacturing | 305,607 | 301,530 | -1.3% | -4,077 |
| Information | 53,526 | 49,400 | -7.7% | -4,126 |

Source: DEED 2012–2022 Employment Outlook

By industry sector, minorities were most likely to hold jobs in administrative and support services, health care and social assistance, and accommodation and food services, which are all lower-wage industries. People of color were underrepresented in mining, utilities, construction, wholesale trade, agriculture, education services, finance and insurance, public administration, professional and technical services, management of companies and information, most of which are higher-wage industries. Increasing the diversity of workers within moderate and high paying industries could improve minority worker earnings and incomes (see Figure 7).

Supporting minority owned firms is another way to increase minority earnings and employment opportunities. For many Minnesotans of color, starting a small business enables them to step out of a traditional job and pursue their career passion. Likewise, many immigrant families see businesses as a way to become self-sufficient and provide a necessary – and often missing – service to their community.

However, minority-owned firms account for just 9.7 percent of all firms in Minnesota, compared to 28.9 percent of all firms nationwide. Just 1.8 percent of firms in Minnesota were owned by Hispanics in 2012, compared to 12.0 percent of U.S. firms (see Table 9).

Table 9. Characteristics of Minnesota Businesses, 2012

| – | Total Number of All Firms | Total Sales of All Firms (\$1,000s) | Number of Firms with Paid Employees | Sales of Firms (\$1,000s) with Paid Employees | Number of Paid Employees | Annual Payroll (\$1,000s) of Firms with Paid Employees | Number of Firms without Paid Employees | Sales of Firms (\$1,000) without Paid Employees |
|--|---------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|---|--------------------------|--|--|---|
| All Firms | 489,494 | 694,788,651 | 109,736 | 677,657,170 | 2,422,065 | 113,609,544 | 379,758 | 17,131,480 |
| Minority-owned Firms | 47,565 | 8,722,470 | 5,651 | 7,619,296 | 63,360 | 1,765,131 | 41,913 | 1,103,174 |
| Black or African American | 19,964 | 1,729,430 | 1,155 | 1,324,500 | 21,261 | 515,770 | 18,809 | 404,930 |
| American Indian or Alaskan Native | 4,152 | 724,233 | 456 | 683,316 | 6,402 | 206,312 | 3,696 | 85,907 |
| Asian | 15,553 | 4,163,621 | 2,995 | 3,774,405 | 27,255 | 720,977 | 12,558 | 389,216 |
| Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander | 328 | 65,151 | 44 | 57,161 | 407 | 7,239 | 284 | 8,000 |
| Some other race | 3,806 | 502,498 | 340 | 397,280 | 2,194 | 67,020 | 3,465 | 105,218 |
| Hispanic-owned Firms | 8,865 | 1,940,095 | 1,009 | 1,687,202 | 8,174 | 296,089 | 7,856 | 252,893 |

In some instances, detail categories may not add to total due to rounding or because a Hispanic firm may be of any race. Moreover, each owner had the option of selecting more than one race and therefore is included in each race selected.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Survey of Business Owners, 2012

Despite the relatively low numbers, minority-owned firms are growing in number much faster than white owned firms in Minnesota. While white-owned firms declined between 2007 and 2012, minority-owned firms grew by 60.3 percent in Minnesota with revenues up 88.5 percent over the period.

Our focus is on targeting and increasing our service capacity to Minnesotans with barriers to employment. In 2014, Minnesotans of color made up 19 percent of the state's population. Individuals from communities of color currently make up one in every four individuals served in our workforce system through universal services and eligibility-based program. Given the well-documented and unequal unemployment rates by race and ethnicity, we can do more to ensure that communities most in need have access to and participate in our workforce system.

This access and participation must also extend to Minnesotans with disabilities and disconnected youth. In 2014, nearly 11 percent of Minnesotans have a disability. These statistics are even greater for the state's Black or African American and American Indian residents. And unemployment rates for individuals with a disability exceed state averages in Minnesota.

Finally, while measures show that Minnesota has the 4th lowest rate among states for disconnected youth – those age 16 to 24 who are neither working nor in school – rates of disconnection are disproportionate by race and ethnicity. Minneapolis–St. Paul metro data show a 16.6 percent disconnection rate among Black or African Americans versus 7.7 percent for whites.

Regional profiles have been made available to each of the workforce development regions. Additional information and analysis will be provided to each region as requested.

B. WORKFORCE ANALYSIS

The Unified or Combined State Plan must include an analysis of the current workforce, including individuals with barriers to employment, as defined in section 3 of WIOA.* This population must include individuals with disabilities among other groups** in the State and across regions identified by the State. This includes: Individuals with barriers to employment include displaced homemakers; low-income individuals; Indians, Alaska Natives, and Native Hawaiians; individuals with disabilities, including youth who are individuals with disabilities; older individuals; ex-offenders; homeless individuals, or homeless children and youths; youth who are in or have aged out of the foster care system; individuals who are English language learners, individuals who have low levels of literacy, and individuals facing substantial cultural barriers; farmworkers (as defined at section 167(i) of WIOA and Training and Employment Guidance Letter No. 35-14); individuals within 2 years of exhausting lifetime eligibility under the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families program; single parents (including single pregnant women); and long-term unemployed individuals. ** Veterans, unemployed workers, and youth, and others that the State may identify.

I. EMPLOYMENT AND UNEMPLOYMENT

Provide an analysis of current employment and unemployment data, including labor force participation rates, and trends in the State.

II. LABOR MARKET TRENDS

Provide an analysis of key labor market trends, including across existing industries and occupations.

III. EDUCATION AND SKILL LEVELS OF THE WORKFORCE

Provide an analysis of the educational and skill levels of the workforce.

IV. SKILL GAPS

Describe apparent 'skill gaps'.

Minnesota ranked second in the country in postsecondary educational attainment

However, significant educational gaps exist between groups.

Minnesota's priority to address not only a workforce shortage but also a growing demand for the need for a skilled workforce is validated by current and future projections in postsecondary enrollment in higher education. Minnesota's population growth in racial ethnicity provides opportunity to fill the workforce demand however, the ever-growing gaps in education and skill attainment needs to be addressed to meet employer demands. Not only are there fewer racially diverse individuals entering post-secondary institutions but there are increasing needs for remedial education for these populations. Population growth for the state is from diverse populations growing to 20% by 2020 from a mere 4% in 1980. By 2025, 70% postsecondary attainment rates for ages 25-44.

70% postsecondary attainment rate for each race-ethnic group.

Interim benchmarks for each race-ethnic group.

Methodology for estimating postsecondary certificate attainment in Minnesota.

DEED's Labor Market office will soon roll-out a new data tool, workforce alignment system to better align, measure, and provide crosswalks between occupational openings and the educational requirements of each occupation. This tool will provide better data and projections for occupational openings, educational requirements, and placements of graduates.

The NGA Talent Pipeline Policy Academy brought together six state agencies and Minnesota State (post-secondary) which led to ten goals to address talent from early childhood through the retiring worker. Five of these goals supported the World's Best Workforce legislation around K-12 which provided an opportunity to build the continuum through adults. Two goals emerged as the state priority to address disparities gaps in education and employment acknowledging our call to action to eliminate these gaps and develop the skills with individuals with the most barriers. Minnesota's state plan has been developed with a focus on addressing the needs of our current and future workforce. While overall, Minnesota is a highly-educated state, the data demonstrates our need to address the opportunities for individuals of color, individuals with disabilities, at-risk or out of school youth, veterans, and long-term unemployed individuals.

With the passing of WIOA, the GWDB identified five in-demand industry sectors that represent greatest opportunity for employment with livable wages and industries that provide occupational growth through career pathways. These industries at the highest NACIS level include; construction, manufacturing, healthcare, natural resources, and professional and business services. Minnesota has sixteen local workforce areas and six regional workforce development areas under WIOA. Our action plans for these six regions provided guidance for the regional plans which focus on; equity and the disparities gaps, sector strategies to engage business and industry to develop training/industry recognized credentials/employment, and strategies to align and leverage resources and assets of the region to build from their key industry sectors. The six regions submitted regional plans in June 2016 which were reviewed and in the process of modifications for submission in February 2017. The GWDB will oversee these regional plans, provide input through their board

representation, evaluate, and disseminate best practices. These action plans support the state (strategic) plan for the state and the GWDB. Partners in this combined plan will all serve on a results based accountability sub-committee of the GWDB to provide guidance and direction. The regional plans address individuals served through all the combined plan partners; youth, out-of school youth, TANF/SNAP recipients, Adult Basic Education, K-12, dislocated workers, WIOA Adult, UI, WP, Senior Employment, Migrant seasonal farmworkers, CTE, Perkins, Veterans, and all jobseekers. Minnesota’s focus on industry sectors, employer engagement, priority to serve individuals with barriers, and measuring outcomes will result in innovative solutions to address the workforce challenges that the state faces today and in the future.

Minnesota has long been recognized as a state with a well-educated workforce. Based on 2014 American Community Survey estimates, 92.6 percent of all Minnesota residents 25 and older have a high school diploma, the 2nd-highest share in the nation.

The state also ranks 11th in share with a bachelor’s degree or higher at 34.3 percent, which increases to an 8th-highest 39.6 percent when limited to young (25 to 34) residents. However, these exemplary statistics conceal additional dimensions of our racial imbalances that need to be addressed. Among black Minnesotans alone, the share of the population 25 and older with a high school diploma is 80.9 percent, a share that ranks 42nd in the nation. It is widely recognized that this educational gap is a key underlying factor in the employment disparities that this plan addresses. Racial disparities notwithstanding, overall Minnesota’s high level of educational attainment is enough to meet the educational requirements of current jobs and of jobs projected to exist in Minnesota’s economy at least through 2024. In fact, by this aggregate measure, the only shortages that will exist by education level are for jobs requiring only a high school diploma or less (see table below). The table below illustrates the relationship between the educational attainment of the current workforce and the education requirements of jobs projected to exist in Minnesota’s economy in 2024.

Educational Attainment of Population 25 years and over, 2014

| - | Educational Attainment of Population 25 years and over, 2014 | Projected Employment in 2024 (DEED Employment Projections 2014-2024) | Projected Employment in 2024 (DEED Employment Projections 2014-2024) |
|--|--|--|--|
| - | - | Number of Jobs | Surplus (Shortage) |
| Less than HS Diploma | 275,444 | 689,637 | (414,193) |
| High school graduate (includes equivalency) | 943,854 | 1,102,289 | (158,435) |
| Some postsecondary education, no degree (includes vocational training) | 793,278 | 307,169 | 486,109 |
| Associate’s degree | 403,984 | 248,398 | 155,586 |
| Bachelor’s degree | 833,676 | 676,904 | 156,772 |
| Graduate or professional degree | 426,020 | 112,602 | 313,418 |
| TOTAL | 3,676,256 | 3,137,000 | 539,256 |

Although Minnesota appears to have a sufficient supply of educated workers to meet the demands of employers at least through 2024, gaps may exist or arise in certain occupations and/or geographic regions that require specialized skills and/or education beyond a high school diploma, particularly as the labor market tightens. For this reason, DEED has been and will continue to develop new informational products and website tools to provide career guidance to those choosing whether and where to pursue additional education and training. One such tool is the Labor Market Information

Office's Career Profiles (<http://mn.gov/deed/data/data-tools/career-profile/>), an all-in-one source for career explorers to learn about an occupation's employment conditions (wages, growth, vacancies, etc.), educational requirements, appropriate instructional programs, and post-secondary offerings, tasks and required skills and abilities, related occupations, and direct links to currently available job openings.

In addition, the LMI Office is developing a method for measuring workforce alignment that involves identifying the number of graduates of various instructional programs and aligning them with the number of occupational positions that these graduates are now qualified to fill. Career explorers could then identify educational programs that are expected to yield good employment opportunities for graduating student. These tools will provide the information necessary to best align the choices students make regarding major with the occupational opportunities being created by Minnesota's employers.

Skill gap analysis is a strategic function at the regional level. Regional planning includes the selection of key growth sectors and occupations in demand that lead to family sustaining wages. The diversity of Minnesota's economy requires this type of approach to best meet the needs of business and industry across the state. The LMI data described through this section of the plan is provided on a regional basis and is assisting regions with articulating their skill gaps and the alignment of system resources to more effectively address those gaps.

The approach to filling those gaps can be illustrated by considering the 307,169 Minnesotan's who have some postsecondary education, but no degree. If a region has selected an occupation in demand within a sector strategy that requires a 1 year certificate, that gap for individuals in this category can be articulated relatively easily by looking at the gaps in skills that could direct educational and training design to fill those gaps, whether it be classroom or work-based, such as an apprenticeship.

Job Seekers participating in this type of approach would also be assessed for gaps in support needs, such as child care, transportation and other basic needs. Minnesota's FastTRAC programs represent the fundamental basis for our design of career pathways. The goal is to provide the shortest successful path to educational/credential attainment and transition into occupations in demand.

2. WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT, EDUCATION AND TRAINING ACTIVITIES ANALYSIS

The Unified or Combined State Plan must include an analysis of the workforce development activities, including education and training in the State, to address the education and skill needs of the workforce, as identified in *Education and Skill Levels of the Workforce* above, and the employment needs of employers, as identified in *Employers' Employment Needs* above. This must include an analysis of –

A. THE STATE'S WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES

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

* Required one-stop partners: In addition to the core programs, the following partner programs are required to provide access through the one-stops: Career and Technical Education (Perkins), Community Services Block Grant, Indian and Native American programs, HUD Employment and Training programs, Job Corps, Local Veterans' Employment Representatives and Disabled Veterans' Outreach Program, National Farmworker Jobs program, Senior Community Service Employment program, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) (unless the Governor determines TANF will not be a required partner), Trade Adjustment Assistance programs, Unemployment Compensation programs, and YouthBuild.

Developing and updating Minnesota's Combined State Plan to meet the requirements of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) has enabled Minnesota to look closely at the state's current workforce development system to determine what works and what improvements can be made to meet changing needs. This plan seeks to address significant challenges to the workforce development system and ongoing opportunity barriers faced by the state residents the system supports. Challenges include labor force availability; disparate impact populations, such as people of color, individuals with disabilities and disconnected youth; increased reliance on technology, and the need to remain relevant and useful to job seekers, given their rapidly changing capacities and expectations.

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

Career Services – WIOA has 13 required elements for career services, all which support customers to make informed decisions about their career choices and to understand the resources needed and available to assist them with pursuing their goals. Minnesota's system focuses on providing career information, job seeker services and connections to support services that help individuals become job seeker ready and help ensure they have the level of stability necessary to successfully hold a job. System partners provide a robust range of workshops, e-learning, one-on-one meetings and other resources to help people prepare for a successful job search.

Minnesota's career services are supported by nationally recognized labor market information systems and a "Creative Job Search" curriculum, as well as workshops designed for a wide range of needs – including career planning, skills assessment, resume writing, interviewing and how to use social media in your job search. Minnesota's Unemployment Insurance (UI) division also has laid the ground work for moving services to the web by creating e-learning courses based on the Creative Job Search curriculum. Resource referrals are also a critical component in connecting job seekers with needed resources. These services are provided throughout the system at Workforce Centers, partner sites and are often augmented by services through non-required titles/partners, such as the public library system. DEED provides required and optional training to all Core program, Combined State Plan programs and optional one-stop delivery system partners to ensure consistent approaches and quality services for all job seekers.

All core programs participate in career services to the fullest extent possible through collocation at Workforce Centers and other locations determined necessary for serving job seekers. Title II being the exception to collocation, works closely with WorkForce Centers to coordinate career services and referrals among the programs for seamless transition for customers. Having a "career and work oriented" context for much of their instruction, including computer literacy, provides strong support for job seekers to transition to services at the Workforce Centers.

All other Combined State Plan programs also have direct connections to career services provided to job seekers and program participants through the WorkForce Centers. As an example, TANF services are currently located at 45 of the 48 WorkForce Centers in Minnesota. Post-secondary Carl Perkins is the only non-direct individual service provider in the Combined State Plan, but the work they produce aligns with the building of career services that support career pathway thinking.

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

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

All core programs participate in training services, as allowed by their federal title rules and regulations. Title I-B and Title IV programs support Youth, Adult, Dislocated workers and individuals with disabilities, often coordinated with state funding and other community based services to ensure successful alignment and outcomes of educational and employment goals. Title II provides services to Minnesota's most diverse population of any plan partner and plays a strategic role in basic skills attainment and preparation for post-secondary education. Title III, which doesn't allow for occupational training activities, serves as a key linchpin for the referral process as they are often the first point of customer contact in the system for low income adults, dislocated workers and other targeted populations.

All other Combined State Plan programs, as allowed by their federal title rules and regulations, participate in the provision of training services. Most of these programs have greater restrictions on the provision of training services, but often provide the opportunity for co-enrollment and possible greater reliance on more traditional sources of financial aid for college or other opportunities. Post-secondary Carl Perkins, as non-direct service provider, is more embedded in the design of post-secondary education, supporting the development of new education and training for emerging occupations and emphasizing non-traditional occupations, to name a few aspects of their role.

Business Services – WIOA adds new emphasis to the recognition of services to business and plans to add performance metrics for these activities. Currently, DEED (Title III) has twenty-two Business Service Representatives that coordinate, lead, and develop response-driven regional and statewide workforce planning strategies and solutions for Minnesota businesses. The Business Service Representatives provide outreach and consult with targeted industry sectors. They establish partnerships with industry associations, workforce service providers, education, and economic development. The primary service provided to employers is to help them find workers.

MinnesotaWorks.net, the state's online job bank, allows businesses to post openings for free. At any given time, it has more than 80,000 job postings and more than 45,000 active resumes from job seekers and has the capacity for businesses to be recognized as "veteran friendly", supporting workforce re-entry of our returning veterans. . The state and its partners assist with recruiting and other workforce planning strategies, such as training or skill assessments and labor market information so employers understand competitive factors impacting their ability to attract and retain a high-skilled workforce.

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

All other Combined State Plan partners benefit in similar ways from the business services activities. Some of these programs, like post-secondary Carl Perkins, have business engagement requirements that assist them with program planning and other aspects of training development. Minnesota also has had great success with the veterans program and strategies that tap into the business services activities.

All optional partners have connections to the One-Stop system's career services, training services, and business services through a variety of options. These options include collocation, sharing recruitment information, participating in referral networks, participation on strategy or service related activities. These options are designed based on regional presence and access to the services.

B. THE STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES OF WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES

Provide an analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of the workforce development activities identified in (A) above.

Minnesota's strengths and weaknesses analysis of the activities provided under WIOA will be looked at through the lens of a career pathways system and how the six elements identify and support the gap analysis of what the current system offers and what the future system needs to deliver.

Career Services Strengths:

The 13 required elements of career services address are naturally embed in a career pathway system. From entry into the system in the resource areas of One-Stops, to the partnerships with community-based organizations, most, if not all of the career services provided are regional or localized to individual labor markets. This is achieved through constant input from regional and local employers through employer engagement on local workforce development boards, participation in focus groups and career fairs. Minnesota's workforce development system providers also represent the growing diversity of our state's population, with community engagement by local providers enhancing and expanding services to assist with emerging populations and issues, specifically people of color, individuals with disabilities and disconnected youth. The employer and community engagement also contribute to the customer-centered design, offering individualized or culturally appropriate approaches.

Minnesota utilizes a variety of funding and resources to provide career services activities, drawing from federal, state, local and philanthropic organizations. The reinstatement of the full Governor's set aside budget and a recently awarded Workforce Innovation Fund grant provide a much needed infusion of funds to support the updating of career services that will be pursued, including technology upgrades, and streamlining services to more effectively serve job seekers.

Minnesota also oversees several key workforce development programs that seek to address the state's economic disparities including:

- **Business Competitive Grants:** The program supports nonprofit organizations that provide business assistance to targeted groups including women, minorities, rural residents, innovative startups, entrepreneurs, inventors and people with disabilities.
- **Pathways to Prosperity:** The program uses a career pathway design in meeting the skills needs of businesses and individuals. The program's innovative approach helps educationally under-prepared adults succeed in well-paying careers by integrating basic skills education and training in fields where these skills are in-demand.
- **Youth at Work:** Provides job training and placement to Minnesota's youth population, in addition to access to networks and problem-solving skills, to support their long-term careers. Each of these sources provide opportunities to review policy and programming requirements or plan approval to support efforts and ensure a standard of service delivery. Aspects of system management of career services included shared calendaring and data systems across all Workforce Centers and within all Adult Basic Education programs. Customer satisfaction tools are also utilized in various ways, to assist providers with continuous improvement of their services.

Career Services Weaknesses:

A career pathways approach to Career Services presents several opportunities for improving our services. At the highest level, the biggest opportunity for change is the approach to serving job seekers – from helping them obtain their next job, to helping them understand their potential career pathway opportunities and the tools to help them become self-directed in pursuing their pathway.

The value of more purposeful employer engagement will be authentic and well-articulated pathways. These pathways will highlight the skills, both soft and technical, and experience requirements;

educational and credential requirements; and other special needs for a given set of related occupations. Understanding these pathways will enable better design of content based on labor market analytics and other real-time needs of employers. More purposeful community engagement will address the needs to understand barriers within the system that impact greater access to career services that result in better employment opportunities and outcomes.

Customer-centered design efforts will improve access to services and the quality of services needed to address people of color, individuals with disabilities and disconnected youth. More culturally relevant environments, including staff reflecting diversity of communities; accessible materials and websites or web tools; and outreach strategies engage job seekers where they are located are examples of how Minnesota can improve the design of career services.

The strategies and actions for addressing these weaknesses in the system will be led by the regional partnerships and the local workforce development boards. Through the regional planning process, each region will be required to zero in on in-demand occupations, specific populations experiencing inequities in educational and employment outcomes, and creating business led sector partnerships that provide the necessary input for the local boards to direct and guide the workforce development system investments in their region that contribute to the foundation of career services.

Funding and resources for career services presents a challenge under WIOA. Career services are intended to not only serve program eligible individuals but also the general public. With the lack of dedicated funding for career services and a base level requirement that requires substantial financial support, it has begun to strain the existing funding streams that are also intended for training activities. This ties closely to the need for policies and programs to be updated, leveraging new approaches and use of technology to become more efficient and uniform across system providers.

System management approaches and tools are also needed to help monitor and measure the impact of new strategies and tools. Approaches may include standardized tools for initial assessments that can be shared across required partners or tools that create a shared intake process to streamline program access and referrals, as well as other best practices.

The strategies and actions for addressing these weaknesses in the system will be led by the Governor's State Board and Cabinet Agencies that oversee the programs participating in the State Combined Plan. Minnesota continues to experience shifts in funding and resources. This, combined with expanding approaches to career services under WIOA, will require innovative approaches and stronger coordination of efforts through policy and program updates. Technology solutions through system management approaches will be key to bridging existing divides that exist within career services. Minnesota has begun to explore options in this area through the WIF granted awarded last year and is pending approval of an implementation plan.

Training Services Strengths:

Minnesota's training services reflect the key elements of a career pathways system. Based on the BEST model from the state of Washington, Minnesota modeled its Pathways to Prosperity initiative on a career pathways approach. This initiative drew heavily upon employer and community engagement for identifying the initial career pathways and targeted populations selected and included a customer-centered design that offered a career navigator to assist with coordinating the required supports to ensure a higher completion and employment rate, with an ultimate goal of a career and family sustaining wage.

Many of the career pathway projects have specifically addressed services for people of color, individuals with disabilities and disconnected youth. The results of these initial efforts demonstrated promise and work has continued to evolve in this area. Minnesota's two year postsecondary education institutions and adult basic education also draw heavily on employer engagement to ensure curriculum and skill requirements remain relevant. This process is leveraged by multiple partners, such as the department of corrections, and serves a strong base for meeting the training needs of employers.

Minnesota also has strengths in the area of funding and resources. State, local and philanthropic support for workforce development makes a substantial contribution to the state's workforce development system. Strong performance by the local boards and service providers has led to the awarding of WIA incentive funds and competitive grants; state appropriations that support additional youth services; services to individuals with disabilities; dislocated and incumbent workers; and adult basic education. Most of these resources augment the activities under WIOA. There are also significant resource coordination activities related to training activities, such as the Youth Practitioners Network, the local workforce development boards and efforts by CBO coalitions.

Activities have further support through changes or creation of new policy and programming development specific to career pathways projects serving low income adult populations. Minnesota has strong working relationships between the agencies that oversee the WIOA titles and the Department of Human services, which oversees the TANF and SNAP E&T programs. Carl D. Perkins, a newly required partner under WIOA, also contributes to the policy discussions, through the mapping of career pathways and their understanding of articulation and matriculation needs to align with postsecondary institutional requirements. The majority of the special programming in career pathway pilots have included or required these types of partnerships which will contribute to policy and program changes.

These efforts also support work in the area of System Management, currently anchored, from a data perspective, within WorkforceOne. This system supports data management and sharing across WIOA titles I and IV; TANF and SNAP E&T, including all of the local partners delivering the related services. This system is also moving toward having participant documents stored electronically, streamlining administrative activities and monitoring.

Training Services Weaknesses:

A career pathways approach to training services is multi-faceted and extends well beyond the required titles of WIOA and the authorizing federal legislation for all the required partners. The largest investment in the workforce development system occur in K-12 and postsecondary education. Stronger and more articulated alignment across the span of education that lead to an industry recognized credential are critical. Disconnects also exist with other barriers, such as social stigmas associated with poor educational attainment, limited English proficiencies and disabilities.

The opportunities and benefits of a career pathways system for the individual are more purposeful with employer engagement which will be authenticated through well-articulated pathways. The education and credential requirements specifically the content, driven by employer engagement, needs to be contextualized into the various facets of education. Access to training or education through the delivery, driven by community engagement, needs to recognize and provide alternative approaches to learning and recognition of learning, including work-based opportunities.

Minnesota's Pathways to Prosperity projects demonstrated the need for and potential success for a customer-centered design and approach. Success requires providing career navigators to assist with the coordination of support services and an alternative to scheduling and instructional approaches. In implementing Pathways to Prosperity and other career pathway initiatives, the state has a better understanding to broaden the scale-ability in moving the system statewide. This is one of, if not the most critical element for broader success of implementing WIOA and a career pathway system.

The strategies and actions for addressing these weaknesses in the system will be led by the regional partnerships and the local workforce development boards. Through the regional planning process, each region will be required to zero in on in-demand occupations, specific populations experiencing inequities in educational and employment outcomes, and creating business led sector partnerships that provide the necessary input for the local boards to direct and guide the workforce development system investments in their region that contribute to the delivery of training services in a more accessible and usable way for populations experiencing inequities in educational and employment outcomes.

Funding and resources strategies will also support developing new approaches to training services. Examples of needs in this area are the level of career counseling in high schools, the number of youth who do not finish high school or connect to post-secondary education, and the number of students requiring developmental education courses prior to starting a post-secondary field of study. These issues reflect inefficient or ineffective use of resources. Through better alignment, programs and policies can guide changes in the system's approach to education and life-long learning. This is one of the greatest weaknesses of WIOA, with shrinking funds and more mandates on activities and processes.

Improving system management will require a coordinated effort of state agencies, state agency boards, local workforce development and school boards, and service providers across the system. Stemming from a shared vision and an understanding of outcomes and common measures, efforts need to focus on developing better approaches to measuring system processes and outcomes that validate a career pathway system and support the needs of a high quality workforce. This should be a long-term goal, based on how the other components and elements develop in this plan.

The strategies and actions for addressing these weaknesses in the system will be led by the Governor's State Board and Cabinet Agencies that oversee the programs participating in the State Combined Plan. Minnesota continues to experience shifts in funding and resources. This, combined with expanding approaches to training services under WIOA, will require innovative approaches and stronger coordination of efforts through policy and program updates. Minnesota is fast becoming a State funding dominated system in relation to federal funding for workforce development and the associated programs in the Combined Plan. This phenomenon will require a thoughtful approach to charting the future of workforce development in Minnesota.

Business Services Strengths:

Current business services involve a high degree of employer engagement. From those represented on the local workforce development boards, participating on training advisory groups with postsecondary education, employers provides direction to business services in Minnesota. Community engagement is a growing area of activity, as we work to address disparate impact among people of color, individuals with disabilities and disconnected youth. This presents a unique opportunity to bridge the divides of cultural differences and work place expectations. One recent example includes a workshop for employers to support their development of cultural competence in

attracting and retaining a diverse quality workforce. A better understanding of the needs of employers and communities can lead to customer-centered design of services that benefit both job seekers and employers.

Funding and resource needs for business services are supported at a basic level. There are multiple approaches to business services, and many are implemented with the support of our partners. Policy and programming guidance also exists at multiple levels and supports a variety of goals and initiatives.

One of the improving developments of the state's services is related to system management. Salesforce is a customer relationship management application that is used by several of the partners, including economic developers and chambers of commerce. With improvements in technology the partners have an interest maximizing the tool for better coordination, effective services for employers, and the impact of services.

Business Services Weaknesses:

Re-envisioning business services under WIOA and through a career pathway lens presents a number of opportunities to address weaknesses. Clearly employer engagement is occurring, but could be done in a far more purposeful and targeted way through sector partnerships. Employer-led sector partnerships provide a better understanding and focus on the needs and skills needed within occupations. Building authentic and articulated career pathways expands access in these sectors and establishes better connections and communications with employers, thus more explicitly demonstrating the value of their engagement.

Community engagement also benefits business services. Businesses are social organizations and understanding and capturing the strengths of a diverse workforce is essential to business success. Addressing cultural competency needs of businesses will directly impact the socio-economic needs of disparately impacted populations. The opportunity for expanding business services is in building the cultural competency of employers, bridging the divides that have contributed to disparities and have hampered the prosperity of the businesses and communities. Employer engagement and community engagement will support the needs for strengthening the customer centered design of services for businesses.

The strategies and actions for addressing these weaknesses in the system will be led by the regional partnerships and the local workforce development boards. Through the regional planning process, each region will be required to zero in on in-demand occupations, specific populations experiencing inequities in educational and employment outcomes, and creating business led sector partnerships that provide the necessary input for the local boards to direct and guide the workforce development system investments in their region that contribute to the delivery of business services in a way that enables them to tap the skills and going diversity of Minnesota's workforce.

Funding and resources for business services also presents opportunities for better employer services. Relative to other aspects of the workforce development system, business services is probably among the least strategically coordinated activities in the system, due to the complexities of economic development activities and the continuing changing needs of the workforce in a global economy. On the surface, it can seem that these two factors are at odds with each other, but through a more strategic career pathways approach, better coordination and strategies should emerge, along with policy and program changes, that should support workforce and economic development activities becoming more mutually beneficial.

Finally, we need to look at opportunities for a system management approach that monitors and measures the right things. WIOA will eventually require performance metrics for business services, but will not be available until after WIOA is implemented. The Aspen Institute has proposed an approach that has merit. It looks at three levels of business services – 1) transactional services, looking at basic labor exchange services; 2) transformational services to individual businesses, looking at workforce development planning; needs of individual firms; and 3) transformational services to industry sectors, looking at sector based strategies for meeting shared needs of a given industry. These three levels of services lend themselves to a career pathway system and will guide discussions in Minnesota while we wait for further guidance from the U.S. Department of Labor, under WIOA.

The strategies and actions for addressing these weaknesses in the system will be led by the Governor's State Board and Cabinet Agencies that oversee the programs participating in the State Combined Plan. Minnesota continues to experience gaps in business services activities. This, combined with expanding need for individual agency approaches to building specific relationships with individual employers is problematic for the system. The State Board will be addressing continuous improvement needs and efforts in relation to business services, looking for strategies and approaches that unify efforts to best serve business while meeting the needs of program providers. The state agencies will begin to assess policies that will assist with alignment and better coordination of activities and services for business.

C. STATE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT CAPACITY

Provide an analysis of the capacity of State entities to provide the workforce development activities identified in (A) above.

The National Governors Association (NGA) Talent Pipeline Policy Academy is a cross-agency leadership team that is working to institute shared goals and strategies across the state's education and training pipeline. The Governor's Workforce Development Board (GWDB) is responsible for convening meetings and coordinating the activities of the policy academy, with technical assistance provided by the NGA Center for Best Practices. Senior leaders from the core partner agencies and other state entities have met monthly, attended three cross-state gatherings, and NGA policy analysts have traveled to Minnesota for two in-state policy sessions.

Initial work of the policy academy centered on creation of a shared vision and goals. The shared vision has been incorporated into the State Combined Plan under WIOA. Talent Pipeline Policy Academy's K-12 education-related goals mirror the World's Best Workforce goals found in Minnesota Statute 120B.11. These five goals were expanded to include five workforce-related goals, creating an education-to-career continuum. Racial and economic disparities along this continuum are at the forefront of the policy academy's work. Over the course of the past year, strategies to achieve these goals have emerged: Systemic Implementation of Career Pathways for Adults and Experiential Learning for Youth.

The team members involved in the policy academy were instrumental in launching an ongoing committee of the GWDB, the Career Pathways Partnership (CPP). The CPP was formed to establish state leadership and an operational framework to support sector-based Career Pathways. It is a foundational group that provides an exchange of information and, through the development of short- and long-term goals, impacts Career Pathways programs and policies from a state, regional, and local perspective. The CPP is chaired by two members of the GWDB and includes a broad spectrum

of members from all regions of the state, including business and industry, state agencies, education, higher education, and community-based organizations.

Regional convenings on Experiential or Work-based Learning for ages 16-24 were recently held in three areas of the state: Southwest Minnesota, Northeast Minnesota and Minneapolis/Metro. Workforce center directors, with the support of the Minnesota Workforce Council Association (MWCA), collaborated with GWDB staff on logistics and an agenda. The goal was to gain insight on the unique challenges each region faces. The sessions also provided an opportunity to plan an integrated approach to establishing and expanding co-location of workforce centers within colleges and Adult Basic Education (ABE) centers in key areas of the state. Invitees included superintendents, ABE partners, postsecondary institutions, technical colleges, business and industry, and community-based organizations. An external consultant familiar with government at all levels facilitated the events and is submitting a white paper as a final deliverable. A follow-up survey was sent to participants by the Economic Analysis Department at DEED and results are being analyzed.

Ongoing work is also being done on specific deliverables required by the NGA prior to the conclusion of the policy academy:

- Measures corresponding to the policy academy's goals, including educational attainment goals;
- Talent Supply and Demand Dashboard to support the alignment and use of education, workforce and economic development data, including longitudinal data systems and current labor market data;
- Asset Mapping of state and federal funding/programs to identify opportunities to increase alignment between the state education and training pipeline.

The involvement of the Minnesota Department of Labor and Industry in the NGA policy academy and Career Pathways Partnership efforts has led to inter-agency collaboration and the awarding of a U.S. Department of Labor Innovation Fund Grant to support and study federally funded employment and training programs to ensure that our public workforce system evolves to continue serving the needs of job seekers and businesses. The funds will be used to build a "demand driven labor market" system and help implement and test innovative ways to deliver services more efficiently, facilitate cooperation across programs and funding streams, and create programs aligned with the needs of specific employers or industry sectors. This will lead to improved services and will provide invaluable data about effective and sustainable strategies that can be used nationwide.

DEED's Labor Market Information Office and its regional analysts continue to collaborate with local workforce investment boards, DEED staff, and others to provide data and analysis for grant applications; MnSCU's Program Planning Office to provide data, analysis, tools and training for program planning; the Dislocated Worker program to provide and improve career products, planning and reporting; Veteran's Services to provide and analyze information and data for planning and evaluation purposes and the GWDB. The LMI Office is currently working to improve its web-based data tools and the design and navigation of its website. In addition, the LMI Office DEED regularly develops 10-year projections of statewide and regional occupational employment and wages, job vacancies, and regional employment.

The State Longitudinal Education Data System (SLEDS) is jointly managed by the Minnesota Office of Higher Education and the Departments of Education and Employment and Economic Development. The system matches student data from pre-kindergarten through completion of postsecondary and

into the workforce, enabling education and policymakers to answer a range of program and policy questions that can be used to gauge the effectiveness of programs, design targeted improvement strategies, and assist in creating a more seamless education and workforce system for all Minnesotans.

DEED's Office of Policy includes the Performance Management Office, which works throughout the agency to facilitate results-based accountability that is client-focused, impartial, and transparent. The office informs strategic direction by providing data-driven analysis and context to those who use, deliver, and fund the Minnesota economic and workforce development systems. Three major functions are information analysis, management analysis, and outreach.

DEED's programs and services are delivered through our 48 WorkForce Centers, online services and eligibility-based programs. DEED also partners with certified service providers, non-profits, and Minnesota State Colleges and Universities, and Adult Basic Education programs.

Overview of our clients in State Fiscal Year (SFY) 2014:

- Over 230,000 Minnesotans received service from DEED's Workforce Development programs and services.
- One out of every four Minnesotans served by our workforce development program and services is from a community of color.
- More than 66% of our customers served by our workforce development program and services found a job with a Minnesota company.
- Approximately 22% of unemployed Minnesotans received a services from a WorkForce Center..

Approximately 7.5% served were veterans.

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WorkForce Center services are available to all Minnesotans throughout the state, free of charge. These customers are often called **universal customers**. They might walk into a WorkForce Center and use a computer to search for a job or take a workshop on resume writing.

In Calendar Year 2015, Minnesota's WorkForce Center system:

- Served 90,390 total customers, including 47,000 Unemployment Insurance applicants and over 14,000 veterans; and
- 8,560 workshops were delivered to 28,470 attendees.

Demographics of WorkForce Center customers served include:

- 72% were White; 23% were African American or Black; 7% were Hispanic; 5% were American Indian or Alaskan Native; 4% were Asian or Hawaiian Native or other Pacific Islander;
- 67% were age 31 or over; and
- 8% have less than a high school diploma/GED; 55% have a high school graduate; and 37% have a college graduate

Online services for job seekers are also available to all Minnesotans, free of charge. Customers can create a resume and search for jobs on MinnesotaWorks.net, the state's no-fee job bank for jobseekers and employers.

In Calendar Year 2015, MinnesotaWorks.net:

- Had 801,400 total job openings posted; and
- Opened 79,320 new job seeker accounts and 1,940 new employer accounts.

Demographics for customers of MinnesotaWorks.net include:

- 78% were White; 14% were African American or Black; 5% were Hispanic; 4% were American Indian; 4% were Asian or Hawaiian Native or other Pacific Islander;
- 54% were age 35 or older; and
- 48% had a high school diploma or GED; 44% had a vocational credential or college degree.

Eligibility-based programs: While DEED serves all Minnesotans through any of our 48 Workforce Centers, our primary focus is on disadvantaged workers, or those with barriers to employment. These populations of Minnesotans have been separated from employment through no fault of their own and often fall into one of the following categories:

- Veterans
- Laid-off workers
- Low-wage, low-skill adults
- People with disabilities
- At-risk youth

Almost 50,000 Minnesotans each year receive workforce development services through state- and federally-funded eligibility-based programs administered by DEED. Services range from skills evaluations and career guidance to on-the-job and classroom training. This number does not include individuals receiving Department of Human Services-administered income assistance programs who are required to complete employment services with DEED, an additional 70,000.

In SFY 2014, DEED's eligibility-based programs:

- Served 47,101 total (28,141 unduplicated) customers; and
- One in three (33%) customers served were long-term unemployed and had no earnings in the six months prior to enrollment.

Demographics for eligibility-based program customers include:

- 74% were White; 17% were African American or Black; 7% were Hispanic; 2% were American Indian; 5% were Asian or Hawaiian Native;
- 15% have a disability;
- 64% are age 31 or over; and
- 52% have education beyond a high school diploma or GED.

Vocational Rehabilitation Services and State Services for the Blind:

In FFY 2016, Vocational Rehabilitation Services (VRS):

- Serving 17,240 persons under Title I of the Rehabilitation Act, all of whom will be individuals with either a significant disability or a most significant disability under Minnesota's administrative rule for vocational rehabilitation;
- 89% will be persons who have a most significant disability (three or more functional limitations); 11% will be persons with a significant disability (one or two functional limitations); and
- 3,000 individuals will have individualized employment plans with a supported employment goal, under Title VI Part B, Supported Employment Services Program.

Adult Basic Education: The mission of Adult Basic Education (ABE) in Minnesota is to provide adults with educational opportunities to acquire and improve their literacy skills necessary to become self-sufficient and to participate effectively as productive workers, family members, and citizens.

In Program Year 2014, ABE programs:

- Served 38,612 customers; and
- One in four (25%) participants served were unemployed at entry into the program; 40% were not in the labor force.

Demographics for ABE program customers include:

- 19% were White; 37% were African American or Black; 23% were Hispanic; 3% were American Indian; 16% were Asian or Hawaiian Native; 2% were two or more races;
- 6% have a disability;
- 75% are age 25 or over; and
- 90% do not have education beyond a high school diploma or GED.

B. STATE STRATEGIC VISION AND GOALS

The Unified or Combined State Plan must include the State's strategic vision and goals for developing its workforce and meeting employer needs in order to support economic growth and economic self-sufficiency. This must include—

1. VISION

Describe the State's strategic vision for its workforce development system.

As described in the economic and workforce analysis above, Minnesota's future economic prosperity requires a workforce development system that provides greater employment opportunity for those experiencing barriers to employment and meets the skill needs of employers. As our state faces the reality of a shrinking and diversifying labor force, we must fully utilize the talents, skills, and experience of more people in the workforce. We need "all hands on deck" at a time when we are leaving too many Minnesotans behind. That's why, after months of discussion and planning, our state and local partners have come together around a common vision for the future of workforce development in Minnesota, a vision we believe will be supported by the programs and services of WIOA:

Our vision for Minnesota is a healthy economy where all Minnesotans have – or are on a path to – meaningful employment and a family sustaining wage, and where all employers are able to fill jobs in demand.

Within this vision is the idea that employment itself is not an adequate goal, especially in a high-employment economy with labor force shortages. Our vision is for meaningful careers at higher wages for individuals with barriers to employment. Similarly, we do not have the luxury of placing people into any employment, but rather should focus on placing people on the path to careers that we believe will be in demand, within industry sectors that we believe will grow in future years. Our workforce development vision must balance the needs of employment supply and demand, and serve Minnesotans who are not sharing in our state's economic prosperity.

2. GOALS

Describe the goals for achieving this vision based on the above analysis of the State's economic conditions, workforce, and workforce development activities. This must include—

- Goals for preparing an educated and skilled workforce, including preparing youth and individuals with barriers of employment* and other populations.**
- Goals for meeting the skilled workforce needs of employers.

* Individuals with barriers to employment include displaced homemakers; low-income individuals; Indians, Alaska Natives, and Native Hawaiians; individuals with disabilities, including youth who are individuals with disabilities; older individuals; ex-offenders; homeless individuals, or homeless children and youths; youth who are in or have aged out of the foster care system; individuals who are English language learners, individuals who have low levels of literacy, and individuals facing substantial cultural barriers; eligible migrant and seasonal farmworkers (as defined at section 167(i) of WIOA and Training and Employment Guidance Letter No. 35-14); individuals within 2 years of exhausting lifetime eligibility under the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families Program; single parents (including single pregnant women); and long-term unemployed individuals.

** Veterans, unemployed workers, and youth and any other populations identified by the State.

In order to realize our vision for a stronger workforce development system, Minnesota's WIOA Plan will focus on two primary goals:

1. Reduce educational and employment disparities based on race, disability or being a disconnected youth to provide greater opportunity for all Minnesotans; and
2. Build employer-led industry-sector partnerships focused on aligning skills with careers in demand.

We believe that the best way to achieve these two goals is by continuing Minnesota's investment in building a robust career pathway system that aligns with the purposes of WIOA and the needs of Minnesota's businesses and workforce.

Minnesota was one of fourteen states in the NGA Talent Pipeline Policy Academy, Minnesota's team represented six state agencies and higher education (MnSCU) which provided an opportunity to identify the needs of a current and future talent pipeline. It was because of this cross agency team of senior leaders; commissioners and deputy commissioners that led to the vision for this state plan. Through this work, the team was able to gather data and information regarding programs, resources, and plans to what each separate agency was doing. This cross agency work lead to the decision to submit a combined plan to DOL.

Minnesota learned that as a state, we were already doing a great deal around alignment and partnership. Minnesota has been recognized as a leader and early adaptor in career pathways, Minnesota FastTRAC program. This program brought together Adult Basic Education, workforce (WIA Adult, DSW, Youth, TAA), higher education (CTE, Perkins), and industry to develop curriculum and programming to move individuals to receive education attainment. Minnesota learned from

experience that there was more to be done in order to reach and serve individuals with barriers. This work has expanded and evidenced through our DEI grant (serving individuals with disabilities), Pipeline project (serving youth and CTE students), incarcerated or recently released individuals, homeless, individuals exiting chemical dependency programs, and veterans faced with difficulty facing re-entry.

Minnesota's Pathways 2 Prosperity serves these particular populations and Minnesota's state investment (\$35M) in equity grants provides further investment for training for youth, communities of color, and individuals with other barriers to employment. Minnesota's vision to meet the needs of these individuals as well as the needs of industry will be our goals for the next four years. Minnesota's success can be measured on the opportunities for employment with these industries and industry success is measured on retention, growth, and prosperity which contributes to our six regional economies as well as the overall state economy.

The GWDB has adopted this state plan as the state board's strategic plan for the next four years and will focus on milestones and outcomes of the two goals. The GWDB's plan is supported on the approved six regional plans which will focus on the disparities gaps in education and employment and the development of successful employer-led sector strategies. The regional plans were submitted in July 2016 and under modification with a final submission in February 2017. The GWDB has a standing committee, Career Pathways Partnership which focuses on a state career pathway system. What this represents for Minnesota for the next four years is priority and focus on addressing developing the skills of our current and future workforce to meet the demands of our demand industry sectors. The GWDB in partnership with the combined partners in this plan identified five industry sectors which represent the greatest opportunity for growth, employment, and livable wages; construction, healthcare, manufacturing, natural resources, and professional and business services. These industries all represent opportunities to develop the skills needed in multiple occupations within their sectors and transferable skills between sectors such as information technology.

Another such example is the healthcare sector which is a growing sector across the entire state, where new innovative models for apprenticeships have been developed with the Dept. of Labor and Industry, DEED and MnSCU through the DOL Apprenticeship (MAI) grant. These innovative approaches are being developed that can and will be replicated across the six regions in Minnesota. These partnerships are a result of industry partnerships - Health Education Industry Part, HEIP, Center of Excellence, HealthForce (MnSCU), and workforce partnerships (MFIP/TANF, SNAP E & T, CTE, Perkins, Adult Basic Education, Dept. of Corrections, MN Job Skills Partnership, WIOA Adult, DSW, TAA, Pathways 2 Prosperity, FastTRAC, MAI, Dept. of Labor and Industry, Pipeline.

The healthcare sector across the state and their partnerships, have developed training models (Career Pathways) that support individuals at all levels but also developed the training that allow for individuals to get off and on the "ramps" to skill development which lead to credential and/or degree attainment. The CPP membership represents all partners of this combined plan with three sub-groups being led by Adult Basic Education, CTE, DLI, and Dept. of Human Services (TANF/Snap E & T).

In addition, community-based organizations play a major role by identifying the needs of their communities whether it be transportation, childcare, housing, remedial education or ESL, or culture differences. This partnership is able to identify the needs of all individuals served through the program partners but also opportunities for incumbent workers whom provide opportunities for entry level positions for someone entering the workforce.

A successful career pathway model allows for individuals, even out of school youth, to move into employment, receive the necessary training leading to credential attainment, receive support services, and provide future opportunity for forward growth in other occupations by building on previous experience and credentials. This partnership supported by the GWDB is one example of supporting this plan in addition to sector partnerships and regional partnerships being established through the six regional plans.

To ensure alignment, transparency, and progress, the GWDB twenty-one private sector members meet quarterly with the CPP to educate, inform, strategize, and develop solutions to support a career pathways system for the state. These 21 members are geographically located throughout the state and represent the five industry sectors. Twelve of these members serve on local workforce boards also providing leadership and input to local and regional needs. The CPP and the GWDB takes the responsibility for dissemination of best practices and sharing across regions. The GWDB, as an advisor to the Governor, will provide recommendations and/or solutions that may have an impact on better outcomes or removing barriers for these individuals. The combined partners (also represented on the GWDB) will review the outcomes and progress of the CPP and the regional plans annually to evaluate progress or need to modify plans.

3. PERFORMANCE GOALS

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

Attachment 1 –Performance Measure Data

Employment – 2nd Qtr After Exit

| Program | PY16 Proposed | PY16 negotiated | PY17 proposed | PY 17 Negotiated |
|---------------------------|---------------|-----------------|---------------|------------------|
| Adults | 77.4 | 80.0 | 77.4 | 80.0 |
| Dislocated Worker | 83.6 | 83.6 | 83.6 | 83.6 |
| Youth | 74.2 | 74.2 | 74.2 | 74.2 |
| Adult Education | Baseline | Baseline | Baseline | Baseline |
| Wagner-Peyser | 64.0 | 64.0 | 64.0 | 64.0 |
| Vocational Rehabilitation | Baseline | Baseline | Baseline | Baseline |

Employment 4th Qtr After Exit

| | | | | |
|---------------------------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| Adults | 74.7 | 76.0 | 74.7 | 76.0 |
| Dislocated Worker | 81.3 | 81.3 | 81.3 | 81.3 |
| Youth | 71.6 | 71.6 | 71.6 | 71.6 |
| Adult Education | Baseline | Baseline | Baseline | Baseline |
| Wagner-Peyser | 68.0 | 68.0 | 68.0 | 68.0 |
| Vocational Rehabilitation | Baseline | Baseline | Baseline | Baseline |

Median Earnings 2nd Qtr After Exit

| | | | | |
|---------------------------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| Adults | 5,339 | 5,700 | 5,339 | 5,700 |
| Dislocated Worker | 8,400 | 8,400 | 8,400 | 8,400 |
| Youth | Baseline | Baseline | Baseline | Baseline |
| Adult Education | Baseline | Baseline | Baseline | Baseline |
| Wagner-Peyser | 6,400 | 6,400 | 6,400 | 6,400 |
| Vocational Rehabilitation | Baseline | Baseline | Baseline | Baseline |

Credential Attainment Rate

| | | | | |
|---------------------------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| Adults | 64.5 | 70.0 | 64.5 | 70.0 |
| Dislocated Worker | 70.1 | 70.1 | 70.1 | 70.1 |
| Youth | 49.7 | 49.7 | 49.7 | 49.7 |
| Adult Education | Baseline | Baseline | Baseline | Baseline |
| Wagner-Peyser | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A |
| Vocational Rehabilitation | Baseline | Baseline | Baseline | Baseline |

Measurable Skill Gains

| | | | | |
|-------------------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| Adults | Baseline | Baseline | Baseline | Baseline |
| Dislocated Worker | Baseline | Baseline | Baseline | Baseline |
| Youth | Baseline | Baseline | Baseline | Baseline |

| | | | | |
|---------------------------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| Adults | Baseline | Baseline | Baseline | Baseline |
| Adult Education | 43 | 43 | 44 | 43 |
| Wagner-Peyser | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A |
| Vocational Rehabilitation | Baseline | Baseline | Baseline | Baseline |

4. ASSESSMENT

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

The Governor's Workforce Development Board (GWDB), in partnership with the Minnesota Workforce Council Association (the association that supports the 16 local workforce development boards and chief elected officials) and DEED, will be establishing an evaluation process that monitors, assesses and shares best practices as it relates to the state's vision, goals and performance goals.

STATE VISION - ASSESSMENT PROCESS

Assessing the State's vision will include measurement of system change indicators related to the three factors in the stated vision – 1) the growth of career pathways, 2) the number of individuals enrolled in pathways that lead to family sustaining wages, and 3) the vacancy rates of in-demand occupations. Measurements will look at state, regional and local performance in these three areas. Assessments will include looking at policies, funding strategies, and resources that support the development of the career pathway system, assessing new practices for effectiveness and designing a best-practices network.

The Operations Committee of the GWDB would be responsible for establishing the state vision assessment in conjunction with the state administrators of the required WIOA titles and the Minnesota Workforce Council Association. The process would be designed during the first year of the plan but would align with the planning cycle of the regional and local plans with full implementation to follow.

GOALS – ASSESSMENT PROCESS

The state's goals would be based on the progress made by the state strategies and the six elements of a career pathway approach.

Business Engagement – Each region will be assessed on how their development of 1-3 business led sector partnerships in new career pathway sector partnerships are progressing, looking at membership of the partnerships and the processes they apply to establishing a career pathway strategy for the identified occupations in demand.

Community Engagement – Each region will be assessed on how they have engaged populations and service providers of communities experiencing inequities in educational and employment outcomes. Census and state demographic data will be used to identify and inform the regions about the communities that need to be included in regional planning and in their sector strategy development.

Customer-Centered Design – Each region will be assessed on how they have utilized input from business and communities in their planning and design of the sector approaches to career pathways. Currently, the State is looking at providing technical assistance to assist regions with this

approach, as it is a relatively new way of looking at serving job seekers and our State's growing diversity.

Funding & Resource Needs – Each region will be assessed on the results of a resource mapping activity to assist with understanding the resource capacity of federal, state, local and philanthropic organizations. This will aid in understanding resource needs of each region and how efforts to leverage resources can be enhanced or expanded. This will also result in considerations for a state legislative platform for the State agencies and the GWDB.

Policy and System Alignment – Each region will be assessed on how local and regional policies need to or have been modified to address the needs to move toward a career pathway system. This will also provide a frame of reference for looking at state level policies within state agencies and the necessary changes that will be needed to support regional and local activities and success.

System Management – Each region will be assessed on how they need to be supported through a shared measurement system that supports both process and outcome improvements. Process improvements will emphasis alignment challenges and opportunities and outcome improvements will look at WIOA performance measures and other measures, as determined by other funding sources, the State Board or Local Boards.

The Operations Committee of the GWDB would be responsible for establishing the specific goals assessment in conjunction with the state administrators of the required WIOA titles and the Minnesota Workforce Council Association. The Career Pathways Partnership under the GWDB will complete the assessment design during the first six months of this plan for recommendation to the Operations Committee, state administrators, and the Minnesota Workforce Council Association. Once approved and resources identified, implementation of the assessment and development of the best-practices report will begin.

PERFORMANCE GOALS – ASSESSMENT PROCESS

The performance goals would be based on serving youth and other individuals with barriers to employment including Minnesota's communities of color. Under the direction of the Operations Committee of the GWDB, DEED's Performance Management staff will prepare models of analysis that assist system partners with understanding the impact of career pathways and other strategies that address disparate impact populations within the WIOA programs and the system at large.

Minnesota's Department of Management & Budget has been supporting state agencies with the implementation of Results Based Accountability (RBA) to support the evaluation and improvement of state services and outcomes. The Operations Committee of the GWDB will appoint a sub-committee to assist with coordinating the development of an RBA approach that engages local boards and stakeholders from across the system to ensure a transparency and sensitivity to the various challenges faced by targeted populations.

C. STATE STRATEGY

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

1. DESCRIBE THE STRATEGIES THE STATE WILL IMPLEMENT, INCLUDING INDUSTRY OR SECTOR PARTNERSHIPS RELATED TO IN-DEMAND INDUSTRY SECTORS AND OCCUPATIONS AND CAREER PATHWAYS, AS REQUIRED BY WIOA SECTION 101(D)(3)(B), (D). "CAREER PATHWAY" IS DEFINED AT WIOA SECTION 3(7). "IN-DEMAND INDUSTRY SECTOR OR OCCUPATION" IS DEFINED AT WIOA SECTION 3(23).

As noted above, Minnesota’s Combined WIOA State Plan will focus on two primary goals:

1. Reduce educational and employment disparities based on race or disability to provide greater opportunity for all Minnesotans; and
2. Build employer–led industry–sector partnerships focused on aligning skills with careers in demand.

Minnesota will seek to achieve these goals by continuing to build a robust career pathway system driven by six the elements of career pathways:

- Business Engagement
- Community Engagement
- Customer–Centered Design
- Funding and Resource Needs
- Policy and System Alignment
- System Management

Over the past several years, career pathways programming has experimented with the definitions of the six elements, making modifications that recognize unique situations of the populations being served, and increasing positive outcomes. We are at the point in career pathways development where greater scalability requires a more consistent understanding and application of the six elements.

The GWDB adopted the definition and six key elements to further their work in partnership with career pathways providers, funders and partnerships to develop and support an updated framework for career pathway efforts based on the six elements. This process will align WIOA and other Combined Plan partner resources with existing state and philanthropic resources that have been a key driver of career pathways programming.

The following table lays out a high level overview of the strategies that the state plans to pursue and complete during the first two years of the four–year plan, recognizing that revisions will be sought after the second year to remain in alignment with progress being made at the regional and local level.

Business Engagement

Strategy – Businesses lead in the identification and development of career pathway maps that target occupations in demand and provide family–sustaining wages.

| | |
|-------|--|
| Input | Engage business and use labor market information to assess and forecast occupational and skill set needs of employers within each of the six regions to map career pathways within occupations in demand that lead to family–sustaining wages. |
|-------|--|

| | |
|-------------|---|
| Output | Articulated career pathways based on occupations in demand. |
| Results | Authentic priority career pathways established. |
| Milestone 1 | Sector partnerships established and "road maps" created for selected sectors. |
| Milestone 2 | Road maps overlaid on the educational pathways, including work-based learning and apprenticeships to determine change needs to align education and training opportunities with career pathways to scale within the in-demand occupations. |
| Milestone 3 | An established process for monitoring of occupational trends that will support the needed flexibility of the career pathway system to respond to changing economic conditions. |
| Milestone 4 | A developed measurement system within the sector strategies that evaluates the effectiveness of the partnerships and their contributions and support of the other strategies. |

Community Engagement

Strategy – Communities experiencing inequities in education and employment and providers with specialized services contribute to the design and delivery of activities within the Career Pathway System.

| | |
|-------------|--|
| Input | Engage impacted communities and culturally-based service providers to: 1) assess and validate the data that will be used to establish the baseline for performance metrics, 2) community-specific barriers that impact successful access and completion of employment, education and training services and 3) identify strategies that will contribute to reduction in barriers. |
| Output | Requirements developed for addressing barriers to employment, education and training needs of impacted communities and service providers. |
| Results | Improved outcomes for populations facing barriers to education and employment |
| Milestone 1 | Validation of data and system barriers identified; strategies developed |
| Milestone 2 | Strategies applied to modifying service delivery for programs being aligned with career pathways. |
| Milestone 3 | An established a strategy for expanding on-going culturally-relevant career pathways programming. |
| Milestone 4 | A developed measurement system that monitors the impact of the strategies and the outcomes of disparate impact communities. |

Customer-Centered Design

Strategy – Better understanding the needs of businesses by stronger engagement, the state will design and support trainings that is unique for job seekers who need multiple services and "on-ramps" to be successful through authentic career pathway opportunities.

| | |
|-------------|--|
| Input | The input results of businesses, impacted communities and specialized service providers that identify the needs for design and delivery of employment and training services. |
| Output | A framework for consistent services design and best practices |
| Results | Flexible employment and training services design that improves completion rates |
| Milestone 1 | Design approaches understood and strategies developed to modify services |
| Milestone 2 | Strategies implemented and program and policy alignment begins |
| Milestone 3 | Funding and resource needs for system improvements and scaling addressed |
| Milestone 4 | A measurement system that focuses on interim measures toward skill gains and program completion. |

Funding & Resource Needs

Strategy – Understand the resource capacity of Federal, state, local and philanthropic organizations who fund and provide resources to the Career Pathway System.

| | |
|-------------|--|
| Input | Collect data and input from funding and resource providers to understand the total investment of the career pathways initiatives and opportunities to leverage additional resources. |
| Output | Alignment of system resources. |
| Results | Funding and resources are maximized. |
| Milestone 1 | A system-wide understanding of capacity and strategies to align funding and resources at a strategic level, based on allowable and restricted activities. |
| Milestone 2 | An overlay of funding and resources to the employment, education and training activities related to the selected career pathways to identify gaps in funding and resources that impact providers' services or participants' outcomes and identification of how to fill the "gaps." |
| Milestone 3 | Recommendations on policy needs to support alignment of funding and resources from federal, state, local and philanthropic organizations. |
| Milestone 4 | Develop a measurement system that is informed by funding and resource investments in career pathway programs for continuous improvement. |

Policy and System Alignment

Strategy – Understand the program and policy change needed to achieve greater alignment that will support a stronger and broader engagement of system partners in building a Career Pathway System.

| | |
|-------------|---|
| Input | Inventory of system policies through dialogue at the state, regional and local levels on impact of existing or missing policies on career pathway activities. |
| Output | Quantitative and qualitative analysis of program and policy alignment. |
| Results | Shared understanding of program and policy areas in need of change or new policies. |
| Milestone 1 | Initial system-wide policy assessment completed with recommendations. |
| Milestone 2 | State assessment of federal policy changes and/or waivers with recommendations. |
| Milestone 3 | New policies implemented, old policy revised based on needs identified. |
| Milestone 4 | Policy practices formalized and monitored. |

System Management

Strategy – Create system measures that assist with managing the building of a Career Pathway System, including process and outcome measures.

| | |
|-------------|--|
| Input | Data from MN's existing career pathways programing that supports recognizing intervals of success and barriers to completion, including disparate impact indices. |
| Output | Quantitative and qualitative analysis of career pathways critical process map to identify system improvement needs. |
| Results | A Career Pathways System with appropriate intermittent measures and evaluation that leads toward better performance outcomes for all populations. |
| Milestone 1 | A Career Pathways System report that outlines the critical intervals and barriers to success, including a specific response to populations experiencing inequities in education and employment outcomes. |

| | |
|-------------|--|
| Milestone 2 | Strategies developed and implemented to increase the effectiveness of measuring the system inputs and outputs. |
| Milestone 3 | The system dashboard is completed and implemented. |
| Milestone 4 | The system dashboard is used to evaluate ongoing performance, best practices and system improvement recommendations. |

The oversight and execution of these six strategic elements requires state, regional and local coordination by the GWDB, state agencies, and the local workforce development boards. The following is a brief summary of the roles of each level of coordination within the six strategic elements.

STRATEGIC ELEMENT 1 – BUSINESS ENGAGEMENT

Business engagement will focus on creating business led sector partnerships that utilizing the 7 principles of Industry Partnerships, published by The National Fund for Workforce Solutions. Based on regional Labor Market Information (LMI) data (including real-time job data), each region will develop sector partnerships that are business-led. The outcome of this effort will be Career Pathway models that lay out a clear route to attaining jobs for occupations in demand that pay family-sustaining wages. Components will include identifying the demand for each occupation; establishing the technical skill requirements tied to a post-secondary credential that are recognized by the industry; and conducting an analysis of workforce make-up as it relates to employment levels of populations experiencing disparate impact.

The regional plans call for the local boards to identify up to three priority industry sectors that are experiencing occupations in demand, through either growth or the need for replacement workers, as baby-boomers retire. Local boards may also consider emerging industries that have growth potential. Business leaders from the selected sectors will be identified and contacted to establish a framework for the business led sector partnership. The engagement strategy will not only assist with strengthening the training and credential pathways to family sustaining wage occupations, but also support the needs of employers to become more successful in attracting and retaining a more diverse workforce, reflective of the communities where they reside.

The state agencies, primarily the Department of Employment and Economic Development, will support the local boards by providing data and other analysis to assist them with selection of their sectors and other aspects of establishing partnerships with system providers. The GWDB will provide general oversight to the process, approving the regional plans and assisting with creating a universal approach to sector practices to share across the state. The twenty-one private sector members of the GWDB will provide leadership and representation of employer-led sector partnerships.

This Strategic Element will build upon the efforts already underway by the GWDB, state agencies, local boards, and industry sectors. As described elsewhere in this Plan, the GWDB has already identified priority sectors for the state and many regions have identified local priority sectors. DEED already provides occupation-in-demand and real-time job posting data to job seekers and businesses. Many key economic sectors already have formed business-led partnerships that are beginning to address workforce issues, but deeper analysis will yield stronger outcomes.

STRATEGIC ELEMENT 2 – COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

There are two areas within this strategic element: service provider engagement and community member engagement. Service provider engagement entails reviewing current practices around existing career pathway programs funded by federal, state, private and philanthropic organizations. An adequate body of work exists to begin prioritizing best practices, the challenges they've faced, and their educational and employment outcomes. The priority here is to develop a larger, more coordinated support network among providers to disseminate these best practices to ensure on-going growth of a career pathway system that achieves our vision and goals.

Minnesota has a diverse provider network with many community based organizations offering specialized approaches to serving the populations experiencing inequities in education and employment outcomes, targeting communities of color, individuals with disabilities, disconnected youth and homelessness, for example. The priority is to develop a more coordinated and more inclusive support network among providers. The GWDB will establish a task force to broaden this network to address these challenges and provide recommendations for better outcomes.

The second area is to more fully engage communities experiencing disparate impact with educational and employment outcomes. This includes the tribal governments serving the seven Anishinaabe and four Dakota communities. Local Workforce Development Boards, within their respective regions, will be required to engage stakeholders in the development of their regional strategies and program development. The outcome of this effort will be to build stronger connections to these communities and specialized service providers to increase access and improve outcomes for individuals with barriers to employment.

The primary responsibility for this strategy is the local boards within the six workforce development regions. The regional plans call for local boards to actively engage communities experiencing disparate impacts in education and employment outcomes and to engage with service providers who have specialized skills in working with the identified populations. This engagement will play a role in strengthening services, connections among providers, and the accessibility of services for impacted populations.

State agencies will provide data and other analysis to assist local boards with this process, providing demographic and programmatic information, as well as ensuring that all system providers are known by the local boards, as many funding efforts have not been aligned specifically with the local workforce development boards.

This Strategic Element will build upon the efforts already underway by the GWDB, state agencies, local boards, and community-based organizations. Ramsey County has for years convened a coalition of public and private organizations around a project called Everybody In to focus on employment disparities. In 2015, DEED engaged the Emerging Workforce Coalition, coalition of culturally-based workforce development leaders to identify practices for increasing employment for people of color and immigrants. DEED also meets regularly with the Minnesota Employment Services Consortium of non-profit workforce service providers who focus on job-seekers with multiple barriers to employment, many with career pathways programs.

STRATEGIC ELEMENT 3 – CUSTOMER-CENTERED DESIGN

Building on the success of existing career pathway programming and on a clear understanding of our ability to achieve a greater scale of service and success rates for disparate-impact communities, our efforts will focus on addressing the tactical and strategic aspects to better employment, education and training services that meet the needs of employers and job seekers. Outcomes will

include more customer-centered design of these services for job seekers who need multiple services and “on-ramps” to be successful and authentic career pathway opportunities based on needs of employers.

The primary responsibility for this strategy will be coordinated by the state board in partnership with the state agencies and the local boards. Existing practices of current career pathway initiatives will be reviewed and assessed for successful elements that can be replicated and brought to scale. These efforts will contribute to establishing a framework that allows for regional and local flexibility, based on available resources and partners to deliver services.

This Strategic Element will build upon the efforts already underway through the state’s Pathways to Prosperity program, which in FY2016 will fund more than \$11 million worth of career pathways partnerships putting jobseekers with barriers to employment into high-demand careers with training and employer-valued credentials.

STRATEGIC ELEMENT 4 – FUNDING AND RESOURCE ALIGNMENT

Minnesota’s existing career pathway programs are funded and supported by a variety of federal, state and philanthropic resources. As funding and resources have expanded and brought new opportunities to service providers and job seekers, so has the broadening of career pathway approaches. Minnesota will review and assess the various models to assist with disseminating best practices and to set a more strategic structure to the development of these programs as we look toward more system changes to building Minnesota’s Career Pathway System. The outcome from this effort will result in more efficient use of resources and an understanding of the resources needed for continued development of the system that achieves our vision and goals of this plan.

The primary responsibility for this strategy will be coordinated by the GWDB in partnership with state agencies, local boards, and partner funders. The assessment of resources and models will provide the state board with a perspective of best practices to be shared among the six workforce development regions, as well as assist local boards with identifying better ways to coordinate and leverage resources. State agencies will review how funding streams flow from federal and state resources, within and among state agencies, to better understand opportunities for modifying funding processes.

This Strategic Element will build upon the efforts already underway by the GWDB, DEED, and our philanthropic partners. In its most recent annual report, the GWDB highlighted career pathways best practices and programs. MSPWin, a regional metro workforce development funders collaborative has identified career pathways in high-demand occupations and industry sector partnerships as priorities for its funded initiatives and programs. Similarly, Twin Cities United Way is planning to fund high-quality career pathway programs for low-income adults. Working through the GWDB’s Career Pathways Partnership, these and other career pathways programs can gain greater alignment with state WIOA programs as part of a larger career pathways system focused on equity and economic demand.

STRATEGIC ELEMENT 5 – POLICY AND PROGRAM ALIGNMENT

Minnesota recognizes the need to adapt state and local policies and the potential need for federal waivers to better align our career pathway system around equity and economic employment demand. Current career pathway programming has shed light on a number of issues that will need full system support to bring about the necessary changes. Through a review and recommendation

process, these changes will begin to be implemented. The outcome of this effort will be stronger alignment of system components and more efficient use of resources, especially regarding performance and outcome metrics. Existing metrics do not adequately support career pathways, equity, or employment demand and new performance policies will need to be developed to drive achievement on these two goals.

The primary responsibility for this strategy will be with the state agencies. Policy and program alignment strategies will need to be coordinated by each agency responsible for specific programs. This process will be coordinated with the local boards and system partners, following what has been agreed to be possible for new approach based on customer-centered design and available funding and resources. The state board will support and lead the effort for federal and state legislative rule changes or waivers to ensure that needs can be acted upon.

This Strategic Element will build upon the efforts already underway between DEED and local workforce board leaders, who have been meeting monthly to redesign system program policy. The foundational collaboration among state agencies involved in the Talent Pipeline Policy Academy will also aid the policy alignment required for this strategic element to move forward.

STRATEGIC ELEMENT 6 – SYSTEM MANAGEMENT

Minnesota is working to redesign a system dashboard that not only complies with the requirements of WIOA, but adds factors that tell us how well the system is supporting each region and the overall state economy. This foundational approach considers talent, trade and innovation as the three pillars of our benchmarking system. Within the talent pillar, Minnesota will expand upon the important measures – beyond WIOA common measures – to look at interim, process and other outcome measures that are critical to each region of the state. The dashboard will also specifically report on identified disparate impact populations that have been identified within each workforce development region.

The primary responsibility for this strategy is with the state board, in coordination with the state agencies and local boards. The state board will oversee the development and overall approach to the benchmarking system. State agencies and local boards will also support how the metrics are developed and applied within the regions and how the regional goals will be established and reported.

2. DESCRIBE THE STRATEGIES THE STATE WILL USE TO ALIGN THE CORE PROGRAMS, ANY COMBINED STATE PLAN PARTNER PROGRAMS INCLUDED IN THIS PLAN, REQUIRED AND OPTIONAL ONE-STOP PARTNER PROGRAMS, AND ANY OTHER RESOURCES AVAILABLE TO THE STATE TO ACHIEVE FULLY INTEGRATED CUSTOMER SERVICES CONSISTENT WITH THE STRATEGIC VISION AND GOALS DESCRIBED ABOVE. ALSO DESCRIBE STRATEGIES TO STRENGTHEN WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES IN REGARD TO WEAKNESSES IDENTIFIED IN SECTION II(A)(2).

The Combined State Plan partners are all represented on the Minnesota's core team for the NGA Policy Academy for the Talent Pipeline. Through this work, an initial asset mapping of programs, resources, and services of all federal and state funding and a report of shared measures was recently completed. This information will serve as one resource to identify resources but also identify gaps in our state's workforce inventory. The policy academy's vision serves as Minnesota's vision for the Combined State Plan in addition to the focus and priority on the goals identified. Two key goals identified support the foundation from which the Combined Plan builds upon; addressing the disparities gap within education and addressing the disparities gap within employment. At a state level, this team will serve as the senior leadership team to either strengthen or identify resources needed to support the overall goals of this plan through existing programs or the development of new programming. In addition, the Minnesota state legislature requires DEED to provide a "report card" of the overall performance of state funded workforce initiatives which can be found at; <https://mn.gov/deed/about/what-we-do/agency-results/perform-measures/report-card.jsp>. This report card also serves as a resources to make data-informed decisions on our performance and any policy recommendations or programming that result in better outcomes.

Also at the state level, the members of the GWDB, MWCA, and DEED meet monthly to share best practices, progress on state, regional, and local plans, and discuss issues with regard to service delivery, resources, and any challenges with serving our customers. This venue provides an excellent opportunity to identify solutions and adjust strategies to meet our overall goals within the plan.

The GWDB, Career Pathway Partnership is yet another opportunity that brings together stakeholders on a bi-monthly basis from all levels that are engaged in delivering training, education, or support for individuals. This partnership brings together the combined plan members and provides the venue to identify the program resources, human capital resources, and the supports needed by their customers. This in turn, is shared with the GWDB private sector members to then develop strategies through an employer-led sector strategy to better serve individuals through our workforce system leading to meaningful employment.

The GWDB, Operations Committee is the host for a sub-committee on Results-based Accountability, which serves as the overall workforce system analysis. This analysis is presented to the Operations Committee and finally the GWDB. The GWDB meets on a quarterly basis and as a standing agenda, the board will discuss progress on the plan. The GWDB makes recommendations to the Governor which focus on the vision, goals and strategies outlined in the plan.

Minnesota's common data tracking system, WF1 shares as a resource for not only the tracking of data but also used as a system which shares information between programs and identifies individuals whom may be co-enrolled in several programs. DEED's staff serve as support to all users of this system and also provide recommendations for system improvements.

Minnesota's core workforce development partners have a long and productive history of collaboration, both across programs and between the state and local areas. The chief conveners of Minnesota's core programs is DEED and the GWDB. As the state's primary workforce development agency, DEED already oversees and strives to align all Title I, III, and IV; TAA, the Jobs for Veterans Grant and the Senior Community Service Employment Programs. Since the adoption of WIOA, DEED has also deepened its partnership with MDE, which oversees Adult Basic Education.

DEED also houses staff and support for the GWDB, which includes all relevant core programs partners and workforce stakeholders. As noted elsewhere in this plan, in the past year the GWDB created a Career Pathways Partnership to establish and strengthen a shared framework for career pathways programs in Minnesota. The Partnership is chaired by two GWDB members and includes participants from all regions of the state. The Partnership also includes business and industry, higher education, and community-based organizations. The Partnership strives to support the sharing of research and best practices for effective career pathways programs and to align policies and resources to support those programs.

The GWDB also convenes and coordinates Minnesota's NGA Talent Pipeline Policy Academy, wherein senior leaders from the following state agencies with have met monthly for more than a year to coordinate and align workforce development programs and policies:

- Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development, co-chair
- Minnesota Department of Education, co-chair
- Minnesota Department of Labor and Industry
- Minnesota Department of Human Services
- Minnesota Department of Human Rights
- Minnesota Office of Higher Education
- Minnesota State Colleges and Universities

In 2013, Minnesota signed into law the "World's Best Workforce," Minnesota statute 120B.11, to ensure every school district in the state makes strides to increase student performance. Each school district must develop a plan improving school readiness, reading proficiency, graduation, and college and career readiness.

This legislation was the foundation for Minnesota's NGA Talent Pipeline Policy Academy. The World's Best Workforce goals were expanded to include five additional workforce-related goals, creating an education to career continuum. Racial and economic disparities along this continuum are at the forefront of the Policy Academy's work. Two key strategies to achieve these goals include the systemic implementation of career pathways for adults and experiential learning opportunities for youth.

The state has also established a Diversity and Inclusion Council, which seeks to improve the recruiting and retention of state employees from diverse backgrounds; improve the contracting process for businesses owned by Minnesotans from diverse backgrounds; and promote civic engagement for residents of Minnesota. The Council and its committees are tasked with identifying best practices, developing a legislative agenda and moving forward with an enterprise-wide diversity and inclusion strategic plan.

Additionally, Minnesota has built strong collaboration between state and local workforce partners to implement core programs. State DEED and MDE staff meet at least monthly with leaders from all local/regional workforce councils to oversee and coordinate program management and

improvement. Over the past year, several committees were formed to guide WIOA core program redesign and implementation. Each committee is co–chaired by a state agency leader and a local workforce council director and included a mixture of state and local participants. The recommendations that emanate out of this process have the ownership of both state and local stakeholders across core program elements.

III. OPERATIONAL PLANNING ELEMENTS

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

A. STATE STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION

The Unified or Combined State Plan must include—

1. STATE BOARD FUNCTIONS

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

The state board will fulfill its functions under section 101(d) of WIOA through an Operations Committee. This committee has formulated its approach to the 12 functions of the board by categories its activities into four areas – administration, policy, information technology and performance. The committee has begun to identify the needs of the 12 functions and will establish a specific work plan that aligns with the state plan upon its approval by the US Department of Labor. The Operations Committee has been meeting monthly to review and comment on the development of the state Combined Plan.

The administration functions include the preparation and submission of the state Combined Plan, preparation and submission of an annual report and other oversight functions. The Operations Committee will also participate in the review and approval of the Regional Plans, to ensure alignment with the state Combined Plan and to assist with creating a work plan for the GWDB.

The policy functions will focus on existing and new policies need to support the better alignment of resources and services and address policy obstacles that hinder advancing the career pathways system. The initial work will take into consideration the current success of career pathway programs, how state funding has been structure to support career pathway initiatives, and the needs for additional refinement of existing policies.

The information technology functions will focus on leveraging systems to avoid duplication, addressing the need for more responsive career information – tied to the eligible training provider list, and on data systems. This will drive better coordination of services across the system and support process and outcome metrics as part of the performance functions.

The performance functions will focus on continuous improvement and support the transparency of the system components and how they are contributing to achieving the goals of the state Combined Plan. The performance system will look at process and outcome measures focusing on interim gains and final outcomes related to the WIOA performance common measures and other areas as deemed necessary by the state board.

2. IMPLEMENTATION OF STATE STRATEGY

Describe how the lead State agency with responsibility for the administration of each core program or a Combined Plan partner program included in this plan will implement the State's Strategies identified in Section II(c). above. This must include a description of—

A. CORE PROGRAM ACTIVITIES TO IMPLEMENT THE STATE'S STRATEGY

Describe the activities the entities carrying out the respective core programs will fund to implement the State's strategies. Also describe how such activities will be aligned across the core programs and Combined State Plan partner programs included in this plan and among the entities administering the programs, including using co-enrollment and other strategies.

The providers of activities under WIOA core Titles I, III and IV; TAA, the Jobs for Veterans Grant and Senior Community Services Employment will primarily implement the State strategies through services within the system and through special projects that support career pathway programming. The provision of career services will focus on how the information made available contributes to a person's knowledge of their career pathway opportunities. Career services will shift from primarily being about the "next job" or a specific skill needed for the next job, to one that provides a sense of trajectory for the individual job seeker. Staff who delivers career services will be provided training on this new approach. Those entering training services will work with counselors who have the tools and resources to assist participants in making an informed choice and assist with identifying the necessary resources to ensure greater opportunities for successful completion of training and job placement.

The providers of activities under WIOA core Title II – Adult Basic Education, will continue to embed career pathways philosophy into their services and administrative capacities. Business engagement extends to pursuing work-based learning opportunities that support the contextualized learning approaches. There are 500 ABE locations throughout the state, all unique to the needs of the communities they serve and the resources they can leverage. Through their participation on sector partnerships and understanding of the sequence of educational requirements for eventual industry recognized credentials, curriculum will continue to be modified to contextualize learning for future educational needs that align with the goals of the individual. Resources will also be committed to continue professional and system staff development so that career pathways approaches allow Adult Basic Education providers to more flexibly meet the needs of regional sector strategies and the needs of targeted populations and their inherent learning styles.

The Carl D. Perkins funded programs and activities provide opportunities for stronger alignment of services to support a career pathways system. These activities include supporting work-based learning, which may expand upon how skills are recognized and credentialed. Teacher credentialing is another focus area which looks at how changes in industry needs impacts the skills and knowledge requirements of faculty. Carl D. Perkins funded activities also promote conducting program feasibility studies, program approval and implementation, all of which are critical to ensure ongoing alignment and relevancy of educational and training opportunities.

The Minnesota Department of Human Services programs and services are well embedded into the One-Stop system in Minnesota, with programs and services on site of 40 of the 48 WorkForce Centers. Participants have access to resource rooms for job seeking, workshops for developing job seeking skills and referral opportunities for other needed services.

There are several opportunities for activities to be aligned and enhanced with the core programs. Training is needed for staff to understand the allowable activities and career pathway opportunities for recipients to engage in. Within a system where job search and job placement have been primarily seen as the core activity, we will work together to better understand how career pathway training can provide access to long term employment with family sustaining wages. This being said, it is important for providers to understand the regional sectors in demand that will provide support of those opportunities. Minnesota was selected as one of 10 states to participate in SNAP to Skills, the pilot program through FNS and Seattle Jobs Initiative which will identify ways to expand employment and training opportunities in the state. Minnesota anticipates career pathways will be one of the important strategies in the SNAP Employment and Training expansion.

Another opportunity is to look at the scaling of on-ramps to training programs. This career pathway strategy is a good fit for individuals who need entry level credentials and the need for immediate employment. Such on ramp training programs could include forklift certification, MS office credentialing, CompTia, Paraprofessional training, and other entry level certifications that are feeders to occupations in demand that could allow for transition into further academic credentials such as diplomas or degrees.

Alignment across all required core programs and State Combined Plan partners has already begun. Beginning with earlier FastTRAC pilots and now through the state workforce development system implementing career pathways activities through multiple state and federal programs. Identified as the Pathways to Prosperity program in Minnesota, this national strategy focuses on providing skilled career counselors, integrated developmental and skills training, application of appropriate sources and comprehensive placement assistance. Minnesota's next step is to start bringing all six strategic elements to scale across the system, starting with key industry sectors and stronger service provider network and community engagement to increase the awareness and opportunities for stronger partnerships and more consistency within the workforce development system.

B. ALIGNMENT WITH ACTIVITIES OUTSIDE THE PLAN

Describe how the activities identified in (A) will be aligned with programs and activities provided by required one-stop partners and other optional one-stop partners and activities provided under employment, training (including Registered Apprenticeships), education (including career and technical education), human services and other programs not covered by the plan, as appropriate, assuring coordination of, and avoiding duplication among these activities.

Program and activity alignment with core partners is primarily achieved through Minnesota's 48 WorkForce Centers, the network of Adult Basic Education providers and community-based organizations who are contracted with through the local workforce development boards. All activities related to career services, training and business services are available through these established working relationships. Across Minnesota there are strong networks developed to align and leverage resources in particular to serve individuals with greatest barriers. One such example is the coordination between Adult Basic Education delivering ESL education and WorkForce Centers delivering digital literacy education. Historically, these relationships have been guided by memorandums of understanding (MOUs) and, under WIOA, new guidelines for these formal relationships will be incorporated into new MOUs.

Program and activity alignment with training opportunities, such as Registered Apprenticeships, occurs through the activities of the local boards, business partnerships and special grant and funding opportunities. These activities vary by regions with the availability of such programs and the needs

of the industry. An example of maximizing opportunities is evidenced through a partnership established with the Red Lake Indian Reservation and a Native American owned manufacturing company where an individual has the opportunity to develop their skills through experiential learning leading to internship followed by registered apprenticeship. This demonstrates the alignment between education, workforce, apprenticeship, and the private sector. The pursuit of the greater business engagement and customer-centered design strategies will broaden and strengthen the involvement of all training opportunities that lead to industry recognized credentials within pathways to family sustaining wages.

Program and activity alignment with education, including career and technical education, is achieved through local board activities and involvement with special projects. Career and technical education resources through the Carl D. Perkins have become a central part of developing Minnesota's Career Pathway model. Staff from Minnesota also participated in the design of the Career Pathways Toolkit and in developing the language for Minnesota's State Combined Plan around the six elements of a Career Pathways System.

Program and activity alignment with human service agencies outside the purview of WIOA is a critical element to career pathways success in serving communities of color, individuals with disabilities and disconnected youth. Human services efforts around housing, transportation and child care have been identified in regional listening sessions as critical to the success of local businesses. The provision of "navigators" within our career pathway efforts has demonstrated the importance of support services in ensuring successful completion of training programs.

The inclusion of activities and providers outside of the plan of WIOA will be critical to the career pathways system's success. The state board and state agencies will focus their efforts on state level strategy and policies that support comprehensive involvement of these providers, while the local workforce development boards focus on partnership development, supporting capacity building and coordination to reduce duplication of effort.

C. COORDINATION, ALIGNMENT AND PROVISION OF SERVICES TO INDIVIDUALS

Describe how the entities carrying out the respective core programs, Combined State Plan partner programs included in this plan, and required and optional one-stop partner programs will coordinate activities and resources to provide comprehensive, high-quality, customer-centered services, including supportive services to individuals including those populations identified in section II(a)(1)(B). The activities described shall conform to the statutory requirements of each program.

Job seekers in Minnesota are served by the statewide network of WorkForce Centers as well as by the myriad government, education, and nonprofit organization locations of one-stop partner programs. All WorkForce Centers offer the full range of WIOA Title I-B, Wagner-Peyser, Veterans, TAA, and state-funded youth and Dislocated Worker services in a co-located model. Many WorkForce Centers across the state include partners from other WIOA titles represented in this plan.

All WorkForce Centers serve customers of the public workforce system with highly-trained professional staff. Both job seekers and businesses have access to services designed to meet their specific needs. DEED developed a training program called the Reception and Resource Area Certification Program for staff who work at WorkForce Center reception desks and resource areas. To date, 327 staff from Title I and Title III partners have been trained and certified through this program. Within the parameters of each statutorily defined program, Minnesota has implemented

special initiatives to provide comprehensive, customized and coordinated services to targeted populations with barriers to employment.

The WorkForce Centers inclusive of several affiliate sites offer assistance to all individuals. All individuals are greeted by trained professional staff who gather information to best assess priority of service, urgency, and make the initial referral(s) to service(s). Individuals are then guided and assisted by program staff to identify all resources the individual may be eligible for, and identify opportunities for co-enrollment. All staff, including core and other combined partner staff and those not physically located with the center, meet on a regular and ongoing basis to discuss program changes, eligibility, and activity. The communication ensures coordination, alignment, and leveraging of resources for better outcomes for the employer and the individual. In addition, the Minnesota 2015 legislature provided funding to support five regional career counselors to serve as a liaison and coordinator of regional programming in greater Minnesota. This has demonstrated value through identification of new programs and broadening access across one of Minnesota's six regions. Under WIOA, the state board has determined professional development of staff as a key priority and responsibility to keep staff well-informed of opportunities within industry sectors, labor market trends, technology tools, and new or expanded programming. The Operations Committee of the Governor's Workforce Development Board will complete an annual review of professional development activities and make recommendations for improvement, capacity, or new programming.

Minnesota is one of 14 states selected to participate in the National Governors Association Talent Pipeline Policy Academy. This academy has brought together seven key state agencies and education and has led to a shared vision with two key strategies and ten goals to address the education and workforce needs of individuals and businesses in Minnesota. The agencies represent the core and combined partners in this plan: DEED, MN Department of Education, MN Department of Higher Education, MN Department of Human Services, MN Department of Human Rights, MN Department of Labor and Industry, MN State Colleges and Universities, and the Governor's Workforce Development Board, Chair (private sector). The policy academy represents coordination and alignment across these agencies and delivers outcomes by leveraging resources between education, DEED, DLI, and DHS.

Services to Laid-Off Adults

- **Unemployment Insurance** – DEED houses the state's Unemployment Insurance (UI) division. WorkForce Centers provide co-location for UI staff members to coordinate reemployment initiatives for claimants and the long-term unemployed. The Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment (RESEA) engages UI claimants within the first weeks of their benefit payments to provide earlier engagement and increased services through WorkForce Centers to expedite their return to work.
- **Dislocated Worker Program** – This program mitigates the negative impact to businesses, communities, and employees who are facing a layoff. It assists laid-off workers in returning to work with comparable wages and benefits and connects employers with skilled staff. The Rapid Response team is the first responder when a business has closed down or is planning to lay off workers. The team is trained to assess the situation and inform the affected workers of available services. Participants enrolled in the program can access career planning and counseling; job search and placement services; short-term training upon counselor approval; and support services for expenses such as family care and transportation upon counselor approval. Minnesota maintains both a federally and state-funded Dislocated Worker program.

- **Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA)** – This program assists laid-off workers in returning to the workforce as quickly as possible by offering them help with work searches, relocation, job training, and weekly cash benefits. There are two major components, separately funded by the U.S. Department of Labor: Trade Readjustment Allowances (TRA), which are special extensions to unemployment insurance; and Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) which includes reimbursement of training costs, job search allowances, relocation allowances, and similar costs.
- **Sector Partnership National Emergency Grant (SPNEG)** – In 2015, Minnesota received a SPNEG to temporarily expand capacity to serve dislocated workers and meet the increased demand for employment and training services with the goal of quickly reemploying laid off workers and enhancing their employability and earnings. This grant will utilize sector strategies to advance and complement the more integrated and comprehensive dislocated worker services envisioned by WIOA. The specific activities targeted by this grant, which continues through 2017, include regional sector planning and strategies, enhanced career services to dislocated workers, and work-based training opportunities.
- **Assessments for Job Seekers** – Minnesota offers ACT's National Career Readiness Certificate (NCRC) assessments along with ACT KeyTrain training to all Minnesotans through the WorkForce Centers. In many parts of the state, the NCRC is a key component of a regional economic development strategy and is recognized by hundreds of employers. To assist with diversity recruiting efforts, the NCRC is offered to minority and women job applicants for transportation and heavy equipment operator positions at the Minnesota Department of Transportation.

Services to Adults with Barriers to Employment

- **WIOA Adult** – The program serves adults who are seeking greater participation in the labor force and prioritizes individuals who receive public assistance, individuals living with low incomes, and veterans. Services include a preliminary assessment of skill levels, support services, occupational or on-the-job training, job search and placement assistance, and career counseling. It also provides resource libraries providing access to employment-related services such as current job vacancies via MinnesotaWorks.net, local education and training service providers, and labor market information. WIOA Adult providers have been partnering with Adult Career Pathway programming to ensure individuals have access to family sustaining wages or beyond.
- **Minnesota Pathways to Prosperity** – Minnesota Pathways to Prosperity (P2P) is an innovative strategy built on a Career Pathway programming model, which integrates basic skills education, career-specific training, support services, and employment placement and retention to meet the needs of adults. P2P projects are designed for adults who traditionally face multiple barriers to employment, and who are in need of enhanced educational and supportive services to be successful in securing long-term family sustaining wages. This competitively awarded grant program targets populations of color; individuals experiencing housing insecurity; individuals with a criminal record; those lacking a high school diploma or equivalent; individuals with disabilities; and those unemployed for 26 or more consecutive weeks. In addition, special consideration should be provided to veterans, those returning to work after receiving public assistance, low-income, and older workers. Participating individuals obtain, retain, and advance in unsubsidized employment or complete training along an educational path, as demonstrated by annual wage increases, placement and retention in a job or education or training program, and completion of training leading to an industry-recognized credential. P2P is a state-funded, competitive grant program.

- Minnesota Displaced Homemaker Program** – This program provides pre–employment services that empower participants to enter or re–enter the labor market after having been homemakers. Customers are women and men who have worked in the home for a minimum of two years caring for home and family but, due to separation, divorce, death, or disability of spouse or partner, or other loss of financial support, must support themselves and their families. The participants need to identify, address and resolve multiple barriers before they can be competitive in the workforce. Often they are worried about basic needs such as facing eviction, having utilities services shut off, or caring for a spouse or child with a disability. Eligibility is based on income guidelines. Seven providers offer services covering 51 counties state–funded program.
- Minnesota Family Investment Program (MFIP/TANF)** – This program helps families with children meet their basic needs, while helping parents move to financial stability through work. Parents are expected to work, and are supported in working with both cash and food assistance. Most families have a lifetime limit of 60 months on MFIP. DEED work with the Department of Human Services (DHS) Economic Assistance and Employment Supports Division to ensure the program goals of MFIP are met.
- SNAP Employment and Training Program (E&T)** – SNAP E&T is jointly supervised by DHS and DEED with DEED taking the lead in E&T management. SNAP recipients who are required to participate in E&T in order to continue receiving SNAP benefits are the crux of those served, although the program also serves SNAP recipients who volunteer for E&T services. The program has two current approaches: 1) county supervised programs usually are contracted out to WIOA providers across the state and 2) project supervised programs are overall seen by DEED/WDD staff. DEED contracts directly with these providers and is reimbursed by DHS for project expenditures.
- Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP)** – The SCSEP program fosters economic self–sufficiency through community service activities for unemployed, low–income persons who are 55 years of age and older and have poor employment prospects. Program clients are Minnesotans 55+ years–old, with an income of less than 125 percent of the federal poverty levels, who want or need additional income. Service providers include five Local Workforce Development Areas, three community action agencies, three counties, two national sponsors, and one Native American tribe. Program operations are sub–granted to 11 local agencies that serve workers in 60 counties throughout the state; remaining counties are served by national sponsors.
- High–Wage, High Demand Nontraditional Jobs Grant Program** – This program seeks to increase the number of women in high–wage, high–demand, nontraditional occupations including those in the skilled trades, science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) occupations. Grant funds serve women, especially low–income women and women over 50 years of age. This is a state–funded grant program, which began in December 2014 and will conclude June 30, 2016.
- Migrant and Seasonal Farmworkers** – This program provides Migrant Seasonal Farm Workers with a full range of employment services and referrals to other community services. Migrant and other seasonal employees engaged in farm work that are legally eligible to work in the United States and of legal age to perform services for wages are eligible for services. The full range of services provided to Migrant Seasonal Farm Workers includes: job search assistance and placement, job counseling, training opportunities, and referrals to supportive services. The program is administered by labor representatives who are proficient in both English and Spanish, to better serve the predominantly Spanish speaking clientele. Services include quality employment services and referrals and are administered at four main Local Workforce Development Areas.
- Services for Incarcerated Adults** – DEED has designed, implemented and managed successful ex–offender employment and training programs in collaboration with the

Minnesota Department of Corrections. DEED employs four dedicated Offender Specialists whose sole job is to provide employment services to ex-offenders both prior to and after release. These staff conduct pre-release workshops at all 11 state correctional facilities and provide one-on-one assistance to ex-offenders after release.

- **Services for Ex-Offenders** – DEED designed and offers a series of "New Leaf" workshops in 20 WorkForce Centers across the state's Local Workforce Development Areas. This workshop is designed specifically for job seekers who are having a difficult time obtaining employment due to their barriers and/or records. This workshop combines DEED's Creative Job Search course with special strategies for overcoming barriers to employment, including how, when and why to disclose your record; addressing concerns from employers; answering tough interview questions; and provides state resources on the Work Opportunity Tax Credit, Federal Bonding and "Ban the Box" requirements. In addition, DEED's Veteran employment program has one DVOP working on a special project for Minnesota veterans that have been incarcerated
- **Services for Homeless Minnesotans** – Approximately 750 participants served in SFY 2015 identified as homeless on program enrollment, representing about 3 percent of total participants served in state- and federally-funded eligibility-based workforce programs administered by DEED. In March 2016, Performance Management (PM) staff assessed these eligibility-based programs to determine which programs do and do not track whether a participant was homeless at the time of program enrollment. Currently, only one program does not track housing insecurity and two programs were found to not make mandatory a question assessing the participant's housing status. PM staff are also piloting the disaggregation of employment and wage outcome data for homeless participants to include in a future version of the Uniform Outcome Report Card. Staff will be meeting with agency program directors later this month with several recommendations addressing data collection changes and outcome reporting related to homeless participants.

Youth Development Programs

- **WIOA Youth Program** – Minnesota's WIOA Youth Program provides comprehensive employment and training services to opportunity youth, including work-based learning, an introduction to career pathways, attainment of recognized credentials and wrap-around support services. Participants are at-risk youth ages 16–24 who are not attending any school, and in-school youth ages 14–21 who are low-income and at-risk. Minnesota encourages co-enrollment of WIOA youth participants in other State and federally funded youth programs to increase the quality of services to in-school and out-of-school youth.
- **Minnesota Youth Program (MYP)** – This program provides comprehensive services to prepare at-risk youth, ages 14 to 24, for the world of work, including: career exploration and planning, labor market information on in-demand occupations, work readiness skills, financial literacy training and quality work experience opportunities. MYP is available in all 87 counties; strong local partnerships are in place with oversight from local Workforce Development Boards/Youth Committees. The Outreach to Schools/Career Advisor component of MYP provides cost-effective strategies for delivering career and labor market information to in-school youth. MYP is a state-funded program.
- **Youthbuild Program** – This program offers a construction career pathway for at-risk youth and young adults who have dropped out of school or experienced repeated failure in school. It provides industry-recognized credentials and pre-apprenticeship training in residential housing construction; contextual basic skills and work readiness soft skills; career exploration and counseling; mentoring and leadership development; and support services. Ten organizations provide services across Minnesota. Youthbuild is a state-funded program.

- **Youth at Work Competitive Grant Program** – The program provides workforce development and training opportunities to economically disadvantaged or at-risk youth with special consideration to youth from communities of color and youth with disabilities. Experiential learning opportunities for economically disadvantaged or at-risk youth, ages 14 through 24; promotes mastery of work readiness competencies and 21st Century skills; promotes skill acquisition (academic and work readiness) through project-based instruction; increases exposure to in-demand jobs important to regional economies; and provides high-quality worksites and overall participant and employer satisfaction. Ten organizations provided summer employment opportunities and another six provided services year-round. The Youth at Work Competitive Grant is state funded.

Veterans

- **Service in WorkForce Center System** – The state's WorkForce Center system provides the full array of labor and employment services to veterans around the state. Disabled Veteran Outreach Program Specialists (DVOPs) provide eligible veterans with employment services such as job matching and referral to posted job openings, vocational and career guidance, labor market information, plus workshops on resume preparation and conducting effective job searches. DVOPs also refer eligible and qualified veterans to appropriate WIOA-funded training programs and discretionary initiatives, as well as registered apprenticeship programs throughout the state. Local Veteran Employment Representatives (LVER) specialize in promoting veterans to employers, educating one-stop partners on current law, changing regulations, and the value veterans bring to an employer.
- **Jobs for Veterans State Grants (JVSG)** – DVOP and LVER staff are funded through the JVSG and fulfill all responsibilities mandated by the grant programs. Services include the provision of intensive case management services to Chapter 31 Veterans, disabled veterans, homeless veterans, economically or educationally disadvantaged veterans, and veterans with "significant barriers to employment" as defined by the Department of Labor.
- **Additional Veterans Outreach** – JVSG grant staff also serves other populations of veterans in the State through Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs). Those populations include:
 - National Guard and Reserve members returning from overseas deployment. In particular, Virtual Job Fair Technology and social media are being utilized to connect and assist this group with veterans' resource sites, services accessed while they are still overseas, and actual virtual job fairs when they return to this country. Minnesota also stages an annual Veterans Career Fair each July, which is "Hire a Veteran" month as proclaimed by the Governor.
 - Service-connected disabled veterans, who are identified through various Veterans Service Organizations (VSO) such as Disabled American Veterans and VFWs, as well as outreach activities at Veteran Centers, Veterans Administration Medical Centers, and Community Based Outpatient Clinics.
 - Recently separated veterans, who are identified at various reintegration events, job fairs, and through partner referrals.
 - Wounded and injured veterans, who are identified through the outreach activities of our DVOPS, local VSO's, and partner staff in our local WorkForce Center system.
 - Incarcerated veterans, who are identified and contacted through "in-reach" activities conducted within correctional facilities managed by the Minnesota Department of Corrections, and community based "halfway houses" and similar facilities. Minnesota has dedicated DVOP staff that serve veterans being released from correctional facilities, and those with a criminal history via this special initiative.

- Homeless Veterans – DVOP Specialists work in partnership with the Homeless Veteran Reintegration Program to provide one-on-one employment assistance and supportive services to homeless veterans. These services may include resume and interviewing preparation, employment workshops, job clubs, job search assistance and job referrals.

Community based "Beyond the Yellow Ribbon" organizations – DVOP/LVER participation in "Beyond the Yellow Ribbon" committees covering 63 National Guard Armory communities. DEED Veterans Employment Representatives are required partners in these organizations comprised of public and private resources designed to support all veterans in the community.

Individuals with Disabilities

- **Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Services** — This program assists Minnesotans with significant disabilities to secure and maintain employment. Customers are people whose disabilities cause serious functional limitations in life, specifically in achieving an employment goal. More than 300 VR counselors, placement counselors, and VR techs work within the Minnesota WorkForce Center System to deliver services that include: assessment, vocational evaluation, training, rehabilitation counseling, assistive technology, and job placement. Some customers may also receive post-employment assistance. Many of these services are delivered through collaborative partnerships between public and private providers. Coordination between programs will be supported by working and, as appropriate, formal partnership agreements with state community partners to create referral processes and jointly deliver services to customers, including customers from unserved and underserved populations. At the local level, VR will work with core and combined plan partners as well as other community resources, to reach out to unserved and underserved populations. Particularly, VR will focus efforts on underserved youth (youth from the foster care, juvenile justice, and mental health systems), homeless individuals, and individuals with limited education. The VR program receives both state and federal funding.
- **Disability Employment Initiative (DEI) Career Pathways** – Beginning in 2014, Minnesota's DEI project supports job-driven approaches in career pathway systems and programs to equip youth and adults with disabilities (including individuals with significant disabilities) with the skills, competencies, and credentials necessary to help them obtain in-demand jobs, increase earnings, and advance their careers. Three Local Workforce Development Areas operate career pathways in manufacturing, health care, and information technology sectors. Disability Resources Coordinators work to strengthen partnerships with Vocational Rehabilitation, disability agencies, and employers and modify career pathway education and employment for individual success.

Adult Learners

- **Customized Training Pilot Program** – Minnesota provides a direct appropriation three MN State Colleges and University System (MNSCU) institutions. The goal of the program is develop and administer customized training programs in the skilled manufacturing industry that integrates academic instruction and job-related learning in the workplace.
- **Apprenticeship Programs** –The Minnesota Department of Labor & Industry (DLI) is committed to supporting Minnesota's economy by fostering and promoting work-based career development through registered apprenticeship programs that provide structured training, development and credentialing of highly skilled employees.

- **Minnesota Apprenticeship Initiative** – In 2015, the U.S. Department of Labor awarded Minnesota a grant to expand registered apprenticeship into the industries of advanced manufacturing, agriculture, healthcare, information technology and transportation. DEED is administering the grant and DLI is engaging industry, labor, and community-based organizations to develop programs, including the creation of apprenticeships in 29 new occupations.
- **Private Investment, Public Education, Labor and Industry Experience (PIPELINE) Project** –The PIPELINE Project was established by the Minnesota legislature in 2014 to expand dual-training and apprenticeship programs in Minnesota. DLI was appropriated one-time funds to convene industry experts, employers, higher-education institutions, and labor to develop competency standards acceptable to advanced manufacturing, health care services, information technology, and agriculture industries.
- **Labor Education Advancement Program (LEAP)** – LEAP was established by DLI for the purposes of facilitating the participation of minorities and women in apprenticeship-able trades and occupations. Grants appropriated by the legislature are distributed annually to community-based organizations serving the targeted population.
- **Construct Tomorrow Program** – Partners with the state construction trades and Apprenticeship Coordinators Association bring to high schools a hands-on experience which exposes young men and women to opportunities in the construction trades.
- **Minnesota Department of Education (MDE)** – As the entity responsible for management and oversight of Title II funds, MDE works collaboratively with partners within the Combined State Plan to ensure effective and efficient career pathways for Minnesotans, through 44 Adult Basic Education (ABE) consortia. ABE transition coordinators and Local Workforce Development Area directors will convene meetings, identify opportunities for collaboration and planning, and host discussions aimed at meeting regional needs. This work is funded, in part, by the WIA Incentive funding that Minnesota was the recipient of last year. The state is investing much of the earnings into WIOA implementation through better alignment and leveraging of resources and opportunities within the six regions in Minnesota.

D. COORDINATION, ALIGNMENT AND PROVISION OF SERVICES TO EMPLOYERS

Describe how the entities carrying out the respective core programs, any Combined State Plan partner program included in this plan, required and optional one-stop partner programs will coordinate activities and resources to provide comprehensive, high-quality services to employers to meet their current and projected workforce needs. The activities described shall conform to the statutory requirements of each program.

The Governor's Workforce Development Board has established the Career Pathways Partnership (CPP) with membership representing the core partners in this plan in addition to all the combined partners in this plan. In addition, this partnership includes: MN Department of Corrections, MN Department of Labor and Industry, community-based organizations, philanthropic organizations, labor, local and regional workforce service providers, and private sector GWDB members. There are three sub-groups focused on customers (characteristics), resources (asset mapping), and communication (developing common language with employers). The partnership meets bi-monthly and brings together the 21 private sector members of the GWDB on a quarterly basis to educate, inform, broaden statewide

coordination within industry sectors, make recommendations and/or identify solutions to develop and expand employer champions to focus on industry sector approaches for credential attainment and skill development. The CPP is focused on goal 2 of this state plan, which is the GWDB's strategic plan including building employer-led sector strategies across all of Minnesota's 16 local areas and six regions of the state. The CPP will complete an annual review provided by the results-based accountability sub-committee to identify best practices and provide recommendations for expansion or modifications based on outcomes.

Minnesota is one of 14 states selected to participate in the National Governors Association Talent Pipeline Policy Academy. This academy has brought together seven key state agencies and education and has led to a shared vision with two key strategies and ten goals to address the education and workforce needs of individuals and businesses in Minnesota. The agencies represent the core and combined partners in this plan: DEED, MN Department of Education, MN Department of Higher Education, MN Department of Human Services, MN Department of Human Rights, MN Department of Labor and Industry, MN State Colleges and Universities, and the Governor's Workforce Development Board, Chair (private sector). The policy academy represents coordination and alignment across these agencies and delivers outcomes by leveraging resources between education, DEED, DLI, and DHS. Career Pathways and work-based learning have been identified as the two focus areas in this academy.

The policy academy's work, over the past 1.5 years, has culminated in the establishment of the Career Pathways Partnership (CPP), a standing committee under the GWDB, which brings state agencies, community-based organizations, education and industry together to address workforce programs for adults with the greatest barriers to employment. In addition, three focus groups on Work-Based Learning (WBL) were conducted to better understand the challenges and opportunities for WBL initiatives and programs for 16-24 year olds, as experienced in three different Minnesota communities: Chisholm, Minneapolis, and Worthington. The sessions were hosted by local workforce boards. Invitations to participate in the two-hour focus groups were sent to key stakeholders and program partners. Each session began with a panel of knowledgeable program leaders updating the group on local efforts. In evaluating the effectiveness and impact of the focus groups, participants were surveyed. Policy academy members learned there is interest in the field to continue the work. Nearly all focus group participants indicated they learned a fair amount about work-based learning and feel better positioned to build their networks. Local champions self-identified their enthusiasm with building upon existing efforts and planning for new ones. Feedback about the use of time and focus of conversation was positive. State agency officials who participated felt they've taken an important first step in building trust and an open channel of communication with regional nonprofit and public sector stakeholder/partners.

This work continues through the ongoing partnership between agencies at the state level, the commitment and leadership in the CPP committee, and partnerships at the local and regional levels with state agencies, which are demonstrated by the outcomes in career pathways programs and apprenticeships.

At a local and regional level, outreach, alignment, and coordination of services will be determined by the local and regional boards. All of the six regions are well represented on the GWDB and these private sector members will be directly engaged (or serve on a local board) with local and regional industry sector strategies. DEED's business service representatives located across the state provide direct assistance and services to business.

Local boards provide direction to these staff and, in turn, these staff provide updates and current activities within industry in their area. Local and regional plans will identify their key industry sectors, which align with industry sectors identified by the GWDB. Priority will be focused on these sectors, which may change during the course of this plan based on economic conditions.

Minnesota has several industry associations and/or partnerships including Minnesota Precision Manufacturing Association, Health Education Industry Partnership, Central MN Manufacturing Association, and Minnesota State College and Universities Centers of Excellence. These partnerships further outreach, coordination, and better alignment within workforce and education. These partnerships are critical to identifying industry-recognized and valued credentials leading to meaningful employment.

Under a career pathways system approach the primary coordination of services will emerge from employer engagements that drive the work of the business led sector partnerships. An initial task of the sector partnerships will be to assess the current status of business services and a review of their effectiveness. This information will be shared with core and required partners, regardless of inclusion in the state Combined Plan.

Many system providers currently offer business services for a variety of purposes – from supporting access to labor exchange services, to planning for workforce development needs through customized training for incumbent workers, to offering company tours for career exploration of hiring individuals through on-the-job training contracts.

The local boards will be responsible for developing more specific strategies and approaches through their regional and local plans. Coordination will cut across the core programs, required programs, economic development entities and secondary and post-secondary education. The strategies and approaches will be aligned with and articulated through the six elements of a career pathways system and supported at the state level by each federal title administrator.

E. PARTNER ENGAGEMENT WITH EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

Describe how the State's Strategies will engage the State's community colleges and area career and technical education schools, as partners in the workforce development system to create a job-driven education and training system. WIOA section 102(b)(2)(B)(iv).

Minnesota has an established history of developing partnerships within education. Minnesota's FastTRAC program represents a strong partnership between Adult Basic Education, DEED, MnSCU, and other post-secondary institutions. This program demonstrates the coordination but also the alignment and leveraging of resources, including financial and human, to better serve individuals on a career path to academic achievement and employment. This model exemplifies the six elements of the career pathway system and moves new programming into innovative ways to develop skills, which include credentials that lead to employment. FastTRAC programming is only one of Minnesota's best practices that move individuals forward in developing the skills which result in either credential or academic credits leading to degree attainment. Minnesota's Pathways 2 Prosperity program, funded by the state legislature, is yet another step in moving career pathways forward with a priority to address the disparities gap for individuals with barriers to employment. Minnesota's partnerships have expanded across education, workforce, Adult Basic

Education, and community-based organizations to not only develop the skills of individuals but meet the demand of employers. The Minnesota Department of Labor and Industry, DEED, MN Department of Education, and several state community colleges have partnerships with industry which are implementing new programs for youth and adults in dual enrollment in apprenticeship programs funded by state and federal funds (including non-traditional occupations in Minnesota's key industry sectors).

As Minnesota establishes its career pathway system, it will draw on existing educational partnerships, several of which have been a part of career pathway projects or have contributed to our development of career pathway thinking. Partners include:

- State agencies engaged in the talent pipeline
 - § Department of Education
 - § Department of Employment and Economic Development
 - § Office of Higher Education
 - § Department of Human Services
 - § Department of Labor and Industry
 - § Department of Human Services
 - § Department of Human Rights
- Higher Education Entities
 - § Minnesota State Colleges and Universities
 - § University of Minnesota
 - § Minnesota Private College Council
- Other Systems and Providers
 - § Adult Basic Education
 - § Career and Technical Education
 - § Community-Based Organizations
 - § Philanthropy
 - § Local Workforce Boards
 - § Organized Labor
 - § Economic Development
 - § State Legislature

Education and Workforce Alignment

Minnesota has a fully interoperable, enterprise-level data collection, reporting and analysis system that stores student data from pre-kindergarten through completion of postsecondary and into the workforce. The system is jointly managed by the Minnesota Department of Education (MDE), the Office of Higher Education (OHE) and DEED, and includes:

- The Statewide Longitudinal Education Data System (SLEDS), which is led by OHE and brings together data from MDE, DEED and OHE; and
- The Early Childhood Longitudinal Data System (ECLDS), which is led by MDE and brings together data primarily from MDE and the Minnesota Departments of Health (MDH) and Human Services (DHS).

SLEDS brings together data from education and workforce to identify the most viable pathways for individuals in achieving successful outcomes in education and work. It can be used to inform decisions to support and improve education and workforce policy and assist in creating a more seamless education and workforce system for all Minnesotans.

The general purpose of the SLEDS system is to identify and analyze the 4 P's of Minnesota's education and workforce systems:

- **Pathways:** The movement of individual students between K–12, higher education, and workforce
- **Progress:** The benchmarks transition points students meet or fail to meet
- **Predictors:** The characteristics or patterns that help explain which students succeed and which do not
- **Performance:** The alignment of education and workforce for individual success

In 2015, Minnesota received a 4–year national SLDS grant through the Institute for Education Sciences (IES) with a focus on early learning and college and career. The grant projects have high potential for expanding SLEDS use in ways that will inform and improve education programming, policies and resource allocation decisions. The proposed projects have been designed to support increased use of SLEDS, improve key stakeholders' data literacy and/or add new linkages to important additional data.

DEED is leading one project to measure workforce and educational alignment, which is known to yield vital information about a state's economic health. The alignment involves matching current and future need for workers in specific occupations with the numbers of students currently in education pipelines who will potentially fulfill those needs.

At this time, however, only potential workforce needs have been measured in other states. Minnesota proposes to take a leadership role is creating a web–based tool that allows for measuring the alignment between actual need and available workforce. This innovative and valuable tool will enable users to quantify and map real over– and under–supplies of workers for specific occupations.

Resulting analyses will provide vital information to multiple stakeholders. For example, postsecondary institutions will have access to essential information that will inform programming and enrollment decisions. Workforce development counselors will be able to better guide clients in selecting educational opportunities that are aligned to in–demand and growth occupations in Minnesota.

State Educational Attainment Goal

In 2015, the Minnesota Legislature set in statute the goal of 70 percent or more of Minnesota residents ages 25 to 44 to hold a postsecondary degree or certificate by 2025. This law also emphasized the importance of achieving comparable attainment rates across all race and ethnicity groups. The Minnesota Office of Higher Education (OHE) is tasked with reporting on progress towards this goal annually, and will use benchmarks of 30 and 50 percent to report progress by race and ethnicity groups.

DEED serves as a key stakeholder in this effort to increase educational attainment levels because of our role in administering workforce training programs for adults and youth with barriers to entry, particularly those from communities of color. Approximately 45 percent of WorkForce Center customers and 48 percent of our eligibility–based program customers do not have education beyond a high school diploma or GED. Providing them with access to education and training opportunities will DEED representatives currently serve on the OHE's advisory group to identify best strategies for meeting the state's attainment goal.

Transparency of Educational Outcomes

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

DEED is a key partner with OHE in this push towards transparency of educational outcomes. Data on institution–level employment and wage outcomes by program of study (i.e. major) are now integrated into DEED’s Graduate Employment Outcomes tool, a product of the Labor Market Information Office.

F. PARTNER ENGAGEMENT WITH OTHER EDUCATION AND TRAINING PROVIDERS.

Describe how the State’s Strategies will engage the State’s other education and training providers, including providers on the state’s eligible training provider list, as partners in the workforce development system to create a job-driven education and training system.

By design, the Governor’s Workforce Development Board represents members from not only public post-secondary institutions but also private post-secondary, career technical education, and two “other” education/training representatives to be inclusive and ensure engagement.

The GWDB has a standing Operations Committee representing members of the board to include education and community-based organizations to serve as the liaison and voice for these stakeholders. The Operations Committee is responsible for the oversight, review, evaluation, and approval of the education and training provider list.

Core partners in this plan and the GWDB meet quarterly with other training service providers to identify issues and opportunities and areas for improvement. This partnership continues to build on current capacity, identify barriers, develop solutions, strengthen communication, and strategize new ideas for capacity building.

The Minnesota Workforce Council Association (MWCA), representing the 16 local workforce development areas, meets monthly for discussion, presentations, and opportunity sharing. These meetings provide an open forum to specifically address services to meet the education and training needs of individuals.

All education and training providers are essential to providing a skilled workforce to meet the needs of employers. The goals and strategies for a Career Pathway system do not make a distinction in this area and apply to other education and training providers. Based on regional industry needs and the selected career pathway occupations, all related providers will be engaged. Additionally, these institutions may participate in the eligible training provider listing service if they meet the criteria.

G. LEVERAGING RESOURCES TO INCREASE EDUCATIONAL ACCESS

Describe how the State's strategies will enable the State to leverage other Federal, State, and local investments that have enhanced access to workforce development programs at the above institutions, described in section (E).

Minnesota has several initiatives underway that leverage multiple resources across programs and partners. Minnesota's FastTRAC and P2P programs leverage and braid funding from federal, state, and local investments from DEED, Adult Basic Education, Department of Human Services, MnSCU, and philanthropic funders. These programs align and leverage customized training programs and academic programming at MnSCU community colleges across Minnesota. In addition, MnSCU's Centers of Excellence in key industry sectors including agriculture, healthcare, IT, manufacturing, energy, and engineering are a referral network to workforce and the private sector and align resources to best serve individuals who may already be co-enrolled in a federal or state funded program. DEED and DLI are state agency partners in a DOL apprenticeship funded initiative that aligns and leverages resources within higher education and other workforce programs. DEED and DHS coordinate and leverage resources to better serve SNAP E & T recipients through career pathways models which build on career pathways opportunities within post-secondary.

The MN Job Skills Partnership program provides state funding for low-wage workers and the incumbent workforce in key industry sectors. This funding is awarded to training and education providers. Program eligible individuals are co-enrolled in multiple programs to ensure successful outcomes for skill development and meaningful employment.

The Career Pathways model, itself, provides a structure to increase educational access. Minnesota also has several other initiatives that align and support efforts to increase educational access. In 2015, the Minnesota State Legislature established funding for five Greater Minnesota Rural Career Counseling Coordinators, RC3 over two years. The RC3s provide a connection to businesses, secondary and higher education, and other workforce stakeholders. They provide services to job seekers through better coordination and access to resources. To further these efforts, a final report will include outcomes on the value of sector strategies, work-based learning opportunities, and how career pathways are implemented in the region. This report will provide a perspective through a career pathways lens and assist the state board, state agencies and local boards with understanding what the access issues are and how coordination could be improve. This effort focuses on greater Minnesota and is being overseen by the local workforce development boards.

The Minnesota Youth Program (MYP) provides short-term, contextualized and individualized training services for at-risk youth, ages 14 to 24. Coordinated at the local level by the Workforce Development Boards/Youth Committees, MYP eligibility criteria is more flexible (inclusive) than the WIOA Youth Program. MYP serves an extremely disadvantaged group of young men and women: participants have multiple challenges such as substance abuse, criminal records, mental health issues, and cognitive learning limitations, in addition to being poor. The Higher Education Career Advisors Pilot Project (HECAP) funded by the Minnesota State Legislature provides funding to focus on assistance to high schools through career exploration and helps students see connections between their education and future careers. HECAP builds on the work of local workforce development boards by using labor market information data and the connections to careers in demand industry sectors.

The eligible training provider list is another component to increasing access through better informed choice by job seekers. By PY16, we will have an efficient mechanism in place for WIOA–certified programs to update program performance outcomes every other year. This will arm job seekers and counselors with the information they need to make wise investments in training. The performance outcomes will mirror the core WIOA Title I performance metrics: employment (second quarter after exit), employment retention (fourth quarter after exit), median earnings (second quarter after exit), credential attainment, measurable skills gain and effectiveness in serving employers, with the last two pending definitions and regulations from USDOL.

H. IMPROVING ACCESS TO POSTSECONDARY CREDENTIALS

Describe how the State’s strategies will improve access to activities leading to recognized postsecondary credentials, including Registered Apprenticeship certificates. This includes credentials that are industry-recognized certificates, licenses or certifications, and that are portable and stackable.

Minnesota’s Department of Labor and Industry (DLI) is Minnesota’s agency responsible for expanding registered apprenticeships in Minnesota. DEED is collaborating with the Department of Labor and Industry to align workforce needs along with other statewide workforce partners.

The Minnesota PIPELINE (Private Investment, Public Education, Labor and Industry Experience) Project was established by the Minnesota Legislature in 2014 to expand dual–training in Minnesota. In 2015, additional legislation was passed to create a grant program to help employers develop dual–training programs. Dual training is work–based career development training. Registered apprenticeship is a nationally recognized and state–approved type of dual–training overseen by the Minnesota Department of Labor and Industry. Dual–training has three components: employment in a dual–training occupation; structured on–the–job training of occupation–specific competencies; and related instruction in industry–sector technical competencies.

The development of industry–recognized competency standards is a core component of the PIPELINE Project. The Legislature required DLI to develop competency standards in the following four industries: advanced manufacturing, agriculture, healthcare services, and information technology. DLI assists groups of industry–technical experts to develop occupational competency standards for the PIPELINE Industry Council identified occupations. Competency Councils review and validate the foundational competencies for each occupation including personal effectiveness, academic, workplace and industry–wide competencies using modified versions of the U.S. DOL occupational competency pyramids. Using their technical expertise, the members of the competency council identify Industry Sector Technical Competencies for each occupation. These competencies are typically those that will be provided during the related instruction component of dual–training. Competency council members identify the occupation–specific competencies for each occupation. These competencies are typically gained during the on–the–job training component of dual–training. A critical component in the development of industry–valued competency standards is to acknowledge that each individual employer will also provide employer–specific training to its employees. Each of the PIPELINE occupational competency standards templates (above, right) includes space for individual employers to reflect their own training needs as part of a broader industry–based dual–training program. All of the

competencies developed by the competency councils are validated and used to develop baseline occupational competency standards templates.

More than 350 industry leaders are engaged in the PIPELINE Project at this time. Occupational competency standards are developed and validated for 17 occupations, including at least three occupations for each industry. Industry Councils have identified an additional 11 occupations for the development of competency standards. Competency Councils will begin this work in March 2016. More than 40 employers, including 15 dual-training grantees, are receiving technical assistance in the creation of new dual-training programs and registered apprenticeship programs. DLI has created a dual-training tool-kit available on its website at www.dli.mn.gov/pipeline.asp. Each industry council has begun the development of an outreach, exposure and awareness plan to promote dual-training to workers and students. Fifteen employers have been awarded dual-training grants totaling \$490,550 that serves 126 dual-trainees.

In early program year of 2015, Minnesota received \$5.75 million to support dislocated workers through the job-driven national dislocated worker grant program. A component of this grant is to award academic credit and –in many cases – credentials for completion of on-the-job, work-based, and apprenticeship training. DEED also received a \$5-million grant to serve 814 apprentices. This funding serves as seed money. The employers bear the primary costs of training and salaries for apprentices. Further, Minnesota is looking for ways to award academic credit for the completion of steps of apprenticeship. Minnesota's policy of "WIOA certifying" only those training programs that result directly in an industry-recognized credential narrows the scope of training programs and ensures that participants receive training valued by employers.

Non-profits and community-based organizations that partner with DEED to support job seekers continue to design short-term credentialed training opportunities. Because training is less time intense, more job seekers are likely to complete the training. These workforce system partners have worked diligently with industry credentialing groups and academic institutions to ensure their shorter-term training results in portable, transferable, recognized credentials.

I. COORDINATING WITH ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES.

Describe how the activities identified in (A) will be coordinated with economic development entities, strategies and activities in the State.

DEED oversees the state's workforce-development system and is home to a majority of the programs within WIOA. The agency is also responsible for Minnesota's economic-development initiatives, including business finance programs, business expansion incentive programs, export and trade promotion, and a variety of education and technical services for small businesses.

DEED's business development representatives located throughout the state provide assistance and solutions to businesses locating or expanding in Minnesota. These representatives work directly with business and identify and connect available resources including workforce solutions. These representatives work directly with DEED staff located in the 48 WorkForce Centers to identify potential resources to meet the employer needs. By state law all economic development projects funded by state resources must coordinate with

a WorkForce Center to post any new or vacant positions. The Minnesota Trade Office in addition to the business development representatives have expertise in key industry sectors. The staff understands the needs of these industries and markets specifically to attract and retain these businesses. The business development representatives serve as a liaison to support regional initiatives and strategies critical to their regional economies.

The Minnesota Jobs Skills Partnership (MJSP) program administered by DEED works strategically with businesses and educational institutions to train or retrain workers, expand work opportunities, and keep high-quality jobs in the state. The MJSP Board also has statutory authority over the state and federal Dislocated Worker Program (DWP), which provides training and services to laid-off Minnesota workers who meet specific eligibility requirements.

By state law, DEED is responsible for supporting the Governor's Workforce Development Board. The GWDB works in alignment with the MJSP board. Four of the GWDB members also serve on the MJSP board to ensure that we are meeting our goals and avoiding duplication in programming or investments.

In addition, the GWDB and DEED senior leaders meet regularly to discuss workforce challenges for Minnesota businesses and identify new opportunities to help companies. The Workforce Housing Development Program is an outgrowth of that collaboration. The program targets the lack of affordable housing in Greater Minnesota, which makes it difficult for businesses to attract the workers they need.

The executive director of the GWDB and several of the board members are also members of the Economic Development Association of Minnesota and the Regional Economic Development group of the McKnight Foundation, two organizations engaged in addressing regional and statewide economic needs.

Many of DEED state-funded business financing programs address the common vision of workforce development of providing Minnesotans with meaningful employment at family sustaining wages.

- **Minnesota Job Creation Fund** – This program encourages capital investment and high-wage job creation in key industries throughout the state. The program provides financial benefits to expanding business that spend at least \$500,000 in real property improvements with one year, create at least 10 new full-time positions that meet compensation requirements within two years, and possess expansion outside the state. In SFY 2015, \$11.65 million in state dollars were awarded, with 1,620 projected jobs created. All financing is performance-based and provided as business meet capital investment and job creation thresholds.
- **Minnesota Investment Fund** – This program provides financing that creates and retains high-quality jobs, with a focus on industrial, manufacturing, and technology-related industries, to increase the local and state tax base and improve the economic vitality for all Minnesota citizens. Grants are awarded to local units of government who provide loans to assist new and expanding businesses. Cities, counties, townships and recognized Indian tribal government are eligible. All projects must meet minimum criteria for private investment, number of jobs created or retained, and waged paid. In SFY 2015, \$7.9 million in state dollars were awarded, with an estimated 1,106 jobs created or retained.

Several state-funded business financing programs directly target communities of color in Minnesota:

- **Minnesota Angel Tax Credit Program** – This program provides a 25 percent credit to investors or equity funds that make equity investments in startup businesses focused primarily on high technology or new proprietary technology. In 2015, \$7.5 million of the available credits were reserved (until October 1) for businesses that are located in Greater Minnesota or are minority- or women-owned. In total 33 businesses in Greater Minnesota or minority- or women-owned received an investment, with total investment dollars generated at \$19.3 million.
- **Minnesota Indian Business Loan Program** – This program supports the development of Indian-owned and -operated businesses and promotes economic opportunities for Native American people throughout Minnesota. Eligible applicants must be enrolled members of a federally recognized Minnesota-based band or tribe. Each band or tribe is allocated funds from the program based on the number of enrolled members. DEED administers the program and services the loans, while the appropriate tribal council approves loan applications. In SFY 2015, 4 projects were approved, with \$425,300 in loan amounts.
- **Urban Initiative Loan Program** – This program primarily assists minority-owned and -operated businesses and other that will create jobs in low-income areas of the Minneapolis-St. Paul region. DEED has entered into partnerships with several local nonprofit organizations, which then provide loans and technical assistance to start-up and expanding businesses. Projects must demonstrate potential to create jobs for low-income people; be unable to obtain sufficient capital from traditional private lenders; and demonstrate the potential to succeed. In SFY 2015, 34 projects were approved, with \$1.13 million in loans granted.

Minnesota has an established history of addressing and supporting the economic needs through philanthropic organizations. Since 2004 the McKnight and Blandin Foundations launched a public-private partnership called the Regional Economic Development Group (RED Group). This partnership promotes regional approaches to economic development in Minnesota. Members of RED Group include business groups, foundations, education systems, public sector agencies, nonprofits and others. In addition, each of the members of RED Group is committed to contributions of financial and human resources. The RED group advances the approach to community economic development because it enables private sector and public and nonprofit community development organizations to concentrate state and local resources more efficiently and effectively while linking powerful public and private resources to achieve shared goals and outcomes. The RED group is organized around the six Minnesota Initiative Foundations, which have identified the distinctive competencies and comparative advantages of each of their regions, the partnership hopes to reduce competition between regions and help each region leverage its unique assets to help create individual and community prosperity.

An important RED Group role in the effort is to be a catalyst for the kind of system changes that will more effectively support economic development in Greater Minnesota. Success in realigning systems already can be seen in cooperative efforts with the state's education systems and public agencies. Most recently the RED Group focus is on the growing disparities gaps in Greater Minnesota. The Group meets quarterly to develop strategies and potential solutions to address the needs of individuals while continuing to meet the workforce needs of employers.

The nine Regional Development Commissions (RDC) in Minnesota were established to provide technical assistance to the local units of government in their region. While RDCs perform a variety of unique services based on the needs of their region they intentionally align and collaborate with stakeholders in the workforce system and often serve as local workforce development board members. Over the past few years the nine RDCs developed a plan and recently launched the DevelopMN Initiative. DevelopMN is a project to improve the regions and communities we serve by creating a new statewide framework for community and economic development to address the special challenges and opportunities of Greater Minnesota. DevelopMN will create a unified assessment of the state of Greater Minnesota, develop regional strategies to address common issues, and engage partners across the state to achieve goals.

B. STATE OPERATING SYSTEMS AND POLICIES

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

1. THE STATE OPERATING SYSTEMS THAT WILL SUPPORT THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE STATE'S STRATEGIES. THIS MUST INCLUDE A DESCRIPTION OF—

A. STATE OPERATING SYSTEMS THAT SUPPORT COORDINATED IMPLEMENTATION OF STATE STRATEGIES (E.G., LABOR MARKET INFORMATION SYSTEMS, DATA SYSTEMS, COMMUNICATION SYSTEMS, CASE-MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS, JOB BANKS, ETC.).

DEED houses several data systems that work together to advance the statewide strategy, by providing necessary information to make data-driven decisions, monitor and track our interactions with employer and job seeking customers, and to communicate effectively with external audiences.

Labor Market Information

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

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

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

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

- The **Career Profile** tool provides a wide range of occupational information, including wages, current and future demand, education and training resources, and job opportunities. It also provides the Eligible Training Provider listings, including WIOA-certified trainings.
- The **Graduate Employment Outcomes** tool shows how many Minnesota college graduates found jobs and at what wages. Outcomes are available at an institution and program of study level.
- The **Cost of Living** tool provides a yearly estimate of the basic-needs cost of living in Minnesota by county, region, and statewide. The tool can be customized by family size and number of workers.
- Regional Profile and regional web pages provide easier access to local and regional employment information.

The office's telephone and email helpline respond to thousands of data and information requests per year. A team of six regional labor market analysts, stationed within Local Workforce Development Areas, give hundreds of public presentations on economic

conditions, workforce issues and key industries to key internal and external stakeholders. They also provide analytical and grant writing support on demographic and labor force topics, and customized support to organizations involved in regional planning.

To leverage existing LMI career tools – and to meet the requirements of WIOA to maintain and publish lists of eligible training opportunities – DEED is building an integrated Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL) database and a Career and Education Explorer online tool. The ETPL Career and Education Explorer Project is expected to conclude the summer of 2016 and will include:

- A publicly accessible web-based occupation and education information tool, the Career and Education Explorer, which meets the requirements of WIOA and the needs of Minnesotans; and
- A secure database and data entry portal to house and maintain Minnesota's official ETPL. The Career and Education Explorer will allow the public to search for ETPL-listed educational opportunities and find matching occupational opportunities, or search for occupational opportunities and find matching ETPL-listed educational opportunities.

DEED is partnering with other state agencies and with the state's public and private post-secondary education institutions on this project.

Customer Data Systems

MinnesotaWorks (MNW) is DEED's online system for helping job seekers find work and employers fill job vacancies. The job bank features technology designed to provide a fast and easy way for employers to match their job openings with the resumes of top applicants. Using a five-star rating scale, the system provides ranked matches and results for employers to review.

The MNW system collects data on employer and job seeker account characteristics, demographics, numbers of job openings and resumes, and web analytics. The data helps us better understand the needs of job seekers, businesses and industries and to guide the direction and focus of future outreach activities, developments and strategies. Web analytics are giving us an up-close look MNW users. Information on how they use the system once they log-in and they technologies use is valuable in determining future improvements and enhancements, including the development of new technologies and mobile capability. Analytics have already confirmed that 29 percent of MNW customers access the system using a mobile device.

The quantitative performance data helps to inform the work of Business Services Representatives (BSR's) and Local Workforce Development Areas in the efforts to focus on businesses, industry associations and economic developers that can benefit from workforce employer services. Reports generated about employer job postings show market penetration, guide planning of employer outreach activities, and assist employers in researching expansion or relocation to areas where required job skill sets may be available.

Employers who post job openings on MNW are also surveyed to determine their satisfaction with the system. This qualitative data is analyzed to learn how well the system meets

employer needs and to help determine the direction for improvement and technological enhancements.

Customers using the Minnesota's WorkForce Centers access a Customer Registration System (CRS), which captures volume and activity patterns in the Resource Areas. The system is used by job seekers to register for services, by local WFC staff to create workshops and track attendance, and by management to create and analyze activity reports.

CRS is currently the sole source of this information that is needed to generate the federal Wagner-Peyser reports, gather data needed for cost allocation plans, and many other internal planning and performance activities. For instance, data on usage rates and customer characteristics are used to more effectively and efficiently plan for and provide appropriate customer service and connection to resources.

In 2016, DEED will integrate a new customer interface that will modernize the existing CRS system by simplifying the process for job seekers to get registered in Minnesota's labor exchange system by automatically creating an account in Minnesotaworks.net at the time the job seeker registers.

Customer Case Management Data System

Workforce One (WF1) is a web-based case management application used by 2,000 state, city, county, and non-profit employees to track services to more than 100,000 customers across Minnesota's county offices, WorkForce Centers, and Rehabilitation Services Offices. WF1 was created through a partnership of two Minnesota state agencies – the Department of Human Services (DHS) and the DEED. State and federally-funded workforce training programs – including WIOA Adult, Dislocated Worker and Youth – track program participants in WF1.

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

For its business customers, DEED leverages Salesforce. The use and cost of Salesforce is shared by both internal users (Business Service Representatives, Veterans employment representatives, DEED's economic development programs, the Minnesota Trade Office, Communications, and the Rapid Response team) and external users (Minnesota Chamber of Commerce, and Greater Minneapolis-St. Paul Regional Economic Development Partnership, i.e., Greater MSP).

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

Communications Systems

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

In the last year, we have added 63,000 new subscribers to this email tool, totaling 365,000 subscribers – most of those job seekers. And, in the last year, we sent a total of 1,630 bulletins to 72 different job seekers lists, broken down by geographical area. These bulletins went to over 8.3 million recipients, with a unique open rate of over 17 percent.

B. DATA-COLLECTION AND REPORTING PROCESSES USED FOR ALL PROGRAMS AND ACTIVITIES, INCLUDING THOSE PRESENT IN ONE-STOP CENTERS*.

Enhanced program performance data is a key element of DEED's data-driven policy initiative to better address some of the most critical policy challenges. State law requires DEED to report performance outcomes for adult-oriented programs funded by the state's Workforce Development Fund. Programs include those administered by Local Workforce Development Areas, awarded by a competitive grant process, and direct appropriations to non-governmental organizations. DEED must report the total number of people served in programs, the number who received training, the number who completed training and earned a credential, the number who found employment, and the average wages earned.

This workforce program report card provides uniformly defined measures, allowing outcomes to be viewed and compared across different program models and by additional layers of disaggregation, including participants' educational level, race, gender and geography. The report card is available online and is updated quarterly.

In 2016, demographic context was to the report card identifying the percentage of program participants served who have a disability, are homeless at enrollment, as immigrants or refugees, and have a criminal record, among others characteristics. This shows the wide range of state-funded programs which serve adults with barriers to employment. The report card will be expanded this year to include federally-funded workforce training programs.

These performance measures have also been adopted by a collaborative group of state agency, non-profit and philanthropic groups in the Twin Cities region, led by MSPWin. This ensures continued movement towards consistent and transparent performance tracking across the entire workforce development and training system, regardless of funding source.

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

The 2015 report found that WIOA Adult and Dislocated Worker (both WIOA and state-funded) programs were responsible for large net impacts on annual earnings and employment likelihood during the two periods (2007–2008 and 2009–2010) examined. The next iteration of the report will provide updates on the original programs and expand the analysis to include DEED's career pathways programs. This report is due to the Minnesota Legislature in January 2017.

In addition, performance data are helping to inform DEED's work on a system-wide approach to addressing racial and occupational employment disparities. Data confirms racial and occupational employment disparities exist among participants in workforce development programs administered by DEED and targeted to low-income and recently laid-off adults. That's particularly true among participants confronting such common barriers to employment as low educational attainment, criminal background, limited work experience, and limited English skills. While we can make tangible progress in serving people of color more intentionally and engaging with employers around how to successfully employ individuals with barriers, we must also find performance solutions to serving participants with barriers.

In addition to increasing the transparency of workforce development program performance across DEED, there is a continued emphasis on defining and documenting customer outcomes using a results-based accountability (RBA) framework, which measures:

- How much we did
- How well we did it
- Whether anybody is better off

While transactional measures (customer counts, number of jobs posted) provide a quantitative way to show the reach of DEED's programs, it's the transformational measures (training in an in-demand occupation, consistent employment, wage levels that support a typical Minnesota family) that inform policy decisions. New efforts are underway in 2016 to assess our interactions with one-stop customers and employers using the results-based accountability framework.

* For the PY 2016 state plan, descriptions of data collection and reporting processes need only include currently known indicators.

2. THE STATE POLICIES THAT WILL SUPPORT THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE STATE'S STRATEGIES (E.G., CO-ENROLLMENT POLICIES AND UNIVERSAL INTAKE PROCESSES WHERE APPROPRIATE). IN ADDITION, DESCRIBE THE STATE'S PROCESS FOR DEVELOPING GUIDELINES FOR STATE-ADMINISTERED ONE-STOP PARTNER PROGRAMS' CONTRIBUTIONS TO A ONE-STOP DELIVERY SYSTEM, INCLUDING BENCHMARKS, AND ITS GUIDANCE TO ASSIST LOCAL BOARDS, CHIEF ELECTED OFFICIALS, AND LOCAL ONE-STOP PARTNERS IN DETERMINING EQUITABLE AND STABLE METHODS OF FUNDING INFRASTRUCTURE IN ACCORDANCE WITH SEC. 121(H)(1)(B). BEGINNING WITH THE STATE PLAN MODIFICATION IN 2018 AND FOR SUBSEQUENT STATE PLANS AND STATE PLAN MODIFICATIONS, THE STATE MUST ALSO INCLUDE SUCH GUIDELINES.

Under the Workforce Investment Act, DEED operated as the lead on writing, soliciting feedback, publishing, and enforcing policies. Under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, DEED will still perform many of these duties, but will engage partner state agencies to ensure continuity and shared awareness. The Governor's Workforce Development Board will provide high-level consultation on new draft policies that touch multiple core programs.

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

Universal intake processes have some layers in Minnesota. While all individuals who access job seeker support services in the WorkForce Centers and through Minnesota's Job Bank are accessing programs funded through Wagner-Peyser, many of them seek deeper services with counselors that require program enrollment. In those cases, the majority of WIOA enrolled customers were also Wagner-Peyser customers, but the opposite is not true. Service providers in Minnesota will continue to work to make the program enrollment process as seamless as possible to the customer.

In addition to these policies and practices, the State will support aspect of the operations of the one-stop system related to cost allocations and selection of the One-Stop Operator. Minnesota implemented a cost allocation policy in 2010 to address audit findings by the Rehabilitation Administration Services. This policy addressed the need for equitable distribution of shared costs at the one-stop facilities. In partnership with the core programs, the State has evaluated this policy on an annual basis and updated the policy to improve on the equitability of the approach based on data analysis and practices of the core programs. WIOA's requirement for an MOU that addresses financial contributions to the one-stop centers is in alignment with Minnesota's current policy. A work group is currently looking at how Minnesota can integrate these two approaches into one seamless policy and document.

The State will also support the process for the selection of the One-Stop Operator, which is required to be in place by July 1, 2017. WIOA states that the selection process must be competitive and that it is the responsibility of the local workforce development boards to conduct this selection process. The process in each local area will be reviewed by the GWDB for conflict of interest issues. Minnesota currently operates 48 one-stop centers with the majority of them being operated by a consortium of the local program operators, which is allowable under WIOA. This has proven to be a cost effective approach as there are no dedicated system resources for this role and it is provided for by local program managers with reimbursements, allowed under the cost allocation policy, from co-located programs.

The law requires the local boards to consider the type of operator, the degree of services provided by the operator and how the operator will be funded. The law allows for a range of options on all three categories and the State will provide additional guidance and support with the issuance of the final regulations.

3. STATE PROGRAM AND STATE BOARD OVERVIEW

A. STATE AGENCY ORGANIZATION

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

Minnesota's designated state agency for the administration of WIOA is the Department of Employment & Economic Development (DEED). The organization chart can be found at: <http://intraweb.deed.state.mn.us/services/org/org.pdf>

Workforce and business development services at DEED are overseen by separate deputy commissioners. Within the Workforce Development and Business and Community Development divisions are the individual state and federal programs that DEED administers.

The Deputy Commissioners of the Workforce and Economic Development divisions meet on a regular basis with the Commissioner to discuss overall department strategies and linkages between the two divisions. This supports stronger coordinated efforts in service delivery, particularly at the local level with serving business needs.

Under the Deputy Commissioner of Workforce Development are WIOA titles I, III and IV, as well as unemployment insurance, TAA, veterans programs, displaced homemaker programs and the Senior Community Services Employment Program. The Executive Director of the Governor's State board also reports to the Deputy Commissioner, as outlined in state statute.

Within the titles of WIOA, separate directors oversee each of the WIOA titles, including one for Vocational Rehabilitation Services and State Services for the Blind, under title IV. TAA is under the WIOA DW program director and the displace homemaker and SCSEP programs are under the WIOA Adult programs director. Unemployment Insurance and the Veteran's program each have individual directors overseeing those activities.

The Workforce and Economic Development divisions are supported by support divisions within DEED, including human resources; administrative and financial services; Career & Business Opportunity for Communities of Color; and communications, analysis and research division, which includes labor market information. Information technology needs are supported by the state agency known as MN-IT@DEED.

At the local level, Minnesota has 16 local workforce development areas overseen by Local Area Workforce Development Boards. In Greater Minnesota, there are five regions that combine the efforts of two local area boards for regional planning purposes. The Twin Cities metropolitan area has six local workforce development areas and combines the efforts of six Local Area Boards for regional planning purposes.

B. STATE BOARD

Provide a description of the State Board, including—

Under Section 101 (d) of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), the State Board shall assist the Governor in the development, implementation, and modification of the State plan through the review of statewide policies and programs; and of recommendations on actions that should be taken by the State to align workforce development programs in a manner that supports a comprehensive and streamlined workforce development system, including the review and provision of comments on the State plans, if any, for programs and activities of one-stop partners that are not core programs. The Governor's Workforce Development Board (GWDB) is the state's workforce development Board under WIOA, which seeks to improve the effectiveness of and streamline the governing structures of the public workforce system, empower elected officials and workforce Boards, establish structures for working with regional economies and engage the key stakeholders needed to lead the system to achieve the goals of WIOA.

The State Board was established prior to the passing of the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) in 1997 and the Board structure was grandfathered in under WIA. With the passing of WIOA, significant changes to the composition and role of the Board are in process to ensure that there is a majority of private sector members on the Board as is now mandated by federal law. The composition and role of the GWDB are further defined by its by-laws and Minnesota statute.

OPERATIONAL STRUCTURE

The GWDB is transitioning to 41 voting members during WIOA implementation, which will continue through July 1, 2017. Membership includes the Governor and the heads of the following state agencies: the DEED (DEED), the Department of Education (MDE), the Department of Human Services (DHS) and Minnesota State Colleges and Universities (MnSCU); one (1) member of the House of Representatives appointed by the Speaker of the House and one (1) member of the Senate appointed by the Senate Majority Leader; twenty-one (21) individuals representing business and industry; two (2) chief local officials representing cities and counties; six (6) individuals representing labor organizations, with Samuel Heimlich from the North Central States Regional Council of Carpenters representing apprenticeship-affiliated labor; two (2) individuals representing community-based organizations; and three (3) individuals representing education.

The fourteen (14) non-voting members of the GWDB consist of the following: representative of Adult Basic Education (ABE); representative of Public Libraries; representative of the Women's Economic Security Act (WESA), Chair of the Minnesota Workforce Council Association (MWCA); Commissioner of the Department of Labor and Industry (DLI); Commissioner of the Office of Higher Education; Commissioner of the Department of Corrections (DOC); Commissioner of the Office of Management and Budget (MMB); two (2) representatives of community-based organizations; district superintendent of a public school district; representative of school-based service learning; minority leader of the House of Representatives; and minority leader of the Senate.

The Governor appoints all members of the Board, with the exception of legislative members. State and local leadership, GWDB staff and representatives of local areas encourage potential candidates from specific sectors, organizations and regions to apply for open positions in alignment with the state vision.

In consultation with DEED's Labor Market Information (LMI) Office, criteria were proposed and approved by the GWDB for prioritizing private sector representation on the Board:

- Industries with the largest number of jobs statewide
- Industries with the highest wages and greatest opportunities for workers' wealth generation
- Industries with the greatest potential for positive job growth
- Industries that are aligned with regional and state economic development priorities

After several months of discussion during committee and full Board meetings, five (5) industries for private sector membership on the GWDB were identified:

- Health Care & Social Assistance
- Manufacturing
- Professional & Business Services
- Construction
- Natural Resources (including Agriculture and Mining)

1. MEMBERSHIP ROSTER

Provide a membership roster for the State Board, including members' organizational affiliations.

Mark Dayton, Governor, State of Minnesota

Beeth, Laura – Chair *, System Director of Talent Acquisition, Fairview Health Services

Flaws, Twyla – Vice Chair *, Manager, Human Resources, Clow Stamping Company

Albrecht, Rita, Mayor, City of Bemidji

Amen, Lemuel, President & CEO, Viking Engineering & Development

Amundson, Mo, Owner and Consultant, Education-To-Careers

Barnes, Shirley, Chief Executive Officer, Crest View Senior Communities

Bartley, Luann, Director of Workforce Development, Minnesota Precision Manufacturing Association

Boelter, Vance, Executive, Northern Tier Energy

Cassellius, Brenda*, Commissioner Department of Education, State of Minnesota

Dean, Mariaha, Owner, Eden Resources, LLC

Debevec, David, Vice President of Human Resources, Safety Director, Ulland Brothers, Inc.

Ditschler, Steven *, President and CEO, ProAct Inc.

Evans, Robert, Vice President of Human Resources, Marvin Windows and Doors

Ferguson, Mary, Director of Recruitment and Staffing Support, Essentia Health

Ford, Jamil, President, Mobilize Design & Architecture, LLC

Gunther, Bob, State Representative, Minnesota House of Representatives

Hang, Pakou, Founding Director, Hmong American Farmers Association

Hardy, Shawntera*, Commissioner Department of Employment and Economic Development

Heimlich, Samuel, Business Representative, North Central States Regional Council of Carpenters

Hess, Russell, Political Coordinator, Laborers District Council

Hoffman, John, Senator, Minnesota Senate

Irving, Jr., Merrill, President, Hennepin Technical College

Janatopoulos, Lorrie, Planning Director, Arrowhead Economic Opportunity Agency, WESA Representative

Kaler, Eric, President, University of Minnesota

Kautz, Elizabeth *, Mayo, City of Burnsville

Kilzer, Anne, Director, Minnesota Workforce Council Association (MWCA)

Kuba, Sanjay, Executive Consultant, SK & Associates & Par Systems

Lang, Jennifer, President and Owner, Minneapolis Glass Company

Lee, Ruby, President, CLUES (Comunidades Latinas Unidas En Servicio)

McCarthy, William (Bill), President, Minnesota AFL-CIO

Nelson, Carla, Senator, Minnesota Senate

Nelson, Loren, President, Aurelius Manufacturing Co., Inc.

Nelson, William (Bill) , Chief Executive Officer, Mille Lacs Health System

Nesheim, Eric, Executive Director, Minnesota Literacy Council (MLC)

Palmer, Tuleah, Executive Director, Northwest Indian Community Development Center

Parker, Scott, Business Representative, International Union of Painters and Allied Trades, District Council 82

Piper, Emily *, Commissioner Department of Human Services

Reynoso, Edward, Political Director, Teamsters Joint Council 32

Riemann, Todd, Chief Executive Officer, MTU Onsite Energy

Rosenstone, Steven *, Chancellor, Minnesota State Colleges and Universities

Russell, Mary *, Director, Organization Effectiveness and Leadership Support, HealthPartners

Siemer, Dennis, President and CEO, V-Tek Incorporated

Smith, Roy, Director, Workforce Development, Iron Range Resources and Rehabilitation Board

Tapani, Traci, Co-President, Wyoming Machine, Inc. Wagner, Rich, President, Dunwoody College of Technology

Wells, Andy, President & CEO, Wells Technology Winkelaar, Jennifer, Director of Marketing & Public Relations, Minneapolis Building Trades

Vacant – Non-voting, Public Libraries

2. BOARD ACTIVITIES

Provide a description of the activities that will assist State Board members and staff in carrying out State Board functions effectively.

DECISION-MAKING PROCESSES

GWDB committees and functions as of December 2015 are as follows:

Executive Committee

The Executive Committee is a standing committee of the GWDB made up of the Board Chairperson (who shall also be the Chairperson of the Executive Committee), the Vice Chairperson, the Chairs of standing committees appointed by the Chairperson, the commissioner of DEED, the commissioner of the Minnesota Department of Education (MDE), a labor representative, an education representative and an at-large member.

The Executive Committee is empowered to meet on an interim basis between regular full Board meetings and make emergency or time-sensitive decisions when necessary. The Executive Committee has all the authority of the full Board when Board action is required. Immediate notification to the full Board will take place whenever any action is taken without prior consent of the Board. Discussion and formal approval of the action will take place at the

next regularly scheduled meeting of the Board. The Executive Committee shall monitor the work of other Board committees and the Board staff, develop agenda items, work on legislative issues and make policy recommendations to the Board.

Operations Committee

The Operations Committee is a standing committee of the GWDB, which reviews, recommends, and approves the necessary reports, information, and all requirements under the functions listed above. State agency staff members provide subject matter expertise, data, information, and recommendations to the committee. Committee members are members of the GWDB who represent business and industry, state agencies, education and community-based organizations.

Career Pathways Partnership

The Career Pathways Partnership (CPP) is an ongoing committee of the GWDB, formed to establish state leadership and an operational framework to support sector-based Career Pathways. It is a foundational group that provides an exchange of information and, through the development of short- and long-term goals, impacts Career Pathways programs and policies from a state, regional, and local perspective. The CPP is chaired by two members of the GWDB and includes a broad spectrum of members from all regions of the state, including business and industry, state agencies, education, higher education and community-based organizations.

National Governors Association (NGA) Talent Pipeline Policy Academy

The National Governors Association (NGA) Talent Pipeline Policy Academy is a cross-agency leadership team that is working to institute shared goals and strategies across the state's education and training pipeline. The GWDB is responsible for convening and coordinating the activities of the policy academy, with technical assistance provided by NGA staff. Senior leaders from the following entities meet monthly and represent Minnesota at cross-state conferences with national experts and other policy academy participants:

- The Minnesota Department of Education (MDE)
- The Minnesota Office of Higher Education (OHE)
- Minnesota State Colleges and Universities (MnSCU)
- The Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED)
- The Minnesota Department of Labor and Industry (DLI)
- The Minnesota Department of Human Services (DHS)
- The Minnesota Department of Human Rights (DHR)

In addition to aligning the efforts of state government, the policy academy also seeks to coordinate, enrich, and expand existing partnerships across the public, private, and nonprofit sectors, while developing new partnerships to address Minnesota's unique workforce challenges and opportunities. The policy academy's work will conclude in July 2016.

Additionally, ad hoc committees or task forces may be initiated to address specific workforce development needs. The following are additional summaries of the work of the GWDB.

- **Development of Minnesota's Combined State Plan** – The GWDB establishes a broad vision for workforce development in Minnesota, and this vision helps guide the development of Minnesota's Combined State Plan.
- **Workforce Development System Strategic Plan and Continuous Improvement** – The Executive Committee of the GWDB is required to submit a report to the legislature regarding the performance and outcomes of Minnesota's WorkForce Centers in January of each odd-numbered year.
- **Designation of Local Areas** – The GWDB reviews and approves Local Workforce Development Area designations.
- **Development of Allocation Formulas** – The GWDB reviews and approves the allocation plans development by DEED for the distribution of funds for adult employment and training activities and youth activities to local areas.
- **Preparation of the Annual Report to the Secretary of Labor** – The GWDB provides input on the annual report to the Secretary of Labor.
- **Statewide Employment Statistics System** – The GWDB works closely with DEED's LMI Office and program managers within the agency to ensure Minnesota's statewide employment statistics system meets the needs of state- and local-level policy makers.
- **Incentive Grants and Other Federal Grants** – The GWDB plays an integral role in setting the vision for and the managing of the incentive grant application process. The GWDB convenes Board members, program partners and key stakeholders to identify how incentive funds can be used to meet the demands of employers and job seekers. The GWDB plays a similar role in the development of proposals for other federal grant opportunities, where appropriate.
- **Sunshine Provision** – The Board shall make available to the public, on a regular basis through electronic means and open meetings, information regarding the activities of the Board, including information regarding the State Plan, or a modification to the State Plan, prior to submission of the plan or modification of the plan, respectively, information regarding membership and, on request, minutes of formal meetings of the Board. The GWDB's accessible web site includes notices of upcoming GWDB meetings, minutes and materials from past meetings and information on each of the GWDB committees.
- **Conflict of Interest** – A member of the Board may not vote on a matter under consideration by the Board regarding the provision of services by such member (or by an entity that such member represents); or that would provide direct financial benefit to such member or the immediate family of such member; or engage in any other activity determined by the Governor to constitute a conflict of interest as specified in the State Plan. A Conflict of Interest statement is to be signed by Board members at the time of their appointment and on an annual basis thereafter.
- **Board Staff** – The GWDB staff shall be attached to the Minnesota DEED (DEED) for administrative and staff purposes. The GWDB may ask for assistance from other units of state government as it requires in order to fulfill its duties and responsibilities.
- **Funding** – The DEED commissioner shall develop recommendations on a funding formula for allocating Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act funds to the GWDB with a minimum allocation of \$350,000 per year.

4. ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION OF PROGRAMS AND ONE-STOP PROGRAM PARTNERS

A. ASSESSMENT OF CORE PROGRAMS

Describe how the core programs will be assessed each year based on State performance accountability measures described in section 116(b) of WIOA. This State assessment must include the quality, effectiveness, and improvement of programs broken down by local area or provider. Such state assessments should take into account local and regional planning goals.

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

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

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

Not only are programs assessed, sub-grantees and partners are analyzed in several ways, and the agency has standardized and consistent processes in place for conducting assessments.

Prior to awarding a grant, a DEED conducts a risk analysis. In addition, in the early part of each year sub-grantees complete an electronic assessment and a fiscal monitoring guide. These assessment tools provide a sweeping array of information, in such important areas as:

- How sub-grantees will serve and provide priority services to veterans
- Policies regarding sub-grantee conflict-of-interest processes
- The longevity of key directors and/or stakeholders
- Sub-grantee customer complaint processes and physical and program accessibility

- Sub-grantee accounting procedures, positive cash flow, third-party audit reports, review of debt ratio, including federal and state tax debt

For the duration of the each grant, sub-grantees are monitored to ensure they're complying with the provisions of the grant and meeting performance goals. Monitoring, which usually takes place on-site, consists of assessing appropriate expenditures, conducting financial reconciliations, assuring proper eligibility of customers, case management, equal opportunity, reviewing options of co-enrollment with other partners and programs, and reviewing monthly and quarterly financial reports. Technical assistance may be provided through monitoring, on-site visits, training of case managers and fiscal staff to ensure that state and federal regulations are being met.

Workforce One (WF1) is an important tool for monitoring and technical assistance, specifically case management. Most sub-grantees and programs are required to use WF1 to ensure a consistent method of tracking participants. In addition, many small, locally-operated employment and training grants use WF1. Nearly 2,000 state, city, county and nonprofit employment and training providers use the web-based system to track employment and training services to more than 100,000 customers across Minnesota's one-stop network.

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

66. The state ABE Management Information System (MIS) data: Minnesota's MIS balances both program quality and program compliance with state and federal expectations. In addition to required reports, local providers can use the state MIS to analyze student persistence, program outcomes, and other measures at the consortium, site, class and student level.
67. A state AEFLA grantee report card: The report card notes actual performance and ranks providers by key program data measures, including measurable skill gain by population, cost of programming per individual served, intensity of service provided, and percentage of population served.
68. A program improvement process: Programs will be identified for review based on rankings in the state AEFLA report card and will undergo a comprehensive review and monitored implementation of a program improvement plan that requires local providers to complete site visits, workshop activities, reports, and plans to strengthen program performance and quality. (For more information on Program Improvement, see the response to (D) in the WIOA Title II program information.)
69. Intensive program application cycle: On a five-year basis, ABE providers are required to complete an in-depth application as a method to adhere to Minnesota statute governing local ABE programs. In this intensive application, local providers describe their:
 - a. Consortium
 - b. Program accountability procedures
 - c. Professional development priorities and activities
 - d. Proposed programming
 - e. Local program governance
 - f. Program collaboration with key stakeholders and partners

- g. Technology resources and integration
- h. Future plans
- i. Performance

These in–depth applications are reviewed and scored by a team of state staff from the Minnesota Department of Education and local AEFLA providers.

70. Local program monitoring site visits: All grantees are subject to monitoring site visits that focus on policy compliance and program quality through multiple methods:
- . Providers with low performance participate in site visits through the program improvement process;
 - a. All AEFLA grantees receive site visits on a rotating basis, at least once every five years, when the program participates in in–depth application process to continue receiving state ABE funding to comply with Minnesota statute;
 - b. Monitoring visits based on periodic desk review of provider data;
 - c. Local ABE providers that participate in state initiatives and/or receive special grants through state or federal funding typically receive site visits as part of their participation; and
 - d. Local providers request special technical assistance site visits as they face issues.

WIOA Title IV also has an extensive approach to measuring quality, effectiveness and improvement in services. In the area of quality there is a strong focus on staff development. The Comprehensive System of Personnel Development is the planning framework for recruiting, developing and retaining qualified staff to carry out the state’s vocational rehabilitation mission. Pursuant to Section 101 of the Rehabilitation Act, the plan addresses the following topics:

- o The Need for Qualified Personnel
- o Regional Higher Education for the Preparation of Vocational Rehabilitation Professionals
- o Recruitment and Retention of Qualified Personnel
- o Staff Training and Development
- o Personnel to Address Individual Communication Needs
- o Coordination with Personnel Development of the State’s Secondary Education System under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act

Specific to service provision, Title IV reviews and monitors how the state strategies will be implemented, including the following:

- o Methods to expand and improve services
- o Assistive technology availability and services
- o Methods used to address and improve services and coordination to transition age youth
- o Plans for establishing, developing or improving community rehabilitation programs

Specific to supported employment, Title IV reviews and monitors how the state strategies will be implemented, including the following:

- Identifying strategies that contribute to goal achievement
- Identifying the factors that impede achievement of goals and priorities
- Measuring the timing of transitions to extended services

These efforts are expressed in greater detail within the Title IV Program Requirements section of the State Combined Plan.

B. ASSESSMENT OF ONE-STOP PARTNER PROGRAMS

Describe how other one-stop delivery system partner program services and Combined State Plan partner programs included in the plan will be assessed each year. Such state assessments should take into account local and regional planning goals.

Minnesota established several WIOA working committees to address the implementation of WIOA. The committee formed for the one-stop service delivery has members from the local workforce service areas, service delivery providers, and state agencies representing the combined plan partners in this plan. This One-Stop committee will continue to serve as the subject matter experts and will be responsible for the annual review of the one-stop delivery. This committee will provide an overview, analysis, and recommendations for improvement to the GWDB Operations Committee. The Operations Committee will use the framework established by the results-based accountability sub-committee to make data informed decisions and recommendations. The Operations Committee will make their recommendations to the GWDB for discussion and actions. The GWDB, in partnership and support from the Combined State Plan partners (whom serve as voting and non-voting members) will be responsible to the Governor by advising the Governor and/or Minnesota Legislature (bi-annually) on the one-stop delivery system with any recommendations for improvement.

Minnesota’s Combined State Plan will be under review the third quarter of the second year. The GWDB will be responsible for the review of the Combined Plan, Regional Plans, and Local Plans to allow for any economic changes or regional impacts on industry or populations served as a priority in this plan.

The assessment of the one–stop delivery system partner programs will be based on a combination of factors – including the service categories under WIOA and the six strategic elements of the career pathways system within the context of the local and regional plans. The development of this process will be based a results–based accountability model which will be developed under the oversight of the GWDB. The following is an illustrative framework that will guide the process with the engagement of state agencies, local boards, service providers and disparately impacted populations.

| – | Quantity | Quality |
|--------|--|---|
| Effort | How much service did we deliver? | How well did we deliver it? |
| – | Career Services | Reduced Duplication |
| – | Training Services | Better Coordination |
| – | Business Services | Effective Engagement |
| Effect | How much change/effect did we produce? | What quality of change/effect did we produce? |
| – | WIOA Performance Measures | Alignment of Services |

| | | |
|---|--|-----------------------|
| – | Quantity | Quality |
| – | Placements in Pathways to OID with Family Sustaining Wages | Maximizing Resources |
| – | Impact on Disparate Impact Populations | Greater System Output |

C. PREVIOUS ASSESSMENT RESULTS

Beginning with the state plan modification in 2018 and for subsequent state plans and state plan modifications, provide the results of an assessment of the effectiveness of the core programs and other one-stop partner programs and Combined State Plan partner programs included in the Unified or Combined State plan during the preceding 2-year period (i.e. the 2-year period of the plan modification cycle). Describe how the State is adapting its strategies based on these assessments.

Initially, Minnesota will rely on the uniform report card which is available on DEED's website. The uniform report card legislation (Minnesota statute 116L.98) is also available online. The uniform report card includes the following programs:

THE PARTICIPANTS

All participants in each of the programs that have been served since SFY14 are included in the report card. Outcomes are available by fiscal year.

THE MEASURES

PROGRAM ENROLLMENT & ENROLLMENT IN TRAINING

Program enrollment includes all participants served at any point in the chosen timeframe, including those first enrolled prior to the chosen timeframe. Enrollment in training includes participants who engaged in training through the program. These are the WF1 activities included in the definition of training:

- Adult Internship
- Apprenticeship
- Basic Skills Training
- Classroom Training
- Classroom Training – Academic
- Classroom Training – Occupational Skills
- CLIMB Training
- CTPP–Pilot Program – Skilled Manufacturing
- Customized Training
- Entrepreneurial Training
- ESL Training
- Financial Education Service
- GED Training
- GED Training (in Conjunction with Credentialed Training)
- Literacy Training
- Non–Credentialed Training
- Occupational Skills Training
- OJT – Public or Private

- OJT Credential Waiver
- Remedial Training
- Work Readiness Skills Training

Not all of these training activities would result in a credential (e.g., Non-Credentialed Training and OJT), and fewer would result in a post-secondary credential as spelled out in the legislation (e.g., GED Training).

NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS ENROLLED IN TRAINING, BY OCCUPATION

WF1 requires the ONET code for some of the activities listed above, and allows but does not require it for others. We know the occupations associated with about 40 percent of training programs. These tend to be the training programs geared toward a specific career rather than those applicable to multiple careers (think Certified Nursing Assistant training versus computer proficiency training). Even where the training is too broad to tie to a specific career, it is always tied to the customer's employment goal.

PRE-ENROLLMENT: MEDIAN EARNINGS OF EMPLOYED PARTICIPANTS

Pre-enrollment earnings are drawn from the second, third, fourth, and fifth quarters prior to program enrollment. Among all served participants, the median earnings calculation excludes those with no earnings. In other words, participants must have earned at least \$1 in the year prior to enrollment to be included in this calculation.

This measure uses Unemployment Insurance wage detail, so it does not capture self-employment income or income earned in other states.

PRE-ENROLLMENT: NUMBER OF UNEMPLOYED PARTICIPANTS

The number of unemployed participants includes all participants with no earnings for a full year before enrollment (technically, in the second, third, fourth, and fifth quarters prior to enrollment). They may or may not be receiving unemployment insurance benefits and may or may not fit the government's definition of "unemployed" as "actively seeking work." This measure uses UI wage detail, so it does not capture self-employment or employment in other states.

NUMBER EXITED, NUMBER COMPLETED TRAINING, & NUMBER ATTAINED A CREDENTIAL

Number exited includes all participants who exited in the chosen timeframe. Program exit occurs when the participant no longer receives intensive employment or training support from the program. Number completed training and number attained a credential are only among those exited, even though a participant may complete training and attain a credential before exit. Participants who complete training may or may not have also attained a credential; likewise, a participant who attained a credential may or may not have engaged in training.

These are the credential types we included in our definition of a credential:

- AA or AS degree
- BA or BS degree
- Master's degree
- Occupational skills certificate/credential
- Other recognized credential
- Technical/occupational skills license

GED and high school diploma are the only credential types we do not include in our definition, because the legislation stipulates "post-secondary" credential.

AVERAGE ENROLLMENT DURATION, IN MONTHS

Average enrollment duration excludes participants still enrolled in the program.

NUMBER CONSISTENTLY EMPLOYED AFTER PROGRAM PARTICIPATION, BY TRAINING COMPLETION

Consistent employment means the participant showed earnings in each of the first, second, and third quarters after exit. Participants who did not complete training may have dropped out of training or may have never engaged in training through the program.

The number consistently employed is not comparable to the number exited, because employment outcome information is only available for a subset of exiters. Specifically, it is only available for exiters who left more than three quarters ago.

This measure uses UI wage detail, so it does not capture self-employment or employment in other states.

NUMBER CONSISTENTLY EMPLOYED AFTER PROGRAM PARTICIPATION, BY INDUSTRY

Consistent employment means the participant showed earnings in the first, second, and third quarters after exit.

This measure uses UI wage detail, so it does not capture self-employment or employment in other states. Employers report their industry in wage detail. People may have two or more employers in a single quarter, or may switch employers from quarter to quarter. We report the industry of the employer from which they earned the most wages in the first quarter after exit.

The number consistently employed is not comparable to the number exited, because employment outcome information is only available for a subset of exiters. Specifically, it is only available for exiters who dropped out more than three quarters ago.

MEDIAN NINE-MONTH EARNINGS AFTER PROGRAM PARTICIPATION, BY TRAINING COMPLETION

We calculate median earnings only among participants who are consistently employed in the first, second, and third quarters after exit. Participants who did not successfully complete

training may have dropped out of training or may have never engaged in training through the program.

A rough estimate of yearly earnings would be to increase nine-month earnings by a third. This measure uses UI wage detail, so it does not capture self-employment income or income earned in other states.

Additionally and subsequently, Minnesota will add the metrics of the result-based accountability model and other dashboard indicators identified by the performance and improvement committee of the GWDB.

D. EVALUATION

Describe how the state will conduct evaluations and research projects on activities under WIOA core programs; how such projects will be coordinated with, and designed in conjunction with, State and local boards and with State agencies responsible for the administration of all respective core programs; and, further, how the projects will be coordinated with the evaluations provided for by the Secretary of Labor and the Secretary of Education under WIOA.

Minnesota will conduct evaluations and research based on utilizing the data and processes from the uniform report card, results based accountability methods and the elements from the career pathways system design, as well as the federal initiatives around customer-centered design and the pending metrics for measuring business services, such as those illustrated in the white paper published by the Aspen Institute in 2015. The final regulations will most likely impact the finer details of this process. Minnesota will provide a more formalized and detailed approach after the regulations are issued.

This process will be overseen by the GWDB and conducted in partnership with the state agencies overseeing the required partner federal titles of WIOA, the state association for local workforce boards, representatives from the provider network and impacted communities of color, individuals with disabilities and disconnected youth. Plans and updates will be routinely shared with Minnesota's federal program officer in the Chicago regional office and with other appropriate DOL representatives as determined by the national office. The efforts will most likely be funded by a portion of the 15% Governor's set aside. Minnesota will additionally seek resources from state funds, philanthropic organizations and DOL for these efforts.

5. DISTRIBUTION OF FUNDS FOR CORE PROGRAMS

Describe the methods and factors the State will use in distributing funds under the core programs in accordance with the provisions authorizing such distributions.

A. FOR TITLE I PROGRAMS

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

1. YOUTH ACTIVITIES IN ACCORDANCE WITH WIOA SECTION 128(B)(2) OR (B)(3),

TITLE I – YOUTH

Similar to the WIOA Adult program, Minnesota will obligate 85 percent of its WIOA youth formula allocation to local service providers.

First, staff take into account the following elements by converting them into shares of Minnesota as a whole and weighted equally:

- The number of economically disadvantaged youth in each WDA
- The total number of unemployed individuals
- The number of excess unemployed individuals (above the state average) in areas of substantial unemployment

Adjustments are made as necessary to maintain a the 90 percent hold-harmless provision

2. ADULT AND TRAINING ACTIVITIES IN ACCORDANCE WITH WIOA SECTION 133(B)(2) OR (B)(3),

TITLE I – ADULT

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

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

- The number of economically disadvantaged adults in each Local Workforce Development Area (LWDA)
- The total number of unemployed individuals
- The number of excess unemployed individuals (above the state average) in areas of substantial unemployment

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

3. DISLOCATED WORKER EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING ACTIVITIES IN ACCORDANCE WITH WIOA SECTION 133(B)(2) AND BASED ON DATA AND WEIGHTS ASSIGNED.

TITLE I – DISLOCATED WORKER

Minnesota will obligate 60 percent of its WIOA Dislocated Worker program formula allocation to local service providers using a combination of labor market information, census data and unemployment insurance information. DEED first reserves five percent of the total allocation for administration, ten percent for allowable statewide activities, and the fully allowable 25 percent for rapid response activity (grants to fund mass layoff projects and statewide rapid response staff).

Three factors to distribute the 60 percent are weighted equally, impacting the preliminary share to local providers:

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

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

B. FOR TITLE II:

1. MULTI-YEAR GRANTS OR CONTRACTS

Describe how the eligible agency will award multi-year grants or contracts on a competitive basis to eligible providers in the State, including how eligible agencies will establish that eligible providers are organizations of demonstrated effectiveness.

TITLE II - AEFLA PROVIDER SELECTION AND FUNDING ALLOCATION PROCESS The Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) is the State's Eligible Agency for Adult Education and Literacy programs. MDE is responsible for administering funds and providing program/performance oversight to grantees.

Adult Education and Literacy eligible providers approved under Workforce Investment Act of 1998 requirements will continue to receive funding through June 30, 2017, as long as they adhere to state and federal grant expectations, as measured through annual applications, financial reports, and program performance reports.

During grant year 2016-17, the Minnesota Department of Education will implement a new competitive application process for all federal AEFLA funding that will determine what local

providers will be grantees starting July 1, 2017. The local AEFLA program grant process will rate responses to the 13 considerations in Title II of WIOA and include additional state ABE priorities and context.

TIMELINE The following steps will be taken in the WIOA AEFLA competition:

In November 2016, an announcement will be posted on the Minnesota Department of Education website requesting letters of intent from interested applicants by December 2016. The letters of intent will ask for basic identifying and contact information from the applying organization. Any organization that submits a letter of intent will receive direct announcements of the application posting and technical assistance from the Minnesota Department of Education.

February 2017 MDE publishes and promotes WIOA-aligned federal AEFLA grant application request for proposals (RFP) February 2017 - ongoing MDE provides technical assistance to inquiries from eligible providers February-March 2017 MDE recruits reviewers to score and rate WIOA-aligned federally-funded AEFLA grant applications March 2017 Due date for WIOA-aligned federally-funded AEFLA grant applications March-April 2017 Reviewers to score and rate WIOA-aligned federally-funded AEFLA grant applications April 2017 MDE decides which applicants will be approved as providers based on reviewer scores and ratings and application's response to the conditions and criteria in the RFP April-May 2017 MDE announces WIOA-aligned federally-funded AEFLA grant applicants that will receive funding July 1, 2017 WIOA-aligned federally-funded AEFLA grant providers begin grant cycle, programming and funding

ELIGIBLE PROVIDERS An eligible local provider is an organization that has demonstrated effectiveness in providing adult education activities to eligible individuals and may include: • A local education agency; • Community-based or faith-based organization; • Volunteer literacy organization; • Institution of higher education; • Public or private nonprofit agency; • Library; • Public housing authority; • Nonprofit institution with the ability to provide adult education and literacy services; • Consortium or coalition of agencies, organizations, institutions, libraries, or authorities described above; and • A partnership between an employer and an entity described above.

APPLICATION PROMOTION AND PUBLICATION In February 2017, the grant competition for the 2017-18 grant year will be publicized in compliance with federal law, Minnesota statute, and Minnesota Department of Education policy in order to ensure that all eligible providers have direct and equitable access to apply and compete for grants. A fair and equitable process will be followed for the federal AEFLA grant funding that follows other federal grant procedures. The Minnesota Department of Education publishes and promotes all grant opportunities on its website. Any eligible entity (described above) can submit a proposal.

ALLOCATIONS The Minnesota Department of Education will dedicate 82.5 percent of the state allocation of federal AEFLA funding to grants to eligible providers. This amount will be divided based on scope of service (number of prior year contact hours for eligible service), accountability aid, and regional aid to help local programs implement AEFLA initiatives.

In addition, 12.5 percent of the state allocation to Leadership Activities to provide support for activities such as: professional development; volunteer recruitment and training; technology;

serving students with disabilities; distance learning and digital literacy; program quality support; assessment training; and career pathway and other transitions-related collaborations.

13 CONSIDERATIONS

The Minnesota Department of Education will use the considerations specified in Section 231(e) of WIOA and listed below as the criteria for selecting and funding eligible providers. As part of the RFP process, agencies will be required to provide narrative detail describing how they will meet each consideration.

120. Needs Assessment: The degree to which the provider is responsive to (A) regional needs as identified in the local plan under Section 108; and (B) serving individuals in the community who are identified in such plan as most in need of adult education and literacy activities, including individuals who have low levels of literacy skills and who are English language learners.
121. Individuals with Disabilities: The degree to which the provider is able to serve eligible individuals with disabilities, including eligible individuals with learning disabilities.
122. Past Effectiveness: The degree to which the provider demonstrates past effectiveness in improving the literacy of eligible individuals, to meet State-adjusted levels of performance for the primary indicators of performance described in Section 116, especially with respect to eligible individuals who have low levels of literacy.
123. Alignment with One-stop Partners: The degree to which the eligible provider is responsive to, and demonstrates alignment between, proposed activities and services and the strategy and goals of the local plan under Section 108 as well as the activities and services of the one-stop partners.
124. Intensity, Quality, and Instructional Practices: The degree to which the eligible provider's program is of sufficient intensity and quality, and based on the most rigorous research available so that participants achieve substantial learning gains; and uses instructional practices that include the essential components of reading instruction.
125. Research Based Educational Practices: The degree to which the eligible provider's activities including reading, writing, speaking, mathematics, and English language acquisition instruction, are based on the best practices derived from the most rigorous research available and appropriate, including scientifically valid research and effective educational practice.
126. Effective Use of Technology: The degree to which the eligible provider's activities effectively use technology, services, and delivery systems, including distance education in a manner sufficient to increase the amount and quality of learning and how such technology, services, and systems lead to improved performance.
127. Integrated Education and Training: The degree to which the eligible provider's activities offer learning in context, including through integrated education and training, so that an individual acquires the skills needed to transition to and complete postsecondary education and training programs, obtain and advance in employment leading to economic self-sufficiency, and to exercise the rights and responsibilities of citizenship.
128. Qualified Staff: The degree to which the eligible provider's activities are delivered by well-trained instructors, counselors, and administrators who meet any

- minimum qualifications established by the state, where applicable, and who have access to high quality professional development, including through electronic means.
129. Partnerships and Development of Career Pathways: The degree to which the eligible provider's activities coordinate with other available education, training, and social service resources in the community, such as by establishing strong links with elementary schools and secondary schools, postsecondary educational institutions, institutions of higher education, local workforce development boards, one-stop centers, job training programs, and social service agencies, business, industry, labor organizations, community-based organizations, nonprofit organizations, and intermediaries, for the development of career pathways.
130. Flexible Schedules and Coordination with Support Services: The degree to which the eligible provider's activities offer flexible schedules and coordination with Federal, State, and local support services (such as child care, transportation, mental health services, and career planning) that are necessary to enable individuals, including individuals with disabilities or other special needs, to attend and complete programs information management system that has the capacity to report measurable participant outcomes (consistent with Section 116) and to monitor program performance.
131. Information management system: The expectation will be that the eligible provider will use the State-administered designated MIS for all grant-related data collection and reporting; and
132. English Language Acquisition and Civics Education: The degree to which the eligible provider has a demonstrated need for additional English language acquisition programs and civics education programs.

ADDITIONAL CRITERIA

In addition to the above considerations, the grant application will require description of applicants:

- Location, service area, the scope of the program, a description of the population to be served, fiscal management procedures, and audit history;
- Capacity to offer day, evening, and distance education programming including evidence of the organization's AEFLA-eligible activity services in the prior year.
- Budget, as well as programmatic information regarding statutory requirements;
- Coordination with other service providers to provide wrap-around services to participants (e.g., child care, transportation);
- A description of how the program will align activities to the Local Plan for WIOA providers and supportive services; and
- The ability to match federal funding with other funding from state, local, organizational or other sources that would directly go to providing AEFLA-eligible activities.

ADDITIONAL CRITERIA In addition to the above considerations, the grant application will require description of applicants: • Location, service area, the scope of the program, a description of the population to be served, fiscal management procedures, and audit history; • Capacity to offer day, evening, and distance education programming including evidence of the organization's AEFLA-eligible activity services in the prior year. • Budget, as well as programmatic information regarding statutory requirements; • Coordination with other service providers to provide wrap-around services to participants (e.g., child care, transportation); • A

description of how the program will align activities to the Local Plan for WIOA providers and supportive services; and • The ability to match federal funding with other funding from state, local, organizational or other sources that would directly go to providing AEFLA-eligible activities.

DEMONSTRATING EFFECTIVENESS

As part of the federal competitive application, each applicant will be required to respond to questions about demonstrating effectiveness in increasing academic literacy and transitions to employment and postsecondary education.

Increasing academic literacy: The questions on demonstrating effectiveness will require all applicants to provide data demonstrating their ability to improve skills of low-literate adults. This can be done in one of two ways:

1. Prior recipients will use data from the Adult Education student data management system to show how they met State-negotiated performance measures for all student levels, both ABE and ESL.
2. New organizations will be provided reporting tables to show numbers of adult students served, demonstrated student learning gain, including low-literacy level and English language learners. Applicants will need to demonstrate how those numbers were calculated and/or verified.

Transitions to employment and postsecondary education: An applicant also will be required to demonstrate its record of: secondary diploma completion for adults served; improved knowledge needed to transition successfully to postsecondary education or training; and skills needed to obtain and retain employment.

Review: Each application will be reviewed to determine whether it meets the standard of demonstrated effectiveness. Applications that do not provide sufficient evidence of demonstrated effectiveness will be eliminated from the competition. Technical assistance will be provided to applicants by the Minnesota Department of Education both through reporting templates, Q and A documents, and assistance upon request.

REVIEW PROCESS Proposals are rated and scored by teams of reviewers approved by the Minnesota Department of Education Grants Office, which will be completed in April 2017. The review process for selecting successful applicants includes formally scoring applications on their responses to each of the 13 considerations of WIOA, the programming proposed and its alignment to the four instructional components, the articulated use of funds, and additional criteria listed above. The Minnesota Department of Education will select applicants for federal AEFLA funding based on proposals with the highest scores, noting also the additional criteria listed above. Applicants selected for federal AEFLA funding that is WIOA-aligned will be notified in May-June 2017 and will be eligible to start programming July 1, 2017.

APPLICATIONS BEYOND 2017 Beyond 2017, all approved and potential new providers will be required to comply with all state and federal regulations, policies and expectations for AEFLA grantees with routine reporting. This routine reporting includes: 1. Reporting and use of the state AEFLA database system; 2. Annual reporting requirements with performance

data; 3. Reauthorization every five years with an updated description of programming, articulated implementation of accountability procedures and policies, performance analysis, and plans for continuous improvement; and 4. Additional requirements or reporting upon request by state and local agencies.

2. ENSURE DIRECT AND EQUITABLE ACCESS

Describe how the eligible agency will ensure direct and equitable access to all eligible providers to apply and compete for funds and how the eligible agency will ensure that it is using the same grant or contract announcement and application procedure for all eligible providers.

The federal WIOA AEFLA competitive application will adhere to federal and state policies to ensure direct and equitable access to providers. All federal funding for local providers (WIOA sections 225, 231, and 243) will be subject to a competitive process that will embed the 13 considerations and adhere to state and federal policies. The federal competition for funds available under WIOA sections 225 (corrections education) and 231 (grants and contracts for eligible providers) will use the same application, scoring rubric, and technical assistance materials. The application, scoring rubric, and technical assistance materials for IEL/Civics (section 243) will have additional questions to adhere to federal expectations for IEL/Civics providers. (For more information about IEL/Civics funding competitive application, please see the IEL/Civics portion of the state plan in the Title II section.)

Grant announcements and application materials will be posted on the Minnesota Department of Education website in the area used to announce and promote all education grant funds in the state. The site will identify all eligible providers (aligned to the providers listed in WIOA, see below) and include a copy of the application and instructions for how to apply.

ELIGIBLE PROVIDERS An eligible local provider is an organization that has demonstrated effectiveness in providing adult education activities to eligible individuals and may include: • A local education agency; • Community-based or faith-based organization; • Volunteer literacy organization; • Institution of higher education; • Public or private nonprofit agency; • Library; • Public housing authority; • Nonprofit institution with the ability to provide adult education and literacy services; • Consortium or coalition of agencies, organizations, institutions, libraries, or authorities described above; and • A partnership between an employer and an entity described above.

APPLICATION PROMOTION AND PUBLICATION In November 2016, an announcement will be posted on the Minnesota Department of Education website requesting letters of intent from interested applicants by December 2016. The letters of intent will ask for basic identifying and contact information from the applying organization. Any organization that submits a letter of intent will receive direct announcements of the application posting and technical assistance from the Minnesota Department of Education. In February 2017, the grant competition for the 2017-18 grant year will be publicized in compliance with federal law, Minnesota statute, and Minnesota Department of Education policy in order to ensure that all eligible providers have direct and equitable access to apply and compete for grants. A fair and equitable process will be followed for the federal AEFLA grant funding that follows other federal grant procedures. The Minnesota Department of Education publishes and promotes all grant opportunities on its website. Any eligible entity (described above) can submit a proposal.

C. TITLE IV VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION

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

The distribution of Minnesota's allotment of VR110 funds between the General and Blind agencies is based upon a methodology submitted to the Rehabilitation Services Administration in 1975. This methodology, still being used today, distributes 82 percent of Minnesota's allotment to the General Agency and 18 percent to the Blind Agency.

6. PROGRAM DATA

A. DATA ALIGNMENT AND INTEGRATION

Describe the plans of the lead State agencies with responsibility for the administration of the core programs, along with the State Board, to align and integrate available workforce and education data systems for the core programs, unemployment insurance programs, and education through postsecondary education, and to the extent possible, the Combined State Plan partner programs included in this plan. The description of the State's plan for integrating data systems should include the State's goals for achieving integration and any progress to date.

1. DESCRIBE THE STATE'S PLANS TO MAKE THE MANAGEMENT INFORMATION SYSTEMS FOR THE CORE PROGRAMS INTEROPERABLE TO MAXIMIZE THE EFFICIENT EXCHANGE OF COMMON DATA ELEMENTS TO SUPPORT ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION.

Currently, in Minnesota, four of the six required titles share the same management information system. This system is called Workforce One and is described in more detail in other Sections of this Combined State Plan.

Conversations have begun with the two partners not currently in this system. Adult Basic Education's management information system serves purposes beyond just participant data. The approach being considered is an API that would share pertinent data with Workforce One and allow for program staff to see basic enrollment information to assist with coordinating participant activities. Job Service's participant data requirements are currently a part of MinnesotaWorks, the State's job bank. A possible API between these two applications is also under consideration.

2. DESCRIBE THE STATE'S PLANS TO INTEGRATE DATA SYSTEMS TO FACILITATE STREAMLINED INTAKE AND SERVICE DELIVERY TO TRACK PARTICIPATION ACROSS ALL PROGRAMS INCLUDED IN THIS PLAN.

Currently, in Minnesota, seven of the 13 participating titles share the same management information system. This system is called Workforce One and is described in more detail in other Sections of this Combined State Plan.

Minnesota will continue to explore the possibilities of additional titles sharing the same management information system. A study will need to be conducted to address data element and security requirements that may create challenges in achieving a total merger.

3. EXPLAIN HOW THE STATE BOARD WILL ASSIST THE GOVERNOR IN ALIGNING TECHNOLOGY AND DATA SYSTEMS ACROSS REQUIRED ONE-STOP PARTNER PROGRAMS (INCLUDING DESIGN AND IMPLEMENTATION OF COMMON INTAKE, DATA COLLECTION, ETC.) AND HOW SUCH ALIGNMENT WILL IMPROVE SERVICE DELIVERY TO INDIVIDUALS, INCLUDING UNEMPLOYED INDIVIDUALS.

The State Board, through its functions under WIOA, will lead the management information system study to ascertain to practicality and functionality of such a broad based system and make a recommendation to the Governor.

4. DESCRIBE THE STATE'S PLANS TO DEVELOP AND PRODUCE THE REPORTS REQUIRED UNDER SECTION 116, PERFORMANCE ACCOUNTABILITY SYSTEM. (WIOA SECTION 116(D)(2)).

Minnesota has dedicated program performance and information technology staff to develop and produce the reports required for performance accountability. Until U.S. DOL/ETA releases specifications for the Participant Individual Record Layout (PIRL), Minnesota plans to continue integrating the data reported in the following reports: • Labor Exchange Participant Report (LEPR) – which includes services to Veterans, Migrant Seasonal Farmworker Program participants, MinnesotaWorks.net, and WorkForce Center resource areas; • Trade Act Participant Report (TAPR) – which includes participants receiving TAA services; and • Workforce Investment Act Standardized Record Data (WIASRD) – which includes participants of Adult, Dislocated Worker and Youth program.

Every quarter, several key staff work together to create the WIASRD which we then submit to the EDRVS for vetting and acceptance. This process will continue until new files specifications are available.

As we look ahead to new data elements, new performance measures and new performance file specifications, staff have a process and timeline in place to ensure a timely transition to new WIOA requirements. This will involve meeting with program staff to determine what changes need to be made to our data systems to ensure compliance with new requirements. We anticipate not only the addition of variables to our data collection systems but also the recoding of data elements. Staff will then look to rebuild the queries and data tables used to populate the PIRL.

Dedicated funding has been set aside in in Program Year 2017 for the necessary modifications and significant staff time that will be spent complying with new reporting requirements for performance accountability.

Finally, Minnesota also plans to continue offering program and local area performance tracking through contracting with Futureworks (FWS) for MN Performs. We believe an added benefit of FWS is that we will be able to use their system to vet our PIRL file, well ahead of when DOL-ETA's new submission system is available.

Planning Note: States should be aware that Section 116(i)(1) requires the core programs, local boards, and chief elected officials to establish and operate a fiscal and management accountability information system based on guidelines established by the Secretaries of

Labor and Education. Separately, the Departments of Labor and Education anticipate working with States to inform future guidance and possible information collection(s) on these accountability systems. States should begin laying the groundwork for these fiscal and management accountability requirements, recognizing that adjustments to meet the elements above may provide opportunity or have impact on such a fiscal and management accountability system.

B. ASSESSMENT OF PARTICIPANTS' POST-PROGRAM SUCCESS

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

Under Minnesota statute 116L.98, the Minnesota legislature has required specific and long-term performance indicators of state-funded workforce training programs since 2014. These indicators include: - Employment and median wage prior to enrollment - Program enrollment - Training enrollment, occupation associated with training activity, and training completion - Credential attainment - Program exit and duration of time in program - Consistent employment and median wages for three and eight quarters after program exit - Comparisons are available by participants' education level, race, gender, and geography, and are available by year. DEED's agency-wide performance staff has already integrated WIA programs into its public facing Uniform Outcome Report Card. This activity will continue under WIOA, thus setting additional indicators of performance upon which workforce programs in Minnesota will be assessed.

State statute also require Minnesota to produce a net impact analysis of workforce programs. In January 2015, the Governor's Workforce Development Board (GWDB) published Minnesota's first report on the net impact of WIOA Adult and Dislocated Worker programs, using a rigorous methodology developed by an external economist, Dr. Raymond Robertson.

The initial results of this analysis are striking. Over the medium term (defined as five to eight quarters after program entrance), WIOA Adult program participants had earnings approximately 37 percent higher than they would have if they had not participated in the program. For Dislocated Worker participants, the earnings impact was 31.7 percent – or \$10,349 more in earnings – on average for participants exiting in PY 2007, and 13.2 percent (or \$5,121) for participants exiting in PY 2009. The difference between the two years may be related to the economy; the first cohort exited just as the recession was starting, whereas the second cohort exited as the recession was technically ending.

For employment over the medium term, WIOA Adult program participants were approximately 15 percent more likely to be employed than they would have been if they had not participated in the program. For Dislocated Workers, the impact was 13.3 percent for the PY 2007 cohort and 8.2 percent for the PY 2009 cohort.

The programs impacted different populations differently, often with positive equity implications. A headline result relative to Minnesota's struggles with racial employment disparities, WIOA Adult has larger impacts on employment and earnings for African-American participants than for white participants. Additionally, the Dislocated Worker program shows larger impacts for women than for men.

DEED is currently building on this analysis to include more recent cohorts of WIOA Adult and Dislocated Workers, as well as and the state's career pathways program, FastTRAC. Moreover, the analysis will provide impacts of specific program services, including various types of training and support services. It will also include an analysis of program benefits relative to program costs, which has never before been estimated in the Minnesota context. DEED will publish this analysis by January 2017.

Finally, DEED submits workforce training and UI wage records to the Minnesota Statewide Longitudinal Education Data System (SLEDS), which links secondary and postsecondary education and workforce to identify the most viable pathways for individuals in achieving successful outcomes in education and work. The capacity will exist very soon for DEED to request more robust data on WIOA program participants who enter, persist and complete postsecondary education after exiting when program tracking typically commences.

C. USE OF UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE (UI) WAGE RECORD DATA

Explain how the State will meet the requirements to utilize quarterly UI wage records for performance accountability, evaluations, and as a source for workforce and labor market information, consistent with Federal and State law. (This Operational Planning element applies to core programs.)

DEED houses the state's Unemployment Insurance (UI) division, which makes access to state wage detail available for the completion of official performance reporting requirements as required by federal or state laws. Minnesota's dedicated program performance and information technology staff also coordinate the data extracts from WRIS and FEDES to develop and produce the reports required for performance accountability under WIOA.

As a part of the net impact analysis required under Minnesota State statute and described in more detail in the section prior, we were also able to leverage UI data in several ways. First, we were able to identify individuals who applied for UI benefits in the same period that our program participants, or treatment group, were entering programs to construct a non-participant control group. Second, we were able to use UI wage records to track both our treatment and control group participants longitudinally.

Finally, DEED links UI wage records to postsecondary completion data from the state's Office of Higher Education in creation of a public facing Graduate Employment Outcomes (GEO) tool. The GEO tool shows how many recent Minnesota graduates found Minnesota jobs one to five years after graduation. It also shows the median wages earned and the top industries where graduates found jobs. Data are available by location, award type, institution type, and instructional program. In spring 2016, graduate employment outcomes by institution were added, helping to fulfill reporting requirements of the Office of Higher Education under Minnesota Statute 136A.121 Subd. 20, which mandates data on the employment and wage outcomes for graduates at the institution level.

DEED is also leveraging postsecondary completers and UI data linkages in preparation of our new Eligible Training Provider List (ETLP), which will be integrated into a new, comprehensive Career and Education Explorer tool being developed by Minnesota's Labor Market Information Office. In addition to GEO, DEED has studied relevant and timeline issues on graduate employment and wage outcomes in Minnesota. In 2015, for example, DEED conducted research on:

- Racial disparities in wage and employment after graduation. This

study provided qualitative evidence on four factors which help explain post-college wage disparities, including choice of major, industry of employment after graduation, time to degree completion and age of student at time of completion. • Labor market returns to higher education for older graduates. This study looked at work experience (continuous employment, interrupted employment, laid off from employment) to model the impact of schooling.

D. PRIVACY SAFEGUARDS

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

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7. PRIORITY OF SERVICE FOR VETERANS

Describe how the State will implement and monitor the priority of service provisions for veterans in accordance with the requirements of the Jobs for Veterans Act, codified at section 4215 of 38 U.S.C., which applies to all employment and training programs funded in whole or in part by the Department of Labor. States should also describe the referral process for veterans determined to have a significant barrier to employment to receive services from the Jobs for Veterans State Grants (JVSG) program's Disabled Veterans' Outreach Program (DVOP) specialist.

Priority of Service to Veterans will be provided to ensure Veterans receive first consideration for all opportunities for which they qualify in the WFC.

- **Point of Entry** – Signage requests that new clients identify themselves if they are a Veteran,
- **Questionnaire** – given to Veterans to assist reception to identify Veterans with significant barriers to employment.
- **SBE Veterans** – All SBE veterans will be referred to and will receive assistance/intensive services from a DVOP or in the absence of the DVOP, a designated intensive services provider.
- **Referral Process** – All other non-SBE Veterans will be referred to a trained partner staff person within the WFC who will provide job search information/assistance, program information and priority referral to services and resources.
- **Access to U.S. DOL funded programs** – Veterans and other eligible persons entitled to POS will be referred to U.S. DOL funded programs immediately. If a waiting list for the program exists, the Veteran will be put at the top of the list for service.
- **Workshops** – All workshops available in the WFC will have open slots available to Veterans up to the day the workshop is scheduled
- **State Job Bank** – Veterans (current and former Military members) are able to identify themselves as such, and are listed at the beginning of searches done by recruiters and employers. Employers are also able to self-designate as "Veterans Friendly Employer" so that Veterans can do keyword searches to find employers seeking Veterans for hire.
- **Training of Partner Staff** – Non DVOP staff are trained specifically as the point-of-contact for Veterans not receiving intensive services from DVOPs.

Several processes will be used to monitor POS statewide and within each area of the State in which covered programs operate: 1) Information provided by DVOP/LVER staff or customers, 2) DVET onsite visits (including U.S. DOL-VETS audits with the State Director of Veterans Employment Programs, 3) Managers Quarterly Reports.

Services are made available and provided within the WFC and through other service providers to eligible Veterans, transitioning service members, CH31 participants, other eligible persons and other such groups targeted for special consideration, including Veterans with significant barriers to employment.

MOUs have been developed with VR&E and the Jobs for Vets Program in providing referrals and priority services for Veterans.

8. ADDRESSING THE ACCESSIBILITY OF THE ONE-STOP DELIVERY SYSTEM FOR INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES

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

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

The **Determining the Location of a Minnesota WorkForce Center policy** requires that the "The WFC location will be accessible to all populations including individuals with disabilities." Workforce Development is the final authority in determining if a location meets the criteria to be certified as a WorkForce Center.

The **Minnesota WorkForce Center System Certification Standards policy** provides guidance on the implementation standards for the equal access obligations under WIOA. WorkForce Centers must be universally accessible to all populations including but not limited to various racial and ethnic groups, persons for which English is not their first language, ex-felons, Veterans. Different age groups, both sexes and individuals with disabilities.

All partners are covered by Title II of the ADA and the equal opportunity and nondiscrimination elements of Section 188 of WIOA and, therefore are subject to the same standards.

PROVIDE ARCHITECTURAL ACCESSIBILITY FOR INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES

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

The **Determining the Location of a Minnesota WorkForce Center policy** states, "DEED must ensure that all services are compliant with applicable laws, regulations and policies. DEED may therefore, withhold certification and/or funding from a location that does not meet the criteria established in this and related policies and laws." The Policy goes on to state, "the WFC location will be accessible to all populations including individuals with disabilities (see Site Selection document for guidance.)"

The Section of the Policy titled **Minnesota WorkForce Center System Certification Standards** provides detailed information regarding the criteria and the process for selecting,

remodeling or moving a WorkForce Center. WorkForce Centers must meet the standards set forth in the Policy. The Policy identifies the tools used to assist in evaluating and determining access requirements. They include:

- The **ADA Site Selection Criteria and Access Standards** – The standards were developed to assess the accessibility of potential WorkForce Center (WFC) locations and identify the building elements that are critical to program access. The standards address the obligation by all WFC partners under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Section 188 of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA).
 - § The site and building element descriptions are intended to help determine if a site location has the most basic accessible features to ensure equal access to participants with disabilities. If the site does not have the required features, modifications can be made to create improved access. It is imperative that a review be conducted prior to lease negotiations so that access issues can be addressed and remediated.
 - § It is the responsibility of DEED and its partners to choose sites that are accessible to and usable by the broadest population. DEED, as the designated state agency for WIOA implementation, is responsible for oversight and implementation of access standards regardless of the WIOA entity that holds the lease.
- The **Building Access Survey** is a tool developed by the Minnesota State Council on Disability that is a comprehensive review of a building site including all components both exterior and interior. The Survey incorporates both the Minnesota Building Code and the ANSI Code in its standards. The Survey categorizes the site features. All aspects of a building site are identified including parking, pathways and entrance, common elements of the building, accessible route and features specific to a WorkForce Center. The tool is available online and provided to site managers prior to a review.
- **Access Survey** – The worksheet developed by DEED to use with the Building Access Survey.

DEED developed a review schedule for all Comprehensive WorkForce Centers. Site visits for recertification of the 48 WorkForce Centers are scheduled on a three-year cycle. Comprehensive WorkForce Centers that are newly developed, remodeled or relocated are included in the review and are prioritized. There is generally an eighteen month lead time on remodeling or relocation.

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

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

PROVIDE PROGRAMMATIC ACCESSIBILITY FOR INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES

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

- The **Minnesota WorkForce Center System Certification Standards** discussed earlier identifies both physical and programmatic accessibility requirements. Customers with disabilities must be able to participate and benefit from the services available in the WorkForce Center System, as do all customers. In addition to the site accessibility standards, the Policy identifies the following requirements:
 - § Development of an evacuation and safety plan
 - § Notice displayed and available in alternate formats upon request
 - § Inclusion of tag lines
 - § Identification of TTY numbers or Minnesota Relay
 - § Availability of accommodation and modifications
 - § Staff knowledge of assistive technology
 - § Use of auxiliary aids and services
 - § Community resources
- Technology standards have been developed for all WorkForce Centers. Assistive technology available in the WorkForce Centers includes Pocket Talker, Zoom Text, Jaws, and TV/VCR with built-in captioning decoder, OVAC 210, Optelec CCTV (in selected sites), large screen monitor, and UbiDuo. Each WorkForce Center has an accessible computer station that includes software and hardware that provides access enhancements. The notice of the availability of these products and services is widely distributed among WorkForce partners for use by all consumers. As Resource Area equipment is updated, the access stations also receive updated hardware and software. In 2014, DEED did an assistive technology upgrade in all the WorkForce Centers. The JAWS software and Zoom Text was upgraded to the most recent version.
- DEED's Policy and Procedure Manual (PPM) Chapter 215, Office Identification, was updated in August, 2014. The policy includes requirements for interior signage. The policy provides information on character proportion, character height, raised/Brailled characters, contrast, placement height and pictorial symbols.
- The DEED Telecommunications Policy (PPM 210) has been updated to either require that a TTY or other alternative assistive technology for individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing be used in every building in which a DEED office is located. If a TTY number is available it should be included on letterhead, brochures, meeting notices and resource information. If a TTY is not available a tagline stating "upon request this information can be made available by calling xxx-xxx-xxxx or by contacting your preferred relay service" should be used.

ARE ABLE TO COMMUNICATE WITH INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES AS EFFECTIVELY AS WITH OTHERS

Public entities are required to ensure that applicants, participants and members of the public with disabilities have communication access that is equally as effective as that provided to people without disabilities. Since the majority of information in today's environment is available primarily through electronic means, DEED's public website provides program and customer information in a user-friendly venue. Sample pages from the DEED home page "contact us" link illustrate how individuals can contact any of our programs by using a TTY number.

MN.IT's Office of Accessibility provides services and technical support to the State of Minnesota executive branch. MN.IT has set standards for IT Accessibility. On their website a page is devoted to accessibility information for state agencies. It includes information on creating electronic documents, an information implementation toolkit for accessibility, and tools, training and testing information for creating accessible videos, podcast and webinars. The Chief Information Accessibility Officer is a dedicated position within MN.IT that is focused solely on assisting state agencies in identifying solutions to technology access issues.

Accessibility has been a central focus for the web development team. DEED's accessibility resources in the Vocational Rehabilitation Unit as well as staff at State Services for the Blind continue to be involved in any webpage updates ensuring accessibility for the blind and visually impaired, as well as users with hearing impairments, mobility impairments, and those with cognitive and reading disorders. DEED's web development team strives for accessibility that extends beyond minimum compliance. If, however, users are unable to access information, they may request information in alternate formats and it will be provided in a timely manner.

STAFF TRAINING AND SUPPORTS

Focus-on-Ability is a DEED education and training initiative designed to increase employment among individuals with disabilities. The training initiative consists of eight webinar training modules. The modules are titled, The Wants and Needs of People with Disabilities, People with Disabilities and Work, What Employers Want and Need, Disability and the Law, WorkForce Center Staff Training, Assistive Technology in the WorkForce Center, Topics of Interest that includes Universal Design History, Ex-Offenders, Outreach to the Disability Community, Veterans, and Manager Training: Coaching and Reinforcement. There is also information on common disabilities and a directory of resources on where to find service providers that offer employment-related assistance to individuals with disabilities.

The training modules are recommended for WorkForce Center staff that provides services to the universal customer, including individuals with disabilities. The professional training is also available to private employers who can opt out of the two units that are specifically about the WorkForce Centers.

The Resource and Reception Area Certification Program ensures that all staff working in the Resource/Reception Area are trained in the use of the assistive technology equipment. Staff are provided personal development opportunities to learn about the challenges that face customers with disabilities.

DEED and the Minnesota Department of Human Services sponsor the Counselor/Case Manager Conference held every year in June. There is always a session on working effectively with customers with disabilities at the conference. Topics can include:

- Mental Health First Aid
- Effective Communication with Deaf and Hard of Hearing Customers
- Accommodations in the Workplace
- My responsibility under the American with Disabilities Act

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

9. ADDRESSING THE ACCESSIBILITY OF THE ONE-STOP DELIVERY SYSTEM FOR ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS

Describe how the one-stop delivery system (including one-stop center operators and the one-stop delivery system partners) will ensure that each one-stop center is able to meet the needs of English language learners, such as through established procedures, staff training, resources, and other materials.

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

- Each WorkForce Center attempts to hire staff that reflect the local community, including non-English languages spoken in the area. For example, Somali-speaking staff are housed in the Minneapolis, St. Paul, St. Cloud, and Willmar WorkForce Centers where Somali communities are growing.
- Every WorkForce Center has an account with LanguageLine Translation Services. WorkForce Centers are able to access translation services via phone, video remote, or on site in 240+ languages.
- Every WorkForce Center is knowledgeable of community-based organizations who specialize in serving ELL learners. The local Adult Basic Education (ABE) provider offers English language classes in every region of the state and is often one of the first referral sources. There are also community-based organizations in larger communities that are an important partner and referral source for the One-Stops.
- DEED targets areas of the state with significant populations of ELL clients by investing existing resources in those areas. For example, additional Wagner Peyser funding is provided to the Minneapolis and St. Cloud WorkForce Centers so they can employ Community Liaison Representatives who speak the local languages. DEED is investing significant WIOA and Wagner Peyser resources into a new One-Stop in North Minneapolis that will house all WIOA programs, adult and K-12 education programming, and a community health care clinic to better serve the growing ELL population.

IV. COORDINATION WITH STATE PLAN PROGRAMS

Describe the methods used for joint planning and coordination among the core programs, and with the required one-stop partner programs and other programs and activities included in the Unified or Combined State Plan.

The state of Minnesota has a long standing history of activities being coordinated among the State Combine Plan partners. This is the primary reason for the robust participation of the required WIOA titles. Engagement of the core required titles began in January, 2015 with a broad review of the law and comment submission.

During the summer of 2015 we began to expand the conversation to other WIOA required titles. These conversations explored the details of their required planning elements and the relationship to WIOA and alignment with the State's emerging vision for a Career Pathway System. Commitments to the Combined State Plan began in the fall of 2015 and program administrators began to participate in a series of individual and group meetings.

The overall state strategy approach was reviewed and adoption recommended by the GWDB Operations Committee in December of 2015, and shared with Combined State Plan partners, with input used to refine the high level overview of our four year plan and serve as the basis for participating in the WIOA National Convening event, for which Minnesota sent 18 representatives.

Monthly meetings with the state level administrators, GWDB members and local workforce development board representatives throughout the first year of the implementation of the WIOA plan. These meetings will most likely move to quarterly meetings in the subsequent years of the four year plan with a series of focused meeting to consider modifications for years 3 and 4.

V. COMMON ASSURANCES (FOR ALL CORE PROGRAMS)

The Unified or Combined State Plan must include assurances that—

1. The State has established a policy identifying circumstances that may present a conflict of interest for a State Board or local board member, or the entity or class of officials that the member represents, and procedures to resolve such conflicts; Yes
2. The State has established a policy to provide to the public (including individuals with disabilities) access to meetings of State Boards and local boards, and information regarding activities of State boards and local boards, such as data on board membership and minutes; Yes
3. The lead State agencies with optimal policy-making authority and responsibility for the administration of core programs reviewed and commented on the appropriate operational planning elements of the Unified or Combined State Plan, and approved the elements as serving the needs of the populations served by such programs; Yes
4. (a) The State obtained input into the development of the Unified or Combined State Plan and provided an opportunity for comment on the plan by representatives of local boards and chief elected officials, businesses, labor organizations, institutions of higher education, the entities responsible for planning or administering the core programs, required one-stop partners and the other Combined Plan programs (if included in the State Plan), other primary stakeholders, including other organizations that provide services to individuals with barriers to employment, and the general public, and that the Unified or Combined State Plan is available and accessible to the general public; (b) The State provided an opportunity for review and comment on the plan by the State Board, including State agency official(s) for the Unemployment Insurance Agency if such official(s) is a member of the State Board; Yes
5. The State has established, in accordance with WIOA section 116(i), fiscal control and fund accounting procedures that may be necessary to ensure the proper disbursement of, and accounting for, funds paid to the State through allotments made for the core programs to carry out workforce development activities; Yes
6. The State has taken appropriate action to secure compliance with uniform administrative requirements in this Act, including that the State will annually monitor local areas to ensure compliance and otherwise take appropriate action to secure compliance with the uniform administrative requirements under WIOA section 184(a)(3); Yes
7. The State has taken the appropriate action to be in compliance with WIOA section 188, Nondiscrimination, as applicable; Yes
8. The Federal funds received to carry out a core program will not be expended for any purpose other than for activities authorized with respect to such funds under that core program; Yes

9. The State will pay an appropriate share (as defined by the State board) of the costs of carrying out section 116, from funds made available through each of the core programs; Yes

10. The State has a One-Stop certification policy that ensures the physical and programmatic accessibility of all One-Stop centers with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA); Yes

11. Service providers have a referral process in place for directing Veterans with Significant Barriers to Employment (SBE) to DVOP services, when appropriate; and Yes

12. Priority of service for veterans and eligible spouses is provided in accordance with 38 USC 4215 in all workforce preparation, development or delivery of programs or services funded directly, in whole or in part, by the Department of Labor. Yes

VI. PROGRAM-SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS FOR CORE PROGRAMS

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

PROGRAM-SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS FOR ADULT, DISLOCATED
WORKER, AND YOUTH ACTIVITIES UNDER TITLE I-B

The Unified or Combined State Plan must include the following with respect to activities carried out under subtitle B--

A. GENERAL REQUIREMENTS

1. REGIONS AND LOCAL WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT AREAS

A. IDENTIFY THE REGIONS AND THE LOCAL WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT AREAS DESIGNATED IN THE STATE.

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

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

B. DESCRIBE THE PROCESS USED FOR DESIGNATING LOCAL AREAS, INCLUDING PROCEDURES FOR DETERMINING WHETHER THE LOCAL AREA MET THE CRITERIA FOR “PERFORMED SUCCESSFULLY” AND “SUSTAINED FISCAL INTEGRITY” IN ACCORDANCE WITH 106(B)(2) AND (3) OF WIOA. DESCRIBE THE PROCESS USED FOR IDENTIFYING REGIONS AND PLANNING REGIONS UNDER SECTION 106(A) OF WIOA. THIS MUST INCLUDE A DESCRIPTION OF HOW THE STATE CONSULTED WITH THE LOCAL BOARDS AND CHIEF ELECTED OFFICIALS IN IDENTIFYING THE REGIONS.

The designation of the local areas followed the requirements in WIOA. The State, through review and consultation with the Minnesota Workforce Council Association, which represents the chief elected officials and the private sector leadership of the local boards, accepted requests for initial designation of all 16 existing local areas, based on satisfactory performance and sustained fiscal integrity.

Satisfactory performance was defined as meeting or exceeding performance standards for the two most recently completed program years. Sustained fiscal integrity was defined as having no audit exceptions for the two most recently completed program years. Documentation included published performance reports and audit letters issued by the State of Minnesota.

Opportunities for public comment on the State plan specific to the designation of local areas occurred at local area board meetings, a State board meeting, seven regional listening sessions and the 30 day public comment period published in the State Register.

The designation of regions followed the requirements in WIOA. The State, through review and consultation with the Minnesota Workforce Council Association, which represents the chief elected officials and the private sector leadership of the local boards, considered various options based on the criteria contained in WIOA law.

Additional criteria included having one metropolitan statistical area in each region and the partnering of two or more local areas. Other considerations, based on feedback from local boards and economic development regions in the state, was to keep existing boundaries intact, as to not require local boards or existing regional economic development regions to engage in multiple regional planning efforts, stressing their resources and capacity to fully participate.

The proposed regions were approved by the GWDB and MWCA and adopted in 2015. Opportunities for public comment on state plan specific to the designation of local areas occurred at local area board meetings, a state board meeting, seven regional listening sessions and the 30 day public comment period.

C. PROVIDE THE APPEALS PROCESS REFERRED TO IN SECTION 106(B)(5) OF WIOA RELATING TO DESIGNATION OF LOCAL AREAS.

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

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

Following the course of action that denies local designation, the appeals process will allow for the local unit(s) of government to present their appeal to the Governor's Workforce Development Board. The State Board will make a recommendation to the Governor. If the determination is not satisfactorily resolved with the Governor's decision, the local unit(s) of government may appeal to the Secretary of Labor.

This policy process is currently in draft, pending legal and regulation review. Once this process is complete, the policy will be submitted to the GWDB for approval and public comment.

D. PROVIDE THE APPEALS PROCESS REFERRED TO IN SECTION 121(H)(2)(E) OF WIOA RELATING TO DETERMINATIONS FOR INFRASTRUCTURE FUNDING.

WIOA requires an infrastructure funding policy to support the One-Stop delivery system. Minnesota has had such a policy in place since 2010 for operations of the 48 One-Stops. This policy uses general customer, participant and staffing data to determine the proportional

benefit that each title derives from the shared services now known as “Career Services” under WIOA. All infrastructure funding is borne by the local budgets of service providers.

This policy includes a dispute resolution statement which allows local partners to appeal the infrastructure funding policy to the Commissioner of DEED, who will designate and convene all partners and attempt to resolve the dispute. If an agreement still cannot be reached, the Commissioner’s designee will convene a meeting consisting of one representative from the Local Workforce Development Board (LWDB), the local WIOA Title 1b Director, a representative assigned by the DEED Title 4 state units, and the DEED Workforce Development Division Director. If this is not successful, a final appeal will be made to the DEED Commissioner for resolution.

This policy is under current review, as WIOA has broader view of funding participation, beyond just those partners physically located at a One-Stop. Current data systems that can appropriately determine proportionate benefit are not in place across the system making this unachievable in the near future.

It is also unclear as to how the definition of “administration” based allocations, if agreements are not reached, would be applied and be sufficient to maintain adequate services and locations of the One-Stop system. Legal review and technical guidance from DOL is pending our finalization of the appeals process for infrastructure funding. Until such time these issues can be resolved, our existing policy will remain in place.

2. STATEWIDE ACTIVITIES

A. PROVIDE STATE POLICIES OR GUIDANCE FOR THE STATEWIDE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM AND FOR USE OF STATE FUNDS FOR WORKFORCE INVESTMENT ACTIVITIES.

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

Policy and guidance covers all areas of department operated core partner titles and additional titles, and includes the following categories of policy: Equal Opportunity & Complaints; Administration & Operations; Multi-Program Administration Requirements; One-Stop Centers; WIOA Adult, Dislocated Worker and Youth; Wagner-Peyser; Vocational Rehabilitation Services; Displaced Homemaker; Foreign labor Certification; Migrant & Seasonal Farmworker; Senior Community Services Employment; Trade Adjustment Act; Work Opportunity Tax Credit; Minnesotaworks.net and new elements under WIOA.

These policies have been or are in the process of being updated to comply with WIOA, with specific attention being focused on TEGs released by DOL and changes in workforce investment activities. Examples include board membership, both state and local; changes in the eligible training provider list requirements; transfers among adult and dislocated worker programs; and training related activities.

General guidance for the local boards has been provided during the transition period through a collaborative process that engages state and local partners. Based on reviews of the law

by subject matter experts from the state and local area, efforts have been guiding the implementation process forward, complying with DOL released TEGL's and interpretation of the law and NPRMs.

The GWDB's Operations Committee has also played an integral role in supporting the implementation of WIOA through reviewing and approving pertinent policy and guidance issued by the department. This committee is in the process of preparing for a complete system review of all policies for updates and other needed changes or additions. This committee will also be looking at policy alignment with title II, the only core partner title not currently housed in the state agency that has administrative responsibilities for WIOA.

B. DESCRIBE HOW THE STATE INTENDS TO USE GOVERNOR'S SET ASIDE FUNDING. DESCRIBE HOW THE STATE WILL UTILIZE RAPID RESPONSE FUNDS TO RESPOND TO LAYOFFS AND PLANT CLOSINGS AND COORDINATE SERVICES TO QUICKLY AID COMPANIES AND THEIR AFFECTED WORKERS. STATES ALSO SHOULD DESCRIBE ANY LAYOFF AVERSION STRATEGIES THEY HAVE IMPLEMENTED TO ADDRESS AT RISK COMPANIES AND WORKERS

The restoration of the full 15% of the Governor's set aside is a recent development and no formal plan has been approved as of the submission of the State Combined Plan. DEED will work in partnership with the Minnesota Workforce Council Association to consider how the funds should be used for required and allowable activities.

Considerations for the use of the 15% set aside will include, but not be limited to deferred infrastructure expenses during the four year absence of the full set aside, on-going technology upgrades that support better integration of data and performance reporting, and other strategies with demonstrated success with service delivery, such as pay-for-performance. Specific use of these funds will be determined in April and May of 2016.

RAPID RESPONSE

Minnesota plans to reserve the maximum allowable 25 percent of the WIOA Dislocated Worker program allocation to provide Rapid Response services throughout the state. These funds serve laid off individuals who will participate in either the WIOA or State Dislocated Worker (DW) programs. Both programs require speed and quality of service from the Rapid Response team and the subsequent DW services to customers. Balance between these two principles is where the State Rapid Response Team does its most important work.

When DEED Rapid Response staff learn about an event that could qualify as a mass layoff, the team works with the employer, the local partners, unions, and any other relevant entities to determine the actual size and scope of the layoff. At the same time, a "call for competition" goes out to every provider in the state (16 WSAs and 10 Independent, State Certified Service Providers) to determine who may be interested in competing for mass layoff grant (also called a "project"), if one is announced. Within 24 hours, the State has a list of providers interested in serving the laid off individuals.

If there are no interested providers beyond the WSA in which the layoff is happening, the State determines the size of the layoff and the number of likely DW program participants,

conducts an orientation for workers if necessary, surveys the workers to inform the providers' service provision, and provides a smooth transition to local partners who will provide any DW program services.

If there are interested providers beyond the WSA in which the layoff is happening, the State takes a more substantial role beyond orientations and surveys. In these circumstances, the Rapid Response Team performs all orientation and facilitation functions until a volunteer, designated Planning and Selection Committee (PSC) – composed of the workers impacted by the layoff – has chosen a service provider. Rapid response team staff members convene the PSC, explain the process, provide impartial and accurate data on the performance of service providers, facilitate the decision-making process, and maintain communication with all competing providers. In addition, after the PSC makes its selection, Rapid Response staff advise other State staff of the formal proposal that comes from the service provider. This formal proposal allows the State to confirm the PSC's choice. Finally, Rapid Response staff follow-up with PSC members several weeks after their selection and administer a survey to assess the performance of both the Rapid Response team staff and the early performance of the provider. The entire PSC process puts the power in the hands of the laid off workers, giving them the opportunity to choose their provider after having lost the power they had in their employment.

Typically, competition among service providers increases the quality of customer services, since providers must focus on the unique aspects of a layoff in order to convince the PSC to choose them. Please visit DEED's website for additional details on Minnesota's Rapid Response services and the competitive process.

LAY-OFF AVERSION

Lay-off aversion tactics are difficult to deploy. Holistic workforce planning and early communication with employers supports workers during times of transition and layoff. Minnesota also offers a shared work program through the Unemployment Insurance Division, which minimizes layoffs.

Minnesota also offers Incumbent Worker (IW) training, and continues to develop policies to guide such work. As we fully implement WIOA, we plan to use a portion of DW program formula-allocated funding to work with companies to provide IW training, which strengthens the existing labor force and helps to prepare for retirement and other natural attrition. Minnesota also offers other types of IW training, including Job Skills Partnership grants, which bring employers and training institutions together to support the existing labor force. This kind of training, in and of itself, strengthens the workforce, which helps to avert layoffs in an indirect manner.

C. IN ADDITION, DESCRIBE THE STATE POLICIES AND PROCEDURES TO PROVIDE RAPID RESPONSES IN CASES OF NATURAL DISASTERS INCLUDING COORDINATION WITH FEMA AND OTHER ENTITIES.

Natural disasters are covered under the Governor's Executive Order which assigns emergency responsibilities to State agencies. Each agency has an Emergency Operations Plan that details their responsibilities and roles in coordinating with other state and federal agencies, as deemed necessary by the disaster event and declaration by the President to engage FEMA. The following is a high level description of the role DEED plays in a disaster

response: a. Disaster Unemployment Assistance (DUA) DUA helps unemployed workers and self-employed individuals who are unable to work as a direct result of a major disaster, and if the individual is not eligible for other unemployment insurance benefits. DUA is administered by the Unemployment Insurance Division. For DEED to initiate DUA, the President must issue a disaster declaration providing for individual assistance. Individuals can apply for unemployment insurance benefits at www.uimn.org or 1-877-898-9090.

b. National Emergency Grant (NEG) A NEG creates temporary employment to assist with clean-up on public land and infrastructure resulting from a natural disaster. Work under the NEG program is administered by the Workforce Development Division's Dislocated Worker Unit. For DEED to initiate a NEG application, the President must declare a major disaster for public assistance. A NEG is issued by the U.S. Department of Labor, lasts six months, and can provide up to \$12,000 to each eligible individual in wages. After a NEG is awarded to DEED, Job Seeker Services sub-grants the funding to a local level project operator to implement activity within counties that had been designated by FEMA for public assistance. Individuals interested in employment through the NEG would obtain information through their local Workforce Center.

c. Temporary Workforce Center (One If a disaster strikes a community and a DEED Workforce Center is not available within close proximity, a temporary center may be opened. Services provided at the location would be for answering questions related to Disaster Unemployment Insurance, Dislocated Worker Services and the National Emergency Grant temporary employment. The logistics of a temporary center being opened would be handled in conjunction with Administrative and Financial Services' Facilities Coordinator. 2. Provide materials or representation at Disaster Recovery Centers (DRCs) and public meetings, as requested by the Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Management, to furnish information relative to disaster unemployment, dislocated worker, job training and applicable programs.

To fulfill the tasks outlined in provision above, DEED units provide the following programs.

a. Program Awareness & Materials Preparation DEED's Communications Analysis and Research Division (CARD) will assist in the development of materials and representing the department. The public information officer is the director of CARD who will work with graphic design and writing staff to develop materials and represent DEED. These individuals would work with personnel from DEED, including the Rapid Response Team to assist dislocated workers and other state/local agencies to collaboratively create and provide the necessary information. An additional responsibility of CARD is coordinating DEED information through the Minnesota Recovers Web site, www.MinnesotaRecovers.org, which is the state's clearinghouse for all information about federal, state and local government disaster-assistance efforts.

b. Representation at Disaster Recovery Centers (DRC's) For a FEMA - Disaster Recovery Center (DRC) to be opened, a Presidential declaration for Individual Assistance within several counties is required for the activation of these centers. However, HSEM through a state disaster declaration, may elect to open these centers before or in the absence of a federally declared disaster.

D. DESCRIBE HOW THE STATE PROVIDES EARLY INTERVENTION (E.G., RAPID RESPONSE) TO WORKER GROUPS ON WHOSE BEHALF A TRADE

ADJUSTMENT ASSISTANCE (TAA) PETITION HAS BEEN FILED. (SECTION 134(A)(2)(A).) THIS DESCRIPTION MUST INCLUDE HOW THE STATE DISSEMINATES BENEFIT INFORMATION TO PROVIDE TRADE-AFFECTED WORKERS IN THE GROUPS IDENTIFIED IN THE TAA PETITIONS WITH AN ACCURATE UNDERSTANDING OF THE PROVISION OF TAA BENEFITS AND SERVICES IN SUCH A WAY THAT THEY ARE TRANSPARENT TO THE TRADE-AFFECTED DISLOCATED WORKER APPLYING FOR THEM (TRADE ACT SEC. 221(A)(2)(A) AND SEC. 225; GOVERNOR-SECRETARY AGREEMENT). DESCRIBE HOW THE STATE WILL USE FUNDS THAT HAVE BEEN RESERVED FOR RAPID RESPONSE TO PROVIDE SERVICES FOR EVERY WORKER GROUP THAT FILES A TAA PETITION.

DEED provides Rapid Response events for 100% of all Trade-certified workers who live in Minnesota. Rapid Response events are triggered when a plant closing or mass layoff occurs, and includes TAA benefits and services information if a petition has been filed. When a small layoff is identified as Trade-affected, Rapid Response funds are used to provide events for all eligible workers covered in the TAA petition(s). Additionally, Minnesota co-enrolls all TAA-eligible workers into the WIOA Dislocated Worker program in order to provide wrap-around case management and supportive services. Due to the in-depth approach for Rapid Response and TAA-eligible workers, eligible workers have the opportunity to learn about available services multiple times; including the initial Rapid Response event, TAA information meetings for each petition, and Dislocated Worker program enrollment meetings.

B. ADULT AND DISLOCATED WORKERS PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

1. IF THE STATE IS UTILIZING WORK-BASED TRAINING MODELS (E.G. ON-THE-JOB TRAINING, INCUMBENT WORKER TRAINING, TRANSITIONAL JOBS, AND CUSTOMIZED TRAINING) AS PART OF ITS TRAINING STRATEGY AND THESE STRATEGIES ARE NOT ALREADY DISCUSSED IN OTHER SECTIONS OF THE PLAN, DESCRIBE THE STATE'S STRATEGIES FOR HOW THESE MODELS ENSURE HIGH QUALITY TRAINING FOR BOTH THE PARTICIPANT AND THE EMPLOYER.

The Sector Partnership National Emergency Grant (SP NEG) is a federal grant for dislocated workers, among other grants that addresses the use of alternative training models to better serve Minnesotans facing unemployment and barriers to employment. The State applied for the SP NEG grant because it was a great opportunity to embark on an innovative way of viewing and implementing work-based training models. U.S. DOL awarded the State with \$5,750,000 to serve over 1,000 dislocated workers. Trainings models such as on-the-job training, credentialed training, transitional jobs skills training, and incumbent worker training can be expensive and staff intensive which often times can be discouraging for WDAs, especially smaller WDAs to embark on. The SP NEG grant provides the opportunity to leverage funds with existing dislocated worker dollars to accomplish the goals that the governor and president have set to increase achievement and decrease the gap between those who face barriers to employment and those who do not. Minnesota has a strong economy, relatively low unemployment rate, and high education attainment. However, that does not apply to the entire population in the state. Not all Minnesotans benefit equally from the current robust economy. Meeting the needs of those individuals require funds, regional coordination, strong partnerships, and innovative and inclusive models that allow dislocated workers with various backgrounds and experiences to enter an industry that can provide a sustainable living. The SP NEG addresses the employer and job seeker need and bridges the gap between the two. The State used current Labor Market Information data to determine five sector-based occupations on which to focus: manufacturing, health care, transportation, IT, and agriculture. All expected outcomes in this project are guided by current federal law and regulations as well as supporting metrics related state statutes, policies and procedures. This Sector Partnership grant along with other programs and strategies exhibit the State's commitment to cater to the needs of employers and participants.

MN Pathways to Prosperity (P2P) will support increased participation of enrollees in career pathway programming to strengthen development of increased career awareness, acquisition of basic skills education, participation in skills-training programs, and placement into positions in high growth, high demand industries capable of long-term employment at wages permitting family self-sufficiency.

The State directly appropriated funds for a Customized Training Pilot Program (CTPP) for the second time for three MN State Colleges and University System (MNSCU) institutions. The goal of the CTPP is develop and administer customized training programs in the skilled manufacturing industry that integrates academic instruction and job-related learning in the workplace.

2. DESCRIBE HOW THE STATE WILL INCORPORATE REGISTERED APPRENTICESHIP INTO ITS STRATEGY AND SERVICES.

Minnesota was awarded funds for the American Apprenticeship Initiative Grant, at \$5 million to build new apprenticeship programs and serve 814 new apprentices over the next five years. More than 100 employers statewide are participating in the Minnesota Apprenticeship Initiative to bring more than 800 individuals into newly registered apprenticeship programs in 29 high-growth occupations spanning five industries: advanced manufacturing, agriculture, healthcare, information technology and transportation. Minnesota apprenticeship Initiative activities include outreach and recruitment, co-enrolled program intake, assessment, adult basic education where necessary, wrap-around support services, career guidance, life skills coaching and counseling, structured on-the-job training, competency based technical instruction and state-issued industry-recognized credentials. Guidelines for apprenticeships are outlined in state policy to assist with any questions that WDAs may have in using these funds to serve Minnesotans.

Registered Apprenticeships are considered a part of the continuum of training opportunities of a career pathways system. As such, the establishment of sector strategies within the 6 regions in Minnesota will include available Registered Apprenticeships, of which we have over 200, for training and future development for occupations in demand that lead to family sustaining wages. Registered Apprenticeships are also a part of the Eligible Training Provider List and we continue to look for opportunities to expand the involvement of these opportunities.

3. PROVIDE THE PROCEDURE, ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA, AND INFORMATION REQUIREMENTS FOR DETERMINING TRAINING PROVIDER INITIAL AND CONTINUED ELIGIBILITY, INCLUDING REGISTERED APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAMS (WIOA SECTION 122).

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

WIOA certification in Minnesota occurs in three steps.

1. Ensuring that the training institution is licensed, registered, or otherwise exempt by the Minnesota Office of Higher Education (OHE), or, depending on program, other appropriate state agency.
2. Entering and updating information on all programs and courses to be WIOA-certified on the state's eligible training provider list.
3. Submitting a WIOA certification application to DEED.

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

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

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

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

After the year of initial eligibility is completed, training providers who provide the required information may be considered for continued eligibility. Programs certified under WIA will be grandfathered in under WIOA and will not be subject to initial eligibility, but providers will need to provide any required information for continued eligibility for these programs by the end of calendar year 2015. All programs are subject to review and renewal at least every two years; failure to provide and update data may result in loss of WIOA certification.

Under the law, required data on WIOA-certified training programs includes information on recognized postsecondary credentials received by participants, information on cost of attendance for participants (including tuition and fees), and information on the program completion rate of participants. DEED will generally acquire as much information (e.g., entered employment rate, wages) through existing data collection processes, without necessitating any paperwork from the training provider. DEED will leverage our inter-agency Minnesota State Longitudinal Data System (SLEDS) to meet the Workforce WIOA reporting requirements for the ETPL.

Only a training institution that has a physical location in Minnesota may apply for listing on Minnesota's ETPL - except for Registered Apprenticeship sponsors, who may apply even if located outside Minnesota. And only a training institution approved for listing on Minnesota's

ETPL may request WIOA certification of its programs or sources. WIOA specifically requires training providers to apply for program or course certification.

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

In 2016, Minnesota will complete a new ETL build, which allows more. Minnesota's ETPL will be embedded in a comprehensive Career and Education Explorer tool being developed by Minnesota's Labor Market Information Office and is intended to better meet the needs of the state's customers and counselors.

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

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

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

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

The State's policy of WIOA Certification for Training Programs that providers definitions, detailed procedures, general and performance reporting requirements, is available online.

4. DESCRIBE HOW THE STATE WILL IMPLEMENT AND MONITOR THE PRIORITY FOR PUBLIC ASSISTANCE RECIPIENTS, OTHER LOW-INCOME INDIVIDUALS, AND INDIVIDUALS WHO ARE BASIC SKILLS DEFICIENT IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE REQUIREMENTS OF WIOA SEC. 134(C)(3)(E), WHICH APPLIES TO INDIVIDUALIZED CAREER SERVICES AND TRAINING SERVICES FUNDING BY THE ADULT FORMULA PROGRAM.

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

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

Local providers should determine priority on an individual basis. Staff members with the local service provider may determine an individual's "most in need" status based on his/her unique factors and barriers. Local providers should intervene early with eligible customers.

DEED monitors these activities through our client data system to ensure this priority is addressed. The outcomes of these efforts become a part of monitoring reports.

5. DESCRIBE THE STATE'S CRITERIA REGARDING LOCAL AREA TRANSFER OF FUNDS BETWEEN THE ADULT AND DISLOCATED WORKER PROGRAMS.

The State's criteria is as follows –

Policy Action This policy provides the mechanism for transferring up to 100 percent of formula-allocated WIOA Title I-B Adult funds to WIOA Title I-B formula-allocated Dislocated Worker funds and vice versa.

Background In accordance with WIOA Law, local workforce investment boards shall ensure the formula-based WIOA Dislocated Worker program, like all partners, contributes proportionally to one-stop core services' costs. Some providers have expressed a wish to use WIOA Law, Section 133(b)(4) to transfer funds between Dislocated Worker and Title I-B Adult to accomplish this.

Procedures In accordance with WIOA Law, Section 133(b)(4), a local workforce council can, with state approval, transfer up to 100 percent of a program year allocation for Adult employment and training activities, and up to 100 percent of a program year allocation for Dislocated Worker employment and training activities, between the two programs. A local service provider cannot transfer funds to or from a WIOA Title I-B Youth Program.

In order for DEED to approve the request, the local provider will need to provide a rationale for the transfer in accordance with the request form given below.

A requesting provider must submit the following three documents:

164. a completed and signed form (Request to Transfer Funds: Adult/Dislocated Worker – attached);
165. a revised Dislocated Worker program budget and participant information forms (found in the Planning Guidelines); and
166. a revised Adult program budget and participant information forms (found in the Planning Guidelines)

C. YOUTH PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

With respect to youth workforce investment activities authorized in section 129 of WIOA,—

1. IDENTIFY THE STATE-DEVELOPED CRITERIA TO BE USED BY LOCAL BOARDS IN AWARDING GRANTS FOR YOUTH WORKFORCE INVESTMENT ACTIVITIES AND DESCRIBE HOW THE LOCAL BOARDS WILL TAKE INTO CONSIDERATION THE ABILITY OF THE PROVIDERS TO MEET PERFORMANCE ACCOUNTABILITY MEASURES BASED ON PRIMARY INDICATORS OF PERFORMANCE FOR THE YOUTH PROGRAM AS DESCRIBED IN SECTION 116(B)(2)(A)(II) OF WIOA IN AWARDING SUCH GRANTS.*

* Sec. 102(b)(2)(D)(i)(V)

The State-developed criteria to be used for youth workforce investment activities includes an array of service perspectives that ensure a quality experience for youth and a flexible approach from which providers may design opportunities for youth to be successful. The criteria is as follows:

Adult Support, Structure and Expectations

- Initiatives that connect young people with adults who are willing to advocate and broker on their behalf, mentor and connect them to the broader institutions of society and who have the training and skills to help them develop and grow.
- Services that stress coherence and structure, offer challenging content and give youth responsibilities that may develop civic responsibility, self-worth and leadership skills while establishing rules and setting practical limits for young people.
- Committed/skilled adults who can continue to set clear, high and yet attainable expectations over an extended period of time.

Career Pathways

- Initiatives that incorporate basic and high-level skills that align with the skill needs of industries in the local economy and prepare youth to be successful in secondary or postsecondary education options, including apprenticeships as appropriate.
- Services that emphasize experiential learning and work-based learning as a tool in creating an effective learning environment for youth.
- Counseling to support youth in achieving the individual's education and career goals.
- Services that result in the acquisition of industry sought and recognized credentials.
- Access to academic program that are grounded in standards, clear performance expectations, and graduation exit options based on meaningful, accurate and relevant indicators of student learning and skills.

A Combination of Guidance and Connections to the Workplace

- Use of readily accessible and understood Labor Market Information (LMI) to assess employment opportunities in high-growth industries and in-demand occupations.
- Activities that support and demonstrate strong employer engagement, involvement of the business community.
- Initiatives that provide opportunities to learn how to work, stimulate growth as a result of work experience, success or failure and develop a sound perspective on work and learning.
- Activities that can show the correlation between work and learning.
- Support that extends beyond the initial job placement point and interpersonal involvement with adults who can assist youth in reaching for success in employment.

Support and Follow-Up

- Activities that establish trust, particularly for opportunity youth who have weak institutional ties and lack positive adult and peer relationships.
- Activities with strong built-in follow-up mechanisms to design better participant outcomes
- Effective case management skills that provide comprehensive guidance, counseling and referrals to coordinate a progression of services and activities.
- Policies that stress the quality of individual initiatives and the richness of the youth support network.
- Activities that involve parents, families and other caring adults who are involved in the young person's life and can support their ability to achieve independence and self-sufficiency.

Youth as a Resource

- Initiatives that build skills in self-advocacy and conflict resolution and recognize young people are an important resource in improving their own lives.
- Activities that empower youth to contribute to their community's growth.
- Activities that promote youth leadership and peer support.

Implementation Quality

- Activities with well thought out implementation designs that are followed and tracked through a continuous improvement process.
- Initiatives requiring flexibility to both regional needs and proven methodologies.
- Initiatives that incorporate evaluation components including customer satisfaction.

In regard to performance accountability measures, the State will require Local Boards to assess the capacity of youth services providers to achieve the performance accountability measures negotiated

by the State. This will be accomplished by looking at the historic outcomes of youth services providers based on the primary indicators for youth. This includes:

- employment retention at the 2nd quarter after exit
- employment retention at the 4th quarter after exit
- credential attainment

Outcome data for employment at exist and available follow up data relative to employment retention at 6 and 12 months will be evaluated and serve as a partial basis for selecting youth service providers. Outcome data for educational attainment at exist will also be evaluated and serve as partial basis for selecting youth service providers.

These are the current three measures with performance accountability goals. As baseline measures for median earnings, measurable skill gains and employer engagement are establish and performance accountability measures are negotiated, they, too, will become a part of this assessment of youth service providers.

2. DESCRIBE THE STRATEGIES THE STATE WILL USE TO ACHIEVE IMPROVED OUTCOMES FOR OUT-OF-SCHOOL YOUTH AS DESCRIBED IN 129(A)(1)(B), INCLUDING HOW IT WILL LEVERAGE AND ALIGN THE CORE PROGRAMS, AND COMBINED STATE PLAN PARTNER PROGRAMS INCLUDED IN THIS PLAN, REQUIRED AND OPTIONAL ONE-STOP PARTNER PROGRAMS, AND ANY OTHER RESOURCES AVAILABLE.

Minnesota supports partnerships that help young people – the future workforce – attain the skills, knowledge and aptitudes to become productive workers in the 21st century economy. Minnesota is committed to providing the highest quality programming for youth. Program quality increases participant satisfaction and retention of youth which increases the positive impact that youth workforce programs have on our young people, their families and communities. Investments in quality youth programs reduce future costs of out-of-home placements, public assistance and the juvenile justice system. Minnesota's vision for providing quality services to youth includes:

- Coordinate resources at the state and local level;
- Connect youth with quality educational, experiential learning and work-based learning opportunities;
- Introduce youth to career pathways and in-demand jobs important to regional economies;
- Performance accountability; and
- Improving services to the neediest youth.

Outreach and recruitment of out-of-school youth focuses on eligible youth ages 18-24 interested in pursuing occupational skill training and/or other postsecondary credentials. Interagency partnerships are established between the WDA, local technical colleges, universities and adult basic education (ABE) to identify and connect with youth who can benefit from case management, education, financial and transitional supports of the WIOA Youth Program. Youth program staff directly interface with and recruit potential youth candidates from ABE programs and look for co-enrollment opportunities. The WDA's on-site presence at the technical colleges and ABE centers promotes

communication with Student Disability Specialists and Financial Aid Officers who identify individuals who qualify for and could potentially benefit from WIOA Youth services.

Out of school youth in need of occupational skills training are also recruited from the Disability Employment Initiatives underway in six Minnesota sites and other career pathway programs which serve as a referral source for Vocational Rehabilitation Services, the Minnesota Family Investment Program (MFIP), and the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). New marketing materials focus on older, out-of-school youth and are used to recruit out of school youth who visit the local WorkForce Centers.

WIOA Youth service providers maintain regular communication with representatives from county social services foster care units, juvenile corrections, homeless youth service providers and drop-in centers, and other community based organizations serving out of school youth. Enhanced recruitment efforts of Out of school youth include closer ties with local Area Learning Centers (ALCs). ALC's include WIOA Youth applications in senior student portfolios.

WDA youth counselors receive referrals of out-of-school youth from community-based organizations such as: United Way, Lutheran Social Services, Salvation Army, community action agencies and local libraries. Youth counselors work with these organizations to partner and provide a variety of WIOA Youth services that help the youth re-connect with educational opportunities and move towards economic self-sufficiency and work readiness.

Minnesota's commitment to improving services to at-risk youth, especially out of school youth, is reflected in its Shared Vision for Youth (SVY) vision statement: "By age 25, Minnesota's young people will be ready for the responsibilities and rewards of economic self-sufficiency, health, family and social relationships, community involvement, stable housing and lifelong learning." This vision is supported by an interagency workgroup whose mission is: "State agencies will collaborate to assure that Minnesota's neediest youth, especially out of school youth, acquire the talents, skills, and knowledge necessary to ensure their healthy transition to successful adult roles and responsibilities." Minnesota supports partnerships at the state and local levels so that a variety of funding sources can be leveraged to address the needs of opportunity youth (e.g., youth who are disconnected from both schools and jobs). For example, there are partnerships to recruit out of school youth with Adult Basic Education, Drop-in Centers, community centers, and with other agencies where out of school youth gather.

DEED posted a Shared Vision for Youth web page to provide the contact information for the state-level interagency workgroup and to provide information on ongoing interagency projects which further the goals of serving opportunity youth and achieving successful, shared outcomes (see Minnesota Shared Vision for Youth). The web page features samples of interagency projects underway at the Local Workforce Development Area (LWDA) level to improve transition outcomes for all at-risk youth with a particular emphasis on: dropouts and potential dropouts; youth aging out of foster care; youth with disabilities; and homeless youth and runaways.

Through the leadership of the Local Workforce Development Boards and Youth Committees, Minnesota's WIOA Young Adult Program provides comprehensive services to youth who are experiencing an opportunity gap. Minnesota's youth unemployment rate was 13 percent for all youth in 2015, and double that for youth of color, youth with disabilities and economically disadvantaged youth. Minnesota's Local Workforce Development Areas provide high quality services for youth and young adults beginning with career exploration and guidance, support for educational attainment,

opportunities for skills training in in-demand industries and occupations, and a job along a career pathway or enrollment in post-secondary education.

The WIOA Young Adult Program serves at-risk youth, ages 16–24, who are not attending any school, and in-school youth, ages 14–21, who are low-income and at-risk. WIOA improves job and career options for youth through an integrated, job-driven workforce system that supports the development of strong regional economies. WIOA Youth program elements include: dropout recovery and prevention; paid and unpaid work experience; tutoring; occupational skills training; leadership development, mentoring; comprehensive guidance and counseling; financial literacy education; entrepreneurial skills training; tutoring; study skills training; entrepreneurial skills training; labor market information on in-demand industry sectors/occupations; alternative secondary school services; education offered with workforce preparation activities and training; support services and follow up.

Services for out of school youth involve partnerships with multidisciplinary teams that consist of community action agency staff, school personnel (where appropriate), probation officers, county social workers, mental health professionals, chemical dependency counselors, rehabilitation workers, interpreters, youth, and youths' parents or guardians. These teams develop action plans to support the OSY. For example, a community action worker will assist youth with work experience, a probation officer will ensure the youth is getting to work and/or an educational experience, and a chemical dependency counselor will ensure that the youth is going to therapy.

The State is pursuing a waiver to support co-enrollment of WIOA youth participants in other federally funded youth programs to increase the quality and flexibility of services to in-school and out-of-school youth (see Section XX). Given that WIOA broadens the required program elements and focuses on a more difficult to serve population, local workforce development boards (LWDBs) will partner with:

1. Vocational Rehabilitation Services (VRS) to provide Pre-Employment Transition Services to assist In-School Youth with disabilities. Three pilot sites will be established in Rural Minnesota CEP, Anoka County and Southwest Minnesota in April of 2016 (will expand to other Local Workforce Development Areas at later date). The pilot sites will provide direct services in the form of work experience, introduction to career pathways and support services to VRS-eligible youth ages 14–21, who are attending secondary school (including alternative schools). The pilot sites will demonstrate effective intra-agency collaboration and local partnerships, best practices and co-enrollment strategies that can be shared across states and local youth workforce system providers and youth-serving agencies.
2. Department of Human Services (DHS) to provide youth employment services to Teen Parents, 16 through 24 years of age, who are receiving Minnesota Family Investment (MFIP) benefits; and Youth ages 14 through 18, who are on the grant in the MFIP household. Thirteen Local Workforce Development Areas will participate projects that focus on work readiness, work experience, introduction to career pathways and preparation of youth for long-term employment.

As indicated above, many WIOA Young Adult participants come into our system through one-stop partner programs (such as MFIP, Vocational Rehabilitation and/or ABE) so, in general additional resources and services can be tailored to meet the needs of the participant across these programs. Some participants also find their way into these programs through referrals from their local one-stop, while others learn about available services from friends, family and other acquaintances.

The WIOA Young Adult Program is designed to support the shift under Title I of WIOA to expend at least 75 percent of funds on Out-of-School Youth. The cost per participant under WIOA will increase as many Out-of-School Youth require more intensive and costly services, potentially over a longer period of time.. Consequently, fewer participants will be served under the WIOA Young Adult Program due to the more intensive and costly services for the increased emphasis on the Out-of-School Youth population.

In addition to the potential of co-enrolling WIOA youth participants in other federally-funded programs outside of the Department of Labor, many local Workforce Development Boards will also pursue co-enrolling youth into the WIOA Adult program where feasible. Leveraging these additional resources will increase the potential for more positive outcomes in both youth and adult programs at the local level

3. DESCRIBE HOW THE STATE WILL ENSURE THAT ALL 14 PROGRAM ELEMENTS DESCRIBED IN WIOA SECTION 129(C)(2) ARE MADE AVAILABLE AND EFFECTIVELY IMPLEMENTED.*

* Sec. 102(b)(2)(D)(i)(I)

DEED's Youth Services Team asks all Workforce Service Areas (WSAs)/Local Workforce Investment Boards to describe in their Local Youth Plans how the 14 required WIOA Young Adult Program elements are made available at the WSA level. The Youth Program Monitoring activities assures that the yearly on-site review of the WIOA Youth services includes an evaluation of whether the 14 program elements are being effectively implemented at the WSA level as described in the Local Youth Plan.

4. PROVIDE THE LANGUAGE CONTAINED IN THE STATE POLICY FOR "REQUIRING ADDITIONAL ASSISTANCE TO ENTER OR COMPLETE AN EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM, OR TO SECURE AND HOLD EMPLOYMENT" CRITERION FOR OUT-OF-SCHOOL YOUTH SPECIFIED IN WIOA SECTION 129(A)(1)(B)(III)(VIII) AND FOR "REQUIRING ADDITIONAL ASSISTANCE TO COMPLETE AN EDUCATION PROGRAM, OR TO SECURE AND HOLD EMPLOYMENT" CRITERION FOR IN-SCHOOL YOUTH SPECIFIED IN WIOA SECTION 129(A)(1)(C)(IV)(VII).

Local workforce development boards must define in their Local Youth Plan their definition of "an individual who requires additional assistance to enter or complete an educational program or to secure or hold employment." This definition must be reasonable, quantifiable, and based on evidence that the specific characteristic of the youth identified objectively requires additional assistance. Examples may include, but are not limited to: Migrant youth, incarcerated parent, behavior problems at school, family literacy problems, domestic violence, substance abuse, chronic health conditions, one or more grade levels below appropriate age, immigrant/refugee.

5. INCLUDE THE STATE DEFINITION, AS DEFINED IN LAW, FOR NOT ATTENDING SCHOOL AND ATTENDING SCHOOL AS SPECIFIED IN WIOA SECTION 129(A)(1)(B)(I) AND SECTION 129(A)(1)(C)(I). IF STATE LAW DOES NOT DEFINE "NOT ATTENDING SCHOOL" OR "ATTENDING SCHOOL" INDICATE THAT IS THE CASE.

In Minnesota, school is defined as a "public school, or nonpublic school, church or religious organization, or home school in which a child is provided instruction in compliance with Minnesota statute 120A.22, subdivision 4 and Section 120A.24." The compulsory age of school attendance is 17 (Minnesota statute 120A.22.subdivision 5).

In Minnesota, the following are included in the definition of dropout/not attending any school: 1) students with 15 consecutive days of unexcused absences (excluding school breaks and official days off of school); 2) students who are "voluntary" withdrawals from school (as described in Minnesota statute 120A.22); 3) expelled students (as described in Minnesota statute 121.A.45).

6. IF NOT USING THE BASIC SKILLS DEFICIENT DEFINITION CONTAINED IN WIOA SECTION 3(5)(B), INCLUDE THE SPECIFIC STATE DEFINITION.

The term "basic skills deficient" means, with respect to an individual:

- Who is a youth, that the individual has English reading, writing, or computing skills at or below the 8th grade level on a generally accepted standardized test; or
- Who is a youth or adult that the individual is unable to compute or solve problems, or read, write, or speak English, at a level necessary to function on the job, in the individual's family, or in society.

D. SINGLE-AREA STATE REQUIREMENTS

In States where there is only one local workforce investment area, the governor serves as both the State and local chief elected official. In such cases, the State must submit any information required in the local plan (WIOA section 106(d)(2)). States with a single workforce area must also include:

1. ANY COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD THAT REPRESENT DISAGREEMENT WITH THE PLAN. (WIOA SECTION 108(D)(3).)
2. THE ENTITY RESPONSIBLE FOR THE DISBURSAL OF GRANT FUNDS, AS DETERMINED BY THE GOVERNOR, IF DIFFERENT FROM THAT FOR THE STATE. (WIOA SECTION 108(B)(15).)
3. THE TYPE AND AVAILABILITY OF WIOA TITLE I YOUTH ACTIVITIES, INCLUDING AN IDENTIFICATION OF SUCCESSFUL PROVIDERS OF SUCH ACTIVITIES. (WIOA SECTION 108(B)(9).)

N/A

E. WAIVER REQUESTS (OPTIONAL)

States wanting to request waivers as part of their Title I-B Operational Plan must include a waiver plan that includes the following information for each waiver requested:

1. IDENTIFIES THE STATUTORY OR REGULATORY REQUIREMENTS FOR WHICH A WAIVER IS REQUESTED AND THE GOALS THAT THE STATE OR LOCAL AREA, AS APPROPRIATE, INTENDS TO ACHIEVE AS A RESULT OF THE WAIVER AND HOW THOSE GOALS RELATE TO THE UNIFIED OR COMBINED STATE PLAN;
2. DESCRIBES THE ACTIONS THAT THE STATE OR LOCAL AREA, AS APPROPRIATE, HAS UNDERTAKEN TO REMOVE STATE OR LOCAL STATUTORY OR REGULATORY BARRIERS;
3. DESCRIBES THE GOALS OF THE WAIVER AND THE EXPECTED PROGRAMMATIC OUTCOMES IF THE REQUEST IS GRANTED;
4. DESCRIBES HOW THE WAIVER WILL ALIGN WITH THE DEPARTMENT'S POLICY PRIORITIES, SUCH AS:
 - A. SUPPORTING EMPLOYER ENGAGEMENT;
 - B. CONNECTING EDUCATION AND TRAINING STRATEGIES;
 - C. SUPPORTING WORK-BASED LEARNING;
 - D. IMPROVING JOB AND CAREER RESULTS, AND
 - E. OTHER GUIDANCE ISSUED BY THE DEPARTMENT.
5. DESCRIBES THE INDIVIDUALS AFFECTED BY THE WAIVER, INCLUDING HOW THE WAIVER WILL IMPACT SERVICES FOR DISADVANTAGED POPULATIONS OR INDIVIDUALS WITH MULTIPLE BARRIERS TO EMPLOYMENT; AND
6. DESCRIBES THE PROCESS USED TO:
 - A. MONITOR THE PROGRESS IN IMPLEMENTING THE WAIVER;
 - B. PROVIDE NOTICE TO ANY LOCAL BOARD AFFECTED BY THE WAIVER;
 - C. PROVIDE ANY LOCAL BOARD AFFECTED BY THE WAIVER AN OPPORTUNITY TO COMMENT ON THE REQUEST;
 - D. ENSURE MEANINGFUL PUBLIC COMMENT, INCLUDING COMMENT BY BUSINESS AND ORGANIZED LABOR, ON THE WAIVER.
 - E. COLLECT AND REPORT INFORMATION ABOUT WAIVER OUTCOMES IN THE STATE'S WIOA ANNUAL REPORT

The Secretary may require that States provide the most recent data available about the outcomes of the existing waiver in cases where the State seeks renewal of a previously approved waiver;

Minnesota is extending it's waiver requests and is renewing the youth procurement waiver. The waiver process meet the requirements under WIA and will be reviewed and updated following final regulations under WIOA.

TITLE I-B ASSURANCES

The State Plan must include assurances that:

1. The State has implemented a policy to ensure Adult program funds provide a priority in the delivery of training services and individualized career services to individuals who are low income, public assistance recipients and basic skills deficient; Yes
2. The state has implemented a policy to ensure local areas have a process in place for referring veterans with significant barriers to employment to career services provided by the JVSG program's Disabled Veterans' Outreach Program (DVOP) specialist; Yes
3. The state established a written policy and procedure that set forth criteria to be used by chief elected officials for the appointment of local workforce investment board members. Yes
4. The state established written policy and procedures to ensure local workforce investment boards are certified by the governor every two years in accordance with WIOA section 107(c)(2). Yes
5. Where an alternative entity takes the place of a State Board, the State has written policy and procedures to ensure the alternative entity meets the definition under WIOA section 101(e) and the legal requirements for membership. Yes
6. The State established a written policy and procedure for how the individuals and entities represented on the State Workforce Development Board help to determine the methods and factors of distribution, and how the state consults with chief elected officials in local areas throughout the state in determining the distributions. Yes
7. The State will not use funds received under WIOA Title I to assist, promote, or deter union organizing in accordance with WIOA section 181(b)(7). Yes
8. The State distributes adult and youth funds received under WIOA equitably throughout the State, and no local area suffers significant shifts in funding from year-to-year during the period covered by this plan. Yes
9. If a State Workforce Development Board, department, or agency administers state laws for vocational rehabilitation of persons with disabilities, that board, department, or agency cooperates with the agency that administers Wagner-Peyser services, Adult and Dislocated Worker programs and Youth Programs under Title I. Yes
10. The State agrees to report on the impact and outcomes of its approved waivers in its WIOA Annual Report. Yes
11. The State has taken appropriate action to secure compliance with the Uniform Guidance at 2 CFR 200 and 2 CFR 2900, including that the State will annually monitor local areas to ensure compliance and otherwise take appropriate action to secure compliance with the Uniform Guidance under section WIOA 184(a)(3); Yes

**PROGRAM-SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS FOR WAGNER-PEYSER PROGRAM
(EMPLOYMENT SERVICES)**

All program-specific requirements provided for the WIOA core programs in this section must be addressed for either a Unified or Combined State Plan.

A. EMPLOYMENT SERVICE PROFESSIONAL STAFF DEVELOPMENT.

1. DESCRIBE HOW THE STATE WILL UTILIZE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES FOR EMPLOYMENT SERVICE STAFF TO ENSURE STAFF IS ABLE TO PROVIDE HIGH QUALITY SERVICES TO BOTH JOBSEEKERS AND EMPLOYERS.

The state will use several professional development activities for Job Service staff:

- All staff who serve job seekers in the resource areas and/or reception desks are required to complete the Reception and Resource Area Certification Program.
- Business Services Representatives are required to obtain the Workforce Development Specialist certification from a customized training program developed by the University of Minnesota.
- Classroom presentation skills training based on the state's Creative Job Search workshop will continue to be offered to all employees who facilitate workshops.
- All Job Service employees have access to the Skill–soft online training platform. Training specific to each employee is documented in the employee's Individual Development Plan.
- Ongoing training in the areas of dealing with diverse populations, accessibility, safety, and financial literacy will continue to be offered to all employees.
- Training will continue to be provided in specific program areas such as Migrant Seasonal Farmworkers and Trade Adjustment Assistance.
- Staff will continue to be encouraged to attend the state's annual Job Counselor training event, which includes keynote speakers and breakout sessions on multiple topics related to their work with job seekers and businesses.

The goal of these training activities is to ensure that staff are able to effectively assist job seekers with improving their job search skills, obtaining the best job possible, and progressing in a career pathway. These training activities will also provide employers with access to qualified candidates and strengthen their business. The delivery methods of these trainings will include on–the–job training, conference calls, and web based technology such as Skype and WebEx.

2. DESCRIBE STRATEGIES DEVELOPED TO SUPPORT TRAINING AND AWARENESS ACROSS CORE PROGRAMS AND THE UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE PROGRAM, AND THE TRAINING PROVIDED FOR EMPLOYMENT SERVICES AND WIOA STAFF ON IDENTIFICATION OF UI ELIGIBILITY ISSUES AND REFERRAL TO UI STAFF FOR ADJUDICATION.

The state's Reception and Resource Area Certification Program is available for all state and local partners in the WorkForce Centers and includes basic training on core programs as well as the Unemployment Insurance program. Modules that are included in this training program are:

- Unemployment Insurance basics, how to file a claim and claim benefits
- Assessing and referring the UI customer
- WIOA and State programs and services offered through the WorkForce Center system
- Career Planning Process
- Job Searching Process
- The state's Customer Registration System that enrolls job seekers for all WorkForce Center services as well as the Wagner–Peyser program
- Adaptive Technology

- MinnesotaWorks (i.e. the state's online labor exchange system)
- Equal Opportunity
- WIOA complaint process
- Data Privacy
- Customer Service
- Population Awareness
- Business Services
- "Language Line" translation services

B. EXPLAIN HOW THE STATE WILL PROVIDE INFORMATION AND MEANINGFUL ASSISTANCE TO INDIVIDUALS REQUESTING ASSISTANCE IN FILING A CLAIM FOR UNEMPLOYMENT COMPENSATION THROUGH ONE-STOP CENTERS, AS REQUIRED BY WIOA AS A CAREER SERVICE.

Most aspects of Minnesota's Unemployment Insurance program are operated centrally by DEED through an online portal and a call center. Although only about two percent of all UI customers access services through the one-stops, customers who request assistance in a WorkForce Center are offered one or more of the following:

- Free computers to access the online UI portal to file a claim, file an appeal, and/or claim benefits. The UI portal is bookmarked on every WFC resource area computer.
- Phones for calling the UI call center.
- Printed materials containing detailed information about UI benefit eligibility and the process for filing claims, appeals, and collecting benefits.
- Staff assistance on the computers when needed.

As mentioned in the "training" Sections of this plan, the state's Reception and Resource Area Certification Program contains modules on UI including:

- Introduction to UI
- Assessing and Referring UI Customers
- UI Basic Information and Researching UI
- Data Security and Passwords
- UI Website and Online Application Process Overview

Handouts for staff that are part of this training include:

- Answering UI Questions: Phone Tree English
- Answering UI Questions: Phone Tree Hmong
- Answering UI Questions: Phone Tree Somali
- Answering UI Questions: Phone Tree Spanish
- How to Apply for UI Benefits
- Language Line Quick Reference Guide

C. DESCRIBE THE STATE'S STRATEGY FOR PROVIDING REEMPLOYMENT ASSISTANCE TO UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE CLAIMANTS AND OTHER UNEMPLOYED INDIVIDUALS.

Minnesota's strategy is centered on the Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment (RESEA) program. It's important to note that due to the state's low unemployment rate, ALL UI claimants who are seeking work (i.e. not attached to a job) are called in to RESEA sessions at WorkForce Centers. This helps ensure that the Wagner Peyser program will have direct contact with all UI applicants in the state who are not attached to a job. Minnesota's strategy in this area will be as follows:

- A Job Service staff person will attend every RESEA session that UI offers across the state. The UI program plans on offering RESEA sessions to all UI claimants who are not attached to a job.
- The RESEA and Job Service staff will conduct a quick assessment of every UI claimant to determine who will most likely need additional services from the WorkForce Center.
- The Job Service staff person will conduct an orientation to WFC services either 1:1 or in a group setting (depending on the size of the group) that includes information on how to register for the state's labor exchange system, i.e. MinnesotaWorks, and information about programs such as the Dislocated Worker program that they may be eligible for.
- The Job Service staff person will assist the RESEA customer with creating an initial registration and enrolling in the Creative Job Search workshop. Creative Job Search is typically the first job finding/job placement service that is offered to UI applicants. The workshop consists of training on how to find a job that includes career planning, preparing for the job hunt, skills identification, resumes and cover letters, applications and references, social media, interviewing skills, and more.
- Job Service will follow up with UI applicants who are not enrolled in a program to ensure that they have a complete registration and resume in MinnesotaWorks, and that they are taking advantage of job placement services. Wagner Peyser services will also be available to all other unemployed individuals. Anyone can enroll in the job search classes offered to UI claimants, can access 1:1 staff assistance to obtain job search assistance, career guidance, labor market information, etc., and can use MinnesotaWorks.net to search for jobs. One of the strategies employed by Wagner Peyser that is marketed and offered to all citizens are onsite hiring events and career fairs. These events have grown in popularity and will continue to be used as a vehicle to connect all job seekers with employers.

D. DESCRIBE HOW THE STATE WILL USE W-P FUNDS TO SUPPORT UI CLAIMANTS, AND THE COMMUNICATION BETWEEN W-P AND UI, AS APPROPRIATE, INCLUDING THE FOLLOWING:

1. COORDINATION OF AND PROVISION OF LABOR EXCHANGE SERVICES FOR UI CLAIMANTS AS REQUIRED BY THE WAGNER-PEYSER ACT;

The UI program strongly encourages all UI applicants participants to register with the state's labor exchange system, MinnesotaWorks, and create a resume. Once registered, job seekers have access to all of the online features such as searching for jobs and making their resume viewable by employers registered in the system. As described in the previous Section, RESEA participants, who represent ALL UI applicants who are not attached to a job, also receive information on Wagner-Peyser services, information and referrals to eligibility-based programs (such as WIOA Dislocated Worker), orientations to WFC services, and workshop enrollments.

Other unemployed individuals as well as universal customers have access to the same re-employment services. Staff-assisted services such as job search workshops, assistance registering with MinnesotaWorks, resume writing assistance, provision of labor market information, referral to veteran services, and referral to education, training, and supportive services are offered to all job seekers

2. REGISTRATION OF UI CLAIMANTS WITH THE STATE'S EMPLOYMENT SERVICE IF REQUIRED BY STATE LAW;

State law does not require UI claimants to register with MinnesotaWorks, however UI requires registration for RESEA program participants. As described earlier, Wagner-Peyser staff attend every RESEA workshop and provide follow up services with the intent of having every participant create a viewable resume in MinnesotaWorks.

3. ADMINISTRATION OF THE WORK TEST FOR THE STATE UNEMPLOYMENT COMPENSATION SYSTEM, INCLUDING MAKING ELIGIBILITY ASSESSMENTS (FOR REFERRAL TO UI ADJUDICATION, IF NEEDED), AND PROVIDING JOB FINDING AND PLACEMENT SERVICES FOR UI CLAIMANTS; AND

Wagner-Peyser staff in Minnesota are not involved in administration of the work test or making eligibility assessments. The UI program administers the work test and does all eligibility assessments. Please refer to previous Sections for the description on how job finding and placement services are provided to UI applicants. As noted earlier, ALL UI applicants who are not attached to a job are required to attend a RESEA session, which means that all UI applicants are receiving the work test and getting an eligibility assessment..

4. PROVISION OF REFERRALS TO AND APPLICATION ASSISTANCE FOR TRAINING AND EDUCATION PROGRAMS AND RESOURCES.

All UI claimants who are not attached to employment are provided information about the availability of training and education programs at the RESEA session. This includes an explanation of how the UI claimant, if eligible, can collect benefits and receive training. Customers who would like further information about training are assisted either by Job Service staff to gain more information and application assistance, or by program staff if the customer is eligible for a WIOA or state funded

program. This same information is provided to all other unemployed individuals and the universal customer by either self-service (information provided at the WorkForce Center or online links to training programs) or with staff assistance.

E. AGRICULTURAL OUTREACH PLAN (AOP). EACH STATE AGENCY MUST DEVELOP AN AOP EVERY FOUR YEARS AS PART OF THE UNIFIED OR COMBINED STATE PLAN REQUIRED UNDER SECTIONS 102 OR 103 OF WIOA. THE AOP MUST INCLUDE--

1. ASSESSMENT OF NEED

Provide an assessment of the unique needs of farmworkers in the area based on past and projected agricultural and farmworker activity in the State. Such needs may include but are not limited to: employment, training, and housing.

The migrant farmworker stream in Minnesota continues to evolve with workers only wanting to assist with seasonal crop production and returning home in the off-season. Employment opportunities have shifted from actual field work to food processing, thus changing the dynamics that makes employment more predictable based on the growth season. Workers are recruited prior to seasons, as producers recruit in Texas. Farmworkers are less interested in staying in Minnesota for training, due to family members elsewhere and climate reasons.

This is contributed to by the housing made available to migrant workers. This housing is dedicated to contracted adult workers. Bringing entire families forces workers into year long leases which is incompatible with the financial resources of the workers.

A. AN ASSESSMENT OF THE AGRICULTURAL ACTIVITY IN THE STATE MEANS: 1) IDENTIFYING THE TOP FIVE LABOR-INTENSIVE CROPS, THE MONTHS OF HEAVY ACTIVITY, AND THE GEOGRAPHIC AREA OF PRIME ACTIVITY; 2) SUMMARIZE THE AGRICULTURAL EMPLOYERS' NEEDS IN THE STATE (I.E. ARE THEY PREDOMINANTLY HIRING LOCAL OR FOREIGN WORKERS, ARE THEY EXPRESSING THAT THERE IS A SCARCITY IN THE AGRICULTURAL WORKFORCE); AND 3) IDENTIFYING ANY ECONOMIC, NATURAL, OR OTHER FACTORS THAT ARE AFFECTING AGRICULTURE IN THE STATE OR ANY PROJECTED FACTORS THAT WILL AFFECT AGRICULTURE IN THE STATE.

| Crop | Area | Dates |
|-------------|---------------------------|--------------------|
| Vegetables | South/Southeastern | May-September |
| Sugar Beets | Northwestern/Southwestern | June-August |
| Potatoes | Statewide | September-November |
| Corn | Central/Southern | July-September |
| Soybeans | Central/Southern | June-July |

Migrant labor participation was concentrated in the months specified, based on the growing or harvesting of the particular crops. The use of mechanization and Roundup Ready chemicals in the state has reduced the number of farm workers needed per acre in fieldwork. Many migrant farm workers have continued to take advantage of other longer-term employment opportunities in vegetable, meat and poultry processing companies. In addition, local worker shortages have also contributed to the increasing interest of employers hiring migrant farm workers in dairy farms, nurseries, landscaping and sod farms. Since some workers return to areas where they have established relationships, they do not seek the services of the WorkForce Centers. Therefore, it is

difficult to provide an actual number of migrant farm workers in this state. The best guess would be an estimate of 10,000 migrant farm workers residing in Minnesota during the peak season. The total number of registered Migrant and Seasonal Farmworkers in the last full program year, PY14, was 2,435. This number is a significant increase due to best practices used by the Migrant Labor outreach workers and the addition of a Migrant Labor Representative (MLR) outreach worker at the Rochester WorkForce Center the MSFW information was captured in the Workforce One data system. Our commitment to improve these numbers have included intensive training for the program staff as to the eligibility definitions and criteria of the program. The reestablishment of employer cooperation and collaboration. In the past, Minnesota has placed in the top 12 of the 20 states with the highest impact of registered MSFWs. There are four WorkForce Centers with significant MSFW activity in Minnesota. These WorkForce Centers each staff a bilingual Spanish/English MLR, all of whom are bilingual/bicultural and also have farmworker backgrounds. Three of these MLRs are not full-time outreach positions. The MLR staff, while performing outreach, make contacts, assist MSFWs with registrations, job referrals and inform workers of employment services as well as other resources available from all partners in the WorkForce Centers. They distribute bilingual materials that describe these services and also provide the names and addresses of contact persons. The information is important and sometimes crucial to MSFWs, whether they are seeking agricultural or non-agricultural employment. This is consistent with our commitment to universal access to labor exchange services and the requirement to ensure that all job seekers with LEP and/or little or no knowledge in using computer-based labor exchange services will be provided with services. Other partner agencies are advised they may want to review their written correspondence to ensure they are meeting the needs of LEP customers. For example, English language forms or general business letters are sent to LEP customers explaining the appeals process and numerous processes within the agency. LEP customers often lose their benefits because they do not understand nor respond to the information they receive. They may be unfamiliar with timeframes for filing, the appeals process or deadlines for applications. Many times these customer will have to reapply for a benefit or start over with the process, which can cost time and decrease the amount of benefits. Therefore, it is imperative that LEP customers be identified in the registration process and correspondence written in their language whenever possible. The MLRs will contact farm workers at their work sites, living areas and gathering places. The MLRs collaborate with social service agencies, migrant education centers, health service centers, community agencies, migrant Head Start, migrant legal services and other migrant service providers to enable them to provide outreach and locate farm workers that are missed through WorkForce Center outreach efforts. The cooperative arrangements with these agencies are based on long-standing verbal agreements. Minnesota has a Memorandum of Understanding with Motivation, Education and Training, Inc. (MET) the NFJP grantee. The working relationships among agencies have been excellent. The MLRs are expected to contact a minimum of five farm workers per day on their outreach days. At the rate of 121 outreach days from four offices, the number of contacts in PY14 was 2,216. The expected new for PY15 will be 3,500. Much of the outreach activity is concentrated in the summer and early fall months, when MSFW activity is at its peak. The MLRs participated in the annual Pre-Season Training in May 2015. The emphasis of the training included outreach efforts, coordination with other agencies, the Complaint Process and protections afforded to MSFWs by state and federal laws. The training is planned and facilitated by the state monitor advocate. The second part of the training included an orientation on the WF1 system components and the integration of the MSFW Program within WF1. MET staff was also invited and participated in this training. The MET staff will work in partnership with the MLR staff to deliver services to MSFWs. The significant local offices also develop a yearly outreach plan which, in part, describes the coordination and referral system with other local community MSFW service providers and partners. This includes conducting employer visits and making contacts for job development and assessment of the needs of both MSFWs and employers. These plans will be monitored by the state Monitor Advocate as part of the review process to ensure that MSFWs have full access to all WorkForce Center services. Outreach staff also contact agricultural employers,

providing them with information about the services of partners in the WorkForce Centers and the availability of farm workers and the special services provided to them. We have updated our informational pamphlets directed to agricultural and non-agricultural employers. There were 2,880 agricultural job openings received in PY14. There were no interstate clearance orders received. The WF1 system is not set up to or able to accept out of state job orders. Information available on computerized job systems appears to be making clearance orders obsolete. Employers in search of workers contact the local offices and job orders are received and entered in MinnesotaWorks.net, our online state labor exchange system. Local staff provide service to employers by searching for candidates who match the employers' job categories and other requirements of the positions. This routine screening procedure can alert staff to opportunities that meet the preferences of many migrant workers. In addition, the outreach staff is acquainted with employers in their prospective areas who repeatedly hire MSFWs. Domestic referrals are made to H2-A employers. Migrant labor representatives make contact with as many agricultural employers as possible to provide them information on:

- Listing their agricultural job orders with WorkForce Centers
- Interstate and intrastate clearance orders
- Federal and state compliance regulations
- The availability of presentations by compliance agencies to growers associations, and other affected groups and organizations
- Field and quality assessments
- Mediation/interpreter services
- Liaison between migrant service providers and employer

The State Monitor Advocate (SMA) visits communities with substantial MSFW activity to meet with employers, review their needs and determine the effectiveness of the WorkForce Center services provided. This opportunity is taken to provide information to employers, discussing such issues as how to meet the housing needs of farm workers. An additional tool for promoting labor exchange services is the mn.gov/deed website which contains information of particular importance to agricultural employers. Minnesota met 5 of 5 Equity Ratio Indicators in fourth quarter of PY14, including:

1. Referred to Employment
2. Received Staff Assisted Services
3. Referred to Support Services
4. Career Guidance,
5. Job Development Contacts

Minnesota met 4 of the 7 (Minimum Service Level) equity indicators in the fourth quarter of PY10, including:

1. Reviews of significant offices
2. Field checks conducted
3. Timely processing of ES complaints
4. Outreach contacts per staff day

Minnesota is on track to meet the same numerical goals for PY14 and will achieve additional Minimum Service Level equity indicators for PY15. Additional emphasis will be placed on outreach contacts. Outreach was performed throughout the peak MSFW farm worker season. The MLRs commendable commitment to outreach has succeeded in increasing the number to 18 contacts per

outreach day in PY14. There were no clearance orders or required field checks in PY14. Although, with an increasing number of H2–A employers and domestic referrals, field checks will be conducted in the coming season. All of the significant offices will be reviewed again this program year. Minnesota WorkForce Centers will offer the same full range of programs and services to farm workers that are provided to non–farm workers. Services will be actively promoted to farm workers as described above under the outreach plan. Our demand driven philosophy includes the concept that employment services are available to both the employers and job seekers to assist in making the connection of the two parties through a common language and understanding of jobs that are in high demand. In a primarily agricultural area, agribusiness is a cornerstone of employment. Occupations in this industry include agricultural research, sales and farming. Minnesota has a full–time MSFW monitor advocate. The State Monitor Advocate and the Migrant Labor Representatives maintain close contact with the following organizations in the interest of providing effective service to their customers:

- Red River Valley Sugar Beet Growers Association
- Southern Minnesota Regional Legal Services
- Motivation Education and Training Inc.
- Migrant Health Services, Inc.
- Tri–Valley Opportunity Council

Feedback on the Agricultural Services plan has been solicited from the above organizations. We are awaiting responses for PY15. The four MLRs are expected to contact a minimum of 5 farmworkers per day on their outreach days. In PY14: The number of 2,216 contacts were conducted in 121 staff days this indicates that there was 18 contacts per staff outreach day. The rate of 203 contacts by cooperating agencies. The number of expected contacts in the new PY15 will be 3,500. Much of the outreach activity is concentrated in the summer and early fall months, when MSFW activity is at its peak. Most of the workers are migrant food processors that are recruited and contracted in Texas by employers. They arrive to work in three 8–14 hour shifts during the season. Minnesota met 5 of 5 Equity Ratio Indicators in fourth quarter of PY14. Minnesota met 4 of the 7 (Minimum Service Level) equity indicators in the fourth quarter of PY14. Outreach was performed during the peak MSFW farm worker season. The MLRS made 18 contacts per outreach day (PY14).

B. AN ASSESSMENT OF THE UNIQUE NEEDS OF FARMWORKERS MEANS SUMMARIZING MIGRANT AND SEASONAL FARM WORKER (MSFW) CHARACTERISTICS (INCLUDING IF THEY ARE PREDOMINANTLY FROM CERTAIN COUNTRIES, WHAT LANGUAGE(S) THEY SPEAK, THE APPROXIMATE NUMBER OF MSFWS IN THE STATE DURING PEAK SEASON AND DURING LOW SEASON, AND WHETHER THEY TEND TO BE MIGRANT, SEASONAL, OR YEAR-ROUND FARMWORKERS). THIS INFORMATION MUST TAKE INTO ACCOUNT DATA SUPPLIED BY WIOA SECTION 167 NATIONAL FARMWORKER JOBS PROGRAM (NFJP) GRANTEES, OTHER MSFW ORGANIZATIONS, EMPLOYER ORGANIZATIONS, AND STATE AND/OR FEDERAL AGENCY DATA SOURCES SUCH AS THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR (DOL) EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING ADMINISTRATION.

A. Minnesota has 81,000 farms totaling nearly 27 million acres of the state's 54 million acres. The average farm size is 332 acres. Minnesota's growing season varies depending on where you are in the state: 100 days in the north to 150 days in the south. The Agricultural and Food Industry is the 2nd largest employer in Minnesota with (2/3) two-thirds of all agricultural jobs are off-farm, in processing, distribution, supply and service sectors. Minnesota is a top producer of frozen and canned vegetables. Corn is the state's most valuable crop followed by soybeans. Minnesota's leading fruit crop are apples. Minnesota leads the nation in producing sugarbeets, turkeys, oats, and sweet corn and green peas for processing. The state is second only to California in wild rice production. Minnesota is unique in the production of wild rice with it being cultivated paddy wild rice and traditional Native American hand harvested wild rice. The state is also a major producer of spring wheat, canola, hogs, dry beans and milk cows.

Minnesota is a leading state in annual farm income. It ranks at 5 among the states, generating about 4% of the nation's total agricultural receipts. In terms of revenue generated Minnesota's top five agricultural products are corn for grain, hogs, soybeans, dairy products, and cattle and calves. Livestock and livestock products account for about half of the state's farm income. The most valuable livestock products are hogs, accounting for 18% of the state's total agricultural revenues.

Key crops include sugarbeets in northwestern and southeastern Minnesota, June through September; vegetables in southeastern Minnesota, July-October; potatoes, statewide in August-October; Corn in central and southern Minnesota in July-September; Soybeans in central and southern Minnesota in June-August; apples in southeastern and metro in July-September

Migrant labor participation is concentrated in the months between May-October based on the growing or harvesting of the particular crops. The use of mechanization and Roundup Ready chemicals in the state has greatly reduced the number of farm workers needed in fieldwork. Many farm workers have continued to take advantage of other longer-term employment opportunities in vegetable, meat and poultry processing companies. The turkey processing companies employ 3,900 workers year round, the poultry companies employ 6,300 workers. (MN Dept. of Agriculture).

In addition, local worker shortages have contributed to the increasing interest of employers hiring migrant and seasonal farm workers in dairy farms, nurseries, landscaping and sod farms. Since some workers return seasonally to areas where they have established employer relationships, they do not seek the services of the local one-stop WorkForce Centers (WFC). Therefore, it is difficult to provide an actual number of migrant farm workers in this state. The best estimate of 15,000 to 20,000 migrant and seasonal farm workers residing in Minnesota during the peak season (May-October) with most being recruited and contracted at their permanent home base, for hire by the

Food Processing and the Turkey & Poultry company recruiters/contractors. These employers offer on-site housing to the hired workers. The farmworkers working in Minnesota are primarily employed by the Food Processing companies (migrant food processors). The Food Processing companies including SENECA/Green Giant, and Lakeside Foods recruit the workers in Texas every spring. The migrant food processing workers arrive to the work sites in in Rochester, Montgomery, Glencoe and Blue Earth, and Brooten, Owatonna, and Plainview, MN.

2. OUTREACH ACTIVITIES

The local offices outreach activities must be designed to meet the needs of MSFWs in the State and to locate and contact MSFWs who are not being reached through normal intake activities. Describe the State agency's proposed strategies for:

A. CONTACTING FARMWORKERS WHO ARE NOT BEING REACHED BY THE NORMAL INTAKE ACTIVITIES CONDUCTED BY THE EMPLOYMENT SERVICE OFFICES.

When the Migrant Labor Representative is conducting outreach, the MSFW Program (bilingual) Resource Guide provides local staff and agency contact information to the MSFWs. The information is important and sometimes crucial to MSFWs, whether they are seeking agricultural or non-agricultural employment and services. The MLRs post contact information with local businesses and agencies that are frequented by the MSFWs. In addition to the types of employment services available, this includes tear-off tabs with their names and phone numbers. These postings are written in English and Spanish. This is consistent with our commitment to universal access to labor exchange services and the requirement to ensure that all job seekers with LEP and/or little or no computer knowledge or access to computer-based labor exchange services will be still be provided services and assistance. Much of the outreach activity is concentrated in the summer and fall months, when MSFW activity is at its peak. The majority of the workers that the outreach staff make contact with are migrant food processors that are recruited and contracted in Texas by employers. They arrive to work in three 8 to 14 hour shifts during (June- end of Sept.) the peak season. Each WorkForce Center offers a variety of workshops to help with your job search and career planning. Examples of workshops include: • Interviewing skills • Networking • Internet job searches • Completing job applications • Resumes and cover letters There are four one-stop WorkForce Centers with significant MSFW activity in Minnesota. These WorkForce Centers include a bilingual Spanish/English MLR, all of whom are bilingual / bicultural, have farmworker backgrounds and a strong commitment to their work. The MLR outreach staff perform outreach activities during the peak time of the season including scheduling and coordinating outreach efforts with the other service providers. The outreach staff provide the farmworkers and employers with information, presentations, and handouts related to employment rights and protections, job referrals and job search services. The majority of MSFWs encountered by the MLRs and other service providers (Migrant Health, Legal Services, NFJP) indicated that they are limited-English (LEP) or non-English speakers. The outreach staff assist MSFWs with translation, program registrations, the Unemployment compensation application process if needed, and provide and inform workers of all employment services to those who qualify. The staff provides informational resource guides that include eligibility information for all agency partners, and local community resources. Services will be actively promoted to farm workers as described above under the local outreach plan.

The outreach staff in the four significant local offices develop a yearly outreach plan which, in part, describes the coordination and referral system with other local community MSFW service providers and partners. This includes setting goals and objectives on employer and worker contacts,

registration number of workers, job referrals and following-up on referrals to record results, increasing the number of employer visits and making contacts for job development and making assessments of the needs of farmworkers and employers. These plans are monitored by the State Monitor Advocate (SMA) as part of the office review process to ensure that MSFWs and employers have full access to all WorkForce Center services.

A minimum of 5 contacts per outreach day is required to meet USDOL compliance. In PY15: 2,097 contacts were conducted in 172 staff outreach days which indicates 13 contacts per staff outreach day. The rate of 203 contacts was achieved by other cooperating agencies. The proposed number of contacts in the new PY16-20 will be 2,500 annually. The number of field checks conducted in PY16-20 will increase as we refer and place domestic job seekers in H-2A jobs.

The total number of registered Migrant and Seasonal Farmworkers in the last full program year, PY14 was 2,435. This number represents a significant increase due to outreach best practices used by the Migrant Labor outreach workers, and the addition of a Migrant Labor Representative (MLR) located at the Rochester one-stop Workforce Center. Our commitment to improve these numbers have included intensive training for the program staff as to the eligibility definitions and criteria of all the programs. The reestablishment of local area employer cooperation and collaboration, has improved significantly with the involvement of the statewide Business Services Representatives. There are 48 one-stop Workforce Centers throughout Minnesota. The Workforce Center programs are targeted to dislocated workers, low-income adults, disadvantaged youth, welfare-to-work participants, Veterans and low-income seniors. However, any person who lives in Minnesota can use their services. The centers offer many different classes and workshops. "New Leaf" is a workshop designed for job seekers who must address a criminal record in their job search. "Career Exploration" is a workshop that allows participants to take several assessments to find matching career options. In "Networking Groups," job seekers discuss networking, job search techniques, job interviewing and other related topics. The centers also have services geared specifically for veterans, including veterans networking groups, job clubs and reintegration training.

B. PROVIDING TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE TO OUTREACH WORKERS. TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE MUST INCLUDE TRAININGS, CONFERENCES, ADDITIONAL RESOURCES, AND INCREASED COLLABORATION WITH OTHER ORGANIZATIONS ON TOPICS SUCH AS ONE-STOP CENTER SERVICES (I.E. AVAILABILITY OF REFERRALS TO TRAINING, SUPPORTIVE SERVICES, AND CAREER SERVICES, AS WELL AS SPECIFIC EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES), THE EMPLOYMENT SERVICE COMPLAINT SYSTEM, INFORMATION ON THE OTHER ORGANIZATIONS SERVING MSFWs IN THE AREA, AND A BASIC SUMMARY OF FARMWORKER RIGHTS, INCLUDING THEIR RIGHTS WITH RESPECT TO THE TERMS AND CONDITIONS OF EMPLOYMENT.

Minnesota has a year round part-time monitor advocate and four Migrant Labor Representatives (MLRs) who provide technical assistance.

The SMA provides training for the outreach workers (MLRs) includes an orientation on the WF1 (MIS) system components and the integration of the MSFW Program within WF1 to effectively and efficiently ensure the documentation of the full range of employment, career and training services provided to the farmworkers. In addition to the outreach duties the MLRs staff also have responsibilities as experienced Job Counselors/Employment Reps., during the off-season winter months. Minnesota annually holds a collaborative statewide Job Counselor Conference for the Department of Human Services, Department of Employment and Economic Development, partner

agencies, and community and non-profit organizations. MLRs attend an annual statewide Job Counselor conference where the emphasis of the training includes outreach best practices, team coordination with other agencies, complaint process for workers, information on core programs including Vocational Rehabilitation, Veterans, Unemployment Insurance, rights and protections afforded to MSFWs by state and federal laws. They also receive updated training on customer services, workshops on Dislocated Workers programs, Employer services, SNAP, MFIP, Job Fairs, and WIOA compliance.

The MLR staff are invited to and do present at company's Employee Orientations for the migrant food processors, facilitated by the food processing companies.

Assisting MSFWs with the Employment Service Complaint Process and the Unemployment Compensation application process is a critical role of the MLR as the farmworkers may be unfamiliar with timeframes for filing, the appeals process or deadlines for applications. The majority of these farmworkers are limited English speakers, and most are also illiterate, the wages earned here is their total yearly earnings. LEP customers often lose their benefits because they do not understand nor respond to the information they receive. They are not aware to request that correspondence regarding services be written in their language. Many times these customer will have to reapply for a benefit/service or start over with the process, which can cost time and decrease the amount of benefits. Therefore, it is imperative that the MLRs identify the LEP workers in the registration process and inform them of their options for assistance including Language Line availability and translator assistance.

C. INCREASING OUTREACH WORKER TRAINING AND AWARENESS ACROSS CORE PROGRAMS INCLUDING THE UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE (UI) PROGRAM AND THE TRAINING ON IDENTIFICATION OF UI ELIGIBILITY ISSUES.

The MSFW Program (bilingual) Resource Guide provides staff and agency contact information. The information is important and sometimes crucial to MSFWs, whether they are seeking agricultural or non-agricultural employment. The MLRs post contact information with local businesses and agencies that are frequented by the MSFWs. In addition to the types of employment services available, this includes tear-off tabs with their names and phone numbers. These postings are written in English and Spanish. This is consistent with our commitment to universal access to labor exchange services and the requirement to ensure that all job seekers with LEP and/or little or no computer knowledge or access to computer-based labor exchange services will be still be provided services and assistance.

Our demand driven philosophy includes the concept that employment services are available to both the employers and job seekers to assist in making the connection of the two parties through a common language and understanding of jobs that are in high demand. In a primarily agricultural area, agribusiness is a cornerstone of employment. Occupations in this industry include agricultural research, sales and farming.

The MLR staff also have responsibilities as experienced Job Counselors/Employment Reps., during the off- season winter months. Minnesota annually holds a collaborative statewide Job Counselor Conference for the Department of Human Services, Department of Employment and Economic Development, partner agencies, and community and non-profit organizations. MLRs attend the conference where the emphasis of the training includes outreach best practices, team coordination with other agencies, complaint process for workers, sharing of information on core programs including Vocational Rehabilitation, Veterans, Unemployment Insurance, rights and protections

afforded to MSFWs by state and federal laws. They also receive updated training on customer services, workshops on Dislocated Workers programs, Employer services, SNAP, MFIP, Job Fairs, and WIOA compliance.

D. PROVIDING STATE MERIT STAFF OUTREACH WORKERS PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES TO ENSURE THEY ARE ABLE TO PROVIDE HIGH QUALITY SERVICES TO BOTH JOBSEEKERS AND EMPLOYERS.

To ensure that MLR staff provides professional, high quality services to employers and jobseekers. The SMA provides technical assistance and support to the outreach staff on outreach for the MSFWs and related functions, including Pre-Season Trainings on topics related to the MSFW program including Complaint Process, MIC, state and federal regulations affecting the MSFW customer. Onsite reviews of local services provided to MSFWs. The SMA and staff train local staff and provide technical assistance to enhance services to MSFWs (e.g., conducting workshops in Spanish, introducing migrants and other customers to office technology, and offering translation assistance within local communities). Additionally, the SMA performs the following required activities:

- Conducts annual State-level reviews of one-stop centers and career center services and protections provided to MSFWs
- Consults with State and local staff to ensure accurate reporting of MSFW-related information
- Compiles and reports on all statistical and other MSFW-related data reported by agricultural offices quarterly
- Reviews proposed State directives, manuals, and operating instructions that pertain to MSFWs
- Participates in federal monitoring reviews
- Prepares an annual summary report of statewide services

The outreach workers (MLRs) participate in the annual Pre and Post Season MSFW Program training, which is developed and facilitated by the State Monitor Advocate (SMA). The emphasis of the training include outreach efforts, coordination with other agencies, the Complaint Process and the rights and protections afforded to MSFWs by state and federal laws. The SMA Complaint Poster and the AWP/MSPA posters are in all of the WFCs and migrant camps. The NFJP, Motivation, Education and Training (MET, Inc.) staff is always invited to attend and present at the annual trainings. The MET staff work in partnership and collaboration with the outreach staff to deliver services and community information and resources to MSFWs and employers.

The training also includes information on services and training provided by the local Workforce Centers and all agency partners. Enforcement agencies are also invited to attend and present at the post season training, including; Wage and Hour, OSHA, Labor & Industry, Human Rights, Legal Services, Dept. of Transportation, and EEOC. The information presented and obtained from these agencies is vital and important when providing agency referrals to the farmworkers.

Information regarding the Complaint system including current forms and procedures, and the rights and protections afforded to MSFWs by state and federal laws, and the mandated posters are provided at the MLR training. Assisting MSFWs with the Employment Service Complaint Process and the Unemployment Compensation application process is a critical role of the MLR as the farmworkers may be unfamiliar with timeframes for filing, the appeals process or deadlines for applications. The majority of these farmworkers are limited English speakers, and most are also illiterate, the wages earned here is their total yearly earnings. LEP customers often lose their benefits because they do not understand nor respond to the information they receive. They are not aware to request that correspondence regarding services be written in their language. Many times these customer will have to reapply for a benefit/service or start over with the process, which can cost time and decrease the amount of benefits. Therefore, it is imperative that the MLRs identify the

LEP workers in the registration process and inform them of their options for assistance including Language Line availability and translator assistance.

The second part of the training includes an orientation on the WF1 (MIS) system components and the integration of the MSFW Program within WF1 to effectively and efficiently ensure the documentation of the full range of employment, career and training services provided to the farmworkers

Minnesota annually holds a collaborative statewide Job Counselor Conference for the Department of Human Services, Department of Employment and Economic Development, partner agencies, and community and non-profit organizations. MLRs attend the conference where the emphasis of the training includes outreach best practices, team coordination with other agencies, complaint process for workers, sharing of information on core programs including Vocational Rehabilitation, Veterans, Unemployment Insurance, rights and protections afforded to MSFWs by state and federal laws. They also receive updated training on customer services, workshops on Dislocated Workers programs, Employer services, SNAP, MFIP, Job Fairs, and WIOA compliance.

Training and development for the SMA is through her attendance and presentations at the annual DOL ETA National State and Regional Monitor Advocate Conference training. The SMA also attends the Regional Round-Table Meetings held for the Region V SMAs, also participates in the SMA conference calls. In addition the SMA is also the Foreign Labor Certification Coordinator (SWA) for the H-2A and H-2B Programs. The SWA participates in the monthly OFLC /CNPC SWA conference calls.

E. COORDINATING OUTREACH EFFORTS WITH NFJP GRANTEE AS WELL AS WITH PUBLIC AND PRIVATE COMMUNITY SERVICE AGENCIES AND MSFW GROUPS.

Minnesota has a Memorandum of Understanding with Motivation, Education and Training, Inc. (MET) the NFJP grantee since 1997. The collaboration includes team outreach days to the farmworker camps, and Informational meetings held for the workers. The NFJP staff is invited to attend and present at the SMA pre-season training.

The following data is derived from the NFJP database of MET, Inc., who is an NFJP grantee for the state of Minnesota. The NFJP services and referrals were provided to farmworkers across a large area stretching from the counties of Kandiyohi, Brown, Blue Earth, Waseca, Steele and Olmsted in the southern half of the state. NFJP services were also provided in the western counties of Clay and Wilken. • PY 2014 (7/1/2014 to 6/30/2015), co-enrollments with Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED) reached 135 farmworkers and in PY2015, co-enrollments increased to 176 farmworkers. • Over the two year period (7/1/2014 to 6/30/2016), approximately 50% of the NFJP participants were migrant farmworkers. Ethnicity was reported to be 80% Hispanic with as many as 64% born in the United States. • Total individuals and households members served amounted to 1,700 over the 2 year period with an average household size of 3.5 individuals. • In the past the NFJP has been a co-located partner in the WFCs, at the present time they are not on site. However, this does not diminish the working relationship collaboration and cooperation between the WFC and NFJP outreach staff. The outreach staff in the four significant local offices develop a yearly outreach plan which, in part, describes the coordination and referral system with other local community MSFW service providers and partners. This includes setting goals and objectives on employer and worker contacts, registration number of workers, job referrals and following-up on referrals to record results, increasing the number of employer visits and making

contacts for job development and making assessments of the needs of farmworkers and employers. These plans are monitored by the State Monitor Advocate (SMA) as part of the office review process to ensure that MSFWs and employers have full access to all WorkForce Center services.

3. SERVICES PROVIDED TO FARMWORKERS AND AGRICULTURAL EMPLOYERS THROUGH THE ONE-STOP DELIVERY SYSTEM.

Describe the State agency's proposed strategies for:

(A) PROVIDING THE FULL RANGE OF EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING SERVICES TO THE AGRICULTURAL COMMUNITY, BOTH FARMWORKERS AND AGRICULTURAL EMPLOYERS, THROUGH THE ONE-STOP DELIVERY SYSTEM. THIS INCLUDES:

- I. HOW CAREER AND TRAINING SERVICES REQUIRED UNDER WIOA TITLE I WILL BE PROVIDED TO MSFWs THROUGH THE ONE-STOP CENTERS;
- II. HOW THE STATE SERVES AGRICULTURAL EMPLOYERS AND HOW IT INTENDS TO IMPROVE SUCH SERVICES.

The MSFW Program (bilingual) Resource Guide provides staff and agency contact information. The information is important and sometimes crucial to MSFWs, whether they are seeking agricultural or non-agricultural employment. The MLRs post contact information with local businesses and agencies that are frequented by the MSFWs. In addition to the types of employment services available, this includes tear-off tabs with their names and phone numbers. These postings are written in English and Spanish. This is consistent with our commitment to universal access to labor exchange services and the requirement to ensure that all job seekers with LEP and/or little or no computer knowledge or access to computer-based labor exchange services will be still be provided services and assistance. There are 48 one-stop Workforce Centers throughout Minnesota. The Workforce Center programs are targeted to dislocated workers, low-income adults, disadvantaged youth, welfare-to-work participants, Veterans and low-income seniors. However, any person who lives in Minnesota can use their services. The centers offer many different classes and workshops. "New Leaf" is a workshop designed for job seekers who must address a criminal record in their job search. "Career Exploration" is a workshop that allows participants to take several assessments to find matching career options. In "Networking Groups," job seekers discuss networking, job search techniques, job interviewing and other related topics. The centers also have services geared specifically for veterans, including veterans networking groups, job clubs and reintegration training. Workshops to help with job search and career planning. Examples of workshops include: • Interviewing skills • Networking • Internet job searches • Completing job applications • Resumes and cover letters

The SMA and MLRs hold informational meetings twice per season at the camps to provide information relevant to the MSFWs such as the Employment Service Complaint Process, the Unemployment Compensation application process and the full range of employment services available at the local one-stop centers. The meeting notice is posted in advance, and held in the evening and or a weekend day, to accommodate shift work schedules. Other MSFW service provider agencies attend and present regarding agency service eligibility, type of services and benefits available. The meetings are well attended by the workers and their families and provide the outreach workers an opportunity to exchange agency contact information with other agency staff.

The MLRs continue to contact farm workers at their work sites, living areas and gathering places. The MLRs collaborate with advocacy groups including County Social Service agencies (SNAP), Migrant Education centers, Health Service centers, local community agencies, Migrant Head Start, Migrant Legal Services and other service providers to enable them to provide outreach and locate farm workers that are missed through WorkForce Center outreach efforts. The cooperative referral arrangements with these agencies are based on long-standing agreements. Minnesota has a Memorandum of Understanding with Motivation, Education and Training, Inc. (MET) the NFJP grantee.

Outreach staff also contact agricultural and non-agricultural employers, providing them with information about the employment services available for employers such as posting jobs, viewing resumes, hiring priority targeted populations, apprentice programs, WOTC, tax credit program and local Job Fairs. We distribute informational pamphlets directed to agricultural and non-agricultural employers that include contact information for the local Business Services Representatives. The SMA visits communities with substantial farmworker activity to meet with workers, local agencies and employers, to assess their needs and determine the effectiveness of the WorkForce Center services. Also, promoting to employers the labor exchange system services website which contains information of particular importance to agricultural and non-ag-employers.

Agricultural and non-agricultural employers in the area are provided information on:

- Posting their job orders, Job Fairs, Apprenticeship programs
- Interstate and intrastate clearance orders, Job Fairs
- Federal and state employment compliance regulations
- The availability of presentations by compliance agencies to growers associations, and other affected groups and organizations
- Field and quality assessments
- Mediation/interpreter services
- Liaison between migrant service providers and employer

The State Monitor Advocate (SMA) visits communities with substantial MSFW activity to meet with employers, to review and assess their needs and determine the effectiveness of the WorkForce Center services provided. The SMA works with the MLR's to promote the labor exchange system and workforce system programs and services which contains information of particular importance to agricultural and non-ag-employers.

(B) MARKETING THE EMPLOYMENT SERVICE COMPLAINT SYSTEM TO FARMWORKERS AND OTHER FARMWORKER ADVOCACY GROUPS.

The MLRs continue to contact farm workers at their work sites, living areas and gathering places. The MLRs collaborate with advocacy groups including County Social Service agencies (SNAP), Migrant Education centers, Health Service centers, local community agencies, Migrant Head Start, Migrant Legal Services and other service providers to enable them to provide outreach and locate farm workers that are missed through WorkForce Center outreach efforts. The cooperative referral arrangements with these agencies are based on long-standing agreements. Minnesota has a Memorandum of Understanding with Motivation, Education and Training, Inc. (MET) the NFJP grantee.

The SMA and MLRs hold informational meetings twice per season at the camps to provide information relevant to the MSFWs such as the Employment Service Complaint Process, the Unemployment Compensation application process and the full range of employment services available at the local one-stop centers. The meeting notice is posted in advance, and held in the evening and or a weekend day, to accommodate shift work schedules. Other MSFW service

provider agencies attend and present regarding agency service eligibility, type of services and benefits available. The meetings are well attended by the workers and their families and provide the outreach workers an opportunity to exchange agency contact information with other agency staff.

The MLRs play a significant role in assisting MSFWs with the Employment Service Complaint Process and the Unemployment Compensation application process. They may be unfamiliar with timeframes for filing, the appeals process or deadlines for applications. The majority of these farmworkers are limited English speakers, and most are also illiterate, the wages earned here is for the most part their total yearly earnings. LEP customers often lose their benefits because they do not understand nor respond to the information they receive. They are not aware to request that correspondence regarding services be written in their language. Many times these customer will have to reapply for a benefit/service or start over with the process, which can cost time and decrease the amount of benefits. Therefore, it is imperative that the MLRs identify these LEP customers in the registration process and inform them of their options for assistance including Language Line availability as well as translator assistance

The MSFW Program (bilingual) Resource Guide provides staff and agency contact information. The information is important and sometimes crucial to MSFWs, whether they are seeking agricultural or non-agricultural employment. The MLRs post contact information with local businesses and agencies that are frequented by the MSFWs. In addition to the types of employment services available, this includes tear-off tabs with their names and phone numbers. These postings are written in English and Spanish. This is consistent with our commitment to universal access to labor exchange services and the requirement to ensure that all job seekers with LEP and/or little or no computer knowledge or access to computer-based labor exchange services will be still be provided services and assistance.

(C) MARKETING THE AGRICULTURAL RECRUITMENT SYSTEM TO AGRICULTURAL EMPLOYERS AND HOW IT INTENDS TO IMPROVE SUCH PUBLICITY.

Outreach staff contact agricultural and non-agricultural employers, providing them with information about the employment services available for employers such as posting jobs, viewing resumes, hiring priority targeted populations, apprentice programs, WOTC, tax credit program and local Job Fairs. We distribute informational pamphlets on the MSFW program and resources (bilingual) directed to Agricultural and non-agricultural employers that include contact information for the local Business Services Representatives and local one-stop offices. The SMA visits communities with substantial farmworker activity to meet with workers, local agencies and employers, to access their needs and determine the effectiveness of the WorkForce Center services. Also, promoting to employers is the labor exchange system services website which contains information of particular importance to agricultural and non-ag-employers. Minnesota's online labor exchange system is called MinnesotaWorks.net

There were 2,880 agricultural job openings received in PY14. There were 109 interstate clearance orders (PY2015) received. Qualified domestic workers are informed about the postings and referrals are made to H2-A employers.

Employers create an employer account in Minnesotaworks.net, our online self-service labor exchange system, and once approved, they may enter job postings. Employers in search of workers may also contact the local offices staff for assistance in searching for candidates who match the employers' job categories and other requirements of the positions.

In addition, the outreach staff is acquainted with employers in their prospective areas who repeatedly hire seasonal workers.

Agricultural and non-agricultural employers in the area are provided information on:

- Posting job orders, Job Fairs, industry events, work-based learning opportunities including apprenticeships and other training programs
- Interstate and intrastate clearance orders, Job Fairs
- Federal and state employment compliance regulations
- The availability of presentations by compliance agencies to growers associations, and other related groups and organizations
- Field and quality assessments
- Mediation/interpreter services
- Liaison between migrant service providers and employers

4. OTHER REQUIREMENTS

(A) COLLABORATION

Describe any collaborative agreements the state workforce agency (SWA) has with other MSFW service providers including NFJP grantees and other service providers. Describe how the SWA intends to build upon/increase collaboration with existing partners and in establishing new partners over the next four years (including any approximate timelines for establishing agreements or building upon existing agreements).

The SMA and MLRs hold informational meetings twice per season at the camps to provide information relevant to the MSFWs. Other MSFW service provider agencies attend and present regarding agency service eligibility, type of services and benefits available. The meetings are well attended by the workers and their families and provide the outreach workers an opportunity to exchange agency contact information with other agency staff.

The MLRs continue to contact farm workers at their work sites, living areas and gathering places. The MLRs collaborate with advocacy groups including County Social Service agencies (SNAP), Migrant Education centers, Health Service centers, local community agencies, Migrant Head Start, Migrant Legal Services and other service providers to enable them to provide outreach and locate farm workers that are missed through WorkForce Center outreach efforts. The cooperative referral arrangements with these agencies are based on long-standing agreements. Minnesota has a Memorandum of Understanding with Motivation, Education and Training, Inc. (MET) the NFJP grantee. The outreach staff in the four significant local offices develop a yearly outreach plan which, in part, describes the coordination and referral system with other local community MSFW service providers and partners. This includes setting goals and objectives on employer and worker contacts, registration number of workers, job referrals and following-up on referrals to record results, increasing the number of employer visits and making contacts for job development and making assessments of the needs of farmworkers and employers. These plans are monitored by the State Monitor Advocate (SMA) as part of the office review process to ensure that MSFWs and employers have full access to all WorkForce Center services.

The State Monitor Advocate and the Migrant Labor Representatives maintain close contact with the following organizations in the interest of providing effective and inclusive service to their customers:

- Southern Minnesota Regional Legal Services
- Motivation Education and Training Inc.
- Migrant-Community Health Services, Inc.
- Tri-Valley Opportunity Council

(B) REVIEW AND PUBLIC COMMENT.

In developing the AOP, the SWA must solicit information and suggestions from NFJP grantees, other appropriate MSFW groups, public agencies, agricultural employer organizations, and other interested organizations. In addition, at least 45 calendar days before submitting its final AOP, the SWA must provide a proposed plan to NFJP grantees, public agencies, agricultural employer organizations, and other organizations expressing an interest and allow at least 30 days for review and comment. The SWA must: 1) Consider any comments received in formulating its final proposed AOP; 2) Inform all commenting parties in writing whether their comments have been incorporated and, if not, the reasons therefore; and 3) Transmit the comments and recommendations received and its responses with the submission of the AOP. The AOP must include a statement confirming NFJP grantees, other appropriate MSFW groups, public agencies, agricultural employer organizations and other interested employer organizations have been given an opportunity to comment on the AOP. Include the list of organizations from which information and suggestions were solicited, any comments received, and responses to those comments.

The AOP was posted and made available for public comment. The aforementioned advocacy groups were notified and no comments were received.

(C) DATA ASSESSMENT.

Review the previous four years Wagner-Peyser data reports on performance. Note whether the State has been meeting its goals to provide MSFWs quantitatively proportionate services as compared to non-MSFWs. If it has not met these goals, explain why the State believes such goals were not met and how the State intends to improve its provision of services in order to meet such goals.

Minnesota has consistently met the 4 or 5 of the 5 (Equity Ratio Indicators) over the past 4 years. The minimum of 4 of 7 (Minimum Service) have been met from PY2012-2015. We have also surpassed the minimum of 5 contacts per outreach days, increasing from 8 to 15 contacts per outreach staff day.

Minnesota met 5 of 5 Equity Ratio Indicators in fourth quarter of PY15, including:

1. Referred to Employment
2. Received Staff Assisted Services
3. Referred to Support Services
4. Career Guidance,
5. Job Development Contacts

Minnesota met 4 of the 7 (Minimum Service Level) equity indicators in the fourth quarter of PY15, including:

1. Reviews of significant offices

2. Field checks conducted
3. Timely processing of ES complaints
4. Outreach contacts per staff day

(D) ASSESSMENT OF PROGRESS

The plan must include an explanation of what was achieved based on the previous AOP, what was not achieved and an explanation as to why the State believes the goals were not achieved, and how the State intends to remedy the gaps of achievement in the coming year.

As indicated above, Minnesota meet 5 Of 5 Equity Ratio Indicators in fourth quarter of PY15 and 4 of 7 Minimum Service Level equity indicators in the fourth quarter of PY15. We have surpassed the minimum of 5 contacts per outreach day. Our plan is to continue to increase our efforts in every aspect of our program requirements as we will strive to improve the number of MSFW registrations, referrals to ESL/GED, referrals to job placements, and referrals for training. As we continue to work in a collaborative manner with our partners it will led to an increased number of placements in jobs and training for our customers. Outreach was performed throughout the peak MSFW farm worker season concentrated in the summer and early fall months, The MLRs commitment to outreach has succeeded in increasing the number to 18 contacts per outreach day in PY14. In PY15, average number of contacts per outreach day is 13. Minnesota is on track to meet the same numerical goals for PY16 and will achieve additional Minimum Service Level equity indicators for PY16.

In order to be in compliance, MLRs are expected to contact a minimum of 5 farmworkers per outreach day. In PY15, the number of 2,097 contacts were conducted in 172 staff outreach days indicating 13 contacts per staff outreach day. In addition, there were 249 contacts made by cooperating partner agencies. The number of expected contacts in the PY16-PY20 will be in excess of 3,500. Minnesota met 5of 5 Equity Ratio Indicators for PY15. Minnesota met 4 of the 7 (Minimum Service Level) equity indicators for PY15

There were 217 agricultural clearance orders. Field checks were not required. With an increasing number of H2-A employers and domestic referrals, we plan to conduct field checks in the coming season. The 4 significant offices will be reviewed on an annual basis.

(E) STATE MONITOR ADVOCATE

The plan must contain a statement confirming the State Monitor Advocate has reviewed and approved the AOP.

The SMA has participated in the development and completion of the Agricultural Outreach Plan (AOP.)

F. WAGNER-PEYSER ASSURANCES

The State Plan must include assurances that:

1. The Wagner-Peyser Employment Service is co-located with one-stop centers or a plan and timeline has been developed to comply with this requirement within a reasonable amount of time. (sec 121(e)(3)); Yes

2. The State agency is complying with the requirements under 20 CFR 653.111 (State agency staffing requirements) if the State has significant MSFW one-stop centers; Yes

3. If a State Workforce Development Board, department, or agency administers State laws for vocational rehabilitation of persons with disabilities, that board, department, or agency cooperates with the agency that administers Wagner-Peyser services, Adult and Dislocated Worker programs and Youth Programs under Title I; and Yes

4. State agency merit-based public employees provide Wagner-Peyser Act-funded labor exchange activities in accordance with Department of Labor regulations. Yes

**PROGRAM-SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS FOR ADULT EDUCATION AND FAMILY
LITERACY ACT PROGRAMS**

The State Plan must include a description of the following as it pertains to Adult Education and Literacy programs under Title II, the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (AEFLA).

A. ALIGNING OF CONTENT STANDARDS

Describe how the eligible agency will, by July 1, 2016, align its content standards for adult education with State-adopted challenging academic content standards, as adopted under section 1111(b)(1) of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, as amended (20 U.S.C. 6311(b)(1)).

The content standards for the Minnesota Adult Basic Education (ABE) system comprise three components:

1. the federally–developed College and Career Readiness Standards (CCRS) for Adult Education (<https://lincs.ed.gov/publications/pdf/CCRStandardsAdultEd.pdf>), which identify key English Language Arts/Literacy, Math, and Foundational Reading Skills;
2. the Minnesota–developed Academic, Career and Employability Skills (ACES) Transitions Integration Framework (TIF) (<http://atlasabe.org/professional/transitions>), which identifies key professional or soft skills in the areas of Effective Communication, Learning Strategies, Critical Thinking, Self–Management, Developing a Future Pathway, Navigating Systems; and
3. the Minnesota–developed Northstar Digital Literacy Standards (available at www.digitalliteracyassessment.org), which identify key basic digital literacy skills needed to perform tasks on computers and online.

The CCRS for Adult Education are drawn from the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) and the Minnesota state–adopted K–12 standards for English Language Arts and Literacy align with the CCSS. The current Minnesota state–adopted K–12 standards for Mathematics encompass some content that is beyond the scope of the CCSS, but are largely aligned with the CCSS. Eligible providers will be required to demonstrate that their curriculum, instruction, and assessment are aligned to these MN ABE content standards and that their staff have been trained on the use of the standards.

In order to ensure that all ABE practitioners are knowledgeable of the above listed standards and understand how to use them effectively to guide instruction and programming, the Minnesota ABE system will provide systematic professional development and other support to eligible providers including:

- a) face–to–face workshops and online trainings;
- b) training modules based on the College and Career Readiness Standards–in–Action training tools and processes;
- c) technical assistance to eligible providers focused on standards implementation;
- d) support for local Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) focused on standards implementation;
- e) online standards resource libraries; and
- f) support for the use of standards–aligned Open Educational Resources (OERs).

B. LOCAL ACTIVITIES

Describe how the State will, using the considerations specified in section 231(e) of WIOA, fund each eligible provider to establish or operate programs that provide the adult education and literacy activities, including programs that provide such activities concurrently. The Unified or Combined State Plan must include at a minimum the scope, content, and organization of local activities.

ADULT EDUCATION AND LITERACY ACTIVITIES (SECTION 203 OF WIOA)

- Adult education;
- Literacy;
- Workplace adult education and literacy activities;
- Family literacy activities;
- English language acquisition activities;
- Integrated English literacy and civics education;
- Workforce preparation activities; or
- Integrated education and training that—
 1. Provides adult education and literacy activities, concurrently and contextually with both, workforce preparation activities, and workforce training for a specific occupation or occupational cluster, and
 2. Is for the purpose of educational and career advancement.

Funding WIOA, Title II: AEFLA Providers The Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) is the State's Eligible Agency for Adult Education and Literacy programs. MDE is responsible for administering funds and providing program/performance oversight to grantees. Adult Education and Literacy eligible providers approved under Workforce Investment Act of 1998 requirements will continue to receive funding through June 30, 2017, as long as they adhere to state and federal grant expectations, as measured through annual applications, financial reports, and program performance reports. During grant year 2016–17, the Minnesota Department of Education will implement a new competitive application process for all federal AEFLA funding that will determine what local providers will be grantees starting July 1, 2017. The local AEFLA program grant process will rate responses to the 13 considerations in Title II of WIOA and include additional state ABE priorities and context. An eligible local provider is an organization that has demonstrated effectiveness in providing adult education activities to eligible individuals and may include: 1. A local education agency; 2. Community-based or faith-based organization; 3. Volunteer literacy organization; 4. Institution of higher education; 5. Public or private nonprofit agency; 6. Library; 7. Public housing authority; 8. Nonprofit institution with the ability to provide adult education and literacy services; 9. Consortium or coalition of agencies, organizations, institutions, libraries, or authorities described above; and 10. A partnership between an employer and an entity described above.

The grant competition will be publicized in compliance with federal law, Minnesota state statute, and Minnesota Department of Education policy in order to ensure that all eligible providers have direct and equitable access to apply and compete for grants.

The Minnesota Department of Education will dedicate a minimum 82.5 percent of the state allocation of federal AEFLA funding to grants to eligible providers. In addition, up to 12.5 percent of the state allocation to Leadership Activities to provide support for activities such as: professional development; volunteer recruitment and training; technology; serving students with disabilities; distance learning and digital literacy; program quality support; assessment training; and career pathway and other transitions-related collaborations.

The Minnesota Department of Education will use the considerations specified in section 231(e) of WIOA and listed below as the criteria for selecting and funding eligible providers. As part of the RFP process, agencies will be required to provide narrative detail describing how they will meet each consideration.

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

2. Individuals with Disabilities: The degree to which the provider is able to serve eligible individuals with disabilities, including eligible individuals with learning disabilities.

3. Past Effectiveness: The degree to which the provider demonstrates past effectiveness in improving the literacy of eligible individuals, to meet State-adjusted levels of performance for the primary indicators of performance described in section 116, especially with respect to eligible individuals who have low levels of literacy.

4. Alignment with One-stop Partners: The degree to which the eligible provider is responsive to, and demonstrates alignment between, proposed activities and services and the strategy and goals of the local plan under section 108 as well as the activities and services of the one-stop partners.

5. Intensity, Quality, and Instructional Practices: The degree to which the eligible provider's program is of sufficient intensity and quality, and based on the most rigorous research available so that participants achieve substantial learning gains; and uses instructional practices that include the essential components of reading instruction.

6. Research Based Educational Practices: The degree to which the eligible provider's activities including reading, writing, speaking, mathematics, and English language acquisition instruction, are based on the best practices derived from the most rigorous research available and appropriate, including scientifically valid research and effective educational practice.

7. Effective Use of Technology: The degree to which the eligible provider's activities effectively use technology, services, and delivery systems, including distance education in a manner sufficient to increase the amount and quality of learning and how such technology, services, and systems lead to improved performance.

8. Integrated Education and Training: The degree to which the eligible provider's activities offer learning in context, including through integrated education and training, so that an individual acquires the skills needed to transition to and complete postsecondary education and training programs, obtain and advance in employment leading to economic self-sufficiency, and to exercise the rights and responsibilities of citizenship.

9. Qualified Staff: The degree to which the eligible provider's activities are delivered by well-trained instructors, counselors, and administrators who meet any minimum qualifications established by the state, where applicable, and who have access to high quality professional development, including through electronic means.

10. Partnerships and Development of Career Pathways: The degree to which the eligible provider's activities coordinate with other available education, training, and social service resources in the

community, such as by establishing strong links with elementary schools and secondary schools, postsecondary educational institutions, institutions of higher education, local workforce investment boards, one-stop centers, job training programs, and social service agencies, business, industry, labor organizations, community-based organizations, nonprofit organizations, and intermediaries, for the development of career pathways.

11. Flexible Schedules and Coordination with Support Services: The degree to which the eligible provider's activities offer flexible schedules and coordination with Federal, State, and local support services (such as child care, transportation, mental health services, and career planning) that are necessary to enable individuals, including individuals with disabilities or other special needs, to attend and complete programs information management system that has the capacity to report measurable participant outcomes (consistent with section 116) and to monitor program performance.

12. Information management system: The expectation will be that the eligible provider will use the State-administered designated MIS for all grant-related data collection and reporting; and

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

In addition to the above considerations, the grant application will require description of applicants:

- location, service area, the scope of the program, a description of the population to be served, fiscal management procedures, and audit history;
- capacity to offer day, evening, and distance education programming;
- budget, as well as programmatic information regarding statutory requirements;
- coordination with other service providers to provide wrap-around services to participants (e.g. child care, transportation); and
- a description of how the program will align activities to the Local Plan for WIOA providers and supportive services.

Adult Basic Education Programming

The focus of adult education instruction in Minnesota will be the above noted content standards contextualized to enhance readiness for employment, citizenship, postsecondary education and training provided through comprehensive services that meet the diverse educational needs of students. In accordance with federal regulation, eligible providers may receive adult education funding for the delivery of any of the following adult education and literacy activities: adult education; literacy; workplace adult education and literacy activities; family literacy activities; English language and acquisition activities; integrated English literacy and civics education (IEL/Civics); workforce preparation activities; or integrated education and training, which

a) provides adult education and literacy activities, concurrently and contextually with both, workforce preparation activities, and workforce training for a specific occupation or occupational cluster, and

b) is for the purpose of educational and career advancement.

Eligible providers will be required to implement such activities in accordance with the following federal definitions: Adult education means academic instruction and education services below the postsecondary level that increase an individual's ability to read, write, and speak in English and perform mathematics or other activities necessary for the attainment of a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent; transition to postsecondary education and training; and obtain employment. Literacy means an individual's ability to read, write, and speak in English, compute, and solve problems, at levels of proficiency necessary to function on the job, in the family of the individual, and in society. Workplace adult education and literacy activities means adult education and literacy activities offered by an eligible provider in collaboration with an employer or employee organization at a workplace or an off-site location that is designed to improve the productivity of the workforce. Family literacy activities means activities that are of sufficient intensity and quality to make sustainable improvements in the economic prospects for a family, and that better enable parents or family members to support their children's learning needs, and that integrate all of the following activities:

A. Parent or family adult education and literacy activities that lead to readiness for postsecondary education or training, career advancement, and economic self-sufficiency.

B. Interactive literacy activities between parents or family members and their children.

C. Training for parents or family members regarding how to be the primary teacher for their children and full partners in the education of their children.

D. An age-appropriate education to prepare children for success in school and life experiences.

The Minnesota Department of Education will not use any funds made available under this title for adult education and literacy activities for the purpose of supporting or providing programs, services, or activities for individuals who are under the age of 16 and are enrolled or required to be enrolled in secondary school under State law, except that the agency may use such funds for such purpose if such programs, services, or activities are related to family literacy activities. In providing family literacy activities under this title, the Minnesota Department of Education will attempt to coordinate with programs and services that are not assisted under this title prior to using funds for adult education and literacy activities under this title for activities other than activities for eligible individuals.

English language acquisition program means a program of instruction designed to help eligible individuals who are English language learners achieve competence in reading, writing, speaking, and comprehension of the English language; and that leads to attainment of a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent; and transition to post-secondary education and training; or employment.

Integrated English literacy and civics education means education services provided to English language learners who are adults, including professionals with degrees and credentials in their native countries, that enables such adults to achieve competency in the English language and acquire the basic and more advanced skills needed to function effectively as parents, workers, and citizens in the United States. Such services shall include instruction in literacy and English language acquisition and instruction on the rights and responsibilities of citizenship and civic participation, and may include workforce training.

Workforce preparation activities means activities, programs, or services designed to help an individual acquire a combination of basic academic skills, critical thinking skills, digital literacy skills, and self-management skills, including competencies in utilizing resources, using information, working with others, understanding systems, and obtaining skills necessary for successful transition into and completion of post-secondary education or training, or employment.

Integrated education and training means a service approach that provides adult education and literacy activities concurrently and contextually with workforce preparation activities, and workforce training for a specific occupation or occupational cluster for the purpose of educational and career advancement.

Federal funds may be used to increase the level of nonfederal funds that would be available in the absence of federal funds, and, in no case, replace those nonfederal funds. Federal funds must not be used for the purpose of supplanting, only for supplementing.

SPECIAL RULE

Each eligible agency awarding a grant or contract under this section shall not use any funds made available under this title for adult education and literacy activities for the purpose of supporting or providing programs, services, or activities for individuals who are under the age of 16 and are enrolled or required to be enrolled in secondary school under State law, except that such agency may use such funds for such purpose if such programs, services, or activities are related to family literacy activities. In providing family literacy activities under this title, an eligible provider shall attempt to coordinate with programs and services that are not assisted under this title prior to using funds for adult education and literacy activities under this title for activities other than activities for eligible individuals.

C. CORRECTIONS EDUCATION AND OTHER EDUCATION OF INSTITUTIONALIZED INDIVIDUALS

Describe how the State will establish and operate programs under section 225 of WIOA for corrections education and education of other institutionalized individuals, including how it will fund, in accordance with the requirements of Title II, subtitle C, any of the following academic programs for:

- a. Adult education and literacy activities;
- b. Special education, as determined by the eligible agency;
- c. Secondary school credit;
- d. Integrated education and training;
- e. Career pathways;
- f. Concurrent enrollment;
- g. Peer tutoring; and
- h. Transition to re-entry initiatives and other post release services with the goal of reducing recidivism.

Each eligible agency using funds provided under Programs for Corrections Education and Other Institutionalized Individuals to carry out a program for criminal offenders within a correctional institution must give priority to serving individuals who are likely to leave the correctional institution within 5 years of participation in the program.

Correctional Institution Programs The Minnesota Department of Education will award funds to carry out corrections education and education for other institutionalized individuals within correctional institutions in accordance with the requirements of section 225. This will be done by competing the state correctional prison facilities as a special population region and county correctional jails through geographic competitions.

Each eligible provider that receives funds provided under section 225 to carry out a program for criminal offenders within a correctional institution shall give priority to serving individuals who are likely to leave the correctional institution within five years of participation in the program. Applicants must describe in their grant application how they give priority to individuals most likely to leave the correctional institution within five years of participation in the program.

Section 225(a) of WIOA states, "from funds made available under Section 222(a)(1) for a fiscal year, each eligible agency shall carry out corrections education or education for other institutionalized individuals. The funds described shall be used to provide: (1) Adult education and literacy services, (2) Special education as determined by the eligible agency, (3) Secondary school credit, and (4) Integrated education and training; (5) Career pathways; (6) Concurrent enrollment; (7) Peer tutoring; and (8) Transition to re-entry initiatives and other post-release services with the goal of reducing recidivism.

The Minnesota Department of Education will reserve no more than 20 percent of its federal grant received under WIOA to provide programs for corrections education and education for other institutionalized individuals as described in Section 225 and will use the same application process being used for section 231 funds. A single applicant will be approved to provide services to Minnesota's Department of Corrections system. County corrections facilities as well as other

facilities such as state hospitals, rehabilitation centers, and limited retention facilities will be must be addressed by applicants competing for the service area in which they are located.

D. INTEGRATED ENGLISH LITERACY AND CIVICS EDUCATION PROGRAM

1. DESCRIBE HOW THE STATE WILL ESTABLISH AND OPERATE INTEGRATED ENGLISH LITERACY AND CIVICS EDUCATION PROGRAMS UNDER SECTION 243 OF WIOA, FOR ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS WHO ARE ADULTS, INCLUDING PROFESSIONALS WITH DEGREES AND CREDENTIALS IN THEIR NATIVE COUNTRIES.

The goals of IEL/Civics Education are to: (1) prepare adults who are English language learners for, and place such adults in, unsubsidized employment in in-demand industries and occupations that lead to economic self-sufficiency; and (2) integrate with the local workforce development system and its functions to carry out the activities of the program.

IEL/Civics grant applications will identify the eligible service population as English language learners who are adults, which may range from adults with no previous formal education to professionals with degrees and credentials in their native countries. IEL/Civics providers awarded funds through WIOA Section 243 will be encouraged to identify their target population.

All IEL/Civics grantees will be required to provide all four instructional components as outlined in WIOA including: 1. English Literacy 2. Civics (defined as instructing on the rights and responsibilities of citizenship and civic participation in the U.S.A.) 3. Workforce Preparation (operationalized in Minnesota as the ACES Transitions Integration Framework that identifies key workforce preparation skills in the areas of self-management, developing a future pathway, navigating systems, effective communication, learning strategies, and critical thinking) 4. Work Training and Certification (including Integrated Education and Training) Minnesota grantees will be required to address the College and Career Ready Standards (CCRS), Minnesota's Academic, Career and Employability Standards (ACES) and North Star Digital Literacy Standards. In addition, grantees will be required to provide English instruction contextualized to both civics content and occupational training with the occupational training opportunities comprising both short-term certificate programs and well as more extended career pathways.

All local IEL/Civics providers will need to articulate within their grant application a plan that outlines how the provider will develop an instructional program that integrates all four essential IEL/Civics instructional components. In addition, providers will be eligible for ongoing technical assistance and be required to evaluate the effectiveness of their programming and report on outcomes, lessons learned and best practices.

2. DESCRIBE HOW THE STATE WILL FUND, IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE REQUIREMENTS OF TITLE II, SUBTITLE C, INTEGRATED ENGLISH LITERACY AND CIVICS EDUCATION SERVICES AND HOW THE FUNDS WILL BE USED FOR THOSE SERVICES.

The Minnesota Department of Education will offer multi-year grants through a competitive request-for-proposal (RFP) process specifically for IEL/Civics Education grant funds. The application RFP asks potential local providers to describe:

1) The programming they would implement and how it incorporates the four instructional components;

2) How they would use the grant funds; and

3) Respond to the 13 considerations from Title II of WIOA. Each criterion in the application RFP articulates a potential maximum score.

Eligible providers for IEL/Civics grants include local education agencies, community based organizations (including faith-based organizations), volunteer literacy organizations, institutions of higher education, public or private nonprofits, public housing authorities, libraries, and consortiums of the above.

A fair and equitable process is followed to allow all eligible entities the opportunity to apply for the IEL/Civics grant. The Minnesota Department of Education publishes all grant opportunities on its website. IEL/Civics proposals are rated and scored by teams of reviewers approved by the Minnesota Department of Education Grants Office.

The review process for selecting successful applicants includes formally scoring applications on their responses to each of the 13 considerations of WIOA, the programming proposed and its alignment to the four instructional components, and the articulated use of funds.

Successful applicants may receive up to \$50,000 per site annually for their IEL/Civics program that embeds the four instructional components as noted in WIOA through IEL/Civics: 1. English Literacy

2. Civics

3. Workforce Preparation

4. Work Training and Certification

E. STATE LEADERSHIP

1. DESCRIBE HOW THE STATE WILL USE THE FUNDS TO CARRY OUT THE REQUIRED STATE LEADERSHIP ACTIVITIES UNDER SECTION 223 OF WIOA.

State Leadership The Minnesota Department of Education will use funds made available under section 222(a)(2) to enhance the quality of programming in the adult education system. Not more than 12.5 percent of the grant funds made available will be used to carry out State leadership activities under section 223. Activities to be supported with federal leadership funds and extended using Minnesota Adult Basic Education Supplemental Services funding (approximately \$1.46 million) include:

(A) The Minnesota Department of Education will work collaboratively with other core programs and partner agencies to align and coordinate services for program participants. State-level policy and planning bodies provide an opportunity for Minnesota's ABE system and local programs to partner with workforce development, human services, higher education and other key agencies. Leadership funds will be used to build the capacity of grantees to coordinate and align services. Specific areas of capacity building include intake/orientation, eligibility screening, and referral between partners, and other joint mechanisms developed through agency partnerships. In addition, the development of all components of career pathways will continue to be a priority with a focus on bridge programming and integrated education and training.

(B) Minnesota supports a statewide ABE professional development (PD) advisory committee that meets quarterly to identify key present and future PD needs, develop PD plans and resources, identify and implement best practices in PD, and coordinate and align PD activities for an efficient and effective PD system. This advisory committee has approximately 25 members, and includes state ABE staff, PD providers and local ABE instructors and administrators. The Minnesota PD system uses a data-driven planning process to identify PD needs and set priorities for each year. The results of an annual statewide PD needs assessment of local providers, along with evaluation data from previous PD efforts, research regarding best practices, and federal recommendations are used to inform PD priorities and the design and delivery of PD activities. Professional development activities are aligned to the MN ABE PD standards, which emphasize research-based features of effective professional development – longer-term, job-embedded activities with opportunities for collaborative participation and the application of new knowledge and skills. Both statewide and regional opportunities are provided for adult educators to develop and share their knowledge and skills in order to improve the quality of instruction delivered in local programs. These PD activities include professional learning communities, study circles, statewide and regional conferences, online courses, webinars, and others. Evaluation of PD outcomes, especially evidence of teacher change and quality of implementation of new knowledge and skills, is integrated into every initiative to ensure the effectiveness of PD activities. State leadership funds will be used to support professional development activities that focus on a variety of areas of emphasis, including content standards implementation, evidence-based reading instruction (EBRI), adult learning, research-based instructional methodologies, volunteer training and management, effective program management, integrated education and training, bridge programming, transition to postsecondary education, use of technology, distance education, universal design, serving students with disabilities, and volunteer training and recruitment. The MDE-ABE office contracts for ABE professional development services related to research-based literacy, numeracy, English language instruction, content standards, and transitions. These PD activities include STAR training and technical assistance; EBRI study circles, online courses, and resource dissemination; and the implementation of content standards. More information regarding existing training provided may be viewed on the ATLAS (ABE Teaching and

Learning Advancement System) homepage: www.atlasabe.org. In addition, the MDE–ABE office contracts to deliver professional development and technical assistance in the arena of serving adults with disabilities and to maintain a disabilities website <http://mn.abedisabilities.org>. The disabilities website has received considerable national attention and may be the leading model for adult education related disabilities web information in the United States. The disabilities service provider also provides training on using Universal Design for Learning principles and strategies to address the varied needs of adult learners. All disability–related activities are consistent with and contribute to implementation of Minnesota’s Olmstead plan. The MDE–ABE office contracts to provide statewide services in the areas of volunteer tutor training, volunteer management, and client referral services (a web–searchable Literacy Hotline and a phone hotline). The services are described in detail at: www.mnliteracy.org.

(C) The Minnesota Department of Education will deliver technical assistance to eligible providers to enhance program effectiveness, increase the ability of providers to meet established performance standards, and fulfill obligations associated with being a one–stop partner. Specific areas of focus will include:

(1) Increasing the capacity of instructors and programs to provide quality instruction in the areas of reading, writing, speaking, mathematics, English language acquisition, and distance education via implementation of professional development activities and associated technical assistance such as:

- STAR training and Evidence–Based Reading Instruction study circles;
- EBRI and writing online courses;
- Annual Language and Literacy Institute;
- Low–literacy Adult ESL Study Circles;
- Minnesota Numeracy Initiative (MNI) cohort training;
- Annual Math Institute;
- Distance learning professional development cohorts (DL 101 and DL 102);
- MN distance learning website;
- Distance Learning Basics online course;
- Online resource libraries in the areas of EBRI, STAR, writing, adult ESL, numeracy, writing, content standards, transitions, content standards, and project–based learning

(2) Enabling providers to establish, build upon, or maintain effective relationships with other core providers via training on referral systems, data sharing/reporting, integrating education with occupational training, and transition strategies for post–secondary enrollment or employment.

(3) Using technology to improve program effectiveness through training and technical assistance focused on preparing instructors and program administrators to identify and utilize technology to enhance instruction, programming, and distance education.

MDE–ABE contracts to provide professional development in the area of technology through activities such as face–to–face and online training. More information about current technology training can be found at: <https://mnliteracy.org/techservices>.

MDE–ABE contracts to provide online training in a variety of areas, including educational technology, digital literacy instruction, and distance learning. A list of current courses available can be found at: <http://online.themlc.org/>. Training and technical assistance around distance education and digital literacy is also offered through a contracted provider. More information about current training and resources can be found at: <http://www.mnabe–distancelearning.org/>

In addition, other training and technical assistance focuses on the effective use of the statewide data system to maintain accurate student data and continuously improve programming. This support is offered in a variety of formats and venues.

(D) The Minnesota Department of Education will provide grantee oversight to include data monitoring, site visits and a program improvement process for low performing grantees. The following strategies will be implemented:

– Data Reviews

– The statewide MIS will be configured to facilitate ongoing review in the areas of assessment, attendance and compliance.

– Monitoring Visits

– The Minnesota Department of Education will establish a monitoring system focusing on programs identified via data review. Visits will focus primarily on compliance related issues, but may be incorporated in the more extensive program review, and will result in development and monitored implementation of a local corrective action plan, called the program improvement process. (For more information on monitoring visits, please see the response to (f) below.)

– Program Improvement Process

– Local providers that do not meet state and federal program performance targets and grant expectations will be subject to a program improvement process. Over the course of one year, a provider in program improvement will:

1. Host site visits from staff from the Minnesota Department of Education;
2. Participate in special workshops focusing on analyzing and improving local program results;
3. Develop a program improvement plan that will highlight key local challenges, ensure program compliance with state and federal policy, and identify strategies and timelines to improve program performance; and
4. Receive additional technical assistance from Minnesota Department of Education and other adult education specialists, as needed.

The program improvement process will last at least one program year. At the end of the program year, the provider will complete the process as long as the provider's annual grant performance reports meet state and federal targets and grant expectations. Local providers that continue to not meet state and federal targets and grant expectations will be subject to participate in program improvement again. Providers that do not meet state and federal targets and grant expectations 3 consecutive years, may be subject to a special review by the Minnesota Department of Education to determine if the provider should continue to receive AEFLA funding.

The MDE-ABE office and professional development providers will employ a variety of methods to ensure that information about proven or promising practices and models is disseminated to eligible providers and practitioners working in the ABE system. These will include activities such as:

- local program site visits, as described in f.5 below;
- a weekly electronic professional development newsletter with information about training opportunities, high-quality resources, and promising practices for instruction and programming;
- sessions at state and regional conferences showcasing promising practices and models;
- webinars showcasing promising practices and models; and
- job-embedded professional development activities, including professional learning communities, study circles and peer observations.

2. DESCRIBE HOW THE STATE WILL USE THE FUNDS TO CARRY OUT PERMISSIBLE STATE LEADERSHIP ACTIVITIES UNDER SECTION 223 OF WIOA, IF APPLICABLE.

State Leadership The Minnesota Department of Education will also use funds made available under section 222(a)(2) to enhance the quality of programming in the adult education system in the following permissible areas:

- (A) Support a system of Regional Transitions Coordinators.
- (B) Professional development for distance education and use of technology.
- (C) Disseminating adult education curricula.
- (D) Developing and disseminating content and models for integrated education and training and career pathways.
- (E) Implementation of program improvement to enhance educational quality, provider effectiveness, and participant and system outcomes.
- (F) Facilitation of collaboration with postsecondary education providers.
- (G) Professional development regarding integration of literacy and English language instruction with occupational skill training.

(H) Support alignment of contextualized instruction and curricula with state academic standards and required assessments.

(I) Provide support for programs serving learners with disabilities including professional development, a web site, and a resource lending library.

(J) Carry out outreach strategies to engage and connect instructors, students and employers with ABE programs.

F. ASSESSING QUALITY

Describe how the eligible agency will assess the quality of providers of adult education and literacy activities under title II and take actions to improve such quality, including providing the activities described in section 223(a)(1)(B) of WIOA.

The Minnesota Department of Education prioritizes and measures program quality through accountability expectations and activities that focus on both compliance and best practice according to research and experience. The expectations and activities include:

1. The state ABE Management Information System (MIS) data: Minnesota's MIS balances both program quality and program compliance with state and federal expectations. In addition to required reports, local providers can use the state MIS to analyze student persistence, program outcomes, and other measures at the consortium, site, class and student level.
2. A state AEFLA grantee report card: The report card notes actual performance and ranks providers by key program data measures, including measurable skill gain by population, cost of programming per individual served, intensity of service provided, and percentage of population served.
3. A program improvement process: Programs will be identified for review based on rankings in the state AEFLA report card and will undergo a comprehensive review and monitored implementation of a program improvement plan that requires local providers to complete site visits, workshop activities, reports, and plans to strengthen program performance and quality. (For more information on Program Improvement, see the response to (D) above.)
4. Intensive program application cycle: On a five-year basis, ABE providers are required to complete an in-depth application as a method to adhere to state statute governing local ABE programs. In this intensive application, local providers describe their: a. Consortium, b. Program accountability procedures, c. Professional development priorities and activities, d. Proposed programming, e. Local program governance, f. Program collaboration with key stakeholders and partners, g. Technology resources and integration, h. Future plans, and i. Performance. These in-depth applications are reviewed and scored by a team of state staff from the Minnesota Department of Education and local AEFLA providers.
5. Local program monitoring site visits: All grantees are subject to monitoring site visits that focus on policy compliance and program quality through multiple methods: a. Providers with low performance participate in site visits through the program improvement process; b. All AEFLA grantees receive site visits on a rotating basis, at least once every five years, when the program participates in in-depth application process to continue receiving state ABE funding to comply with state statute; c. Monitoring visits based on periodic desk review of provider data; d. Local ABE providers that participate in state initiatives and/or receive special grants through state or federal funding typically receive site visits as part of their participation; and e. Local providers request special technical assistance site visits as they face issues.

6. Assessing the quality of professional development programs:

The Minnesota PD system, overseen by the ABE PD specialist and the Statewide PD Committee, uses a data-driven planning process to identify PD needs, set priorities, design PD, and evaluate PD effectiveness each year. The results of an annual statewide PD needs assessment of local providers, along with evaluation data from previous PD efforts, research regarding best practices,

and federal recommendations are used to inform PD priorities and the design and delivery of PD activities. Professional development activities are aligned to the MN ABE PD standards, which emphasize research-based features of effective professional development (Improving Impact Studies of Teachers' Professional Development by Desimone, 2009) – longer-term, job-embedded activities with opportunities for collaborative participation and the application of new knowledge and skills. The Minnesota ABE Statewide Professional Development Committee and professional development providers use the Thomas Guskey Levels of Professional Development Evaluation (2002) as a framework for their PD evaluation efforts. Evaluation of PD outcomes and quality, especially evidence of teacher change and quality of implementation of new knowledge and skills, is integrated into every PD initiative to ensure the effectiveness of PD activities. Short-term or one-time PD activities such as workshops or conferences are typically evaluated through surveys. Longer-term PD initiatives are evaluated through a variety of methods, including participant surveys, pre/post-tests, classroom observations, program site visits, evaluation of assignments, and focus groups.

a. Minnesota will continue to implement Student Achievement in Reading (STAR) program. Evaluation of STAR training includes both training participant surveys, classroom observation, program site visits, as well as analysis of STAR student assessment results.

b. Minnesota's Supplemental Services system, which is funded with a combination of state and federal leadership funds, provides training and supports local programs in implementing program components needed to meet the wide range of needs of Minnesota's adult education participants including: distance education, use of technology for instruction as well as program management; services related to serving students with disabilities; instructional methodology including evidence-based reading and numeracy instruction; content standards including CCRS, ACES and Northstar Digital Literacy Standards; IET, contextualization and career pathway programming; volunteer recruitment and training; assessment; partner collaborations including workforce, TANF and SNAP, etc. Information regarding the relevance, quality and success of each component of the supplemental services system is collected through an annual professional development survey. In addition, quarterly and annual reporting regarding participation and locally collected participant evaluations are required of all professional development providers and are monitored by state ABE staff.

c. The statewide Supplemental Services noted above are available to all paid and volunteer staff. Professional development activities for volunteers are part of the supplemental services system and are also evaluated using the same methods described above.

d. Dissemination of information about models and promising practices are facilitated by Minnesota's Supplemental Services providers. Each provider maintains a website of related resources and all providers provide content for Minnesota's weekly PD e-newsletter, which is distributed to all ABE staff in the state. Minnesota also maintains online resource libraries for key content areas of instruction, including a career pathway-related curriculum repository. Information regarding the success of the dissemination system is collected annually as part of the Professional Development Survey and via locally collected participant evaluations. It is also evaluated quarterly by the Statewide ABE PD Committee.

CERTIFICATIONS

States must provide written and signed certifications that

1. The plan is submitted by the State agency that is eligible to submit the plan. Yes
2. The State agency has authority under State law to perform the functions of the State under the program. Yes
3. The State legally may carry out each provision of the plan. Yes
4. All provisions of the plan are consistent with State law. Yes
5. A State officer, specified by title in the certification, has authority under State law to receive, hold, and disburse Federal funds made available under the plan. Yes
6. The State officer who is submitting the plan, specified by the title in the certification, has authority to submit the plan. Yes
7. The agency that is submitting the plan has adopted or otherwise formally approved the plan. Yes
8. The plan is the basis for State operation and administration of the program. Yes

CERTIFICATION REGARDING LOBBYING

Certification for Contracts, Grants, Loans, and Cooperative Agreements

The undersigned certifies, to the best of his or her knowledge and belief, that:

(1) No Federal appropriated funds have been paid or will be paid, by or on behalf of the undersigned, to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of an agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with the awarding of any Federal contract, the making of any Federal grant, the making of any Federal loan, the entering into of any cooperative agreement, and the extension, continuation, renewal, amendment, or modification of any Federal contract, grant, loan, or cooperative agreement.

(2) If any funds other than Federal appropriated funds have been paid or will be paid to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with this Federal contract, grant, loan, or cooperative agreement, the undersigned shall complete and submit Standard Form-LLL, "Disclosure of Lobbying Activities," in accordance with its instructions.

(3) The undersigned shall require that the language of this certification be included in the award documents for all subawards at all tiers (including subcontracts, subgrants, and contracts under grants, loans, and cooperative agreements) and that all subrecipients shall certify and disclose accordingly. This certification is a material representation of fact upon which reliance was placed when this transaction was made or entered into. Submission of this certification is a prerequisite for making or entering into this transaction imposed by section 1352, title 31, U.S. Code. Any person who fails to file the required certification shall be subject to a civil penalty of not less than \$10,000 and not more than \$100,000 for each such failure.

STATEMENT FOR LOAN GUARANTEES AND LOAN INSURANCE

The undersigned states, to the best of his or her knowledge and belief, that:

If any funds have been paid or will be paid to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with this commitment providing for the United States to insure or guarantee a loan, the undersigned shall complete and submit Standard Form-LLL, "Disclosure of Lobbying Activities," in accordance with its instructions. Submission of this statement is a prerequisite for making or entering into this transaction imposed by section 1352, title 31, U.S. Code. Any person who fails to file the required statement shall be subject to a civil penalty of not less than \$10,000 and not more than \$100,000 for each such failure.

Applicant's Organization **Minnesota Department of Education**

Full Name of Authorized Representative: **Brenda Cassellius**

Title of Authorized Representative: **Education Commissioner**

SF LLL Form – Disclosure of Lobbying Activities (only if applicable)
(<http://www2.ed.gov/fund/grant/apply/appforms/appforms.html>). If applicable, please print, sign, and email to OCTAE_MAT@ed.gov

ASSURANCES

The State Plan must include assurances that:

1. The eligible agency will expend funds appropriated to carry out title II of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) only in a manner consistent with fiscal requirements under section 241(a) of WIOA (regarding supplement and not supplant provisions). Yes
2. The eligible agency will ensure that there is at least one eligible provider serving each local area, as defined in section 3(32) of WIOA. Yes
3. The eligible agency will not use any funds made available under title II of WIOA for the purpose of supporting or providing programs, services, or activities for individuals who are not “eligible individuals” within the meaning of section 203(4) of WIOA, unless it is providing programs, services or activities related to family literacy activities, as defined in section 203(9) of WIOA. Yes
4. The Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education program under section 243(a) of WIOA will be delivered in combination with integrated education and training activities; Yes
5. The Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education program under section 243(a) of WIOA will be designed to (1) prepare adults who are English language learners for, and place such adults in, unsubsidized employment in in-demand industries and occupations that lead to economic self-sufficiency and (2) integrate with the local workforce development system and its functions to carry out the activities of the program; and Yes
6. Using funds made available under title II of WIOA to carry out a program for criminal offenders within a correctional institution, the eligible agency will give priority to serving individuals who are likely to leave the correctional institution within five years of participation in the program. Yes

PROGRAM-SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS FOR VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION
(GENERAL)

The Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Services Portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan* must include the following descriptions and estimates, as required by section 101(a) of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended by WIOA:

* Sec. 102(b)(D)(iii) of WIOA

A. INPUT OF STATE REHABILITATION COUNCIL

All agencies, except for those that are independent consumer-controlled commissions, must describe the following:

1. INPUT PROVIDED BY THE STATE REHABILITATION COUNCIL, INCLUDING INPUT AND RECOMMENDATIONS ON THE VR SERVICES PORTION OF THE UNIFIED OR COMBINED STATE PLAN, RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE COUNCIL'S REPORT, THE REVIEW AND ANALYSIS OF CONSUMER SATISFACTION, AND OTHER COUNCIL REPORTS THAT MAY HAVE BEEN DEVELOPED AS PART OF THE COUNCIL'S FUNCTIONS;

The State Rehabilitation Council provides ongoing input and recommendations to VRS. The council's annual reports, meeting minutes, and summary reports of public forums can be found online at: <http://mn.gov/deed/job-seekers/disabilities/councils/rehab-council.jsp>.

The SRC spent a substantial amount of time reviewing WIOA and preparing public comment. The council's comments were previously submitted to RSA. In summary, the following recommendations were made:

1. RSA should closely monitor the impact of steering 15% of the federal appropriation to pre-employment services for transition aged youth. The SRC felt that this new mandate should have included new funding. This new mandate could have negative impact on services for adults.
2. The regulations should clarify how the common performance measures will be used. The regulations do not indicate if VR agencies will be compared to other VR agencies, or if VR will be compared to all programs funded by WIOA. If VR will be compared to all WIOA funded programs, common definitions need to be provided. For example, VR considers placement to be 90 days of successful employment while other programs consider placement to be one day of employment.
3. The SRC provided comment on the draft WIOA regulations related to Employer Training & Services. The primary concern is the language used in this regulation indicating that WIOA "authorizes the DSU to expend VR funds for training and services for employers [. . .]." The SRC is concerned that the language in this draft regulation is not strong enough to make this a priority for the DSU. There are many operational requirements that the DSU must fulfill, and if the draft regulations do not use language that do not require or allocate funding to this activity, it will not be a priority. SRC would like the language revised to emphasize the importance of this activity.

Additionally, of particular interest to the council is the type of services that should be available to employers. The MN SRC General proposes that the following training & services be available to employers: a. Disability Awareness Training b. Myths & Facts of ADA Accommodations Training c. VR Services 101 training for Employers. This training should discuss services and supports available to employees/employers including when and for how long after employee is hired supports can be provided through VR and Extended Employment (state funded long term supports).

4. SRC provided comment and suggestions on metrics that can assist in measuring "effectiveness in serving employers". These measures could include: a. Repeat hiring of VRS referrals by employer b. Employer referrals of other employment businesses c. Post-placement career progression d. Number of individuals employed by each employer business partner e. Ratio of employers hiring

VRS consumers &/or using Work Opportunity Tax Credits (WOTC) compared to all employers SRC noted that a measure that would be ineffective at measuring effectiveness in serving employers would be employee retention rates. This would not have the strongest correlation to the DSU effectiveness, as much of it is related to the employer's own initiative and commitment.

5. The goal of competitive integrated employment that provides an opportunity for advancement is a very appropriate goal for the public Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) program. However, the Council is concerned that mandating the goal through regulation will infringe on the participant's right to self-determination. People should be given choices and options for competitive integrated employment based on their abilities and capabilities. Establishing the appropriate level of integration for the person is best done on an individual basis through the counseling and guidance process, not federal regulations.

The employee with a disability may choose a competitive work site that is not fully integrated for a variety of reasons. The person may want or need a level of job coaching or other supports not available at a single site placement. The person may be introverted and not want a high level of interaction with co-workers. People may select a small work crew because they feel that working with people who have similar disabilities provides a supportive environment. Public transportation may not be available to single site placements, especially in rural areas.

The Council also has concerns about the requirement that individuals with disabilities employed by a community rehabilitation program (CRP) and working on a community-based service contract (i.e., working on a janitorial work crew) be integrated with co-workers without disabilities employed by the CRP instead of with co-workers employed at the community work site. Many people with disabilities choose employment on a work crew as a stepping stone to a competitive single site placement. The level of integration should be measured at the actual work site, not the CRP site, since the opportunity for advancement would be employment at the work site.

6. SRC recommends that each state have the discretion to define the ages of those potentially eligible for services. Due to limited resources, SRC recommends limiting pre-employment services to students on IEPs or Section 504 Plans who are age 16-21. Interested students with disabilities age 14 and older should have annual exposure to VR, including information and referral.

7. The term 'hearing impaired' is offensive and should be replaced with 'deaf, hard of hearing and DeafBlind'.

Public Forums

The State Rehabilitation Council convenes two public forums each year. The forums provide an opportunity to gather grassroots commentary and input regarding Minnesota's Vocational Rehabilitation program, and they encourage participation in public conversation about matters of interest and importance in the arena of disability employment.

May public forum: A Public forum on Employment and People with Disabilities in Southwest Minnesota.

The May forum examined local employment data for southwestern Minnesota, a predominantly rural area with limited resources. Key stakeholders providing input included County Case Management, Southwest Independent Living staff, VRS staff, and the Commission on Economic Development.

Overall, the SRC was impressed with the VR staff and their creative approach to the challenges posed when providing services in a vast low population area.

Recommendations from the forum included:

- * Recognizing that VR staff in Greater Minnesota already collaborate with community resources, the SRC called upon VRS leadership to encourage VR staff to increase collaboration and provide creative leadership in such efforts. Specific examples included supporting the development of more work readiness programs, skill training, and student work opportunities. One participant noted that the nearest job coach was one and a half hours away.

- * The SRC advised that VR staff actively encourage homebased employment options.

- * SRC advised that VR continue to support early outreach and communication to potential VR consumers in hopes that early engagement will allow VR staff to build connections with employers and provide client choice.

- * The SRC advised that VR continue to support outreach to employers, including small businesses. VR has a unique and important role assuring small businesses are aware of ADA, on-the-job training, work opportunity tax credits, etc.

- * Lack of transportation impacted job choice, training opportunities and economic development. SRC recognized that transportation options are very limited in rural areas, but the problem cannot be ignored.

September public forum: Coordination between the Schools and Vocational Rehabilitation.

The September forum was sponsored by SRC-General, SRC-Blind and the Department of Education. A panel discussed the federal and state initiatives designed to increase employability for students with disabilities, and how to maximize the positive impact of pre-employment transition services through effective collaboration.

Following a panel discussion of the current initiatives and a discussion of the current policies and practices around VR and school collaboration, participants broke into local teams consisting of the local school district staff, the VRS and SSB staff assigned to those school districts, and students with disabilities from the various school districts. Each team developed strategies on how to improve interagency coordination at the local level. Although not a part of the initial design, participants used the forum as an opportunity to network and become familiar with services available at other school districts and/or other agencies.

Review and analysis of consumer satisfaction

The SRC expanded on the May forum by holding consumer discussion groups in five additional areas of the state. The Centers for Independent Living hosted these discussion groups, focusing on a subgroup of VRS participants who received both VR and IL services. Public discussions were held in Duluth (northeast), Fergus Falls (west central), Rochester (southeast) St. Cloud (central), and St. Paul (Twin cities metro).

Discussion topics were primarily focused on people's experiences looking for and obtaining jobs, experiences working with placement services, experiences after getting the job and working for a while, and thoughts on the VR/IL collaborative. Following is a brief summary of the discussions:

Looking for and obtaining jobs:

- * Scheduling interviews can be difficult if you use door to door para-transit services. You need to schedule a week in advance and provide a specific address. If you submit multiple resumes you don't know who will invite you to interview or on what date.

- * Several people mentioned VR was willing to fund school and coordinate academic accommodations.

- * Several people mentioned they had returned to VR on multiple occasions for placement assistance. One person mentioned he worked for 30 years as a professional, and then returned to VR when the job ended. Other people mentioned they wished they had known it was O.K. to return if the job ended or you were ready for advancement.

- * Most people were aware of assistive technology and many people accessed assistive technology services. One person mentioned that VR provided adaptations to her car to get to and from work, but no agency was available to modify the employer's van that she uses while working.

Experiences working with placement services:

- * Overall, people were very positive about the practical help provided including job search, coordinating interviews, mock interviews, resume development, etc. Two people described their experience as awesome. Several people commented that job seeking was much more difficult than they imagined. They initially didn't see the need for support, but very much appreciated it once they started the job search.

- * Several people felt they were being pushed to apply for available jobs in the local economy instead of VR developing jobs in their areas of interest. There was too much focus on the number of placements instead of the quality of the placement. One person mentioned that VR would not support his vocational goal because Labor Market Information indicated it was not in a growing industry. Another person mentioned that all he wanted was a d*** job; the process was too slow.

- * Some people indicated VR provided too many choices. It was too difficult to decide. This was more common with transition students entering employment for the first time.

Experiences after getting the job and working for a while:

- * There was recognition that the outreach, information and support VR provides to employers is unique and important.

- * The overall theme was that the VR process is important but can be frustrating at times. Participants generally felt that they would not have succeeded without VR support.

- * Several people felt 90 days of support after successful employment was not enough. Some people wanted more information on employee rights. Several people didn't disclose their disability at hire

and were uncertain if they should now disclose. Some people weren't comfortable calling their counselor after case closure, or weren't aware they could request additional services after closure.

Thoughts on the VR/IL collaborative:

* The VR/IL collaborative was very important to the participants. One person stated that IL/VR was a "savior". It helped her prioritize life's major stressors.

* Overall, people felt the collaborative was very helpful for prioritizing what needs to be addressed first, Social Security benefits counseling, learning about community services, independent living skills, and learning advocacy skills.

The SRC and VRS have reviewed the notes of the discussion groups to help determine staff training needs. More emphasis needs to be placed on teaching self-advocacy skills. Several people mentioned they would have benefited from specific services but never asked for the services. People were appreciative of the team approach (VRS staff, IL staff and CRP staff co-located) but some people presumed everyone was employed by VRS. It is important that everyone is aware that VR provides choice of vendor and you don't need to select the co-located staff. VRS needs to look at better ways to disengage when the person is successfully employed and does not need long-term supports. The information about post-employment services needs to be more inviting.

2. THE DESIGNATED STATE UNIT'S RESPONSE TO THE COUNCIL'S INPUT AND RECOMMENDATIONS; AND

The Director of Vocational Rehabilitation Services and the Field Operations Director attended most meetings of the SRC and responded to questions from the Council. Much of the discussion in the past year focused on the changes related to WIOA. There were no formal recommendations made to VRS that required a formal response. Instead, the focus was on VRS management team and SRC learning together about WIOA.

VRS supports the council's interest in providing services to employers. Placement staff currently offer education, information, and training to employers regarding disability awareness, reasonable accommodations, and VR services. VRS anticipates continuing and expanding these efforts. VRS is currently working with the council to establish metrics to assess the effectiveness of these efforts.

The council also called for an expansion of services provided in collaboration with community partners, such as work readiness programs, skill training, and student work. VRS is working with the CRP Advisory Committee to explore opportunities to expand services, particularly in rural areas, while recognizing the reality of limited resources and the increased costs of providing additional services in low-population areas.

3. THE DESIGNATED STATE UNIT'S EXPLANATIONS FOR REJECTING ANY OF THE COUNCIL'S INPUT OR RECOMMENDATIONS.

VRS did not reject any of the council's suggestions or recommendations. There is continued discussion about better defining employer engagement and metrics to measure progress. There is also continued discussion with the CRP Advisory Committee, on at least a quarterly basis, to explore ways to improve and expand VR services statewide.

B. REQUEST FOR WAIVER OF STATEWIDENESS

When requesting a waiver of the statewideness requirement, the designated State unit must identify the types of services to be provided by the program on a non-statewide basis. The waiver request must also include written assurances that:

1. A LOCAL PUBLIC AGENCY WILL PROVIDE THE NON-FEDERAL SHARE OF COSTS ASSOCIATED WITH THE SERVICES TO BE PROVIDED IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE WAIVER REQUEST;

This agency has requested a waiver of statewideness. VRS requests continuation of the waiver with respect to delivery of vocational rehabilitation services in Minnesota Independent School District No. 2170, which includes the cities of Staples and Motley in north central Minnesota. VRS serves students with disabilities in all public school districts and most private schools and charter schools. Uniform statewide provision of services is required by the Rehabilitation Act, except when waived. Independent School District 2170 and VRS use a service model, pursuant to waiver, under which a full-time counselor provides services exclusively to the district's eligible students. The school district employs the counselor, sharing costs with VRS. Hiring authority and case supervision is a responsibility of the VRS area manager. The contract under which this collaboration is carried out is negotiated and administered by the local rehabilitation area manager to meet specific local needs.

2. THE DESIGNATED STATE UNIT WILL APPROVE EACH PROPOSED SERVICE BEFORE IT IS PUT INTO EFFECT; AND

This written contract provides that all non-federal funds allocated by the agreement are made available to VRS, that all services provided under the agreement are subject to VRS approval.

3. ALL STATE PLAN REQUIREMENTS WILL APPLY

requirements of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan will apply to the services approved under the waiver.

All state plan requirements apply to all services approved under the contract.

C. COOPERATIVE AGREEMENTS WITH AGENCIES NOT CARRYING OUT ACTIVITIES UNDER THE STATEWIDE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM.

Describe interagency cooperation with and utilization of the services and facilities of agencies and programs that are not carrying out activities through the statewide workforce development system with respect to:

1. FEDERAL, STATE, AND LOCAL AGENCIES AND PROGRAMS;

Following is a discussion of Vocational Rehabilitation Services' collaborative arrangements with federal, state and local agencies and with private entities that are not formal components of the statewide workforce investment system.

Olmstead Subcabinet: The Department of Employment and Economic Development is active on the Governor's subcabinet to implement the Olmstead Plan that was approved by the U.S. District Court on September 29, 2015. The subcabinet "embraces the Olmstead decision as a key component of achieving a better Minnesota for all Minnesotans, and strives to ensure Minnesotans with disabilities will have the opportunity, both now and in the future, to live close to their families and friends, to live more independently, to engage in productive employment and to participate in community life" (2013 vision statement). The employment section of the plan listed two population-level indicators: 1) Increase the employment rate of persons with disabilities so that it is comparable to the employment rate of persons without disabilities and 2) Increase the employment earnings of persons with disabilities so that they are comparable to the earnings of persons without disabilities.

Minnesota Autism Interagency Committee: Representatives from Minnesota's Departments of Education, Human Services, Health, and Employment and Economic Development meet monthly to discuss the needs of citizens with autism. VRS is active on this committee, and on a sub-committee that wrote Minnesota's Autism State Plan. The rehabilitation specialist for autism is also active on the Department of Human Services' Advisory Council on residential services for people with autism. The task force supports expanding transition program options and employment opportunities for teens and adults with autism, particularly innovative community-based programs (e.g., Project Search—www.projectsearch.us/) that better meet the unique needs of this population.

Collaboration Grants to Provide Independent Living Services: Since 2008, the VRS/IL collaboration has served Minnesotans with the most significant disabilities who require both vocational rehabilitation and independent living services to meet their goals for working and living in the community. In FFY 2014 VRS dedicated \$1,027,466 in SSA program income to fund locally designed collaboration grants with each of Minnesota's eight Centers for Independent Living. There is an IL counselor housed in most VRS offices.

Minnesota Employment Center for Individuals Who Are Deaf or Hard-of-Hearing: Provides VRS funded short-term services and state-funded long-term support services for individuals who are deaf and hard-of-hearing.

VECTOR Youth Project for Deaf/Deaf Blind: \$1.9m in school district funding supplemented with \$475,000 in VRS managed state funding support enhanced transition services for youth who are deaf, hard of hearing, or deaf blind in Minnesota. Enhanced services include work readiness classes, college preparation classes, driver's education, community based work experiences, and paid internships in competitive employment. For students who transition to college, high school instructors work with the college for the first semester to make sure all needed accommodations are

in place and the person is making adequate progress. Ninety percent of VECTOR students are either working or enrolled in college at time of high school graduation.

Cooperative Agreements with the White Earth Nation – Tribal VR program and the Red Lake Nation – Tribal VR program: VRS and State Services for the Blind provide information, technical assistance, training opportunities, and support to the state's two tribal VR programs. A formal process is in place for referral and transfer of cases in accordance with best practices ensuring choice. Although not a part of the formal written agreement, the Social Security Administration's Area Work Incentive Coordinator plays a crucial role in providing technical assistance on benefits planning.

U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment Services: Memorandum of Understanding to enhance work opportunities for veterans with disabilities by sharing information, coordinating activities and offering complementary services.

Ticket to Work Employment Networks: VRS, State Services for the Blind and SSA co-host periodic meetings of the Employment Networks to provide staff training, updates on Ticket to Work procedural changes, and to promote Partnership Plus job retention services after VRS/SSB case closure.

The SGA Project: The Institute for Community Inclusion at the University of Massachusetts–Boston is conducting RSA funded research on best practices for assisting SSDI beneficiaries achieve employment above Substantial Gainful Activity (SGA). The VR agencies in Minnesota and Kentucky are currently demonstrating this rapid engagement model where eligibility is determined within three days; within seven days transferable work skills are identified, labor market information is presented to the consumer, and benefits and financial planning services are started; and within 30 days the IPE and a Placement Plan are developed. A benefits analysis is completed within 8 weeks of application if needed. RSA demonstration grant funding is being used to provide SSDI beneficiaries' access to a financial specialist to help the person know how income will impact federal and state benefits, and how work incentives and VR services can help improve credit scores and provide savings that can be used as a down-payment on a home or to purchase reliable transportation, etc. Minnesota hopes to demonstrate that rapid engagement and holistic services will lead to more placements at higher wages.

Professional vocational rehabilitation counseling organizations: Active participation relating to ongoing professional development for staff and to counselor recruitment takes place through well-established working relationships with and memberships on the boards of the Minnesota Rehabilitation Association, including the Minnesota Rehabilitation Counseling Association chapter. Performance-based funding for placement services provided by community rehabilitation programs and limited-use vendors: Placement providers receive milestone and outcome payments for facilitating successful outcomes for VR customers. The first milestone is payable when the Placement Plan is developed, the second milestone is paid at time of successful placement, and a final outcome payment is paid when the person has been successfully employed for 90 days.

Work Incentives Connection (Minnesota's Work Incentives and Planning Assistance program): VRS maintains an agreement with Goodwill Easter Seals to provide benefit analysis counseling and related services for consumers on a fee for service basis with the goal of increasing the employment of persons who receive Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI). The agreement also provides funding for staff training on work incentives.

2. STATE PROGRAMS CARRIED OUT UNDER SECTION 4 OF THE ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY ACT OF 1998;

The Minnesota STAR (System of Technology to Achieve Results) Program: The STAR Program, a program within the Minnesota Department of Administration, is funded by the Department of Health and Human Services in accordance with the Assistive Technology Act of 1998, as amended. Vocational Rehabilitation often refers people to STAR for a device demonstration. This allows consumers to compare benefits and features of a particular device or category of devices. Once a decision on a device is made, the person can borrow the device for 30 days to make sure it meets the person's needs before VR purchases the item. VR also maintains an agreement with STAR to provide VR assistive technology specialists with commonly used devices for use in doing assessments with consumers.

3. PROGRAMS CARRIED OUT BY THE UNDER SECRETARY FOR RURAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE;

U.S. Department of Agriculture: Memorandum of Understanding establishing formal working relationships between the USDA's AgrAbility Project and Vocational Rehabilitation Services field offices under which consumers may access programs funded by USDA Rural Development in support of their employment plans. The Minnesota USDA Rural Development Office also uses technical economic and forecasting information provided by DEED to develop and market its services.

4. NONEDUCATIONAL AGENCIES SERVING OUT-OF-SCHOOL YOUTH; AND

The designated state unit maintains a close working relationship with the local Workforce Development Board's Youth Programs, including the Youth Disability Employment Initiative. Two of the service providers have become Employment Networks so they can continue job retention services after WIOA services have ended. One of the providers is seeking CARF accreditation to become a community rehabilitation provider to better meet the needs of youth with disabilities.

5. STATE USE CONTRACTING PROGRAMS.

State Use Program: Since the mid-1990s, Minnesota state agencies have been legislatively encouraged to purchase goods and services from small businesses operated by individuals with disabilities. In 2007, the Legislature enacted a set-aside program, providing that 19 percent of the total value of all state janitorial contracts be awarded to community rehabilitation organizations approved by VRS as service providers under the VRS Extended Employment Program. During the 2010 legislative session, the set-aside program was expanded to include document imaging, document shredding, mailing, collating, and sorting services. Further, the amount of each contract awarded under this section may exceed the estimated fair market price for the same goods and services by up to 6 percent.

D. COORDINATION WITH EDUCATION OFFICIALS

Describe:

1. DSU'S PLANS

The designated State unit's plans, policies, and procedures for coordination with education officials to facilitate the transition of students with disabilities from school to the receipt of VR services, including pre-employment transition services, as well as procedures for the timely development and approval of individualized plans for employment for the students.

Vocational Rehabilitation Services (VRS), State Services for the Blind (SSB), and the Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) have an agreement to achieve better coordination between schools and VR services and creating a bridge from the school to VRS or SSB prior to school exit. Following is a discussion of the current agreement. It is anticipated that the agreement will be updated when the final WIOA regulations are published:

- Provide guidance to students with disabilities transitioning from school to employment.
- Offer consultation and technical assistance to educators in planning for the transition of students with disabilities from school to VR services.
- Define roles and responsibilities, including the financial responsibilities of each agency, and determine state lead agencies and qualified staff responsible for transition services.
- Design methods of identification and outreach to students with disabilities who are in need of transition services.
- Guide the development of policies and procedures that help students with disabilities make the transition from school to employment.
- Promote flexible, coordinated, and collaborative planning and service delivery among MDE, VRS, and SSB for eligible youth transitioning from school to employment.

Coordinated Services for Youth in Special Education

Minnesota law mandates a coordinated system of services for youth, birth to 21, who are involved in special education. The Minnesota System for Interagency Collaboration (MnSIC) was formed to develop and implement this system. VRS is represented on MnSIC and VRS staff participate on subcommittees that develop service strategies for students and recommendations for governance and coordination of state and local collaborative efforts.

Community Transition Interagency Committee (CTIC)

Approximately 70 local CTICs promote statewide interagency coordination to remove system barriers and expand community services. CTICs include parents, students, advocacy groups, local businesses, county government, post-secondary education, vocational education, community education, corrections, SSA health care, and other local service providers. VRS staff serve on all

CTICs, thereby helping to improve and expand vocational services that result in employment outcomes.

Rehabilitation Counselors Assigned to High Schools

VR counselors are assigned to all public, private, and charter high schools in Minnesota.

Outreach efforts include working with school nurses, guidance counselors, case managers, principals, social workers, 504 personnel, community agencies and work experience coordinators to identify students with disabilities who are not in special education programs. About 11 percent of students referred to VRS are not enrolled in special education programs. A referral of all potentially eligible students is sought as soon as possible so that employment services can begin well before the student leaves school.

An interagency agreement between VRS/SSB and the Minnesota Department of Education is currently being revised to define qualified personnel responsible for pre-employment transition services and transition services. The agreement has not yet been finalized, pending publication of the WIOA final regulations. But the relevant portion of the draft language of the interagency agreement reads as follows:

III: ROLES and RESPONSIBILITIES

- MDE's Division of Special Education and Division of Career and College Success is responsible for ensuring that local education agencies provide special education and related services as documented in students' Individualized Education Program.
- DEED's VRS/SSB assists students with disabilities in making informed choices to prepare for, obtain and maintain competitive, integrated employment. Services include the provision of pre-employment transition services for students who are eligible or potentially eligible for VR services. They also include assessing an individual's VR needs, developing and implementing an individualized plan for employment (IPE), and assisting in the achievement of the employment goals for the individuals that have applied for VR services, have been found eligible and are in an open priority category.
- MDE's Division of Special Education and Division of Career and College Success and DEED's VRS/SSB are responsible for coordination necessary to satisfy documentation requirements set forth in WIOA with regard to students and youth with disabilities who are considering subminimum wage employment.
- MDE's Division of Special Education and Division of Career and College Success is responsible to assure that neither the State educational agency nor LEAs will enter into a contract or other arrangement with an entity, as defined in WIOA for the purpose of operating a program under which a youth with a disability is engaged in subminimum wage employment.
- MDE's Division of Special Education and Division of Career and College Success and DEED's VRS/SSB are financially responsible for the services they provide under its own laws and rules. Nothing will be construed to reduce the obligation under IDEA of a local educational agency or any other agency to provide or pay for any transition services that are also considered special education or related services and that are necessary for ensuring a free appropriate public education to children with disabilities within Minnesota.

- MDE's Division of Special Education and Division of Career and College Success and DEED's VRS/SSB are responsible to ensure that neither the local educational agency nor VR agencies may shift the burden for providing a service, for which it otherwise would be responsible, to the other entity. Decisions related to which entity will be responsible for providing transition or pre-employment transition services that can be considered both a special education and a VR service will be made at the State and local level as part of the collaboration between the VR agencies, State educational agencies, and local educational agencies. Criteria that can assist in making these decisions include:

- o The purpose of the service—Is it related more to an employment outcome or education (i.e., is it considered a special education or related service (e.g., rehabilitation counseling that is necessary for the provision of a free appropriate public education))?

- o Customary Services—Is the service one that the school customarily provides under IDEA part B? For example, if the school ordinarily provides job exploration counseling to its eligible students with disabilities, the mere fact that such a service is now authorized under the Rehabilitation Act as a pre-employment transition service does not mean the school should cease providing that service and refer those students to VR programs.

- o Eligibility—Is the student with a disability eligible for transition services under IDEA? The definition of a “student with a disability,” for purposes of VR programs, is broader than that under IDEA because the definition in WIOA includes those students who are individuals with a disability under section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act. It is possible that these students do not have an individualized education program under IDEA and, therefore, would not be eligible for or receiving special education and related services under IDEA. As a result, VR programs are authorized to provide transition services to a broader population than local educational agencies are authorized to provide under IDEA.

There is also a separate Interagency Agreement to Purchase used Assistive Technology Devices

When a child with a disability transitions into a work environment or postsecondary program, VRS or SSB may purchase any assistive technology device that the child's former school district purchased on the child's behalf.

2. INFORMATION ON THE FORMAL INTERAGENCY AGREEMENT WITH THE STATE EDUCATIONAL AGENCY WITH RESPECT TO:

A. CONSULTATION AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE TO ASSIST EDUCATIONAL AGENCIES IN PLANNING FOR THE TRANSITION OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES FROM SCHOOL TO POST-SCHOOL ACTIVITIES, INCLUDING VR SERVICES;

- The Minnesota Department of Education (MDE), Division of Special Education, Vocational Rehabilitation Services and State Services for the Blind agree to share responsibility for ensuring that students with disabilities receive current information about their strengths, interests and preferences in order to make informed choices about integrated competitive employment prior to leaving school.

- MDE, Division of Special Education and VRS/SSB agree to share responsibility for ensuring that students with disabilities receive exposure to career information through Minnesota's Internet

System for Education and Employment Knowledge (ISEEK), Minnesota Career Information System (MCIS) or other state supported sites. Information could include connections to postsecondary education training requirements, current labor market forecasts, and job outlook to assist the student in making informed choices about their futures.

- MDE, Division of Special Education and VRS/SSB will work together to implement career exploration and vocational skills development for transition-age students with disabilities.
- MDE, Division of Special Education and VRS/SSB agree to collaborate and promote transition to adult services through participation in existing councils, committees, and other workgroups within respective agencies.

B. TRANSITION PLANNING BY PERSONNEL OF THE DESIGNATED STATE AGENCY AND EDUCATIONAL AGENCY THAT FACILITATES THE DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THEIR INDIVIDUALIZED EDUCATION PROGRAMS;

- MDE, Division of Special Education and VRS/SSB agree to accept shared responsibility for the transition planning for students with disabilities receiving both special education and VR services. DEED's VRS/SSB staff agrees to be active participants in the transition planning process once VR eligibility is determined.

C. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES, INCLUDING FINANCIAL RESPONSIBILITIES, OF EACH AGENCY, INCLUDING PROVISIONS FOR DETERMINING STATE LEAD AGENCIES AND QUALIFIED PERSONNEL RESPONSIBLE FOR TRANSITION SERVICES;

- MDE, Division of Special Education is responsible for ensuring that local education agencies provide special education and related services as documented in students' Individualized Education Program.
- DEED's VRS/SSB assists students with disabilities in making informed choices to prepare for, obtain and maintain employment. Services relate to assessing an individual's VR needs, developing and implementing an individualized plan for employment (IPE), and assisting in the achievement of the employment goals for the individuals served.
- MDE, Division of Special Education and VRS/SSB are financially responsible for the services they provide under its own laws and rules.

Responsibilities of Each Partner for Pre-employment Transition Services

The draft language of an Interagency Agreement includes the following:

For the purpose of this agreement a "student with a disability" may include one who is eligible for and receiving special education services under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) or requires accommodations under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act.

The intent of this agreement is to:

1. Through consultation and technical assistance, assist LEAs in planning for the transition of students with disabilities from school to post- school activities, including post-secondary education , training, and competitive integrated employment.
2. Provide transition planning by personnel of VRS and SSB alongside secondary special education and college and career readiness staff through the delivery of pre-employment transition services under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act and facilitates the development and completion of their Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.
3. Define the roles and responsibilities, including financial responsibilities, of each agency, including provisions for determining State lead agencies and qualified personnel responsible for pre-employment transition services and transition services.
4. Designate procedures for outreach to students with disabilities who are in need of employment-related transition services. Outreach to students should occur as early as possible during the transition planning process

II: CONSULTATION AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

- MDE's Division of Special Education and Division of Career and College Success and DEED's VRS/SSB agree to share responsibility for ensuring that students with disabilities receive current information about their strengths, interests and preferences in order to make informed choices about competitive integrated employment prior to leaving school.
- MDE's Division of Special Education and Division of Career and College Success and DEED's VRS/SSB agree to share responsibility for ensuring that students with disabilities receive exposure to career information through Minnesota's Internet System for Education and Employment Knowledge (ISEEK), Minnesota Career Information System (MCIS) or other state supported sites. Information could include connections to postsecondary education training requirements, current labor market forecasts, and job outlook to assist the student in making informed choices about their futures.
- MDE's Division of Special Education and Division of Career and College Success and DEED's VRS/SSB will work together to implement pre-employment transition services for transition-age students with disabilities.
- MDE's Division of Special Education and Division of Career and College Success and DEED's VRS/SSB will work together to deliver consultation and technical assistance, which may be provided using alternative means for meeting participation (such as video conferences and conference calls), to assist educational agencies in planning for the transition of students with disabilities from school to post-school activities, including vocational rehabilitation services.
- MDE's Division of Special Education and Division of Career and College Success and DEED's VRS/SSB agree to collaborate and promote transition to adult services through participation in existing councils, committees, and other workgroups within respective agencies.

D. PROCEDURES FOR OUTREACH TO AND IDENTIFICATION OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES WHO NEED TRANSITION SERVICES.

- MDE, Division of Special Education and VRS/SSB staff will work together to develop outreach tools related to integrated competitive employment for students with disabilities, school personnel, and other community agencies. Materials may include a description of the purpose of the VR program, referral process, eligibility requirements, priority for services, application procedures, and scope of services that may be provided to eligible individuals.
- MDE, Division of Special Education and VRS/SSB staff will support the Community Transition Interagency Committees (CTICs) to improve interagency collaboration among those that support youth with disabilities.

E. COOPERATIVE AGREEMENTS WITH PRIVATE NONPROFIT ORGANIZATIONS

(Formerly known as Attachment 4.8(b)(3)). Describe the manner in which the designated State agency establishes cooperative agreements with private non-profit VR service providers.

VRS purchases services such as vocational evaluation, skill training, internships, job development and job placement, on-the-job training, and time-limited job coaching. Services must be consistent with an employment plan developed between counselor and customer, based on the consumer's informed choices and offered in integrated settings.

Written Assurances

Providers must provide written assurances about their organizational missions, operations (including audits and lines of authority), staff development and qualifications, services, fees, populations served, standards of professional practice, and adherence to customers' employment plans. They must also provide written assurance regarding vendor compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, Minnesota Human Rights Act and other employment law on individual rights, accessibility, occupational health and safety, and data privacy.

Two Categories of Providers

Minnesota distinguishes between two categories of vendor: the limited-use provider and the unlimited use community rehabilitation program (CRP). This arrangement permits wide selection of services and system flexibility and emphasizes the use of providers accredited by the national Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF).

Limited Use Providers

Limited-use providers (those without CARF accreditation) introduce competition to the rehabilitation marketplace and provide an entry point for new providers in response to an unmet or emerging service need. They are typically small organizations with small caseloads, limited to a narrow range of specialized services such as intensive job placement or job coaching for individuals with a particular disability. Some are private-for-profit entities. VRS uses the services of 53 limited-use providers. Contracts are limited to \$20,000 annually.

CARF-accredited CRPs

An unlimited-use CRP must be accredited by CARF for the services they provide. Professional/Technical Contracts, detailing services and specific fee schedules, are negotiated, with the engagement of VRS area managers and counseling staff. VRS management reviews the agreement for approval or modification. VRS currently has 62 Professional/Technical Contracts with CRPs statewide. VRS employs a program specialist to help maintain a mutually supportive professional relationship and to negotiate modifications to agreements with CRPs. VRS and CRPs work together to promote mutually held goals, including:

- Develop and maintain choices for consumers.
- Meet workforce needs identified by the state's employers.

- Ensure that services are provided in integrated settings.
- Facilitate state-level planning and coordination of training needs of CRP staff.
- Facilitate communication between VRS and CRP staff at the administrative level.
- Increase CRP awareness of vocational rehabilitation issues at state and national levels.
- Identify and provide training for CRP and VRS staff.

VRS has an active CRP Advisory Committee to assist in achievement of these common goals. Priority topics discussed included "telling our story" (development of a strategic marketing and communications plan), enhanced placement services through collaboration, CRP input into the VRS administrative structure, collaborating with CRPs to provide paid internships for consumers including pre-employment transition internships, enhancements to supported employment services, and shared coordination and delivery of staff training.

The Advisory Committee is also engaged in defining CRP quality measures and defining opportunities for joint training of VRS and CRP staff. The committee is currently actively involved in developing and providing training for VRS and CRP job developers on rapid engagement and fully engaging the consumer in the placement process.

F. ARRANGEMENTS AND COOPERATIVE AGREEMENTS FOR THE PROVISION OF SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES

(Formerly known as Attachment 4.8(b)(4)). Describe the designated State agency's efforts to identify and make arrangements, including entering into cooperative agreements, with other State agencies and other appropriate entities in order to provide supported employment services and extended employment services, as applicable, to individuals with the most significant disabilities, including youth with the most significant disabilities.

Statewide Collaboration

VRS collaborates with the Minnesota Department of Education (MDE), Department of Human Services (DHS), and county and local service providers to offer statewide supported employment services. VRS is a partner in several state-level agreements that provide long-term supports. During development of an employment plan, VRS counselors and other service team members help consumers to select supported employment services that meet their needs. They identify which services will be provided by VRS, as well as the source of long-term supports in the community. VRS provides time-limited supports for up to 18 months (up to 24 months for youth), but an employment plan may be amended if additional time is needed to achieve job stability. The primary funding resources for long-term supports in the community following VRS case closure are county case managers, the VRS Extended Employment Program, DHS programs such as traumatic brain injury waiver funding, and the Social Security Administration's Impairment-Related Work Expense exclusions and Ticket to Work funding for persons on SSI and/or SSDI.

State-funded VRS Extended Employment Program

Minnesota's Extended Employment Program, administered by VRS, develops performance based contracts with CARF-accredited CRPs. The contracts set expectations for extended support, establish funding levels and specify how many employment hours will be funded. These collaborations contribute significantly to the quality, scope, and effectiveness of the state's supported employment efforts.

The VRS Extended Employment Program augments Minnesota's supported employment resources, including those for persons who are deaf or hard-of-hearing and for persons with serious mental illness. It provides over \$12 million a year to CRPs to provide ongoing supports. VRS coordinates both vocational rehabilitation and extended employment services to maximize the impact of both time-limited and extended services.

The Extended Employment Program is in the rule making process. Currently, more than 80 percent of the dollars support people working in integrated community settings. The proposed rule would eliminate center-based employment over five years, shifting 100% of the money to community based employment.

Individuals with Serious Mental Illness and Individuals Who Are Deaf or Hard-of-Hearing

Extended Employment dedicates \$1.6 million to supports for persons with serious and persistent mental illness. Another appropriation provides \$475,000 annually to provide ongoing supports for persons who are deaf or hard-of-hearing. In state fiscal year 2014, the VRS Extended Employment program provided ongoing work supports to about 4,700 individuals working in the community, most of whom had previously received time-limited VR services.

G. COORDINATION WITH EMPLOYERS

(Formerly known as Attachment 4.8(b)(5)). Describe how the designated State unit will work with employers to identify competitive integrated employment and career exploration opportunities in order to facilitate the provision of:

1. VR SERVICES; AND

Excellence in placement services is fundamental to more fully living into DEED's vision statement of "a healthy economy, where all Minnesotans have or are on a path to meaningful employment and a family sustaining wage, and all employers are able to fill jobs in demand". Coordination with employers is also key to VRS' priority to embrace employers as key customers resulting in increased employment outcomes.

VRS has developed three updated strategic priorities and measures related to coordination with employers. These priorities replace the priorities listed under Goal 4: Employer Engagement in Section (P) Evaluation and Reports of Progress.

A. Develop and implement a VR consumer talent pool structural framework within the electronic case management system. The talent pool will be developed to gather and tap information to facilitate matching consumers to employment opportunities.

Metric: Secure approval and resources to develop the consumer talent pool structural framework as part of a larger rewrite of the case management system.

B. Develop and implement Low Risk Hiring and Retention Options designed to increase employment outcomes and workforce diversity.

Metric: Track the VR consumer participation and employment outcomes in low risk hiring and retention options on a quarterly basis. Options include on-the-job training, job try outs, internships, 700 hour program and Schedule A hiring.

Metric: Create and delivery raining to help employers identify, develop and sustain natural supports for employees with disabilities in the workplace.

C. VRS will lead and convene Placement Partnerships focused on developing, maintaining, and strengthening relationships among VRS, VR Community Partners and employers.

Metric: The placement specialist team will develop a quarterly report on the major activities and outcomes for active placement partnerships.

Metric: VRS will share the quarterly report with partnership participants and use as a tool to increase understanding and collaboration for increased employment outcomes.

Metric: WIOA Common Performance Measure 6 (effectiveness in serving employers) will be developed and addressed in an annual report.

Following is a report of progress on the revised priorities:

The Disability Employment Resource (DER) was developed to support business engagement. The initiative helps businesses meet their workforce goals by employing people with disabilities in competitive integrated positions, while employment professionals learn more about how to align their placement goals with business needs.

The DER curriculum improves business engagement by delivering information to bridge the gap between business and human services, dispelling myths that can prevent employers from considering people with disabilities, helping human service professionals understand the business perspective, providing tools for starting and building relationships, and connecting businesses with information and resources to help them succeed.

The DER model has four stages of engagement:

The first stage is Visibility. Strategies are provided to identify businesses and develop contacts.

The second stage is Credibility. The focus is on educating and informing the employer by asking for opportunities to present employment information to the business, hosting informational events, and sharing stories about business successes in employing people with disabilities. To encourage engagement, the employer may be asked to conduct mock interviews with job seekers or mentoring a job seeker.

The third stage is Fulfillment. The focus is on finding qualified candidates for the employer's job openings.

The fourth stage is Reciprocity. The focus is on supporting the new employee by mentoring the person's supervisor, if needed, and providing job coaching and other support services to fully integrate the new employee in the work site.

Minnesota has developed 15 Placement Partnerships throughout the state to provide a single point of contact for employers and to enhance the skills of placement professionals.

Placement 101 is a three day training to provide professionals with an introductory level of knowledge and skills in providing placement services for VRS consumers. It is available free of charge to VRS and community partners. To date, 17 classes have been completed, providing training to over 300 placement professionals. In addition, 30 trainers have been trained (15 VRS staff and 15 community rehabilitation program staff) to ensure an adequate number of trainers to continue the project. In addition to supporting joint training to maintain qualified staff, the placement partnerships share job leads and host job fairs and other community events.

In 2012 a Next Generation Placement Design Team was developed, consisting of 18 key VRS and CRP leaders who engaged in a facilitated process to develop the 'Next Generation' of placement services for the benefit of job seekers and employers. The model was piloted in each region of the state (northern, metro, and southern) and at the Deaf/Hard of Hearing Units in St. Paul and St. Cloud. The model is currently being expanded statewide to all geographic areas of the state and all VR communities (VRS, community rehabilitation programs and limited use vendors).

The vision of Next Generation Placement is that job seekers will be better prepared to actively engage with the placement team to secure integrated competitive employment. The placement team will provide coordinated, effective and individualized support to the job seeker and employers, including access to ongoing supports to help the person maintain and advance in their employment.

Employment will increase self-sufficiency, thus further increasing the person's integration in the community. The employer will also be more engaged and willing to provide job skill evaluations, job tryouts and on the job training. The initial evaluation of the project is very promising. For example, one employer has completed 79 job skill evaluations or job tryouts, and hired 31 of the people. The employer has directly hired another 25 people.

The SGA Project, implemented in August, 2015, is piloting another strategy for engaging consumers and employers. The consumer works with a core team consisting of a counselor, benefits planner and placement specialist. The consumer can add additional people if desired, such as an independent living counselor or mental health worker. The counselor and placement specialist focus on helping the person decide on a vocational goal that exists in the local economy, while the benefits planner helps the person set an income goal. The placement plan is developed at the same time as the Employment Plan, even if the person will be entering a training program. If the person is entering a highly competitive field, the placement specialist may recommend internships or other services that will give the consumer a competitive edge over other job applicants. Frequently, the internship leads to a job offer.

2. TRANSITION SERVICES, INCLUDING PRE-EMPLOYMENT TRANSITION SERVICES, FOR STUDENTS AND YOUTH WITH DISABILITIES.

With the greater emphasis on providing pre-employment transition services, VRS staff have reached out to local school districts across the state to identify how transition students are currently able to access community-based work-based learning opportunities and what gaps need to be filled. In many instances, there are work-based learning coordinators, hired by the school district, that have at least some employer relationships within the community. However, many of these coordinators report that they don't always have the time or expertise to form the breadth of relationships that meets the needs of all students. VRS is working collaboratively with these coordinators to create a structure for connecting them to employer relationships and job leads created/ identified by the regional placement partnerships and to revise and deliver the Placement 101 training in order to meet the unique needs of these school staff members. On the flip side, where there aren't work-based learning coordinators available to students, VRS is identifying alternative options to work with employers to offer students work experiences. First, VRS and three Workforce Investment Board Title I Youth programs are currently piloting a way to collaboratively identify students in need of paid work-based learning experiences and connect them to employers to provide these experiences at integrated work settings in the community. In these 12-week experiences, students will gain confidence and skills to help propel them along career pathways. As many as 50 students will be served with this model. Furthermore, VRS is working with Community Rehabilitation Providers on various opportunities as well. These include job shadows, job try-outs, internships, and full and part-time jobs. Lastly, VRS has both internal and contracted job placement positions that are re-directing their time within VRS offices to focus more intentionally on partnering with employers to offer these opportunities as well.

H. INTERAGENCY COOPERATION

Describe how the designated State unit will collaborate with the State agency responsible for administering each of the following programs to develop opportunities for competitive integrated employment, to the greatest extent practicable:

1. THE STATE MEDICAID PLAN UNDER TITLE XIX OF THE SOCIAL SECURITY ACT;

Medical Assistance, the state's Medicaid program, is administered by the Minnesota Department of Human Services (DHS). Vocational Rehabilitation Services (VRS) and State Services for the Blind (SSB) collaborate closely with DHS in the provision of a variety of Medicaid services:

Waiver Programs: Medicaid participants with disabilities who need a defined level of care and choose to live in the community may be eligible for one of the following waivers to help fund the cost of community living and supportive employment:

* Brain Injury Waiver: the person must have a traumatic, acquired or degenerative brain injury and require the level of care typically provided in a nursing facility or neurobehavioral hospital.

* Community Alternatives for Disabled Individuals (CADI) Waiver: the person must have a disability and require the level of care typically provided in a nursing facility.

* Developmental Disability Waiver: the person must have a developmental disability or related condition and require the level of care typically provided in an Intermediate Care Facility for Persons with Developmental Disabilities (ICF/DD).

There is joint planning occurring between the Waiver Programs and the state funded Extended Employment program to maximize the number of people who can access competitive integrated employment through the provision of supported employment services. Many counties have waiting lists for waiver services.

VRS and SSB access Medicaid dollars to pay for durable medical supplies such as wheelchairs, hearing aids and communication boards. Medicaid has limits on what they will pay for specific items. If the rehabilitation counselor feels the consumer would benefit from an "upgrade" to the item, Vocational Rehabilitation can pay the difference between the Medicaid payment and the cost of the upgraded product. Medicaid will apply the VR payment to the consumer's spenddown.

Minnesota's Medicaid Infrastructure Grant was a joint project of the Department of Human Services, the Department of Employment and Economic Development (VRS and SSB) and the State Council on Disability. Collaborative efforts started utilizing grant funding has been continued using state appropriations, including:

* Disability Linkage Line (DLL): The DLL is a partnership between DHS and the Centers for Independent Living to provide disability related information and referral resources for Minnesotans with disabilities. Assistance is available in the areas of accessible housing, personal care services, transportation, employment, disability benefits, assistive technology, and other community resources. Services are available through a toll free number or online at www.MinnesotaHelp.info. The most recent expansion of the DLL has been in the area of benefits planning and benefits analysis for beneficiaries of Social Security benefits.

* Disability Benefits 101: DB101 (www.db101.org) is a free online service operated by the Disability Linkage Line that was initially developed using Medicaid Infrastructure grant funding. The program allows people to plan for their future by providing estimator sessions showing how income will impact benefits, explores effective use of work incentives, helps people establish work goals, and provides answers to questions through live chat, phone or email. The program includes short videos of success stories. Many of the DLL staff are certified Community Work Incentive Coordinators and can provide benefits analysis services if there are complex issues. Utilizing Department of Labor – Disability Employment Initiative funding, a new section on Work Benefits for Youth has been added. In addition to VRS and SSB staff being actively involved in the development of the online program, consumers were actively involved in the BETA testing to make sure the program was accessible to people with disabilities.

* SGA Project: the Institute on Community Inclusion at the University of Massachusetts – Boston has received RSA funding to demonstrate effective strategies to assist SSDI beneficiaries achieve income above the substantial gainful activity (SGA) level. Minnesota VRS is one of the demonstration sites. At time of enrollment, the SSDI beneficiary is assigned a counselor, placement specialist and financial specialist. Eligibility for services is presumed within three days and the Employment Plan is developed within 30 days of application. VRS has partnered with the DLL to provide financial counseling in VR offices. RSA funding was used to provide the benefits planners with financial literacy training so that in addition to benefits planning the financial specialists can provide assistance with improving credits scores, paying off credit card debt, and developing savings plans. It is hoped that the combination of rapid engagement and financial planning services will lead to better outcomes. Although the SGA Project does not receive any Medicaid funding, the financial specialist positions would not have been possible without the initial collaboration with the Medicaid Infrastructure Grant.

2. THE STATE AGENCY RESPONSIBLE FOR PROVIDING SERVICES FOR INDIVIDUALS WITH DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES; AND

The primary agency responsible for services for adults with disabilities is the Minnesota Department of Human Services. The Minnesota State Interagency Committee (MnSIC) has the responsibility to develop and implement a coordinated, multidisciplinary service system for children and youth with disabilities ages three to 21. The Committee brings together the Minnesota Departments of Education, Employment and Economic Development, Commerce, Corrections, Health, Human Rights, and Human Services to develop needed policy change to reduce duplication of local effort and to improve local response to the needs of children and families by developing a coordinated, multidisciplinary service system. Minnesota does not have a specific agency focused on developmental disabilities.

Minnesota's Olmstead Plan supports freedom of choice and provides a framework and a series of key activities that must be achieved to ensure Minnesotans with disabilities have the opportunity to live, learn, work and enjoy life in the most integrated setting desired by the person.

Governor Mark Dayton appointed an Olmstead Subcabinet to develop and implement this plan. The Subcabinet consists of representatives of the MnSIC agencies listed above, the Housing Finance Agency, the Department of Transportation, the ombudsman for mental health and developmental disabilities, and the Executive Director of the Governor's Council on Developmental Disabilities.

VRS and SSB are involved in several joint projects with the above agencies:

* Individual Placement and Support (IPS): IPS services bring together mental health treatment services and vocational rehabilitation to help move people with serious mental illness into competitive employment. Participants are more likely to achieve employment success, leading to increased income, improved self-esteem, improved quality of life and reduced symptoms.

* Way to Work Project: Also referred to as the Ohio model, VRS has placed vocational rehabilitation counselors in a sheltered workshop to assess consumer needs and develop strategies to move the employees from segregated employment to competitive integrated employment. Dakota County, the Department of Human Services and VRS are studying effective ways to provide training, supports and benefits planning to assist people transition into the community.

* SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) Employment and Training: The Departments of Human Services and Employment and Economic Development are currently studying opportunities to blend SNAP funds with other anti-poverty funding to help move more people out of poverty.

3. THE STATE AGENCY RESPONSIBLE FOR PROVIDING MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES.

The Minnesota Department of Human Services has primary responsibility for coordinating mental health services for youth and adults. Youth services is a coordinated effort bringing together mental health services, substance abuse treatment, primary medical care, juvenile corrections, education, child welfare and vocational rehabilitation, as appropriate.

Adult services are coordinated through Adult Rehabilitative Mental Health Services (ARMHS). The services are funded primarily through Medicaid waivers and state dollars. The four core components of ARMHS are basic living and social skills, community intervention, medication education, and transitioning to community living. Vocational Rehabilitation Services is a critical component of community living. ARMHS cannot fund vocational services, but VRS closely coordinates services to provide the person with a comprehensive package of services.

I. COMPREHENSIVE SYSTEM OF PERSONNEL DEVELOPMENT; DATA SYSTEM ON PERSONNEL AND PERSONNEL DEVELOPMENT

(Formerly known as Attachment 4.10)). Describe the designated State agency's procedures and activities to establish and maintain a comprehensive system of personnel development designed to ensure an adequate supply of qualified State rehabilitation professional and paraprofessional personnel for the designated State unit, including the following:

1. DATA SYSTEM ON PERSONNEL AND PERSONNEL DEVELOPMENT

A. QUALIFIED PERSONNEL NEEDS.

Describe the development and maintenance of a system for collecting and analyzing on an annual basis data on qualified personnel needs with respect to:

i. the number of personnel who are employed by the State agency in the provision of VR services in relation to the number of individuals served, broken down by personnel category;

In FFY 2015, VRS served 17,922 consumers and ended the year with an active caseload of 10,921 individuals, including 423 applicants. In FFY 2016, we anticipate serving approximately 17,240 consumers, and ending the year with an active caseload of 10,740, an average case load for counselors of 68. U.S. Census Bureau data on the geographic distribution of Minnesotans with disabilities is used to determine the distribution of staff. The metro region has 132 positions, the northern region has 82 positions, and the southern region has 76 positions.

ii. the number of personnel currently needed by the State agency to provide VR services, broken down by personnel category; and

The Vocational Rehabilitation Services leadership team consists of a director, nine managers and two Office Services Supervisors. (Two positions currently overlap for succession planning to prepare for two Admin staff retirements.)

Direct supervision of field staff is provided by seventeen rehabilitation area managers and four rehabilitation supervisors. Twenty three rehabilitation specialists and three other administrative specialists support the work of both administrative and field staff by providing technical assistance, training, and consultation.

Direct service to VR consumers is provided by 160 rehabilitation counselors, augmented by nine rehabilitation representatives, twenty three job placement coordinators, a business services specialist, two community liaison representatives, and one Occupational Communication Specialists (sign language interpreters); sixty nine vocational rehabilitation technicians and sixteen clerical staff provide support to both field and administrative offices.

iii. projections of the number of personnel, broken down by personnel category, who will be needed by the State agency to provide VR services in 5 years based on projections of the number of individuals to be served, including individuals with significant disabilities, the number of personnel expected to retire or leave the field, and other relevant factors.

VRS had fifteen retirements in calendar year 2015. There were six voluntary resignations. The number of voluntary resignations has remained constant (around 2%) over the past five years. Between 2015 and 2020, 30% of VRS staff, including 23% of counselors and 33% of managers and supervisors will be eligible to retire.

VRS program director/managers/supervisors (Admin)

Total positions: 12

Current vacancies: 0

Projected vacancies over the next 5 years: 6

Rehabilitation Area Managers/supervisors (field)

Total positions: 21

Current vacancies: 0

Projected vacancies over the next 5 years: 5

Rehabilitation Specialists

Total positions: 23

Current vacancies: 0

Projected vacancies over the next 5 years: 9

Rehabilitation Counselors

Total positions: 160

Current vacancies: 1

Projected vacancies over the next 5 years: 37

Rehabilitation Representatives

Total positions: 9

Current vacancies: 0

Projected vacancies over the next 5 years: 2

Job Placement/Business Services

Total positions: 25

Current vacancies: 0

Projected vacancies over the next 5 years: 8

Vocational Rehabilitation Technicians

Total positions: 69

Current vacancies: 2

Projected vacancies over the next 5 years: 28

Clerical Support

Total positions: 16

Current vacancies: 1.5

Projected vacancies over the next 5 years: 3

Other Admin/Field

Total positions: 7

Current vacancies: 0

Projected vacancies over the next 5 years: 3

TOTAL

Total positions: 342

Current vacancies: 4.5

Projected vacancies over the next 5 years: 101

B. PERSONNEL DEVELOPMENT

Describe the development and maintenance of a system for collecting and analyzing on an annual basis data on personnel development with respect to:

i. a list of the institutions of higher education in the State that are preparing VR professionals, by type of program;

Three area graduate programs award master's degrees that prepare individuals to work as vocational rehabilitation counselors:

Minnesota State University at Mankato

St. Cloud State University

University of Wisconsin – Stout

VRS maintains a collegial relationship with these programs, recruiting for internships and filling counselor positions from among graduates. The section below displays current enrollment and the number of rehabilitation counseling graduates available through these programs.

ii. the number of students enrolled at each of those institutions, broken down by type of program; and

Minnesota State University – Mankato

Students enrolled: 10

Employees sponsored by agency and/or RSA: 0

Graduates sponsored by agency and/or RSA: 1

Graduates from the previous year: 4

St. Cloud State University

Students enrolled: 26

Employees sponsored by agency and/or RSA: 2

Graduates sponsored by agency and/or RSA: 0

Graduates from the previous year: 12

University of Wisconsin – Stout

Students enrolled: 67

Employees sponsored by agency and/or RSA: 4

Graduates sponsored by agency and/or RSA: 0

Graduates from the previous year: 20

iii. the number of students who graduated during the prior year from each of these institutions with certification or licensure, or with the credentials for certification or licensure, broken down by the personnel category for which they have received, or have the credentials to receive, certification or licensure.

All graduates from the three institutions received master's degrees in rehabilitation counseling:

Minnesota State University – Mankato: 4

St. Cloud State University: 12

University of Wisconsin – Stout: 20

2. PLAN FOR RECRUITMENT, PREPARATION AND RETENTION OF QUALIFIED PERSONNEL

Describe the development and implementation of a plan to address the current and projected needs for qualified personnel including, the coordination and facilitation of efforts between the designated State unit and institutions of higher education and professional associations to recruit, prepare, and retain personnel who are qualified, including personnel from minority backgrounds and personnel who are individuals with disabilities.

Internships commonly lead to permanent counseling positions. Eight students completed internships in 2015. Eight internships are currently in progress. We anticipate hosting additional interns beginning Fall 2016 semester. The staff development manager devotes approximately 10% time as the point of contact for managers, professors, interns, supervising counselors, and Human Resources to coordinate intern placement and supervision, and for counselor recruitment. Other activities include presentations to students, coordinating VRS participation in career fairs, and informing university personnel of counselor vacancies.

The VRS staff development manager is an active member of graduate counseling advisory committees at the University of Wisconsin – Stout and Minnesota State University, and communicates regularly with counseling program directors.

VRS provides tuition support for staff pursuing graduate degrees in rehabilitation counseling. Employees in the St. Cloud program and UW – Stout online program also had access to RSA stipends to assist with some tuition costs. One VRS employee graduated with a Rehabilitation Counseling graduate degree in 2015, and one was promoted to a counselor position; seven employees are in the process of completing degrees.

Media advertisement: VRS posts its vacancies at the State of Minnesota personnel openings website and the MinnesotaWorks job bank, as well as in newspapers.

Minnesota post retirement option: The post retirement option, which permits a state retiree to work up to half time without losing insurance or retirement benefits, is a component of VRS retention and succession planning strategies.

As a key strategy for staff retention, VRS pays close attention to organizational vitality and staff morale. VRS works to maintain a high level of employee engagement through statewide staff communication about the vision, mission, values, strategic goals and agency achievements, and a robust training and development program. VRS completed an Organizational Vitality survey in Spring 2015. Survey response rate was 87% this year. Findings indicate strong employee engagement on the key indicators measured. For example, 92% agreed that the VRS mission makes them feel their job is important, 92% agreed that they have the necessary training to do their job well, and 79% agreed that they were informed of decisions and issues that affect them and their work. Staff also provided suggestions for specific changes that would increase job satisfaction; response themes included continuing the commitment to training, increasing recognition and

feedback, enhancing organization communications, reviewing system or policy issues, and addressing work environment issues. VRS plans to repeat the survey annually as a measure of employee engagement and as a tool to identify needed improvements in organizational effectiveness.

Counselors and other staff are recruited and hired under Minnesota's competitive civil service system, including affirmative action to recruit and hire individuals with disabilities and members of the state's diverse cultural and ethnic populations. Voluntary disclosure of ethnic and cultural status provides the following FFY 2015 data: 7% of VRS employees identify themselves as American Indian, Asian, Black or Hispanic/Latino, 92% identify themselves as White, and 2% are non-specified or undisclosed. At present, 10% of VRS employees voluntarily disclose a disability.

The New Americans team, based in the Twin Cities, offer vocational rehabilitation services to refugees who recently immigrated to Minnesota from countries such as Somalia, Ethiopia, Jamaica, Turkey, Congo, Guyana, Iraq, Nigeria, Egypt, Pakistan, Sudan and Eritrea. The New Americans team consists of a lead rehabilitation counselor and two community liaison representatives. They are themselves refugees from East African countries. Each member of the New Americans team is multi-lingual and provides intensive supports from application through employment closure to the VRS consumers they serve.

Coordination with professional associations: VRS staff serve on the board of the Minnesota Rehabilitation Association (MRA) and serve on MRA conference planning committees. A significant number of staff attend MRA conferences each year. VRS encourages staff membership in professional associations, and many serve as officers and work on association committees.

3. PERSONNEL STANDARDS

Describe the State agency's policies and procedures for the establishment and maintenance of personnel standards consistent with section 101(a)(7)(B) and 34 CFR 361.18(c) to ensure that designated State unit professional and paraprofessional personnel are adequately trained and prepared, including:

A. STANDARDS THAT ARE CONSISTENT WITH ANY NATIONAL OR STATE-APPROVED OR -RECOGNIZED CERTIFICATION, LICENSING, REGISTRATION, OR OTHER COMPARABLE REQUIREMENTS THAT APPLY TO THE PROFESSION OR DISCIPLINE IN WHICH SUCH PERSONNEL ARE PROVIDING VR SERVICES; AND

Vocational rehabilitation counselors and other professional staff are hired through competitive examination under the Minnesota civil service system. The current rehabilitation counselor candidate examination was developed by a workgroup that comprises staff from VRS, State Services for the Blind, and the department's Office of Human Resources.

Qualifications for counselors are based on both educational preparation and professional work experience. The academic degree standard for Rehabilitation Counselors is the Master's Degree in Rehabilitation Counseling or a Master's Degree in a closely related field and evidence of completion of a graduate level course in counseling theories/techniques.

B. THE ESTABLISHMENT AND MAINTENANCE OF EDUCATION AND EXPERIENCE REQUIREMENTS, IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 101(A)(7)(B)(II) OF THE

REHABILITATION ACT, TO ENSURE THAT THE PERSONNEL HAVE A 21ST
CENTURY UNDERSTANDING OF THE EVOLVING LABOR FORCE AND THE NEEDS
OF INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES.

Rehabilitation Counselors

- * Master's degree in Rehabilitation Counseling; or
- * A degree in a closely related field with evidence of completion of graduate level coursework in counseling theory/techniques.

All of the agency's vocational rehabilitation counselors meet the state's standard.

Rehabilitation Representative

- * Bachelor's degree in rehabilitation counseling or in a related social services field; or
- * Bachelor's degree in any field, plus two years of experience providing employment related services for persons with disabilities.

Placement Coordinator

- * One year professional experience in which the primary focus was the provision of vocational services to persons with disabilities; or
- * Master's degree in behavioral science, counseling, vocational evaluation, job placement, vocational rehabilitation, or a closely related degree; or
- * Three years of paraprofessional experience in which the primary focus was the provision of vocational services to persons with disabilities.

Vocational Rehabilitation Technician

- * A minimum of one year of experience in an organization whose mission includes the provision of services to persons who are injured or disabled so that an understanding and sensitivity toward people with disabilities has been obtained
- * Customer service skills sufficient to perform intake, assist with forms, and to develop positive relationships with the consumers
- * Keyboarding skills sufficient to create documents and complete data entry, and
- * English sufficient to interview consumers and employers, present job-seeking skills training, and to draft correspondence or complete forms.

4. STAFF DEVELOPMENT.

Describe the State agency's policies, procedures, and activities to ensure that, consistent with section 101(a)(7)(C) of the Rehabilitation Act, all personnel employed by the designated State unit receive appropriate and adequate training in terms of:

A. SYSTEM OF STAFF DEVELOPMENT

a system of staff development for professionals and paraprofessionals within the designated State unit, particularly with respect to assessment, vocational counseling, job placement, and rehabilitation technology, including training implemented in coordination with entities carrying out State programs under section 4 of the Assistive Technology Act of 1998; and

The staff development director is a member of the VRS management team and is responsible for the Comprehensive System of Personnel Development. Staff development coordinates training, develops training programs to meet identified needs, and coordinates internships and other recruitment activities.

Staff development and training needs are assessed through interviews with field staff, reports from area managers and recommendations from staff groups and committees. Case review yields training needs information. A Staff Development Committee meets regularly to develop and guide staff development activity.

The comprehensive staff training and development plan describes core training curriculum for staff, identifies competencies required of each VRS position along with training strategies and resource information for each competency, and identifies specialized competencies for serving transition age youth. Annual performance reviews between supervisor and employee include a review of training and development needs of the employee.

Required training for new employees includes: New Employee Orientation, New Counselor Training, Data Practices, Ethics, Information Management, Purchasing Procedures, Work Incentives, Transition 101, Labor Market Resources and Updates, Vocational Assessment Interpretation, ADA, Introduction to Supported Employment and Motivational Interviewing. Online learning options available through the TACE and other entities are also available for new employees. A field trainer manual is available for use in on-the-job training of counselors.

Guidelines for funding continuing education contribute to agency succession planning, professional expertise and leadership capacity. Completion of an ethics course once every five years is a minimum expectation for all staff. Besides agency-required training, staff must complete at least one self-initiated elective training activity annually. The agency makes a concerted effort to publicize conferences and external training opportunities available to staff; these are a vital component of the overall staff development strategy as they enable counselors to obtain advanced training to meet individual learning and development goals for serving VR consumers.

Equipping staff with skills in Motivational Interviewing (MI) has been a most significant ongoing training initiative. Staff have taken advantage of a variety of learning opportunities – from Introduction to MI, to MI Refreshers, to Coaching Circles, to Audiotape proficiency training, to MI Train the Trainer to MI Coach Skill Building to MI Coding, and to individualized MI audiotape coding and feedback. VR managers and supervisors have participated in MI training designed around MI

and supervision; as they've participated in clinical supervision training, they've noted the strong correlation between motivational interviewing and skills needed for effective clinical supervision.

All staff have had the opportunity to participate in MI training, with most opting in to at least the initial Introduction to MI (now mandatory for new employees), and many opting to attend advanced MI training. Staff have reported improved relationships with consumers, greater ease in developing employment plans with consumers, and much greater job satisfaction. Building the capacity of internal staff to provide MI training and coaching has been the recent emphasis, accomplished through monthly Coach Skill Building sessions. These internal MI champions have experienced the benefits to clients and to themselves, and are now delivering the Introduction to MI training and offering team-based MI practice sessions.

We continue to offer a variety of in-service training programs to enhance counselor skills. As VRS expanded the Individual Placement and Support model for Persons with Serious Mental Illness (IPS), staff involved in the expansion projects received training on the IPS model of service delivery. Training has also been offered on Rehabilitation Approaches to Serving People with Mental Health Disorders, Mental Health First Aid, and ADHD, LD and EBD: Effective Rehabilitation Approaches. "Understanding Special Education Evaluation Summary Reports" was extremely impactful on their practice. Training on Social Security Work Incentives is offered annually. AT Liaisons receive advanced training in Assistive Technology through UW Stout Vocational Rehabilitation Institute. All field staff received training on a new Mandated Reporting policy.

VRS continues to support staff in attending external training that addresses individual development needs related to serving unique populations, including participation in the Minnesota Rehabilitation Association Conference, which this year offered two full day programs on serving individuals with mental health disorders and on working with families of transition-age youth.

VRS has offered several in-service programs to enhance counselor skills in assessment and employment planning including Assessing the Ability to Benefit, Assistive Technology basics, Small Business Plans, Social Security Work Incentives and Supported Employment. Transition Counselors noted that a program "Understanding Special Education Evaluation Summary Reports" was extremely impactful on their ability to do meaningful assessments and plans.

An 18-month statewide case review cycle is in progress and will be completed by March 30, 2016. The process places greater emphasis on reviewing for quality in assessments and employment plans. It engages counselors by including them in reviewing their own cases and provides same day feedback. Staff have reported greater satisfaction with the redesigned review process, viewing it as more conducive to learning and process improvement than the previous process. Managers received training on a model for training staff how to complete a quality assessment of VR needs; in addition, a tool to assist counselors in thinking through the critical components of a strong VR Assessment has been designed and will be incorporated into the case management system.

VRS and CRPs in Minnesota continue to make a concerted effort to work in partnership to serve VR consumers. Placement 101, a foundational training program in job placement for new VRS and CRP placement staff is offered on a quarterly basis with an average of 18 participants in attendance. The training design team also developed a training program on Business Engagement; implementation is pending infrastructure enhancements that will enable the rehabilitation community to successfully meet the needs of businesses. Training on a VRS initiated pilot project "Next Generation Placement" concluded in 2015; the pilot is designed to implement and assess the effectiveness of an enhanced team approach to providing job placement services.

Substantial Gainful Activity (SGA) is a research project funded by the University of Mass Boston ICI designed to improve earnings for VR customers who receive benefits through Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI). After extensive planning and training half of VRS staff, SGA was launched on August 3. The SGA Project is a major initiative to increase wage outcomes for SSDI customers. Paid internships for some graduate students were made available by the project.

VRS field managers and supervisors participated in Clinical Supervision Training offered by Christine Haddad Gonzalez, University of MN School of Social Work in Fall 2015. VRS RAMs and Supervisors completed a full day of training which focused on supervisory relationships, building trust and issues of race. RAMs and Supervisors will have access to up to 45 hours of consulting with the trainer, coordinated through the Regional RAMs.

The VRS leadership team has defined a set of leadership competencies for the agency. A leadership development program for VRS staff has been designed and will be launched in October 2014. The VRS Leadership Exploration and Development (LEAD) Program was launched in November 2014. Thirteen VRS staff participated in the 12 month program, which included opportunities for self–assessment, increasing awareness of VRS strategic priorities, developing skills in leadership related competencies, experiential learning through leading a project, and reflective learning via participation in a peer–coaching process.

The State of Minnesota’s Emerging Leader’s Institute (ELI), a seven month program designed to help participants explore leadership within State government, is available to a total of 60 State of Minnesota employees each year. Three VRS employees completed ELI in 2015, and one employee is participating in the 2015–16 ELI cohort.

The Department of Employment and Economic Development librarians routinely track and disseminate relevant research and journals. They also provide in–service training to VRS teams on how to use the department’s advanced online library search capabilities and on effective use of social media.

B. ACQUISITION AND DISSEMINATION OF SIGNIFICANT KNOWLEDGE

procedures for the acquisition and dissemination of significant knowledge from research and other sources to designated State unit professionals and paraprofessionals.

In the next year, priorities are to develop and implement structure within VRS to address WIOA regulatory changes through a Core Policy Team and Core learning team. The Core Policy Team will analyze the new law, drill into the legislation and develop the implementation priorities. The Core Learning Team will take the implementation priorities, develop training and ensure effective training of staff through the Rehabilitation Area Managers. Continue to build counseling and counseling supervision skills along with developing internal capacity to provide ongoing training in Motivational Interviewing. Continue to build skills of VRS and CRP Placement Staff. Provide Person–Centered Thinking and Person–Centered Planning training to ensure VR Staff promote client–centered practices in accordance with the Olmstead Plan.

5. PERSONNEL TO ADDRESS INDIVIDUAL COMMUNICATION NEEDS

Describe how the designated State unit has personnel or obtains the services of other individuals who are able to communicate in appropriate modes of communication with or in the native language of applicants or eligible individuals who have limited English speaking ability.

VRS ensures that personnel and methods are available so that staff may communicate with consumers in a preferred language or other means of communication. Substantial numbers of VRS consumers use languages other than English, including: Cambodian, Lao, Vietnamese, Somali, Spanish, and American Sign Language. Translation of forms, information brochures and the ready availability of purchased interpreter services or a multilingual staff member ensures effective communication statewide.

The addition of a highly qualified State Coordinator on Deaf Services in 2012 has greatly enhanced agency capacity to serve consumers who are deaf or hard of hearing. In addition to the State Coordinator on Deaf Services, twenty eight staff are conversationally competent in American Sign Language, including five VRS managers/supervisors, thirteen counselors, four placement specialists, two VR technicians, two Rehabilitation Representatives, two Occupational Communication Specialists (who are also certified sign language interpreters) and one Office Administrative Specialist. Deaf and hard of hearing specialists in six locations are using a video remote interpreting platform called Stratus VRI via a state contractor to supplement the use of onsite interpreting services and provide more options for accessibility. Counselors are also using videophones, FaceTime, Skype and Microsoft Lync to communicate virtually and visually, and new video communication platforms are being offered which allow hearing staff to communicate directly with deaf and hard of hearing consumers via desktop or laptop computers.

6. COORDINATION OF PERSONNEL DEVELOPMENT UNDER THE INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES EDUCATION ACT

As appropriate, describe the procedures and activities to coordinate the designated State unit's comprehensive system of personnel development with personnel development under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.

Under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act VRS has a collaborative agreement with the Minnesota Department of Education, Minnesota's secondary education system. This is augmented by Department of Education representation on the State Rehabilitation Council and VRS participation on the Minnesota State Interagency Coordinating Team, with staff support by VRS program specialists for transition services and services for people with autism.

J. STATEWIDE ASSESSMENT

(Formerly known as Attachment 4.11(a)).

1. PROVIDE AN ASSESSMENT OF THE REHABILITATION NEEDS OF INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES RESIDING WITHIN THE STATE, PARTICULARLY THE VR SERVICES NEEDS OF THOSE:

A. WITH THE MOST SIGNIFICANT DISABILITIES, INCLUDING THEIR NEED FOR SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES;

The American Community Survey estimates that 253,800 Minnesotans of working age, or 7.7% of the state's population, has a disability. Males are slightly more likely to have a disability than females (7.9% versus 7.5%). Fifty-nine percent of the responders indicated they have one disability, 22.2% indicated they have two disabilities, and 18.7% had three or more disabilities. Cognitive and ambulatory disabilities are the two most common types of disability.

The availability of long term supports continues to be an issue, especially supported employment services for individuals with serious mental illness, traumatic brain injury, autism spectrum disorder and deaf/hard of hearing. In addition to traditional long term supports, consumers and supported employment providers identified a need for additional support services including personal support for life issues, how to disclose a disability if not done at time of hire, how to quit a job, how to make yourself visible and promotion-worthy within a company, and understanding the job appraisal purpose and process.

B. WHO ARE MINORITIES;

The ratio of minority and non-minority service rates have been at .85 consistently since 2012. The RSA national standard is .80.

Vocational Rehabilitation is showing continuous improvement in the number of participants from minority backgrounds. Individuals who are Black/African American represent 5.4% of the state population, 12.8% of the VR caseload, and 11.6% of VR's successful closures. Individuals who are Hispanic/Latino represent 4.8% of the state population, 4.0% of the VR caseload, and 3.4% of VR's successful closures. American Indians represent 1.0% of the state population, 2.5% of the VR caseload, and 1.2% of the successful closures. Asians represent 4.8% of the state population, 2.4% of the VR caseload, and 2.4% of the successful closures. Research suggests blacks and American Indians experience disability at a higher rate than other cultural/ethnic groups. VRS needs to continue active outreach to minorities to assure equal access to the benefits of VR services.

C. WHO HAVE BEEN UNSERVED OR UNDERSERVED BY THE VR PROGRAM;

Several underserved populations have been identified. Recent surveys by the Department of Human Services indicate 46% of the people who have reached full retirement age plan to continue working. Many of these people have disabilities.

Ex-offenders is a growing population. More than half of the ex-offenders have a serious mental illness and over half have chemical dependency issues. 24% have cognitive disabilities and 12% have a physical disability. A Wilder Foundation study found that 83% of homeless ex-offenders had

a serious or chronic disability. VRS is engaged in several initiatives including an Ex–Offender Employment program, the Minnesota comprehensive Offender Reentry Plan, customized Fast TRAC training services and staff training. Progress has been made in developing appropriate training programs, but additional work is needed on how to develop soft skills needed for employment.

D. WHO HAVE BEEN SERVED THROUGH OTHER COMPONENTS OF THE STATEWIDE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM; AND

People with disabilities are served in all components of the workforce development system, both as universal customers and in eligibility based programs. Ten percent of the universal customers self–report having a disability. However, when the system became an Employment Network under the SSA Ticket to work Program many people who had indicated they did not have a disability assigned their ticket, suggesting people prefer not to disclose a disability until there is a reason to.

A customer Job Seeker Satisfaction Survey indicated an overall satisfaction with services. The five resources customers found most helpful were developing job related skills (44%), learning job search skills (34%), resources to help in job search (28%), financial help and gas vouchers for job search (26%), and staff helpfulness (17%). Recommendations for improvement included providing more services directly in the Centers (32%), improving the quality of services (16%), increasing financial support (10%), and improving the staffing ratio (8%). It was noted services aren't always consistent statewide. For example, not all Centers have special “zones” for youth and young adults with disabilities.

E. WHO ARE YOUTH WITH DISABILITIES AND STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES, INCLUDING, AS APPROPRIATE, THEIR NEED FOR PRE-EMPLOYMENT TRANSITION SERVICES OR OTHER TRANSITION SERVICES.

VRS staff have reached out to local school districts across the state to identify how transition students are currently able to access community work–based learning opportunities and what gaps need to be filled. In many instances, there are work–based learning coordinators hired by the school district that have at least some employer relationships within the community. However, many of these coordinators report that they don't always have the time or expertise to form the breadth of relationships that meets the needs of all students. VRS is currently developing a structure to share job leads developed by the VRS/CRP Placement Partnerships, and plan are being made to offer the Placement 101 training curriculum to school personnel. VRS and three Title 1 Youth programs are piloting a model where students will participate in a 12 week paid work experience to gain confidence and encourage development of career pathways. VRS is also working with CRPs to develop more opportunities for job shadows, job try–outs, internships and integrated competitive placements. It is anticipated that these pilot projects will lead to a model to better serve youth with disabilities in both the WIOA Title 1 youth programs and VRS.

2. IDENTIFY THE NEED TO ESTABLISH, DEVELOP, OR IMPROVE COMMUNITY REHABILITATION PROGRAMS WITHIN THE STATE; AND

An online survey of the executive directors and program managers of the state's community rehabilitation programs (CRPs) did not indicate a need to establish or develop additional CRPs. The largest unmet need was finding transportation options for people working in individual sites in the community. Many of the existing options provide transportation between group homes and center based programs or enclaves, but there are very limited options for transportation to and from individual integrated worksites. They also identified the need for more funding for ongoing

employment supports. As a part of providing technical assistance to the state's two tribal VR programs (White Earth Nation VR and Red Lake Nation VR) the tribal Councils identified a need for a CRP serving the reservation itself. Currently services are available at neighboring cities, but transportation to services is an issue, and services are not culturally specific. They also identified the need for an American Indian Center for Independent Living to provide culturally specific services on the two reservations.

**3. INCLUDE AN ASSESSMENT OF THE NEEDS OF INDIVIDUALS WITH
DISABILITIES FOR TRANSITION CAREER SERVICES AND PRE-EMPLOYMENT
TRANSITION SERVICES, AND THE EXTENT TO WHICH SUCH SERVICES ARE
COORDINATED WITH TRANSITION SERVICES PROVIDED UNDER THE
INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES EDUCATION ACT .**

The Minnesota Department of Education, several local school districts, the Title 1 Youth programs and VRS is currently conducting this assessment to determine how to provide cost effective coordinated transition career services and pre–employment transition services. The pilot activities are described in the section on youth with disabilities.

K. ANNUAL ESTIMATES

(Formerly known as Attachment 4.11(b)). Describe:

1. THE NUMBER OF INDIVIDUALS IN THE STATE WHO ARE ELIGIBLE FOR SERVICES;

Of the approximately 225,000 Minnesotans between the ages of 16 and 64 with two or more long-lasting disabilities, it is estimated that approximately 150,000 are eligible for vocational rehabilitation services.

2. THE NUMBER OF ELIGIBLE INDIVIDUALS WHO WILL RECEIVE SERVICES UNDER:

A. THE VR PROGRAM;

In FFY 2016, Vocational Rehabilitation Services (VRS) anticipates serving about 17,240 persons under Title I of the Rehabilitation Act, all of whom will be individuals with either a significant disability or a most significant disability under Minnesota's administrative rule for vocational rehabilitation.

It is estimated that about 15,480 (89 percent) will be persons who have a most significant disability, and about 1,760 (11 percent) will be persons with a significant disability.

B. THE SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM; AND

It is estimated that 3,000 individuals will have individualized employment plans with a supported employment goal in FFY 2016 under Title VI Part B, Supported Employment Services Program. The approximate cost of purchased services for these individuals will be \$4,500,000. Under the administrative rule enacted to establish Minnesota's order of selection, all persons receiving supported employment services must be found to have three or more serious functional limitations (priority category one).

C. EACH PRIORITY CATEGORY, IF UNDER AN ORDER OF SELECTION;

In FFY 2016, it is estimated that about 15,480 persons with serious limitations in three or more functional areas (priority category one) will be served at an approximate case service cost of \$16.9 million; about 1,270 persons will be served who have serious limitations in two functional areas (priority category two) at an approximate case service cost of \$1.2 million; and about 490 persons will be served who have a serious limitation in one functional area (priority category three) at an approximate case service cost of \$460,000.

3. THE NUMBER OF INDIVIDUALS WHO ARE ELIGIBLE FOR VR SERVICES, BUT ARE NOT RECEIVING SUCH SERVICES DUE TO AN ORDER OF SELECTION; AND

The total waiting list under the current order of selection is 830 people. Vocational Rehabilitation Services has four categories under the order of selection. Category One (three or more substantial functional limitations) is currently open. Category Two (two substantial functional limitations) is closed with a waiting list of 553 people. Category Three (one functional limitation) is closed with a

waiting list of 270 people, and Category Four (no identified substantial functional limitations) has a waiting list of 7 people.

4. THE COST OF SERVICES FOR THE NUMBER OF INDIVIDUALS ESTIMATED TO BE ELIGIBLE FOR SERVICES. IF UNDER AN ORDER OF SELECTION, IDENTIFY THE COST OF SERVICES FOR EACH PRIORITY CATEGORY.

In FFY 2016, approximately 2,875 individuals will obtain an integrated competitive outcome that is approved by the U.S. Secretary of Education. All of these will be individuals with significant or most significant disabilities.

Priority Category One: Open

Title I

Estimated Funds: \$16,890,000

Estimated Number to be Served: 15,480

Average Cost of Services: \$1,091

Priority Category Two: Closed

Title I

Estimated Funds: \$1,230,000

Estimated Number to be Served: 1,270

Average Cost of Services: \$968

Priority Category Three: Closed

Title I

Estimated Funds: \$460,000

Estimated Number to be Served: 490

Average Cost of Services: \$938

Priority Category Four: Closed

Title I

Estimated Funds: \$0

Estimated Number to be Served: 0

Average Cost of Services: \$0

Totals

Estimated Funds: \$18,580,000

Estimated Number to be Served: 17,240

Average Cost of Services: \$1,078

These costs do not reflect the costs for provision of pre-employment services for students who are not VR applicants outside of the OOS. Our strategic decision, pending receipt of the final WIOA regulations, and given the need to keep category 1 open, is to provide services only to those students who are enrolled for VR services. It's important to note that the unduplicated child count estimates there are more than 33,000 students in Minnesota, ages 14 to 21, who would be eligible for pre-employment services based on the draft regulations. Fiscal responsibility dictates that we limit pre-employment transition services to students who are eligible for VR until the final regulations are released and we know with certainty what the target population will be for pre-employment transition services.

L. STATE GOALS AND PRIORITIES

The designated State unit must:

1. IDENTIFY IF THE GOALS AND PRIORITIES WERE JOINTLY DEVELOPED

Identify if the goals and priorities were jointly developed and agreed to by the State VR agency and the State Rehabilitation Council, if the State has a Council, and jointly agreed to any revisions.

VRS and the State Rehabilitation Council, with input from the Community Rehabilitation Providers Advisory Group, has jointly agreed to revise the Goals and Priorities to promote the continuous improvement of the VR program.

2. IDENTIFY THE GOALS AND PRIORITIES IN CARRYING OUT THE VR AND SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT PROGRAMS.

State Goals for Program Years 2017–2020

Goal 1: Increasing the number of Minnesotans with the most significant disabilities working in competitive, integrated employment

VRS and the VR Community are committed to expanding job opportunities and improving employment outcomes for Minnesotans with the most significant disabilities.

Strategic Priorities

A. Increase consumer engagement and satisfaction

Action: Survey customer engagement and satisfaction after plan development and at case closure

Action: Conduct customer focus groups on an annual basis

B. Increase the number of employment outcomes

Metric: The number of successful employment outcomes per federal fiscal year

C. Increase education, credentials, and skill gains

Action: Establish baselines for secondary and post–secondary credentials and for measurable skill gains

Metric: WIOA Common Performance Measure 4:

The percentage of participants who obtained a recognized post–secondary credential or a secondary school diploma, or its recognized equivalent during participation in or within 1 year after exit from the program

Metric: WIOA Common Performance Measure 5:

The percentage of participants who are in an education or training program that leads to a recognized post–secondary credential or employment and who are achieving measurable skill gains

D. Increase job retention

Action: Establish a job retention baseline

Metric: WIOA Common Performance Measure 1:

The percentage of participants, who are in unsubsidized employment during the second quarter after exit from the program

Metric: WIOA Common Performance Measure 2:

The percentage of participants who are in unsubsidized employment during the fourth quarter after exit from the program

Metric: WIOA Common Performance Measure 3:

Median earnings of participants who are in unsubsidized employment during the second quarter after exit from the program

Goal 2: Increasing Pre–Employment Transition Services

VRS, schools, and the VR Community will focus on increasing vocational exploration and work based learning experiences for high school students with disabilities.

Strategic Priorities

A. Develop strategies to implement the PETS requirements stipulated in WIOA

Action: Track required and authorized services and monitor expenditures and fiscal impact

B. Increase VRS outreach on the responsibilities under WIOA to provide pre–employment transition services for students with disabilities

Action: Develop and implement a WIOA pre–employment transition services communication and outreach plan designed for school staff

Action: Track the number of schools with VRS time and expenditures devoted to WIOA required and authorized pre–employment transition services

C. Increase the number of work based learning experiences prior to graduation for VR eligible students in high school

Action: Establish a baseline and track the number of VR students with paid and unpaid work based learning experience prior to graduation

Goal 3: Enhancing Organizational Vitality

VRS will hire, develop and retain staff who will provide the best possible services to Minnesotans with the most significant disabilities.

Strategic Priorities

A. Develop staff skills and competencies in serving Minnesotans with the most significant disabilities.

Action: Provide relevant training for VRS staff, including training on person-centered thinking and planning

B. Maintain a leadership development program for current and emerging leaders.

Action: VRS will conduct a leadership development program for approximately 10–15 current and emerging leaders on a biannual basis

Action: VRS will evaluate the participant experience in the leadership development program to inform program design

C. Develop strategies for increasing the diversity and cultural competence of VRS staff

Action: Provide cultural competence training for VRS staff

Action: Develop strategies to increase diversity in staff hiring and retention

D. Strengthen organizational communication internally and with system partners

Action: Provide monthly VRS organizational updates to staff

Action: Communicate rationale for major policy and practice decisions internally and/or with system partners

Goal 4. Leveraging Partnerships

VRS will provide leadership in convening and strengthening system-wide collaborative partnerships that expand and fully use resources to serve Minnesotans with the most significant disabilities.

Strategic Priorities

A. Engage the State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) for input and feedback on the vocational rehabilitation service delivery model for Minnesota

Action: The SRC works in partnership with the DSU to develop and review state goals and priorities and assists with the development of the State Plan and Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment

Action: The SRC produces an annual report, conducts public forums, and coordinates its activities with other councils.

Action: The SRC provides input on substantive VR policy changes

Action: The SRC works collaboratively with the designated state agency to measure customer satisfaction.

B. Maintain and build our partnerships with community-based rehabilitation providers and advocacy organizations

Action: Continue to convene and leverage the VRS CRP Advisory Committee

Action: Convene statewide meetings of community partners on an annual basis

Action: Maintain collaborative agreements with the Centers for Independent Living (CILs)

Action: Collaborate with advocacy organizations to advance mutual agendas.

C. Expand our collaboration with other system partners to better align and fulfill the requirements of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) and Minnesota's Olmstead Plan.

Action: Expansion of key partnership work with Department of Human Services (DHS), Minnesota Department of Education (MDE), the Olmstead Plan interagency efforts, counties, local school districts, and WorkForce Center System partners

D. Expand access to ongoing employment supports through county, state and federal programs

Action: Partner with Department of Human Services (DHS), counties, and Medicaid providers to increase resources for support of integrated, competitive employment

Action: Partner with VRS Extended Employment (EE) providers to transition and increase state resources for support of integrated, competitive employment

Goal 5. Engaging Employers

VRS and the VR Community will continue to embrace employers as key customers resulting in increased employment outcomes for Minnesotans with disabilities

Strategic Priorities

A. Develop a robust system to assist VRS staff in matching qualified VR jobseekers with competitive, integrated employment opportunities. Leverage the Workforce One case management and/or Minnesota's internet based labor exchange system rewrite initiatives to fund, develop, and implement the system.

Action: Secure approval and resources for a VR client talent pool structural framework as part of future application development priorities for the Workforce One system and/or other Minnesota systems.

B. Develop and implement Low Risk Hiring and Retention options designed to increase employment outcomes and workforce diversity.

Action: Track participation and employment outcomes in low risk hiring and retention options on a quarterly basis. Options are anticipated to include On the Job Training, Job Try Outs, Internships, 700 Hour Program, and Schedule A Hiring.

Action: Create and deliver training designed to help employers identify, develop and sustain natural workplace supports for employees with disabilities.

C. VRS will lead and convene Placement Partnerships focused on developing, maintaining, and strengthening relationships among VRS, VR Community Partners and Employers

Action: The VRS Placement Specialist team will develop and disseminate a quarterly report on the major activities and outcomes for active placement partnerships.

Action: Work with partners to implement WIOA Common Performance Measure 6 focused on effectiveness in serving employers.

3. ENSURE THAT THE GOALS AND PRIORITIES ARE BASED ON AN ANALYSIS OF THE FOLLOWING AREAS:

A. THE MOST RECENT COMPREHENSIVE STATEWIDE ASSESSMENT, INCLUDING ANY UPDATES;

The revised goals and priorities are based on an analysis of the comprehensive statewide assessment, feedback from community partners and public forums.

B. THE STATE'S PERFORMANCE UNDER THE PERFORMANCE ACCOUNTABILITY MEASURES OF SECTION 116 OF WIOA; AND

The revised goals, especially Goal 1, will lead to improved performance under the performance accountability measures of Section 116 of WIOA.

C. OTHER AVAILABLE INFORMATION ON THE OPERATION AND EFFECTIVENESS OF THE VR PROGRAM, INCLUDING ANY REPORTS RECEIVED FROM THE STATE REHABILITATION COUNCIL AND FINDING AND RECOMMENDATIONS FROM MONITORING ACTIVITIES CONDUCTED UNDER SECTION 107.

VRS and the State Rehabilitation Council considered Goals and Priorities established by other public VR agencies, and input from the State Council on Disability and people with disabilities.

M. ORDER OF SELECTION

Describe:

1. WHETHER THE DESIGNATED STATE UNIT WILL IMPLEMENT AND ORDER OF SELECTION. IF SO, DESCRIBE:

A. THE ORDER TO BE FOLLOWED IN SELECTING ELIGIBLE INDIVIDUALS TO BE PROVIDED VR SERVICES.

Eligibility for VR Services

A person is eligible for vocational rehabilitation services from the general VR agency when they have a physical or mental impairment that constitutes or results in a substantial impediment to employment, and they require vocational rehabilitation services to prepare for, secure, retain, or regain employment. If a counselor suspects that an individual is unable to benefit from VR services, the person would be offered a trial work experience or extended evaluation services to determine the individual's ability to benefit.

Qualifications for VR Services

A person is qualified for vocational rehabilitation services from the General VR agency when they are eligible and found to have serious functional limitations due to a severe impairment and wish to obtain, retain, or regain employment. If the person does not wish obtain, retain, or regain employment, the file is closed "not interested in services" prior to eligibility determination.

Service Priority

The order of selection establishes service priority based on the number of functional areas in which a person has significant limitations to employment. Persons with limitations in more functional areas are deemed to have more significant disability. It is intended by the order of selection that persons with the most significant disabilities will be served first when all persons who are eligible cannot be served.

Waiting List

When annual program resources are insufficient to serve qualified new applicants and to serve all current customers through the end of the fiscal year, a priority category may be closed. New applicants who qualify in a closed category are then placed on a statewide waiting list for that category. Closing a category slows the rate of increase in the number of persons being served. It conserves resources so that obligations to persons who are already being served may continue to be met.

Functional Areas

Serious limitations in life skills in one or more of the following areas, as defined:

A. Communication: the ability to effectively give and receive information through words or concepts, such as reading, writing, speaking, listening, sign language, or other adaptive methods

B. Interpersonal skills: the ability to establish and maintain personal, family, and community relationships as it affects, or is likely to affect, job performance and security.

C. Mobility: the physical and psychological ability to move about from place to place inside and outside the home, including travel to and from usual destinations in the community for activities of daily living, training, or work.

D. Self-care: the skills needed to manage self or living environment, such as eating, toileting, grooming, dressing, money management, and management of special health or safety needs, including medication management, as they affect an individual's ability to participate in training or work-related activities.

E. Self-direction: the ability to independently plan, initiate, organize, or carry out goal-directed activities or solve problems related to working.

F. Work skills: (1) the ability to do specific tasks required to carry out job functions; and (2) the capacity to benefit from training in how to perform tasks required to carry out job functions.

G. Work tolerance: the capacity or endurance to effectively and efficiently perform jobs requiring various levels of physical demands, psychological demands, or both.

Serious Limitation

A serious limitation in a functional area means that, due to a severe physical or mental impairment, the individual's functional capacities in the specific area are restricted to the degree that they require services or accommodations not typically made for other individuals in order to prepare for, enter, engage in, or retain employment. Accommodations are defined as special working conditions, job re-engineering, rehabilitation technology, or substantial support and/or supervision.

List of Physical or Mental Disabilities

Physical or mental disabilities resulting from amputation, arthritis, autism, blindness, burn injury, cancer, cerebral palsy, cystic fibrosis, deafness, head injury, heart disease, hemiplegia, hemophilia, respiratory or pulmonary dysfunction, mental retardation, mental illness, multiple sclerosis, muscular dystrophy, musculoskeletal disorders, neurological disorders including stroke and epilepsy, paraplegia, quadriplegia, and other spinal cord conditions, sickle cell anemia, specific learning disability, and end-stage renal disease, or another disability or combination of disabilities determined on the basis of an assessment for determining eligibility and priority for services to cause comparable serious functional limitation.

B. THE JUSTIFICATION FOR THE ORDER.

Minnesota Vocational Rehabilitation Services implemented an Order of Selection in 1993, setting forth who will be served first when the program cannot serve all eligible individuals. Determination of eligibility and qualification for service is based on the applicable Minnesota administrative rule and the Minnesota Vocational Rehabilitation Policy and Procedure Manual.

Annual State and Federal resources allocated for Minnesota's Vocational Rehabilitation Services program continue to not be sufficient to serve all Minnesotans who are eligible for services.

Conclusions regarding capacity of the Minnesota vocational rehabilitation program in any given year are based on:

- 1) An analysis of resources available for annual operation of the vocational rehabilitation program,
- 2) expenditures required to implement employment plans approved prior to commencement of the fiscal year,
- 3) the anticipated costs for determining eligibility and qualification for service of new applicants during the fiscal year,
- 4) the anticipated costs of implementing approved vocational rehabilitation plans for new applicants during the fiscal year, and
- 5) reasonable and necessary costs related to administration of the vocational rehabilitation services program.

Program expenditures were exceeding annual program resources, requiring the agency to use carryover funds from the previous year to meet all financial obligations. The budget forecast for FFY 2014 indicated a continuing trend in deficit spending. This fiscal situation required the agency to implement several budget reduction measures, including the closing of Priority Categories Two and Three on October 14, 2013. Priority Category Four (individuals who have a disability that makes them eligible for service but do not have a serious limitation in a functional area) has been closed since 1993.

The State Rehabilitation Council received monthly updates on the budget situation, including the impact of sequestration, and was actively involved in the process to determine if and when to close Priority Categories Two and Three.

As of March 15, 2016, there were 830 individuals on the waiting list: 7 on Priority Category Four, 270 on Priority Category Three, and 553 on Priority Category Two. Individuals on the waiting list are provided information and referral to other programs that may meet the person's needs. Although the above categories remain closed, VRS used RSA reallocation dollars to take everyone off of the Category 2 and 3 waiting lists who had been found eligible for services prior to October 15, 2014.

C. THE SERVICE AND OUTCOME GOALS.

In FFY 2016, under the order of selection currently in effect, approximately 17,240 individuals will be served. Approximately 2,875 individuals will achieve employment outcomes in FFY 2015.

D. THE TIME WITHIN WHICH THESE GOALS MAY BE ACHIEVED FOR INDIVIDUALS IN EACH PRIORITY CATEGORY WITHIN THE ORDER.

Priority Category 1

Number of individuals to be served: 5,480

Estimated number of individuals who will exit with employment: 2,450

Estimated number of individuals who will exit without employment: 1,290

Time within which goals may be achieved: 20.3 months

Cost of Services: \$16,890,000

Category 2

Number of individuals to be served: 1,270

Estimated number of individuals who will exit with employment: 320

Estimated number of individuals who will exit without employment: 180

Time within which goals are to be achieved: 34.5 months

Cost of services: \$1,230,000

Category 3

Number of individuals to be served: 490

Estimated number of individuals who will exit with employment: 105

Estimated number of individuals who will exit without employment: 40

Time within which goals are to be achieved: 32.2 months

Cost of services: \$460,000

Category 4

Number of individuals to be served: 0

Estimated number of individuals who will exit with employment: 0

Estimated number of individuals who will exit without employment: 0

Time within which goals are to be achieved: 0

Cost of services: 0

E. HOW INDIVIDUALS WITH THE MOST SIGNIFICANT DISABILITIES ARE SELECTED FOR SERVICES BEFORE ALL OTHER INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES; AND

Service Priority: The order of selection establishes service priority based on the number of functional areas in which a person has significant limitations to employment. Persons with limitations in more

functional areas are deemed to have more significant disability. It is intended by the order of selection that persons with the most significant disabilities will be served first when all persons who are eligible cannot be served.

Service Priority Categories

Persons are served according to their priority category. When priority categories must be closed, lower priority categories are closed before higher categories. Persons leave their waiting list according to the priority of their category and their date of application for VR services.

- Priority Category One (first priority for service) includes all individuals with a most significant disability, that is, persons whose condition results in serious limitations in three or more functional areas.
- Priority Category Two (second priority for service) includes all individuals with a significant disability that results in serious functional limitations in two functional areas.
- Priority Category Three (third priority for service) includes all individuals with a significant disability that results in a serious functional limitation in one functional area.
- Priority Category Four (fourth priority for service) includes all other eligible customers. These customers have a disability that makes them eligible for service but they do not have a serious limitation in a functional area. This category has essentially been closed since 1993.

Priority of categories to receive VR services under the order

2. IF THE DESIGNATED STATE UNIT HAS ELECTED TO SERVE ELIGIBLE INDIVIDUALS, REGARDLESS OF ANY ESTABLISHED ORDER OF SELECTION, WHO REQUIRE SPECIFIC SERVICES OR EQUIPMENT TO MAINTAIN EMPLOYMENT.

Vocational Rehabilitation Services has elected to not exempt individuals who require specific services or equipment to maintain employment from the Order of Selection.

N. GOALS AND PLANS FOR DISTRIBUTION OF TITLE VI FUNDS.

1. SPECIFY THE STATE'S GOALS AND PRIORITIES FOR FUNDS RECEIVED UNDER SECTION 603 OF THE REHABILITATION ACT FOR THE PROVISION OF SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES.

Estimate of the Number of Persons to Be Served

During FFY 2015, about 2,950 individuals will be served with Title VI, Part B funds supplemented by Title I funds, at a purchased service cost of about \$2,610,000. Under the administrative rule that sets forth Minnesota's priority-for-service categories, all persons receiving supported employment have three or more serious functional limitations.

The Contribution of State Funding

Title VI B and Title I funds are used to prepare people for supported employment. The VRS Extended Employment Program (VRS-EE) provides ongoing employment supports using state funding of \$12,075,000 annually that flows to community rehabilitation programs. More than 80 percent of this state funding provides extended services for persons in competitive employment with supports. The VRS-EE "basic" program serves all disability groups. An additional state appropriation of \$1,555,000 is dedicated to extended supported employment services for persons with serious mental illness since it has been historically difficult to obtain ongoing support services for this population.

System Complexity and Limited Capacity

Funding for supported employment, within which Title VI Part B funds play a relatively small part, is governed by a myriad of federal and state laws and rules covering many categories of services. For example, a network of private, not-for-profit organizations, licensed by the Department of Human Services Disability Services Division, provides training and habilitation services that may include supported employment. People with mental illness may receive work-related support through the State Comprehensive Mental Health Act. In these instances, each county determines the level of service that will be provided.

Title VI B supported employment funds are distributed on a fee-for-service basis under fee schedules developed with service providers. VRS collaborates with the Departments of Education and Human Services and county and local service providers to facilitate access to other funding and service resources. During development of a vocational rehabilitation employment plan, the vocational rehabilitation participant and the service team design a supported employment framework that best meets the participant's needs. Planning for eventual long-term supports in the community is a crucial part of planning during VRS' time-limited period of service. Minnesota has redistributed available VRS-EE funding to address waiting lists in some areas of the state.

Strategic Goal for Effective Partnerships

In FFY 2016, under the designated state unit's strategic goal for effective partnerships, VRS will continue to facilitate a statewide planning collaboration to better understand Minnesota's supported employment needs, revise the State Rule to shift more state dollars to integrated competitive supported employment work sites, address current service capacity and gaps, particularly those

related to the development needs of community rehabilitation programs, the needs of transition–age youths, and the needs of underserved populations.

2. DESCRIBE THE ACTIVITIES TO BE CONDUCTED, WITH FUNDS RESERVED PURSUANT TO SECTION 603(D), FOR YOUTH WITH THE MOST SIGNIFICANT DISABILITIES, INCLUDING:

A. THE PROVISION OF EXTENDED SERVICES FOR A PERIOD NOT TO EXCEED 4 YEARS; AND

Minnesota is unique in having a state-funded Extended Employment program that can and does provide long-term support services to individuals not eligible for other funding sources. During IPE development VR consumers are given the opportunity to make an informed choice of provider of long-term supports. The consumer is informed about whether the provider has a waiting list. If a waiting list exists for their preferred provider, they are given information about other providers without a waiting list.

As part of Olmstead Plan, VRS is working closely with the Department of Human Services, the Department of Education, and other departments to better leverage available dollars, including Medicaid waiver dollars, to ensure that the transition from VR dollars to other public funding will occur when the individual is ready for the transition.

B. HOW THE STATE WILL LEVERAGE OTHER PUBLIC AND PRIVATE FUNDS TO INCREASE RESOURCES FOR EXTENDED SERVICES AND EXPANDED SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES FOR YOUTH WITH THE MOST SIGNIFICANT DISABILITIES.

VRS is promulgating changes to the State rule governing the Extended Employment program, ending admissions to non–integrated and sub–minimum wage jobs and shifting this state funding to competitive, integrated employment with supports.

O. STATE'S STRATEGIES

Describe the required strategies and how the agency will use these strategies to achieve its goals and priorities, support innovation and expansion activities, and overcome any barriers to accessing the VR and the Supported Employment programs (See sections 101(a)(15)(D) and (18)(B) of the Rehabilitation Act and section 427 of the General Education Provisions Act (GEPA)):

1. THE METHODS TO BE USED TO EXPAND AND IMPROVE SERVICES TO INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES.

Innovation and Expansion activities are developed in response to needs identified in the Comprehensive Statewide Assessment of Need, with a focus on ensuring equal access to services regardless of specific disability, impediment to employment, economic status, public assistance status, race, national origin, gender, sexual orientation or age.

This activity specifically addresses program access, and adherence to the employment non-discrimination principles requirements of Section 427 of the General Education Provisions Act. VRS seeks partnerships with other public and private entities to increase access to vocational rehabilitation services and other employment services.

The State Rehabilitation Council plays a crucial role in identifying the needs of citizens with disabilities. The council conducts 10 meetings annually, along with public forums and numerous committee meetings to carry out its consultative and participative roles in the work of Vocational Rehabilitation Services. In 2015 the council participated in updating the VR combined plan and the comprehensive needs assessment, engaged in strategic planning, reviewed the policies and practices that guide the delivery of VRS services, and assisted in identifying program evaluation needs.

The employment section of the Olmstead Plan, approved by the U.S. District Court on September 29, 2015, establishes two goals: 1) Increase the employment rate for people with disabilities so that it is comparable to the employment rate of people without disabilities, and 2) increase the earnings of people with disabilities so that it is comparable to people without disabilities.

There are four specific strategies that VRS will play an active role in:

- 1) Expand Individual Placement and supports in 17 additional counties,
- 2) promulgate changes to the State Rule governing Extended Employment, ending admissions to non-integrated and sub-minimum wage programs and shifting the state funding to integrated employment,
- 3) provide technical assistance to non-integrated employment programs to design new business models that lead to competitive employment in the most integrated setting, and
- 4) provide information about effective employment strategies, such as supported and customized employment, that make competitive employment possible for individuals with complex and significant disabilities.

VRS is currently clarifying policy to ensure that all vocational rehabilitation services are provided in the most integrated setting appropriate for the person.

In FFY 2015, VRS utilized \$1,216,000 in funding for innovation and expansion activities. This includes funding for the State Rehabilitation Council, salaries for rehabilitation specialists focused on service innovation and program evaluation, and state funds for the Minnesota Employment Center for Individuals who are Deaf/Hard of Hearing. Identify how a broad range of assistive technology services and assistive technology devices will be provided to individuals with disabilities at each stage of the rehabilitation process; and describe how assistive technology services and devices will be provided to individuals with disabilities on a statewide basis.

2. HOW A BROAD RANGE OF ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY SERVICES AND DEVICES WILL BE PROVIDED TO INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES AT EACH STAGE OF THE REHABILITATION PROCESS AND ON A STATEWIDE BASIS.

A rehabilitation technology specialist provides onsite assistive technology assistance to staff and consumers. He also coordinates with the Minnesota Department of Education to promote inclusion of assistive technology in transition plans, and coordinates with the national AgrAbility project to assist agricultural workers with disabilities maintain their employment. The specialist is supported by three regional liaisons and a local liaison on each VR team. Placement coordinators assist employers in using rehabilitation technology to resolve employment barriers. The VRS website has an assistive technology page with links to nationally recognized websites. VRS coordinates closely with the STAR Program which operates an equipment loan program that allows consumers to try the assistive technology for 30 days before VRS purchases the equipment.

3. THE OUTREACH PROCEDURES THAT WILL BE USED TO IDENTIFY AND SERVE INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES WHO ARE MINORITIES, INCLUDING THOSE WITH THE MOST SIGNIFICANT DISABILITIES, AS WELL AS THOSE WHO HAVE BEEN UNSERVED OR UNDERSERVED BY THE VR PROGRAM.

VRS continues to expand services to minority populations. The New Americans VRS office in St. Paul employs multi-lingual staff of East African descent to provide outreach and services to recent immigrants, primarily from Somalia, who are not fluent in English. Other VRS offices hire bilingual staff as opportunities arise.

VRS and the Department of Corrections (DOC) utilize the same online interest and aptitude assessment to assist people make a smoother transition from incarceration to VR services. The goal is to assist people develop a vocational goal early, and then enroll in appropriate DOC adult basic education classes or other training programs while incarcerated. As part of the community release plan, the person then transitions to VR if appropriate for continued training and/or job placement assistance.

It is estimated that there are 315,000 Minnesotans of working age living with serious mental illness. VRS collaborates with the Department of Human Services (DHS) Adult Mental Health Division and with community partners to build supports and services for persons with serious mental illness (SMI), who now comprise 33 percent of the VR caseload and 32.5 percent of employment outcomes.

Individual Placement and Support (IPS) is the evidenced based practice of supported employment for persons with serious mental illness. IPS helps people in community mental health treatment

services to become part of the competitive labor market. Research indicates that IPS is nearly three times more effective than other vocational approaches in helping people with mental illness to work competitively. Research also shows that people who obtain competitive employment through IPS have increased income, improved self-esteem, improved quality of life and reduced symptoms. Approximately half of the people who enroll in IPS become steady workers and remain competitively employed a decade later.

Historically, VRS has provided state funding to the Minnesota Employment Center (MEC) for Individuals who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing, using an annual pass-through appropriation of \$300,000. VRS time limited services and MEC supported employment services have been closely coordinated to enhance employment opportunities for people who are deaf or have significant hearing loss. However, a legislative change in 2013 redirected the direct appropriation into a competitive grant pool. MEC has successfully competed for the available funding.

About 40 percent of VRS applicants receive SSA benefits. VRS was instrumental in establishing the Work Incentives Connection, a program of Goodwill Industries that provides work incentives planning and assistance for consumers and work incentives training for VRS staff.

SSA, VRS and State Services for the Blind co-host periodic meetings of the Employment Networks. In addition to providing in-service training, the meetings provide an opportunity to learn more about the services offered by each Employment Network to assist consumers make informed choices when selecting a vendor for employment services and/or on-going job retention services. The current focus of this group is to expand the use of Ticket to Work funding to provide ongoing job retention supports, and to promote the use of PASS Plans.

Minnesota has been selected by the Institute for Community Inclusion (ICI) at the University of Massachusetts – Boston as a demonstration site for the RSA funded demonstration grant to improve employment outcomes for VR customers who are SSDI beneficiaries (“The SGA Project”). Minnesota VRS is working closely with the ICI to promote rehabilitation counseling techniques that promote consumer engagement, provide early access to financial planning and benefits planning services, and provides early job development activities. Goals include presuming eligibility within 3 days, holding a meeting with the consumer to start benefits planning and to discuss Labor Market information within 7 days, and to implement the Employment Plan within 30 days.

4. THE METHODS TO BE USED TO IMPROVE AND EXPAND VR SERVICES FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES, INCLUDING THE COORDINATION OF SERVICES DESIGNED TO FACILITATE THE TRANSITION OF SUCH STUDENTS FROM SCHOOL TO POSTSECONDARY LIFE (INCLUDING THE RECEIPT OF VR SERVICES, POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT, AND PRE-EMPLOYMENT TRANSITION SERVICES).

VRS has a Cooperative Agreement with the College Financial Aid Administrators Association to assist in the development of financial aid packages with students with disabilities enrolled in all Minnesota-based public and most private post-secondary institutions. Most students receiving VRS services can complete a post-secondary program without taking out student loans.

The post-secondary options program allows students to take entry level college classes as part of their high school experience. Credits earned in college also apply toward their high school diploma. The local school district pays the tuition. This allows the student to gradually transition to post-secondary education during their senior year of high school.

Every Minnesota public college and most private colleges have offices to support students with disabilities. VECTOR, a program that supports high school students who are deaf, extends their services for the first year of college to promote a smooth transition to a new learning environment.

Employment and pre–employment services for youth are discussed in other sections of the State Plan.

5. IF APPLICABLE, PLANS FOR ESTABLISHING, DEVELOPING, OR IMPROVING COMMUNITY REHABILITATION PROGRAMS WITHIN THE STATE.

Program access to CRPs is monitored by reviewing compliance with CARF policies on program access, and by continuously monitoring the geographical coverage provided by the network of 63 CRPs. VRS has an active CRP Advisory Committee to assist in achievement of common goals. Priority topics include "telling our story" (development of a Community Outreach Team to develop a strategic marketing and communications plan for the public/private partnership), input into the Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment through completion of a community survey to identify strategic priorities, enhanced placement services through collaboration, preliminary work on a return on investment study, CRP input into the VRS administrative structure, collaborating with CRPs to provide paid internships for consumers, enhancements to supported employment services, and shared coordination and delivery of staff training. A sub–committee is currently actively involved in developing and implementing training for VRS and CRP job developers (Next Generation Placement). The Advisory Committee is also engaged in defining CRP quality measures that will support VRS' goals and priorities.

6. STRATEGIES TO IMPROVE THE PERFORMANCE OF THE STATE WITH RESPECT TO THE PERFORMANCE ACCOUNTABILITY MEASURES UNDER SECTION 116 OF WIOA.

Performance, five–year trends, and specific strategies utilized to improve the agency's performance in meeting the evaluation standards and performance indicators, are included in Section (P).

7. STRATEGIES FOR ASSISTING OTHER COMPONENTS OF THE STATEWIDE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM IN ASSISTING INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES.

WorkForce Centers (WFCs) serve a significant number of people with disabilities beyond the customers served by VRS and SSB. The needs assessment indicated that notable progress has been made toward achieving universal design; almost 100 percent of survey respondents indicated they felt WFC resources were universally available. However, WFCs need to articulate and better disseminate information about their program access. VRS provides consultation to the WFCs' Disability Employment Initiative (DEI) federal grant to serve youth in transition and adults.

8. HOW THE AGENCY'S STRATEGIES WILL BE USED TO:

A. ACHIEVE GOALS AND PRIORITIES BY THE STATE, CONSISTENT WITH THE COMPREHENSIVE NEEDS ASSESSMENT;

The agency's strategies to achieve the goals and priorities, support innovation and expansion, and overcome identified barriers are fully discussed in Section (L) State Goals and Priorities.

B. SUPPORT INNOVATION AND EXPANSION ACTIVITIES; AND

A portion of the VR budget is designated to pay the salaries of VR program specialists who design and implement innovation and expansion activities that are required to achieve the goals described in the agency's strategic priorities.

C. OVERCOME IDENTIFIED BARRIERS RELATING TO EQUITABLE ACCESS TO AND PARTICIPATION OF INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES IN THE STATE VR SERVICES PROGRAM AND THE STATE SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES PROGRAM.

In Minnesota transportation is one of the biggest barriers to access. To overcome this barrier, VR direct service staff and partner staff can as needed travel to communities throughout the state to provide equitable access to services when an applicant or consumer lacks transportation or other means to gain access to a VR field office. In addition, staff often make use of facilities in schools, county offices, libraries and other public buildings to meet consumers who may not be able to travel to VR offices.

P. EVALUATION AND REPORTS OF PROGRESS: VR AND SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT GOALS

Describe:

1. AN EVALUATION OF THE EXTENT TO WHICH THE VR PROGRAM GOALS DESCRIBED IN THE APPROVED VR SERVICES PORTION OF THE UNIFIED OR COMBINED STATE PLAN FOR THE MOST RECENTLY COMPLETED PROGRAM YEAR WERE ACHIEVED. THE EVALUATION MUST:

A. IDENTIFY THE STRATEGIES THAT CONTRIBUTED TO THE ACHIEVEMENT OF THE GOALS.

The State Rehabilitation Council and VRS are committed to a disciplined process for making decisions that shape and guide VRS as an organization. Consumers, stakeholders and VRS staff contributed insights over many months to the planning process, resulting in the five goals. A strategic planning process is never finished. Changing consumer needs – as reflected by the Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment, program evaluation and ever-changing social, legal and economic circumstances – prompts an annual review of the goals and process measures.

Goal 1: More jobs, better jobs

The result of this goal is expanded job opportunities and improved employment outcomes for Minnesotans with disabilities. VRS will:

- A. Increase the number of employment outcomes
- B. Increase the quality of employment outcomes
- C. Expand development of long-term supports
- D. Improve consistency of transition services received by students who are in high school

Goal 1 Outcome Measures:

A1. Using FFY 2013 as the baseline, employment outcomes will increase by 25 annually in each of the next two FFYs (2014 and 2015).

Progress to Date: The 2013 baseline is 2,738 placements. The 2014 performance was 2,869, a 131 increase over the previous fiscal year. The 2015 performance was 3,104, a 365 increase over the 2013 baseline.

B1. All VRS managers, counselors and VR Technicians Seniors will have attended four informational sessions on Social Security work incentives and benefits planning by the end of FFY 2015.

Progress to Date: All teams participated in training on Developing PASS Plans and a Disability Benefits 101 refresher. New employees participated in benefits planning training provided by local WIPA staff. An advanced course on benefits planning was also offered to all staff. VRS is one of the sites for the Institute for Community Inclusion's SGA Project. Eight staff completed a comprehensive three week training course on benefits and financial planning to help determine if in-house financial

planning services will improve employment outcomes for SSDI beneficiaries. In addition to traditional benefits planning services, the financial specialist also helps people develop strategies to build savings, improve credit ratings, and achieve other financial goals.

B2. VRS will collect baseline data during FFY 2014 on consumer satisfaction with their employment outcomes. The baseline data will be used to establish future targets for customer satisfaction.

Progress to Date: VRS has decided to initially focus on determining the factors that keep consumers engaged in the VR process. Although satisfaction with employment outcome is very important, it is equally important that the person stays engaged in the process. A new Consumer Engagement survey has been developed. Consumer Engagement is operationalized by the measure of three constructs: empowerment, partnership and performance. The survey was developed through meetings with 5 teams who contributed input into the development of the constructs to measure consumer engagement and survey items for those constructs. Once a survey was drafted, meetings were conducted with 5 teams to review and suggest modifications of the survey. Once the survey was developed, it was field-tested with approximately 50 consumers. Modifications were made based on the consumers' comments. The survey was administered to a statewide sample. Response rate was over 80% and composite scores for consumer engagement it constructs were compiled. Overall, engagement across the State was in the 89–90 range on a scale of 1 to 100. The responses to the statewide sample were used to conduct a statistical analysis (Factor Analysis) to validate the construct measurements. Modifications to the survey items were made based on this analysis. Some items thought to measure one construct actually measured another, or were equivocal. The survey will be offered to all consumers during the first counseling session after plan development.

C1. Increase annually the number of VRS consumers who are leveraging Extended Employment/Supported Employment funding for on-going supports.

Progress to Date: All direct service staff have received training on the available funding streams for supported employment. Measuring the impact of this training has been difficult due to the complexity of the funding streams, and the fact that a person may access multiple funding streams to meet specific needs. VRS works closely with the SSA funded Employment Networks to encourage leveraging of Ticket to Work funding to provide on-going supports. In FFY 2015, Employment Networks received over \$250,000 in SSA funding for post-VR job retention services.

D1. Improve work experience opportunities for VRS consumers in school to work transition.

Progress to Date: The Olmsted Plan places heavy emphasis on "Work First". Transition students will have opportunities for integrated work experiences in the community before less integrated options are considered. VRS continues to support work try-outs, on the job training and paid work experiences to assist students make the transition to integrated competitive employment.

Goal 2: Organizational vitality

The result of this goal is a vibrant organization providing the best possible services to Minnesotans with disabilities. VRS will:

A. Develop a program evaluation framework

Progress to Date: VRS has developed and implemented an evaluation framework with three aspects:

1) A Director of Program Evaluation and Service Quality has been hired. He has clarified and articulated a development model of program evaluation and created a plan to progressively move VRS's evaluation work from compliance reports to sophisticated program analytics to measure State Plan and program outcomes and the factors supporting/hindering those outcomes;

2) revised internal operation details to support the model and ensure that there is alignment of evaluation efforts with VRS's direction and that new initiatives develop an evaluation design prior to the start of the initiative, and

3) VRS took steps to "demystify" data and program evaluation and increase the data skills of staff and managers. For common reports and common requests, VRS has been creating a series of Excel spreadsheets which are populated with client data. Each spreadsheet has a specific topic, e.g., placement, assessment, service costs, and includes data elements for those topics. In this way, managers and staff only need knowledge of Excel, Excel's Sort function, some capacity to create tables/charts and rudimentary skill with Pivot Tables to quickly answer their questions in these topic areas. This approach improved the productivity of evaluation staff to more quickly answer manager's questions and continued to embed an "evaluation" culture within VRS. The Director position is currently vacant. An interim Director is continuing the focus on program evaluation, with an emphasis on identifying new data elements needed for WIOA reporting. Managers received initial training on using Excel spreadsheets. Additional training will be provided as the report structure is finalized.

B. Establish a leadership development program for current and emerging leaders

Progress to Date: The VRS Leadership Exploration and Development (LEAD) Program was launched in November 2014. Thirteen VRS staff participated in the 12 month program, which included opportunities for self-assessment, increasing awareness of VRS strategic priorities, developing skills in leadership related competencies, experiential learning through leading a project, and reflective learning via participation in a peer-coaching process. The State of Minnesota's Emerging Leader's Institute (ELI), a 7 month program designed to help participants explore leadership within State government, is available to a total of 60 State of Minnesota employees each year. Three VRS employees completed ELI in 2015, and one employee is participating in the 2015-16 ELI cohort.

Goal 3: Effective partnerships

The result of this goal is the strengthening of system-wide collaborative partnerships that fully use resources to serve Minnesotans with disabilities.

Strategic priority: A. In FFY 2014 and 2015 the State Rehabilitation Council and the Community Rehabilitation Program Advisory Committee will rate the effectiveness of their partnership with VRS as at least 80 percent effective.

The State Rehabilitation Council conducts an annual survey of the Council to rate the effectiveness of the Council. The average ranking for the questions ranged from 62% to 96%. Topics that exceeded the 80% threshold included VRS giving meaningful consideration to Council's advice (94.5%), clarity of the information provided by VRS (92%), clarity of data submitted to RSA (92%),

completeness of the information provided about the required data reports (96%), timeliness of discussions (91.5%), and informing the Council of their statutory responsibilities (87.5%). Two areas of concern emerged from the survey. Some members felt member training and development would be improved if members mentored each other and if there was an expanded orientation for new members (62% ranking). Some members were either unclear or was unaware that there was a Council Work Plan (78% ranking).

The Community Rehabilitation Advisory Committee meets an average of six times per year. There has been substantial discussion this year on deepening and strengthening collaboration. Activities included co-hosting a statewide community partners meeting, sharing an understanding of WIOA regulations regarding Pre-Employment Transition Services and the impact this will have on VRS and CRPs, discussing a pilot program at ProAct (a center-based employment site) that will help transform centered-based programs to competitive integrated work opportunities, and providing an effective conduit for sharing important information with community providers and consumers.

Goal 4. Employer engagement

The result of this goal is that VRS and the VR community will embrace serving businesses and other employers as key customers. This effort will produce long-term, enduring, mutually satisfying relationships and increased employment outcomes for VRS consumers. New strategic priorities are included in Section (G) Coordination with Employers.

Following is a progress report on the previous priorities:

Strategic Priorities

A. Throughout FFY 2014 and 2015 VRS and Community Rehabilitation Program (CRP) managers will continue to develop local placement partnerships throughout each of Minnesota's three regions and to create a locally consistent framework for service that engages and meets the needs of businesses and employers.

Progress to date: There are currently 18 local placement partnerships operating across the state. Placement 101, the joint training of VRS and CRP placement specialists, continues. To date, over 300 placement specialists from VRS and our community partners have attended this training.

B. By the end of FFY 2014, an active placement partnership will be established for 80 percent of the VR teams. By the end of FFY 2015, an active placement partnership will be established for 95 percent of VR teams.

Progress to date: Each of the 17 VRS teams is represented on at least one of the 15 active placement partnerships. The more established partnerships are hosting job fairs, mentoring new staff, and operating as an effective partnership. Newer partnerships are still defining how they will operate and expanding community awareness of their services.

C. Placement partnership members will share and track job leads within the VR Community on a timely basis and in a coordinated manner in order to a) improve responsiveness to employers, and b) increase employment outcomes for VR consumers.

Progress to Date: Job leads are shared via email or Google, and successful placements are tracked. Members frequently co-host Career Fairs and other employer events to engage employers.

B. DESCRIBE THE FACTORS THAT IMPEDED THE ACHIEVEMENT OF THE GOALS AND PRIORITIES.

VRS achieved all of the performance indicators except RSA indicator 1.5: Consumer's average wage compared to all other Minnesota workers. This indicator continues to be difficult to achieve because the salaries of youth entering employment for the first time are being compared to the salaries of long-term employees. Many jobs in Minnesota are unionized, and many of the jobs require a high level of skill such as medical professionals at the Mayo clinic and medical device manufacturing. The revised Goals and Priorities are designed to help address this.

2. AN EVALUATION OF THE EXTENT TO WHICH THE SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM GOALS DESCRIBED IN THE SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SUPPLEMENT FOR THE MOST RECENT PROGRAM YEAR WERE ACHIEVED. THE EVALUATION MUST:

A. IDENTIFY THE STRATEGIES THAT CONTRIBUTED TO THE ACHIEVEMENT OF THE GOALS.

VRS utilized a Request for Proposals process to shift Extended Employment funding from areas with surplus capacity to areas with limited resources. This expanded Minnesota's service capacity for supported employment, including the supported employment needs of transition-age youths and young adults, low incidence populations of persons with disabilities and other unserved and underserved populations. VRS is currently engaged in the rule making process to shift Extended Employment state dollars from center-based employment to integrated competitive work sites.

B. DESCRIBE THE FACTORS THAT IMPEDED THE ACHIEVEMENT OF THE GOALS AND PRIORITIES.

Substantial effort has been made in the past year to bring together all interested parties to plan for implementation of WIOA and the Olmstead Plan. This process is helping the State to develop a strong vision for the future focused on the full integration of people with the most significant disabilities in community living including competitive, integrated employment with supports. Development of this comprehensive vision is time-consuming and has potentially delayed immediate results, but it will allow the state to move forward with a coordinated, comprehensive approach that meets the needs of people with the most significant disabilities.

3. THE VR PROGRAM'S PERFORMANCE ON THE PERFORMANCE ACCOUNTABILITY INDICATORS UNDER SECTION 116 OF WIOA.

Following are the performance measures and the five-year trends:

Indicator 1.1: Number of consumers achieving an employment outcome:

RSA National Standard: Equal or exceed previous year.

2011: 2,477

2012: 2,490

2013: 2,738

2014: 2,869

2015: 3,014

Indicator 1.2: The percentage of consumers with employment outcomes who exited the program after receiving services.

RSA National Standard: 55.8%

2011: 60.2

2012: 56.7

2013: 59.5

2014: 61.4

2015: 61.9

Indicator 1.3: The percentage of consumers with competitive employment outcomes.

RSA National Standard: 72.6%

2011: 99.1

2012: 99.0

2013: 99.6

2014: 80 (Percentage declined due a significant increase in the state minimum wage)

2015: 99.4

Indicator 1.4: The percentage of consumers with significant disabilities.

RSA National Standard: 62.4%

Under the Order of Selection, 100% of consumers served have a significant disability.

Indicator 1.5: Consumers' average wage compared to all other Minnesota workers.

RSA National Standard: .52

2011: .458

2012: .457

2013: .463

2014: .472

2015: .457

Indicator 1.6: Percentage change, from application to closure, of earned income as the primary source of financial support.

RSA National Standard: 53.0

2011: 67.9

2012: 64.4

2013: 67.8

2014: 69.3

2015: 64.3

Indicator 2.1: The ratio of minority and non-minority service rates.

RSA National Standard .80

2011: .81

2012: .85

2013: .86

2014: .85

2015: .85

The following performance accountability factors are based on FFY 2014 closures, and includes only employment that was reported to Minnesota Wage Detail. VRS does not currently have access to wage detail for people employed by the federal government, placed in employment in other states, or people employed by employers not required to report wages.

1) the percentage of program participants who are in unsubsidized employment during the second quarter after exit from the program: 56.6%

2) the percentage of program participants who are in unsubsidized employment during the fourth quarter after exit from the program: 55.2%

3) the median earnings of program participants who are in unsubsidized employment during the second quarter after exit from the program: Quarterly median earnings was \$3,255. Average

quarterly earnings was \$4,154. Average earnings increased to \$4,481 at the end of the fourth quarter.

4) the percentage of program participants who obtain a recognized postsecondary credential, or a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent, during participation in or within 1 year after exit from the program: VRS does not currently track this data. Strategies are being developed to measure.

5) the percentage of program participants who, during a program year, are in an education or training program that leads to a recognized postsecondary credential or employment and who are achieving measurable skill gains toward such credential or employment: VRS currently only measures the number of program participants enrolled in a for-credit college or university program. The agency is currently developing strategies for measuring participation in other post-secondary training programs.

6) the indicators of effectiveness in serving employers: VRS and the State Rehabilitation council are currently establishing the indicators of effectiveness in serving employers.

4. HOW THE FUNDS RESERVED FOR INNOVATION AND EXPANSION (I&E) ACTIVITIES WERE UTILIZED.

About 3.3 percent of Minnesota's VR appropriation (\$1.216 m) was used for innovation and expansion activities to improve and increase services to historically underserved populations with the most severe disabilities. These activities represent program response to identified need.

State Rehabilitation Council

Ten monthly meetings of the SRC, committee meetings, and public forums are where council members carry out their consultative and participative roles in the work of VRS. Primary contributions are annual participation in development of the VR Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment and State Plan; study of consumer satisfaction, VRS strategic planning, and review of the policies and practices that guide the delivery of services.

Persons with Mental Illness

Collaborative activity at state and local levels between VRS, DHS Mental Health Division, and community partners continues to build supports and services for persons with serious mental illness (SMI), who now comprise 33 percent of the VR program's total caseload and 32.5 percent of employment outcomes. Innovative projects developed with dedicated state funds are increasing the quality of services and outcomes for this population in urban and rural Minnesota.

SSDI and SSI Beneficiaries

SSA, VRS and SSB continue to co-host periodic meetings of the Employment Networks. One result of this is more Employment Networks are providing Ticket-to-Work funded job retention (Partnership Plus) services following VRS intensive services. There are currently 188 consumers receiving Partnership Plus services. Ticket-to-Work funding is used to supplement Supported Employment funding or to provide continued job retention services beyond the 90 days VRS typically

provides. Work incentives basic and advanced training for counselors was provided by work incentives specialists at the Work Incentives Connection.

All counselors received SSA sponsored training on how to coordinate VRS and PASS Plan services. There are currently 80 consumers receiving coordinated services. The most typical PASS Plan services are private college tuition above what VRS pays and the purchase of “gently used” cars for reliable transportation.

VRS is currently implementing the “SGA Project” to improve the employment rate and income level for SSDI beneficiaries. The project is part of an RSA funded research project at the Institute for Community Inclusion at the U of M–Boston.

Rehabilitation Technology

Rehabilitation technology, also referred to as assistive technology, enhances employment outcomes, leading to better employment outcomes including higher paying jobs. VRS continues to provide training and coaching to increase the use of rehabilitation technology by both experienced and new staff. Implementation of the VR Rehabilitation Technology Services Plan has involved widespread staff participation, brought focus to rehabilitation technology activity, and honored the work of VR program counselors serving as a technology liaison to their own VR teams. Several staff have completed the RSA funded TechSpec program at the U of W–Milwaukee.

Minorities with Most Significant Disabilities

State demographic data indicates Minnesota’s minority populations are growing at a much higher rate than the white, non–Hispanic population. Minnesota has the largest Somali refugee population in the United States.

The New Americans office in St. Paul specializes in addressing the needs of Somali and other East African immigrants who lack fluency in English. In FFY 2013, there were 38 new applications and 15 people achieved an employment outcome.

Collaborative Projects with Centers for Independent Living

Since 2008, the VRS–IL collaboration has served Minnesotans with the most significant disabilities that require both vocational rehabilitation and independent living services to meet their goals for working and living in the community. In FFY 2015 DEED–VRS dedicated \$1,027,446 in SSA program income to fund locally designed collaboration grants with each of Minnesota’s eight Centers for Independent Living. The employment rate for consumers who received coordinated services continue to exceed the rate for people who received only VR services.

Q. QUALITY, SCOPE, AND EXTENT OF SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES.

Include the following:

1. THE QUALITY, SCOPE, AND EXTENT OF SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES TO BE PROVIDED TO INDIVIDUALS WITH THE MOST SIGNIFICANT DISABILITIES, INCLUDING YOUTH WITH THE MOST SIGNIFICANT DISABILITIES.

Supported employment services promote the integration of people with the most significant disabilities into the Minnesota workplace. The use of funds from Title VI Part B of the Rehabilitation Act initially allowed for expansion of supported employment services and outcomes. Vocational Rehabilitation Services (VRS) continues to work cooperatively with consumers, family members, advocates, employers, service providers and State, county, and local agencies to improve and expand the use of supported employment services statewide.

Approximately 3,000 vocational rehabilitation consumers were served in FFY 2015 with SE funds. VRS uses all federal funds authorized under Title VI, Part B in addition to Title I funds to purchase services for customers on a fee for service basis. Funds are distributed to field offices to purchase needed services for those consumers with a vocational goal that requires ongoing supports. Supported employment expenditures are administered and tracked separately in accordance with federal requirements. The quality of supported employment services in Minnesota is assured by a State administrative rule requirement that vendors from whom more than \$20,000 in services are purchased annually must be fully accredited by the Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF) or have applied for and are actively pursuing accreditation. In addition, vendors who agree to meet professional standards of service but are not CARF-accredited may be granted a limited use provider status, under which their services are limited to \$20,000 or less annually.

The state's major challenge regarding supported employment is one of consumer access to extended ongoing supports when they are needed. Agency structures and funding systems for extended support are governed by a myriad of federal and State laws and rules, each governing a specific piece of the categorical funding available to people with disabilities. A network of private not-for-profit organizations in Minnesota licensed by DHS Disabilities Services Division provides day training and habilitation services that may include such extended supports.

The agency's coordination of vocational rehabilitation services with its extended employment services contributes significantly to the quality, scope, and effectiveness of the State's overall SE efforts. When developing a customer's employment plan, the consumer and VR counselor identify the time-limited services to be provided by VRS, the expected ongoing supports needed, and the source of those supports. This may include natural supports. VRS is a partner in several state level agreements that facilitate provision of these services. With respect to extended employment services, VRS develops contracts with each accredited community rehabilitation program (CRP) that includes an outline of expectations for extended support. Each program submits an application for funding which becomes part of the contract and specifies the number of employment hours that will be funded by VRS. VRS provides \$11,942,000 in state funding annually to community rehabilitation programs to support ongoing vocational services through community based supported employment. By coordinating its short-term vocational rehabilitation services and long-term extended employment services, VRS facilitates optimal benefit from time-limited and extended funding for persons in supported employment.

VRS, through state-funded extended employment services, provides ongoing work supports to approximately 5,100 individuals in SE annually. Many of these individuals received time-limited vocational rehabilitation services prior to entering supported employment. Part of Minnesota's supported employment funding is dedicated to extended supports for persons with serious and persistent mental illness. VRS and the Department of Human Services Mental Health Division collaborate on Individual Placement and Support (IPS) projects to promote innovation in service delivery, including supported employment services, for this population. The projects are designed to provide functional assessment, individualized career planning, job skill acquisition, job placement, job development, and non-time-limited supports necessary to maintain and advance in employment. All recipients of grants under these projects are required to demonstrate collaboration with counties, the local community support program, VRS, and providers of employment services such as CRPs, regional treatment centers, and community mental health centers.

2. THE TIMING OF TRANSITION TO EXTENDED SERVICES.

The timing of the transition to extended services is highly individualized based on the needs of the person. The need for extended services is usually identified during the assessment of VR needs, and the consumer makes an informed choice of vendor for long term supports as a part of Individualized Plan for Employment development. However, the need can be identified at any point in time, and the plan can be amended. The consumer will frequently select the same vendor to serve as their placement provider and extended services provider to reduce the stress of changing providers.

The transition to extended services typically starts when training is completed and the person has stabilized on the job for 60 days. Both VR and the Extended Services provider provides joint services for at least 30 days ensure the transition has been successful. As needed, VR can continue supports for up to 18 months for adults and 48 months for youth. If the person becomes ready for job promotion VR may re-engage to provide additional training to ensure the person's success in their career-laddering efforts.

CERTIFICATIONS

Name of designated State agency or designated State unit, as appropriate **Vocational Rehabilitation Services**

Name of designated State agency **Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development**

Full Name of Authorized Representative: **Kimberley T. Peck**

Title of Authorized Representative: **Director, Vocational Rehabilitation Services**

States must provide written and signed certifications that:

1. The **designated State agency or designated State unit (as appropriate) listed above** is authorized to submit the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan under title 1 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Rehabilitation Act), as amended by WIOA*, and its supplement under title VI of the Rehabilitation Act.** Yes
2. As a condition for the receipt of Federal funds under title I of the Rehabilitation Act for the provision of VR services, the **designated State agency listed above** agrees to operate and administer the State VR Services Program in accordance with the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan , the Rehabilitation Act, and all applicable regulations , policies, and procedures established by the Secretary of Education. Funds made available under section 111 of the Rehabilitation Act are used solely for the provision of VR services and the administration of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan; Yes
3. As a condition for the receipt of Federal funds under title VI of the Rehabilitation Act for supported employment services, the designated State agency agrees to operate and administer the State Supported Employment Services Program in accordance with the supplement to the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan* , the Rehabilitation Act, and all applicable regulations , policies, and procedures established by the Secretary of Education. Funds made available under title VI are used solely for the provision of supported employment services and the administration of the supplement to the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan;** Yes
4. The designated State agency and/or the designated State unit has the authority under State law to perform the functions of the State regarding the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement; Yes
5. The State legally may carry out each provision of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement. Yes
6. All provisions of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement are consistent with State law. Yes
7. The **Authorized Representative listed above** has the authority under State law to receive, hold, and disburse Federal funds made available under the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement; Yes

8. The **Authorized Representative listed above** has the authority to submit the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and the supplement for Supported Employment services; Yes

9. The agency that submits the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement has adopted or otherwise formally approved the plan and its supplement. Yes

FOOTNOTES

Certification 1 Footnotes

* Public Law 113-128.

** Unless otherwise stated, "Rehabilitation Act" means the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended by WIOA, signed into law on July 22, 2014.

Certification 2 Footnotes

* All references in this plan to "designated State agency" or to "the State agency" relate to the agency identified in this paragraph.

** No funds under title 1 of the Rehabilitation Act may be awarded without an approved VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan in accordance with section 101(a) of the Rehabilitation Act.

*** Applicable regulations, in part, include the Education Department General Administrative Regulations (EDGAR) in 34 CFR parts 76,77,79,81, and 82; 2 CFR part 200 as adopted by 2 CFR part 3485; and the State VR Services Program regulations.

Certification 3 Footnotes

* No funds under title VI of the Rehabilitation Act may be awarded without an approved supplement to the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan in accordance with section 606(a) of the Rehabilitation Act.

** Applicable regulations, in part, include the citations in *** under Certification 2 footnotes

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS ON THE CERTIFICATIONS FROM THE STATE

CERTIFICATION REGARDING LOBBYING — VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION

Certification for Contracts, Grants, Loans, and Cooperative Agreements The undersigned certifies, to the best of his or her knowledge and belief, that:

(1) No Federal appropriated funds have been paid or will be paid, by or on behalf of the undersigned, to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of an agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with the awarding of any Federal contract, the making of any Federal grant, the making of any Federal loan, the entering into of any cooperative agreement, and the extension, continuation, renewal, amendment, or modification of any Federal contract, grant, loan, or cooperative agreement.

(2) If any funds other than Federal appropriated funds have been paid or will be paid to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with this Federal contract, grant, loan, or cooperative agreement, the undersigned shall complete and submit Standard Form-LLL, "Disclosure of Lobbying Activities," in accordance with its instructions.

(3) The undersigned shall require that the language of this certification be included in the award documents for all subawards at all tiers (including subcontracts, subgrants, and contracts under grants, loans, and cooperative agreements) and that all subrecipients shall certify and disclose accordingly. This certification is a material representation of fact upon which reliance was placed when this transaction was made or entered into. Submission of this certification is a prerequisite for making or entering into this transaction imposed by section 1352, title 31, U.S. Code. Any person who fails to file the required certification shall be subject to a civil penalty of not less than \$10,000 and not more than \$100,000 for each such failure.

STATEMENT FOR LOAN GUARANTEES AND LOAN INSURANCE

The undersigned states, to the best of his or her knowledge and belief, that:

If any funds have been paid or will be paid to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with this commitment providing for the United States to insure or guarantee a loan, the undersigned shall complete and submit Standard Form-LLL, "Disclosure of Lobbying Activities," in accordance with its instructions. Submission of this statement is a prerequisite for making or entering into this transaction imposed by section 1352, title 31, U.S. Code. Any person who fails to file the required statement shall be subject to a civil penalty of not less than \$10,000 and not more than \$100,000 for each such failure.

Applicant's Organization **Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development - Vocational Rehabilitation Services**

Full Name of Authorized Representative: **Kimberley T. Peck**

Title of Authorized Representative: **Director, Vocational Rehabilitation Services**

SF LLL Form – Disclosure of Lobbying Activities (only if applicable)
(<http://www2.ed.gov/fund/grant/apply/appforms/appforms.html>). If applicable, please print, sign, and email to MAT_OCTAE@ed.gov

CERTIFICATION REGARDING LOBBYING — SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT

Certification for Contracts, Grants, Loans, and Cooperative Agreements The undersigned certifies, to the best of his or her knowledge and belief, that:

(1) No Federal appropriated funds have been paid or will be paid, by or on behalf of the undersigned, to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of an agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with the awarding of any Federal contract, the making of any Federal grant, the making of any Federal loan, the entering into of any cooperative agreement, and the extension, continuation, renewal, amendment, or modification of any Federal contract, grant, loan, or cooperative agreement.

(2) If any funds other than Federal appropriated funds have been paid or will be paid to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with this Federal contract, grant, loan, or cooperative agreement, the undersigned shall complete and submit Standard Form-LLL, "Disclosure of Lobbying Activities," in accordance with its instructions.

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STATEMENT FOR LOAN GUARANTEES AND LOAN INSURANCE

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Applicant's Organization **Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development - Vocational Rehabilitation Services**

Full Name of Authorized Representative: **Kimberley T. Peck**

Title of Authorized Representative: **Director, Vocational Rehabilitation Services**

SF LLL Form – Disclosure of Lobbying Activities (only if applicable)
(<http://www2.ed.gov/fund/grant/apply/appforms/appforms.html>).

ASSURANCES

The designated State agency or designated State unit, as appropriate and identified in the State certifications included with this VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement, through signature of the authorized individual, assures the Commissioner of the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA), that it will comply with all of the requirements of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement, as set forth in sections 101(a) and 606 of the Rehabilitation Act. The individual authorized to submit the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement makes the following assurances:**The State Plan must provide assurances that:**

1. PUBLIC COMMENT ON POLICIES AND PROCEDURES:

The designated State agency assures it will comply with all statutory and regulatory requirements for public participation in the VR Services Portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan, as required by section 101(a)(16)(A) of the Rehabilitation Act.

2. SUBMISSION OF THE VR SERVICES PORTION OF THE UNIFIED OR COMBINED STATE PLAN AND ITS SUPPLEMENT:

The designated State unit assures it will comply with all requirements pertaining to the submission and revisions of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement for the State Supported Employment Services program, as required by sections 101(a)(1), (22), (23), and 606(a) of the Rehabilitation Act; section 102 of WIOA in the case of the submission of a unified plan; section 103 of WIOA in the case of a submission of a Combined State Plan; 34 CFR 76.140.

3. ADMINISTRATION OF THE VR SERVICES PORTION OF THE UNIFIED OR COMBINED STATE PLAN:

The designated State agency or designated State unit, as appropriate, assures it will comply with the requirements related to:

A. THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE DESIGNATED STATE AGENCY AND DESIGNATED STATE UNIT, AS REQUIRED BY SECTION 101(A)(2) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT.

B. THE ESTABLISHMENT OF EITHER A STATE INDEPENDENT COMMISSION OR STATE REHABILITATION COUNCIL, AS REQUIRED BY SECTION 101(A)(21) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT.

The designated State agency or designated State unit, as applicable **(B) has established a State Rehabilitation Council**

C. CONSULTATIONS REGARDING THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE VR SERVICES PORTION OF THE UNIFIED OR COMBINED STATE PLAN, IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 101(A)(16)(B) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT.

D. THE FINANCIAL PARTICIPATION BY THE STATE, OR IF THE STATE SO ELECTS, BY THE STATE AND LOCAL AGENCIES, TO PROVIDE THE AMOUNT OF THE NON-FEDERAL SHARE OF THE COST OF CARRYING OUT THE VR PROGRAM IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 101(A)(3).

E. THE LOCAL ADMINISTRATION OF THE VR SERVICES PORTION OF THE UNIFIED OR COMBINED STATE PLAN, IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 101(A)(2)(A) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT.

The designated State agency allows for the local administration of VR funds **Yes**

F. THE SHARED FUNDING AND ADMINISTRATION OF JOINT PROGRAMS, IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 101(A)(2)(A)(II) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT.

The designated State agency allows for the shared funding and administration of joint programs: **Yes**

G. STATEWIDENESS AND WAIVERS OF STATEWIDENESS REQUIREMENTS, AS SET FORTH IN SECTION 101(A)(4) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT.

Is the designated State agency requesting or maintaining a waiver of statewideness for one or more services provided under the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan? See Section 2 of this VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan. **Yes**

H. THE DESCRIPTIONS FOR COOPERATION, COLLABORATION, AND COORDINATION, AS REQUIRED BY SECTIONS 101(A)(11) AND (24)(B); AND 606(B) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT.

I. ALL REQUIRED METHODS OF ADMINISTRATION, AS REQUIRED BY SECTION 101(A)(6) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT .

J. THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE COMPREHENSIVE SYSTEM OF PERSONNEL DEVELOPMENT, AS SET FORTH IN SECTION 101(A)(7) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT.

K. THE COMPILATION AND SUBMISSION TO THE COMMISSIONER OF STATEWIDE ASSESSMENTS, ESTIMATES, STATE GOALS AND PRIORITIES, STRATEGIES, AND PROGRESS REPORTS, AS APPROPRIATE, AND AS REQUIRED BY SECTIONS 101(A)(15), 105(C)(2), AND 606(B)(8) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT.

L. THE RESERVATION AND USE OF A PORTION OF THE FUNDS ALLOTTED TO THE STATE UNDER SECTION 110 OF THE REHABILITATION ACT FOR THE DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION OF INNOVATIVE APPROACHES TO EXPAND AND IMPROVE THE PROVISION OF VR SERVICES TO INDIVIDUALS WITH

DISABILITIES, PARTICULARLY INDIVIDUALS WITH THE MOST SIGNIFICANT DISABILITIES.

M. THE SUBMISSION OF REPORTS AS REQUIRED BY SECTION 101(A)(10) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT.

4. ADMINISTRATION OF THE PROVISION OF VR SERVICES:

The designated State agency, or designated State unit, as appropriate, assures that it will:

A. COMPLY WITH ALL REQUIREMENTS REGARDING INFORMATION AND REFERRAL SERVICES IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTIONS 101(A)(5)(D) AND (20) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT.

B. IMPOSE NO DURATION OF RESIDENCE REQUIREMENT AS PART OF DETERMINING AN INDIVIDUAL'S ELIGIBILITY FOR VR SERVICES OR THAT EXCLUDES FROM SERVICES UNDER THE PLAN ANY INDIVIDUAL WHO IS PRESENT IN THE STATE IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 101(A)(12) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT .

C. PROVIDE THE FULL RANGE OF SERVICES LISTED IN SECTION 103(A) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT AS APPROPRIATE, TO ALL ELIGIBLE INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES IN THE STATE WHO APPLY FOR SERVICES IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 101(A)(5) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT?

Agency will provide the full range of services described above

D. DETERMINE WHETHER COMPARABLE SERVICES AND BENEFITS ARE AVAILABLE TO THE INDIVIDUAL IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 101(A)(8) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT.

E. COMPLY WITH THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF AN INDIVIDUALIZED PLAN FOR EMPLOYMENT IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 102(B) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT.

F. COMPLY WITH REQUIREMENTS REGARDING THE PROVISIONS OF INFORMED CHOICE FOR ALL APPLICANTS AND ELIGIBLE INDIVIDUALS IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 102(D) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT.

G. PROVIDE VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION SERVICES TO AMERICAN INDIANS WHO ARE INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES RESIDING IN THE STATE, IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 101(A)(13) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT.

H. COMPLY WITH THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE CONDUCT OF SEMIANNUAL OR ANNUAL REVIEWS, AS APPROPRIATE, FOR INDIVIDUALS EMPLOYED EITHER IN AN EXTENDED EMPLOYMENT SETTING IN A COMMUNITY REHABILITATION PROGRAM OR ANY OTHER EMPLOYMENT UNDER SECTION 14(C) OF THE FAIR

LABOR STANDARDS ACT OF 1938, AS REQUIRED BY SECTION 101(A)(14) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT.

I. MEET THE REQUIREMENTS IN SECTIONS 101(A)(17) AND 103(B)(2) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT IF THE STATE ELECTS TO CONSTRUCT, UNDER SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES, FACILITIES FOR COMMUNITY REHABILITATION PROGRAMS

J. WITH RESPECT TO STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES, THE STATE,

I. HAS DEVELOPED AND WILL IMPLEMENT,

A. STRATEGIES TO ADDRESS THE NEEDS IDENTIFIED IN THE ASSESSMENTS; AND

B. STRATEGIES TO ACHIEVE THE GOALS AND PRIORITIES IDENTIFIED BY THE STATE, TO IMPROVE AND EXPAND VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION SERVICES FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES ON A STATEWIDE BASIS; AND

II. HAS DEVELOPED AND WILL IMPLEMENT STRATEGIES TO PROVIDE PRE-EMPLOYMENT TRANSITION SERVICES (SECTIONS 101(A)(15) AND 101(A)(25)).

5. PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION FOR THE SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT TITLE VI SUPPLEMENT:

A. THE DESIGNATED STATE UNIT ASSURES THAT IT WILL INCLUDE IN THE VR SERVICES PORTION OF THE UNIFIED OR COMBINED STATE PLAN ALL INFORMATION REQUIRED BY SECTION 606 OF THE REHABILITATION ACT.

B. THE DESIGNATED STATE AGENCY ASSURES THAT IT WILL SUBMIT REPORTS IN SUCH FORM AND IN ACCORDANCE WITH SUCH PROCEDURES AS THE COMMISSIONER MAY REQUIRE AND COLLECTS THE INFORMATION REQUIRED BY SECTION 101(A)(10) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT SEPARATELY FOR INDIVIDUALS RECEIVING SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES UNDER TITLE I AND INDIVIDUALS RECEIVING SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES UNDER TITLE VI OF THE REHABILITATION ACT.

C. THE DESIGNATED STATE UNIT WILL COORDINATE ACTIVITIES WITH ANY OTHER STATE AGENCY THAT IS FUNCTIONING AS AN EMPLOYMENT NETWORK UNDER THE TICKET TO WORK AND SELF-SUFFICIENCY PROGRAM UNDER SECTION 1148 OF THE SOCIAL SECURITY ACT.

6. FINANCIAL ADMINISTRATION OF THE SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM:

A. THE DESIGNATED STATE AGENCY ASSURES THAT IT WILL EXPEND NO MORE THAN 2.5 PERCENT OF THE STATE'S ALLOTMENT UNDER TITLE VI FOR ADMINISTRATIVE COSTS OF CARRYING OUT THIS PROGRAM; AND, THE DESIGNATED STATE AGENCY OR AGENCIES WILL PROVIDE, DIRECTLY OR INDIRECTLY THROUGH PUBLIC OR PRIVATE ENTITIES, NON-FEDERAL CONTRIBUTIONS IN AN AMOUNT THAT IS NOT LESS THAN 10 PERCENT OF THE

COSTS OF CARRYING OUT SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES PROVIDED TO YOUTH WITH THE MOST SIGNIFICANT DISABILITIES WITH THE FUNDS RESERVED FOR SUCH PURPOSE UNDER SECTION 603(D) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT, IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 606(B)(7)(G) AND (H) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT.

B. THE DESIGNATED STATE AGENCY ASSURES THAT IT WILL USE FUNDS MADE AVAILABLE UNDER TITLE VI OF THE REHABILITATION ACT ONLY TO PROVIDE SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES TO INDIVIDUALS WITH THE MOST SIGNIFICANT DISABILITIES, INCLUDING EXTENDED SERVICES TO YOUTH WITH THE MOST SIGNIFICANT DISABILITIES, WHO ARE ELIGIBLE TO RECEIVE SUCH SERVICES; AND, THAT SUCH FUNDS ARE USED ONLY TO SUPPLEMENT AND NOT SUPPLANT THE FUNDS PROVIDED UNDER TITLE I OF THE REHABILITATION ACT, WHEN PROVIDING SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES SPECIFIED IN THE INDIVIDUALIZED PLAN FOR EMPLOYMENT, IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 606(B)(7)(A) AND (D), OF THE REHABILITATION ACT.

7. PROVISION OF SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES:

A. THE DESIGNATED STATE AGENCY ASSURES THAT IT WILL PROVIDE SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES AS DEFINED IN SECTION 7(39) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT.

B. THE DESIGNATED STATE AGENCY ASSURES THAT:

- I. THE COMPREHENSIVE ASSESSMENT OF INDIVIDUALS WITH SIGNIFICANT DISABILITIES CONDUCTED UNDER SECTION 102(B)(1) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT AND FUNDED UNDER TITLE I OF THE REHABILITATION ACT INCLUDES CONSIDERATION OF SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT AS AN APPROPRIATE EMPLOYMENT OUTCOME, IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE REQUIREMENTS OF SECTION 606(B)(7)(B) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT
- II. AN INDIVIDUALIZED PLAN FOR EMPLOYMENT THAT MEETS THE REQUIREMENTS OF SECTION 102(B) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT , WHICH IS DEVELOPED AND UPDATED WITH TITLE I FUNDS, IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTIONS 102(B)(3)(F) AND 606(B)(6)(C) AND (E) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT.

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS ON THE ASSURANCES FROM THE STATE

PROGRAM-SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS FOR VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION
(BLIND)

The Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Services Portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan* must include the following descriptions and estimates, as required by section 101(a) of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended by WIOA:

* Sec. 102(b)(D)(iii) of WIOA

A. INPUT OF STATE REHABILITATION COUNCIL

All agencies, except for those that are independent consumer-controlled commissions, must describe the following:

1. INPUT PROVIDED BY THE STATE REHABILITATION COUNCIL, INCLUDING INPUT AND RECOMMENDATIONS ON THE VR SERVICES PORTION OF THE UNIFIED OR COMBINED STATE PLAN, RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE COUNCIL'S REPORT, THE REVIEW AND ANALYSIS OF CONSUMER SATISFACTION, AND OTHER COUNCIL REPORTS THAT MAY HAVE BEEN DEVELOPED AS PART OF THE COUNCIL'S FUNCTIONS;

A. Input of State Rehabilitation Council The Minnesota State Rehabilitation Council for the Blind (hereinafter "SRC-B") is a council whose members are appointed by Governor Mark Dayton, consistent with the requirements of 34 CFR 361. 17(b)(3) and related regulation. The SRC-B is an advisory council to Minnesota State Services for the Blind (hereinafter "SSB"), a division within the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development (hereinafter "DEED"). In formulating its input and recommendations for this state plan, the SRC-B reviewed a considerable amount of information, including, but not limited to: 1. information supplied to the SRC-B by SSB; 2. information supplied to the SRC-B by DEED; 3. information developed by the SRC-B; and 4. information and input received from the public at SRC-B meetings. Summary of input and recommendations from the SRC-B Input of State Rehabilitation Council Section A This section was presented to the SRC-B on February 4, 2016 and was unanimously approved. SSB Response: SSB agree with the SRC-B. Request for Waiver of Statewideness Section B This section was presented to the SRC-B on February 4, 2016 and was unanimously approved. SSB Response: SSB agrees with the SRC-B. Cooperative Agreements with Agencies Not Carrying Out Activities Under the Statewide Workforce Development System Section C This section was presented to the SRC-B on February 4, 2016 and was unanimously approved. SSB Response: SSB agrees with the SRC-B. Coordination with Education Section D This section was presented to the SRC-B on February 4, 2016 and was unanimously approved. SSB Response: SSB agrees with the SRC-B. Cooperative Agreements with Private Nonprofits Section E This section was presented to the SRC-B on February 4, 2016 and was unanimously approved. SSB Response: SSB agrees with the SRC-B. Arrangements and Cooperative Agreements Regarding Supported Employment Section F This section was presented to the SRC-B on February 4, 2016 and was unanimously approved. SSB Response: SSB agrees with the SRC-B. Coordination with Employers Section G This section was presented to the SRC-B on February 4, 2016 and was unanimously approved. SSB Response: SSB agrees with the SRC-B. Coordination with Employers Section H This section was presented to the SRC-B on February 4, 2016 and was unanimously approved. SSB Response: SSB agrees with the SRC-B. Comprehensive System of Personnel Development Section I This section was presented to the SRC-B on February 4, 2016 and was unanimously approved. SSB Response: SSB agrees with the SRC-B. Statewide Assessment J The Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment Taskforce met in 2015 to review the needs assessment. An updated needs assessment was provided to the Council on June 4, 2015 with the understanding that RSA did not require State Plan submission on July 1, 2015 for FFY 2016. The taskforce met on November 16, 2015 to review and update the needs assessment. The updated needs assessment was presented to the Council at the December 3, 2015 meeting. SSB Response: SSB agrees with the SRC-B. Annual Estimates Section K SSB updated the annual estimates and submitted this section on July 1, 2015 along with the Order of Selection section. The updated annual estimates were presented to the Council on December 3, 2015 and on February 4, 2016 was unanimously approved. SSB Response: SSB agrees with the SRC-B. Goals and Priorities Section L The SRC-B has a standing "Customer Satisfaction and

Goals & Priorities Committee” which reviews and makes recommendations regarding customer satisfaction, goals and priorities, and VR effectiveness. The committee reports quarterly to the full SRC–B. In preparing the strategies for the goals and priorities, the SRC–B committees submitted their recommendations to SSB. In 2015 the Customer Satisfaction and Goals & Priorities Committee reviewed the recommendations from the committees and developed goals and priorities for FFY 2016 with the understanding that RSA did not require State Plan submission on July 1, 2015. The SRC–B voted unanimously with one abstention on April 2, 2015 to approve the goals and priorities with no additional input. On October 28, 2015 the committee met to review and update the goals and priorities. They were presented to the SRC–B at the December 3, 2015 meeting and received a unanimous vote of approval. SSB Response: SSB agrees with the SRC–B. Order Of Selection Section M SSB implemented Order Of Selection on October 1, 2015 after considerable discussion with the SRC–B. The Order Of Selection section was developed and submitted to RSA by SSB on July 1, 2015 for FFY 2016. The section was presented to the SRC–B at the December 3, 2015 meeting. SSB Response: SSB agrees with the SRC–B. Goals for Title VI Part B Section N This section was presented to the SRC–B on February 4, 2016 and was unanimously approved. SSB Response: SSB agrees with the SRC–B. Strategies for Goals Section O The SRC–B has a standing “Customer Satisfaction and Goals & Priorities Committee” which reviews and makes recommendations regarding customer satisfaction, goals and priorities, and VR effectiveness. The committee reports quarterly to the full SRC–B. In preparing the strategies for the goals and priorities, the SRC–B committees submitted their recommendations to SSB. In 2015 the Customer Satisfaction and Goals & Priorities Committee reviewed the recommendations from the committees and developed goals and priorities for FFY 2016 with the understanding that RSA did not require State Plan submission on July 1, 2015. The SRC–B voted unanimously with one abstention on April 2, 2015 to approve the goals, priorities, and strategies with no additional input. On October 28, 2015 the committee met to review and update the goals, priorities, and strategies. They were presented to the SRC–B at the December 3, 2015 meeting and received a unanimous vote of approval. SSB Response: SSB agrees with the SRC–B. Evaluation and Report of Progress Section P The SRC–B has a standing “Customer Satisfaction and Goals & Priorities Committee” which reviews and makes recommendations regarding customer satisfaction, goals and priorities, and VR effectiveness. The committee reports quarterly to the full SRC–B. In preparing the year end year report which becomes this attachment, SSB formatted the material in a summary model which is different than the historical model of responding to each priority and strategy. The Committee requested the historical model be used for the SRC–B presentation in December, 2015 and their Annual Report. The report was approved unanimously with one abstention on December 3, 2015. There was no additional input or recommendations. SSB Response: SSB agreed with the reformatting for the Annual report, but will migrate to a new, more summary model of presentation in this attachment. SSB believes that a summary model is more in line with the expectations of RSA.

2. THE DESIGNATED STATE UNIT'S RESPONSE TO THE COUNCIL'S INPUT AND RECOMMENDATIONS; AND

A. Input of State Rehabilitation Council The Minnesota State Rehabilitation Council for the Blind (hereinafter “SRC–B) is a council whose members are appointed by Governor Mark Dayton, consistent with the requirements of 34 CFR 361. 17(b)(3) and related regulation. The SRC–B is an advisory council to Minnesota State Services for the Blind (hereinafter “SSB”), a division within the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development (hereinafter “DEED”). In formulating its input and recommendations for this state plan, the SRC–B reviewed a considerable amount of information, including, but not limited to: 1. information supplied to the SRC–B by SSB; 2. information supplied to the SRC–B by DEED; 3. information developed by the SRC–B; and 4. information and input received from the public at SRC–B meetings. Summary of input and

recommendations from the SRC-B Input of State Rehabilitation Council Section A This section was presented to the SRC-B on February 4, 2016 and was unanimously approved. SSB Response: SSB agree with the SRC-B. Request for Waiver of Statewideness Section B This section was presented to the SRC-B on February 4, 2016 and was unanimously approved. SSB Response: SSB agrees with the SRC-B. Cooperative Agreements with Agencies Not Carrying Out Activities Under the Statewide Workforce Development System Section C This section was presented to the SRC-B on February 4, 2016 and was unanimously approved. SSB Response: SSB agrees with the SRC-B. Coordination with Education Section D This section was presented to the SRC-B on February 4, 2016 and was unanimously approved. SSB Response: SSB agrees with the SRC-B. Cooperative Agreements with Private Nonprofits Section E This section was presented to the SRC-B on February 4, 2016 and was unanimously approved. SSB Response: SSB agrees with the SRC-B. Arrangements and Cooperative Agreements Regarding Supported Employment Section F This section was presented to the SRC-B on February 4, 2016 and was unanimously approved. SSB Response: SSB agrees with the SRC-B. Coordination with Employers Section G This section was presented to the SRC-B on February 4, 2016 and was unanimously approved. SSB Response: SSB agrees with the SRC-B. Coordination with Employers Section H This section was presented to the SRC-B on February 4, 2016 and was unanimously approved. SSB Response: SSB agrees with the SRC-B. Comprehensive System of Personnel Development Section I This section was presented to the SRC-B on February 4, 2016 and was unanimously approved. SSB Response: SSB agrees with the SRC-B. Statewide Assessment J The Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment Taskforce met in 2015 to review the needs assessment. An updated needs assessment was provided to the Council on June 4, 2015 with the understanding that RSA did not require State Plan submission on July 1, 2015 for FFY 2016. The taskforce met on November 16, 2015 to review and update the needs assessment. The updated needs assessment was presented to the Council at the December 3, 2015 meeting. SSB Response: SSB agrees with the SRC-B. Annual Estimates Section K SSB updated the annual estimates and submitted this section on July 1, 2015 along with the Order of Selection section. The updated annual estimates were presented to the Council on December 3, 2015 and on February 4, 2016 was unanimously approved. SSB Response: SSB agrees with the SRC-B. Goals and Priorities Section L The SRC-B has a standing "Customer Satisfaction and Goals & Priorities Committee" which reviews and makes recommendations regarding customer satisfaction, goals and priorities, and VR effectiveness. The committee reports quarterly to the full SRC-B. In preparing the strategies for the goals and priorities, the SRC-B committees submitted their recommendations to SSB. In 2015 the Customer Satisfaction and Goals & Priorities Committee reviewed the recommendations from the committees and developed goals and priorities for FFY 2016 with the understanding that RSA did not require State Plan submission on July 1, 2015. The SRC-B voted unanimously with one abstention on April 2, 2015 to approve the goals and priorities with no additional input. On October 28, 2015 the committee met to review and update the goals and priorities. They were presented to the SRC-B at the December 3, 2015 meeting and received a unanimous vote of approval. SSB Response: SSB agrees with the SRC-B. Order Of Selection Section M SSB implemented Order Of Selection on October 1, 2015 after considerable discussion with the SRC-B. The Order Of Selection section was developed and submitted to RSA by SSB on July 1, 2015 for FFY 2016. The section was presented to the SRC-B at the December 3, 2015 meeting. SSB Response: SSB agrees with the SRC-B. Goals for Title VI Part B Section N This section was presented to the SRC-B on February 4, 2016 and was unanimously approved. SSB Response: SSB agrees with the SRC-B. Strategies for Goals Section O The SRC-B has a standing "Customer Satisfaction and Goals & Priorities Committee" which reviews and makes recommendations regarding customer satisfaction, goals and priorities, and VR effectiveness. The committee reports quarterly to the full SRC-B. In preparing the strategies for the goals and priorities, the SRC-B committees submitted their recommendations to SSB. In 2015 the Customer Satisfaction and Goals & Priorities Committee reviewed the recommendations from the committees and developed goals and priorities for FFY 2016 with the understanding that RSA did not require State

Plan submission on July 1, 2015. The SRC–B voted unanimously with one abstention on April 2, 2015 to approve the goals, priorities, and strategies with no additional input. On October 28, 2015 the committee met to review and update the goals, priorities, and strategies. They were presented to the SRC–B at the December 3, 2015 meeting and received a unanimous vote of approval. SSB Response: SSB agrees with the SRC–B. Evaluation and Report of Progress Section P The SRC–B has a standing “Customer Satisfaction and Goals & Priorities Committee” which reviews and makes recommendations regarding customer satisfaction, goals and priorities, and VR effectiveness. The committee reports quarterly to the full SRC–B. In preparing the year end year report which becomes this attachment, SSB formatted the material in a summary model which is different than the historical model of responding to each priority and strategy. The Committee requested the historical model be used for the SRC–B presentation in December, 2015 and their Annual Report. The report was approved unanimously with one abstention on December 3, 2015. There was no additional input or recommendations. SSB Response: SSB agreed with the reformatting for the Annual report, but will migrate to a new, more summary model of presentation in this attachment. SSB believes that a summary model is more in line with the expectations of RSA.

3. THE DESIGNATED STATE UNIT’S EXPLANATIONS FOR REJECTING ANY OF THE COUNCIL’S INPUT OR RECOMMENDATIONS.

Evaluation and Report of Progress Section P The SRC–B has a standing “Customer Satisfaction and Goals & Priorities Committee” which reviews and makes recommendations regarding customer satisfaction, goals and priorities, and VR effectiveness. The committee reports quarterly to the full SRC–B. In preparing the year end year report which becomes this attachment, SSB formatted the material in a summary model which is different than the historical model of responding to each priority and strategy. The Committee requested the historical model be used for the SRC–B presentation in December, 2015 and their Annual Report. The report was approved unanimously with one abstention on December 3, 2015. There was no additional input or recommendations. SSB Response: SSB agreed with the reformatting for the Annual report, but will migrate to a new, more summary model of presentation in this attachment. SSB believes that a summary model is more in line with the expectations of RSA.

B. REQUEST FOR WAIVER OF STATEWIDENESS

When requesting a waiver of the statewideness requirement, the designated State unit must identify the types of services to be provided by the program on a non-statewide basis. The waiver request must also include written assurances that:

1. A LOCAL PUBLIC AGENCY WILL PROVIDE THE NON-FEDERAL SHARE OF COSTS ASSOCIATED WITH THE SERVICES TO BE PROVIDED IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE WAIVER REQUEST;

B. Request for Waiver of Statewideness This agency has not requested a waiver of statewideness.

2. THE DESIGNATED STATE UNIT WILL APPROVE EACH PROPOSED SERVICE BEFORE IT IS PUT INTO EFFECT; AND

B. Request for Waiver of Statewideness This agency has not requested a waiver of statewideness.

3. ALL STATE PLAN REQUIREMENTS WILL APPLY

requirements of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan will apply to the services approved under the waiver.

B. Request for Waiver of Statewideness This agency has not requested a waiver of statewideness.

C. COOPERATIVE AGREEMENTS WITH AGENCIES NOT CARRYING OUT ACTIVITIES UNDER THE STATEWIDE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM.

Describe interagency cooperation with and utilization of the services and facilities of agencies and programs that are not carrying out activities through the statewide workforce development system with respect to:

1. FEDERAL, STATE, AND LOCAL AGENCIES AND PROGRAMS;

SSB continues to work in collaboration with the other designated state unit in Minnesota, Vocational Rehabilitation Services (VRS), and has arrangements for providing reciprocal referral services between VR-SSB and VRS. SSB has developed and implemented a formal cooperative agreement with representatives of the higher education system in the State: the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities (MNSCU) System. SSB has established working relationships with programs which provide services to minority populations such as the New Americans Program (a program within VRS) and the Hmong American Partnership (HAP) in the Minneapolis/St. Paul area. Adult Basic Education (ABE) programs have become important partners with SSB in serving customers, especially pertaining to services to English Language Learners (ELL), which had been an objective within our RSA Quality Training Grant. VR-SSB also has formal interagency agreements with the American Indian VR programs in the State.

2. STATE PROGRAMS CARRIED OUT UNDER SECTION 4 OF THE ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY ACT OF 1998;

A System of Technology to Achieve Results (STAR) is located within the Minnesota Department of Administration. STAR's mission is to help all Minnesotans with disabilities gain access to and acquire the assistive technology they need to live, learn, work and play. The Minnesota STAR Program is federally funded by the Department of Health and Human Services, Administration For Community Living in accordance with the Assistive Technology Act of 1998, as amended (P.L. 108-364). SSB does not have a cooperative agreement with STAR in place, although VR counselors engage with this program.

3. PROGRAMS CARRIED OUT BY THE UNDER SECRETARY FOR RURAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE;

VR-SSB does not have a formal interagency agreement with the programs carried out by the Department of Agriculture's undersecretary for rural development, nor does it have formal agreements with other federal or State agencies, except as noted below. All qualified VR counselors have been provided a description of the programs provided by the USDA Minnesota Rural Development Offices and are able to access these services as needed.

4. NONEDUCATIONAL AGENCIES SERVING OUT-OF-SCHOOL YOUTH; AND

VR-SSB does not have any cooperative agreements with agencies serving out-of-school youth.

5. STATE USE CONTRACTING PROGRAMS.

SSB uses a Master Contract system managed by The Materials Management Division of the MN Administrative Department. Master contracts are used with all Community Rehabilitation Programs that SSB purchases Rehabilitation Services from.

D. COORDINATION WITH EDUCATION OFFICIALS

Describe:

1. DSU'S PLANS

The designated State unit's plans, policies, and procedures for coordination with education officials to facilitate the transition of students with disabilities from school to the receipt of VR services, including pre-employment transition services, as well as procedures for the timely development and approval of individualized plans for employment for the students.

The designated State unit's plans, policies, and procedures for coordination with education officials to facilitate the transition of students with disabilities from school to the receipt of VR services, including pre-employment transition services, as well as procedures for the timely development and approval of individualized plans for employment for the students. Vocational Rehabilitation Services (VRS), State Services for the Blind (SSB), and the Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) have an agreement to achieve better coordination between schools and VR services and creating a bridge from the school to VRS or SSB prior to school exit. Following is a discussion of the current agreement. It is anticipated that the agreement will be updated when the final WIOA regulations are published:

- Provide guidance to students with disabilities transitioning from school to employment.
- Offer consultation and technical assistance to educators in planning for the transition of students with disabilities from school to VR services.
- Define roles and responsibilities, including the financial responsibilities of each agency, and determine state lead agencies and qualified staff responsible for transition services.
- Design methods of identification and outreach to students with disabilities who are in need of transition services.
- Guide the development of policies and procedures that help students with disabilities make the transition from school to employment.
- Promote flexible, coordinated, and collaborative planning and service delivery among MDE, VRS, and SSB for eligible youth transitioning from school to employment.

Coordinated Services for Youth in Special Education Minnesota law mandates a coordinated system of services for youth, birth to 21, who are involved in special education. The Minnesota System for Interagency Collaboration (MnSIC) was formed to develop and implement this system. VRS is represented on MnSIC and VRS staff participate on subcommittees that develop service strategies for students and recommendations for governance and coordination of state and local collaborative efforts. Community Transition Interagency Committee (CTIC) Approximately 70 local CTICs promote statewide interagency coordination to remove system barriers and expand community services. CTICs include parents, students, advocacy groups, local businesses, county government, post-secondary education, vocational education, community education, corrections, SSA health care, and other local service providers. SSB staff serve on CTICs, thereby helping to improve and expand vocational services that result in employment outcomes. SSB counselors serve all public, private, and charter high schools in Minnesota. They are active participants on transition planning teams so that each VR eligible student with a disability can access VR services and establish a written VR plan before leaving school. Outreach efforts include working with school nurses, guidance counselors, case managers, principals, social workers, 504 personnel, community agencies and work experience coordinators to identify students with disabilities who are not in special education programs. A referral of all potentially eligible students is sought as soon as possible so that employment services can begin well before the student leaves school. Interagency Agreement to Purchase used Assistive Technology Devices When a child with a disability transitions into a work environment or postsecondary program, VRS or SSB may purchase any assistive technology device that the child's former school district purchased on the child's behalf.

2. INFORMATION ON THE FORMAL INTERAGENCY AGREEMENT WITH THE STATE EDUCATIONAL AGENCY WITH RESPECT TO:

A. CONSULTATION AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE TO ASSIST EDUCATIONAL AGENCIES IN PLANNING FOR THE TRANSITION OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES FROM SCHOOL TO POST-SCHOOL ACTIVITIES, INCLUDING VR SERVICES;

- The Minnesota Department of Education (MDE), Division of Special Education, Vocational Rehabilitation Services and State Services for the Blind agree to share responsibility for ensuring that students with disabilities receive current information about their strengths, interests and preferences in order to make informed choices about integrated competitive employment prior to leaving school.
- MDE, Division of Special Education and VRS/SSB agree to share responsibility for ensuring that students with disabilities receive exposure to career information through Minnesota's Internet System for Education and Employment Knowledge (ISEEK), Minnesota Career Information System (MCIS) or other state supported sites. Information could include connections to postsecondary education training requirements, current labor market forecasts, and job outlook to assist the student in making informed choices about their futures.
- MDE, Division of Special Education and VRS/SSB will work together to implement career exploration and vocational skills development for transition-age students with disabilities.
- MDE, Division of Special Education and VRS/SSB agree to collaborate and promote transition to adult services through participation in existing councils, committees, and other workgroups within respective agencies.

B. TRANSITION PLANNING BY PERSONNEL OF THE DESIGNATED STATE AGENCY AND EDUCATIONAL AGENCY THAT FACILITATES THE DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THEIR INDIVIDUALIZED EDUCATION PROGRAMS;

- MDE, Division of Special Education and VRS/SSB agree to accept shared responsibility for the transition planning for students with disabilities receiving both special education and VR services. DEED's VRS/SSB staff agrees to be active participants in the transition planning process once VR eligibility is determined.

C. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES, INCLUDING FINANCIAL RESPONSIBILITIES, OF EACH AGENCY, INCLUDING PROVISIONS FOR DETERMINING STATE LEAD AGENCIES AND QUALIFIED PERSONNEL RESPONSIBLE FOR TRANSITION SERVICES;

MDE, Division of Special Education is responsible for ensuring that local education agencies provide special education and related services as documented in students' Individualized Education Program.

- DEED's VRS/SSB assists students with disabilities in making informed choices to prepare for, obtain and maintain employment. Services relate to assessing an individual's VR needs, developing and implementing an individualized plan for employment (IPE), and assisting in the achievement of the employment goals for the individuals served.
- MDE, Division of Special Education and VRS/SSB are financially responsible for the services they provide under its own laws and rules. For non-VR transition students If a transition student referral does not want to apply for services but expressed interest in any of the Pre-Employment Transition Services available from SSB, SSB will provide those services until the student graduates from high school. SSB currently has one non-VR transition student participating in Pre-Employment Transition Services. All SSB hosted and sponsored transition events are marketed towards both VR and non-VR transition

students. The Career Expo in April 2016 had several students attend who were not applicants of the VR program. SSB is developing a case management system that will have better tracking abilities for non-VR transition students.

D. PROCEDURES FOR OUTREACH TO AND IDENTIFICATION OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES WHO NEED TRANSITION SERVICES.

MDE, Division of Special Education and VRS/SSB staff will work together to develop outreach tools related to integrated competitive employment for students with disabilities, school personnel, and other community agencies. Materials may include a description of the purpose of the VR program, referral process, eligibility requirements, priority for services, application procedures, and scope of services that may be provided to eligible individuals. • MDE, Division of Special Education and VRS/SSB staff will support the Community Transition Interagency Committees (CTICs) to improve interagency collaboration among those that support youth with disabilities.

E. COOPERATIVE AGREEMENTS WITH PRIVATE NONPROFIT ORGANIZATIONS

(Formerly known as Attachment 4.8(b)(3)). Describe the manner in which the designated State agency establishes cooperative agreements with private non-profit VR service providers.

(SSB) holds master contracts with three full-time Community Rehabilitation Providers (CRPs) which focus on providing adjustment to blindness training as well as other services to blind, visually impaired, and DeafBlind customers. SSB discusses with providers during the development of master contracts the scope of services, programs and rates. After review by SSB staff, the Director of SSB approves all service costs charged by CRPs. As necessary, SSB staff answers questions and discusses any issues with each CRP. SSB has developed and implemented a comprehensive vendor monitoring system which utilizes SharePoint for the overall management of the process. Vendors are reviewed in person on a three year cycle with reviews taking place throughout the year. Feedback to date has been positive from the vendors and is helping to create a better channel for communication and feedback about services delivered. In one case, this has led to a vendor/SSB committee that developed a more meaningful reporting tool with the vendor. As required by statute, SSB contracts with three CRPs to provide the minimum of six weeks intensive training under sleep shades from an adjustment to blindness center for Rehabilitation Counselors. Contracts have also been developed with CRPs to provide transition programs to students. Services are meant to augment work done by school districts with activities on evenings and weekends. Additionally, SSB has implemented "Vendor Forums" twice per year as an opportunity to provide updates about agency happenings, discuss trends in findings from monitoring visits and provide training on pertinent topics such as data practices, navigating the state system for job placement and assistive technology. In the area of assistive technology, vendors were part of a pilot program which tested a new curriculum and reporting tool for technology training. That curriculum and reporting tool have since been adopted as standard procedure. In the summer of 2015, a request for proposal (RFP) was released to the public to provide programming to transition students during the school year in the evenings and weekends designed to augment/supplement training they are receiving in school. Beginning on October 2015, SSB awarded two Adjustment To Blindness training centers contracts to provide these services.

F. ARRANGEMENTS AND COOPERATIVE AGREEMENTS FOR THE PROVISION OF SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES

(Formerly known as Attachment 4.8(b)(4)). Describe the designated State agency's efforts to identify and make arrangements, including entering into cooperative agreements, with other State agencies and other appropriate entities in order to provide supported employment services and extended employment services, as applicable, to individuals with the most significant disabilities, including youth with the most significant disabilities.

F. Arrangements and Cooperative Agreements For The Provision of Supported Employment Services For customers that require other types of training/services from community-based rehabilitation programs, including supported employment program services. State Services for the Blind (SSB) utilizes community rehabilitation programs (CRPs) that have master contracts versus operating agreements with the general rehabilitation Designated State Unit, Vocational Rehabilitation Services (VRS) or with SSB. Due to the changes in Minnesota's new accounting system, the operating agreements shifted to master contracts in October of 2012. With this shift, there were additional requirements for each vendor which included maintenance of liability insurance. As a result of this requirement, several vendors chose to no longer do business with SSB. New vendors have subsequently replaced those individuals, maintaining a high degree of choice and availability of services for customers. Services to all supported employment program customers including youth have and will continue to be provided under fee-for-service contracts with CRPs. SSB's relationship with these CRPs is governed by master contracts with either SSB or VRS for the specific services required. The master contracts describe the services offered by the CRP and the agreed upon cost of each service. Information about each CRP is provided to each customer so that they can make an informed choice in the selection of their service provider. Extended services are secured via individual agreements with non-VR organizations, including a number of agreements with an array of counties in Minnesota.

G. COORDINATION WITH EMPLOYERS

(Formerly known as Attachment 4.8(b)(5)). Describe how the designated State unit will work with employers to identify competitive integrated employment and career exploration opportunities in order to facilitate the provision of:

1. VR SERVICES; AND

There are many ways in which SSB works with employers to identify employment and career exploration opportunities in competitive and integrated settings. SSB has a team of three employment specialists who assist employers in identify their needs and match them with qualified candidates. Some of the services provided to employers include education on the importance of a diverse work force, job site analysis, training on the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), and job retention services for employees with vision issues.

SSB routinely attends networking events to promote disability awareness and sensitivity training through presentations, providing resources and technical assistance to potential public and private employers throughout MN. SSB has presented to the State of MN Human Resources leaders on the advantages of hiring people who are visually impaired, blind and DeafBlind. In addition, presentations have been held for a variety of MN and national companies including Land O' Lakes, the Veteran's Administration, Medtronic, and 3M on SSB services and how qualified candidates can benefit their business. Throughout MN SSB provides training to managers and employers on hiring and working with people with disabilities, in addition to courtesy services, resources, and follow-up to employers. SSB staff provide free, on-site accessibility testing of employer computer systems and data bases in addition to information accessibility support.

SSB actively participates and provides leadership and guidance to local and national groups devoted to connecting employers to qualified individuals with disabilities. This is done through Minnesota Community Advisors on Recruitment and Retention Solutions (MnCARRS), the Council of State Administrators of Vocational Rehabilitation (CSAVR)/ National Employment Team (NET), the Project Search Leadership Team and the Statewide Placement Partnerships. MNCARRS is a partnership between agencies within the State of Minnesota and leaders of organizations representing minority communities, women, veterans, and people with disabilities. MnCARRS partners serve as recruiters and credible voices within their communities to promote the State of Minnesota as an employer of choice. In return, the state provides advance communication of employment opportunities, improved communications about the state's employment processes, assistance with mock interviews, and training to improve candidate's performance throughout the hiring process. Various state agencies and MnCARRS partners participate in career fairs, community outreach events, job information sessions, training sessions, resource sharing, and more. The NET through CSAVR is comprised of one point of contact for each of the 80 rehabilitation programs nationwide. The sole purpose of this team is to connect with employers on a national level including private employers and federal partners. Through the NET, SSB can connect with approximately 2-4 new employers monthly and receives correspondence and job leads from approximately another dozen employers each month. Additionally, SSB provides training and presentations for businesses approximately four to six times annually, last year conducting eight trainings. Each year SSB has customers hired by employers through the NET connection. SSB also frequently acts as the subject matter expert and resource for other state programs that connect directly to employers across Minnesota.

2. TRANSITION SERVICES, INCLUDING PRE-EMPLOYMENT TRANSITION SERVICES, FOR STUDENTS AND YOUTH WITH DISABILITIES.

The employment team at State Services for the Blind is comprised of three employment specialists, one support staff, and two transition placement coordinators (one in the process of being hired). SSB has implemented a model for transition called BRIDGE to Success that is implemented with all eligible and potentially eligible transition students (approaching 150 people). Within BRIDGE (as defined below), the employer relations is vital to the success of the program. As students navigate the world of high school and begin thinking about the future, we offer services and resources that provide a foundation for success. Each of the core areas highlights an essential component that teenagers need in order to succeed after high school: •Basic Skills •Role Models •Initiative •Discovery •Goal Setting •Experiences Through SSB, teens can explore each of these core components and cross the BRIDGE in to the future of work, study, and living independently. In building that BRIDGE, SSB offers resources in technology, career exploration, work experience, adjustment to blindness training (ATB), and peer connections, to help students who are blind, DeafBlind, or low vision develop the skills and confidence for a bright future.

Activities that SSB is providing in coordination with employers are outlined below using the BRIDGE framework: Basic Skills • All students receive assistance from the employment team to learn how to write a resume, how to interview, and other basic job seeking skills. The new transition placement coordinator that is in the process of being hired will be providing more extensive one-on-one job seeking skills training to transition students statewide. Part of the mock interviewing is students must interview with outside employers. They obtain feedback from those employers that helps them improve their skills. • The placement team provides training to these same students around disclosure of disability in the employment process. Role Models • The 1st Annual Career Expo was held in April 2016, and it showcased blind, low vision, and DeafBlind professionals. Transition students went around to each professional and asked questions about the type of work they do and how they do the job with a vision loss. Over 90 individuals participated, including students who were not yet customers of SSB. This will be an annual event that will continue to have employers in the field. • A peer mentorship program is being developed by the employment team that partners students with employers and professionals who also have a vision loss. • The Spectacle quarterly transition newsletter highlights a different working professional every quarter. Initiative • The Summer Transition Program (a two week program for students that is hosted by SSB and the Department of Education) has a component where students go to the radio station in the Communication Center and record their elevator speech for employers. • Students are being asked to represent the sub-committees for the State Rehab Council. Discovery • A big piece of the BRIDGE model is having students learn more about their skills and assets. This includes career exploration. At the Career Expo, there was an exhibit on labor market information. Students learned how to find more information on jobs they are interested in. • Before the graduate from high school, students sit down with their counselor and assigned placement specialist to review job outlook and growth. Part of the process is contacting employers to learn more about the types of work they do. • Students are connected with job shadowing and informational interviewing opportunities with employers in the community to find out more about different types of jobs. • Every year, there is a summer opportunities fair for transition students and their families to explore options for summer. This includes summer camps, ATB centers, employment opportunities (employers come), job seeking classes, and other activities they can take part in. Goal Setting • All transition students are expected to have an Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE) that aligns with their Individualized Education Program (IEP). The development of the IPE is expected to be within 90 days of eligibility and the job goal is one that this projected for the student. Work and career exploration must be part of the IPE. Experiences • Every single student is expected to have some sort of work experience or

volunteer experience prior to graduation. At this time, over 85% of our transition students have met this goal. • Community Rehab Providers (CRPs) have added student work experiences to their contract with SSB to help us meet our goal of every student having a work experience. CRPs and SSB's placement staff have developed relationships with employers that will allow students to work for them. These employers include Lunds Grocery Store and Menards. • As part of the Summer Transition Program (STP), all students participating will be doing a two to four week work experience in a variety of areas, including retail and administrative support. All these students will have a resume completed by a placement specialist. • SSB will be expanding the agreement with the two ATB centers (Blind Inc and Duluth) to add a placement/work experience component to the year-round programs. • SSB is in the process of hiring a second transition placement coordinator whose responsibility will only be placement of students in work experiences throughout the state. • A collaboration with the Apprenticeship program in the state is the next focus of SSB. • SSB has become an employer and opened up three paid student worker positions at the agency. Currently, the Senior Services unit has employed one student worker to assist. • The Business Enterprise Program (BEP) has opened up one paid student worker position with a BEP operator. • SSB is an active representative on Project Search. • SSB is an active representative on the Placement Partnerships and the National Employment Team (NET). We tap into businesses within the Placement Partnerships in order to establish student work opportunities. Project Search is an internship program for students finishing their last year of high school. Instead of going to school they go to three, 10 week internship rotations with a business in the hopes that a job is offered after the 3rd rotation. This is a non-paid program and all students are in an integrated competitive employment situation. The Project Search Leadership team is a group of state directors that oversees school districts requests to start a Project Search program. SSB reviews their proposal and determine if it would be a good site to incorporate the program. There are over 250 Project Search sites around the world. There are five active sites in MN, including Medtronic, Children's Hospital and Clinics, and Hennepin County Medical Center in Minneapolis, Avera Hospital in Marshall, Fairview Lakes Medical Center in Wyoming, MN. A total of five visually impaired customers have taken part, one of which was hired/ employed part-time at Minneapolis Children's Hospital.

H. INTERAGENCY COOPERATION

Describe how the designated State unit will collaborate with the State agency responsible for administering each of the following programs to develop opportunities for competitive integrated employment, to the greatest extent practicable:

1. THE STATE MEDICAID PLAN UNDER TITLE XIX OF THE SOCIAL SECURITY ACT;

1. The State Medicaid plan under Title XIX of the Social Security Act; Medical Assistance, the state's Medicaid program, is administered by the Minnesota Department of Human Services (DHS). Vocational Rehabilitation Services (VRS) and State Services for the Blind (SSB) collaborate closely with DHS in the provision of a variety of Medicaid services: Waiver Programs: Medicaid participants with disabilities who need a defined level of care and choose to live in the community may be eligible for one of the following waivers to help fund the cost of community living and supportive employment:

- Brain Injury Waiver: the person must have a traumatic, acquired or degenerative brain injury and require the level of care typically provided in a nursing facility or neurobehavioral hospital.
- Community Alternatives for Disabled Individuals (CADI) Waiver: the person must have a disability and require the level of care typically provided in a nursing facility.
- Developmental Disability Waiver: the person must have a developmental disability or related condition and require the level of care typically provided in an Intermediate Care Facility for Persons with Developmental Disabilities (ICF/DD).

There is joint planning occurring between the Waiver Programs and the state funded Extended Employment program to maximize the number of people who can access competitive integrated employment through the provision of supported employment services. Many counties have waiting lists for waiver services. VRS and SSB access Medicaid dollars to pay for durable medical supplies such as wheelchairs, hearing aids and communication boards. Medicaid has limits on what they will pay for specific items. If the rehabilitation counselor feels the consumer would benefit from an "upgrade" to the item, Vocational Rehabilitation can pay the difference between the Medicaid payment and the cost of the upgraded product. Medicaid will apply the payment to the consumer's spenddown. Minnesota's Medicaid Infrastructure Grant was a joint project of the Department of Human Services, the Department of Employment and Economic Development (VRS and SSB) and the State Council on Disability. Collaborative efforts started utilizing grant funding has been continued using state appropriations, including:

- Disability Linkage Line (DLL): The DLL is a partnership between DHS and the Centers for Independent Living to provide disability related information and referral resources for Minnesotans with disabilities. Assistance is available in the areas of accessible housing, personal care services, transportation, employment, disability benefits, assistive technology, and other community resources. Services are available through a toll free number or online at www.MinnesotaHelp.info. The most recent expansion of the DLL has been in the area of benefits planning and benefits analysis for beneficiaries of Social Security benefits.
- Disability Benefits 101: DB101 (www.db101.org) is a free online service operated by the Disability Linkage Line that was initially developed using Medicaid Infrastructure grant funding. The program allows people to plan for their future by providing estimator sessions showing how income will impact benefits, explores effective use of work incentives, helps people establish work goals, and provides answers to questions through live chat, phone or email. The program includes short videos of success stories. Many of the DLL staff are certified Community Work Incentive Coordinators and can provide benefits analysis services if there are complex issues. Utilizing Department of Labor - Disability Employment Initiative funding, a new section on Work Benefits for Youth has been added. In addition to VRS and SSB staff being actively involved in the development of the online program, consumers were actively involved in the BETA testing to make sure the program was accessible to people with disabilities.
- SGA Project: the Institute on Community Inclusion at the University of Massachusetts – Boston has received RSA funding to

demonstrate effective strategies to assist SSDI beneficiaries achieve income above the substantial gainful activity (SGA) level. Minnesota VRS is one of the demonstration sites. At time of enrollment, the SSDI beneficiary is assigned a counselor, placement specialist and financial specialist. Eligibility for services is presumed within three days and the Employment Plan is developed within 30 days of application. VRS has partnered with the DLL to provide financial counseling in VR offices. RSA funding was used to provide the benefits planners with financial literacy training so that in addition to benefits planning the financial specialists can provide assistance with improving credits scores, paying off credit card debt, and developing savings plans. It is hoped that the combination of rapid engagement and financial planning services will lead to better outcomes. Although the SGA Project does not receive any Medicaid funding, the financial specialist positions would not have been possible without the initial collaboration with the Medicaid Infrastructure Grant.

2. THE STATE AGENCY RESPONSIBLE FOR PROVIDING SERVICES FOR INDIVIDUALS WITH DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES; AND

The primary agency responsible for services for adults with disabilities is the Minnesota Department of Human Services. The Minnesota State Interagency Committee (MnSIC) has the responsibility to develop and implement a coordinated, multidisciplinary service system for children and youth with disabilities ages three to 21. The Committee brings together the Minnesota Departments of Education, Employment and Economic Development, Commerce, Corrections, Health, Human Rights, and Human Services to develop needed policy change to reduce duplication of local effort and to improve local response to the needs of children and families by developing a coordinated, multidisciplinary service system. Minnesota's Olmstead Plan supports freedom of choice and provides a framework and a series of key activities that must be achieved to ensure Minnesotans with disabilities have the opportunity to live, learn, work and enjoy life in the most integrated setting desired by the person. Governor Mark Dayton appointed an Olmstead Subcabinet to develop and implement this plan. The Subcabinet consists of representatives of the MnSIC agencies listed above, the Housing Finance Agency, the Department of Transportation, the ombudsman for mental health and developmental disabilities, and the Executive Director of the Governor's Council on Developmental Disabilities. VRS and SSB are involved in a joint project with the above agencies which is the Way to Work Project.

3. THE STATE AGENCY RESPONSIBLE FOR PROVIDING MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES.

The primary agency responsible for services for adults with disabilities is the Minnesota Department of Human Services. The Minnesota State Interagency Committee (MnSIC) has the responsibility to develop and implement a coordinated, multidisciplinary service system for children and youth with disabilities ages three to 21. The Committee brings together the Minnesota Departments of Education, Employment and Economic Development, Commerce, Corrections, Health, Human Rights, and Human Services to develop needed policy change to reduce duplication of local effort and to improve local response to the needs of children and families by developing a coordinated, multidisciplinary service system. Minnesota's Olmstead Plan supports freedom of choice and provides a framework and a series of key activities that must be achieved to ensure Minnesotans with disabilities have the opportunity to live, learn, work and enjoy life in the most integrated setting desired by the person. Governor Mark Dayton appointed an Olmstead Subcabinet to develop and implement this plan. The Subcabinet consists of representatives of the MnSIC agencies listed above, the Housing Finance Agency, the Department of Transportation, the ombudsman for mental health and developmental disabilities, and the Executive Director of the Governor's Council on Developmental Disabilities. VRS and SSB are involved in a joint project with the above agencies.

The Individual Placement and Support (IPS) services bring together mental health treatment services and vocational rehabilitation to help move people with serious mental illness into competitive employment. Participants are more likely to achieve employment success, leading to increased income, improved self-esteem, improved quality of life and reduced symptoms.

I. COMPREHENSIVE SYSTEM OF PERSONNEL DEVELOPMENT; DATA SYSTEM ON PERSONNEL AND PERSONNEL DEVELOPMENT

(Formerly known as Attachment 4.10)). Describe the designated State agency's procedures and activities to establish and maintain a comprehensive system of personnel development designed to ensure an adequate supply of qualified State rehabilitation professional and paraprofessional personnel for the designated State unit, including the following:

1. DATA SYSTEM ON PERSONNEL AND PERSONNEL DEVELOPMENT

A. QUALIFIED PERSONNEL NEEDS.

Describe the development and maintenance of a system for collecting and analyzing on an annual basis data on qualified personnel needs with respect to:

i. the number of personnel who are employed by the State agency in the provision of VR services in relation to the number of individuals served, broken down by personnel category;

Minnesota State Services for the Blind (SSB) takes a coordinated approach in utilizing policies and procedures in developing activities to ensure that a comprehensive system of personnel development is maintained. This approach ensures there are staff in the numbers and quantities needed throughout the state and that all staff have access to ongoing development opportunities. SSB intends to provide the highest quality services to SSB customers who are blind, visually impaired or DeafBlind. This comprehensive system of personnel development consists of: • An annual review and analysis of data on current staffing and future needs, as well as a review of each vacancy when it occurs; • Collaboration with institutions of higher education and communication regarding the number of students in the counseling graduate programs; • Policies and actions related to recruitment, preparation, and retention of qualified staff; • Personnel standards in accordance with the Rehabilitation Act; and • Personnel development including methods to assess individual and organizational staff training needs and the provision of in-service training.

SSB maintains data on the number of employees in each personnel category for all of its programs. This data is reviewed on an annual basis and each position is reviewed when a vacancy occurs to determine whether a change in personnel category or services is necessary to meet the current needs of SSB customers. Personnel levels are also reviewed annually when the VR program budget is developed.

SSB's WorkForce Development Unit (WDU), the VR field unit, employs 48 permanent staff positions (excluding those assigned to the Randolph-Sheppard Program). Seventeen positions are currently earmarked for qualified VR counselors. During FFY2015 the ratio of qualified VR counselors (17) to individuals served (1,094) is 1 to 64.4. The ratio of qualified VR counselors to individuals served during FFY16 and into FFY17 is expected to average between 1 to 60 and 1 to 61 depending on the number of counselor vacancies. It is the intention of SSB to fill all counselor positions. SSB does not employ Rehabilitation Teachers, Orientation and Mobility Specialist, Interpreters, or Braille Instructors. SSB currently has: 1 State Director 1 Deputy Director, Program Services 4 Field Operations Supervisor IV 17 Qualified VR Counselor 3 Placement Staff 1 Transition Coordinator 5 Assistive Technology Specialist 7 VR Technician 3 Support Staff 1 Deputy Director, Operations 6 Central Office Admin. Staff 0 Temporary Support Staff

ii. the number of personnel currently needed by the State agency to provide VR services, broken down by personnel category; and

To better provide Pre-Employment Transition Services, SSB is in the process of hiring one additional transition coordinator and modifying one existing Metro counselor position to have a transition only caseload.

iii. projections of the number of personnel, broken down by personnel category, who will be needed by the State agency to provide VR services in 5 years based on projections of the number of individuals to be served, including individuals with significant disabilities, the number of personnel expected to retire or leave the field, and other relevant factors.

The projections for new staff needed over the next five years are: 1 State Director; 0 Deputy Director, Program Services; 1 Field Operations Supervisor IV; 5 Qualified VR Counselor; 3 Placement Staff; 0 Assistive Technology Specialist; 3 VR Technician; 2 Support Staff; 0 Deputy Director, Operations; 2 Central Office Admin. Staff; and 0 Temporary Support Staff.

Data on the rate of blindness, visual impairments and DeafBlindness indicators suggest the potential population of customers served will increase due to aging workers remaining in the workforce. We expect greater numbers of individuals will be accessing SSB services to help remain in employment. SSB has a dedicated outreach staff member who is increasing marketing to potential customer groups through presentations and electronic information. Given these changes, SSB will continue evaluating and revamping its structure to meet the increased needs over the next five years.

Staff retirement and attrition are a factor in the estimated 17 positions turning over in the next five years. A major recruitment strategy specifically for incoming rehabilitation counselors is focusing on their understanding and experience of the business world. Counselor Business Intelligence is believed to correlate to better employment outcomes and building effective relationships with employers. SSB wants counselors who are able to effectively do this.

B. PERSONNEL DEVELOPMENT

Describe the development and maintenance of a system for collecting and analyzing on an annual basis data on personnel development with respect to:

i. a list of the institutions of higher education in the State that are preparing VR professionals, by type of program;

Collaboration with Institutions of Higher Education Minnesota has two credentialed graduate programs in vocational rehabilitation counseling. The two programs are Minnesota State University at Mankato (MSU-M) and St. Cloud State University (SCSU). SSB management maintains contact with the Directors of the Vocational Rehabilitation Counseling graduate programs through direct one-on-one conversations and by serving on advisory committees.

The University of Wisconsin at Stout is very close to the Minnesota border. SSB has now hired several graduates from their programs. The master's Vocational Rehabilitation program at Stout offers concentration in two main areas: rehabilitation counseling (RC) or dual concentration in vocational evaluation and rehabilitation counseling (VE/RC). As a CORE accredited rehabilitation counseling (RC) program, graduates of either the RC or the VE/RC concentrations are eligible to apply for the certified rehabilitation counselor (CRC) and/or the professional counselor (PC) training

certificate (leading to Licensed Professional Counselor (LPC)). In addition, graduates of the dual VE/RC concentration meet or exceed any existing criteria for certification or registration of vocational evaluation specialists. They offer their program both on campus and online. All graduates meet the Minnesota standard for a qualified rehabilitation counselor. This represents a significant pool of qualified counselors that more than meets the anticipated staffing needs of SSB. The Supervisors of WDU have periodic opportunities to meet with students at these three universities and, as a result, students with disabilities and from minority backgrounds will frequently express interest in paid internship experiences with SSB. The Deputy Director of Program Services provides feedback to the counseling program staff regarding the skill needs of VR counselors at SSB.

ii. the number of students enrolled at each of those institutions, broken down by type of program; and

Minnesota State University at Mankato (MSU-M) 10 students St. Cloud State University (SCSU) 22 students University of Wisconsin at Stout 20 on campus students enrolled (11 Rehabilitation Counseling; 9 dual major Vocational Evaluation and Rehabilitation Counseling) and 47 on line students (all Rehabilitation Counseling) for the 2015-2016 academic year.

iii. the number of students who graduated during the prior year from each of those institutions with certification or licensure, or with the credentials for certification or licensure, broken down by the personnel category for which they have received, or have the credentials to receive, certification or licensure.

Minnesota State University at Mankato (MSU-M) graduated 4 students St. Cloud State University (SCSU) graduated 12 students University of Wisconsin at Stout graduated 20 students

All graduates from these three programs have the necessary credentials to qualify for national certification. All graduates meet the Minnesota standard for a qualified rehabilitation counselor. This represents a significant pool of qualified counselors that more than meets the anticipated staffing needs of SSB.

2. PLAN FOR RECRUITMENT, PREPARATION AND RETENTION OF QUALIFIED PERSONNEL

Describe the development and implementation of a plan to address the current and projected needs for qualified personnel including, the coordination and facilitation of efforts between the designated State unit and institutions of higher education and professional associations to recruit, prepare, and retain personnel who are qualified, including personnel from minority backgrounds and personnel who are individuals with disabilities.

Plan for Recruitment, Preparation and Retention of Qualified Personnel SSB annually reviews and updates its plan to address current and projected needs for qualified personnel. This review looks at overall staffing patterns, expected customer demand and overall needs of the unit. SSB employs three main strategies around the recruitment and retention of qualified personnel. 1. Recruitment—In addition to more traditional forms of advertising for vacant positions, SSB utilizes social media and national search groups to help with attracting qualified candidates. The close relationship established with the three local universities helps with promoting openings and getting viable candidates. Recent changes in the economic climate have once again provided raises for state employees and SSB is now able to offer a more attractive starting salary and opportunities for promotion. 2. Use of Internships— SSB offers paid internship opportunities to select students enrolled

in Master's-level rehabilitation counselor education programs in Minnesota and throughout the nation. Use of these internships continues to be one means to attract individuals, including those from minority backgrounds and individuals with significant disabilities, to enroll in rehabilitation counselor education programs, have a positive experience with the public VR program, and increase the probability of their future employment in the public system. 3. Workplace Culture/Employer of Choice- SSB strives to have a vibrant workplace culture and becoming an employer of choice to help retain employees. From the point of onboarding employees to throughout their career with SSB, efforts are made to be inclusive, interactive and to utilize each employee's strengths to the fullest. Additionally, SSB offers many internal and external training opportunities that are attractive to counselors wanting to maintain their CRC. This includes seven weeks of adjustment to blindness training which gives a unique opportunity for full immersion into the blind visually impaired customer experience.

3. PERSONNEL STANDARDS

Describe the State agency's policies and procedures for the establishment and maintenance of personnel standards consistent with section 101(a)(7)(B) and 34 CFR 361.18(c) to ensure that designated State unit professional and paraprofessional personnel are adequately trained and prepared, including:

A. STANDARDS THAT ARE CONSISTENT WITH ANY NATIONAL OR STATE-APPROVED OR -RECOGNIZED CERTIFICATION, LICENSING, REGISTRATION, OR OTHER COMPARABLE REQUIREMENTS THAT APPLY TO THE PROFESSION OR DISCIPLINE IN WHICH SUCH PERSONNEL ARE PROVIDING VR SERVICES; AND

Policies and procedures are in place for establishing and maintaining standards that ensure personnel needed by SSB are appropriately and adequately prepared and trained. Such policies and procedures, including negotiated labor agreements with exclusive bargaining representatives, also cover the selection, retention, development, and termination of staff employed by SSB, and includes requirements of State law concerning the classification of SSB positions by Minnesota Management and Budget. The academic degree standard for a vocational rehabilitation counselor at SSB is the Master's degree in rehabilitation counseling with graduate-level coursework in each of the following: theories and techniques of counseling; medical/psycho-social aspects of disability; assessment; and occupational information or job placement. A Master's degree in a closely related field also meets the necessary standard. SSB works closely with its human resources to ensure that only those individuals who have earned a Master's degree in rehabilitation counseling or a closely related field qualify for placement on eligible lists for rehabilitation counselor. Therefore, all counselors fully meet the position standard and SSB does not have any expenditures for staff training to obtain a graduate degree in rehabilitation counseling. SSB does not anticipate any factors that would adversely affect the ability to hire qualified staff. VR Technicians are required by the State of MN to be certified with Authority for Local Purchasing (ALP). The ALP certification is provided and monitored by the Materials Management Division in the Department of Administration. SSB does not employ Rehabilitation Teachers, Orientation and Mobility Instructors, Braille Instructors or Interpreters. Their services are contracted and they are required to meet the SSB standards for contract approval.

B. THE ESTABLISHMENT AND MAINTENANCE OF EDUCATION AND EXPERIENCE REQUIREMENTS, IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 101(A)(7)(B)(II) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT, TO ENSURE THAT THE PERSONNEL HAVE A 21ST CENTURY UNDERSTANDING OF THE EVOLVING LABOR FORCE AND THE NEEDS OF INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES.

DEED offers several Labor Market Intelligence classes which SSB staff attend on a bi-annual basis. New employees come to SSB with a variety of knowledge, skills and abilities. Nearly all need SSB to provide them with additional information, and in some cases training, to ensure they have the tools and resources to do their job. Minnesotans expect SSB to be “experts” in the field of blindness. As the only public organization providing blind services, SSB has an obligation to train staff on the essential aspects of blindness, visual impairment and DeafBlindness. To meet that expectation, SSB has a comprehensive training program about blindness, visual impairment and DeafBlindness consisting of:

- Introduction to Blindness and Visual Impairment —PHASE I. Responsibilities of SSB staff do vary, but there are minimum requirements for all positions and are part of this course which is required of all new employees.
- Introduction to Blindness and Visual Impairment —PHASE II. “Under the blindfold” and with simulators are training activities which will be required of some new staff as determined by SSB management.
- Continuing Education in Blindness and Visual Impairment —PHASE III. Training consists of specialized and ongoing training related to blindness and vision loss and will be required of staff as determined by SSB management.
- Orientation to DeafBlind. All new WDU staff have a one-on-one training session with the WDU’s DeafBlind specialist. For development purposes staff may request additional or more advanced training. These requests are considered on a case-by-case basis taking into account organizational needs and resources. All WDU staff members new to SSB will receive Introduction to Blindness —Phase 1 and Phase 2 training on the essential aspects of blindness and visual impairment and Orientation to DeafBlind within three months of hire. Statutory language requires all Rehabilitation Counselors to successfully complete a minimum of 6 weeks of intensive training under supervision from an adjustment to blindness center.

4. STAFF DEVELOPMENT.

Describe the State agency's policies, procedures, and activities to ensure that, consistent with section 101(a)(7)(C) of the Rehabilitation Act, all personnel employed by the designated State unit receive appropriate and adequate training in terms of:

A. SYSTEM OF STAFF DEVELOPMENT

a system of staff development for professionals and paraprofessionals within the designated State unit, particularly with respect to assessment, vocational counseling, job placement, and rehabilitation technology, including training implemented in coordination with entities carrying out State programs under section 4 of the Assistive Technology Act of 1998; and

Staff Development In collaboration with other offices of the Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED), SSB utilizes a collaborative model when looking at employee performance and creates a dialogue between supervisor and staff. Together, they create goals for the upcoming year and put plans into place that will help the individual reach those goals. A final component is completing a review of any essential professional and job-related training that is either desired by the employee or required by the employer. Ongoing in-service training offerings give employees a wide variety of options for enhancing and improving skills. With the passage of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) and with the extensive emphasis in WIOA on

Pre-employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) SSB is looking forward to the Acts final interpretations from the Rehabilitation Services Administration. The interpretations will guide training plans for the remainder of this year and into the next. Meanwhile, staff training will include fundamental counseling and job placement skills that now will include all staff that make up the WDU teams.

B. ACQUISITION AND DISSEMINATION OF SIGNIFICANT KNOWLEDGE

procedures for the acquisition and dissemination of significant knowledge from research and other sources to designated State unit professionals and paraprofessionals.

SSB will continue to encourage coordination of personnel development among agencies through the exchange of relevant information and mutually supportive activities. Such coordination includes appropriately involved representatives from the education and rehabilitation communities in staff training activities of each organization. Other sources of significant knowledge from research and other sources are disseminated to staff by electronic means or during staff unit meetings or trainings.

5. PERSONNEL TO ADDRESS INDIVIDUAL COMMUNICATION NEEDS

Describe how the designated State unit has personnel or obtains the services of other individuals who are able to communicate in appropriate modes of communication with or in the native language of applicants or eligible individuals who have limited English speaking ability.

SSB assures that all materials are available to staff in the desired format. Print material is, as appropriate, made available to staff in braille and other alternate formats. SSB is fortunate to have Braille services onsite and is able to produce high quality Braille in short timeframes. Minnesota is also fortunate to have several spoken and written language and American Sign Language interpreter services available who contract with the State for use with non-English speaking individuals and/or DeafBlind individuals.

6. COORDINATION OF PERSONNEL DEVELOPMENT UNDER THE INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES EDUCATION ACT

As appropriate, describe the procedures and activities to coordinate the designated State unit's comprehensive system of personnel development with personnel development under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.

SSB coordinates personnel development with activities and efforts of Minnesota Department of Education Concerning IDEA, transition activities, and supported employment with special focus on development activities with the State Vision Network, the primary communication vehicle for vision teachers throughout the State.

J. STATEWIDE ASSESSMENT

(Formerly known as Attachment 4.11(a)).

1. PROVIDE AN ASSESSMENT OF THE REHABILITATION NEEDS OF INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES RESIDING WITHIN THE STATE, PARTICULARLY THE VR SERVICES NEEDS OF THOSE:

A. WITH THE MOST SIGNIFICANT DISABILITIES, INCLUDING THEIR NEED FOR SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES;

SSB feels that with blind, visually impaired and DeafBlind individuals all of its customers can be viewed as having significant disabilities. Supported Employment services are provided to SSB customers as needed. With regards to youth, SSB is committed to providing all transition students work experiences with or without support employment services.

B. WHO ARE MINORITIES;

While Minnesota has always been a home for persons considered part of minority groups, the numbers and the diversity of these groups has changed significantly over the past twenty-five years. According to census statistics, Minnesota's population of individuals classified as White increased by only 2.8% between 2000 and 2010 while Black, American Indian, Asian and Hispanic populations increased by 59.8%, 10.8%, 50.9% and 74.5% respectively. The significant increase in the population of Black Minnesotans is due to an influx of individuals from several African countries which have been in the throes of famine and civil war. For example, Minnesota's Somali population is the largest in the United States according to a Census Bureau report released in October 2011. That report estimated the number of people of Somali ancestry in the state to be more than 32,000. The United States Hmong population in 2009 was 226,522 and 54,524 resided in Minnesota. This number makes up a significant portion of the increase in our Asian population. According to the Suburbanstats.org website, <https://suburbanstats.org/population/how-many-people-live-in-minnesota>, populations of minority groups as of 2014 are: Black 274,412; American Indian 60,916; Asian 214,234; Hispanic and Latin 250,258. These groups represent 15% of Minnesota's total population of 5,303,925, and, according to the same source, there another almost 250,000 persons of multiracial background who do not fit into the above. For reasons beyond the scope of this report, these groups experience higher unemployment, lower average income, and less education. Members of these groups who are blind face additional challenges which do fall into the scope of this report. In order to receive the services that are needed to help them reach their full potential as blind people, they must deal with agencies of a government they may not trust. They must understand information about services and what is expected of them even though this information is written in a language that is new to them. Finally, even with the best efforts of everyone involved, cultural differences can be a barrier to rehabilitation. Fortunately, Minnesota State Services for the Blind and other service providers in Minnesota have been aware of the existence of these barriers for some time now. A number of concentrated efforts have been made by State Services for the Blind over the past few years to reach blind persons in minority groups. Examples of such efforts include:

- Outreach to state Councils which advocate for minority communities in Minnesota
- Outreach to Wisdom Steps (state program in Native American Communities that promotes healthy living for seniors)

- Outreach to CLUES, and Urban Ventures
- Participation in Hmong Resource Fair
- Published an Article about SSB services in the Spokesman-Recorder, a publication for the African-American community in Minnesota

A Minority Outreach committee of the SRC-B has been in existence for some time, and has played an active advisory role in the developments of some of these efforts. Community Rehabilitation Programs have started to develop tailored programs to meet the needs of this population as well. Blind, Incorporated, for example, has worked for more than a decade to help those for whom English is new to learn the English Language while starting on the road to success as a blind person. So what remains to be done? RSA Indicator 1.2 has been used to measure the effectiveness of services offered to customers who are members of minority groups by comparing their rate of successful closures to the rate of those not considered members of minority groups. The goal is 80%, and this standard is applied when a state agency has more than 100 customers from minority groups closed from services. Minnesota did not reach that number until very recently so there are no historical statistics to reference. The number was 0.7128 in 2012, 0.77 in 2013, and 0.88 in 2014 to the current calculation of 0.817. This shows that meaningful progress has been made but that there is still work to be done. This fact has been acknowledged by the development of strategies to address this gap within the goals and priorities documents of the past several years. We will examine the effectiveness of these strategies and the progress made with respect to increasing the effectiveness of services to members of minority groups in the next year.

C. WHO HAVE BEEN UNSERVED OR UNDERSERVED BY THE VR PROGRAM;

Two groups have emerged in this analysis that have been unserved or underserved. While services to senior citizens has primarily fallen into the category of independent living, trends indicate that there could be a significant increase in the numbers of persons considered to be "seniors" who will be seeking employment. Two factors that make this likely are the increasing numbers of those considered to be "seniors," and the increased average life expectancy. For example, men and women who have reached the age of 65 will live on average to 81 and 84 respectively. While this means that one can look forward to more years of retirement than ever before, it also puts more strain upon personal budgets. In addition to supplementing one's income, there are significant incentives to delaying the use of Social Security retirement benefits. While the age for full retirement benefits has been raised to 66 for those approaching retirement, there is a significant gain for each year that social security benefits are delayed until the age of 70. Some companies that provide pension programs, determine the size of monthly payments by the five years of highest earnings of the recipient. This means that the size of a pension payment can often be significantly increased by working one or two more years. The result of these factors is that there will be more pressure on seniors to continue in their current jobs or seek part time work after dealing with vision loss. It will be necessary to develop some knowledge of the problems faced by seniors when seeking employment. The very fact that an analysis by the Humphrey Institute was requested and funding indicates that State Services for the Blind recognizes that this is a serious challenge, and the findings of the Humphrey Institute report have frequently been referenced by the agency's director and other staff members. Still, the magnitude of this challenge is well worth spotlighting here. There are additional challenges faced by customers of State Services for the Blind who, in addition to blindness, are hard of hearing or deaf. To assist in developing policies and processes that more effectively meet the needs of these customers, a committee of the State Rehabilitation Council of the blind was established some time ago. Their work has been used here to identify gaps. There are three gaps

outlined here although work is already in progress to address them. They are staff training, communication, and dealing with the isolation experienced by transition-aged DeafBlind customers. Since most people have little exposure to persons who are part of this group, and because they represent a fairly small portion of all customers, efforts have been made to develop some expertise by designating that particular staffs receive specific training and experience. Nevertheless, normal staff turn-over means that there is an on-going need for training to meet the needs of this customer group. It is also important that other staff who may interact with DeafBlind customers, even if not directly, are aware of the specific needs of this customer group. Therefore, it is important that further development of staff training regarding the needs of DeafBlind customers continue. Communication is a second area that requires continued efforts. The DeafBlind Committee has been working on developing guidelines on the creation of documents using simplified English to assist customers who are still developing their language skills. This work also has a positive impact on other customers who come from other cultures where English is not the primary language. A number of documents have been produced, but work is still in progress on developing a generalized approach to creating documents using simplified English. Work remains to fill this gap. Finally, it has become apparent that DeafBlind customers of transition age are often very isolated. According to the "Unduplicated Child Count" available from the Minnesota Department of Education, there were 32 transition-aged students primarily identified as DeafBlind in 2013. The total number of transition-aged students who were identified as visually impaired or DeafBlind was 137. Over the past four years, the percentage of DeafBlind transition-aged students was consistently between 20% and 25%. This is a small enough number, that when distributed throughout the state, would indicate that these students are most often not going to be in contact with other DeafBlind students. The DeafBlind Committee is working on the development of a mentoring program to provide contact with adults who can serve as role models and suggest ways of handling social and educational challenges. It seems likely that this might be an area into which some of the newly required 15% of federal dollars that must be used for transition customers could be directed.

D. WHO HAVE BEEN SERVED THROUGH OTHER COMPONENTS OF THE STATEWIDE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM; AND

Services through the local Workforce Centers are available to individuals with disabilities and provide classes, workshops, and pre-employment services. A small percentage of those individuals who utilize the Workforce Centers are blind, visually impaired, or DeafBlind. SSB works with the Director of the Workforce Centers to keep staff Workforce Center staff trained in the etiquette and tips in working with blind, visually impaired and DeafBlind individuals. Additionally, SSB works to remind them about updating computers with accessible computer programs and sees this through until completed. Despite these efforts, customers frequently do not feel comfortable utilizing the Workforce Centers and choose to work with SSB who is recognized as more knowledgeable in the area of blindness.

E. WHO ARE YOUTH WITH DISABILITIES AND STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES, INCLUDING, AS APPROPRIATE, THEIR NEED FOR PRE-EMPLOYMENT TRANSITION SERVICES OR OTHER TRANSITION SERVICES.

An important and unique group of possible customers for State Services for the Blind are those who are considered to be of transition age. In general, this category has included students between the ages of fourteen and twenty-one years of age, however recent legislation has expanded this category to include those who are not students with an upper age limit of twenty-four. We have identified two gaps that need to be filled. As is generally the case, identifying gaps does not imply

that nothing is currently being done in these areas. The intent here is, rather, to indicate that the need for more attention is a priority.

There is significant anecdotal evidence from disabled students' offices in colleges and universities that many students are not well-equipped to handle the requirements of college as they begin that phase of their education. This appears to be the case even though they have the necessary qualifications on paper to have been accepted. There are many reasons for this, particularly wide variations between services available in various school districts. Minnesota State Services for the Blind has been making significant efforts to reach transition-aged students to attempt to connect them with training and experience that will better equip students for the future. For a number of reasons, though, this continues to present challenges. Some students are located long distances from services that could be of help. In other cases, students and parents do not realize the importance in thinking beyond high school graduation. In addition to State Services for the Blind being aware of the difficulties faced by transition-aged students, Congress has also tried to confront this problem. With the recent passage and signing of the Workforce Investment and Opportunity Act (WIOA), there has been attention directed toward this category of Vocational Rehabilitation customers. Agencies have been directed to spend 15% of their federal dollars on transition-aged students, and, as mentioned above, the category has been expanded. This has created a second gap that must be addressed. While there is plenty that needs to be done, the mandate to spend 15% of federal dollars means that effective approaches of spending this money must be developed quickly. In addition, this could cause dollars that were being spend on the provision of other services to be diverted to services for transition-aged students. This means that priorities might change and additional funding for other services may need to be sought quickly. SSB has hired a former high school teacher as a Transition Coordinator in an effort to better address the increasing needs of transition aged youth and students. Additionally, SSB has created transition programs to provide student work experiences and programming to augment work done by school districts by offering activities for students in the evening and/or on weekends. The goal of the program is to provide more opportunities for Minnesota students who are blind, visually impaired or DeafBlind to enhance their skills and readiness for post-secondary work and training. In summary, there are two gaps that are related to transition-aged students. They are reaching more transition-aged students, and dealing with the challenges of allocating and effectively spending 15% of federal dollars as prescribed by WIOA. We know that Minnesota State Services for the Blind is already aware of both of these gaps and that they are working on addressing them. We will be working to gain a better understanding of these efforts in the next year of this process. Finally, it has become apparent that DeafBlind customers of transition age are often very isolated. According to the "Unduplicated Child Count" available from the Minnesota Department of Education, there were 32 transition-aged students primarily identified as DeafBlind in 2013. The total number of transition-aged students who were identified as visually impaired or DeafBlind was 137. Over the past four years, the percentage of DeafBlind transition-aged students was consistently between 20% and 25%. This is a small enough number, that when distributed throughout the state, would indicate that these students are most often not going to be in contact with other DeafBlind students. The DeafBlind Committee is working on the development of a mentoring program to provide contact with adults who can serve as role models and suggest ways of handling social and educational challenges. It seems likely that this might be an area into which some of the newly required 15% of federal dollars that must be used for transition customers could be directed.

2. IDENTIFY THE NEED TO ESTABLISH, DEVELOP, OR IMPROVE COMMUNITY REHABILITATION PROGRAMS WITHIN THE STATE; AND

The availability of community rehabilitation programs varies by service and location within the state. To better ascertain the needs of SSB customers for community rehabilitation programs, a survey of SSB staff was conducted looking at the type of services need by location. The survey also addressed the amount of waiting time for services by type and location and estimated amount of additional community rehabilitation program providers needed by type and location. The survey data will be used to create a plan to increase the amount community rehabilitation programs and services available to SSB customers.

With the greater emphasis being placed now on transition aged youth, the need for more transition programs has been identified. SSB has issued a Request for Proposal to develop year round transition services to students with disabilities. Two contracts were awarded and SSB recently evaluated the programs first year and is making adjustments going forward.

3. INCLUDE AN ASSESSMENT OF THE NEEDS OF INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES FOR TRANSITION CAREER SERVICES AND PRE-EMPLOYMENT TRANSITION SERVICES, AND THE EXTENT TO WHICH SUCH SERVICES ARE COORDINATED WITH TRANSITION SERVICES PROVIDED UNDER THE INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES EDUCATION ACT .

SSB currently serves 123 out of the identified 141 blind, visually impaired and DeafBlind students by the Minnesota Department of Education and continues to work towards reaching all identified students. SSB has hired a former high school teacher as a Transition Coordinator in an effort to better address the increasing needs of transition aged youth and students. Additionally, SSB has created transition programs to provide student work experiences and programming to augment work done by school districts by offering activities for students in the evening and/or on weekends. The goal of the program is to provide more opportunities for Minnesota students who are blind, visually impaired or DeafBlind to enhance their skills and readiness for post-secondary work and training. SSB's Transition Coordinator sits on the Site Council for the Minnesota State Academy for the Blind. Additionally, the coordinator provides training and education to Minnesota Teachers of the Blind and Visually Impaired on SSB services and how those services can supplement students Individual Employment Program (IEP) goals. SSB has a close relationship with the Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) Specialist for the Blind and Visually Impaired. The specialist is a member of the State Rehabilitation council for the Blind (SRC-B) and serves on its Transition Committee.

SSB and MDE is actively involved in one unique summer program focused on transition. The Summer Transition Program (STP) serves as many as 25 high school juniors and/or seniors each summer. It is housed at St. Thomas University in St Paul, Minnesota, and is designed to provide alternative skills training and career exploration activities for participating students. Staff members assist students with transition goals that may include informational interviews, job shadowing, and mentoring. This gives students a first-hand experience in the world of work. While living in the dorms at St. Thomas, students also participate in a variety of independent living activities with specific mobility, self-care, communication, leadership, and related goals. SSB placement staff assist during the experience with career assessment, resume writing, and interviewing skills.

K. ANNUAL ESTIMATES

(Formerly known as Attachment 4.11(b)). Describe:

1. THE NUMBER OF INDIVIDUALS IN THE STATE WHO ARE ELIGIBLE FOR SERVICES;

According to the U.S. Census Bureau's three year American Community Survey, Minnesota has an estimated 75,000 citizens between the ages of 18 and 64 who have visual difficulties.

2. THE NUMBER OF ELIGIBLE INDIVIDUALS WHO WILL RECEIVE SERVICES UNDER:

A. THE VR PROGRAM;

Minnesota State Services for the Blind estimates approximately 830 individuals will receive case services under title I of the Act in 2016. Approximately 15 individuals will concurrently receive case services under title VI, part B of the Act.

B. THE SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM; AND

It is estimated 15 individuals will be served under the Supported Employment Program.

C. EACH PRIORITY CATEGORY, IF UNDER AN ORDER OF SELECTION;

Minnesota State Services for the Blind will be implementing an order of selection October 1, 2015 and will be not be able to serve all eligible individuals.

It is estimated that the number of individuals served in Category A will be 228, Category B will be 343, and Category C will be 259.

3. THE NUMBER OF INDIVIDUALS WHO ARE ELIGIBLE FOR VR SERVICES, BUT ARE NOT RECEIVING SUCH SERVICES DUE TO AN ORDER OF SELECTION; AND

SSB has 10 adults and 2 transition students on the waiting list.

4. THE COST OF SERVICES FOR THE NUMBER OF INDIVIDUALS ESTIMATED TO BE ELIGIBLE FOR SERVICES. IF UNDER AN ORDER OF SELECTION, IDENTIFY THE COST OF SERVICES FOR EACH PRIORITY CATEGORY.

The average estimated costs for Category A are \$9,000, Category B are \$7,800, Category C are \$5,700, and Supported Employment is \$4,666.

Costs for case services provided under title I of the Act are estimated at \$6,200,000. Costs for supported employment case services under Title VI, Part B of the Act are estimated at \$70,000.

L. STATE GOALS AND PRIORITIES

The designated State unit must:

1. IDENTIFY IF THE GOALS AND PRIORITIES WERE JOINTLY DEVELOPED

Identify if the goals and priorities were jointly developed and agreed to by the State VR agency and the State Rehabilitation Council, if the State has a Council, and jointly agreed to any revisions.

This section outlines the strategies that will assist State Services for the Blind's (SSB) vocational rehabilitation program to achieve the goals and priorities for the vocational rehabilitation program. The 2016 goals and priorities were jointly developed and were formally agreed to by SSB and the State Rehabilitation Council for the Blind (SRC-B).

2. IDENTIFY THE GOALS AND PRIORITIES IN CARRYING OUT THE VR AND SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT PROGRAMS.

SSB, in conjunction with the SRC-B is committed to the following priorities in carrying out the VR and Supported Employment programs: FOCUS AREA: JOBS, MORE JOBS, BETTER JOBS • Increase competitive integrated employment outcomes by 3% from the previous year. o Strategies: ? Annual review of customer base with counselors and develop targeted plans for those in "ready for employment" status. ? Complete revision of intake process including materials, training for staff, and incorporation of an intake overview training for customers. ? Ensuring applicants fully understand the benefits of competitive integrated employment. ? Work with Department of Human Services (DHS) in the Olmstead interagency workgroup focused on blending and braiding funding that allow access to extended services for the long term supports needed for customers for desiring employment. ? Active participation in the State interagency workgroup promoting the Governor's executive order to improve hiring persons with disabilities in state government to 7%. SSB provides technical assistance to HR Directors, Accessibility Coordinators, and IT staff in accommodations, reviews software and hardware issues, and makes recommendations to the Governor and his staff of steps that can be taken to improve hiring. • Increase the percentage of eligible individuals achieving employment outcomes from 55% to 70%. o Strategies: ? Regularly analyze data of unsuccessful closures to determine trends, issues and opportunities. From that develop plans to mitigate those problems. ? Implement the new intake process so individuals have a clear understanding of the rights and responsibilities of all parties when entering the public vocational rehabilitation program. • Implement the primary indicators of performance under section 116. o Strategies: ? Currently, SSB is unable to capture the data required under the section as some is not collected in our current system and other data is not available to us. After an audit of the Unemployment Insurance Program, the IRS made several recommendation about others accessing their data. SSB did not have an acceptable agreement unlike VRS general. SSB has been working with the central office Data Practices Administrator to secure the appropriate agreement to access this data. ? SSB is working with Title's I, II, and III under WIOA in Minnesota to collaborate in securing other data around the performance accountability measures. ? Work with the development team and build tracking mechanisms into the new case management system set to launch June 2017. FOCUS AREA-SSB-Your Resource Within Reach • Increase the number of transition students receiving Pre-Employment Transition Services (ETS) from SSB to 100% of students identified by the Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) as blind, visually impaired or DeafBlind. (Currently serving 123 of 141 students identified- compared to 61 in August, 2015) o Strategies: ? Identify and communicate with all transition aged students who are blind, visually impaired or DeafBlind who are not currently engaged with SSB so they are informed of services. ? Meet with Special Education Directors

outlining SSB's Pre-ETS services and disseminating materials for distribution in their districts. ? Regular communication with teachers for Blind and Visually Impaired (BVI) students through the BVI listserv about SSB opportunities for students so they can share this with families and encourage them to apply for services. ? Work with MDE to develop a data sharing agreement so student names can be shared with SSB. • Annually, 95% of Pre-ETS students served will participate in at least one skill building opportunity outside of the school setting each year. o Strategies: ? Promote and continually revamp the newly developed year-round transition program with involved Community Rehabilitation Providers. ? Promote summer opportunities to students and families. ? Annually co-sponsor a two-week Summer Transition Program with the MDE for 12-16 students on a college campus with a focus on independent living skills, skills of blindness, technology training, employment, and socialization. ? Co-sponsor a Career Expo with the Minneapolis Community and Technical College where students meet professionals who are blind, visually impaired, or DeafBlind, to learn about careers. ? Work with the DeafBlind committee to pair DeafBlind students with DeafBlind mentors. • During their senior year, 100% of transition aged students planning to attend college will complete technology and travel assessments and receive requisite equipment and training prior to graduation. o Strategies: ? Each fall counselors identify students that are graduating. ? Technology specialists complete a comprehensive assessment and procure required equipment. ? Training is provided to students to build necessary skills for entering college. • Increase the vendor base able to serve DeafBlind individuals so they have better access to training for travel skills and placement (Target-5 vendors). o Strategies: ? Work with Helen Keller National Center (HKNC) to provide training to O & M instructors in Minnesota on training techniques for DeafBlind. ? Work with HKNC and current placement vendors/potential vendors regarding training techniques for DeafBlind. • Identify set DeafBlind counselors and provide them with specialized training. o Strategies: ? Identify DeafBlind counselors and assign a DeafBlind caseload. ? Provide DeafBlind counselors with training at DeafBlind camp in collaboration with HKNC. ? Participate in the DeafBlind consortium of agencies, including presenting at conferences, panels, and policy projects. • Increase outreach efforts within the five top minority communities in Minnesota so they are aware of SSB and have access to information about SSB by participating in 10 touchpoint activities throughout the year. o Strategies: ? Work with the SSB SRC – B Minority Outreach Committee to develop a list of networks that have not yet been targeted by SSB. ? Develop plan of contacts and participation in meetings, seminars, and conferences each year. FOCUS AREA: SSB-A Great Place to Work • Increase the numbers of individuals hired by SSB that reflect the customer base served by 3. o Strategies: ? All SSB job postings have a preferred qualification of fluency in a second language. ? All individuals meeting the required qualifications and are flagged as "special population" defined by Human Resources are granted an interview. ? SSB will participate in the Connect 700 Hour program for the State of Minnesota. ? All postings are sent to consumer groups for broad dissemination. ? SSB will hire at least 3 student workers who are blind, visually impaired, or DeafBlind. • Implement the accepted Assistive Technology workgroup recommendation by piloting CETT (Customer Evaluation of Technology and Training) by December 31, 2016. Implement strengths based meeting framework within the team model process by December 31, 2016.

3. ENSURE THAT THE GOALS AND PRIORITIES ARE BASED ON AN ANALYSIS OF THE FOLLOWING AREAS:

Goals and priorities were based on the new WIOA requirements, especially Pre-ETS, the Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment (CSNA), and SSB's participation in Minnesota's Olmstead plan which promotes integrated living and working environments.

A. THE MOST RECENT COMPREHENSIVE STATEWIDE ASSESSMENT, INCLUDING ANY UPDATES;

As identified in the CSNA, unsuccessful closures rate have been on the SRCB's radar since 2010. Various attempts have been made to address this situation with some level of success. While unsuccessful closures have decreased in relation to successful closures, continued work and monitoring is needed to bring SSB back to the levels experienced in 2011. SSB has completely revamped the intake process so that applicants truly intend to achieve an employment outcome versus passive involvement. Once in the door, customers are engaged in a team model process designed to improve employment outcomes. This is in its second year of implementation. With the implementation of WIOA as it relates to Pre-ETS, SSB is in a position to focus tremendous effort around Pre-ETS. Significant anecdotal evidence from disability offices in colleges and universities suggests that many students are not well equipped to handle the requirements of college as they begin that phase of their education. Providing training in alternative techniques will better prepare students for college and career. Comprehensive analysis was completed in the CSNA of the needs of blind persons who are members of minority groups. The numbers and diversity of these groups has changed significantly over the past twenty-five years. According to census statistics, Minnesota's population of individuals classified as White increased only 2.8% between 2000-2010 while black, American Indian, Asian, and Hispanic populations increased by 59.8%, 10.8%, 50.9%, and 74.5% respectively. These groups represent 15% of Minnesota's total population. Members of these groups who are blind face additional challenges. In order to receive the services that are needed to help them reach their full potential as blind people, they must deal with agencies of a government they may not trust. They must understand information about services and what is expected of them even though this information is written in a language that is new to them. Even with the best efforts, cultural differences can be a barrier to rehabilitation. There are compounded challenges faced by customers who in addition to blindness, are hard of hearing or deaf. Three gaps were outlined including staff training, communication, and dealing with isolation experienced by transition aged DeafBlind customers. A fourth gap was recently identified with the departure of a major provider of DeafBlind service, which posed a great need for building capacity of skilled trainers in DeafBlind techniques for travel and placement. The ongoing employment disparity of people with disabilities is appalling. Part of SSB's overall mission is to promote the increased placement of blind, visually impaired, and DeafBlind individuals.

B. THE STATE'S PERFORMANCE UNDER THE PERFORMANCE ACCOUNTABILITY MEASURES OF SECTION 116 OF WIOA; AND

Currently, SSB is unable to obtain the required data for reporting the performance accountability measures outlined in WIOA. The general VRS portion of the agency was operating under a different agreement which allowed them access to this data. SSB is working with the Data Practices Administrator to obtain the necessary approvals to secure this data. Additionally, a number of the data elements asked for in this area are not captured in the current case management system. Since the system is undergoing a complete rewrite launching in June of 2017, there is no money or time to fix the current system. Plans are to include the new required data elements in the case management system rewrite. SSB is also collaborating with Titles I, II, and III programs within Minnesota to secure other data around the performance accountability measures.

C. OTHER AVAILABLE INFORMATION ON THE OPERATION AND EFFECTIVENESS OF THE VR PROGRAM, INCLUDING ANY REPORTS RECEIVED FROM THE STATE REHABILITATION COUNCIL AND FINDING AND RECOMMENDATIONS FROM MONITORING ACTIVITIES CONDUCTED UNDER SECTION 107.

The Office of the Legislative Auditor (OLA) conducted a review of SSB in February of 2016. This audit included new checklist elements as a result of WIOA. One finding was that SSB did not have adequate internal controls to ensure it developed individualized plans for employment for participants in the vocational rehabilitation program within the required timeframe. This finding was shared with the SRCB and SSB is working with the new case management system rewrite team to develop tracking mechanisms. In the meantime, there is a manual tracking system in place that supervisors and counselors use to ensure that documentation is in place outlining the mutual agreement to an extension in the event the IPE is not completed within the 90 day requirement.

M. ORDER OF SELECTION

Describe:

1. WHETHER THE DESIGNATED STATE UNIT WILL IMPLEMENT AND ORDER OF SELECTION. IF SO, DESCRIBE:

A. THE ORDER TO BE FOLLOWED IN SELECTING ELIGIBLE INDIVIDUALS TO BE PROVIDED VR SERVICES.

An assessment for determining assignment to a priority of services category shall be conducted with each individual determined eligible for vocational rehabilitation services. This assessment shall be based, to the degree possible, on data used to determine eligibility. To the extent necessary, additional information required for this assessment will be secured. Selection and placement in a priority category is based upon the severity of the eligible individual's disability and the functional limitations, and is not based upon the type of disability, geographical area in which the individual lives, projected type of vocational outcome, age, sex, race, color, creed, religion, or national origin of the individual. Each eligible individual will be assigned to one of the following priority of services categories: Category A: Individual with a most significant disability An eligible individual who: • Has a severe physical or mental impairment that results in serious limitations in terms of an employment outcome in five or more of the following functional areas: mobility, communication, self-care, self-direction, work skills, interpersonal skills or work tolerance; • Is expected to require multiple VR services over an extended period of time; and • Has a significant disability" under section 7(21) of the Rehabilitation Act. and meets the definition contained in "List of physical or mental disabilities. Category B: Individual with a significant disability An eligible individual who: • Has a significant physical or mental impairment that results in serious limitations in terms of an employment outcome in more than two and less than five of the following functional areas: Mobility, communication, self-care, self-direction, work skills, interpersonal skills, or work tolerance; and • Is expected to require multiple VR services over an extended period of time; and • Meets the definition contained in "List of physical or mental disabilities." Category C: All other eligible individuals • Has a disability that makes them eligible for services but they do not have a serious limitation in a functional area. Physical or mental disabilities resulting from amputation, arthritis, autism, blindness, burn injury, cancer, cerebral palsy, cystic fibrosis, deafness, head injury, heart disease, hemiplegia, hemophilia, respiratory or pulmonary dysfunction, intellectual disability, mental illness, multiple sclerosis, muscular dystrophy, musculoskeletal disorders, neurological disorders including stroke and epilepsy, paraplegia, quadriplegia, and other spinal cord conditions, sickle cell anemia, specific learning disability, and end-stage renal disease, or another disability or combination of disabilities determined on the basis of an assessment for determining eligibility and priority for services to cause comparable serious functional limitation.

B. THE JUSTIFICATION FOR THE ORDER.

Minnesota State Services for the Blind (SSB), in consultation with the State Rehabilitation Council for the Blind (SRC-B), has determined it cannot serve all individuals who are determined eligible for services. The actual total costs of services and administration for FFY 2014 was \$12.8M (\$8.8M federal, \$2.4M state, \$1.6M program income). The FFY 2015 budget was \$11.7M; estimated costs of services and administration is projected at \$13.0M, of which \$1.2M is pre-employment transition services (\$8.5M federal, \$2.5M state, \$1.3M program income, \$0.7M reallocated federal). Out of the 1,015 individuals served in FFY 15, 406 did not have direct charges associated with their case. Looking at FFY 16 and the individuals receiving services, there will be more direct service provision

resulting in spending at the same level as FFY 15. FFY 16 case service budget is \$5M (includes pre-employment transition services) and needs are \$6.2M. SSB is working to address coverage by implementing Performance Based Agreements and fee schedules. There were some expenses during FFY 2015 that SSB absorbed and there are additional factors for FFY 2016. They are as follows: • Necessary rewrite of the state's case management system which incorporates changes needed to implement WIOA. The budget projection for SSB's share of the rewrite is \$897,000 in FFY 2016 and again in FFY 2017. The estimated cost for FFY 2015 is \$200,000. • Lower return on Social Security Administration (SSA) program income than expected. In FFY 2015 SSB had claims of \$3.7 million, received \$1.3 million and have pending claims of \$743,000. • WIOA required a 15% set-aside toward transition age students equaling \$1.27 million for FFY 2015. SSB has previously spent between \$100,000 and \$200,000 on transition aged youth. Spending \$1.27 million for students diverts funds previously available and necessary to serve adults. • Discontinuation in FFY 2016 of training grant funds will require SSB to redirect dollars needed to ensure staff training required by statute. For FFY 2015 this amount equaled \$60,000 It is the policy of SSB to provide rehabilitation services to eligible individuals under a statewide order of selection. SSB consults with the SRC-B regarding the: (1) Need to establish a (2) n order of selection, including any re-evaluation of the need; (3) Priority categories of the particular order of selection; (4) Criteria for determining individuals with the most severe disabilities; (5) Administration of the order of selection, and; (6) The decision to open or close priority categories. SSB will work in conjunction with the SRC-B to examine strategies to reduce or eliminate the need for Order of Selection. A sub-committee of the SRC-B has been formed to jointly develop proposals on cost saving measures including the use of fee schedules to present to the SRC-B. The SRC-B will also be involved in planning public hearings regarding any proposed strategies Effective October 1, 2015, SSB proposes to close categories B and C. SSB is exercising its discretion under section 101(a)(5)(D) of the Rehabilitation Act, as amended by WIOA, to serve eligible individuals, whether or not they are receiving vocational rehabilitation services, who require services and equipment to maintain employment.

C. THE SERVICE AND OUTCOME GOALS.

For FFY2016, SSB estimates that for individuals in Priority A, 228 customers will be served with 30 exiting successfully employed with estimated expenditures at \$2,046,000. For individuals in Priority B, 343 customers will be served with 47 exiting successfully employed with estimated expenditures at \$2,666,000. For individuals in Priority C, 259 customers will be served with 70 exiting successfully employed with estimated expenditures at \$1,488,000.

D. THE TIME WITHIN WHICH THESE GOALS MAY BE ACHIEVED FOR INDIVIDUALS IN EACH PRIORITY CATEGORY WITHIN THE ORDER.

It is expected that the goal of 147 successful closures from individuals in Priority Category A, B, And C will be met by the end of FFY16.

E. HOW INDIVIDUALS WITH THE MOST SIGNIFICANT DISABILITIES ARE SELECTED FOR SERVICES BEFORE ALL OTHER INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES; AND

Each eligible individual will be assigned to one of the priority of services categories. Priority Category A services individuals with the most significant disabilities. The SSB Director will notify SSB staff in writing when finances allow staff to begin serving wait listed customers. Customers with the most significant disabilities are to be served first based on application date. Once all customers who have a most significant disability are served first, then the next category can be served.

2. IF THE DESIGNATED STATE UNIT HAS ELECTED TO SERVE ELIGIBLE INDIVIDUALS, REGARDLESS OF ANY ESTABLISHED ORDER OF SELECTION, WHO REQUIRE SPECIFIC SERVICES OR EQUIPMENT TO MAINTAIN EMPLOYMENT.

Individuals who require job retention services may receive only those services required to maintain employment outside of the order of selection for services.

N. GOALS AND PLANS FOR DISTRIBUTION OF TITLE VI FUNDS.

1. SPECIFY THE STATE'S GOALS AND PRIORITIES FOR FUNDS RECEIVED UNDER SECTION 603 OF THE REHABILITATION ACT FOR THE PROVISION OF SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES.

Minnesota State Services for the Blind's (SSB) goal and plan for Title VI, Part B funds, is to use them on an individualized, fee-for-service basis to purchase needed services for customers whose vocational rehabilitation goal is competitive employment with supports. All funds authorized under Title VI, Part B, less a maximum of five percent set-aside for administrative expenses, are distributed and authorized by VR counselors to purchase needed services for customers under a supported employment plan. The money is administered and tracked, in accordance with federal requirements, through SSB's electronic tracking system.

During FFY2013, SSB provided services to 15 individuals under a plan for supported employment. The total Title VI Part B expenditures for FFY2013 were \$89,063.78. In FFY2014 the expenditures were \$70,222 and \$75,259 in FFY2015.

SSB purchases needed services from community rehabilitation programs. Those purchases are governed by operating agreements with either SSB or the General VR agency for the specific services required.

SSB has set a specific, measurable goal for supported employment for FFY2016. This goal is set taking into account the number of individuals in a supported employment plan currently within counselor caseloads, where the individuals are in the process of completing their rehabilitation plan, when they are expected to be ready for employment, and the ongoing services available. SSB will assist five SSB customers to secure competitive employment with supports following the provision of supported employment services using Title VI Part B funds.

2. DESCRIBE THE ACTIVITIES TO BE CONDUCTED, WITH FUNDS RESERVED PURSUANT TO SECTION 603(D), FOR YOUTH WITH THE MOST SIGNIFICANT DISABILITIES, INCLUDING:

A. THE PROVISION OF EXTENDED SERVICES FOR A PERIOD NOT TO EXCEED 4 YEARS; AND

SSB has allocated approximately \$41,000 in funds for FFY16 for youth with disabilities who required extended services. There are two supported employment youth populations within SSB: • those youth who were already determined by SSB or the Department of Education to be competitively employable in an integrated setting who will/may require extended services, and • those youth where in the past, shelter workshops, enclaves, and other non-competitive, segregated settings would have been identified as possible options. For all youth who are already identified as supported employment candidates, a supported employment plan is required. The plan identifies the extended services required for that youth and who would be providing those extended services. Collaboration with extended service providers occurs, and a negotiation happens with who picks up the cost and when. With four years allowed for the VR agency to provide those extended services, this allows time for the families to get set up with waiver programs and natural supports. The extended services activities that are provided by SSB (and subsequently the extended service provider when it becomes available) under the supported employment plan include: • Customized employment,

including job carving, employer negotiation • Social skills training • Job coaching • Development of natural supports on the job • Follow up services • Ongoing assistive technology assessment and evaluation • Ongoing adjustment to blindness training and other skills training One collaboration that has already began is the Hyatt's Hands on Education program. SSB and VRS are working closely with Minnesota's representative in instituting this program in the Twin Cities. Roll out is expected to begin after July 1st, 2016. The Hands on Education program is geared towards those who would be supported employment candidates. Youth especially will benefit from this on-the-job model for employment. SSB is collaborating with the Department of Education, Vocational Rehabilitation Services, and the Department of Human Services to develop an interagency agreement that would assist youth in gaining competitive integrated supported employment, when in the past they would have went into sheltered work situations. With WIOA and the Olmstead Plan, there will be an increase in the number of youth with severe disabilities who will require extended services. These youth in the past may have immediately entered into sub-minimum wage type settings after graduation. SSB believes that all individuals have the right to try competitive integrated work if that is what the individual chooses. Extended services allows a longer time for the youth to learn what work is like, to learn the job itself, become stable in the job, and develop natural supports. The extended services for these youth are the same services provided to the youth above: • Customized employment, including job carving, employer negotiation • Social skills training • Job coaching • Development of natural supports on the job • Follow up services • Ongoing assistive technology assessment and evaluation • Ongoing adjustment to blindness training and other skills training

B. HOW THE STATE WILL LEVERAGE OTHER PUBLIC AND PRIVATE FUNDS TO INCREASE RESOURCES FOR EXTENDED SERVICES AND EXPANDED SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES FOR YOUTH WITH THE MOST SIGNIFICANT DISABILITIES.

As part of Minnesota's Olmstead plan, SSB serves on an interagency panel that is committed to increasing competitive integrated employment outcomes for individuals with the most significant disabilities. As part of this work, the panel is looking into ways funding can be blended and braided to ensure that more people with disabilities can achieve the vocational life they want. Currently, the DHS is working with their federal partner about funding for employment. This work will benefit all individuals including youth with the most significant disabilities. Additionally, SSB is partnering with MDE to coordinate employment opportunities for students with disabilities. One strategy is co-sponsoring the Summer Transition Program to provide students work experiences, skill building in alternative techniques of blindness, independent living skills, assistive technology, braille, and mobility.

O. STATE'S STRATEGIES

Describe the required strategies and how the agency will use these strategies to achieve its goals and priorities, support innovation and expansion activities, and overcome any barriers to accessing the VR and the Supported Employment programs (See sections 101(a)(15)(D) and (18)(B) of the Rehabilitation Act and section 427 of the General Education Provisions Act (GEPA)):

1. THE METHODS TO BE USED TO EXPAND AND IMPROVE SERVICES TO INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES.

There are 5 specific areas that SSB is targeting to expand and improve services to individuals with disabilities. They are:

- Increase competitive integrated employment outcomes by 3% from the previous year.
 - o Methods used will include:
 - ? Annual review of customer base with counselors and develop targeted plans for those in “ready for employment” status.
 - ? Complete revision of intake process including materials, training for staff, and incorporation of an intake overview training for customers.
 - ? Ensuring applicants fully understand the benefits of competitive integrated employment.
 - ? Work with Department of Human Services (DHS) in the Olmstead interagency workgroup focused on blending and braiding funding that allow access to extended services for the long term supports needed for customers for desiring employment.
 - ? Active participation in the State interagency workgroup promoting the Governor’s executive order to improve hiring persons with disabilities in state government to 7%. SSB provides technical assistance to HR Directors, Accessibility Coordinators, IT staff in accommodations, reviews software and hardware issues, and makes recommendations to the Governor and his staff of steps that can be taken to improve hiring.
- Increase the percentage of eligible individuals achieving employment outcomes from 55% to 70%.
 - o Methods used will be include:
 - ? Regularly analyze data of unsuccessful closures to determine trends, issues and opportunities. From that develop plans to mitigate those problems.
 - ? Implement the new intake process so individuals have a clear understanding of the rights and responsibilities of all parties when entering the public vocational rehabilitation program.

- Increase the vendor base able to serve DeafBlind individuals so they have better access to training for travel skills and placement (Target-5 vendors).
 - o Methods used will include:
 - ? Work with Helen Keller National Center (HKNC) to provide training to O & M instructors in Minnesota on training techniques for DeafBlind.
 - ? Work with HKNC and current placement vendors/potential vendors regarding training techniques for DeafBlind.
 - Identify set DeafBlind counselors and provide them with specialized training.
 - o Methods used will include:
 - ? Identify DeafBlind counselors and assign a DeafBlind caseload.
 - ? Provide DeafBlind counselors with training at DeafBlind camp in collaboration with HKNC.
 - ? Participate in the DeafBlind consortium of agencies, including presenting at conferences, panels, and policy projects.
 - Increase outreach efforts within the five top minority communities in Minnesota so they are aware of SSB and have access to information about SSB by participating in 10 touchpoint activities throughout the year.
 - o Methods used will include:
 - ? Work with Minority Outreach Committee to develop a list of networks that have not yet been targeted by SSB.
 - ? Develop plan of contacts and participation in meetings, seminars, and conferences each year.

2. HOW A BROAD RANGE OF ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY SERVICES AND DEVICES WILL BE PROVIDED TO INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES AT EACH STAGE OF THE REHABILITATION PROCESS AND ON A STATEWIDE BASIS.

SSB’s Assistive Technology (AT) Team is comprise of five assistive technologists who provide statewide services at each stage of the rehabilitation process. The general overview of the services they provide include:

- Provide on and off-site assistive technology assessments and

recommendations to SSB customers, rehabilitation counselors, employers and other interested parties • Provide technical expertise and follow-up assistance to employers so that effective and compatible applications technology and assistive technologies are utilized on the job • Serve as resource to customers, counselors, employers, partners, and other interested parties in utilizing and adapting information systems and designing and developing assistive technology solutions for blind, visually impaired, and DeafBlind individuals • Participate in SSB's Team Model process and follow customers throughout their services, providing customized assessment and recommendations for equipment purchase to the counselor to be written into their Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE)

The technologists at SSB provide a broad range of comprehensive assistive technology services and devices. This include: • A technologist dedicated to serving SSB customers that are transition students ages 14-21 and their families across Minnesota, engaging in the following: • Technology assessments for all transition age students • Participation on SSB's Transition Committee • Technology demos of SSB's resource room for universities and transition events • Work with vision teachers and schools on assistive technology to assist students • Collaboration with SSB's Transition Coordinators • A technologist dedicated to serving as the Resource Center Coordinator with duties that include: • Scheduling workstations for training, demonstrations to the public, or regular use • Regular maintenance on all the Resource Center technology and also coordinate incoming speakers presenting on technology and assistive topics to SSB Staff, assistive technology trainers and customers • Work with vendors to provide demo and loaned technology to our SSB Resource Center, which is available for customers to borrow from SSB • Technologists who are dedicated to providing short-term AT training for SSB customers • Writing training tests for evaluating and certifying contracted AT trainers • Keeping current on newest AT software and hardware such as the EBot, LVI, Braille Edge, VarioUltra, Brailliant, etc. and latest computer operating systems and software such as Windows 10, Microsoft Office 2016, Apple software updates for Mac, iPhone and iPad, etc. • Keeping current on latest techniques for evaluating websites, etc. for accessibility • Completing job site assessments for customers • Beta test existing and new technology • Collaborate with MN Management and Budget and VR in an effort to provide greater accessibility to our state employment application system for individuals with disabilities. • Provide statewide consultation services to ensure appropriate access to current state employees.

3. THE OUTREACH PROCEDURES THAT WILL BE USED TO IDENTIFY AND SERVE INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES WHO ARE MINORITIES, INCLUDING THOSE WITH THE MOST SIGNIFICANT DISABILITIES, AS WELL AS THOSE WHO HAVE BEEN UNSERVED OR UNDERSERVED BY THE VR PROGRAM.

Develop and implement an outreach and marketing plan targeted toward eye care professionals to meet their legal obligation.

Network with the leaders of the five prominent minority communities in this area (Russian, Hmong, Native Americans, Hispanic and east African) to develop marketing and outreach.

Develop and implement a marketing and outreach plan targeting Regional Low Incidence Facilitators and Special Education Directors.

Develop a collaborative opportunity for SSB, VRS, Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services of the Department of Human Services and teachers of the blind, visually impaired and DeafBlind to market and provide information to people throughout MN.

4. THE METHODS TO BE USED TO IMPROVE AND EXPAND VR SERVICES FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES, INCLUDING THE COORDINATION OF SERVICES DESIGNED TO FACILITATE THE TRANSITION OF SUCH STUDENTS FROM SCHOOL TO POSTSECONDARY LIFE (INCLUDING THE RECEIPT OF VR SERVICES, POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT, AND PRE-EMPLOYMENT TRANSITION SERVICES).

Upon the implementation of WIOA, SSB put into a play a Transition Core team that designed a plan to improve and expand VR services for students with disabilities. The program model for service delivery that SSB utilizes is called BRIDGE to Employment. It is designed to help students develop the skills and experiences they need to gain successful employment after high school. BRIDGE functions as the following acronym, which guides the services and programs we provide: • B Basic Skills-these include skills outside of academics that are necessary for students who are blind, low vision, or DeafBlind. Specifically it includes knowledge of assistive technology, non-visual literacy, independent living, and orientation and mobility. • R Role Models-student need adult mentors who employed so that they can learn the skills and techniques needed to be successful. • I Initiative-developing initiative includes problem-solving skills, confidence, and growth mindset • D Discovery-In addition to exploring careers, students need to explore items related to other life experiences. College visits and job shadowing are two examples of helping students discover what follows high school. • G Goal setting-students work with teachers and others to develop goals with their IEP teams, and they also work with rehabilitation counselors to develop their IPE's. • E Experiences-students gain pre-employment experiences through volunteering or other paid work options.

DEVELOP A TEAM In the summer of 2015, SSB hired a transition coordinator to lead the charge to find students and coordinating all transition based plans. As the year progressed, the team grew by assigning an Assistive Technology Specialist who focuses solely on students-providing assessments, training, and collaborating with the schools (teachers and assistive tech staff). Recently, a third position was added to develop internships, work experiences, and jobs for each student. Finally, the metro area caseload is being realigned so one Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor is assigned to a transition caseload. We believe this transition focused team comes together to fully wrap around a student, their family, and the school to build effective plans that help to move a student from high school to post-secondary school and career. **FIND THE STUDENTS** SSB has put considerable effort into finding and serving all blind, visually impaired, and DeafBlind students. Last year, SSB was serving 61 of 143 students as identified by the MDE master reporting count. Due to data privacy laws, MDE is unable to directly share student information with SSB. Instead, we have to work with the teachers of the Blind and Visually Impaired to connect with students and their parents. This is a hit or miss practice and is one of the reasons we know we don't have every student possible. Currently, SSB is serving 123 out of 141 students from the MDE master report count. **PROVIDE OPPORTUNITIES** There have been several strategies around building opportunities for students to improve skills and gain experience/exposure to what is possible. We believe "you don't know what you don't know." Prior to the implementation of WIOA, SSB saw an alarming trend of students unprepared for life after high school. Students were having to stop post-secondary education and go back to get the skills needed to successfully enter a career or schooling. SSB believed that high schools were providing more alternative techniques of blindness training (ATB) than was actually being provided. We determined this is an opportunity to provide ATB training for students outside of school. The strategy we chose was to develop a request for proposal for the purpose of developing programs that could provide year-round PRE-ETS. Two providers were awarded contracts and the first year of programming just ended. SSB discussed the year end results with each provider and is making plans for some adjustments to this training in the upcoming year. A total of twenty students were involved in the inaugural program year. Another

strategy is developing or facilitating the development of summer activities for students to improve skills. SSB co-sponsors a Summer Transition Program with MDE. Thirteen students will participate in this event this summer. Students will live on a local college campus, learn about transportation, travel, independent living, careers, braille, and end the two weeks with a summer job experience. There are other providers offering summer programs lasting from one to eight weeks which are focused on improving skills. SSB has asked the providers to include an element of work experience in their programming. In order to foster career exploration, SSB coordinated a Career Expo with the Minneapolis Community and Technical College in which adults with vision loss served as exhibitors, showcasing their careers to students. Students were able to talk individually with the adults in order to learn about skills and strategies needed in order to be successfully employed. Students also learned from a panel of blind, visually impaired, and DeafBlind college students about their current experiences in college and heard about ideas that can help students when they enter post-secondary life. PROVIDE RESOURCES A transition assessment has been developed and implemented over the past year that guides counselors and teams about each student's skill level in activities of daily living and identifies skill training needed for moving on to post-secondary life. This transition assessment has been instrumental in the development of concrete plans and strategies that can be woven into both the IPE and IEP for that student. This results in a genuine coordinated effort between school and VR. Counselors are working with IEP teams to encourage the use of post-secondary options which allows students to take entry level college classes while still in high school. This gives students an opportunity to try out their technology, braille, and self-advocacy skills prior to attending college full time. Each fall, counselors work with students and their teams to determine who is graduating and going on to college. After that list is developed, the Assistive Technology Specialist completes a technology assessment with each student and determines the resources they need to get ready for college. Equipment is ordered and training is provided so students are ready with the resources, skills, and strategies to handle a college experience. An O & M assessment is also completed to ensure that students receive needed travel training prior to attending college. Minnesota has a state academy for the blind. Our Transition Coordinator meets with them on a regular basis and helps provide training that links common life skills and the connection to work. The Transition Coordinator has also met with the Disability Service Offices at two local colleges often selected by SSB customers. They brought the issue of our student's lack of note-taking skills to our attention and are working with us to develop strategies that can be used for training while they are still in high school.

5. IF APPLICABLE, PLANS FOR ESTABLISHING, DEVELOPING, OR IMPROVING COMMUNITY REHABILITATION PROGRAMS WITHIN THE STATE.

SSB has conducted a staff survey in an effort to target specific services and geographical areas where more community rehabilitation program options are needed. Survey data will be used to develop a plan to increase community rehabilitation program options for customers by service and geographic area.

SSB and two community rehabilitation programs who provide center based Adjustment To Blindness Training have developed year round transition programs for youth with disabilities. At the completion of the first year, review meetings were held to discuss changes needed and expansion of the programs to include more employment services.

SSB is partnering with the Helen Keller National Center to provide training to Orientation and Mobility (O&M) contractors who work with DeafBlind customers. This training is the result of the DeafBlind community's request for more trained O&M instructors who are familiar with working with DeafBlind individuals. Current O&M contractors were surveyed as to their experience and interest in

working with DeafBlind individuals. Several of those contractors have chosen to participate in the training.

6. STRATEGIES TO IMPROVE THE PERFORMANCE OF THE STATE WITH RESPECT TO THE PERFORMANCE ACCOUNTABILITY MEASURES UNDER SECTION 116 OF WIOA.

Currently, SSB is unable to obtain the required data for reporting the performance accountability measures outlined in WIOA. The general VRS portion of the agency was operating under a different agreement which allowed them access to this data. SSB is working with the Data Practices Administrator to obtain the necessary approvals to secure this data. Additionally, a number of the data elements asked for in this area are not captured in the current case management system. Since the system is undergoing a complete rewrite launching in June of 2017, there is no money or time to fix the current system. Plans have been made to the new required data elements in the case management system rewrite. SSB is also collaborating with Titles I, II, and III programs within Minnesota to secure other data around the performance accountability measures. SSB can report on its strategies to improve performance based on the former Standards and Indicators. Indicator 1.1: Number of consumers achieving an employment outcome. SSB has experienced an unprecedented number of successful employment outcomes. To continue to increase this number, the following strategies are being implemented: 1. The placement team will further utilize the .NET for employer contacts 2. SSB is hiring of a second transition placement coordinator to provide work experiences, internships, and apprenticeships. Over the long term, this will increase the employability and subsequent hiring of customers. 3. SSB has begun collaboration with the State of Minnesota as a model employer to promote several programs for the hiring of individuals with disabilities a. Connect 700: a Schedule A type process for state employment b. Supported Worker Program: a program that promotes hiring of individuals who require on-going supports on the job c. Complete Accessibility: staff are working with State of Minnesota systems to ensure accessibility for blind, low vision, and DeafBlind customers so they can work effectively within the State. Indicator 1.2: The percentage of consumers with employment outcomes who exited the program after receiving services. 1. SSB has implemented a new referral and intake process that will provide customers with more informed choice regarding the purpose of the vocational rehabilitation program. Expectations and responsibilities are outlined more clearly at the front end of the process, so individuals who are not committed or serious about the program can decide to not apply or move forward with eligibility. 2. SSB has also updated their documents and forms to be more plain language. The VR process at times can be confusing and that can cause customers to be frustrated. The forms help guide the customer through the process in a language they understand. 3. Research has shown that if a customer is not actively engaged in their employment process within six months of applying, they tend to drop out of the program. SSB is investigating fast track strategies/processes for customers who are immediately ready for employment so as not to lose them in the paperwork process. Indicator 1.3: The percentage of consumers with competitive employment outcomes. 1. SSB's vocational rehabilitation unit has removed homemakers and unpaid family workers as an allowable IPE job goal and employment outcome. All individuals who meet that definition are referred to the independent living unit of the agency. 2. A collaboration with the Minnesota Department of Education, VRS, and the Department of Human Services will assist in decreasing the number of individuals placed in sheltered work situations and increase the number of individuals in competitive integrated employment.

Indicator 1.4: The percentage of consumers with significant disabilities. As an agency for the blind, this number will continue to be between 98 and 100%. Indicator 1.5: Consumers' average wage compared to all other Minnesota workers. 1. SSB will continue to promote education and

credentialing for customers of the program. Indicator 1.6: Percentage change, from application to closure, of earned income as the primary source of financial support. 1. Benefits Analysis will be a standard part of the vocational rehabilitation process for all customers on social security. Information will be included at the very beginning of the process. Indicator 2.1: The ratio of minority and non-minority service rates. 1. Marketing and outreach to the highest population of minority communities in Minnesota will continue to increase. The communities include Somali, Hmong, Russian, and Hispanic. This includes attendance at community events.

7. STRATEGIES FOR ASSISTING OTHER COMPONENTS OF THE STATEWIDE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM IN ASSISTING INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES.

SSB provides outreach to the Workforce development system by meeting with the director to make the Workforce Centers ready for blind, visually impaired, and DeafBlind individuals. SSB assists with ensuring that the computer systems are accessible with up to date software and staff are trained to not automatically refer individuals to SSB.

SSB is part of an ongoing taskforce for MN Works which is the state's new job bank. A thorough review of the product was completed by SSB along with a sit down with the product developers to discuss accessibility issues.

8. HOW THE AGENCY'S STRATEGIES WILL BE USED TO:

A. ACHIEVE GOALS AND PRIORITIES BY THE STATE, CONSISTENT WITH THE COMPREHENSIVE NEEDS ASSESSMENT;

SSB will use the agency's strategies to achieve the goals and priorities which are based on the new WIOA requirements, especially Pre-ETS, the Comprehensive Needs Assessment (CSNA), and SSB's participation in Minnesota's Olmstead plan which promotes integrated living and working environments. The agency's strategies to achieve the goals and priorities are discussed in detail in Section L State Goals and Priorities.

B. SUPPORT INNOVATION AND EXPANSION ACTIVITIES; AND

SSB and the SRCB cannot do the all the work ourselves. The strategies and priorities outlined include many partnerships and the development of new programs and new vendors. Year-round transition programs, skill training for vendors working with our DeafBlind population, and the creation of many summer programs are examples of our commitment to innovation and expansion activities. SSB's work on the Olmstead interagency team further promotes innovative and effective ideas for bringing competitive integrated employment to all Minnesotans with disabilities.

C. OVERCOME IDENTIFIED BARRIERS RELATING TO EQUITABLE ACCESS TO AND PARTICIPATION OF INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES IN THE STATE VR SERVICES PROGRAM AND THE STATE SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES PROGRAM.

Implementation of a new intake process is underway that is designed to provide accurate and consistent information about all of SSB's services and better equip customers with the ability to understand information about services so they can make informed decisions. The intent is to

promote an increased focus on the customer's needs and to better engage customers with the VR process from the start of services. There will be one point of contact beginning at referral, to group orientation, and through individualized one on one intakes. This point of contact is also engaged in our minority outreach committee and so understands how to better engage and serve a dynamic customer population. This new process is streamlined and systematized but will accommodate the unique needs of our customers resulting in better access to information and participation in the VR program.

P. EVALUATION AND REPORTS OF PROGRESS: VR AND SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT GOALS

Describe:

1. AN EVALUATION OF THE EXTENT TO WHICH THE VR PROGRAM GOALS DESCRIBED IN THE APPROVED VR SERVICES PORTION OF THE UNIFIED OR COMBINED STATE PLAN FOR THE MOST RECENTLY COMPLETED PROGRAM YEAR WERE ACHIEVED. THE EVALUATION MUST:

A. IDENTIFY THE STRATEGIES THAT CONTRIBUTED TO THE ACHIEVEMENT OF THE GOALS.

The Goals, Priorities, and Strategies for FFY 2015 include two main goals: increasing successful employment and increasing SSB's outreach. The priorities for the first goal are increasing employment outcomes, increasing the percentage of eligible individuals achieving employment outcomes, and increasing partnerships. The WDU has assigned a staff person to coordinate incoming referrals and is responsible for providing information specific to the programs available within SSB. The intent is to ensure all new referrals have a complete and accurate understanding of the purpose of the vocational rehabilitation program as well as the responsibilities and expectations of participants. This allows individuals the opportunity to make an informed choice regarding their application. WDU also established an intake workgroup designed to evaluate and implement a new and improved intake system. This system involves a group orientation and clear, consistent messaging. This workgroup is still in the process of implementation. SSB as a whole will be piloting a group orientation for any new referrals to enhance the effort for individuals to make an informed choice regarding their intent to achieve an employment outcome. This orientation will be designed to meet the needs of all incoming referrals, regardless of culture or disability. In the area of increasing partnerships, WDU has developed relationships with Gillette Hospital and Ecolab to increase the likelihood of employment outcomes. We have achieved three successful employment outcomes from these employer relationships. WDU's employment team is actively involved in Statewide Placement Partnerships that has resulted in approximately seven successful employment outcomes. The Statewide Placement Partnerships include VRS and other employment agencies throughout the state. WDU is working collaboratively with VRS on a model Memorandum Of Understanding (MOU) with the Department of Natural Resources, Department of Administration, and the Department of Corrections. The MOU indicates that if a vocational rehabilitation applicant meets the minimum qualifications, they are guaranteed an interview with the department. WDU and VRS are working together on the Talent Acquisition Portal (TAP), which is managed by the National Employment Team. WDU hired a transition coordinator, who has continued to develop relationships with the Department of Education and other transition-related agencies. The goal of the transition coordinator is to ensure all SSB transition students receive Pre-Employment Transition Services, including work-based learning opportunities. In the summer of 2015, 80 out of 100 transition age students were involved in summertime activities at State Services for the Blind's (SSB) transition program at the Duluth Lighthouse and BLIND, Inc. There were also other programs offered through various school districts. In addition to summertime programs, some of the students were able to hold part-time jobs and gain work experience. Goal two for FFY 2015, is to increase SSB's outreach to all Minnesotans and targeted groups. Priorities and strategies for FFY 2015 focus on outreach and marketing strategy, networking with targeted communities, reaching Regional Low Incidence Facilitators and Special Education Directors, and DeafBlind service and outreach. An outreach and marketing strategy has been developed and implemented. The strategy includes messaging targeted to eye care professionals, using a positive tone to remind them of their obligation, and to let them know

about the extensive services available through SSB's Workforce Development Unit, Senior Services Unit, and the Communication Center. SSB obtained a list of 16,000 eye care professionals within the state. SSB is also working with the Communications, Analysis, Research and Design Agency in the Department of Employment, and Economic Development, to use their database of email contacts for state business to target Ophthalmologists, Optometrists, and Eye Clinics. An emailing and postcard campaign to the contacts will be begin in 2016. SSB has worked extensively with the Hmong Community through the Hmong Resource Fair. Several SSB staff volunteered to work at the booth at the Resource Fair to talk with Hmong community members about SSB and the services it provides. The FFY2015 fair was held on October 4, 2014.

Planning was done at a SRC-B Outreach committee meeting to reach out to the Hispanic and Russian communities. Several agencies serving these populations were assigned to members to contract beginning in FFY2016. SSB and VRS directors spoke at a training targeting Special Education Directors at the Department of Education on September 11, 2015. In the area of increasing the numbers of minority individuals served and vocational outcomes achieved, SSB had representation at the Hmong Resource Fair and visited the Red Lake and White Earth Vocational Rehabilitation Programs for the annual technical assistance meetings. Guidelines are in the final draft format and are anticipated to be available in January 2014. During FFY 2013, SSB had been kept informed of current marketing and outreach activities to minority communities through email alerts from SSB staff. The DeafBlind sub-committee of the SRC-B identified concerns about the lack of skills current Orientation and Mobility Instructors have in training DeafBlind customers. SSB held meetings with the Helen Keller National Center (HKNC) and asked for assistance in offering training for Orientation and Mobility Instructors in working with the DeafBlind population. HKNC is developing a proposal for a training curriculum to be held in summer of 2016. The third goal seeks to develop and maintain a positive work environment by developing and implementing a team oriented model of customer service, ongoing customer support and training plan for the assistive technology team, and hiring practices that reflect the customer base served. SSB formed a workgroup to research, develop, and implement a team approach to service delivery. The purpose of the team approach is to increase the probability of success for customers by offering a structure that provides the maximum support to a counselor and their caseload. This approach was piloted to WDU staff, and there is now an approximately 85% participation rate. The goal is to have 100% of staff involved in the team approach for FFY16. Recommendations from the SSB Assistive Technology Workgroup have identified strategies which were recently approved by SSB senior management. Strategies focus on 3 areas including: SSB making the commitment to be "The Model" for accessibility standards; adopting and implementing the Customer Environment Task Tool (CETT) framework of how we approach students at the beginning of their vocational rehabilitation process; and providing customers with multiple training options. The WDU Assistive Technology staff are now working to implement them. The CETT is based on the SETT Framework by Joy Zabala (<http://www.joyzabala.com/>). SSB has been working with Department of Employment and Economic Development human resources to ensure that position postings include appropriate preferred qualifications that support SSB's customer base. SSB management is now adding to preferred qualifications a second language proficiency to encourage minority candidates to apply. SSB management is also taking a more active approach in screening potential candidates for job postings.

B. DESCRIBE THE FACTORS THAT IMPEDED THE ACHIEVEMENT OF THE GOALS AND PRIORITIES.

In FFY15, SSB's Minority and Outreach Sub-Committee proposed collecting information at time of referral regarding the demographic information of the individual. Collecting this information at that

time in the VR process appeared discriminatory. Instead, the referral system was improved to provide information in a way that the customer can access it. This includes language interpreters, translated documents, and other methods to be serve all referrals. The DeafBlind Sub-Committee received a very low response rate (almost 0%) on the needs assessment for the past two years. The committee has chosen not to continue conducting the needs assessment. Instead, the DeafBlind committee is focusing on three areas: partnering with the HKNC on training orientation and mobility vendors on DeafBlindness, partnering with HKNC on best practices for DeafBlind placement, and increasing DeafBlind membership and representation on the SRC-B and DeafBlind Sub-Committee.

2. AN EVALUATION OF THE EXTENT TO WHICH THE SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM GOALS DESCRIBED IN THE SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SUPPLEMENT FOR THE MOST RECENT PROGRAM YEAR WERE ACHIEVED. THE EVALUATION MUST:

A. IDENTIFY THE STRATEGIES THAT CONTRIBUTED TO THE ACHIEVEMENT OF THE GOALS.

Achieving the goal was accomplished through collaborative efforts with private placement and, as necessary, county supports. All efforts included establishing structured and stable work settings.

B. DESCRIBE THE FACTORS THAT IMPEDED THE ACHIEVEMENT OF THE GOALS AND PRIORITIES.

Determining on-going supports, particularly those requiring funding, can be the make or break for some situations. It can be very time consuming to arrange supports and funding. We have seen some jobs that have not been possible to successfully close because of a lack of on-going funding.

3. THE VR PROGRAM'S PERFORMANCE ON THE PERFORMANCE ACCOUNTABILITY INDICATORS UNDER SECTION 116 OF WIOA.

SSB is currently unable to collect data elements required for performance accountability measures under section 116 of WIOA until redesign on its electronic client information system, which is anticipated in June, 2017. The Minnesota general agency was operating under a different agreement which allowed them access to this data. SSB is working with the Data Practiced Administrator to obtain the necessary approvals to secure this data. Although the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) no longer uses the established standards and indicators for measuring vocational rehabilitation program performance, SSB has calculated its performance using them. Standard 1 pertains to employment outcomes and Standard 2 pertains to the service rate between minority and nonminority populations. RSA requires that each agency pass 4 of the 6 indicators and 2 of 3 Primary Indicators on Standard 1. In FFY2015, SSB met 5 of 6 Indicators and all three Primary Indicators in Standard 1. SSB has a long history of consistently meeting the three primary indicators. Standard 1 1.1 The number of individuals exiting the VR program who achieved an employment outcome during the current performance period compared to the number of individuals who exit the VR program after achieving an employment outcome during the previous performance period. Required Performance Level: Performance in the current period must equal or exceed performance in the previous period. In FFY2015 SSB assisted 42 more individual to obtain employment than in FFY2014. 1.2 Of all individuals who exit the VR program after receiving services, the percentage who are determined to have achieved an employment outcome. Required Performance Level: The required performance level is 68.9%. In FFY2015, SSB rose above this

measure, achieving 69.41%. 1.3 Of all individuals determined to have achieved an employment outcome, the percentage who exit the VR program in competitive, self-, or business enterprise program (BEP) employment with earnings equivalent to at least the minimum wage. Required Performance Level: SSB exceeded the required performance level of 35.4% by achieving a level of 91.34%. 1.4 Of all individuals who exit the VR program in competitive, self-, or BEP employment with earnings equivalent to at least the minimum wage, the percentage who are individuals with significant disabilities. Required Performance Level: SSB achieved a performance level of 100.00%, exceeding the requirement of 89.0%. 1.5 The average hourly earnings of all individuals who exit the VR program in competitive, self-, or BEP employment with earnings equivalent to at least the minimum wage as a ratio to the State's average hourly earnings for all individuals in the State who are employed (as derived from the Bureau of Labor Statistics report, "State Average Annual Pay" for the most recent available year). Required Performance Level: SSB surpassed the required performance level of .59 by achieving a level of .772. 1.6 Of all individuals who exit the VR program in competitive, self-, or BEP employment with earnings equivalent to at least the minimum wage, the difference between the percentage who report their own income as the largest single source of economic support at the time they exit the VR program and the percentage who report their own income as the largest single source of support at the time they apply for VR services. Required Performance Level: SSB achieved a level of 28.20%, falling below the requirement of 30.4%. Standard 2 2.1 The service rate for all individuals with disabilities from minority backgrounds as a ratio to the service rate for all individuals with disabilities from non-minority backgrounds. Required Performance Level: This ratio is not calculated if fewer than 100 persons from minority backgrounds exit the program during the fiscal year. For fiscal year 2015 SSB's rate was .817%.

4. HOW THE FUNDS RESERVED FOR INNOVATION AND EXPANSION (I&E) ACTIVITIES WERE UTILIZED.

4. Report on how the funds reserved for innovation and expansion (I&E) activities were utilized in FY 2015. SSB used Title I funds for innovation and expansion in support of the State Rehabilitation Council for the Blind (SRC-B) meetings, for meetings of the Council committees and task forces, and in support of member travel to national rehabilitation meetings. The SRC-B actual expenditures for FFY2015 were \$28,728. SSB resources for support of the Statewide Independent Living Council come from Title VII rather than Title I funds. SSB will continue to use Title I funds for innovation and expansion in support of the SRC-B's resource plan of \$35,730 for FFY 2016.

Q. QUALITY, SCOPE, AND EXTENT OF SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES.

Include the following:

1. THE QUALITY, SCOPE, AND EXTENT OF SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES TO BE PROVIDED TO INDIVIDUALS WITH THE MOST SIGNIFICANT DISABILITIES, INCLUDING YOUTH WITH THE MOST SIGNIFICANT DISABILITIES.

Supported employment services promoting the integration of people with the most severe disabilities into employment in Minnesota have become increasingly available. The scope and quality of supported employment services have improved as more entities become aware of the benefits of ongoing employment supports for individuals with the most significant disabilities. However, the demand for supported employment exceeds the capacity of systems in Minnesota to provide the necessary extended ongoing employment supports. In addition to the goals for Title VI Part B described in Section N, SSB will continue to engage in capacity building and technical assistance efforts with other state agencies and community service providers. For example, SSB is working with the Minnesota Department of Human Services regarding the need for ongoing employment supports for individuals who are DeafBlind. SSB counselors have had some success working with county social workers to obtain waiver funding for those ongoing supports.

2. THE TIMING OF TRANSITION TO EXTENDED SERVICES.

When vocational rehabilitation services are completed, a customer transitions to extended services. That transition occurs when the individual achieves the goals set out in their supported employment IPE, when they reach stability on the job, and when a service provider agrees to begin providing the needed ongoing employment supports. In most cases, the transition from vocational rehabilitation services to extended services occurs within three months. In Minnesota, the sources of ongoing support primarily include the counties, community rehabilitation programs or other private non-profit organizations.

CERTIFICATIONS

Name of designated State agency or designated State unit, as appropriate **Department of Employment and Economic Development, DEED**

Name of designated State agency **State Services for the Blind, SSB**

Full Name of Authorized Representative: **Carol Pankow**

Title of Authorized Representative: **Director State services for the Blind**

States must provide written and signed certifications that:

1. The **designated State agency or designated State unit (as appropriate) listed above** is authorized to submit the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan under title 1 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Rehabilitation Act), as amended by WIOA*, and its supplement under title VI of the Rehabilitation Act.** Yes
2. As a condition for the receipt of Federal funds under title I of the Rehabilitation Act for the provision of VR services, the **designated State agency listed above** agrees to operate and administer the State VR Services Program in accordance with the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan , the Rehabilitation Act, and all applicable regulations , policies, and procedures established by the Secretary of Education. Funds made available under section 111 of the Rehabilitation Act are used solely for the provision of VR services and the administration of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan; Yes
3. As a condition for the receipt of Federal funds under title VI of the Rehabilitation Act for supported employment services, the designated State agency agrees to operate and administer the State Supported Employment Services Program in accordance with the supplement to the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan* , the Rehabilitation Act, and all applicable regulations , policies, and procedures established by the Secretary of Education. Funds made available under title VI are used solely for the provision of supported employment services and the administration of the supplement to the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan;** Yes
4. The designated State agency and/or the designated State unit has the authority under State law to perform the functions of the State regarding the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement; Yes
5. The State legally may carry out each provision of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement. Yes
6. All provisions of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement are consistent with State law. Yes
7. The **Authorized Representative listed above** has the authority under State law to receive, hold, and disburse Federal funds made available under the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement; Yes

8. The **Authorized Representative listed above** has the authority to submit the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and the supplement for Supported Employment services; Yes

9. The agency that submits the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement has adopted or otherwise formally approved the plan and its supplement. Yes

FOOTNOTES

Certification 1 Footnotes

* Public Law 113-128.

** Unless otherwise stated, "Rehabilitation Act" means the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended by WIOA, signed into law on July 22, 2014.

Certification 2 Footnotes

* All references in this plan to "designated State agency" or to "the State agency" relate to the agency identified in this paragraph.

** No funds under title 1 of the Rehabilitation Act may be awarded without an approved VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan in accordance with section 101(a) of the Rehabilitation Act.

*** Applicable regulations, in part, include the Education Department General Administrative Regulations (EDGAR) in 34 CFR parts 76,77,79,81, and 82; 2 CFR part 200 as adopted by 2 CFR part 3485; and the State VR Services Program regulations.

Certification 3 Footnotes

* No funds under title VI of the Rehabilitation Act may be awarded without an approved supplement to the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan in accordance with section 606(a) of the Rehabilitation Act.

** Applicable regulations, in part, include the citations in *** under Certification 2 footnotes

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS ON THE CERTIFICATIONS FROM THE STATE

CERTIFICATION REGARDING LOBBYING — VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION

Certification for Contracts, Grants, Loans, and Cooperative Agreements The undersigned certifies, to the best of his or her knowledge and belief, that:

(1) No Federal appropriated funds have been paid or will be paid, by or on behalf of the undersigned, to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of an agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with the awarding of any Federal contract, the making of any Federal grant, the making of any Federal loan, the entering into of any cooperative agreement, and the extension, continuation, renewal, amendment, or modification of any Federal contract, grant, loan, or cooperative agreement.

(2) If any funds other than Federal appropriated funds have been paid or will be paid to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with this Federal contract, grant, loan, or cooperative agreement, the undersigned shall complete and submit Standard Form-LLL, "Disclosure of Lobbying Activities," in accordance with its instructions.

(3) The undersigned shall require that the language of this certification be included in the award documents for all subawards at all tiers (including subcontracts, subgrants, and contracts under grants, loans, and cooperative agreements) and that all subrecipients shall certify and disclose accordingly. This certification is a material representation of fact upon which reliance was placed when this transaction was made or entered into. Submission of this certification is a prerequisite for making or entering into this transaction imposed by section 1352, title 31, U.S. Code. Any person who fails to file the required certification shall be subject to a civil penalty of not less than \$10,000 and not more than \$100,000 for each such failure.

STATEMENT FOR LOAN GUARANTEES AND LOAN INSURANCE

The undersigned states, to the best of his or her knowledge and belief, that:

If any funds have been paid or will be paid to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with this commitment providing for the United States to insure or guarantee a loan, the undersigned shall complete and submit Standard Form-LLL, "Disclosure of Lobbying Activities," in accordance with its instructions. Submission of this statement is a prerequisite for making or entering into this transaction imposed by section 1352, title 31, U.S. Code. Any person who fails to file the required statement shall be subject to a civil penalty of not less than \$10,000 and not more than \$100,000 for each such failure.

Applicant's Organization **MN State Services for the Blind**

Full Name of Authorized Representative: **Carol Pankow**

Title of Authorized Representative: **Director State Services for the Blind**

SF LLL Form – Disclosure of Lobbying Activities (only if applicable)
(<http://www2.ed.gov/fund/grant/apply/appforms/appforms.html>). If applicable, please print, sign, and email to MAT_OCTAE@ed.gov

CERTIFICATION REGARDING LOBBYING — SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT

Certification for Contracts, Grants, Loans, and Cooperative Agreements The undersigned certifies, to the best of his or her knowledge and belief, that:

(1) No Federal appropriated funds have been paid or will be paid, by or on behalf of the undersigned, to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of an agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with the awarding of any Federal contract, the making of any Federal grant, the making of any Federal loan, the entering into of any cooperative agreement, and the extension, continuation, renewal, amendment, or modification of any Federal contract, grant, loan, or cooperative agreement.

(2) If any funds other than Federal appropriated funds have been paid or will be paid to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with this Federal contract, grant, loan, or cooperative agreement, the undersigned shall complete and submit Standard Form-LLL, "Disclosure of Lobbying Activities," in accordance with its instructions.

(3) The undersigned shall require that the language of this certification be included in the award documents for all subawards at all tiers (including subcontracts, subgrants, and contracts under grants, loans, and cooperative agreements) and that all subrecipients shall certify and disclose accordingly. This certification is a material representation of fact upon which reliance was placed when this transaction was made or entered into. Submission of this certification is a prerequisite for making or entering into this transaction imposed by section 1352, title 31, U.S. Code. Any person who fails to file the required certification shall be subject to a civil penalty of not less than \$10,000 and not more than \$100,000 for each such failure.

STATEMENT FOR LOAN GUARANTEES AND LOAN INSURANCE

The undersigned states, to the best of his or her knowledge and belief, that:

If any funds have been paid or will be paid to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with this commitment providing for the United States to insure or guarantee a loan, the undersigned shall complete and submit Standard Form-LLL, "Disclosure of Lobbying Activities," in accordance with its instructions. Submission of this statement is a prerequisite for making or entering into this transaction imposed by section 1352, title 31, U.S. Code. Any person who fails to file the required statement shall be subject to a civil penalty of not less than \$10,000 and not more than \$100,000 for each such failure.

Applicant's Organization **MN State Services for the Blind**

Full Name of Authorized Representative: **Carol Pankow**

Title of Authorized Representative: **Director State Services for the Blind**

SF LLL Form – Disclosure of Lobbying Activities (only if applicable)
(<http://www2.ed.gov/fund/grant/apply/appforms/appforms.html>).

ASSURANCES

The designated State agency or designated State unit, as appropriate and identified in the State certifications included with this VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement, through signature of the authorized individual, assures the Commissioner of the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA), that it will comply with all of the requirements of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement, as set forth in sections 101(a) and 606 of the Rehabilitation Act. The individual authorized to submit the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement makes the following assurances:**The State Plan must provide assurances that:**

1. PUBLIC COMMENT ON POLICIES AND PROCEDURES:

The designated State agency assures it will comply with all statutory and regulatory requirements for public participation in the VR Services Portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan, as required by section 101(a)(16)(A) of the Rehabilitation Act.

2. SUBMISSION OF THE VR SERVICES PORTION OF THE UNIFIED OR COMBINED STATE PLAN AND ITS SUPPLEMENT:

The designated State unit assures it will comply with all requirements pertaining to the submission and revisions of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement for the State Supported Employment Services program, as required by sections 101(a)(1), (22), (23), and 606(a) of the Rehabilitation Act; section 102 of WIOA in the case of the submission of a unified plan; section 103 of WIOA in the case of a submission of a Combined State Plan; 34 CFR 76.140.

3. ADMINISTRATION OF THE VR SERVICES PORTION OF THE UNIFIED OR COMBINED STATE PLAN:

The designated State agency or designated State unit, as appropriate, assures it will comply with the requirements related to:

A. THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE DESIGNATED STATE AGENCY AND DESIGNATED STATE UNIT, AS REQUIRED BY SECTION 101(A)(2) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT.

B. THE ESTABLISHMENT OF EITHER A STATE INDEPENDENT COMMISSION OR STATE REHABILITATION COUNCIL, AS REQUIRED BY SECTION 101(A)(21) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT.

The designated State agency or designated State unit, as applicable **(B) has established a State Rehabilitation Council**

C. CONSULTATIONS REGARDING THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE VR SERVICES PORTION OF THE UNIFIED OR COMBINED STATE PLAN, IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 101(A)(16)(B) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT.

D. THE FINANCIAL PARTICIPATION BY THE STATE, OR IF THE STATE SO ELECTS, BY THE STATE AND LOCAL AGENCIES, TO PROVIDE THE AMOUNT OF THE NON-FEDERAL SHARE OF THE COST OF CARRYING OUT THE VR PROGRAM IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 101(A)(3).

E. THE LOCAL ADMINISTRATION OF THE VR SERVICES PORTION OF THE UNIFIED OR COMBINED STATE PLAN, IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 101(A)(2)(A) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT.

The designated State agency allows for the local administration of VR funds **No**

F. THE SHARED FUNDING AND ADMINISTRATION OF JOINT PROGRAMS, IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 101(A)(2)(A)(II) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT.

The designated State agency allows for the shared funding and administration of joint programs: **No**

G. STATEWIDENESS AND WAIVERS OF STATEWIDENESS REQUIREMENTS, AS SET FORTH IN SECTION 101(A)(4) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT.

Is the designated State agency requesting or maintaining a waiver of statewideness for one or more services provided under the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan? See Section 2 of this VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan. **No**

H. THE DESCRIPTIONS FOR COOPERATION, COLLABORATION, AND COORDINATION, AS REQUIRED BY SECTIONS 101(A)(11) AND (24)(B); AND 606(B) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT.

I. ALL REQUIRED METHODS OF ADMINISTRATION, AS REQUIRED BY SECTION 101(A)(6) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT .

J. THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE COMPREHENSIVE SYSTEM OF PERSONNEL DEVELOPMENT, AS SET FORTH IN SECTION 101(A)(7) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT.

K. THE COMPILATION AND SUBMISSION TO THE COMMISSIONER OF STATEWIDE ASSESSMENTS, ESTIMATES, STATE GOALS AND PRIORITIES, STRATEGIES, AND PROGRESS REPORTS, AS APPROPRIATE, AND AS REQUIRED BY SECTIONS 101(A)(15), 105(C)(2), AND 606(B)(8) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT.

L. THE RESERVATION AND USE OF A PORTION OF THE FUNDS ALLOTTED TO THE STATE UNDER SECTION 110 OF THE REHABILITATION ACT FOR THE DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION OF INNOVATIVE APPROACHES TO EXPAND AND IMPROVE THE PROVISION OF VR SERVICES TO INDIVIDUALS WITH

DISABILITIES, PARTICULARLY INDIVIDUALS WITH THE MOST SIGNIFICANT DISABILITIES.

M. THE SUBMISSION OF REPORTS AS REQUIRED BY SECTION 101(A)(10) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT.

4. ADMINISTRATION OF THE PROVISION OF VR SERVICES:

The designated State agency, or designated State unit, as appropriate, assures that it will:

A. COMPLY WITH ALL REQUIREMENTS REGARDING INFORMATION AND REFERRAL SERVICES IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTIONS 101(A)(5)(D) AND (20) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT.

B. IMPOSE NO DURATION OF RESIDENCE REQUIREMENT AS PART OF DETERMINING AN INDIVIDUAL'S ELIGIBILITY FOR VR SERVICES OR THAT EXCLUDES FROM SERVICES UNDER THE PLAN ANY INDIVIDUAL WHO IS PRESENT IN THE STATE IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 101(A)(12) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT .

C. PROVIDE THE FULL RANGE OF SERVICES LISTED IN SECTION 103(A) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT AS APPROPRIATE, TO ALL ELIGIBLE INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES IN THE STATE WHO APPLY FOR SERVICES IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 101(A)(5) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT?

Agency will provide the full range of services described above

D. DETERMINE WHETHER COMPARABLE SERVICES AND BENEFITS ARE AVAILABLE TO THE INDIVIDUAL IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 101(A)(8) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT.

E. COMPLY WITH THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF AN INDIVIDUALIZED PLAN FOR EMPLOYMENT IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 102(B) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT.

F. COMPLY WITH REQUIREMENTS REGARDING THE PROVISIONS OF INFORMED CHOICE FOR ALL APPLICANTS AND ELIGIBLE INDIVIDUALS IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 102(D) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT.

G. PROVIDE VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION SERVICES TO AMERICAN INDIANS WHO ARE INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES RESIDING IN THE STATE, IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 101(A)(13) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT.

H. COMPLY WITH THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE CONDUCT OF SEMIANNUAL OR ANNUAL REVIEWS, AS APPROPRIATE, FOR INDIVIDUALS EMPLOYED EITHER IN AN EXTENDED EMPLOYMENT SETTING IN A COMMUNITY REHABILITATION PROGRAM OR ANY OTHER EMPLOYMENT UNDER SECTION 14(C) OF THE FAIR

LABOR STANDARDS ACT OF 1938, AS REQUIRED BY SECTION 101(A)(14) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT.

I. MEET THE REQUIREMENTS IN SECTIONS 101(A)(17) AND 103(B)(2) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT IF THE STATE ELECTS TO CONSTRUCT, UNDER SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES, FACILITIES FOR COMMUNITY REHABILITATION PROGRAMS

J. WITH RESPECT TO STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES, THE STATE,

I. HAS DEVELOPED AND WILL IMPLEMENT,

A. STRATEGIES TO ADDRESS THE NEEDS IDENTIFIED IN THE ASSESSMENTS; AND

B. STRATEGIES TO ACHIEVE THE GOALS AND PRIORITIES IDENTIFIED BY THE STATE, TO IMPROVE AND EXPAND VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION SERVICES FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES ON A STATEWIDE BASIS; AND

II. HAS DEVELOPED AND WILL IMPLEMENT STRATEGIES TO PROVIDE PRE-EMPLOYMENT TRANSITION SERVICES (SECTIONS 101(A)(15) AND 101(A)(25)).

5. PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION FOR THE SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT TITLE VI SUPPLEMENT:

A. THE DESIGNATED STATE UNIT ASSURES THAT IT WILL INCLUDE IN THE VR SERVICES PORTION OF THE UNIFIED OR COMBINED STATE PLAN ALL INFORMATION REQUIRED BY SECTION 606 OF THE REHABILITATION ACT.

B. THE DESIGNATED STATE AGENCY ASSURES THAT IT WILL SUBMIT REPORTS IN SUCH FORM AND IN ACCORDANCE WITH SUCH PROCEDURES AS THE COMMISSIONER MAY REQUIRE AND COLLECTS THE INFORMATION REQUIRED BY SECTION 101(A)(10) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT SEPARATELY FOR INDIVIDUALS RECEIVING SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES UNDER TITLE I AND INDIVIDUALS RECEIVING SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES UNDER TITLE VI OF THE REHABILITATION ACT.

C. THE DESIGNATED STATE UNIT WILL COORDINATE ACTIVITIES WITH ANY OTHER STATE AGENCY THAT IS FUNCTIONING AS AN EMPLOYMENT NETWORK UNDER THE TICKET TO WORK AND SELF-SUFFICIENCY PROGRAM UNDER SECTION 1148 OF THE SOCIAL SECURITY ACT.

6. FINANCIAL ADMINISTRATION OF THE SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM:

A. THE DESIGNATED STATE AGENCY ASSURES THAT IT WILL EXPEND NO MORE THAN 2.5 PERCENT OF THE STATE'S ALLOTMENT UNDER TITLE VI FOR ADMINISTRATIVE COSTS OF CARRYING OUT THIS PROGRAM; AND, THE DESIGNATED STATE AGENCY OR AGENCIES WILL PROVIDE, DIRECTLY OR INDIRECTLY THROUGH PUBLIC OR PRIVATE ENTITIES, NON-FEDERAL CONTRIBUTIONS IN AN AMOUNT THAT IS NOT LESS THAN 10 PERCENT OF THE

COSTS OF CARRYING OUT SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES PROVIDED TO YOUTH WITH THE MOST SIGNIFICANT DISABILITIES WITH THE FUNDS RESERVED FOR SUCH PURPOSE UNDER SECTION 603(D) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT, IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 606(B)(7)(G) AND (H) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT.

B. THE DESIGNATED STATE AGENCY ASSURES THAT IT WILL USE FUNDS MADE AVAILABLE UNDER TITLE VI OF THE REHABILITATION ACT ONLY TO PROVIDE SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES TO INDIVIDUALS WITH THE MOST SIGNIFICANT DISABILITIES, INCLUDING EXTENDED SERVICES TO YOUTH WITH THE MOST SIGNIFICANT DISABILITIES, WHO ARE ELIGIBLE TO RECEIVE SUCH SERVICES; AND, THAT SUCH FUNDS ARE USED ONLY TO SUPPLEMENT AND NOT SUPPLANT THE FUNDS PROVIDED UNDER TITLE I OF THE REHABILITATION ACT, WHEN PROVIDING SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES SPECIFIED IN THE INDIVIDUALIZED PLAN FOR EMPLOYMENT, IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 606(B)(7)(A) AND (D), OF THE REHABILITATION ACT.

7. PROVISION OF SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES:

A. THE DESIGNATED STATE AGENCY ASSURES THAT IT WILL PROVIDE SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES AS DEFINED IN SECTION 7(39) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT.

B. THE DESIGNATED STATE AGENCY ASSURES THAT:

- I. THE COMPREHENSIVE ASSESSMENT OF INDIVIDUALS WITH SIGNIFICANT DISABILITIES CONDUCTED UNDER SECTION 102(B)(1) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT AND FUNDED UNDER TITLE I OF THE REHABILITATION ACT INCLUDES CONSIDERATION OF SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT AS AN APPROPRIATE EMPLOYMENT OUTCOME, IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE REQUIREMENTS OF SECTION 606(B)(7)(B) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT
- II. AN INDIVIDUALIZED PLAN FOR EMPLOYMENT THAT MEETS THE REQUIREMENTS OF SECTION 102(B) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT , WHICH IS DEVELOPED AND UPDATED WITH TITLE I FUNDS, IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTIONS 102(B)(3)(F) AND 606(B)(6)(C) AND (E) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT.

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS ON THE ASSURANCES FROM THE STATE

VII. PROGRAM-SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS FOR COMBINED STATE PLAN PARTNER PROGRAMS

States choosing to submit a Combined State Plan must provide information concerning the six core programs—the Adult Program, Dislocated Worker Program, Youth Program, Wagner-Peyser Act Program, Adult Education and Family Literacy Act Program, and the Vocational Rehabilitation Program—and also submit relevant information for any of the eleven partner programs it includes in its Combined State Plan. When a State includes a Combined State Plan partner program in its Combined State Plan, it need not submit a separate plan or application for that particular program.* If included, Combined State Plan partner programs are subject to the “common planning elements” in Sections II and III of that document, where specified, as well as the program-specific requirements for that program (available on www.regulations.gov for public comment). The requirements that a State must address for any of the partner programs it includes in its Combined State Plan are provided in this separate supplemental document. The Departments are not seeking comments on these program-specific requirements, which exist under separate OMB control numbers and do not represent requirements under WIOA. For further details on this overall collection, access the Federal eRulemaking Portal at <http://www.regulations.gov> by selecting Docket ID number ETA-2015-0006.

* States that elect to include employment and training activities carried out under the Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) Act (42 U.S.C. 9901 et seq.) under a Combined State Plan would submit all other required elements of a complete CSBG State Plan directly to the Federal agency that administers the program. Similarly, States that elect to include employment and training activities carried by the Department of Housing and Urban Development and programs authorized under section 6(d)(4) and 6(o) of the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 that are included would submit all other required elements of a complete State Plan for those programs directly to the Federal agency that administers the program.

CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS AUTHORIZED UNDER THE
CARL D. PERKINS CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION ACT OF 2006

NOTE

NOTE: Unless otherwise noted, statutory references in this section are to P.L. 109-270—Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Improvement Act of 2006 (Perkins IV or the Act). (20 U.S.C. 2301 et seq.) Please provide your Perkins IV State Plan, including any revisions for the upcoming program year, in the text boxes below. Please note the following as you make this submission:

- Use bold text to denote revisions to your plan.
- You are not required to provide or revise portions of your State's Perkins State Plan that are no longer relevant, for example, items pertaining to a transition year under Perkins IV. Accordingly, text boxes are not provided for those items below.
- You are not required to hold separate hearings for the Perkins portion of your WIOA Combined State Plan, unless your State determines that there is a "significant and relevant" change in: (1) the information or assurances in the Perkins plan; (2) the administration or operation of the Perkins plan; or (3) the organization, policies, or operations of the State agency that received the grant, if the change materially affects the information or assurances in the Perkins plan. See Question A.12 in the Department's Perkins IV Non-Regulatory Guidance Q&A -Version 4.0, released April 24, 2015. Accordingly, if your State determines that no significant or relevant change is being made, you are not required to provide or revise Section I, Planning, Coordination, and Collaboration Prior to State Plan Submission, unless your State chooses to do so.
- Congress eliminated a separate allocation for Title II, Tech Prep Programs under Perkins IV in the 2011 Continuing Resolution. Accordingly, States are not required to provide or revise Section V, Tech Prep Programs, or other items of their Perkins State Plan pertaining to tech prep programs unless your State chooses to do so.
- You are not required to provide or revise your EDGAR certifications and assurances unless your State determines that a significant or relevant change needs to be made.

Once you have entered your plan, please click on the link below to the Perkins State Plan Portal. There you must enter your request to extend your Perkins State Plan, an updated budget, performance levels for the upcoming program year, and, if applicable, updated EDGAR certifications and assurances.

I. PLANNING, COORDINATION, AND COLLABORATION PRIOR TO STATE PLAN SUBMISSION

As noted above, in addition to entering your Perkins State Plan and any revisions for the upcoming year, you must submit a request to extend your Perkins State Plan using the link to the Perkins State Plan Portal below. You are not required to hold separate hearings for the Perkins portion of your WIOA Combined State Plan unless your State determines that there is a “significant and relevant” change in: (1) the information or assurances in the Perkins plan; (2) the administration or operation of the Perkins plan; or (3) the organization, policies, or operations of the State agency that received the grant, if the change materially affects the information or assurances in the Perkins plan. See Question A.12 in the Department’s Perkins IV Non-Regulatory Guidance Q&A -Version 4.0, released April 24, 2015. Accordingly, if your State determines that no significant or relevant change is being made, you are not required to provide or revise this Section I, Planning, Coordination, and Collaboration Prior to State Plan Submission, unless your State chooses to do so.

A. STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS

1. THE STATE MUST CONDUCT PUBLIC HEARINGS IN THE STATE, AFTER APPROPRIATE AND SUFFICIENT NOTICE, FOR THE PURPOSE OF AFFORDING ALL SEGMENTS OF THE PUBLIC AND INTERESTED ORGANIZATIONS AND GROUPS (INCLUDING CHARTER SCHOOL AUTHORIZERS AND ORGANIZERS CONSISTENT WITH STATE LAW, EMPLOYERS, LABOR ORGANIZATIONS, PARENTS, STUDENTS, AND COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS), AN OPPORTUNITY TO PRESENT THEIR VIEWS AND MAKE RECOMMENDATIONS REGARDING THE STATE PLAN. (SECTION 122(A)(3))

Perkins IV requires Career and Technical Education (CTE) to have a renewed and strengthened focus on collaborative partnerships and the development and implementation of programs of academic and technical preparation spanning secondary and postsecondary education. To promote this heightened expectation of collaboration between secondary and postsecondary CTE, the following guiding principles became instrumental in moving CTE forward in Minnesota under the Perkins IV Transition Plan:

1. CTE and academic education must be integrated in a more comprehensive way.
2. College and work readiness skills are one and the same.
3. Each student needs at least some education or advanced training past high school, whether 2-year college, 4-year university, industry certification, or advanced training through work.
4. Federal Perkins funding for CTE is not an entitlement at either the state or local level.
5. All education spending must be connected with student success outcomes.
6. High schools and colleges should continue CTE programs and activities that have worked well.
7. CTE must be strategically placed within the broader vision, mission and goals for education within the State of Minnesota.

Rather than developing a vision and mission for CTE in Minnesota, these guiding principles acted as the primary drivers for advancing CTE within Minnesota high schools and colleges. In particular, adhering to these guiding principles will be critical at the local level as high schools and colleges begin implementing the key new feature of the Minnesota CTE Plan: A **NEW CONSORTIUM STRUCTURE** that requires each consortium of high school and college partners to develop a **SINGLE LOCAL PLAN**, starting July 1, 2008 and all years thereafter. The **SINGLE LOCAL PLAN** will govern and manage the use of secondary basic, postsecondary basic and tech prep funds for each recognized consortium. At the same time, it enables the State to achieve its vision of having a seamless CTE education system through a **NEW CONSORTIUM STRUCTURE**, which is pivotal for the successful implementation of the State Plan. Finally, the guiding principles should provide CTE stakeholders the overall framework for enabling the necessary input and recommendations for the State Plan.

Minnesota indicated, to the US Department of Education, its intent first to submit a one year Transition Plan with goals, strategies, objectives, outcomes and measures laid out in their fullest detail. These goals, objectives, and strategies are summarized below.

Transition Plan Goals: Modifying Them to Meet the State Plan Goals: The primary goal of the Minnesota State Perkins Transition Plan focused upon the formation of a **NEW CONSORTIUM STRUCTURE OF HIGH SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES**. In addition, Minnesota chose to agglomerate the required and permissible activities as laid out in the Perkins Law into four additional goals. The five Transition Plan goals were:

1. **Create a new consortium structure of high schools and colleges.** This goal addresses the planning and provision of structural recommendations for the implementation of Perkins IV (beginning FY09). In FY08, high schools and colleges must begin the process at the local level of identifying the **new consortium structure**. In order for secondary and postsecondary recipients to obtain funding after June 30, 2008, a recipient must participate in a consortium that includes at least one Perkins-eligible postsecondary institution and at least one Perkins-eligible secondary school district. Elements to consider when selecting consortium partners include current effective relationships, anticipated programs of study, roles of brokering services with other Perkins schools/institutions, matriculation patterns of high school graduates to colleges within the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities system, and geographic proximity.

2. **Improve and expand high school to college transitions for career and technical education students.** This goal is designed to support the transition of students from high school to college through programs and services such as the development and implementation of programs of study, alignment of high school and college standards, integration of academic concepts into career and technical education, credit articulation, career guidance, college readiness, etc.

3. **Examine and expand collaborative practices to support career and technical education programming.** This goal builds upon the successes of Minnesota Indicator 12 under Perkins III by expanding on collaboratively planned activities that support career and technical education programming. Indicator 12 is the requirement, which directs at least 10% allocation of local funds to be spent on collaborative activities at the local level, but allowing for separate planning and implementation to occur for most of the local funds.

4. **Effectively use employer, community and education partnerships to support career and technical education.** This goal promotes input from, and consultation with, education, employer and community organizations to successfully address each purpose of Perkins IV. Active

involvement of external partners helps ensure that programming and structural reorganization under Perkins IV will promote student success.

5. Provide access to services for special populations, including under-represented students, in career and technical education programs. This goal addresses the continuing focus of the Perkins Act on students in special population groups. By ensuring equal, if not greater access, to all available education programming and support services, students with the greatest need are assured of the:

- Participation and completion of CTE programs,
- Preparation needed for high-skill, high-wage, or high-demand occupations that lead to self sufficiency, and,
- Consistent application of the accountability, administrative and funding rules across all student groups.

Minnesota Five-Year State CTE Plan: A Preview

Minnesota will build and sustain CTE through a NEW CONSORTIUM STRUCTURE that brings together high schools and colleges around a SINGLE LOCAL PLAN. Guided by seven basic principles, each NEW LOCAL PERKINS IV CONSORTIUM will focus on CTE becoming more accountable to all its stakeholders, but particularly to students as they maneuver through high school and college building their knowledge and skills and work towards stable employment in their chosen career pathway. With the NEW CONSORTIUM STRUCTURE for Minnesota in place, an alignment between high schools and colleges regarding administration, funding, accountability, and, most importantly, programming of CTE is beginning to take shape. The long-term goal will be to create a strong and solid foundation for CTE in Minnesota at the state and local levels.

The following sections of this document will address: Program Administration under a New Consortium Structure; Service to Special Populations; Accountability and Evaluation; Tech Prep Programming; Financial Requirements and Edgar Certifications. The rest of this section will discuss planning, coordination, and collaboration prior to plan submission.

Public Hearings. The State conducted four regional public hearings on the State Plan, and one public hearing that was broadcast electronically throughout the state. These public hearings were held on the following dates:

- February 7, 2008 --- Bemidji
- February 13, 2008 --- Mankato
- February 19, 2008 --- Anoka
- February 20, 2008 --- MnSAT Satellite Broadcast
- February 21, 2008 --- Duluth

Each hearing began with a presentation on key elements of the State Plan with particular emphasis on programs of study and the new consortium structure. Participants were then engaged in dialogue with State Perkins staff responding to questions about the state's proposed CTE plan.

2. THE STATE MUST INCLUDE A SUMMARY OF THE ABOVE RECOMMENDATIONS AND THE ELIGIBLE AGENCY'S RESPONSE TO SUCH RECOMMENDATIONS IN THE STATE PLAN. (SECTION 122(A)(3))

A summary of questions raised at the statewide task force meetings, as well as those raised at public hearings and the State responses, is listed in Appendices A and B of the full State Plan.

3. THE STATE MUST DEVELOP THE STATE PLAN IN CONSULTATION WITH ACADEMIC AND CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION TEACHERS, FACULTY, AND ADMINISTRATORS; CAREER GUIDANCE AND ACADEMIC COUNSELORS; ELIGIBLE RECIPIENTS; CHARTER SCHOOL AUTHORIZERS AND ORGANIZERS CONSISTENT WITH STATE LAW; PARENTS AND STUDENTS; INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION; THE STATE TECH PREP COORDINATOR AND REPRESENTATIVES OF TECH PREP CONSORTIA (IF APPLICABLE); ENTITIES PARTICIPATING IN ACTIVITIES UNDERTAKEN BY THE STATE BOARDS UNDER SECTION 101 OF THE WIOA; INTERESTED COMMUNITY MEMBERS (INCLUDING PARENTS AND COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS); REPRESENTATIVES OF SPECIAL POPULATIONS; REPRESENTATIVES OF BUSINESS AND INDUSTRY (INCLUDING REPRESENTATIVES OF SMALL BUSINESS); AND REPRESENTATIVES OF LABOR ORGANIZATIONS IN THE STATE. THE STATE ALSO MUST CONSULT THE GOVERNOR OF THE STATE WITH RESPECT TO DEVELOPMENT OF THE STATE PLAN. (SECTION 122)

Minnesota Perkins Career and Technical Education (CTE) State Plan Advisory Task Force. Serving an advisory role, a 45-member Minnesota Perkins Career and Technical Education (CTE) State Plan Advisory Task Force was constituted in December 2007 as a time limited work group. The charge statement for this Task Force and the Task Force membership is available at www.cte.mnscu.edu. Task Force membership was determined by expanding upon the existing Education Action Committee for the Governor's Workforce Development Council to fill in categories of participation specified in the Act. The Task Force met on January 18, 2008 and January 25, 2008 to review the draft State Plan. Presentations pertaining to the plan content were made and discussion addressed specific plan content. A final meeting was scheduled for February 22, 2008 to review comments from the public hearings.

4. THE STATE MUST DEVELOP EFFECTIVE ACTIVITIES AND PROCEDURES, INCLUDING ACCESS TO INFORMATION NEEDED TO USE SUCH PROCEDURES, TO ALLOW THE INDIVIDUALS AND ENTITIES LISTED IN ITEM 3 ABOVE TO PARTICIPATE IN STATE AND LOCAL DECISIONS THAT RELATE TO DEVELOPMENT OF THE STATE PLAN. (SECTION 122(B)(2))

The list of public hearings was posted in the State Register and specific invitations to participate in the public hearings were sent to:

- The Minnesota Chamber of Commerce
- The Minnesota Business Partnership
- The Minnesota AFL-CIO
- Minnesota School Boards Association
- Department of Labor and Industry
- Education Minnesota

- Minnesota's Career and Technical Education Professional Organizations
- Minnesota's School and College Counselor Associations
- The University of Minnesota Department of Work and Human Resource Education
- PACER (Champions for Children with Disabilities)
- Minnesota Minority Education Partnership
- Minnesota College Access Network
- Minnesota High Tech Association
- Minnesota Council of Nonprofits
- The Minnesota Parent Teacher Association (PTA)
- The Minnesota Foundation for Student Organizations with a request that information be forwarded to state officers of all Minnesota career and technical education student organizations and all Minnesota career and technical education student organization advisors.
- The Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development with a request that information be forwarded to all community-based organizations that have linkages to the state's workforce center system.

A summary of Task Force discussion and the State responses is included in Appendix A. The State also posted the draft State Plan on its career and technical education web site and accepted comments to the plan electronically. A summary of comments made and the State responses is listed in Appendix B.

5. THE STATE MUST DEVELOP THE PORTION OF THE STATE PLAN RELATING TO THE AMOUNT AND USES OF ANY FUNDS PROPOSED TO BE RESERVED FOR ADULT CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION, POSTSECONDARY CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION, TECH PREP EDUCATION, AND SECONDARY CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION AFTER CONSULTATION WITH THE STATE AGENCY RESPONSIBLE FOR SUPERVISION OF COMMUNITY COLLEGES, TECHNICAL INSTITUTES, OR OTHER 2-YEAR POSTSECONDARY INSTITUTIONS PRIMARILY ENGAGED IN PROVIDING POSTSECONDARY CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION, AND THE STATE AGENCY RESPONSIBLE FOR SECONDARY EDUCATION. IF ANY OF THOSE STATE AGENCIES FINDS THAT A PORTION OF THE FINAL STATE PLAN IS OBJECTIONABLE, THAT STATE AGENCY MUST FILE ITS OBJECTIONS WITH THE ELIGIBLE STATE AGENCY. THE ELIGIBLE STATE AGENCY MUST RESPOND TO ANY OBJECTIONS IT RECEIVES IN THE STATE PLAN THAT IT SUBMITS TO THE SECRETARY OF EDUCATION. (SECTION 122(E)(3))

Minnesota Rule 3505.1700 specifies that an annual agreement between the Commissioner of the Minnesota Department of Education and the Chancellor of the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities will specify the distribution of federal career and technical education funds between secondary and postsecondary entities. This plan identifies the factors that are considered in this decision and the formula through which such decision is made.

The Financial Requirement Section (Section Six of the full plan) provides the details of how the total Perkins and Tech Prep funds Minnesota receive annually is allocated between the State (Minnesota Department of Education and the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities Office of the Chancellor) and local high schools and colleges. In addition, the Financial Requirement Section details how the funds are allocated between secondary and postsecondary and proposes an

alternative mechanism for distributing Reserve funds since Minnesota has decided to combine the Basic (Title I) and the Tech Prep (Title II) programs.

II. PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION

1. THE STATE MUST PREPARE AND SUBMIT TO THE SECRETARY A STATE PLAN FOR A 6-YEAR PERIOD; OR YOU MAY PREPARE AND SUBMIT A TRANSITION PLAN FOR THE FIRST YEAR OF OPERATION OF PROGRAMS UNDER THE ACT.
(SECTION 122(A)(1))

2. THE STATE MUST DESCRIBE THE CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION ACTIVITIES TO BE ASSISTED THAT ARE DESIGNED TO MEET OR EXCEED THE STATE ADJUSTED LEVELS OF PERFORMANCE, INCLUDING A DESCRIPTION OF—

A. THE CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS OF STUDY, THAT MAY BE ADOPTED BY LOCAL EDUCATIONAL AGENCIES AND POSTSECONDARY INSTITUTIONS TO BE OFFERED AS AN OPTION TO STUDENTS (AND THEIR PARENTS AS APPROPRIATE) WHEN PLANNING FOR AND COMPLETING FUTURE COURSEWORK, FOR CAREER AND TECHNICAL CONTENT AREAS THAT—

- a. Incorporate secondary education and postsecondary education elements;
- b. Include coherent and rigorous content, aligned with challenging academic standards, and relevant career and technical content in a coordinated, non-duplicative progression of courses that align secondary education with postsecondary education to adequately prepare students to succeed in postsecondary education
- c. May include the opportunity for secondary education students to participate in dual or concurrent enrollment programs or other ways to acquire postsecondary education credits; and
- d. Lead to an industry-recognized credential or certificate at the postsecondary level, or an associate or baccalaureate degree

Program Approval for Secondary CTE Programs. To provide guidance to high school districts, the Minnesota Department of Education has developed curriculum frameworks in six CTE areas: agriculture, business/marketing, family and consumer sciences, health occupations, and trade and industrial/technology education. Each of these framework documents aligns Minnesota academic standards with national curriculum standards and nationally recognized occupational skill standards that incorporate academic concepts into career and technical education instruction. Additionally, the following are in place or planned:

- Curriculum Frameworks for CTE programs (six program frameworks completed and all districts standards completed and are on file in districts).
- Local District and Regional Training for Program Improvement and Approval.
- Provided workshops in the use of the self-assessment tool and the new Program Approval Rubrics to evaluate alignment of program delivery for Career and Technical Education.
- Into the third year of the regional five-year program approval process for CTE programs.
- Promoted use of the self-assessment tool and the new Program Approval Rubrics.

Program Approval for Postsecondary CTE Programs. The Minnesota State Colleges and Universities system has developed policy and procedure for approving all academic programs including CTE programs. Relevant policy <http://www.mnscu.edu/board/policy/336.html> and

procedures <http://www.mnscu.edu/board/procedure/336pl.html> are summarized below. The purpose of the Academic Programs policy is to direct system decision-making regarding the development, approval and management of academic programs to meet Minnesota's educational needs. This policy applies to credit-based academic programs of system colleges and universities.

Constructed as a cohesive arrangement of college-level credit courses and experiences, an academic program is designed to accomplish predetermined objectives leading to the awarding of a degree, diploma, or certificate. Most academic programs include a general education component. The purpose of an academic programs is to:

- A. Increase students' knowledge and understanding in a field of study or discipline,
- B. Qualify students for employment in an occupation or range of occupations, and/or
- C. Prepare student for advanced study.

Credit means a quantitative measure of instructional time assigned to a course or an equivalent learning experience such as class time per week over an academic term. General education means a cohesive curriculum defined by faculty through system college or university procedures to develop reasoning ability and breadth of knowledge through an integration of learning experiences in the liberal arts and sciences.

An academic program inventory is the official list of academic programs offered by system colleges and universities. The academic program inventory also includes all approved postsecondary CTE programs and only those are eligible for Perkins funding. CTE programs are programs:

- Offered at two-year colleges.
- That are assigned a six-digit Classification of Instruction Program (CIP) code and one of the 16 career clusters.
- That, upon completion, result in the receipt of a certificate, diploma, associate of applied science degree, or the associate of science degree.

An approved academic program shall include curricular requirements for earning an academic award, such as credits in general education, in a major and/or minor, and for all prerequisite courses. Approval of the system chancellor is required for new academic programs, changes to existing academic programs, suspension of academic programs, and closure of academic programs at system colleges and universities.

The chancellor shall maintain the academic program inventory. Only academic programs approved by the chancellor as recorded in the academic program inventory may be offered by system colleges and universities. Each system college and university shall regularly review its academic programs for the purpose of academic planning and improvement and shall submit an annual summary of its academic program review activity to the chancellor. The chancellor, as appropriate, may conduct statewide or regional reviews of academic programs or program clusters, report findings to the Board of Trustees and, when necessary, impose conditions on academic programs.

Career Pathways and Programs of Study. With standards on program approval and new program development in place at both the secondary and postsecondary levels, and capitalizing on much of the development work done in other states, Minnesota intends to implement programs of study (POS) and career pathways as a primary mechanism to identify, build and sustain its new

consortium structure proposed under the State Plan. Minnesota has long used the 16 CTE career clusters as a data organizing framework. However, only under its new consortium structure has Minnesota begun exploring the use of career pathways/POS as a structural framework for organizing the coordinated delivery of CTE in high schools and colleges. Details of the activities undertaken in Minnesota to support implementation of career pathways/POS can be found on the website www.cte.mnscu.edu/programs/index.html and include the following:

- Promoting early consideration of career clusters as a guidance tool (middle school), discussion has finalized a set of six Minnesota Career Fields that encompasses the 16 career clusters.
- Minnesota has begun to apply the 81 Career Pathways Model as developed by the National Association of State Directors of Career and Technical Education Consortium (NASDCTEc) to Minnesota's CTE curricula at the secondary and postsecondary levels.
- Using the Minnesota Career Fields, Clusters, and Pathways framework developed nationally and by other states, but in particular Nebraska, the State has developed an organizing framework (graphically depicted in Appendix D) of the foundation knowledge and skills, career fields, clusters, and pathways that Minnesota will use for developing programs of study in career and technical education.
- Along with this organizing framework, guidelines and print and electronic communication pieces, the State has begun to lay a solid foundation for local consortia to implement at least one POS in FY09 (July 1, 2008 to June 30, 2009), five more in FY10 and one more in FY11. A draft version of these guidelines is shown in Appendix E.
- The Minnesota State Colleges and Universities Office of the Chancellor has reconfigured its inventory of programs and created a report that reorganizes them according to career fields, career clusters and career pathways. The report is titled Minnesota State Colleges & Universities Programs by Career Fields, Clusters, and Pathways.

The educational programming and support services needs of all students must be considered in implementing the organizing framework described above, including adult students, particularly those whose high school experience is in the distant past, and are entering directly into college, maybe for the first time. In general, the organizing framework must consider all transitions from secondary into postsecondary education, in and out of postsecondary education, and between education and employment.

B. HOW THE STATE, IN CONSULTATION WITH ELIGIBLE RECIPIENTS, WILL DEVELOP AND IMPLEMENT THE CAREER AND TECHNICAL PROGRAMS OF STUDY DESCRIBED IN (A) ABOVE;

After consultation with eligible recipients, Minnesota will set the following parameters for developing and implementing a statewide career pathways/POS strategy. Programs of Study (POS) within Minnesota CTE must meet the following criteria:

- Career pathways/POS will either be developed locally or developed by the State with local input;
- Span at least grades 11-14 by identifying a non-duplicative sequence of both academic and technical courses within a program of study;
- Make high school graduation a minimum requirement;
- Lead to an industry-recognized certification or a certificate, diploma or an associate degree from a two-year college;

- Align with the program approval processes established by the Minnesota Department of Education and the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities system; and,
- Incorporate articulation agreements, dual- or concurrent-enrollment opportunities, or postsecondary enrollment options so that students may earn college credit while in high school.

The State has encouraged local recipients to consider the following when developing and implementing POS:

- Existing programmatic career pathways in the colleges which can serve as a foundation for identifying POS that connect secondary and postsecondary levels through a sequence of non-duplicative courses.
- The development of new, or the modification of existing, pathways using the current Tech Prep articulation agreements between secondary education and postsecondary education institutions as initial points of discussion. For example, Perkins III recipients had already begun developing POS in Information Technology, Health, and Manufacturing under existing Tech Prep articulation agreements.
- Use already developed POS models from different U.S. states and national organizations as available and as appropriate to Minnesota and the local consortia.
- Incorporation of dual- or concurrent-enrollment opportunities, articulation agreements, or postsecondary enrollment options within each POS.
- Identifying, for students and their parents, the academic and technical courses needed for broad preparation in various career fields at the secondary level, and specialization at the postsecondary level.
- Developing resources for counselors in order to understand the role of career pathways/POS as a mechanism for moving towards a postsecondary education or employment.

Minnesota strongly feels that the development and implementation of career pathways/POS will be facilitated by having the new consortium structure in place. The State contends that the new consortium structure will support the Perkins IV requirement for building increasingly strong collaborative models, not only for CTE, but to pave the way for other linkages that connect the secondary and postsecondary systems.

C. HOW THE STATE WILL SUPPORT ELIGIBLE RECIPIENTS IN DEVELOPING AND IMPLEMENTING ARTICULATION AGREEMENTS BETWEEN SECONDARY EDUCATION AND POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS;

Each new local consortium, as part of its overall planning efforts, must consider the following to ensure smooth transitions, from secondary into postsecondary education; in and out of postsecondary education; and, between education and employment:

- Initially Minnesota used the term BROKERING OF SERVICES and made special reference to the fact a situation might arise, when, in a local consortium, either the secondary or postsecondary components of a given program of study is absent, but consortium students have expressed an interest in the missing component. It is then incumbent on the local consortium to facilitate the movement of CTE students from high school to college, by identifying, and expediting the transfer into, another local consortium that has the complete program of study. The concept of BROKERING OF SERVICES has been expanded to include other situations in which two or more local consortia might have reason to pool funds

to provide services in a manner that ensures a continuum of service provision (hence the acronym CSP). See also Section Five below.

- Continuum of Service Provision (CSP) is one of the five goals to which funds have to be targeted and educational programming and support services provided to students within the local consortium (see Section Five below). CSP arises when a local consortium is unable to provide adequate service to its own CTE students. In such situations, the local consortium that is in need of adequate services should engage in formal and informal relationships with other local consortia to ensure that educational programming and support service requested by the student(s) are provided. Minnesota expects the application of the CSP concept to be a key ingredient in forging new articulation and dual-enrollment agreements that extend beyond a single consortium, and set the stage for regional and statewide agreements that help CTE students move from secondary into postsecondary education, in and out of postsecondary education, and between education and employment.
- Using the term articulation more expansively, the State has decided to make some of the permissible activities under Perkins IV required activities, particularly, articulation and dual enrollment. Minnesota has a long established state-supported dual enrollment program. For 11th and 12th grade high school students to enroll in postsecondary education at the state's expense and under certain conditions, they can do so under the Minnesota Postsecondary Enrollment Options (PSEO) Act (M.S. 124D.09). The PSEO or concurrent enrollment program has thus far had limited application when it comes to high school students enrolling in college-level CTE courses. Nevertheless, as Minnesota's new CTE consortium structure gets more firmly established and local consortia begin exploring the different ways in which a high school student can participate in college-level coursework, PSEO and concurrent enrollment certainly becomes one of the choices offered to a CTE student within a particular local consortium. It also creates opportunities for consortia to begin engaging in continuum of service provision (CSP).

D. HOW PROGRAMS AT THE SECONDARY LEVEL WILL MAKE AVAILABLE INFORMATION ABOUT CAREER AND TECHNICAL PROGRAMS OF STUDY OFFERED BY ELIGIBLE RECIPIENTS;

Once the Transition Plan was submitted to the U.S. Department of Education in May 2007, Minnesota began to construct a framework, guidelines, and communication strategies for making information about programs of study (POS) available to local recipients of Perkins funds. Elements of the Minnesota POS plan included:

- A 20 person statewide team, comprised of several State Perkins staff and key personnel from school districts and colleges, was sent to Washington DC to attend a workshop on the development and implementation of POS at the local level, and the management of POS at the state level. An outgrowth from the meeting was the formation of sub-groups from the team, along with guidance from the State, which focused on developing a POS template for use by local consortia. The template, as shown in Appendix F, is to be used as one piece of an overall plan to develop and implement POS in the high schools and colleges within local consortia.
- The State has provided:
 1. Oral and written guidance regarding the development of career pathways/POS within each local consortium (See Appendix E).
 2. Preliminary data work on using Classification of Instructional Program (CIP) codes, career clusters and career pathways to align existing programs in community and technical colleges

with the cluster and pathway structure. A similar crosswalk is being established for secondary CTE programs.

3. Initial work to build a relational database that links secondary CTE programs to related CTE programs at the postsecondary level within the cluster/pathway framework.
 4. Existing labor market information (LMI) produced regularly by the Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED), particularly as it relates to current and emerging high-skill, high-wage, or high-demand occupations. An analysis has been done at the college level to identify high-skill, high-wage or high-demand career pathways in Minnesota (See Appendix G).
- The State will explore a variety of electronic and face-to-face mechanisms that explain, to students, families, and counselors, Minnesota's career pathway/POS organizational framework particularly through the development of interactive career planning resources. These mechanisms will be incorporated into existing Minnesota career planning resources, specifically the Minnesota Career Information System (MCIS), CAREERwise Education and Minnesota Careers (MnCareers).

E. THE SECONDARY AND POSTSECONDARY CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS TO BE CARRIED OUT, INCLUDING PROGRAMS THAT WILL BE CARRIED OUT BY YOU, TO DEVELOP, IMPROVE, AND EXPAND ACCESS TO APPROPRIATE TECHNOLOGY IN CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS;

Minnesota has developed several electronic and online tools that have enabled students in secondary and postsecondary CTE programs to access information on career guidance, on education programming in CTE, and on current and future employment opportunities. Among them are:

- Career Information: Minnesota provides information to students and the general public about high-skill/high-wage opportunities using three primary career development products: the Minnesota Careers publication, the Minnesota Department of Education Minnesota Career Information System (MCIS) and internet- based products, and CAREERwise Education a web-based system of education and employment information.
- eFolio Minnesota: is a statewide electronic portfolio infrastructure <http://www.efoliumn.com> that permits all Minnesota residents and students to construct and showcase their education and workforce skills and abilities. Partially supported with Perkins leadership funds, eFolio is entirely web-based and will accommodate text and/or multi-media files (images, audio, and video). A product of the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities, it is the nation's first statewide electronic portfolio management system.
- Use of Technology: Parametric Technology Corporation made a gift to Minnesota school districts of site licenses of Pro-E modeling software. Utilizing resources from a grant from the National Governors' Association, Minnesota made this software available to any school district whose staff participated in Pro-E training. While not limited to career and technical education programs, the majority of participating school districts have incorporated this software into CTE mechanical and engineering drafting programs. Minnesota has encouraged the implementation of Oracle Academy programming through promotion by the state secondary business education specialist.
- CTE and STEM: Minnesota has promoted access to science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) education through multiple initiatives, not the least of which has been state support, utilizing Perkins state leadership and MnSCU Center of Excellence funding, for

two positions helping school districts to implement Project Lead The Way (PLTW) pre-engineering curriculum and qualifying for PLTW site certification.

F. THE CRITERIA THAT YOU WILL USE TO APPROVE ELIGIBLE RECIPIENTS FOR FUNDS UNDER THE ACT, INCLUDING CRITERIA TO ASSESS THE EXTENT TO WHICH THE LOCAL PLAN WILL—

- i. Promote continuous improvement in academic achievement;
- ii. Promote continuous improvement of technical skill attainment; and
- iii. Identify and address current or emerging occupational opportunities

F. i,ii,iii

Minnesota has established a data systems that, at the state level, identify participants and concentrators in secondary career and technical education programs and which identify whether those students have met the academic performance requirements established by the state under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. Summary data, disaggregated by sub-populations, is made available to Perkins recipients and will be used as the baseline for promoting academic achievement of career and technical education concentrators.

Special legislation points to the connections between business and agriculture education programs to deliver economics education and all career and technical education programs to deliver science, mathematics and arts education. The 2007 Minnesota Legislature added language to the section on graduation requirements and course credits (M.S. 120B.024) allowing CTE to fulfill science, mathematics and arts credits not otherwise specified in statute. Expansion of these linkages will be a priority. Likewise, Minnesota has heavily promoted the incorporation of academic concepts in CTE within the constraints of highly qualified teacher requirements of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act.

The expectation under Perkins IV, that technical skill attainment must be measured with valid and reliable instruments aligned with industry standards and certifications (where available and appropriate) will pose a significant challenge for Minnesota. Like many states, Minnesota has measured technical skill attainment using either program completion or level of participation as prima facie evidence of a student gaining technical skills. To move beyond such measures, as the Law requires, state leaders throughout the country reached consensus on the use of assessments that were developed by third parties and which provide evidence of validity and reliability but administered locally.

To meet the expectations under Perkins IV, Minnesota established a process for identifying technical skill assessments in 2009 that will be used in each of the 79 career pathways identified in the MN Career pathway model. The process relies on teachers, faculty, administrators and counselors, and business and industry representatives to identify and validate the core competencies within a pathway for both secondary and postsecondary students, then review and identify available nationally-developed assessments aligned with industry-recognized standards (when possible) which become part of the state-approved list of technical skill assessments for use in MN career & technical education programs.

During FY10, Minnesota engaged in this process in five career pathways. The process will continue by identifying and validating competencies and identifying potential technical skill assessments that align with those competencies in eight additional career pathways during FY11, 25 career pathways in FY12, 21 career pathways in FY13, and the remaining 15 career pathways in FY14.

The purpose of this collaborative project is to develop an assessment system that will provide teachers, administrators and policymakers with accurate and useful information about student technical skill achievement. This assessment system will provide information that is useful for improving program quality, creating strong connections between high school and college programs, and communicating to employers and policymakers the value of career and technical skill programs of study in preparing students for college and work readiness. Baseline data will be collected for both secondary and postsecondary concentrators in the state approved programs of study in the five career pathways in the project pilot to be reported in the FY11 CAR report.

More information (including the MN Position Statement on Technical Skill Assessment Implementation) can be found at:

<http://cte.mnscu.edu/programs/documents/MnSCU-MDE-FINAL-Position-on-TSAImplem-7-1-15.pdf>

The MnSCU/MDE Career and Technical Education position on Technical Skill Assessments can be found in Appendix E-4.

G. HOW PROGRAMS AT THE SECONDARY LEVEL WILL PREPARE CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION STUDENTS, INCLUDING SPECIAL POPULATIONS, TO GRADUATE FROM SECONDARY SCHOOL WITH A DIPLOMA

Minnesota will continue to promote secondary career and technical education opportunities as a strategy to encourage students to remain in school through graduation. Career and technical education is an identified strategy under a separate dropout prevention grant through the Minnesota Department of Education, and successful practices from that grant will be disseminated to all Minnesota school districts.

Minnesota also continues to support a wide array of educational alternatives, including area learning centers, charter schools, contract alternative schools, etc., designed to support the needs of students in special populations. Presentations are made annually to the Minnesota Association of Alternative Programs to share new initiatives in career and technical education and to promote effective use of CTE for students with special learning challenges. The transition-disabled specialist within the Minnesota Department of Education has also worked closely with staff in the Department's special education unit to promote effective work-based learning opportunities for students with disabilities.

H. HOW SUCH PROGRAMS WILL PREPARE CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION STUDENTS, INCLUDING SPECIAL POPULATIONS, ACADEMICALLY AND TECHNICALLY FOR OPPORTUNITIES IN POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION OR ENTRY INTO HIGH-SKILL, HIGH-WAGE, OR HIGH-DEMAND OCCUPATIONS IN CURRENT OR EMERGING OCCUPATIONS, AND HOW PARTICIPATING STUDENTS WILL BE MADE AWARE OF SUCH OPPORTUNITIES;

Postsecondary: Minnesota has long focused on developing and sustaining programs that prepare individuals for high-skill, high-wage jobs including:

- Using Perkins Leadership Funds to promote the **development of new programs** in colleges, either on their own or collaboratively, in high-skill, high-wage, or high-demand occupations.
- Competition among colleges for **Perkins Program Development Grants**, which are meant to stimulate the development of new academic programs by colleges. Proposals must address one or more of the following:
 1. Programmatic career pathways
 2. Technical skill attainment assessment processes
 3. Preparation for non-traditional fields
 4. Support for programs for special populations
 5. Support for programs that link high schools to colleges
 6. Evidence of high-wage and high-skill or high-demand occupations

These projects are especially encouraged -- but not required -- to include:

1. Employer engagement to provide experiential learning
2. Existing STEM-related coursework
3. Support of initiatives to facilitate transition from sub-baccalaureate to baccalaureate programs
4. Industry, community, K-12 or other partners
5. Leveraged funds

Labor Market Analysis is partially provided by the MN Department of Employment and Economic Development. The tasks include:

- Link employment and labor demand information to existing postsecondary engagement, attainment and transition data.
- Produce information, reports and documents on current and projected employment levels, wage rates for individual colleges and universities within the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities and other labor market trends that will inform the development, maintenance, and changes to academic programming.
- Provide statewide and regional labor market analyses for technical skill assessment projects and for the development of programs of study and adult career pathways. Provide the critical link to the research and statistical information unit in the Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED), allowing both agencies to share data electronically and use those data in specific projects within the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities and DEED.

In addition, the System Office of MnSCU supports the Real Time Talent project, a collaboration among higher education, private sector, government and non-profit organizations, which provides access to real-time job posting data through Wanted Analytics. This web-based research tool pulls data from hundreds of online job posting sites, analyzes, and presents up-to-date information in a subscription services. The use of this data helps job seekers and also institutions in planning strategies to meet workforce development needs.

Secondary:

- Using the Minnesota Career Information System (MCIS) to provide information for schools, students and their parents on employment trends and opportunities and educational programs that will help students prepare for, and enter, these occupations. Most Minnesota school districts subscribe to MCIS which gives students and parents access to the system from home via the Internet, though much of the data is also provided by MCIS to ISEEK which is freely available to all Minnesota citizens.

I. HOW FUNDS WILL BE USED TO IMPROVE OR DEVELOP NEW CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION COURSES—

- i. At the secondary level that are aligned with rigorous and challenging academic content standards and student academic achievement standards adopted by the State under section 1111(b)(1) of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, as amended;
- ii. At the postsecondary level that are relevant and challenging; and
- iii. That lead to employment in high-skill, high-wage, or high-demand occupations;

Minnesota requires secondary school districts to collect data pertaining to academic performance of career and technical education students as part of the state program approval process. Additionally, through the performance negotiations under Perkins IV, each participating school district must meet or exceed state levels of performance toward academic standards, as defined under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, or establish an improvement plan to meet that requirement.

Legislation was enacted by the 2007 Minnesota Legislature allowing high school students to meet academic requirements in science, mathematics and the arts through participation in career and technical education programs. Districts must determine that academic standards are addressed with integrity through local CTE programming for this credit to be granted. Similar legislation identifies business and agricultural education teachers as meeting requirements for delivering economics by highly qualified personnel.

The 2007 Minnesota Legislature amended MINNESOTA STATUTE 122A.72 and appropriated funds for the development of math and science teacher academies in Minnesota. A task force was assembled to facilitate the implementation of these academies (teacher centers) with an initial focus on mathematics, and included development of strategies to deliver mathematics across the curriculum. Career and technical educators were selected to lead this effort.

Postsecondary level see discussion under (H) above.

Employment in high-skill, high-wage, or high-demand occupations -- see discussion under (H) above.

J. HOW YOU WILL FACILITATE AND COORDINATE COMMUNICATIONS ON BEST PRACTICES AMONG SUCCESSFUL RECIPIENTS OF TECH PREP PROGRAM GRANTS UNDER TITLE II AND OTHER ELIGIBLE RECIPIENTS TO IMPROVE PROGRAM QUALITY AND STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

Minnesota's move to combine the Basic and Tech Prep programs reflects the expectation under Perkins IV that Basic programs also address integration and articulation. Starting July 1, 2008, tech prep and basic grant funds will be combined for distribution to local consortia. Local consortium plans must continue to address tech prep activities within the limits of the Basic Grant structure.

K. HOW FUNDS WILL BE USED EFFECTIVELY TO LINK ACADEMIC AND CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION AT THE SECONDARY LEVEL AND AT THE POSTSECONDARY LEVEL IN A MANNER THAT INCREASES STUDENT ACADEMIC AND CAREER AND TECHNICAL ACHIEVEMENT; AND

Minnesota students who elect to take CTE courses do not have to choose between becoming Career or College ready -ultimately, secondary CTE courses aim to prepare students for both. For example, this year MN will be inviting many of the CTE teachers to partner with core content teachers within their building; together these teams will be attending the a new CTE professional development series with the goal of linking academic and career and technical education outcomes. The professional development series will allow teachers to set aside time to align their vocabulary, curriculum sequencing, and concepts so that students receive direct instruction as well as hands-on experiences of the content standards and benchmarks.

The Programs of Study and the Rigorous Programs of Study all reflect academic AND career and technical education opportunities. In addition the MN State Plan reflects investment in articulation agreements, dual enrollment options, and support of CTE students who also complete AP and IB coursework.

The State professional development opportunities have emphasized the use of data to promote strategies for student success. These professional development opportunities have included webinars around specific performance criteria, face-to-face local workshops to help consortium reflect on their own student populations and how to promote the academic and career achievement, workshops at all state-wide gatherings to promote data driven decision making to promote student success.

Advisory committee input at the postsecondary and secondary programs assist in streamlining and informing course sequencing, course content and skill attainment as well as emphasizing the critical, foundational, transferable skills such as communication, critical thinking, problem solving, and teamwork.

L. HOW THE STATE WILL REPORT ON THE INTEGRATION OF COHERENT AND RIGOROUS CONTENT ALIGNED WITH CHALLENGING ACADEMIC STANDARDS IN CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS IN ORDER TO ADEQUATELY EVALUATE THE EXTENT OF SUCH INTEGRATION. (SECTION 122(C)(1)(A)-(L))

Secondary

As part of the secondary CTE program approval process, Minnesota requires districts to submit curriculum outlines to the state. It is an expectation that these outlines identify how academic standards are met or supported through participation in CTE programs. Additionally, the Minnesota Department of Education works closely with teacher professional organizations in each CTE field to promote effective practices that focus on the attainment of academic and technical skills. Each district annual report of performance will identify the number and percentage of CTE concentrators within the consortium who met or exceeded academic and technical skill standards.

The Department of Education is working with its information technology staff to develop the means to post annual secondary performance reports for each Perkins consortium for all core indicators on its web site, ensuring that information is not presented in such a way that individual students could be identified.

Postsecondary

Minnesota has established a separate policy (<http://www.mnscu.edu/board/policy/337.html>) for general education courses reflecting competencies adopted by the public higher education entities in Minnesota. The 1994 "Minnesota Transfer Curriculum Agreement" is a document developed by faculty representatives of Minnesota public colleges and universities outlining the conditions by which students transfer their completed general education work at one public college or university to meet lower division general or liberal education requirements at any public college or university in Minnesota. The agreement was signed by the chief executive officers of the existing public higher education systems in 1994. The agreement identifies ten areas of emphasis and goals and student competencies in each area of emphasis. The ten "goal areas" refer to the areas of emphasis identified in the Minnesota Transfer Curriculum Agreement: 1) Communication, 2) Critical Thinking, 3) Natural Sciences, 4) Mathematical and Logical Reasoning, 5) History, Social and Behavioral Sciences, 6) Humanities and Fine Arts, 7) Human Diversity, 8) Global Perspective, 9) Civic and Ethical Responsibility, and 10) People and the Environment.

Colleges and universities within the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities system have policies and procedures with regard to the development, approval and management of academic programs to meet Minnesota's educational needs (see above discussion regarding the academic programs policy and procedure). The Minnesota Transfer Curriculum policy and procedure has been developed in such a manner that they are consistent with academic programs policy and procedure. Unlike the undergraduate course credit transfer policy and procedure (see above) where the receiving institution determines criteria for accepting credit, each receiving system college and university shall accept a Minnesota Transfer Curriculum course, goal area, or the entire curriculum as determined and documented by the sending system college or university. Each system college and university shall publish its Minnesota Transfer Curriculum requirements and policies. A corresponding procedure must be developed to implement the Minnesota Transfer Curriculum policy (<http://www.mnscu.edu/board/procedure/337pl.html>).

3. THE STATE PLAN MUST DESCRIBE HOW COMPREHENSIVE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT (INCLUDING INITIAL TEACHER PREPARATION AND ACTIVITIES THAT SUPPORT RECRUITMENT) FOR CAREER AND TECHNICAL TEACHERS, FACULTY, ADMINISTRATORS, AND CAREER GUIDANCE AND ACADEMIC COUNSELORS WILL BE PROVIDED, ESPECIALLY PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT THAT—

A. PROMOTES THE INTEGRATION OF COHERENT AND RIGOROUS ACADEMIC CONTENT STANDARDS AND CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION CURRICULA, INCLUDING THROUGH OPPORTUNITIES FOR ACADEMIC AND CAREER AND TECHNICAL TEACHERS TO JOINTLY DEVELOP AND IMPLEMENT CURRICULA AND PEDAGOGICAL STRATEGIES;

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

It is important for college faculty and secondary teachers to continue professional growth, and to do so, college faculty and secondary teachers need to set clear goals and means to accomplish these goals. Professional development includes continuing improvement in: teaching and learning skills and methods, discipline and program content, student interactions, service to the school, the college and the greater community, and personal growth related to the secondary school teacher's or a postsecondary faculty's employment responsibilities.

The Career and Technical Education Professional Development Director continues to provide ongoing and strategic oversight of professional development initiatives and activities related to CTE in Minnesota and nationally. This includes planning statewide professional development conferences, producing online training resources, and providing ongoing technical assistance to Mn Perkins consortia for their local planning and delivery of professional development. Priority topics for Mn CTE professional development are the formation of pedagogical strategies to provide culturally competent curriculum; increasing the capacity of CTE professional programs to recognize and address the impact that battling poverty has on students; and providing work-based learning guidelines for secondary, postsecondary and workforce partners. In addition, the CTE staff is involved in providing strategic direction to statewide CTE teacher preparation programs.

Secondary --- The Minnesota Department of Education and the Office of the Chancellor provide updates at all quarterly meetings of the Minnesota Association of Career and Technical Administrators. Implementation of the Perkins Act, including promotion of opportunities to address academic content in career and technical education programs, is a regular part of these updates.

The Minnesota Department of Education and the Office of the Chancellor promoted the Math-in-CTE model as developed by the National Research Center for Career and Technical Education throughout Minnesota, especially through targeted work in the areas of health and manufacturing. While the timing did not allow continuation of pilot work beyond the 2007-2008 transition year the State intends to continue to promote this successful model across all CTE curricula.

As Minnesota implements teacher centers with a focus on delivery of mathematics and science concepts, professional development will be provided to several affiliates of the Minnesota Association for Career and Technical Education, to which many secondary CTE teachers belong. The aim here is to focus on encouraging the use of CTE courses to reinforce mathematics and science concepts.

Postsecondary --- At the postsecondary level, each college is required to establish a policy to implement the faculty development process which shall include the development of faculty professional development plans. College faculty and administration must work together to establish the college policy on faculty professional development. Each faculty member prepares an individual professional development plan according to the timelines and criteria specified in the college professional development policy.

The purpose of the professional development plan is to identify activities and/or strategies to be used by the faculty member to maintain currency in the faculty member's credential field(s) and in teaching and learning skills and may include activities that go beyond maintaining currency. The plan shall be developed by the faculty member in consultation with the faculty member's supervisor and shall address specific objectives and expected outcomes with respect to the following components, as appropriate to the faculty member's needs:

1. Content knowledge and skill in the discipline/program;
2. Teaching methods and instructional strategies;
3. Related work experience;
4. Study appropriate to the higher education environment;
5. Service to the college and the greater community; and
6. Other components, as appropriate.

The CTE Professional Development Director along with the entire Perkins State Leadership team also coordinates and presents a fall Best Practices conference for career and technical administrators and teachers/faculty. This conference spotlights promising practices identified during our monitoring visits, from the review of the local applications, and from practices described in emerging research literature. Guest speakers set the tone (FY10 was Kim Green, Executive Director of the National Association of State Directors of Career Technical Education Consortium) and individuals attend a number of breakout sessions. Past participation included as many as 250 participants from local districts and colleges in attendance.

B. INCREASES THE PERCENTAGE OF TEACHERS THAT MEET TEACHER CERTIFICATION OR LICENSING REQUIREMENTS;

Secondary --- Perkins State leadership funds support positions at both the University of Minnesota and Bemidji State University, the two institutions primarily responsible for preparing career and technical education teachers in the state, with responsibility for reviewing applicant credentials and designing individual paths leading to certification as career and technical education teachers. This process has greatly facilitated access to additional certifications for licensed teachers in Minnesota and has promoted movement of new teacher candidates from industry or preparation other than traditional teacher preparation pathways. Both the University of Minnesota and Bemidji State University have implemented modest fees to help the credential review process to become sustainable.

Perkins funds support programming at both the University of Minnesota and Bemidji State University to deliver the "teacher education sequence," a series of courses designed to prepare individuals for new CTE teaching positions whose technical background is gained through either coursework or industry experience.

SECONDARY CTE TEACHER LICENSURE COURSES AND PROGRAMS EXIST FOR AGRICULTURE, BUSINESS EDUCATION AND FAMILY AND CONSUMER SCIENCE.

PERKINS STATE LEADERSHIP FUNDS ARE SUPPORTING THE ENHANCEMENT AND DEVELOPMENT OF ADDITIONAL CAREER/TECHNICAL TEACHER EDUCATION PROGRAMS IN MEDICAL CAREER AND THE WORK-BASED LEARNING CERTIFICATION. THE RECRUITMENT AND EDUCATION OF CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION TEACHERS PRESENTS AN OPPORTUNITY FOR CREATIVE SOLUTIONS AND MULTIPLE AGENCIES WORKING TOGETHER. THE CURRENT NUMBER OF TEACHERS WANTING TO ACCESS THIS EDUCATIONAL PATHWAY IS NOT A CRITICAL MASS SO THAT THE PROGRAMS MEET THE STRICT GUIDELINES OF THE BUSINESS MODELS OF THE UNIVERSITIES.

PERKINS FUNDS SUPPORT PROGRAMMING AT SOUTHWEST MINNESOTA STATE UNIVERSITY [HTTPS://WWW.SMSU.EDU/](https://www.smsu.edu/) TO DELIVER THE "TEACHER EDUCATION SEQUENCE," A SERIES OF COURSES DESIGNED TO PREPARE INDIVIDUALS FOR NEW CTE TEACHING POSITIONS WHOSE TECHNICAL BACKGROUND IS GAINED THROUGH EITHER COURSEWORK OR INDUSTRY EXPERIENCE. THIS INSTRUCTION IS PROVIDED THROUGH A VARIETY OF METHODOLOGIES TO SERVE OUR DIVERSE, ADULT STUDENT POPULATION THROUGHOUT THE STATE.

Postsecondary --- The Minnesota State Colleges and Universities has developed a college faculty credentialing policy (<http://www.mnscu.edu/board/policy/332.html>) and procedure <http://www.mnscu.edu/board/procedure/332pl.html> that assures that qualified individuals perform faculty work in the system colleges through system-established faculty minimum qualifications. It applies to 100% of newly hired unlimited faculty teaching in our two-year colleges. Minimum qualifications mean system-established minimum requirements used to evaluate the credentials of an individual considered for college faculty work. A component of these minimum requirements is the teaching and learning competency requirement. The teaching and learning competency requirement applies to college faculty, including counselors and librarians.

Prior to being granted unlimited status, a faculty member shall successfully complete courses in the following content areas focused on the postsecondary student learning environment: course construction; teaching/instructional methods; student outcomes assessment/evaluation; and philosophy of community and technical college education. The learning experiences defined in this requirement are intended to: provide the faculty with an insight into the culture and climate of teaching at a community or technical college in Minnesota; lay the groundwork for excellence in teaching and learning; and ensure that faculty possess the minimum instructional knowledge, skill and practice components foundational for the community and technical college teaching environment. New faculty members who hold a degree in education focused on a postsecondary student learning environment, have documented evidence of successful completion of equivalent coursework in the specified teaching and learning content areas, or three years of successful full-time (or equivalent) secondary, postsecondary, industry, or trade apprenticeship teaching experience in the field for which they are being hired will be exempt from taking the first three courses. The philosophy course shall be waived for individuals who, at the time of hire, have documented evidence of successful completion of equivalent coursework. The equivalency determination will be made by the Office of the Chancellor Human Resources Office.

The Philosophy of Community and Technical College Education non-credit course has been developed and is delivered online by the Southwest Minnesota State University.

Equivalent courses from other universities may fulfill this requirement but will need to be evaluated by the Office of the Chancellor's personnel office staff. An example course outline, from the Philosophy of Community and Technical College Education course:

A. Content knowledge and skill in the discipline/program. Example: LEARNING NEW TECHNOLOGY OR METHODOLOGIES; COMPUTER SOFTWARE TRAINING, WRITING SKILLS WORKSHOP, COMMUNICATION/INTERPERSONAL RELATIONS SKILLS TRAINING, ATTAIN PROFESSIONAL CERTIFICATIONS/LICENSES.

B. Teaching methods and instructional strategies. Example: CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT, CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT, LEARNING STYLES, ON-LINE DELIVERY, CULTURAL AND DIVERSITY ENRICHMENT.

C. Related work experience. Example: BUSINESS/INDUSTRY INTERNSHIPS, RELEVANT SUMMER EMPLOYMENT, OBSERVATION OR SPECIAL PROJECT(S) WITH EMPLOYERS.

D. Study appropriate to the higher education environment. Example: ADVANCEMENT OF ACADEMIC CREDENTIALS, RESEARCHING, PUBLISHING, GRANT WRITING.

E. Service to the college and the greater community. Example: ACTIVE PARTICIPATION IN LEADERSHIP IN PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS, LEADERSHIP IN COLLEGE COMMITTEES, WORKING WITH YOUTH IN ACADEMIC SKILLS DEVELOPMENT.

C. IS HIGH QUALITY, SUSTAINED, INTENSIVE, AND FOCUSED ON INSTRUCTION, AND INCREASES THE ACADEMIC KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF INDUSTRY STANDARDS, AS APPROPRIATE, OF CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION TEACHERS

Secondary --- Minnesota worked to demonstrate effective, sustained professional development when it implemented the high school math-in-CTE model developed by the National Research Center on Career and Technical Education. Twenty-two high school teachers, in teams of mathematics and either health or manufacturing, participated for 10 days throughout the year to identify mathematics embedded in CTE coursework and to enhance the abilities of the CTE teachers to deliver that mathematics content in a way that was recognized by students both in context and in traditional classroom settings. The state continues to promote this particular activity, and uses it as a model for future professional development activities in other areas.

Minnesota is implementing significant changes to its natural resources curricula in collaboration with the Center for Agricultural and Environmental Research and Training (CAERT). More than a dozen state agricultural education teachers from both high schools and colleges worked to align the state's academic standards to natural resources coursework using CAERT tools. A series of workshops will be conducted to introduce these new curriculum materials and to fully implement these academic and technical standards across the state.

Postsecondary --- Professional development will be delivered using an on-going, thematic approach that will provide career and technical teachers, faculty, administrators, and career guidance and academic counselors with the skills to improve student performance and acquisition of high-skill, high-wage and high-demand employment. Professional development will be provided in the following areas:

- Program of Study Development -- Creating CTE Pathways for Student Success from secondary through postsecondary education and career pathways for adult learners in Career and Technical Education
- Technical Skill Assessments -- Selecting and using valid and reliable assessments to align CTE instruction and student outcomes with industry standards
- Integration of Liberal Arts and Sciences/Academic and Career Education
- Recruitment, Retention and Credentialing -- Provided for CTE teachers and faculty including individuals in groups underrepresented in the teaching profession
- Special Populations -- Providing the knowledge and skills needed to work with and improve CTE instruction for Special Populations

Professional development will be conducted by the following MN CTE staff members:

- CTE Professional Development Director
- Minnesota State Colleges and Universities & Minnesota Department of Education CTE Staff
- MN Consortium Leaders
- Local Secondary and Postsecondary Administration
- CTE secondary teachers and postsecondary faculty

Professional development will be delivered via the following face-to-face methods:

- Statewide, Regional & local Consortium meetings and conferences
- Annual Fall CTE Conference for Secondary & Postsecondary stakeholders
- Technical Skill Assessment meetings by career pathway(s) or as requested
- Programs of Study meetings by career pathway(s)
- Fiscal Management and Accountability training
- Math, Reading and Writing-in-CTE workshops

Professional development will be delivered via the following web-based tools and methods:

- Webinars
- MN CTE Website, <http://www.cte.mnscu.edu>, conduit to professional development calendar, webinars, on-line training and links to state & national CTE professional development resources.
- MN CTE e-Learning Project - asynchronous eLearning modules developed for secondary & postsecondary CTE educators to provide foundational understanding of Perkins IV implementation in Minnesota, programs of study, technical skill assessments and non-traditional student success.

D. ENCOURAGES APPLIED LEARNING THAT CONTRIBUTES TO THE ACADEMIC AND CAREER AND TECHNICAL KNOWLEDGE OF THE STUDENT;

Minnesota students who elect to take career and technical education courses do not have to choose between becoming Career or College ready -ultimately, secondary CTE courses aim to prepare students for both. CTE teachers are encouraged to partner with core content teachers within their building; as a team they will be attending a professional development series. The goal of the series is to allow teachers to set aside time to align their vocabulary, curriculum sequencing, and concepts so that students receive direct instruction as well as hands-on experiences of the content standards and benchmarks.

Advisory committees (required for each approved program at secondary and postsecondary levels) provide input to assist streamlining and informing course sequencing, course content and required skill attainment and provide opportunities for work based learning.

Other options for the CTE students include articulation agreements at the local level, dual enrollment options (PSEO and Concurrent enrollment models to encourage the completion of learning experiences.

Articulation agreements, Dual Enrollment options (PSEO/Concurrent/College in the Schools),

Many of our CTE students also complete in AP and IB coursework.

Advisory committees with input from postsecondary programs assist in streamlining and informing course sequencing, course content & skills learned, as well as available opportunities to acquire transferable credentials.

E. PROVIDES THE KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS NEEDED TO WORK WITH AND IMPROVE INSTRUCTION FOR SPECIAL POPULATIONS; AND

Secondary

WORK-BASED LEARNING: Minnesota has long supported CTE opportunities for students with disabilities and has placed an emphasis on providing work-based learning coursework for this population. Recent funding changes enacted by the Minnesota Legislature has required further training for school districts, so the Department of Education has been providing a number of work-based learning seminars. The seminars focus on effective community-based instruction, particularly that provided under the state transition-disabled program (career and technical education for students with disabilities). These workshops are provided in collaboration with special education staff in the Department and stress not only effective work-based learning activities but also link career and technical education programming with the expectations as outlined in the individual educational programs (IEPs) of participating students and rehabilitation services staff from the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development.

ALTERNATIVE HIGH SCHOOLS: Staff from the Department of Education provides annual updates at the winter conference of the Minnesota Association of Alternative Programs (MAAP). The state's alternative high schools, including area learning centers, state-approved alternative schools, charter schools and contract alternative schools, provide options to students who have otherwise been unsuccessful in their educational pursuits. Most alternative school students are members of special populations, particularly disadvantaged students, pregnant teens/parenting students, students with limited English ability, or students with disabilities.

Postsecondary

See the response to item (a)-(c) above for postsecondary.

F. PROMOTES INTEGRATION WITH PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES THAT THE STATE CARRIES OUT UNDER TITLE II OF THE ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION ACT OF 1965, AS AMENDED, AND TITLE II OF THE HIGHER EDUCATION ACT OF 1965, AS AMENDED. (SECTION 122(C)(2)(A)-(G))

Secondary --- When the Minnesota Board of Teaching decided not to continue licensure for technical tutors (support personnel working primarily with students of special populations), special legislation was enacted allowing support for paraprofessionals within career and technical education programs as long as those paraprofessionals met the requirements as identified in the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. The state has implemented on-line instruction to assist individuals to meet these requirements.

Much effort has gone into professional development opportunities that assist CTE teachers to deliver academic concepts aligned with state academic standards required under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. Teachers of business and teachers of agriculture are specifically recognized as highly qualified to deliver economics standards.

4. THE STATE MUST DESCRIBE EFFORTS THAT YOUR AGENCY AND ELIGIBLE RECIPIENTS WILL MAKE TO IMPROVE—

A. THE RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION OF CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION TEACHERS, FACULTY, AND CAREER GUIDANCE AND ACADEMIC COUNSELORS, INCLUDING INDIVIDUALS IN GROUPS UNDERREPRESENTED IN THE TEACHING PROFESSION; AND

Postsecondary: Minnesota State Colleges and Universities has an established policy and procedure related to college faculty credentialing which is the process for evaluating an individual's formal education, training, professional/occupational experience and any required state licensure or industry certification in accordance with system-established minimum qualifications for individuals teaching in specific programs or disciplines as well as academic counselors and librarians. (<http://www.mnscu.edu/board/policy/332.html>, <http://www.mnscu.edu/board/procedure/332pl.html>). This assures that qualified individuals are teaching in the system colleges through these system-established faculty minimum qualifications.

The process to establish and revise minimum qualifications includes:

- Analysis that includes programs and disciplines from a national, regional and state perspective; availability of education and/or training in the specific area for faculty; national standards; industry, professional or state requirements for faculty in a specific program or discipline and any other pertinent background information.
- Consultation with industry representatives, faculty, administrators, and others as appropriate that culminates in a recommendation regarding required minimum qualifications.
- Alignment with the approved college programs and college-approved disciplines (see the response under 3a above).

Additionally,

- Industry licensure/certification or other credential required or considered essential for practice in the industry directly related to the field shall be incorporated into the minimum

qualifications. (Examples: The state/industry licensure requirement for the existing assigned field of Registered Nurse is a Minnesota Registered Nurse license; the state/industry requirement for the existing license field of Law Enforcement is Minnesota POST certification.)

- Standards for faculty credentials established by state or national program accreditation bodies may be incorporated into the minimum qualifications.

B. THE TRANSITION TO TEACHING FROM BUSINESS AND INDUSTRY, INCLUDING SMALL BUSINESS. (SECTION 122(C)(3)(A)-(B))

Secondary

Perkins Sate leadership funds support leadership positions to facilitate review of teacher qualifications. This process has greatly facilitated access to additional certifications for licensed teachers in Minnesota and has promoted movement of new teacher candidates from industry or preparation other than traditional teacher preparation pathways.

Perkins funds support programming at Southwest Minnesota State “teacher education sequence,” a series of courses designed to prepare individuals for new CTE teaching positions whose technical background is gained through either coursework or industry experience.

Secondary CTE Teacher Licensure courses and programs exist for agriculture, business education and family and consumer science. Perkins State leadership funds are supporting the enhancement and development of additional career/technical teacher education programs in medical career and the work-based learning certification. The recruitment and education of career and technical education teachers presents an opportunity for creative solutions and multiple agencies working together. The current number of teachers wanting to access this educational pathway is not a critical mass so that the programs meet the strict guidelines of the business models of the universities.

Perkins funds support programming at Southwest Minnesota State University <https://www.smsu.edu/> to deliver the “teacher education sequence,” a series of courses designed to prepare individuals for new CTE teaching positions whose technical background is gained through either coursework or industry experience. This instruction is provided through a variety of methodologies to serve our diverse, adult student population throughout the state.

Postsecondary

The Minnesota State Colleges and Universities has developed a college faculty credentialing policy (<http://www.mnscu.edu/board/policy/332.html>) and procedure <http://www.mnscu.edu/board/procedure/332p1.html> that assures that qualified individuals perform faculty work in the system colleges through system- established faculty minimum qualifications. It applies to 100% of newly hired unlimited faculty teaching in our two-year colleges. Minimum qualifications mean system-established minimum requirements used to evaluate the credential of and individual considered for college faculty work. A component of these minimum requirements is the teaching and learning competency requirement. The teaching and learning competency requirement applies to college faculty, including counselors and librarians.

5. THE STATE PLAN MUST DESCRIBE EFFORTS THAT THE ELIGIBLE STATE AGENCY AND ELIGIBLE RECIPIENTS WILL MAKE TO IMPROVE THE TRANSITION

OF SUBBACCALAUREATE CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION STUDENTS INTO BACCALAUREATE DEGREE PROGRAMS AT INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION. (SECTION 122(C)(4))

The Minnesota State Colleges and Universities system has 25 two-year colleges and seven state universities. Since its constitution in 1995, The Minnesota State Colleges and Universities Office of the Chancellor has sought to establish consistent practices for accepting credit for undergraduate college-level courses transferred into a system college or university. The Minnesota State Colleges and Universities system has established a policy (<http://www.mnscu.edu/board/policy/321.html>) and a procedure (<http://www.mnscu.edu/board/procedure/321pl.html>) for undergraduate course credit transfer. A website www.mntransfer.org has considerable information about transfer from sub-baccalaureate to baccalaureate programs including the following items:

- A transfer action plan for students www.mntransfer.org/students/plan/s_tap.php
- Information on Bachelor of Applied Science (BAS) programs www.mntransfer.org/educators/transfer/e_bas.php, a baccalaureate degree with a major in a technical area with substantial applied content that a student can acquire by completion of another instructional program or experience in a technical field.
- Articulation agreements: www.mntransfer.org/educators/transfer/e_artagreements.php site includes a template for designing an articulation agreement and course equivalencies.
- Links to each college and university transfer information www.mntransfer.org/educators/transfer/e_websites.php and a link to transfer specialists at each college and university http://www.mntransfer.org/educators/transfer/e_tscontacts.php.

Initiatives currently underway for improving the transition of students from sub-baccalaureate to baccalaureate programs include:

- MN Transfer Curriculum (MnTC) Review by each college and university (completed in March 2008).
- Redesign of the Transfer website to improve navigation and update graphics and to provide a system-wide database of articulation agreements.
- System-wide contract to provide CollegeSource/Transcript Evaluation Service to all institutions.
- Development of Course Equivalency Builder Matrix for institutions to use in comparing course equivalencies across the system entered into the Degree Audit Reporting system.
- Implementation of new and revised transfer policies and procedures for course transfer and for the 3.35 Minnesota Transfer Curriculum (see below).
- Development of credit for prior learning policy and procedures 3.35.1.
- Improved information and services to military personnel and veterans.

Minnesota has established a separate policy (<http://www.mnscu.edu/board/policy/337.html>) for general education courses reflecting competencies adopted by the public higher education entities in Minnesota. The 1994 "Minnesota Transfer Curriculum Agreement" is a document developed by faculty representatives of Minnesota public colleges and universities outlining the conditions by which students transfer their completed general education work at one public college or university to meet lower division general or liberal education requirements at any public college or university in Minnesota. The agreement was signed by the chief executive officers of the existing public higher education systems in 1994. The agreement identifies ten areas of emphasis and goals and student competencies in each area of emphasis. The ten "goal areas" refer to the areas of emphasis identified in the Minnesota Transfer Curriculum Agreement: 1) Communication, 2) Critical Thinking,

3) Natural Sciences, 4) Mathematical and Logical Reasoning, 5) History, Social and Behavioral Sciences, 6) Humanities and Fine Arts, 7) Human Diversity, 8) Global Perspective, 9) Civic and Ethical Responsibility, and 10) People and the Environment.

Colleges and universities within the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities system have policies and procedures with regard to the development, approval and management of academic programs to meet Minnesota's educational needs (see above discussion regarding the academic programs policy and procedure). The Minnesota Transfer Curriculum policy and procedure has been developed in such a manner that they are consistent with academic programs policy and procedure. Unlike the undergraduate course credit transfer policy and procedure (see above) where the receiving institution determines criteria for accepting credit, each receiving system college and university shall accept a Minnesota Transfer Curriculum course, goal area, or the entire curriculum as determined and documented by the sending system college or university. Each system college and university shall publish its Minnesota Transfer Curriculum requirements and policies. A corresponding procedure must be developed to implement the Minnesota Transfer Curriculum policy (<http://www.mnscu.edu/board/procedure/337pl.html>).

6. THE STATE PLAN MUST DESCRIBE HOW THE ELIGIBLE STATE AGENCY WILL ACTIVELY INVOLVE PARENTS, ACADEMIC AND CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION TEACHERS, ADMINISTRATORS, FACULTY, CAREER GUIDANCE AND ACADEMIC COUNSELORS, LOCAL BUSINESS (INCLUDING SMALL BUSINESSES), AND LABOR ORGANIZATIONS IN THE PLANNING, DEVELOPMENT, IMPLEMENTATION, AND EVALUATION OF CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS IN YOUR STATE. (SECTION 122(C)(5))

Program Approval for Secondary CTE Programs

To provide guidance to high school districts, the Minnesota Department of Education has developed curriculum frameworks in six CTE areas: agriculture, business/marketing, family and consumer sciences, health occupations, and trade and industrial/technology education. Each of these framework documents aligns Minnesota academic standards with national curriculum standards and nationally recognized occupational skill standards that incorporate academic concepts into career and technical education instruction. Additionally, the following are in place or planned:

- Curriculum Frameworks for CTE programs (six program frameworks completed and all districts standards completed and are on file in districts).
- Local District and Regional Training for Program Improvement and Approval.
- Provided workshops in the use of the self-assessment tool and the new Program Approval Rubrics to evaluate alignment of program delivery for Career and Technical Education.
- Into the third year of the regional five-year program approval process for CTE programs.
- Promoted use of the self-assessment tool and the new Program Approval Rubrics.

Program Approval for Postsecondary CTE Programs

The Minnesota State Colleges and Universities system has developed policy and procedure for approving all academic programs including CTE programs. Relevant policy <http://www.mnscu.edu/board/policy/336.html> and procedures <http://www.mnscu.edu/board/procedure/336pl.html> are summarized below. The purpose of the Academic Programs policy is to direct system decision-making regarding the development, approval

and management of academic programs to meet Minnesota's educational needs. This policy applies to credit-based academic programs of system colleges and universities.

Constructed as a cohesive arrangement of college-level credit courses and experiences, an academic program is designed to accomplish predetermined objectives leading to the awarding of a degree, diploma, or certificate. Most academic programs include a general education component. The purpose of an academic program is to:

- A. Increase students' knowledge and understanding in a field of study or discipline,
- B. Qualify students for employment in an occupation or range of occupations, and/or
- C. Prepare students for advanced study.

Credit means a quantitative measure of instructional time assigned to a course or an equivalent learning experience such as class time per week over an academic term. General education means a cohesive curriculum defined by faculty through system college or university procedures to develop reasoning ability and breadth of knowledge through an integration of learning experiences in the liberal arts and sciences.

An academic program inventory is the official list of academic programs offered by system colleges and universities. The academic program inventory also includes all approved postsecondary CTE programs and only those are eligible for Perkins funding. CTE programs are programs:

1. · Offered at two-year colleges.
2. · That are assigned a six-digit Classification of Instruction Program (CIP) code and one of the 16 career clusters.
3. That, upon completion, result in the receipt of a certificate, diploma, associate of applied science degree, or the associate of science degree.

An approved academic program shall include curricular requirements for earning an academic award, such as credits in general education, in a major and/or minor, and for all prerequisite courses. Approval of the system chancellor is required for new academic programs, changes to existing academic programs, suspension of academic programs, and closure of academic programs at system colleges and universities.

The chancellor shall maintain the academic program inventory. Only academic programs approved by the chancellor as recorded in the academic program inventory may be offered by system colleges and universities. Each system college and university shall regularly review its academic programs for the purpose of academic planning and improvement and shall submit an annual summary of its academic program review activity to the chancellor. The chancellor, as appropriate, may conduct statewide or regional reviews of academic programs or program clusters, report findings to the Board of Trustees and, when necessary, impose conditions on academic programs.

7. THE STATE PLAN MUST DESCRIBE EFFORTS THAT THE ELIGIBLE STATE AGENCY AND ELIGIBLE RECIPIENTS WILL MAKE TO—

A. IMPROVE THE ACADEMIC AND TECHNICAL SKILLS OF STUDENTS PARTICIPATING IN CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS,

INCLUDING BY STRENGTHENING THE ACADEMIC AND CAREER AND TECHNICAL
COMPONENTS OF CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS THROUGH
THE INTEGRATION OF ACADEMICS WITH CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION
TO ENSURE LEARNING IN—

i. The core academic subjects (as defined in section 9101 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, as amended);

ii. Career and technical education subjects;

Minnesota has established data systems that, at the state level, identify participants and concentrators in secondary career and technical education programs and which identify whether those students have met the academic performance requirements established by the state under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. Summary data, disaggregated by sub-populations, is made available to Perkins recipients and will be used as the baseline for promoting academic achievement of career and technical education concentrators.

Special legislation points to the connections between business and agriculture education programs to deliver economics education and all career and technical education programs to deliver science, mathematics and arts education. The 2007 Minnesota Legislature added language to the section on graduation requirements and course credits (M.S. 120B.024) allowing CTE to fulfill science, mathematics and arts credits not otherwise specified in statute. Expansion of these linkages will be a priority. Likewise, Minnesota has heavily promoted the incorporation of academic concepts in CTE within the constraints of highly qualified teacher requirements of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act..

The expectation under Perkins IV that technical skill attainment must be measured with valid and reliable instruments aligned with industry standards and certifications (where available and appropriate) will pose a significant challenge for Minnesota. Like many states, Minnesota has measured technical skill attainment using either program completion or level of participation as prima facie evidence of a student gaining technical skills. To move beyond such measures, as the Law requires, state leaders throughout the country reached consensus on the use of assessments that were developed by third parties and which provide evidence of validity and reliability but administered locally.

To meet the expectations under Perkins IV, Minnesota established a process for identifying technical skill assessments in 2009 that will be used in each of the 79 career pathways identified in the MN Career pathway model. The process relies on teachers, faculty, administrators and counselors, and business and industry representatives to identify and validate the core competencies within a pathway for both secondary and postsecondary students, then review and identify available nationally-developed assessments aligned with industry-recognized standards (when possible) which become part of the state-approved list of technical skill assessments for use in MN career & technical education programs.

During FY10, Minnesota engaged in this process in five career pathways. The process will continue by identifying and validating competencies and identifying potential technical skill assessments that align with those competencies in eight additional career pathways during FY11, 25 career pathways in FY12, 21 career pathways in FY 13, and the remaining 15 career pathways in FY14.

The purpose of this collaborative project is to develop an assessment system that will provide teachers, administrators and policymakers with accurate and useful information about student technical skill achievement. This assessment system will provide information that is useful for improving program quality, creating strong connections between high school and college programs, and communicating to employers and policymakers the value of career and technical skill programs of study in preparing students for college and work readiness. Baseline data will be collected for both secondary and postsecondary concentrators in the state approved programs of study in the five career pathways in the project pilot to be reported in the FY11 CAR report.

B. PROVIDE STUDENTS WITH STRONG EXPERIENCE IN, AND UNDERSTANDING OF, ALL ASPECTS OF AN INDUSTRY; AND

Secondary: Secondary CTE programs in Minnesota are required to address all aspects of industry in their curricula, and the Minnesota Department of Education has provided resources and professional development around all nine aspects of industry that are common to any enterprise. Students should gain strong experience in, and understanding of all nine aspects, which are:

1. Planning - How an organization plans (including goals and objectives); types of ownership (public or private); relationship of the organization to economic, political and social context; assessment of needs.
2. Management - Structure and process for effectively accomplishing the goals and operations of the organization using facilities, staff, resources, equipment and materials.
3. Finance - Accounting and financial decision-making process, method of acquiring capital to operate management of financial operations including payroll.
4. Technical and Production Skills - Basic skills in math, communications, computer, time management and thinking; specific skills for production; interpersonal skills within the organization.
5. Underlying Principles of Technology - Technological systems used in the workplace and their contributions to the product or service of the organization.
6. Labor Issues - Rights of employees and related issues; wages, benefits and working conditions.
7. Community Issues - Impact of the company on the community, impact of the community on the organization.
8. Health, Safety and Environment - Practices and laws affecting the employee, the surrounding community and the environment.
9. Personal Work Habits - Non-technical skills and characteristics expected in the workplace.

Postsecondary: Sec 2 (e) and 2 (h) above for a general discussion of how information about all aspects of industry is disseminated to students.

Program Advisory Committee Initiative: An online Program Advisory Committee Handbook has been developed for use in high schools and colleges. The Minnesota State Colleges and Universities Office of the Chancellor Division of Academic and Student Affairs and the Minnesota State College Faculty (MSCF) collaborated on this joint project designed to reinvigorate program advisory committees in the state of Minnesota.

The handbook seeks to help two-year college faculty and administrators improve the structure and use of advisory committees so that they become an effective tool for improving CTE for college students. This resource provides high schools and colleges a guide to form an advisory committee and work with its members. The handbook clearly and thoroughly explains the purpose and structure

of a committee and the roles of its members. It can serve as a tool for all committee members and may be especially helpful when introducing new members to advisory committee responsibilities. Although the handbook was designed specifically for faculty in two-year technical and professional programs, its use can be extended to all secondary and postsecondary institutions. It is anticipated that the program advisory handbook will be an important resource as new local consortia in Minnesota are developed.

In 2009 MN Career and Technical Education (CTE), finalized a contract with the Center for Occupation Research and Development (CORD) to revise and update the 2004 MN Program Advisory Committee Handbook. The goal of the updated handbook is to assist Community and Technical Colleges in implementing local advisory committee procedures. The revised handbook will incorporate all relevant information written in the 2006 Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act and the Minnesota Five-Year State CTE Plan. In addition the handbook will contain information for Local consortia to build common (secondary/postsecondary) CTE program advisory committee structures along the lines of programs of study/career pathways.

C. ENSURE THAT STUDENTS WHO PARTICIPATE IN CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS ARE TAUGHT TO THE SAME CHALLENGING ACADEMIC PROFICIENCIES AS TAUGHT TO ALL OTHER STUDENTS. (SECTION 122(C)(7)(A)-(C))

Secondary: Throughout the implementation of Perkins III, professional development activities were conducted that promoted the identification of, and teaching to, academic competencies embedded within secondary career and technical education programs. Minnesota has adopted state standards at the high school level in core academic subjects as defined under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act as follows:

1. Language Arts - state standards established for grades 9-12 and state assessments established in reading and writing.
2. Mathematics - state standards established for grades 9-12 and state assessments.
3. Arts - state recommended standards established or districts may develop their own standards; assessments determined locally.
4. Science - state standards established for grades 9-12 and state assessment under development.
5. Social studies - state standards established for grades 9-12; assessments determined locally.
6. Health and physical education - locally determined standards and assessments.
7. World languages - locally determined standards and assessments.

Each district is required by statute to offer courses in career and technical education and to develop local standards and assessments. Curriculum frameworks have been developed to assist districts to determine appropriate standards and assessments, and to align coursework in career and technical education with state and local standards in academic subjects.

Documents have been prepared to guide districts as they incorporate instruction in all aspects of industry into career and technical education programming. Professional development activities have been conducted throughout the state for teachers and career and technical administrators on all aspects of industry, and all aspects must be incorporated as an element in each annual local Perkins plan.

Minnesota has adopted a policy of a single diploma (no certificates of attendance or alternative diplomas reflecting separate standards) and sets in statute both credit requirements and standards expectations for all students. A limited number of students with the most severe disabilities may receive diplomas based on meeting criteria of their individual educational programs (IEPs) - all other students are taught to the same academic standards and expectations.

Postsecondary: See the discussion above on the Minnesota Transfer Curriculum in (5) above.

8. THE STATE PLAN MUST DESCRIBE HOW THE ELIGIBLE STATE AGENCY WILL PROVIDE LOCAL EDUCATIONAL AGENCIES, AREA CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION SCHOOLS, AND ELIGIBLE INSTITUTIONS IN THE STATE WITH TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE. (SECTION 122(C)(15))

Secondary: The Minnesota Department of Education maintains program specialists in five career and technical education fields who also serve as regional contacts for all career and technical education programming under the Perkins Act. These individuals will be first contacts for providing technical assistance, and will bring issues to the State career and technical education team so that recurring needs are addressed in a timely manner and in a consistent fashion.

Postsecondary: The Minnesota State Colleges and Universities System Office has two full-time program directors, who report to the State Director of Career and Technical Education. In addition, several other staff from other divisions in the Office of the Chancellor have responsibility in the areas of accountability and finance. All these individuals work with perkins-eligible colleges and Perkins consortia to improve programs and services eligible under the Perkins Act.

Joint Perkins IV Planning: Staff members from the Minnesota Department of Education and the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities Office of the Chancellor have met regularly for nearly two years to plan for Perkins IV. A Leadership Team comprised of senior administrative staff representing state level agencies responsible for secondary and postsecondary CTE and including the State Director for CTE has also met regularly. The Leadership Team has conceptualized and approved the new direction Minnesota will take under Perkins IV.

With the Perkins Act now enacted, the joint planning has focused on Basic and Tech Prep local planning. The joint planning has resulted in all recipients, Secondary Basic, Postsecondary Basic, and Tech Prep, using the same format for the local application and a common operational handbook. Frequently asked questions (FAQs), be they from secondary or postsecondary, are answered in a single document. All documents, materials and resources produced in preparation for informing local eligible recipients on the intent of the new law, Minnesota's new direction, Minnesota's five Perkins IV goals, and Minnesota's rationale for the new consortium structure are available on www.cte.mnscu.edu.

Future Planning and Technical Assistance: Formal training sessions have been provided on local plan development in five regions of the state. Additional sessions are planned on partnership building, programs of study, technical skill attainment, and accountability. Training on other topics will be provided as needed. Individual assistance will be provided as requested or will be scheduled for each consortium.

9. THE STATE PLAN MUST DESCRIBE HOW CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION IN YOUR STATE RELATES TO YOUR STATE'S AND REGION'S OCCUPATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES. (WIOA SECTION 122(C)(16))

Minnesota is implementing a new CTE consortium structure of secondary and postsecondary institutions, wherein at least one high school district and at least one college combine to plan programmatic and support services at the local level for CTE students. In nearly all cases, the new local consortia that are being formed are within one of the six Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED) regions. Labor market information (LMI) exists for these six regions, and the new local consortia will be expected to use the regionally-based LMI. Such information will be useful to local consortia for program planning purposes, developing new programs of study, and maximizing key business and industry partnerships, all based on regional LMI.

As a partner of the State WIOA Combined Plan there is opportunity for regional gathering of stakeholders in the development and implementation of regional plans in which one to three career pathways will be identified as priority work initiatives. (WIOA career pathway definitions correlate closely with our Perkins Rigorous Program of Study (RPSO) criteria.) WIOA regional planning needs will be compared to RPOS, gaps identified, and plan implemented to meet that need.

10. THE STATE PLAN MUST DESCRIBE THE METHODS THE ELIGIBLE STATE AGENCY PROPOSES FOR THE JOINT PLANNING AND COORDINATION OF PROGRAMS CARRIED OUT UNDER THIS LEGISLATION WITH OTHER FEDERAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS. (SECTION 122(C)(17))

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11. THE STATE PLAN MUST PROVIDE A DESCRIPTION AND THE INFORMATION SPECIFIED "IN SUBPARAGRAPHS (B) AND (C)(III) OF SECTION 102(B)(2), AND, AS APPROPRIATE, SECTION 103(B)(3)(A), AND SECTION 121(C), OF THE WORKFORCE INNOVATION AND OPPORTUNITY ACT (PUBLIC LAW 113-128) CONCERNING THE PROVISIONS OF SERVICES ONLY FOR POSTSECONDARY STUDENTS AND SCHOOL DROPOUTS. (SECTION 122(C)(20))

Postsecondary

Minnesota has long focused on developing and sustaining programs that prepare individuals for high-skill, high-wage jobs including:

- Using Perkins Leadership Funds to promote the **development of new programs** in colleges, either on their own or collaboratively, in high-skill, high-wage, or high-demand occupations.
- Competition among colleges for **Perkins Program Development Grants**, which are meant to stimulate the development of new academic programs by colleges. Proposals must address one or more of the following:

o Programmatic career pathways

o Technical skill attainment assessment processes

o Preparation for non-traditional fields

o Support for programs for special populations

o Support for programs that link high schools to colleges

o Evidence of high-wage and high-skill or high-demand occupations These projects are especially encouraged—but not required—to include:

o Employer engagement to provide experiential learning

o Existing STEM-related coursework

o Support of initiatives to facilitate transition from sub-baccalaureate to baccalaureate programs

o Incorporation of career academies and distance education

o Industry, community, K-12 or other partners

o Leveraged funds

Labor Market Analysis is partially provided by the MN Department of Employment and Economic Development. The tasks include:

- Link employment and labor demand information to existing postsecondary engagement, attainment and transition data.
- Produce information, reports and documents on current and projected employment levels, wage rates for individual colleges and universities within the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities and other labor market trends that will inform the development, maintenance, and changes to academic programming.
- Provide statewide and regional labor market analyses for technical skill assessment projects and for the development of programs of study and adult career pathways. Provide the critical link to the research and statistical information unit in the Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED), allowing both agencies to share data electronically and use

those data in specific projects within the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities and DEED.

Provisions for school dropouts remain a challenge. Current legislations regarding the Alternative Learning Center opportunities such as Subdivision 9 of Minnesota Statutes, section 124D.09 allows the opportunity to leverage Postsecondary Enrollment Options funding for development coursework under specific circumstances. Under this clause, student are considered eligible if they are enrolled in a core school day State Approved Alternative Program (SAAP) under the graduation incentives program as defined by the Minnesota Department of Education.

PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION

1. THE STATE PLAN MUST PROVIDE A WEB LINK TO THE ELIGIBLE STATE AGENCY'S LOCAL APPLICATIONS OR PLANS FOR SECONDARY AND POSTSECONDARY ELIGIBLE RECIPIENTS, WHICH WILL MEET THE REQUIREMENTS IN SECTION 134(B) OF THE ACT.

http://www.cte.mnscu.edu/MN_State_Plan/index.html

2. THE STATE PLAN MUST PROVIDE A DESCRIPTION OF THE STATE'S GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE FOR CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION.

The Minnesota Legislature established Minnesota State Colleges and Universities (MnSCU) to serve as Sole State Agency to perform the functions of the State specified in the Carl D. Perkins State Plan (http://www.cte.mnscu.edu/MN_State_Plan/index.html).

The Perkins staff in the Academic and Student Affairs Division of the System Office of the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities (MnSCU) includes the State Director of Career and Technical Education who works in concert with the College and Career Readiness Division of the Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) to administer the plan and serve the local consortia (http://www.cte.mnscu.edu/MN_State_Plan/index.html).

Local consortia (26) consist of a minimum of one high school district and one postsecondary institution (MnSCU Perkins eligible college). Access to Carl D. Perkins resources are provided through the local grant application process.

The state leadership team of MnSCU and MDE personnel review the grant applications, conduct on-site monitoring activities, review Annual Performance Reports (APR), and provide technical assistance including professional development.

Starting July 1, 2008, Minnesota implemented a radical restructuring of how CTE operates at the state and local levels. Minnesota build and has sustained CTE by introducing and developing a New consortium Structure that brought together high schools and colleges around a SINGLE LOCAL PLAN. Here after, this SINGLE LOCAL PLAN has been referred to as the local consortium plan. Guided by seven basic principles, each new local Perkins IV consortium focused on CTE becoming more accountable to all its stakeholders, but in particular to students as they maneuver and transition through high school and college building their knowledge and skills and working towards stable employment in their chosen career pathway. The long-term goal is to create a strong and

solid foundation for CTE in Minnesota at the state and local levels. Governance at the local level is dictated by the local consortium and their accepted Perkins plan.

3. THE STATE PLAN MUST PROVIDE A DESCRIPTION OF THE ROLE OF POSTSECONDARY CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION IN THE ONE-STOP CAREER CENTER DELIVERY SYSTEM ESTABLISHED BY TITLE I OF WIOA.

Postsecondary career and technical education has a critical role in the one-stop career center delivery system established by Title I of WIOA. Minnesota State Colleges and Universities (MnSCU) are the primary eligible training providers. Mechanisms for providing training include: integration of participants into existing coursework; delivery through grant awards/partnerships such as the Pathways to Prosperity grant projects, and evolution of the FastTRAC initiatives; and providing customized delivery if/as numbers of participants allow.

In these initial years of the WIOA grant for Minnesota, local consortium will work with the regional workforce centers to pro-actively align education and training needs with the workforce development needs. Regional plans, due to the State in May, 2016, will identify three primary career pathway needs. In general, the goals of the state -to have a healthy economy where all Minnesotans have-- or are on a path to -- meaningful employment and a family-sustaining wage, and where all employers are able to fill jobs in demand- will be achieved by continuing to build a robust career pathway system driven by :

- Business Engagement
- Community Engagement
- Customer-Centered Design
- Funding and Resource Needs
- Policy and System Alignment and
- System Management.

These six elements align with the Perkins Rigorous Programs of Study criteria so the participation in the one-stop career center system will enhance the local consortia work.

III. PROVISION OF SERVICES FOR SPECIAL POPULATIONS

1. YOU MUST DESCRIBE YOUR PROGRAM STRATEGIES FOR SPECIAL POPULATIONS LISTED IN SECTION 3(29) OF THE ACT, INCLUDING A DESCRIPTION OF HOW INDIVIDUALS WHO ARE MEMBERS OF THE SPECIAL POPULATIONS—

A. WILL BE PROVIDED WITH EQUAL ACCESS TO ACTIVITIES ASSISTED UNDER THE ACT.

Both the Minnesota Department of Education and the Office of the Chancellor require eligible recipients to submit a plan narrative that describes, through goals, strategies and measurable outcomes, those activities that assure members of special populations will have equal access to, and opportunity to be successful in, career and technical education programs. A key goal every eligible recipient must address in the local application plan specifically requires attention to:

- Programs and services for those with the greatest need to ensure participation and completion of CTE programs.
- Ensuring awareness efforts and learner accommodations so that members of special populations will not be discriminated against on the basis of their status.
- Providing members of special populations the same opportunities as other CTE students regarding information about preparing for high-skill, high-wage or high-demand occupations and careers.
- Ensuring that college activities are aligned and coordinated with campus TRIO programs, high school alternative programs and other programs that serve underrepresented students to secure equal access to career and education opportunities.

The goals, strategies, measures, outcomes, and performance targets for members of special population groups are the same as those for the general population. The opportunity to enter CTE programs, services, and activities must be the same for special populations as for the general student population, recognizing that to meet a standard of equal access might require the provision of supports not required by the general population. While such provisions are reviewed for inclusion within state goals in Minnesota (p21, Sec. C2), Perkins recipients must address access and opportunity of special populations within goal four: IMPROVE SERVICES TO SPECIAL POPULATIONS. In addition, data gathered at the sub-indicator level include the special population groups eligible under the Act and these are reviewed to determine continuous improvement strategies and the inclusion of these groups.

B. WILL NOT BE DISCRIMINATED AGAINST ON THE BASIS OF THEIR STATUS AS MEMBERS OF SPECIAL POPULATIONS; AND

All Perkins IV eligible recipient plans are reviewed by the Office of the Chancellor and Minnesota Department of Education to ensure that discrimination against members of special populations in learning, student support services, and physical accessibility is not apparent in written goals, objectives, and strategies.

Secondary: The Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) is required to submit to the United States Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights (OCR), a Biennial Civil Rights Compliance Report. It is MDE's responsibility to conduct comprehensive on-site reviews of school districts to

address issues of discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex and disability in vocational education programs. The strategies that have been undertaken under Perkins III will continue under Perkins IV. Equity Specialists within the Minnesota Department of Education review one-fourth of Minnesota schools districts annually.

Postsecondary: Two-day on-site reviews, in accordance with the Office of Civil Rights (OCR) regulations, are conducted on campuses within the colleges of the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities system. On-site reviews are currently conducted on four colleges each year. The goal under Perkins IV is to conduct reviews at 20 percent of the recipient colleges annually. Each college on-site review is administered through the Office of Diversity and Multiculturalism at the Office of the Chancellor. The review covers specific safeguards for special populations defined within the Perkins Act, Title VI (Civil Rights), Title IX (Sex Equity), and Sec 504 (Disability), and Vocational Education.

C. WILL BE PROVIDED WITH PROGRAMS DESIGNED TO ENABLE THE SPECIAL POPULATIONS TO MEET OR EXCEED STATE ADJUSTED LEVELS OF PERFORMANCE, AND HOW YOU WILL PREPARE SPECIAL POPULATIONS FOR FURTHER LEARNING AND FOR HIGH-SKILL, HIGH-WAGE, OR HIGH-DEMAND OCCUPATIONS. (SECTION 122(C)(9)(A)-(C))

Local and state level planning are designed around the seven GUIDING PRINCIPLES that are instrumental in moving CTE forward in Minnesota under Perkins IV and these principles apply to all students, including those in special population groups. The local application addresses SERVICE TO SPECIAL POPULATIONS explicitly as a separate goal. The strategies addressed include:

Diversity Planning: Aligning of the state Perkins plan with other departmental strategic planning, e.g., Office of Diversity and Multiculturalism strategic planning and OCC strategic planning related to access and opportunity. Beginning collaborative strategies between Perkins stakeholders and other community providers allows for a more streamlined and effective transition of learning for the students (e.g. Project C - Connecting Youth to Communities and Careers at www.c3online.org). Counseling services at both the secondary and postsecondary settings should be aligned to assist students in special populations with access, accommodations and appropriate support services that will allow the student to have smoother transitions and a better chance for academic and career success.

Proactive Advising: Utilizing early and proactive advisory techniques, through which secondary and postsecondary students will be provided the opportunity to develop a career development plan that will be reviewed each year. The plan will include the five transition areas addressed at each individual educational program (IEP) team meeting. Excluding recreation, the other four areas are addressed below:

- Employment - A specific sequential series of courses and experiences provide the high school learner the opportunity to enhance their knowledge about the world of work and develop baseline assessment of skills and abilities. The creation of Programs of Study and Career Pathways allows the student to obtain some of these skills in a pathway that includes postsecondary and/or job preparation training. Exposing all special population learners earlier to careers establishes the opportunity for students to obtain knowledge about nontraditional careers.
- Postsecondary Education and Training - The alignment of Programs of Study with secondary and postsecondary institutions allows students a more systematic approach to identifying appropriate career pathways. Earlier recognition of insufficient skill levels necessary for

postsecondary education gives the student learner time to enhance these skills at the secondary level rather than take remedial course work in the postsecondary setting.

- COUNSELING SERVICES: SERVICES THAT CREATE AN ALIGNMENT FOR SECONDARY TO POSTSECONDARY TRANSITIONS INCLUDE:
 1. Minnesota statewide Programs of Study electronic tool.
 2. GPS Lifeplan, an electronic tool which is being replicated among colleges and utilized by some secondary school districts.
 3. Six-Year Plan electronic portfolio developed by St. Paul Public Schools, which connects secondary education plans to postsecondary education planning.
 4. C3 - Connecting Youth to Community and Careers Project allows a vehicle for student learners, parents, and school counselors to assist with the identification of appropriate services and agencies that provide transition services to special needs student learners.
 5. Campus to Careers, a vehicle to allow students with disabilities to enhance their career development through career exploration and hands-on activities in STEM and health science technology fields.

- Implementation of career and technical education programs specifically designed for students with disabilities only where such intervention is required under the individual educational program (IEP). Support is provided for these specially-designed career and technical education programs using state transition-disabled funds.

Both the Office of the Chancellor and Minnesota Department of Education are using Perkins leadership funds to target special population groups in several ways and these include:

- **Using Electronic Career Guidance Tools for Raising Interest in nontraditional Careers:** The purpose of the project is to encourage young students to explore electronic resources by using the internet resources to research more useful information about career options available in nontraditional careers. The end result will be the creation of a white paper report based on student feedback of existing electronic tools that can be utilized as guidelines for focusing interest in nontraditional careers throughout the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities system.
- **MindQuest Academy:** Specifically targets adults identified as academically disadvantaged and/or having limited English proficiency. A new educational service delivery model that helps these adults successfully make the transition to college has been developed and implemented at a community college. The aim of the project is to provide college preparatory services through a mix of online and classroom approaches with open access to assessment, educational planning, counseling, and instruction. The college provides on-campus classroom space and computer technology with teachers from Adult Basic Education (ABE) instructing the adult learners using the interactive MindQuest Academy online college prep curriculum. This delivery model gives MnSCU and ABE programs a new opportunity to work together collaboratively to create a seamless path into postsecondary education for adult at-risk learners.
- **Customizing the American Career Parent Resource Guide for Minnesota:** Producing easy-to-understand information for parents and their high school students about nontraditional career options. Additionally, the magazine, through a special four-page insert, has been customized for Minnesota to highlight key industries and occupations, specifically those that are in high demand.

Equity training for improving recruitment and retention of special population students. In collaboration with various partners including the MnSCU Office of Diversity and Multiculturalism and college partners, Minnesota will develop and deliver equity-focused training that addresses targeted needs in Minnesota. The training will continue to target special populations through professional development with teachers, faculty and administrators through:

1. training on equity issues that will provide for more inclusive teaching approaches; and
2. provide training workshops to address student achievement through gender equity.

Minnesota has made substantial efforts in meeting the needs of special populations using some of the strategies outlined above. Both at the secondary level, but particularly at the postsecondary level, it has to be underscored that collecting data on special population groups is challenging given that information gathered from students is based on self-identification. Nevertheless, both the Minnesota Department of Education and the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities system have developed methods to identify the special population groups within their normal data collection process.

2. YOU MUST DESCRIBE HOW YOU WILL ADEQUATELY ADDRESS THE NEEDS OF STUDENTS IN ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION PROGRAMS, IF YOU HAVE SUCH PROGRAMS. (SECTION 122(C)(14))

Minnesota has legislated many alternative educational opportunities for students, most notably area learning centers and charter schools. Minnesota Statute 123A.06 identifies the programming requirements for area learning centers and specifically specifies, "The programs and services of a center must focus on academic and learning skills, applied learning opportunities, trade and vocational skills, work-based learning opportunities, work experience, youth service to the community, transition services, and English language and literacy programs for children whose primary language is a language other than English.

Student learners in alternative education programs are provided access to counselors who are informed of career pathway/POS organizational framework, the CTE courses provided by area schools and, the alignment of coursework with colleges. Providing access to information about various and multiple options regarding CTE programs can enhance the student learner in an alternative education setting similar to what is expected when the exact information is provided to other students.

Growing number of charter high schools in Minnesota are establishing career and technical education programs. Such programs must comply with Minnesota rules pertaining to state approval of CTE programs and teacher licensure requirements. Minnesota has determined that a charter school with an approved career and technical education program must be allowed to join a secondary/postsecondary consortium to access resources made available to other public schools under Perkins IV.

Leadership grants are awarded based on a competitive request for proposal (RFP) process and approved by MnSCU and MDE. Proposed projects must focus on one or more of the following key areas identified as critical areas supporting Perkins IV:

- **Functional Literacy** -- reading, math, and writing development directly related to career and technical preparation or other activities which support adult learners in preparation for career and technical education or employment.

- **Development of Assessment Procedures** -- assist participants with assessing their interests and abilities, as well as planning with career and technical education.
- **Career Exploration or Career Guidance** -- work sampling, job shadowing, visits to career and technical programs or industry, activities that allow participants to explore high-skill, high-wage, or high-demand careers, or other activities that allow participants to engage in career planning such as career pathways.
- **Transitional Services** -- assist participants with moving from incarceration or transition with individual education plans to career and technical training and/or employment (i.e., jobs outside of correctional settings), such as work readiness skills training.
- Recent legislation has provided an opportunity to bring Early College or Middle College Programs into the alternative education programs. BROADLY, AN EARLY COLLEGE OR MIDDLE COLLEGE PROGRAM IS A HIGH SCHOOL PROGRAM THAT ALLOWS A PUPIL TO EARN A HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA WHILE ALSO EARNING POSTSECONDARY CREDITS TOWARDS A SPECIFIC DEGREE OR CREDENTIAL INCLUDING A CERTIFICATE, DIPLOMA OR AN ASSOCIATE'S DEGREE. EARLY AND MIDDLE COLLEGE PROGRAMS ARE DESIGNED TO SERVE STUDENTS IN THE ACADEMIC MIDDLE-ESPECIALLY LOW-INCOME, ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS, FIRST GENERATION COLLEGE STUDENTS, AND/OR STUDENTS OF COLOR.
- LEGISLATION PASSED IN 2013 PROVIDES THE OPPORTUNITY TO LEVERAGE POSTSECONDARY ENROLLMENT OPTIONS (PSEO) FUNDING FOR DEVELOPMENTAL COURSEWORK UNDER SPECIFIC CIRCUMSTANCES. IN SUBDIVISION 9 OF MINNESOTA STATUTES, SECTION 124D.09 THE FOLLOWING LANGUAGE HAS BEEN ADDED TO AN EXISTING CLAUSE:
- AN INSTITUTION MUST NOT ENROLL SECONDARY PUPILS, FOR POSTSECONDARY ENROLLMENT OPTIONS PURPOSES, IN REMEDIAL, DEVELOPMENTAL, OR OTHER COURSES THAT ARE NOT COLLEGE LEVEL EXCEPT WHEN A STUDENT ELIGIBLE TO PARTICIPATE AND ENROLLED IN THE GRADUATION INCENTIVES PROGRAM UNDER SECTION 124D.68 ENROLLS FULL TIME IN A MIDDLE OR EARLY COLLEGE PROGRAM. A MIDDLE OR EARLY COLLEGE PROGRAM MUST BE SPECIFICALLY DESIGNED TO ALLOW THE STUDENT TO EARN DUAL HIGH SCHOOL AND COLLEGE CREDIT WITH A WELL-DEFINED PATHWAY TO ALLOW THE STUDENT TO EARN A POSTSECONDARY DEGREE OR CREDENTIAL. IN THIS CASE, THE STUDENT SHALL RECEIVE DEVELOPMENTAL COLLEGE CREDIT AND NOT COLLEGE CREDIT FOR COMPLETING REMEDIAL OR DEVELOPMENTAL COURSES. UNDER THIS CLAUSE, STUDENTS ARE CONSIDERED ELIGIBLE IF THEY ARE ENROLLED IN A CORE SCHOOL DAY STATE APPROVED ALTERNATIVE PROGRAM (SAAP) UNDER THE GRADUATION INCENTIVES PROGRAM AS DEFINED BY THE MINNESOTA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION.

PLEASE NOTE: SOME DISTRICTS IN MINNESOTA OFFER EARLY OR MIDDLE COLLEGE PROGRAMS IN THEIR COMPREHENSIVE HIGH SCHOOLS AS WELL. THE DISTINCTION WITH THE LEGISLATIVE LANGUAGE ABOVE, RELATED TO STATE-APPROVED ALTERNATIVE PROGRAMS, IS THAT IT ALLOWS ACCESS TO DEVELOPMENTAL COURSEWORK, WHICH IS NORMALLY PROHIBITED UNDER PSEO STATUTE.

3. DESCRIBE HOW FUNDS WILL BE USED TO PROMOTE PREPARATION FOR HIGH-SKILL, HIGH-WAGE, OR HIGH-DEMAND OCCUPATIONS AND NON-TRADITIONAL FIELDS. (SECTION 122(C)(18))

Both the Minnesota Department of Education and the Office of the Chancellor are committed to promoting the preparation for nontraditional training and employment. A State level staff member has assigned responsibilities in the area of nontraditional training and employment as part of her full-time assignment.

Efforts at the State level under Perkins IV will target specific career clusters and will be collaborative among staff from MDE, Office of the Chancellor and Department of Employment and Economic Development. Also, the local application requires Perkins IV recipients to submit goal(s), strategies, measure(s) and outcome target(s) for preparation for nontraditional training and employment. These activities are designed to have a direct positive impact on the accountability measures for completion of career and technical education programs that lead to nontraditional training and employment. Minnesota has allocated \$60,000 toward this effort. Minnesota also participated with a large team in the 2008 State Technical Assistance Academy pertaining to nontraditional participation and completion, and joined the network of states under the STEM Equity Pipeline operated by the National Alliance for Partnerships in Equity.

Minnesota became a participating state in the Great Lakes Girls collaborative project in March 2009, which is one of six regions providing a repository of networks and resources through the National Girls Collaborative Projects in Washington.

National labor market information has been utilized to identify nontraditional occupations. These occupations will then be matched with lists of high-skill, high-wage and high-demand occupations, and with new and emerging industries in Minnesota that provide, or lead to, wages at a level that promote economic self-sufficiency. The Minnesota State Colleges and Universities Office of the Chancellor is conducting research to identify high-skill, high-wage or high-demand career pathways. As part of this research, nontraditional occupations will be an additional determining factor.

4. YOU MUST DESCRIBE HOW FUNDS WILL BE USED TO SERVE INDIVIDUALS IN STATE CORRECTIONAL INSTITUTIONS. (SECTION 122(C)(19))

Minnesota reserves \$50,000 specifically to serve individuals in State correctional institutions. Through the leadership grant process and interagency agreements, the Minnesota Department of Corrections requests resources to develop and implement research- and evidence-based interventions and support for transitioning offenders.

Planning, implementation, and progress are facilitated by the MnSCU Perkins Program Director for Equity and Collaboration.

5. YOU MUST DESCRIBE HOW YOU WILL REQUIRE EACH APPLICANT FOR FUNDS TO INCLUDE IN ITS APPLICATION A DESCRIPTION OF THE STEPS THE APPLICANT PROPOSES TO TAKE TO ENSURE EQUITABLE ACCESS TO, AND PARTICIPATION IN, ITS FEDERALLY-ASSISTED PROGRAM FOR STUDENTS, TEACHERS, AND OTHER PROGRAM BENEFICIARIES WITH SPECIAL NEEDS AS CONTAINED IN SECTION 427(B) OF THE GENERAL EDUCATION PROVISIONS ACT AS AMENDED. FOR FURTHER GUIDANCE AND EXAMPLES, SEE THE NOTICE TO

ALL APPLICANTS AT
[HTTP://WWW.ED.GOV/FUND/GRAN/APPLY/APPFORMS/GEPA427.DOC](http://www.ed.gov/fund/gran/apply/appforms/gepa427.doc)

Minnesota's Perkins consortia model requires that the combined secondary and postsecondary applications outline the actions and use of funds the recipient will follow. The grant applications are reviewed by staff whose responsibility is to ensure Perkins IV funds are used as required. Minnesota Perkins Goal III specifically addresses services to special populations. Inclusion of all special populations subgroups is monitored during the local consortium plan application process, the on-site monitoring visits, and the annual reporting of disaggregated data for federal CAR reporting.

IV. ACCOUNTABILITY AND EVALUATION

In addition to the narrative information provided below, you must submit your measurement definitions (Items 3 and 11 below) and proposed performance levels (Items 5 and 11 below) for the upcoming program year using the link to the Perkins State Plan Portal below.

A. STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS

1. YOU MUST DESCRIBE PROCEDURES YOU WILL USE TO OBTAIN INPUT FROM ELIGIBLE RECIPIENTS IN ESTABLISHING MEASUREMENT DEFINITIONS AND APPROACHES FOR THE CORE INDICATORS OF PERFORMANCE FOR CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION STUDENTS AT THE SECONDARY AND POSTSECONDARY LEVELS, AS WELL AS FOR ANY OTHER ADDITIONAL INDICATORS OF PERFORMANCE IDENTIFIED BY THE ELIGIBLE AGENCY. (SECTION. 113(B)(1)(A)-(B), SEC. 113(B)(2)(A)-(C))

At both the secondary and postsecondary levels, Minnesota has a long established tradition of having and using good data systems. The presence of such systems has enabled Minnesota to regularly collect data from eligible recipients, standardize definitions, and develop consistent approaches for core indicator performances at the secondary and postsecondary levels. Even while Minnesota will be collecting, negotiating and reporting performance levels separately for secondary and postsecondary local eligible recipients, there will need to be more coordination at the State level on data sharing, on aligning student definitions, and on a common dissemination strategy as Minnesota shifts to having secondary and postsecondary local eligible recipients submit a single plan under the new consortium structure.

Secondary: The Minnesota Department of Education has developed an on-line, web-based system for all districts to provide their local school district/building data. This system was developed under Perkins III and has been improved to include all the elements of the federal Core Indicators. Student data from various district submissions are accessed to gather information on ethnicity, gender, and special population categories as well as the enrollment data and testing data that are kept longitudinally for students from grade 8 through high school completion. The state compiles the data from multiple sources and provides those data through the EDEN collection system. It is Minnesota's plan to use both state negotiated performance targets and prior year local performance targets in negotiating acceptable local levels of performance under Perkins IV. Local districts have been notified of the intent to use academic performance and graduation rates as established under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act.

Postsecondary: With one primary source of all student information, called the Integrated Student Record System (ISRS), the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities system (www.mnscu.edu) is able to access, summarize and report a wide variety of information covering demographic, performance and other student characteristics. Additionally, using information already available in ISRS, Minnesota decided early under the 1998 Carl D. Perkins Act (Perkins III) to construct a unified database and collect all specific postsecondary CTE-related information for two-year college students within the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities system in one location.

Known as the Perkins Brio database, the primary purpose so far has been to meet the Perkins III accountability requirements for compliance. However, with an increased focus on accountability under Perkins IV, the Perkins Brio database continues to be made more integral and dynamic and is

positioned as an evidence-based accountability system. The ability to link certain information in ISRS to the Perkins Brio database has led to the alignment of the Perkins accountability measurement definitions and approaches with those developed under the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities System Accountability Measures, particularly those that relate to student success and licensure pass rates.

By using ISRS to create the Perkins Brio database used for CTE reporting helps to ensure that the postsecondary accountability data generated are valid and reliable. The automated system for extracting CTE data into the Perkins Brio database permits the reporting of accountability data using the same standards and definitions and that these standards and definitions are consistent across reporting periods.

ISRS contains the student's official record and transcript information and significant resources and substantial efforts are undertaken to ensure the accuracy of the data. These efforts include a wide array of user groups (e.g., registrars, institutional researchers, and finance staff), as well as groups specifically dedicated to improving the accuracy and consistency of student data. In addition to a systemwide Student Data Integrity Group to develop and review standards related to the accuracy and completeness of data in ISRS, campuses have data integrity liaisons responsible for communicating these standards on their campus and are responsible for helping address data integrity issues at their institution.

The Minnesota State Colleges and Universities System Office of the Chancellor (OOC) has an official agreement with the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED) to share the Wage Detail Data, which has in it the quarterly wage and employment information of all individuals working in covered employment in Minnesota. Since the data exchange is at the agency level, both the OOC and DEED have undertaken the requisite steps to ensure validity and reliability but also those required for upholding all statutory requirements regarding data privacy.

In July 2007, a postsecondary accountability task force was created. The task force consisted of Office of the Chancellor Perkins accountability staff and accountability specialists from system colleges. The primary goal of the task force has been to develop valid and reliable measurement definitions and approaches for establishing baselines, performance targets and quantifiable improvement levels for all Perkins IV accountability indicators. These included:

- Reviewing trend data from Perkins III to set the stage for establishing baseline measures for each Perkins-eligible college for each of the Perkins IV accountability indicators.
- Creating measurement approaches that are consistent with those already in existence with the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities system.
- Seeking input from several Perkins coordinators, who under Perkins III served as peer technical advisors on the Perkins Brio data, to determine the extent to which colleges can feasibly meet different levels being considered as realistic for improvement.

The Minnesota State Colleges and Universities Office of the Chancellor Perkins Accountability task force has developed a strategy for CTE student definitions and measurement approaches that is consistent with the System Accountability Indicators, particularly the Student Success Indicator and the Licensure Pass Rate Indicator. During the deliberations of the task force, the following items came in the discussions and these were incorporated into the recommendations:

- Using a student cohort method to determine concentrator status.

- The timing of reporting the cohort data.
- Separating the retention from transfer to obtain a more precise measure for each.
- The pros and cons of using the concentrator as the denominator in the nontraditional completion measure.
- How to move beyond licensure pass rates in a limited number of fields as a measure of technical skill attainment.

The original recommendation of the task force, as included in the state plan, was to use the same entry cohort year for reporting all indicators and to report data in the year following the ending year of the cohort. The time lag in obtaining employment data, however, results in a significant delay in reporting information. As a result, data for indicator 4P1 (Student Placement) will continue to be reported in the year following the ending year of the cohort. Data for all other indicators will be reported at the end of the calendar year of the ending year of the cohort. For example, the FY2008 entry cohort will be tracked through July 1, 2010 (FY2008, FY2009 and FY2010) and all indicators submitted in December 2010, except 4P1, will be based on these data. The data for indicator 4P1 will be based on the FY2007 entering cohort in order to accommodate the lag in the availability of employment data.

The task force recommended the development of an entry-level cohort Perkins postsecondary database. The database enables the measurement of all postsecondary accountability indicators, other than technical skill attainment (described separately below). Part C provides the precise measurement definition and approach for each of the Perkins IV indicators.

JOINT SECONDARY/POSTSECONDARY ACCOUNTABILITY WORKGROUP: Beginning in 2010 a joint secondary/postsecondary workgroup will provide additional input and recommendations on issues related to accountability under Perkins IV. The workgroup will consist of both secondary and postsecondary accountability staff from local consortia, MDE and MnSCU and will provide input and recommendations on issues related to accountability in general and on the specific topics of the negotiation of local performance levels and the provision of technical assistance and accountability training to be provided to local consortia.

2. YOU MUST DESCRIBE THE PROCEDURES YOU WILL USE TO OBTAIN INPUT FROM ELIGIBLE RECIPIENTS IN ESTABLISHING A STATE ADJUSTED LEVEL OF PERFORMANCE FOR EACH OF THE CORE INDICATORS OF PERFORMANCE FOR CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION STUDENTS AT THE SECONDARY AND POSTSECONDARY LEVELS, AS WELL AS STATE LEVELS OF PERFORMANCE FOR ANY ADDITIONAL INDICATORS OF PERFORMANCE IDENTIFIED BY THE ELIGIBLE AGENCY. (SECTION 122(C)(10)(A), SEC. 113(B)(3)(B))

Secondary: The state distributed data pertaining to performance on elements required for negotiation during the transition year and has stated its intent to use that as a baseline for negotiations with local recipients for the 2007-2008 year. Individual districts may accept the state's proposal or propose a different performance level with stated rationale for the request. Negotiations, where necessary, will be conducted on a case-by-case basis.

The Minnesota Department of Education maintains a liaison relationship with the Minnesota Association of Career and Technical Administrators (MACTA) and the Minnesota Association for Career and Technical Education (MnACTE). The elected boards of these two organizations are consulted in all phases of Perkins planning and implementation. Administrative representatives from small and large, rural and urban school districts will be consulted on Perkins indicators.

Postsecondary: The Office of the Chancellor will use the postsecondary entry-level cohort-based Perkins Brio data for negotiating individually with each college. Each Perkins eligible college will be provided access to baseline and trend data for the Perkins IV indicators through the Brio database and will be provided proposed targets for each indicator. The proposed targets will include the level below which the college would need to request technical assistance and develop an improvement plan and as well as a slightly higher a level at which only a written report addressing an improvement plan would be required. The proposed levels will be based on the institution's trend data and trend data at the state level. Negotiations will be conducted when a college proposes a performance level other than that proposed by the Office of the Chancellor.

In negotiations with individual colleges and in the development of proposed state level targets for negotiation with the U.S. Department of Education, the Office of the Chancellor will continue to analyze state and local level data and continue to seek input from key research and policy staff within the colleges and within the Office of the Chancellor.

Measuring Secondary and Postsecondary Technical Skill Attainment

- It is the state's expectation that consortia with state-approved programs of study in the five career pathways included in the project pilot discussed above will assess CTE students using the state approved assessments beginning in the 2010-2011 year. As assessments are approved for additional career pathways, those assessments will be included in accountability reporting beginning with each effective year.
- Consortia with state approved programs of study are to select at least one assessment from the state approved Technical Skill Assessment list within the career pathway for the appropriate approved program of study. Beginning in FY11, information about the assessments selected at a local high school or college was to be entered into the MN Program of Study website (www.mnpos.com) and student results are reported to the Minnesota Department of Education and the Office of the Chancellor using established data-collection systems and procedures. Each consortium is encouraged to determine the appropriate time within the student's participation in the program of study to administer the assessment. This may vary from one local program to another depending on the selected assessment, course offerings, and class schedules.

Secondary:

- Beginning with the reporting for the 2010-2011 school year, each consortium must note whether the student was assessed and whether the student received a passing score on that assessment. The state will extract assessment data for CTE concentrators from the assessment data submitted on all CTE students.
- The state will determine the number of secondary CTE concentrators who were assessed and the number of secondary CTE concentrators who passed the assessments and will report those results as part of accountability reporting process.

Postsecondary:

- At the postsecondary level, the use of a three-year cohort model for reporting postsecondary indicators and variations in the timing of assessments (end of course/end of program) will necessitate a phase in of reporting based on the new approved state assessments and may necessitate the continued inclusion of some licensure exam pass rate information when reporting for FY 2012. As data on state approved technical skill assessments within specific

programs of study become available for students in the reporting cohort, those data will replace the annual aggregate licensure pass rate data currently used as a proxy for this indicator.

- The Office of the Chancellor will coordinate the statewide collection of data from third party vendors and licensing boards whenever possible. The Office of the Chancellor will work with consortium staff to ensure that information on technical skill assessments taken by students, including the name of the assessment and the student's score, are entered into the system's integrated student record system (ISRS), the system's data warehouse and the Hyperion/Brio reporting system used by consortia to review data on their students and programs.
- Data will be collected on all postsecondary students taking the state approved assessments. The state will determine the number of CTE concentrators who were assessed and the number of CTE concentrators who passed the assessments and report those results as part of the postsecondary accountability reporting process.

Minnesota feels that the above approach will take into account the EIGHT characteristics that describe any technical skill attainment measure and answer the basic question underlying each:

- Skill: How is technical skill attainment defined?
 1. Level of inclusion
 2. Degree of specificity
- Cost: Who bears the burden of the cost?
 1. Test Development
 2. Update costs
 3. Administration costs
- Rationale: Why the need for a differentiated system of accountability?
 1. Measures the Value-Added of CTE
 2. Direct Link to Employer Perceptions
- Alignment: Which takes precedence?
 1. Industry Standards
 2. College and Program Accreditation (Student Learning Outcomes)
 3. State and Local Requirements (Student Success)
- Penetration: Who takes the assessment and in which program?
 1. Program coverage
 2. Student coverage
- Performance: How does one arrive at a single performance level?
 1. Target
 2. Baseline

3. Variability

- Estimation: Does the estimation procedure truly measure technical skill assessment?

1. Validity
2. Reliability

- Reporting: Which provides the most consistent results?

1. End of Course
2. End of Program
3. At Job Market Entry Point

A long-term goal for Minnesota will be to apply the above characteristics and answer the underlying questions. By so doing, Minnesota intends to build and sustain a technical skill attainment process that is based on solid rationale, using a cost-effective, widely-reported, well-aligned, broadly penetrable and perfectly-estimated system of assessment instruments, and leads to a true measurement of student technical skill performance levels.

3. IDENTIFY, ON THE FORMS IN PART C OF THIS GUIDE, THE VALID AND RELIABLE MEASUREMENT DEFINITIONS

You must identify, on the forms in Part C of this guide, the valid and reliable measurement definitions and approaches that you will use for each of the core indicators of performance for career and technical education students at the secondary and postsecondary/adult levels, as well as any additional indicators of performance identified by the eligible agency, that are valid and reliable. You must describe how your proposed definitions and measures are valid and reliable. (Section 113(b)(2)(A)-(B)) Section 113(b) of the Act describes the measures that a State must use for student attainment of challenging academic content standards and student academic achievement standards in reading/language arts and mathematics (1S1 and 1S2, respectively) and student graduation rates (4S1). Based on our non-regulatory guidance, we have prepopulated the measurement definitions on the Final Agreed Upon Performance Levels (FAUPL) form for your convenience. You do not need to describe how these definitions and measures are valid and reliable in your State plan narrative. A State that chooses to propose other student definitions and measurement approaches in its new State plan would have to describe how its proposed definitions and measures would be valid and reliable. (The Secretary is considering whether to issue regulations requiring a State to agree to use the student definitions and measurement approaches for the core indicators of performance for academic attainment in reading/language arts and mathematics and graduation rates as contained in the guidance document. If the Secretary decides to regulate on these issues and adopts final rules, a State may be required to amend its State plan.

4. YOU MUST DESCRIBE HOW, IN THE COURSE OF DEVELOPING CORE INDICATORS OF PERFORMANCE AND ADDITIONAL INDICATORS OF PERFORMANCE, YOU WILL ALIGN THE INDICATORS, TO THE GREATEST EXTENT POSSIBLE, SO THAT INFORMATION SUBSTANTIALLY SIMILAR TO THAT GATHERED FOR OTHER STATE AND FEDERAL PROGRAMS, OR FOR ANY OTHER PURPOSE, IS USED TO MEET THE ACT'S ACCOUNTABILITY REQUIREMENTS.
(SECTION 113(B)(2)(F))

Secondary: Minnesota will align academic performance and graduation indicators with appropriate definitions under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act and will use all ESEA sub-populations for disaggregating data. Minnesota aligns its definition of students with disabilities with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act.

Postsecondary: As indicated above under (2), the Perkins accountability indicators will be aligned to the System Accountability Measures. In addition, the approach for developing the Perkins accountability indicators is similar to one undertaken when the System Accountability Measures were developed.

Additionally, discussions have occurred at the system level to align the different definitions and measurement approaches used within various system units and Perkins is an integral part of that discussion. The long-term system goal is to have a data system that uses uniform definitions and consistent measurement approaches such that a CTE student will be viewed as a sub-indicator within a larger accountability system.

As the State refines the WIOA Plan performance indicators, these will be analyzed for alignment with the Carl D. Perkins IV accountability measures.

5. PROVIDE, FOR THE FIRST TWO YEARS COVERED BY THE STATE PLAN, PERFORMANCE LEVELS

You must provide, for the first two years covered by the State plan, performance levels for each of the core indicators of performance, except that States submitting one-year transition plans are only required to submit performance levels for part of the indicators as discussed above. For performance levels that are required, the States' performance levels, at a minimum, must be expressed in a percentage or numerical form, so as to be objective, quantifiable, and measurable; and require the State to continually make progress toward improving the performance of career and technical education students. (Section 113(b)(3)(A)(i)-(II)) Section 113(b)(2) of the Perkins Act requires a State to develop valid and reliable core indicators of performance, to propose performance levels in its State plan, and to reach agreement with the Department on "adjusted performance levels" for each of the core indicators. In so doing, the Perkins Act prescribes the measures that a State must use for some of the core indicators.

A. PERKINS ACT REQUIRES A STATE TO MEASURE CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION

(a) Section 113(b)(2)(A)(i) of the Perkins Act requires a State to measure career and technical education students' attainment of "challenging academic content standards" and "student academic achievement standards" that a State adopted pursuant to section 1111(b)(1) of the ESEA. The Perkins Act further requires a State use its State's academic assessments (i.e. the State's

reading/language arts and mathematics tests) implemented under section 1111(b)(3) of the ESEA to measure career and technical education students' attainment of these State standards. Thus, a State's core indicators must include career and technical education students' proficiency in reading/language arts and mathematics as measured under 1111(b)(1) and (3) of the ESEA. Accordingly, under the Perkins Act, a State must report the number or percent of its career and technical education students who score at the proficient level or above on the State's assessments in reading/language arts and mathematics administered under the ESEA to measure the academic proficiency of secondary career and technical education students against the ESEA standards. To measure attainment of these standards, a State must develop and reach agreement with the Department on "adjusted performance levels," which constitute the State's performance targets for a program year. Permissible targets (i.e. "adjusted performance levels") would be a State's "annual measurable objectives" (AMOs) from its State's ESEA accountability workbook. (To ensure that a State's schools are making "adequate yearly progress" (AYP) as required under section 1111(b)(2)(A) of the ESEA, section 1111(b)(2)(G) of the ESEA requires a State to establish Statewide AMOs, which identify a single minimum percentage of students who are required to meet or exceed the proficient level on the State's academic assessments each year.) Under the Perkins Act, a State may propose different performance levels (targets) instead of its AMOs as discussed below.

B. STATE TO IDENTIFY A CORE INDICATOR TO MEASURE FOR ITS CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION

Section 113(b)(2)(A)(iv) of the Perkins Act requires a State to identify a core indicator to measure for its career and technical education students at the secondary level "student graduation rates (as described in section 1111 (b)(2)(C)(vi) of the (ESEA))." Thus, a State must report the number or percent of its career and technical education students whom the State includes as graduated in its graduation rate described under the ESEA. To ensure that a State's schools are making AYP as required under section 1111(b)(2)(A) of the ESEA, some States have established Statewide targets for graduation rates under section 1111(b)(2)(C)(vi), and others States have defined AYP only to require improvement in the graduation rate each year. The Department strongly encourages your State to reach agreement on "adjusted performance levels" required under section 113 of the Perkins Act for the core indicators discussed in (a) and (b) above that are the same as your State's AMOs or targets that your State adopted to ensure that your State's schools are making AYP as required under section 1111(b)(2) of the ESEA. However, as noted above, your State may not have established targets for graduations rates under the ESEA, or your State may wish to propose performance levels for these core indicators that are different from your State's targets. If so, your State must provide baseline data using your State's most recent year's achievement data or graduation rate under the ESEA, propose performance levels, and reach agreement with the Department on "adjusted performance levels." (The Secretary is considering whether to issue regulations requiring a State to agree to "adjusted performance levels" under the Perkins Act that are the same as the State's AMOs or targets for graduation rate under the ESEA. If the Secretary decides to regulate on this issue and adopts final rules, a State may be required to amend its State plan.

6. YOU MUST DESCRIBE YOUR PROCESS FOR REACHING AGREEMENT ON LOCAL ADJUSTED LEVELS OF PERFORMANCE IF AN ELIGIBLE RECIPIENT DOES NOT ACCEPT THE STATE ADJUSTED LEVELS OF PERFORMANCE UNDER SECTION 113(B)(3) OF THE ACT AND ENSURING THAT THE ESTABLISHED PERFORMANCE LEVELS WILL REQUIRE THE ELIGIBLE RECIPIENT TO CONTINUALLY MAKE PROGRESS TOWARD IMPROVING THE PERFORMANCE OF

CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION STUDENTS. (SECTION 113(B)(4)(A)(II);
SEC. 122(C)(10)(B))

The local negotiation process in Minnesota is implemented at the consortia level and occurs jointly with both secondary and postsecondary. The local negotiation process for reaching agreement on local adjusted levels of performance includes the following general steps:

- Development and distribution of proposed consortia accountability targets. Secondary and postsecondary state staff review and analyze the available data to develop proposed consortia level targets for local performance levels that will allow the state to meet the state negotiated performance level. As Perkins IV focuses on continuous improvement, the proposed consortia targets assume that all consortia will do at least as well as they did in the base year, even if that level is higher than the performance level negotiated between the state and OVAE.
- Consortia review of proposed targets. Based on their review of the proposed targets and a review of their local data, each consortium decides to either accept the state's proposed targets or to propose changes. Consortia are asked to develop and document the rationale for any proposed changes. State staff provide workshops and training to assist secondary and postsecondary consortia staff in using their data both for the negotiations process and for continuous improvement efforts.
- Consortia response provided to the state, including explanations and rationale for any proposed changes to the proposed local performance levels.
- Notification by the State. Each consortium is notified whether any proposed changes to the targets are accepted, if further negotiation is required or if the state proposed targets will be the final targets.

7. YOU MUST DESCRIBE THE OBJECTIVE CRITERIA AND METHODS YOU WILL
USE TO ALLOW AN ELIGIBLE RECIPIENT TO REQUEST REVISIONS TO ITS LOCAL
ADJUSTED LEVELS OF PERFORMANCE IF UNANTICIPATED CIRCUMSTANCES
ARISE WITH RESPECT TO AN ELIGIBLE RECIPIENT. (SECTION 113(B)(4)(A)(VI))

Because Minnesota has established solid baseline data on performance for several years at both the secondary and postsecondary levels, consortia will be allowed to renegotiate performance only when demonstrating that a significant change has occurred to the population of students for whom data reporting is to occur. Because of the recent change to a new test system for academic performance, however, Minnesota will allow some flexibility for the first two years under Perkins IV to establish trends for academic performance.

8. YOU MUST DESCRIBE HOW YOU WILL REPORT DATA RELATING TO STUDENTS PARTICIPATING IN CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS IN ORDER TO ADEQUATELY MEASURE THE PROGRESS OF THE STUDENTS, INCLUDING SPECIAL POPULATIONS AND STUDENTS PARTICIPATING IN TECH PREP PROGRAMS, IF APPLICABLE, AND HOW YOU WILL ENSURE THAT THE DATA REPORTED TO YOU FROM LOCAL EDUCATIONAL AGENCIES AND ELIGIBLE INSTITUTIONS, AND THE DATA THAT YOU REPORT TO THE SECRETARY, ARE COMPLETE, ACCURATE, AND RELIABLE. (SECTION 122(C)(13); SECTION 205).

Secondary: Minnesota has established a system of data collection through which career and technical education participants and concentrators are identified by extraction from student scheduling programs in each school district. Once identified, performance data on career and technical education participants and concentrators is extracted from appropriate data sets at the Minnesota Department of Education. Disaggregated data utilize the same student criteria as captured for all students in the state's MARSS (Minnesota Automated Reporting Student System) database.

Postsecondary: As described under (1) above, postsecondary data will be reported using the Perkins Brio database. Perkins-eligible colleges will have continuous access to:

- A transactional database that provides detailed disaggregated information at the student level for ensuring data integrity and obtaining quick summary reports on performance.
- A cohort database that provides detailed information on locally negotiated performance targets, performance levels, anticipated and actual performance gaps.

Since the Perkins Brio database is part of the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities System Integrated Student System (ISRS), the data integrity rules that have been in place for the ISRS system also apply to the Perkins Brio data.

9. YOU MUST DESCRIBE HOW YOUR STATE PLANS TO ENTER INTO AN AGREEMENT WITH EACH CONSORTIUM RECEIVING A GRANT UNDER PERKINS IV TO MEET A MINIMUM LEVEL OF PERFORMANCE FOR EACH OF THE PERFORMANCE INDICATORS DESCRIBED IN SECTION 113(B) AND 203(E). (SECTION 204(E)(1))

Secondary

The state distributed data pertaining to performance on elements required for negotiation during the transition year and has stated its intent to use that as a baseline for negotiations with local recipients for the 2007–2008 year. Individual districts may accept the state's proposal or propose a different performance level with stated rationale for the request. Negotiations, where necessary, will be conducted on a case-by-case basis.

The Minnesota Department of Education maintains a liaison relationship with the Minnesota

Association of Career and Technical Administrators (MACTA) and the Minnesota Association for Career and Technical Education (MnACTE). The elected boards of these two organizations are

consulted in all phases of Perkins planning and implementation. Administrative representatives from small and large, rural and urban school districts will be consulted on Perkins indicators.

Postsecondary

The Office of the Chancellor will use the postsecondary entry–level cohort–based Perkins Brio data for negotiating individually with each college. Each Perkins eligible college will be provided access to baseline and trend data for the Perkins IV indicators through the Brio database and will be provided proposed targets for each indicator. The proposed targets will include the level below which the college would need to request technical assistance and develop an improvement plan and as well as a slightly higher a level at which only a written report addressing an improvement plan would be required. The proposed levels will be based on the institution’s trend data and trend data at the state level. Negotiations will be conducted when a college proposes a performance level other than that proposed by the Office of the Chancellor.

In negotiations with individual colleges and in the development of proposed state level targets for negotiation with the U.S. Department of Education, the Office of the Chancellor will continue to analyze state and local level data and continue to seek input from key research and policy staff within the colleges and within the Office of the Chancellor.

10. YOU MUST DESCRIBE HOW YOU WILL ANNUALLY EVALUATE THE EFFECTIVENESS OF CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS, AND DESCRIBE, TO THE EXTENT PRACTICABLE, HOW YOU ARE COORDINATING THOSE PROGRAMS WITH OTHER FEDERAL PROGRAMS TO ENSURE NONDUPLICATION. (SECTION 122(C)(8))

In September of 2010, the Office of the Chancellor at the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities hired Denise Roseland, Ph.D., as the Senior CTE Planning and Evaluation Director for Perkins postsecondary programs. Responsibilities of this position include providing oversight and direction to program evaluation and monitoring efforts of Perkins funded efforts. In addition, the position works with the secondary Perkins Coordinator at MDE to ensure that all forms, manuals, and materials are updated and current. Between now and the end of FY13, Minnesota will move to an online application and reporting system for local recipients of Perkins funding.

In addition to quality review processes that exist in Minnesota regarding program review and approval and the awarding of credentials to career and technical education teachers and faculty, Minnesota conducts periodic monitoring visits/financial audits/site reviews of MN Perkins Consortia. State Perkins CTE staff from MDE and MnSCU visit each of MN’s 26 consortia over a 4–year rotating schedule and evaluate consortium activities and procedures to assure compliance with the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act of 2006, federal and state financial requirements, the MN State CTE Plan and other state laws, regulations and rules. The state monitoring review team identifies strengths and promising practices within the consortium and opportunities for continued improvement. Consortia are encouraged to share promising practices at the fall CTE conference, administrator meetings, and on the state CTE website, www.cte.mnscu.edu.

As of spring 2011, half of the consortia have had a 2–day, on–site monitoring visit with the remaining consortia scheduled for FY12 or FY13. Staff members follow up with technical assistance where appropriate. The state has, as a result of the 13 site visits that have been completed, developed guidance for local recipients regarding Personnel Activity Reports to ensure that the appropriate

documentation is collected. The developed materials can be found at: http://www.cte.mnscu.edu/consortium_resources/index.html, or see Appendix B.

Minnesota state CTE staff continues to provide technical assistance to all 26 consortia. Six regionally assigned staff at MDE and specialized staff at MnSCU provide updates, forward pertinent information, deliver on-site presentations, facilitate conference calls and webinars, and travel to centralized/regional locations for face-to-face meetings.

Secondary: Minnesota will continue to utilize the annual performance reporting practices established under Perkins III to gauge the effectiveness of programs. Additionally, Minnesota has established a rubrics-based program approval process under which districts must submit their programs for review and approval at least once each five years. Minnesota aligns data systems with those used under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, aligns programming in career and technical education for students with disabilities with requirements of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act, and works with the Governor's Workforce Development Council to align with youth programs under the Workforce Investment Act.

Postsecondary: To annually evaluate the effectiveness of CTE in Minnesota, the following practices from Perkins III will continue or be modified:

- Perkins-eligible colleges will be provided access to their own Perkins IV cohort data through a variety of reports and queries in the Perkins Brio database. In addition to access to a variety of aggregated and disaggregated reports that will highlight performance gaps, this database provides student level data. The data provides colleges enormous flexibility in analyzing their performance, including the ability to link to a wealth of other information in the system's Integrated Student Record System (ISRS).
- Modify the current annual performance report to focus directly on the linkage between program effectiveness, accountability and student success, particularly in the context of the proposed new consortium structure.
- Hold periodic accountability meetings with local eligible recipients to discuss performance effectiveness of CTE programs, as identified in the local application plan.

Between Secondary and Postsecondary: As indicated in the introduction of this section, within both secondary and postsecondary CTE systems, a solid foundation has been established with regard to accountability, evaluation and monitoring. However, the ability to share and use data across the two systems is very limited. Nevertheless, the State has been exploring provisional solutions for following secondary students into the postsecondary system. One method that has been used for the past two years has been the development of postsecondary tech prep enrollment and accountability measures. The method is described in Appendix L. Even while Minnesota has chosen to combine the tech prep and basic programs under Perkins IV, the technique described in Appendix L will definitely find application as Minnesota begins implementing its new consortium structure.

STATES SUBMITTING ONE-YEAR TRANSITION PLANS

Except as noted above with respect the States submitting one-year transition plans, you must provide all the information requested on the forms provided in Part C of this guide to report accountability data annually to the Secretary under section 113(c)(1)-(2), including:

A. THE STUDENT DEFINITIONS THAT YOU WILL USE FOR THE SECONDARY CORE INDICATORS OF PERFORMANCE AND THE POSTSECONDARY/ADULT CORE INDICATORS OF PERFORMANCE;

B. BASELINE DATA FOR THE CORE INDICATORS OF PERFORMANCE UNDER SECTION 113(B)(2) USING DATA FROM THE MOST-RECENTLY COMPLETED PROGRAM YEAR, EXCEPT THAT, FOR THE INDICATORS FOR WHICH YOUR STATE MUST USE YOUR STATE'S STANDARDS, ASSESSMENT, AND GRADUATION RATES ADOPTED UNDER TITLE I OF THE ESEA, IF YOUR STATE CHOOSES TO USE ITS AMOS AND TARGETS UNDER THE ESEA, YOU WILL NOT NEED TO SUBMIT BASELINE DATA; AND

C. PROPOSED PERFORMANCE LEVELS AS DISCUSSED ABOVE, EXCEPT THAT, FOR THE INDICATORS FOR WHICH YOUR STATE MUST YOUR STATE'S STANDARDS, ASSESSMENTS, AND GRADUATION RATES ADOPTED UNDER TITLE I OF THE ESEA, IF YOUR STATE CHOOSES TO USE ITS AMOS AND TARGETS UNDER THE ESEA, YOU WILL ONLY HAVE TO CONFIRM THIS INFORMATION WITH YOUR OCTAE REGIONAL ACCOUNTABILITY SPECIALIST. UPON YOUR REQUEST, THE REGIONAL ACCOUNTABILITY SPECIALIST WILL PRE-POPULATE THE FORMS IN PART C WITH YOUR STATE'S AMOS AND TARGETS FOR THE 2007-08 AND 2008-09 PROGRAM YEARS AND SEND THE FORMS FOR YOU TO FINISH COMPLETING.

2. YOU MUST IDENTIFY THE PROGRAM AREAS FOR WHICH THE STATE HAS TECHNICAL SKILL ASSESSMENTS, THE ESTIMATED PERCENTAGE OF CTE STUDENTS WHO TAKE TECHNICAL SKILL ASSESSMENTS, AND THE STATE'S PLAN FOR INCREASING THE COVERAGE OF PROGRAMS AND STUDENTS REPORTED IN FUTURE PROGRAM YEARS.

Measuring Secondary and Postsecondary Technical Skill Attainment

o It is the state's expectation that consortia with state-approved programs of study in the five career pathways included in the project pilot discussed above will assess CTE students using the state approved assessments beginning in the 2010–2011 year. As assessments are approved for additional career pathways, those assessments will be included in accountability reporting beginning with each effective year.

o Consortia with state approved programs of study are to select at least one assessment from the state approved Technical Skill Assessment list within the career pathway for the appropriate approved program of study. Beginning in FY11, information about the assessments selected at a local high school or college was to be entered into the MN Program of Study website (www.mnpos.com) and student results are reported to the Minnesota Department of Education and the Office of the Chancellor using established data-collection systems and procedures. Each consortium is encouraged to determine the appropriate time within the student's participation in the program of study to administer the assessment. This may vary from one local program to another depending on the selected assessment, course offerings, and class schedules.

Secondary:

o Beginning with the reporting for the 2010–2011 school year, each consortium must note whether the student was assessed and whether the student received a passing score on that assessment. The state will extract assessment data for CTE concentrators from the assessment data submitted on all CTE students.

o The state will determine the number of secondary CTE concentrators who were assessed and the number of secondary CTE concentrators who passed the assessments and will report those results as part of accountability reporting process.

Postsecondary:

o At the postsecondary level, the use of a three year cohort model for reporting postsecondary indicators and variations in the timing of assessments (end of course/end of program) will necessitate a phase in of reporting based on the new approved state assessments and may necessitate the continued inclusion of some licensure exam pass rate information when reporting for FY 2012. As data on state approved technical skill assessments within specific programs of study become available for students in the reporting cohort, those data will replace the annual aggregate licensure pass rate data currently used as a proxy for this indicator.

o The Office of the Chancellor will coordinate the statewide collection of data from third party vendors and licensing boards whenever possible. The Office of the Chancellor will work with consortium staff to ensure that information on technical skill assessments taken by students, including the name of the assessment and the student's score, are entered into the system's integrated student record system (ISRS), the system's data warehouse and the Hyperion/Brio reporting system used by consortia to review data on their students and programs.

o Data will be collected on all postsecondary students taking the state approved assessments. The state will determine the number of CTE concentrators who were assessed and the number of CTE concentrators who passed the assessments and report those results as part of the postsecondary accountability reporting process.

Minnesota feels that the above approach will take into account the eight characteristics that describe any technical skill attainment measure and answer the basic question underlying each:

- **Skill:** How is technical skill attainment defined?
 - Level of inclusion
 - Degree of specificity
- **Cost:** Who bears the burden of the cost?
 - Test Development
 - Update costs
 - Administration costs
- **Rationale:** Why the need for a differentiated system of accountability?

- Measures the Value–Added of CTE
- Direct Link to Employer Perceptions
 - Alignment: Which takes precedence?
- Industry Standards
- College and Program Accreditation (Student Learning Outcomes)
- State and Local Requirements (Student Success)
 - Penetration: Who takes the assessment and in which program?
- Program coverage
- Student coverage
 - Performance: How does one arrive at a single performance level?
- Target
- Baseline
- Variability
 - Estimation: Does the estimation procedure truly measure technical skill assessment?
- Validity
- Reliability
 - Reporting: Which provides the most consistent results?
- End of Course
- End of Program
- At Job Market Entry Point

A long–term goal for Minnesota will be to apply the above characteristics and answer the underlying questions. By so doing, Minnesota intends to build and sustain a technical skill attainment process that is based on solid rationale, using a cost–effective, widely– reported, well–aligned, broadly penetrable and perfectly–estimated system of assessment instruments, and leads to a true measurement of student technical skill performance levels

V. TECH PREP PROGRAMS

As noted above, Congress eliminated a separate allocation for Title II, Tech Prep under Perkins IV in the 2011 Continuing Resolution. States are not required to provide or revise this Section V, Tech Prep Programs, unless your State chooses to do so.

A. STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS

1. DESCRIBE THE COMPETITIVE BASIS OR FORMULA YOU WILL USE TO AWARD GRANTS TO TECH-PREP CONSORTIA. (SECTION 203(A)(1))

Tech-prep is integrated into Minnesota's Single Local Plan concept.

2. YOU MUST DESCRIBE HOW YOU WILL GIVE SPECIAL CONSIDERATION TO APPLICATIONS THAT ADDRESS THE AREAS IDENTIFIED IN SECTION 204(D). (SECTION 204(D)(1)-(6))

3. YOU MUST DESCRIBE HOW YOU WILL ENSURE AN EQUITABLE DISTRIBUTION OF ASSISTANCE BETWEEN URBAN AND RURAL CONSORTIUM PARTICIPANTS. (SECTION 204(F))

The allocation formula includes a factor of square mileage of the school districts geographic area in recognition of the need to offset the cost of serving students across geographically dispersed districts. In addition, the 10% reserve set-aside is in place to serve the out-state rural student populations. The other calculations are based on students of poverty ages 5-17 utilizing free and reduced-meals within each sector for secondary and the Pell grant recipients enrolled in CTE program for the postsecondary measures.

4. YOU MUST DESCRIBE HOW YOUR AGENCY WILL ENSURE THAT EACH FUNDED TECH PREP PROGRAM—

A. Is carried out under an articulation agreement between the participants in the consortium, as defined in section 3(4) of the Act;

B. Consists of a program of study that meets the requirements of section 203(c)(2)(A)-(G);

C. Includes the development of tech prep programs for secondary and postsecondary education that meet the requirements of section 203(c)(3)(A)-(D);

D. Includes in-service professional development for teachers, faculty, and administrators that meets the requirements of section 203(c)(4)(A)-(F).

E. Includes professional development programs for counselors that meet the requirements of section 203(c)(5)(A)-(F);

F. Provides equal access to the full range of technical preparation programs (including pre-apprenticeship programs) to individuals who are members of special populations, including the development of tech-prep program services appropriate to the needs of special populations (Section 203(c)(6));

G. Provides for preparatory services that assist participants in tech-prep programs (Section 203(c)(7)); and

Coordinates with activities under Title I. (Section 203(c)(8))

Tech Prep is part of the integrated Single Local Plan.

5. YOU MUST DESCRIBE HOW YOUR STATE PLANS TO ENTER INTO AN AGREEMENT WITH EACH CONSORTIUM RECEIVING A GRANT UNDER PERKINS IV TO MEET A MINIMUM LEVEL OF PERFORMANCE FOR EACH OF THE PERFORMANCE INDICATORS DESCRIBED IN SECTIONS 113(B) AND 203(E). (SECTION 204(E)(1))

The local negotiation process in Minnesota is implemented at the consortia level and occurs jointly with both secondary and postsecondary. The local negotiation process for reaching agreement on local adjusted levels of performance includes the following general steps:

- Development and distribution of proposed consortia accountability targets. Secondary and postsecondary state staff review and analyze the available data to develop proposed consortia level targets for local performance levels that will allow the state to meet the state negotiated performance level. As Perkins IV focuses on continuous improvement, the proposed consortia targets assume that all consortia will do at least as well as they did in the base year, even if that level is higher than the performance level negotiated between the state and the Federal grantee.
- Consortia review of proposed targets. Based on their review of the proposed targets and a review of their local data, each consortium decides to either accept the state's proposed targets or to propose changes. Consortia are asked to develop and document the rationale for any proposed changes. State staff provide workshops and training to assist secondary and postsecondary consortia staff in using their data both for the negotiations process and for continuous improvement efforts.
- Consortia response provided to the state, including explanations and rationale for any proposed changes to the proposed local performance levels.
- Notification by the State. Each consortium is notified whether any proposed changes to the targets are accepted, if further negotiation is required or if the state proposed targets will be the final targets.

B. OTHER DEPARTMENTAL REQUIREMENTS

1. YOU MUST SUBMIT A COPY OF THE LOCAL APPLICATION FORM(S) USED TO AWARD TECH PREP FUNDS TO CONSORTIA AND A COPY OF THE TECHNICAL REVIEW CRITERIA USED TO SELECT WINNING CONSORTIA, IF FUNDS ARE AWARDED COMPETITIVELY.

VI. FINANCIAL REQUIREMENTS

As noted above, in addition to the narrative information provided below, you must submit an updated budget (Item B.1a below) for the upcoming program year using the link to the Perkins State Plan Portal below.

A. STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS

1. YOU MUST DESCRIBE HOW YOUR AGENCY WILL ALLOCATE FUNDS IT RECEIVES THROUGH THE ALLOTMENT MADE UNDER SECTION 111, INCLUDING ANY FUNDS THAT YOU CHOOSE TO CONSOLIDATE UNDER SECTION 202(A), WILL BE ALLOCATED AMONG CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION AT THE SECONDARY LEVEL, OR CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION AT THE POSTSECONDARY AND ADULT LEVEL, OR BOTH, INCLUDING THE RATIONALE FOR SUCH ALLOCATION. (SECTION 122(C)(6)(A); SECTION 202(C))

Minnesota Rule 3505.1700 specified that an annual agreement between the Commissioner of the Minnesota Department of Education and the Chancellor of the Minnesota State colleges and Universities will specify the distribution of federal career and technical education funds between secondary and postsecondary entities. Minnesota agreed to a split of 42% for secondary allocation and 58% for postsecondary. The factors that were considered in this decision were the following:

Full-year equivalent student counts

Population with disabilities

Economically disadvantaged

Limited English proficiency

Equity/nontraditional students

Single Parent status.

h1>Minnesota will comply with the applicable requirements of Titles I, II, and III of the Act. Additionally all fiscal procedures for the MnSCU, MDE, or contractors will adhere to applicable state and federal regulations. Minnesota's accounting framework is based on Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP). Internally policies and procedures are reviewed to ensure that our practices are sound. This review occurs on an annual basis.

For documentation purposes the 2015–2016 Formula and Reserve for state FY16 and relevant requirements of the federal Perkins CTE Act and MN State CTE Plan have been used. Census data, and other variable are updated on an annual basis to calculate allocations to the local consortia.

The calculations for the consortium will be based on:

Local Consortium Formula Allocation amounts:

Secondary formula:

- 2013 U. S. Census data for the population by school district of individuals aged 5–17
- 2013 U. S. Census data for the population by school district of individuals aged 5–17 in households of poverty
- Description (70% District population 5–17 in poverty/state population 5–17 in poverty times the total secondary formula amount) plus 30% district population 5–17/state population 5–17 times the total secondary formula amount for the state from the OCTAE allocation—42% or \$5,360,774 est. in 2015–2016) is calculated for each district. The secondary consortium formula=the sum of the amounts calculated for each district member of the consortium.

Postsecondary formula:

- 2013–2014 CTE Postsecondary Pell Recipients
- Description (Pell recipients in the college in Perkins eligible programs/ Pell recipients in the state in Perkins eligible programs times the total postsecondary formula amount for the state from the OCTAE allocation—58% or \$7,402,973 est. in 2015–2016) is calculated for each college. The postsecondary consortium formula=the sum of the amounts calculated for each college member of the consortium.

Local Consortium Reserve Allocation amounts:

Reserve: As per the MN State CTE Plan, allocations amounts to the whole consortium are based on 50% sum of the area for member districts in the consortium/area for all districts in the state; 37.5% on the sum of secondary participants for member districts in the consortium/ total secondary CTE participants in the state and 12.5% on the sum of postsecondary participants for member districts in the consortium/ total CTE postsecondary participants in the state based on the following data:

- School district area to account for certain district consolidations
- 2013–2014 CTE Secondary Participants
- 2013–2014 Perkins CTE Participants

Step 1:

The total reserve allocation for the consortium (including secondary and postsecondary) is calculated by taking the sum of the following calculations

+ .5 x the total geographic area for school district members of the consortium/total geographic area for school districts in the state x the total state reserve allocation

+ .375 x the total HS CTE participants of school district members of the consortium/total HS CTE participants in the state x the total state reserve allocation

+ .125 x the total PS CTE participants of college members of the consortium/total PS CTE participants in the state x the total state reserve allocation

Step 2: Once the total reserve allocation for the consortium is determined in Step 1, the allocation amounts to Secondary Reserve and to Postsecondary Reserve are determined according to the 42% secondary: 58% postsecondary:

- Secondary reserve local consortium allocation amount:
 - o .42 x the total reserve allocation for the consortium
- Postsecondary reserve local consortium allocation amount:
 - o .58 x the total reserve allocation for the consortium

2. YOU MUST PROVIDE THE SPECIFIC DOLLAR ALLOCATIONS MADE AVAILABLE BY THE ELIGIBLE AGENCY FOR CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS UNDER SECTIONS 131(A)-(E) AND HOW THESE ALLOCATIONS ARE DISTRIBUTED TO LOCAL EDUCATIONAL AGENCIES, AREA CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION SCHOOLS, AND EDUCATIONAL SERVICE AGENCIES WITHIN THE STATE. (SECTION 131(G); SECTION 202(C))

The specific dollar amount available at the state level has consistently been \$16,684,637.00. Eighty-five percent (\$14,181,194) of the state award is distributed by formula to the 26 local consortium. (90% of the 85% is awarded as basic funds; 10% of the 85% is awarded as reserve funds.)

The calculations for the consortium award of basic grant allocations will be based on: Local Consortium Formula Allocation amounts: Secondary formula: • Most current U. S. Census data for the population by school district of individuals aged 5-17 • Most current (same year as above) U. S. Census data for the population by school district of individuals aged 5-17 in households of poverty • Description (70% District population 5-17 in poverty/state population 5-17 in poverty times the total secondary formula amount) plus 30% district population 5-17/state population 5-17 times the total secondary formula amount for the state from the OCTAE allocation-42% or \$5,360,774 est. in 2015-2016) is calculated for each district. The secondary consortium formula=the sum of the amounts calculated for each district member of the consortium.

Postsecondary formula: • Previous year CTE Postsecondary Pell Recipients • Description (Pell recipients in the college in Perkins eligible programs/ Pell recipients in the state in Perkins eligible programs times the total postsecondary formula amount for the state from the OCTAE allocation-58% or \$7,402,973 est. in 2015-2016) is calculated for each college. The postsecondary consortium formula=the sum of the amounts calculated for each college member of the consortium. Again, for postsecondary, the poverty measure is Pell grant recipients enrolled in CTE programs offered at colleges within the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities system. Secondary allocations for Minnesota make use of U.S. Census data for the distribution of secondary funds, basing 30% of the secondary distribution on the estimated population 5–17 and 70% on the estimated number of relevant children 5–17 years old in poverty who are related to the householder.

Use of the Ten Percent Reserve Funds (\$1,418,194) are distributed to the local consortia as follows: • Eligible recipients receiving the 10% reserve funding in Minnesota under section 112(c) of Carl Perkins IV must meet one of two criteria: “rural area” designation as defined as a consortium with greater than 250 square miles of geographic area served, or a “high numbers” consortium serving CT student headcount greater than 50% of the average consortium total headcount served in the prior year. Minnesota distributes 10% of the Basic Grant funds available for distribution to eligible local school districts and colleges on the basis of a modified formula: a. One half on the ratio of the geographic area of the consortium to the geographic area of the state. Such a distribution recognizes that geographically sparse regions have additional costs associated with such sparsity, especially with the emphasis in the Minnesota plan on consortium development and operations. b.

One half on the basis of participation in career and technical education programs weighted 3 to 1 for secondary participants. Such a distribution rewards high quality career and technical education programs that attract high levels of participation, but recognized through its secondary weighting that guidance activities and pre-career and technical programming that had been supported in secondary schools remain an important focus of each consortium.

Administration and State Leadership Funds: After subtracting 85% for total Perkins funds, the remaining 15% (\$2,502,495) is allocated towards administration and state leadership funds, with 5% for state administration and 10% for state leadership activities.

3. YOU MUST PROVIDE THE SPECIFIC DOLLAR ALLOCATIONS MADE AVAILABLE BY THE ELIGIBLE AGENCY FOR CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS UNDER SECTION 132(A) OF THE ACT AND HOW THESE ALLOCATIONS ARE DISTRIBUTED TO POSTSECONDARY INSTITUTIONS WITHIN THE STATE. (SECTION 122(C)(6)(A); SECTION 202(C))

Minnesota's Perkins Plan is a unified plan serving consortia that consist of a minimum of one secondary school district and postsecondary institution. While data for calculation of the allocations is collected from secondary and postsecondary sources independently, distribution of funds occurs at the local consortium level. Minnesota's allocation of local Basic consortia is based on:

- For secondary, Minnesota makes use of U.S. Census data for the distribution of secondary funds, basing 30% of the secondary distribution on the estimated population 5–17 and 70% on the estimated number of relevant children 5 to 17 years old in poverty who are related to the householder.
- For postsecondary, the poverty measure is Pell grant recipients enrolled in CTE programs offered at colleges within the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities system.

The state distributes 10% reserve fund of the remaining Basic Grant funds using a modified formula that enables large rurally-based local Perkins IV consortia that exist outside the Twin Cities metropolitan area with square mileage greater than 250 square miles, to overcome more significant planning obstacles encountered mainly because educational programming and support require covering large geographical areas. Administration and State Leadership Funds: After subtracting 85% for total Perkins funds, the remaining 15% is allocated towards administration and state leadership funds, with 5% for state administration and 10% for state leadership activities.

4. YOU MUST DESCRIBE HOW YOUR AGENCY WILL ALLOCATE ANY OF THOSE FUNDS AMONG ANY CONSORTIA THAT WILL BE FORMED AMONG SECONDARY SCHOOLS, AND HOW FUNDS WILL BE ALLOCATED AMONG THE MEMBERS OF THE CONSORTIA, INCLUDING THE RATIONALE FOR SUCH ALLOCATION. (SECTION 122(C)(6)(B); SECTION 202(C))

In the MN Single State Plan, allocation of funds at the consortia level would include minimally one secondary partner and one secondary partner. For the transition year, Minnesota utilized the same structure of independent school districts, colleges, and consortia that existed during the final year of Perkins III for the allocation of funds. Funds were distributed to the designated fiscal agent for any district, college, or consortia with the understanding that consortium funds were to be used only in such a way that benefits the entire consortium.

The expectation that consortium funding benefits the entire consortium will carry forward under the new consortium structure and will be applied across secondary and postsecondary lines. The affixing of signatures of both college presidents and district superintendents to the local application will be evidence that the planned use of funds will be seen as providing benefit across the new consortium.

5. YOU MUST DESCRIBE HOW YOUR AGENCY WILL ALLOCATE ANY OF THOSE FUNDS AMONG ANY CONSORTIA THAT WILL BE FORMED AMONG POSTSECONDARY INSTITUTIONS, AND HOW FUNDS WILL BE ALLOCATED AMONG THE MEMBERS OF THE CONSORTIA, INCLUDING THE RATIONALE FOR SUCH ALLOCATIONS. (SECTION 122(C)(6)(B); SECTION 202(C))

In the MN Single State Plan, allocation of funds at the consortia level would include minimally one secondary partner and one secondary partner. For the transition year, Minnesota utilized the same structure of independent school districts, colleges, and consortia that existed during the final year of Perkins III for the allocation of funds. Funds were distributed to the designated fiscal agent for any district, college, or consortia with the understanding that consortium funds were to be used only in such a way that benefits the entire consortium.

The expectation that consortium funding benefits the entire consortium will carry forward under the new consortium structure and will be applied across secondary and postsecondary lines. The affixing of signatures of both college presidents and district superintendents to the local application will be evidence that the planned use of funds will be seen as providing benefit across the new consortium.

6. YOU MUST DESCRIBE HOW YOU WILL ADJUST THE DATA USED TO MAKE THE ALLOCATIONS TO REFLECT ANY CHANGE IN SCHOOL DISTRICT BOUNDARIES THAT MAY HAVE OCCURRED SINCE THE POPULATION AND/OR ENROLLMENT DATA WAS COLLECTED, AND INCLUDE LOCAL EDUCATIONAL AGENCIES WITHOUT GEOGRAPHICAL BOUNDARIES, SUCH AS CHARTER SCHOOLS AND SECONDARY SCHOOLS FUNDED BY THE BUREAU OF INDIAN AFFAIRS. (SECTION 131(A)(3))

Data for calculation of allocations is updated annually to reflect any student population changes. Changes in geographical boundaries specifically would be reflected in the annual update of the square mileage designation of each consortium.

Minnesota distributes 10% of the Basic Grant funds available for distribution to local school districts and colleges on the basis of this modified formula:

- a. One half on the ratio of the geographic area of the consortium to the geographic area of the state. Such a distribution recognizes that geographically sparse regions have additional costs associated with such sparsity, especially with the emphasis in the Minnesota plan on consortium development and operations.
- b. One half on the basis of participation in career and technical education programs weighted 3 to 1 for secondary participants. Such a distribution rewards high quality career and technical education programs that attract high levels of participation, but recognized through its secondary weighting that

guidance activities and pre-career and technical programming that had been supported in secondary schools by tech prep funds remain an important focus of each new consortium.

Once the above formula is applied across the new consortium structure, the share for secondary and postsecondary respectively will be based on the 42/58 split consistent with the other allocated dollars.

7. YOU MUST PROVIDE A DESCRIPTION OF ANY PROPOSED ALTERNATIVE ALLOCATION FORMULA(S) REQUIRING APPROVAL BY THE SECRETARY AS DESCRIBED IN SECTION 131(B) OR 132(B). AT A MINIMUM, YOU MUST PROVIDE AN ALLOCATION RUN FOR ELIGIBLE RECIPIENTS USING THE REQUIRED ELEMENTS OUTLINED IN SECTION 131(A) AND/OR SECTION 132(A)(2), TOGETHER WITH AN ALLOCATION RUN USING THE PROPOSED ALTERNATIVE FORMULA(S). ALSO YOU MUST INCLUDE A DEMONSTRATION THAT THE ALTERNATIVE SECONDARY FORMULA MORE EFFECTIVELY TARGETS FUNDS ON THE BASIS OF POVERTY, AS DESCRIBED IN SECTION 131(B)(1) OF THE ACT; AND/OR, IN THE CASE OF AN ALTERNATIVE POSTSECONDARY FORMULA, A DEMONSTRATION THAT THE FORMULA DESCRIBED IN SECTION 132(A)(2) DOES NOT RESULT IN A DISTRIBUTION OF FUNDS TO ELIGIBLE RECIPIENTS THAT HAVE THE HIGHEST NUMBERS OF ECONOMICALLY DISADVANTAGED INDIVIDUALS AND THAT AN ALTERNATIVE FORMULA WOULD RESULT IN SUCH A DISTRIBUTION.

Currently proposed alternative allocations formulas requiring approval are not utilized.

B. OTHER DEPARTMENT REQUIREMENTS

EXCEPT AS NOTED ABOVE WITH RESPECT THE STATES SUBMITTING ONE-YEAR TRANSITION PLANS, YOU MUST PROVIDE ALL THE INFORMATION REQUESTED ON THE FORMS PROVIDED IN PART C OF THIS GUIDE TO REPORT ACCOUNTABILITY DATA ANNUALLY TO THE SECRETARY UNDER SECTION 113(C)(1)-(2), INCLUDING:

1. You must submit a detailed project budget, using the forms provided in Part B of this guide.

2. YOU MUST PROVIDE A LISTING OF ALLOCATIONS MADE TO CONSORTIA (SECONDARY AND POSTSECONDARY) FROM FUNDS AVAILABLE UNDER SECTIONS 112(A) AND (C).

Under the Act, at least 85 percent of all funds must be allocated to eligible recipients (see definitions for description) for basic programs. An amount not more than 10 percent of the allotment will be available for State programs and leadership, which will include at least \$60,000 to be used for services that prepare individuals for non-traditional training and employment, and an amount equal to not more than 1% of the amount allocated to the state under section 111 shall be available to serve individuals in state institutions such as State correctional institutions or institutions that serve individuals with disabilities.

Minnesota will exercise the reserve option under Section 112 (c) under the following conditions:

1. Up to 10 % of the allocation under Section 131 of the Act will be held in reserve.

The state intends to distribute 10% reserve fund of the remaining Basic Grant funds using a modified formula that should enable large rurally-based local Perkins IV consortia that exist outside the Twin Cities metropolitan area to overcome more significant planning obstacles encountered mainly because educational programming and support require covering large geographical areas.

a. One half on the ratio of the geographic area of the consortium to the geographic area of the state. Such a distribution recognizes that geographically sparse regions have additional costs associated with such sparsity, especially with the emphasis in the Minnesota plan on consortium development and operations.

b. One half on the basis of participation in career and technical education programs weighted 3 to 1 for secondary participants. Such a distribution rewards high quality career and technical education programs that attract high levels of participation, but recognized through its secondary weighting that guidance activities and pre-career and technical programming that had been supported in secondary schools by tech prep funds remain an important focus of each new consortium.

3. YOU MUST DESCRIBE THE SECONDARY AND POSTSECONDARY FORMULAS USED TO ALLOCATE FUNDS AVAILABLE UNDER SECTION 112(A), AS REQUIRED BY SECTION 131(A) AND 132(A).

See Part B of the State Plan for project budget and 1 above.

4. YOU MUST DESCRIBE THE COMPETITIVE BASIS OR FORMULA TO BE USED TO AWARD RESERVE FUNDS UNDER SECTION 112(C).

Minnesota distributes 10% of the Basic Grant funds available for distribution to eligible local school districts and colleges on the basis of a modified formula:

a. One half on the ratio of the geographic area of the consortium to the geographic area of the state. Such a distribution recognizes that geographically sparse regions have additional costs associated with such sparsity, especially with the emphasis in the Minnesota plan on consortium development and operations.

b. One half on the basis of participation in career and technical education programs weighted 3 to 1 for secondary participants. Such a distribution rewards high quality career and technical education programs that attract high levels of participation, but recognized through its secondary weighting that guidance activities and pre-career and technical programming remain an important focus of each consortium.

5. YOU MUST DESCRIBE THE PROCEDURES USED TO RANK AND DETERMINE ELIGIBLE RECIPIENTS SEEKING FUNDING UNDER SECTION 112(C).

Eligible recipients seeking reserve funding in Minnesota under section 112(c) of Carl Perkins IV must meet one of two criteria: "rural area" designation as defined as a consortium with greater than 250 square miles of geographic area served, or a "high numbers" consortium serving CT student headcount greater than 50% of the average consortium total headcount served in the prior year.

Minnesota distributes 10% of the Basic Grant funds available for distribution to eligible local school districts and colleges on the basis of a modified formula:

a. One half on the ratio of the geographic area of the consortium to the geographic area of the state. Such a distribution recognizes that geographically sparse regions have additional costs associated with such sparsity, especially with the emphasis in the Minnesota plan on consortium development and operations. b. One half on the basis of participation in career and technical education programs weighted 3 to 1 for secondary participants. Such a distribution rewards high quality career and technical education programs that attract high levels of participation, but recognized through its secondary weighting that guidance activities and pre-career and technical programming that had been supported in secondary schools remain an important focus of each consortium.

6. YOU MUST INCLUDE A DESCRIPTION OF THE PROCEDURES USED TO DETERMINE ELIGIBLE RECIPIENTS IN RURAL AND SPARSELY POPULATED AREAS UNDER SECTION 131(C)(2) OR 132(A)(4) OF THE ACT.

Eligible recipients seeking Minnesota reserve funding under section 112(c) of Carl Perkins IV must meet one of two criteria: “rural area” or “areas with high numbers of career and technical education students”. Rural area is defined as a consortium with greater than 250 square miles of geographic area served. Areas-with-high-numbers-of-career-and-technical-education-students is defined as any consortium whose combined headcount of secondary and postsecondary career and technical education students served is greater than the average total headcount of secondary and postsecondary CT students served by the 26 consortia in the prior year. Minnesota distributes 10% of the Basic Grant funds available for distribution to eligible local school districts and colleges on the basis of a modified formula:

a. One half on the ratio of the geographic area of the consortium to the geographic area of the state. Such a distribution recognizes that geographically sparse regions have additional costs associated with such sparsity, especially with the emphasis in the Minnesota plan on consortium development and operations. b. One half on the basis of participation in career and technical education programs weighted 3 to 1 for secondary participants. Such a distribution rewards high quality career and technical education programs that attract high levels of participation, but recognized through its secondary weighting that guidance activities and pre-career and technical programming that had been supported in secondary schools by tech prep funds remain an important focus of each new consortium.

Once the above formula is applied across the new consortium structure, the share for secondary and postsecondary respectively will be based on the 42/58 split, as discussed in the basic funding formula.

EDGAR CERTIFICATION TABLE

Please review the EDGAR certifications and assurances below. If your State determines that any updates are necessary, you may submit them, along with your request to extend your State plan, via the link to the Perkins State Plan Portal below.

EDGAR CERTIFICATIONS

1. You must provide a written and signed certification that–
 - a. The plan is submitted by the State agency that is eligible to submit the plan. [34 CFR 76.104(a)(1)] [*Note: The term ‘eligible agency’ means a **State board** designated or created consistent with State law as the sole State agency responsible for the administration, or the supervision of the administration, of career and technical education in the State. See Sec. 3(12).*]
 - b. The State agency has authority under State law to perform the functions of the State under the program. [34 CFR 76.104(a)(2)]
 - c. The State legally may carry out each provision of the plan. [34 CFR 76.104(a)(3)]
 - d. All provisions of the plan are consistent with State law. [34 CFR 76.104(a)(4)]
 - e. A State officer, specified by title in the certification, has authority under State law to receive, hold, and disburse Federal funds made available under the plan. [34 CFR 76.104(a)(5)] [*Note: If a State wishes for the Department to continue sending the grant award documents directly to the State director, this individual’s title needs to be listed on this portion of the assurance.*]
 - f. The State officer who submits the plan, specified by title in the certification, has authority to submit the plan. [34 CFR 76.104(a)(6)]
 - g. The agency that submits the plan has adopted or otherwise formally approved the plan. [34 CFR 76.104(a)(7)]
 - h. The plan is the basis for State operation and administration of the program. [34 CFR 76.104(a)(8)]

OTHER ASSURANCES

1. You must submit a copy of the State plan to the State office responsible for the Intergovernmental Review Process if your State implements that review process under Executive Order 12372. [See 34 CFR Part 79]
2. You must provide a complete and signed ED Form 80-0013 for certifications regarding lobbying; [See 34 CFR Part 82. To download ED Form 80-0013, and the SF LLL Form (Disclosure of Lobbying Activities) referred therein, See: <http://www.ed.gov/fund/grant/apply/appforms/appforms.html>]
3. You must provide a complete and signed Assurance for Non-Construction Programs Form. [See <http://www.ed.gov/fund/grant/apply/appforms/appforms.html>]
4. You must provide a signed assurance that you will comply with the requirements of the Act and the provisions of the State plan, including the provision of a financial audit of funds received under the Act which may be included as part of an audit of other Federal or State programs. [Sec. 122(c)(11)]
5. You must provide a signed assurance that none of the funds expended under the Act will be used to acquire equipment (including computer software) in any instance in which such acquisition results in a direct financial benefit to any organization representing the interests

of the acquiring entity or the employees of the acquiring entity, or any affiliate of such an organization. [Sec. 122(c)(12)]

6. You must provide a signed assurance that your State will waive the minimum allocation as required in section 131(c)(1) in any case in which the local educational agency is located in a rural, sparsely populated area or is a public charter school operating secondary school career and technical education programs and demonstrates that it is unable to enter into a consortium for purposes of providing services under the Act. [Section 131(c)(2)]
7. You must provide a signed assurance that your State will provide, from non-Federal sources for the costs the eligible agency incurs for the administration of programs under this Act, an amount that is not less than the amount provided by the eligible agency from non-Federal sources for such costs for the preceding fiscal year. [Sec. 323(a)]
8. You must provide a signed assurance that your State and eligible recipients that use funds under this Act for in-service and preservice career and technical education professional development programs for career and technical education teachers, administrators, and other personnel shall, to the extent practicable, upon written request, permit the participation in such programs of career and technical education secondary school teachers, administrators, and other personnel in nonprofit private schools offering career and technical secondary education programs located in the geographical area served by such eligible agency or eligible recipient. [Sec. 317(a)]
9. You must provide a signed assurance that, except as prohibited by State or local law, that an eligible recipient may, upon written request, use funds made available under this Act to provide for the meaningful participation, in career and technical education programs and activities receiving funds under this Act, of secondary school students attending nonprofit private schools who reside in the geographical area served by the eligible recipient. [Sec. 317(b)(1)]
10. You must provide a signed assurance that eligible recipients that receive an allotment under this Act will consult, upon written request, in a timely and meaningful manner with representatives of nonprofit private schools in the geographical area served by the eligible recipient regarding the meaningful participation, in career and technical education programs and activities receiving funding under this Act, of secondary school students attending nonprofit private schools. [Sec. 317(b)(2)]

PROCEDURAL SUGGESTIONS AND PLANNING REMINDERS

- EDGAR regulations implementing the Drug-Free Workplace Act of 1988 (41 U.S.C. 701 et seq., as amended) are provided in 34 CFR Part 84, "Government-wide Requirements for Drug-Free Workplace (Financial Assistance)." Changes in this Government-wide requirement (adopted in the November 26, 2003 Federal Register Notice) now implement this as a condition of the award. See 34 CFR 84.400.
- EDGAR regulations implementing Executive Orders 12549 and 12689 and Section. 2455 of the Federal Acquisition Regulation are provided in 34 CFR Part 85, "Government-wide Debarment and Suspension (Nonprocurement)." Changes in this Government-wide requirement (adopted in the November 26, 2003 Federal Register Notice) now implement this as a condition of the award. See 34 CFR 85.440. You are also responsible for including a condition in any subgrant and contract that meets the definition for a covered transaction a condition that the lower tier participant must comply with the regulations in part 85. See 34 CFR 85.330.
- Under EDGAR regulations at 34CFR 85.320, your State is responsible for determining whether any of your principals of your covered transactions (i.e. subgrants or contracts) is excluded or disqualified from participating in the transaction. See 34 CFR 85.320. You may

decide the method and frequency by which you do so. You may, but are not required to, check the Excluded Parties List System at the following site: <http://www.epls.gov/>.

PERKINS STATE PLAN PORTAL

Submit the following documents to the CTE State Plan portal at <https://perkins.ed.gov>.

- Request to Extend State Plan. Each eligible agency must prepare a brief cover letter, indicating that it wishes to extend its Perkins IV State Plan and transmit the required documents for the upcoming program year. This request must be in writing and signed by a State official who is authorized to act on behalf of the eligible agency. Here you may also submit any updated EDGAR certifications and assurances.
- Updated Budget. Each eligible agency must prepare a budget for the upcoming program year. The budget should be based on the estimated allocation tables that our office will issue under separate cover.
- State Proposed Performance Levels. Each eligible agency must prepare proposed performance levels for each of the core indicators of performance described in section 113(b) of Perkins IV for the upcoming program year. Proposed performance levels must take into account the following factors described in section 113(b)(3)(A)(vi) of Perkins IV: 1) how the levels of performance involved compare with the State-adjusted levels of performance established for other States, taking into account factors including the characteristics of participants when the participants entered the program and the services or instruction to be provided; and 2) the extent to which such levels of performance promote continuous improvement on the indicators of performance by such State.

TEMPORARY ASSISTANCE FOR NEEDY FAMILIES (TANF)

States that include TANF in the Combined State Plan must outline how the State will meet the requirements of section 402 of the Social Security Act including how it will:

(A) CONDUCT A PROGRAM DESIGNED TO SERVE ALL POLITICAL SUBDIVISIONS IN THE STATE (NOT NECESSARILY IN A UNIFORM MANNER) THAT PROVIDES ASSISTANCE TO NEEDY FAMILIES WITH (OR EXPECTING) CHILDREN AND PROVIDES PARENTS WITH JOB PREPARATION, WORK, AND SUPPORT SERVICES TO ENABLE THEM TO LEAVE THE PROGRAM, SPECIFICALLY CASH ASSISTANCE, AND BECOME SELF-SUFFICIENT (SECTION 402(A)(1)(A)(I) OF THE SOCIAL SECURITY ACT).

Minnesota Family Investment Program (MFIP) The Minnesota Family Investment Program (MFIP), Minnesota's TANF program, provides temporary (60 months or less) cash and food assistance to:

- Families with children under age 18 (up to age 19 if in secondary or vocational school full-time), and pregnant women and their spouses when financially eligible;
- Grandparents, aunts, uncles, cousins, or other relatives who take responsibility for children whose parents cannot or will not.

These adult relatives may receive assistance through MFIP for children in their care and may choose to be on the MFIP grant or to get a child-only grant. When the non-parental caregiver receives assistance only for the children, the income and assets of the relative caregivers are not considered and the case is not subject to the 60-month lifetime limit. MFIP helps families work toward economic stability and greater self-sufficiency. MFIP provides a grant to supplement family income, help with child care costs, employment services and opportunities for education and training for workforce preparation. MFIP encourages employment by providing work incentives, and promotes personal responsibility by expecting families to actively pursue employment. Some of the family's earned income is disregarded before calculating the MFIP grant. Starting October 1, 2014, the disregard amount is 50 percent of the gross earnings for applicants and participants. The remaining earnings are subtracted from the Family Wage Level grant standard, which is 10 percent higher than the standard allowed for families who receive only unearned income. For applicants, the Family Wage Level is the single standard used when determining MFIP eligibility regardless if the applicant has earnings or not. Child care is a key component in Minnesota's strategy to help families leave and remain off welfare. In Minnesota, the Child Care Assistance Program provides financial assistance to families to support access to child care that is affordable so that parents can work and/or attend school and children are well cared for and ready for school. Minnesota Family Investment Program (MFIP) families who participate in work activities such as work, job search, education, or social services activities that are approved for their employment plans are eligible to receive childcare assistance. In addition, Transition Year child care is available to eligible families for a full year after their MFIP case closes to help families move toward economic stability. MFIP child care and Transition Year child care assistance are fully forecasted in the state's budget. The Basic Sliding Fee program is available for non-MFIP/DWP income eligible families and is funded through a capped allocation. If a family finishes their transition year child care assistance and there is a waiting list in their county for the Basic Sliding Fee program, the Transition Year bridge program will continue to provide them child care assistance until they reach their turn for Basic Sliding Fee child care assistance. Families receiving MFIP are encouraged to apply for medical services at the same time they apply for MFIP. Families not receiving cash assistance can apply for the Medical Assistance program and the MinnesotaCare program (Minnesota's health care program for the uninsured). Families who receive MFIP must cooperate with the Child Support agency to establish and enforce their child support orders. In state fiscal year 2013, the Child Support agency collected \$604 million in child support. Through the child support pass-through, Minnesota counties collected and distributed to MFIP families \$6.6 million in child support. Minnesota passes through 100 percent of the child support payments made to the families receiving MFIP and counts that support dollar-for-dollar as unearned income against the MFIP grant. MFIP combines cash and food per the provisions of a waiver from the United States Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition

Services. Families who are not eligible for MFIP can apply for the federal Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP).

Diversionsary Work Program (DWP) The Diversionsary Work Program provides help to families in crisis who are new to the welfare system by supporting them in their efforts to immediately obtain and retain employment rather than go on welfare. DWP may be provided to families in crisis for a maximum of four months once in a 12-month period. Families with children under age 18 (or under age 19 if the child is a full-time student in a secondary school or at the equivalent level of vocational or technical training), or pregnant women and their spouses are eligible for DWP. All parents, including both parents in a two-parent family, are required to develop and sign an employment plan before the family is approved for DWP. Most parents must seek full-time work immediately when approved. Employment services can help the family identify and address issues that may prevent the parents from obtaining or retaining employment. DWP employment service providers help parents find work that fits with the employment plan. The employment plan may include limited training that can be completed in four or fewer months. DWP supports families during a crisis situation and is not intended to meet recurrent needs. The short-term supports provided may include temporary help with rent, utilities or other housing costs and a personal allowance. Other supports for which families on DWP might be eligible are Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, health care and child care assistance. After four months of DWP, a family may be eligible for MFIP and continue to receive food, child care and health care under MFIP. Families who receive DWP are required to cooperate with the Child Support agency to establish and enforce their child support orders. Although families on DWP are required to cooperate with the Child Support agency, child support is not assigned to the state. All child support is passed through to the family and it reduces the DWP grant dollar-for-dollar. DWP is available for a maximum of four consecutive months. Because DWP benefits are meant to address the family's crisis and divert them from long-term assistance, receipt of DWP does not count against the 60-month TANF time limit. **Work Benefit Program (WB)** Minnesota's will suspend its Work Benefit Program on December 1, 2014. The Commissioner of Human Services has the authority to reinstate the program any time he or she would choose to do so. This program is funded with maintenance of effort state funds under a separate state program. It is intended for families who exit DWP or MFIP. To be eligible for the \$25 benefit, families must be working: • At least 87 hours per month in a one parent family with a child under 6 years old or • At least 130 hours per month in one parent family with no child(ren) under six years of age or a pregnant woman with no other children • At least 130 hours per month in a two-parent family with at least one caregiver working Net income for the Work Benefit Program must not exceed 200% of the Federal Poverty Guideline (FPG) for the family size. Eligibility for WB may continue for up to 24 consecutive months, if all eligibility factors are met and the asset limit is below \$5,000. Work Benefit Program follows MFIP policy when determining counted and excluded assets.

(B) REQUIRE A PARENT OR CARETAKER RECEIVING ASSISTANCE TO ENGAGE IN WORK (DEFINED BY THE STATE) ONCE THE STATE DETERMINES THE PARENT OR CARETAKER IS READY TO ENGAGE IN WORK, OR ONCE HE OR SHE HAS RECEIVED 24 MONTHS OF ASSISTANCE, WHICHEVER IS EARLIER, CONSISTENT WITH THE CHILD CARE EXCEPTION AT 407(E)(2) (SECTION 402(A)(1)(A)(II) OF THE SOCIAL SECURITY ACT)

Minnesota Family Investment Program (MFIP) Caregivers must begin participating in work activities within 30 days of being determined eligible for MFIP. Counties have the option of requiring that work activities begin sooner. MFIP uses a combination of work incentives and required work activities such as job search, short-term training or subsidized work. Sanctions enforce work activity requirements and include grant reductions, vendor payments of shelter costs from the grant, and even case closure (when there are seven occurrences of noncompliance). When a case is closed, the financial worker re-determines the family's continued eligibility for Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program. MFIP must remain closed for a minimum of one full month when closed for sanction reasons. Before ending a family's assistance, because of sanction, the county agency must review the case to determine if the employment plan is still appropriate, and must attempt to meet with the participant face-to-face. Diversionary Work Program (DWP) The goal of the Diversionary Work Program is to provide short-term, necessary services and supports to families, which will lead to unsubsidized employment, increased economic stability, and reduced risk of those families needing longer term assistance under MFIP. DWP supports families during a crisis situation and is not intended to meet recurrent needs. Short-term supports provided may include temporary help with rent, utilities or other housings costs and a personal allowance. Eligibility for DWP begins the date a signed application form is received by the county agency. State statute requires financial workers to hold the interview for an applicant who appears to be eligible for DWP within five working days of the receipt of the application. If it appears that child care is necessary to enable a parent to work or look for work, and the parent has not applied for child care, the application for child care assistance must be completed before the interview with the financial worker is completed. As soon as possible, but no later than ten working days before being notified by the county agency that the applicant is financially eligible for DWP, the employment services provider must meet with the applicant and develop an employment plan. The county agency must issue DWP benefits within one working day after receiving notice that an employment plan has been signed. By requiring a child care application to be completed during the DWP interview process, and by requiring the applicant to meet with workers and develop an employment plan prior to issuing any cash benefits to the applicant, Minnesota stresses work as the means to address the family's ongoing needs and places a high priority on starting to work or increasing the number of hours a person is employed. When a participant fails to comply with the DWP employment plan or with child support enforcement without good cause, the DWP case is closed. The family is not eligible for MFIP during the DWP disqualification period and the case remains closed unless the parent comes into compliance within four consecutive months of the DWP eligibility period. The disqualification of the family from DWP does not affect receipt of Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program or health care benefits.

(C) ENSURE THAT PARENTS AND CARETAKERS RECEIVING ASSISTANCE
ENGAGE IN WORK IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 407 (SECTION
402(A)(1)(A)(III) OF THE SOCIAL SECURITY ACT)

Minnesota Family Investment Program (MFIP) Minnesota ensures that parents receiving assistance through MFIP engage in work activities through three mechanisms: Requiring all adults receiving MFIP assistance to develop an individualized employment plan that identifies the activities the adult will participate in and that meets the hours required for participation (256J.561, subd.2); imposing sanctions if the participant does not comply with the work requirements (256J.46); and offering employment services to all adults receiving assistance. Services available to participants include, but are not limited to: job readiness assessment, job readiness assistance, job clubs, job counseling, job coaching, job skills training, work experience, subsidized employment, on-the-job training, job placement, educational programs and post-employment follow-up services. The Department of Human Services and the Department of Employment and Economic Development jointly operate MFIP employment and training services. The Minnesota Department of Human Services also releases regular management indicator reports to counties in order for the counties to track state-mandated performance measures for MFIP. Child care assistance is available to all MFIP participants who engage in activities in an approved employment plan. Minor caregivers under the age of 18 who have not received a high school diploma or its equivalent are required to engage in appropriate educational programs and are provided with child care assistance and supportive services to enable successful participation. Caregivers ages 18 and 19 can choose whether they want to complete their high school education or participate in work activities leading to employment. Whichever choice is made, child care assistance is available to enable parents to participate in the chosen activity. Bilingual employment and training services and work literacy language programs may be available for those lacking English proficiency, although lack of proficiency in English is not necessarily presumed to be a barrier to employment. Interpreter services are provided when necessary. Diversionary Work Program (DWP) DWP stresses that work is the means for families to meet their ongoing needs and provides support services as needed to help participants in crisis obtain and retain employment. After establishing financial eligibility, participants must meet with an employment counselor and develop an employment plan in order to be found eligible to receive assistance through DWP. Work activities available for participants include, but are not limited to: job search, job readiness assessment, job readiness assistance, job clubs, job counseling, job coaching, job skills training, work experience, subsidized employment, on-the-job training, job placement, educational programs and post-employment follow-up services. Education for DWP recipients is allowed, but the education program must be completed within the four-month DWP period or an education activity cannot be approved as part of the employment plan. Work Benefit Program (WB) Effective December 1, 2014 Minnesota's Work Benefit (WB) Program was suspended. The Commissioner of Human Services retains the authority to reinstate the WB program any time he or she would choose to do so. When in operation, the Work Benefit is available for up to 24 months only to families leaving MFIP with employment.

(D) TAKE SUCH REASONABLE STEPS AS THE STATE DEEMS NECESSARY TO RESTRICT THE USE AND DISCLOSURE OF INFORMATION ABOUT INDIVIDUALS AND FAMILIES RECEIVING ASSISTANCE UNDER THE PROGRAM ATTRIBUTABLE TO FUNDS PROVIDED BY THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT (SECTION 402(A)(1)(A)(IV) OF THE SOCIAL SECURITY ACT)

Minnesota Family Investment Program, Diversionary Work Program and Work Benefit Program Data on recipients is classified as private and may not be disclosed pursuant to Minnesota Statutes, Chapter 13. Access to Minnesota's eligibility computer system (MAXIS) is defined by a security role that is attached to a worker's ID, and access to information is defined and limited by worker job responsibilities. A personal logon ID cannot be issued until the worker completes a state developed orientation course. The orientation includes a review of data privacy and ethics as they pertain to client information. Staff must complete annually two data privacy courses designed to increase compliance with data practices and security, and meet federal training requirements for all those with access to DHS information and networks. Mastery of these courses is now required prior to receiving access to DHS systems including the new eligibility system, MMIS, MAXIS and MEC2.. In addition, printed reports distributed by the State are reviewed individually to ensure data provided to the requestor are appropriate for the recipient of the report.

(E) ESTABLISH GOALS AND TAKE ACTION TO PREVENT AND REDUCE OUT-OF-WEDLOCK PREGNANCIES, WITH SPECIAL EMPHASIS ON TEENAGE PREGNANCIES (SECTION 402(A)(1)(A)(V) OF THE SOCIAL SECURITY ACT)

Minnesota's female population age 15–44 in 2013 is estimated at 1,049,636. Of the total resident births (69,183), 46,420 were to married women, 22,739 were to women who were not married and 24 were unknowns. Thus, the out-of-wedlock birth rate in Minnesota for 2013 is 21.7/1000 for women ages 15 to 44. The out-of-wedlock birth rate in Minnesota for 2012 was 21.6/1000 and for 2011 it was 21.3/1000. While the out-of-wedlock birth rate for Minnesota has remained relatively stable over the last several years, Minnesota still continues to face significant challenges in trying to lower our out-of-wedlock birth rate. To address the issue, Minnesota has focused significant attention on reducing unintended pregnancies, particularly those occurring to teens and young adults who are less likely to be married or prepared to care for a child. While Minnesota's teen pregnancy rate compares well to national rates, it masks significant and persistent racial and ethnic disparities. African American and American Indian youth are three to four times more likely to have a child when they are a teen than is a white youth. In an effort to address these disparities, the Minnesota legislature provided the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) with \$2 million annually in TANF funds that support non-profit and government agencies in reducing the disparities in teen pregnancy rates between Minnesota's white population and Minnesota's racial, ethnic and American Indian communities. The Department of Health also receives up to \$505,743 annually in federal abstinence funds to support evidenced-based efforts to delay sexual activity in youth. Minnesota's program is a coordinated countywide approach in Ramsey County focusing on adolescents 14 and under, reaching them before they start engaging in sexual activity. The Health Teen Initiative has three components: direct service to youth in schools through Teen Outreach Program Clubs; reaching out to parents in the community through It's That Easy: Guide to Raising Sexually Healthy Children Parent Education Training; and Making Authentic Connections, a way of making authentic connections and relationships with youth in the community. The Department of Health was recently re-awarded a federal Personal Responsibility Education Program grant which targets young people of color and American Indian youth, youth in foster care or ageing out of foster care, youth in juvenile detention or on probation, youth in Alternative Learning Centers, homeless or runaway youth and LGBT youth. This initiative's goal is to support high-risk adolescents to successfully transition from youth to adulthood. The Minnesota Department of Health also administers programs directed at increasing access to family planning services for low-income Minnesotans and those at high risk for unintended pregnancies. The State legislature funds Minnesota's Family Planning Special Projects (FPSP), a grant program that made available \$10,706,000 (including \$2,312,000) to community family planning clinics across the state in the current two-year grant cycle. In state fiscal 2013, FPSP provided family planning services to 30,489 women and 2,475 men who were low income and at risk for unintended pregnancy. Twenty nine 29 percent of the people receiving services were under the age of 19. To assist Minnesotans in accessing subsidized family planning services, the Department also funds a 1–800 family planning hotline. Minnesota receives \$3.1 million in a federal Title X funds to augment this work (through Planned Parenthood of Minnesota, North Dakota and South Dakota and Ramsey Public Health). Access to subsidized family planning services has also been increased through The Minnesota Family Planning Program, the name for Minnesota's 1115 family planning waiver, which covers those age 15 to 50 who are not eligible for Medicaid and have incomes at or below 200 percent of the federal poverty guidelines and are U.S. citizens or eligible non-citizens qualified to participate in federally funded programs. For state fiscal year 2013, the Minnesota Family Planning Program served about 35,000 people, with a monthly average enrollment of about 20,000. Reimbursement for family planning services under this program was nearly \$14.9 million. Other state efforts that support reducing unintended pregnancies include The Family Home Visiting Program administered by the Minnesota Department of Health. Approximately

\$8 million in federal TANF funds are directed to the Family Home Visiting Program, which provides funding to all of Minnesota's local public health agencies and to nine of the 11 tribal governments to serve families at or below 200 percent of poverty. The goal of the program is to: • prevent child abuse and neglect, • reduce juvenile delinquency, • promote positive parenting and resiliency in children ;and • promote family health and economic self-sufficiency. The program also focuses on providing family supports that would reduce the risk of teen pregnancies. To work even more closely with pregnant or parenting teens to delay subsequent pregnancies, Minnesota has received an additional \$8.5 million in federal Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting Program funds that augment the state's TANF-funded home visiting efforts.

(F) CONDUCT A PROGRAM DESIGNED TO REACH STATE AND LOCAL LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICIALS, THE EDUCATION SYSTEM, AND RELEVANT COUNSELING SERVICES, THAT PROVIDES EDUCATION AND TRAINING ON THE PROBLEM OF STATUTORY RAPE SO THAT TEENAGE PREGNANCY PREVENTION PROGRAMS MAY BE EXPANDED TO INCLUDE MEN (SECTION 402(A)(1)(A)(VI) OF THE SOCIAL SECURITY ACT)

The state of Minnesota considers sexual violence, including statutory rape, a public health problem. Sexual violence is defined as any of the following conditions: statutory rape, date/acquaintance rape, same-sex assault, child sexual abuse, incest, pornography, prostitution, sexual exploitation by professionals, stalking, sexual harassment, and any other sexual activity in which a person is forced, coerced or manipulated without her/his consent. In order to address this problem, the State passed provisions that outline consequences for sexual violence including age of consent laws (For further details, see Minnesota Statute 609.342 at <https://www.revisor.mn.gov/statutes/?id=609.342>) In addition, statewide partnerships approach sexual violence in a holistic manner that work towards the elimination of violent sexual behaviors including statutory rape. These efforts are provided under the leadership of a statewide stakeholder workgroup involving the following organizations and grassroots advocacy entities: • Minnesota State Department of Health • Minnesota Department of Human Services • Minnesota Department of Corrections • Representatives of county and local legal, health , law enforcement and abuse prevention organizations and workgroups • Minnesota Department of Education and representatives of local school districts • Minnesota Coalition Against Sexual Assault • Teenwise Minnesota • The MN Men's Action Network (Alliance to Prevent Sexual and Domestic Violence) These statewide public/private collaborative efforts support and fund annual conferences, periodic meetings, and ad hoc taskforces to shape the development of sexual violence prevention curriculum that is available and distributed to communities, youth, and professionals. Two Minnesota innovations used to combat sexual violence and abuse are the Duluth Model on Public Intervention and the Men As Peacemakers initiative of The MN Men's Action Network, which was initiated by the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) to build a public/private prevention effort that promotes male leadership. To this end, a collaborative effort between the MDH, Men As Peacemakers in Duluth and the Gender Violence Institute in Clearwater, Minnesota, had been created to develop a network of men and male leaders involved in primary prevention practices. These efforts are currently coordinated by MDH, the Bush Foundation and the MN Department of Public Safety.

(G) IMPLEMENT POLICIES AND PROCEDURES AS NECESSARY TO PREVENT ACCESS TO ASSISTANCE PROVIDED UNDER THE STATE PROGRAM FUNDED UNDER THIS PART THROUGH ANY ELECTRONIC FUND TRANSACTION IN AN AUTOMATED TELLER MACHINE OR POINT-OF-SALE DEVICE LOCATED IN A PLACE DESCRIBED IN SECTION 408(A)(12), INCLUDING A PLAN TO ENSURE THAT RECIPIENTS OF THE ASSISTANCE HAVE ADEQUATE ACCESS TO THEIR CASH ASSISTANCE (SECTION 402(A)(1)(A)(VII) OF THE SOCIAL SECURITY ACT)

The State of Minnesota has taken several steps to ensure the prevention of TANF assistance in being used at prohibited locations under Section 4004 of the Middle class Tax Relief and Job Creation Act of 2012 (P.L. 122–96). Minnesota has primarily focused on the following approaches: 1) Enforcing a complementary state law prohibiting the purchase of tobacco products and liquor with any EBT transaction, 2) informing EBT users of their responsibilities and limitations with EBT card use, 3) directing counties who deliver the Minnesota Family Investment Program (MFIP), Minnesota’s TANF program, to communicate the restrictions to program participants at application and recertification, and; 4) provide trainings to county financial workers and ES providers that incorporate new EBT restrictions and prohibitions.

(H) ENSURE THAT RECIPIENTS OF ASSISTANCE PROVIDED UNDER THE STATE PROGRAM FUNDED UNDER THIS PART HAVE THE ABILITY TO USE OR WITHDRAW ASSISTANCE WITH MINIMAL FEES OR CHARGES, INCLUDING AN OPPORTUNITY TO ACCESS ASSISTANCE WITH NO FEE OR CHARGES, AND ARE PROVIDED INFORMATION ON APPLICABLE FEES AND SURCHARGES THAT APPLY TO ELECTRONIC FUND TRANSACTIONS INVOLVING THE ASSISTANCE, AND THAT SUCH INFORMATION IS MADE PUBLICLY AVAILABLE (SECTION 402(A)(1)(A)(VIII) OF THE SOCIAL SECURITY ACT)

While there are client restrictions regarding EBT access and use of TANF benefits, Minnesota is required by federal law to ensure that applicants and recipients are provided adequate access to cash assistance with minimal or no fees or charges for withdrawal. Clients pay electronic fees similar to non-TANF clients. Clients get 4 free EBT cash withdrawals per month and eFunds then charges \$1 for subsequent Cash withdrawals. This fee is not charged until the client's 5th cash withdrawal. Clients are given the EBT Training Brochure by County workers and/or County Card Issuers (DHS-3315A). Furthermore, if clients request training in addition to the brochure, counties provide EBT training video to walk clients through the process. Clients have the option to make cash withdrawals either from an ATM machine of their choice or they may ask sales clerks tending to Point of Sale machines for assistance to help them get "cash back" when withdrawing the amount of cash benefits they want to withdraw at a specific time at places where they normally shop.

(I) INDICATE WHETHER IT INTENDS TO TREAT FAMILIES MOVING FROM ANOTHER STATE DIFFERENTLY FROM OTHER FAMILIES UNDER THE PROGRAM, AND IF SO HOW (SECTION 402(A)(1)(B)(I) OF THE SOCIAL SECURITY ACT)

To be eligible for MFIP or DWP, an assistance unit must have established residency in Minnesota. An assistance unit is considered to have established residency in Minnesota when a child or caregiver has resided in this state for at least 30 consecutive days with the intention of making the person's home here and not for any temporary purpose. A county must waive the 30-day residency requirement when unusual hardship would result from denial of assistance. Families that have move from other states to Minnesota, and who establish state residency, are treated the same as all the other MFIP participants.

(J) INDICATE WHETHER IT INTENDS TO PROVIDE ASSISTANCE TO NON-CITIZENS, AND IF SO INCLUDE AN OVERVIEW OF THE ASSISTANCE (SECTION 402(A)(1)(B)(II) OF THE SOCIAL SECURITY ACT)

Persons who are either United States citizens or qualified non-citizens are eligible for TANF benefits per the provisions of section 431 of the PRWORA, as amended (8 U.S.C. 1641) if they meet all other program eligibility criteria. Qualified non-citizens who entered the United States before 8/22/1996 are considered to be eligible for federally funded cash assistance if they are Lawful Permanent Residents (LPRs); paroled for one year or more; victims of battery and/or cruelty; or conditional entrants prior to 4/1/80. Qualified non-citizens who entered on or after 8/22/1996 are considered to be ineligible for federally funded MFIP/DWP cash assistance for five years. The following non-citizens may be eligible for federal funding without considering the date of admission to the U.S. if they meet all other program requirements: refugees, asylees, veterans and persons on active duty in the U.S. Armed Forces, their spouses or unmarried dependent children, non-citizens whose deportation/removal is being withheld, Cuban or Haitian entrants and certain Amerasians. All lawfully residing non-citizens who are not eligible for federal funding may be eligible for state funding if they meet other program eligibility requirements for state funded cash assistance as follows: LPRs age 18 through 69 who are funded under state dollars and who have been in the country for four or more years must meet one of the following requirements to remain eligible: enrollment in literacy, ESL or citizenship classes; applied for admission to such classes and on a waiting list; applying for a waiver from the USCIS of the English language or civics requirements of the citizenship test; submitted an application for citizenship to USCIS and waiting for a testing date or swearing in ceremony; or have been denied citizenship due to failure to pass the test after two or more attempts or because of an inability to understand the rights and responsibilities of becoming a U.S. citizen as documented by the USCIS or the county agency.

(K) SET FORTH OBJECTIVE CRITERIA FOR THE DELIVERY OF BENEFITS AND THE DETERMINATION OF ELIGIBILITY AND FOR FAIR AND EQUITABLE TREATMENT, INCLUDING AN EXPLANATION OF HOW IT WILL PROVIDE OPPORTUNITIES FOR RECIPIENTS WHO HAVE BEEN ADVERSELY AFFECTED TO BE HEARD IN A STATE ADMINISTRATIVE OR APPEAL PROCESS (SECTION 402(A)(1)(B)(III) OF THE SOCIAL SECURITY ACT)

Eligibility An applicant for MFIP or for DWP must meet the eligibility requirements specified in Minnesota Statutes Sections 256J.01 through 256J.95 before receiving benefits and services. All requirements under Section 408 of the Social Security Act, as amended by the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996 are included in Minnesota law. Assistance is provided equitably to all program recipients in accordance with State and Federal law. Neither MFIP nor DWP requires basis of eligibility tests, such as the previous AFDC 100-hour rule requirement for two-parent families. The asset limit for both programs is \$2,000 for applicants and \$5,000 for participants. The trade-in value limit on the first licensed vehicle excluded in determining eligibility is \$10,000. In addition, the combined loan value of all other vehicles must be less than or equal to \$7,500. For MFIP and DWP, statewide payment standards are based on the number of eligible persons in the assistance unit. Persons convicted of a drug offense committed after July 1, 1997 may receive cash assistance subject to the conditions set forth in Minnesota Statutes 256J.26.

There is a 60-month lifetime limit for receiving MFIP assistance with exceptions in certain situations. Time limit exceptions apply to the months in which individuals are living in Indian country (as defined in Section 1151 of Title 18, U.S.C.) or a Native Alaskan Village where the not-employed rate is over 50 percent per the provisions under 45 CFR 264.1((b)(1)(ii)). Under the MFIP program, some families are funded with segregated state funds and are exempt from the 60-month lifetime limit. Included are caregivers age 60 and over as well as minor caregivers under the age of 18, and caregivers 18- or 19-year-olds who are complying with education requirements. The months a person received cash assistance as part of the MFIP field trials are also exempted from the 60-month time limit. Hardship Extensions Extensions of the 60-month time limit are possible if any of the following hardship conditions are met:

- The participant is suffering from an illness, injury, or incapacity which has been certified by a qualified professional when the illness, injury, or incapacity is expected to continue for more than 30 days, and severely limits the participant's ability to obtain or maintain suitable employment;
- The participant is a caregiver whose presence in the home is required because of an illness, injury, or incapacity of another member in the assistance unit, a relative in the household, or a foster child in the household when the illness or incapacity and the need for a person to provide assistance in the home has been certified by a qualified professional and is expected to continue for more than 30 days;
- The participant is a caregiver with a child or an adult in the assistance unit who meets the disability or medical criteria for home care services or waived services or meets the criteria for severe emotional disturbance under Minnesota statutes;
- The participant is a caregiver who is employed the number of hours required by Minnesota Department of Human Services with a household income that does not exceed program standards;
- The participant is determined to be hard-to-employ because the individual belongs to any of the following groups:
 - o A person diagnosed by a qualified professional as a person with developmental disability or mental illness, and the condition severely limits the person's ability to obtain or maintain suitable employment;
 - o A person assessed by a vocational specialist or the county agency to be unemployable;
 - o A person assessed to have an IQ below 80 assessed by a vocational specialist or a county agency to be employable, but the condition severely limits the person's ability to obtain or maintain suitable employment.
 - o A person who is determined by a qualified professional to be Learning Disabled and the condition severely limits the person's ability to obtain or maintain suitable employment. The initial approval of a learning disability extension must have been or confirmed

within the previous 12 months. Learning disabilities do not include learning problems that are primarily the result of visual, hearing or motor handicaps, mental retardation, and emotional disturbance or due to environmental, cultural or economic disadvantage.

All caregivers who are extended must develop an employment plan that meets their situation. A person who requests the Family Violence Option (per Minnesota Statute 256J.425, Hardship Extensions), and is in compliance with a modified employment plan, also meets the MFIP extension criteria. Appeals Applicants and recipients of MFIP and DWP are notified in writing of their rights and the process to follow to secure a fair hearing. When an applicant is denied services, or a participant disagrees with a county agency decision, the applicant or participant may submit a request for a hearing to the county agency or directly to the Department of Human Services Appeals Office. State Human Services judges will conduct a hearing in person at the county office or by telephone. Decisions are issued by the Commissioner within 90 days of the request for a hearing. Under certain conditions, a participant may continue to receive benefits pending an appeal decision. Reasonable expenses incurred by a recipient because of the appeal are reimbursed upon request (Minnesota Statute 256.045, Administrative and Judicial Review of Human Services Matters).

(L) INDICATE WHETHER THE STATE INTENDS TO ASSIST INDIVIDUALS TO TRAIN FOR, SEEK, AND MAINTAIN EMPLOYMENT (SECTION 402(A)(1)(B)(V) OF THE SOCIAL SECURITY ACT)—

1. PROVIDING DIRECT CARE IN A LONG-TERM CARE FACILITY (AS SUCH TERMS ARE DEFINED UNDER SECTION 1397J OF THIS TITLE); OR

2. IN OTHER OCCUPATIONS RELATED TO ELDER CARE, HIGH-DEMAND OCCUPATIONS, OR OCCUPATIONS EXPECTED TO EXPERIENCE LABOR SHORTAGES AS, DETERMINED APPROPRIATE BY THE STATE FOR WHICH THE STATE IDENTIFIES AN UNMET NEED FOR SERVICE PERSONNEL, AND, IF SO, SHALL INCLUDE AN OVERVIEW OF SUCH ASSISTANCE.

Minnesota intends to assist individuals in training for, seeking and maintaining employment in the elder workforce as a result of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act of 2010 (ACA). It uses its FastTRAC Initiative to create career pathways programs in high-demand career fields including the elder care workforce.

This Initiative provides grants to collections of local partners to operate as part of the state's employment services system, and is available to low income families on public assistance to comply with their work requirements. At the end of the training, MFIP participants are considered to be work-ready for the Universal Health Care classification that allows entry to the local long-term care facilities as Certified Nurse Assistants with a focus on elder care. While in the training, they are considered Adult Basic Education (ABE) students and part of the work activities focus on retention by reducing barriers to successful employment once the training is complete.

More specifically, the Department is providing access through its annual MFIP Innovations Funds to fund Adult Career Pathways programs focusing on Universal HealthCare Worker in Older Adult Services Certificate training as a tool for integrating adult basic education, non-credit occupational training, and for-credit postsecondary degree and certificate programs, with credentials embedded into these pathways that "stack" toward degrees over time.

The lead state agencies in the FastTRAC Adult Career Pathway Alliance include the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities, Minnesota Department of Education Adult Basic Education Office, and Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development. Other key state level collaborators include Minnesota Department of Human Services, Minnesota Department of Labor and Industry, the Office of Higher Education, Greater Twin Cities United Way, Minnesota Workforce Council Association, and the Governor's Workforce Development Council.

(M) PROVIDE FOR ALL MOE-FUNDED SERVICES THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION:
THE NAME OF THE PROGRAM BENEFIT OR SERVICE, AND THE FINANCIAL
ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA THAT FAMILIES MUST MEET IN ORDER TO RECEIVE THAT
BENEFIT OR SERVICE. IN ADDITION, FOR TANF MOE-FUNDED SERVICES (CO-
MINGLED OR SEGREGATED MOE) DESCRIBE THE PROGRAM BENEFIT PROVIDED
TO ELIGIBLE FAMILIES (SSP SERVICES DO NOT HAVE TO INCLUDE A
DESCRIPTION BUT THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN
SERVICECS ENCOURAGES IT) (§263.2(B)(3) & §263.2(C) PREAMBLE PAGES
17826-7)

Grantee Information State of Minnesota Fiscal Year 2013 1. Name of Service Program: Minnesota Working Family Credit 2. Description of the Major Program Benefits, Services and Activities. [MN Statute 290.0671] MN Working Family Credit. This program provides a tax benefit to eligible low-income families through a refundable income tax credit. 3. Purpose(s) of Benefit or Service Program: The purpose of the program is to provide economic support to low-income families as well as to encourage employment among low-income parents. 4. Program Type: This program is operated under the TANF program. 5. Description of Work Activities: N/A 6. Total State Expenditures for the Program for the Fiscal Year: \$196,618,237 7. Total State MOE Expenditures under the Program for the Fiscal Year: \$ 97,487,875 8. Total Number of Families served with MOE funds: 116,892 This number represents the total served over the fiscal year 9. Financial eligibility criteria for receiving MOE-funded program benefits or services: A family that qualifies for the federal Earned Income Credit also qualifies for the MN Working Family Credit. 10. Program Authorization: Was this program authorized and allowable under prior law? Yes _____ No 11. Total Program Expenditures in FY 1995: \$22,800,000 1. Name of Service Program: Head Start 2. Description of the Major Program Benefits, Services and Activities. [MN Statutes 119A.50] Head Start is a federal and state funded child and family development program, helping low-income families become self-reliant while also helping prepare their children for school success. 3. Purpose(s) of Benefit or Service Program: The purpose of the Head Start program is to provide comprehensive child development services to children, with a special focus on helping preschoolers develop the early reading and math skills required to be successful in school. 4. Program Type: This program is operated separate from the TANF program. 5. Description of Work Activities: N/A. 6. Total State Expenditures for the Program for the Fiscal Year: \$ 19,762,536 7. Total State MOE Expenditures under the Program for the Fiscal Year: \$5,700,000 8. Total Number of Families served with MOE funds: 591 9. This number represents the total served under the program in the fiscal year 10. Financial criteria for receiving MOE-funded program benefits or services: a. Head Start eligibility requires that at least 90% of children enrolled be from low income families as defined by the federal poverty level. State funding to supplement the federal Head Start program is authorized under Minnesota Statute 119A.52. 11. Program Authorization: Was this program authorized and allowable under prior law? Yes _____ No 12. Total Program Expenditures in FY 1995: Not Applicable – \$11,500,000

1. Name of Service Program: MFIP/DWP Child Care Assistance 2. Description of the Major Program Benefits, Services and Activities. MFIP/DWP Child Care Assistance. [MN Statute 119B] The Child Care Assistance program helps caregivers receiving MFIP or DWP benefits with child care costs while participating in authorized activities such as working, looking for work, or participating in other activities that are part of an employment service plan. In addition, a family who leaves MFIP or DWP may be eligible to receive Transition Year Child Care Assistance for up to 12 calendar months after leaving MFIP/DWP. 3. Purpose(s) of Benefit or Service Program: The purpose of MFIP/DWP child care assistance is to help families with child care costs while they are participating in MFIP/DWP authorized activities, such as job search, employment, or training/education. 4. Program Type: This

program is operated under the TANF program. 5. Description of Work Activities: N/A this is not a separate State program. 6. Total State Expenditures for the Program for the Fiscal Year: \$ 41,313,493 This amount includes the state's matching requirement under CCDF of \$ 16,831,362 7. Total State MOE Expenditures under the Program for the Fiscal Year: \$24,482,131 A portion of this amount (\$19,690,299) is also used to meet the CCDF MOE requirement 8. Total Number of Families served with MOE funds: 1,776 This last figure represents the estimated average monthly total for the fiscal year. 9. Financial eligibility criteria for receiving MOE-funded program benefits or services: Child care though MFIP is available to families who have an approved job search support or employment plan under MN Statutes 256J.521 or meet the employment requirements under MN Statutes 119B. 10. Program Authorization: Was this program authorized and allowable under prior law? Yes _____ X _____ No _____ 11. Total Program Expenditures in FY 1995: Not Applicable.

1. Name of Service Program: Basic Sliding Fee (BSF) Child Care Subsidy 2. Description of the Major Program Benefits, Services and Activities. Basic Sliding Fee Child Care Assistance Program [MN Statutes 119B, 119A] The BSF program assists low-income working families who are not participating in MFIP or DWP with child care costs. 3. Purpose(s) of Benefit or Service Program: The purpose of the BSF child care assistance is to help pay the child care costs while low-income non MFIP/DWP families work, look for work or attend educational programs. 4. Program Type: This program is operated under the TANF program. 5. Description of Work Activities: N/A this is not a separate State program. 6. Total State Expenditures for the Program for the Fiscal Year: \$ 49,372,797 This amount includes the state's matching requirement under CCDF of \$20,114,770 7. Total State MOE Expenditures under the Program for the Fiscal Year: \$ 29,258,027 8. Total Number of Families served with MOE funds: 2966 The number of families served represents the estimated average monthly total for the fiscal year. 9. Financial criteria for receiving MOE-funded program benefits or services: Families may enter the BSF program if their income is less than or equal to 175% of the federal poverty guidelines, adjusted for family size. Families moving from Transition Year to BSF are considered to have met the income entry requirement in the first subprogram in which they participated. Families may receive child care assistance until their income reaches 250% of the federal poverty guidelines, adjusted for family size. Eligible families may receive BSF child care assistance for children under the age of 13 or, for children with a disability, under the age of 15. Parents must be working, looking for work, or in an authorized education/training activity. 10. Program Authorization: Was this program authorized and allowable under prior law? Yes _____ X _____ No _____ 11. Total Program Expenditures in FY 1995: Not Applicable.

1. Name of Service Program: Credit for K-12 Education Expenses 2. Description of the Major Program Benefits, Services and Activities. The Credit for K-12 Education Expenses [MN Statutes 290.0674] is a refundable tax credit which is equal to 75% of eligible education expenses for a qualifying child in kindergarten through grade 12. 3. Purpose(s) of Benefit or Service Program: Eligible expenses include fees or tuition for instruction outside the regular school day or school year, such as tutoring and educational summer camps. Also eligible are costs required for the regular school day for textbooks, instructional materials, and transportation costs paid to others. Private school tuition does not qualify for the credit, although it does qualify for the subtraction. Eligible expenses also include personal computer hardware and educational software, limited to a maximum of \$200 per family. 4. Program Type: This program is operated separate from the TANF program. 5. Description of Work Activities: N/A 6 Total State Expenditures for the Program for the Fiscal Year: 14,815,369 7 Total State MOE Expenditures under the Program for the Fiscal Year: 11,755,372 8 Total Number of Families served with MOE funds: 45,563 i. This represents the average monthly total (Total MOE divided by \$255.28 average case cost) 9 Financial criteria for receiving MOE-

funded program benefits or services: The maximum credit of \$1,000 times the number of children in kindergarten through grade 12 is allowed to taxpayers with total household income of \$33,500 or less. For taxpayers with one or two children, the maximum credit is phased out for household income between \$33,500 and \$37,500. For taxpayers with more than two children, the phase-out range for the maximum credit is increased by \$2,000 for each additional child. 10. Program Authorization: Was this program authorized and allowable under prior law? _____
No ___X_____ 11.Total Program Expenditures in FY 1995: Not Applicable There were no state expenditures in 1995. This refundable tax credit was instituted beginning in 1997.

TANF CERTIFICATIONS

States that include TANF in the Combined State Plan must provide a certification by the chief executive officer of that State, that during the fiscal year, the State will:

Operate a child support enforcement program under the State Plan approved under part D. (section 402(a)(2) of the Social Security Act) Yes

Operate a foster care and adoption assistance program under the State Plan approved under part E, and that the State will take such actions as are necessary to ensure that children receiving assistance under such part are eligible for medical assistance under The Unified or Combined State Plan under title XIX. (section 402(a)(3) of the Social Security Act) Yes

Specify which State agency or agencies will administer and supervise the program referred to in paragraph (1) for the fiscal year, which shall include assurances that local governments and private sector organizations (section 402(a)(4) of the Social Security Act)—have been consulted regarding the plan and design of welfare services in the State so that services are provided in a manner appropriate to local populations; Yes

Specify which State agency or agencies will administer and supervise the program referred to in paragraph (1) for the fiscal year, which shall include assurances that local governments and private sector organizations (section 402(a)(4) of the Social Security Act)—have had at least 45 days to submit comments on the plan and the design of such services Yes

Provide each member of an Indian tribe, who is domiciled in the State and is not eligible for assistance under a tribal family assistance plan approved under section 412, with equitable access to assistance under the State program funded under this part attributable to funds provided by the Federal Government. (section 402(a)(5) of the Social Security Act) Yes

Establish and enforce standards and procedures to ensure against program fraud and abuse, including standards and procedures concerning nepotism, conflicts of interest among individuals responsible for the administration and supervision of the State program, kickbacks, and the use of political patronage. (section 402(a)(6) of the Social Security Act) Yes

(optional) Establish and Enforcing standards and procedures to (section 402(a)(7) of the Social Security Act).— screen and identify individuals receiving assistance under this part with a history of domestic violence while maintaining the confidentiality of such individuals; Yes

(optional) Establish and Enforcing standards and procedures to (section 402(a)(7) of the Social Security Act).— refer such individuals to counseling and supportive services; Yes

(optional) Establish and Enforcing standards and procedures to (section 402(a)(7) of the Social Security Act).—waive, pursuant to a determination of good cause, other program requirements such as time limits (for so long as necessary) for individuals receiving assistance, residency requirements, child support cooperation requirements, and family cap provisions, in cases where compliance with such requirements would make it more difficult for individuals receiving assistance under this part to escape domestic violence or unfairly penalize such individuals who are or have been victimized by such violence, or individuals who are at risk of further domestic violence Yes

EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING PROGRAMS UNDER THE SUPPLEMENTAL
NUTRITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (PROGRAMS AUTHORIZED UNDER
SECTION 6(D)(4) OF THE FOOD AND NUTRITION ACT OF 2008 (7 U.S.C.
2015(D)(4)))

A. GENERAL REQUIREMENTS

The State agency must prepare and submit an Employment and Training (E&T) Plan to its appropriate Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) Regional Office. The E&T Plan must be available for public inspection at the State agency headquarters. A State agency may include its plan for the SNAP E&T program in a Combined Plan under WIOA but will require FNS approval prior to implementation and must continue to make a copy of the plan available for public inspection. If a State includes SNAP E&T in a Combined Plan under WIOA, the State agency will detail the following for each year covered by the Combined Plan:

1. THE NATURE OF THE E&T COMPONENTS THE STATE AGENCY PLANS TO OFFER AND THE REASONS FOR SUCH COMPONENTS, INCLUDING COST INFORMATION. THE METHODOLOGY FOR STATE AGENCY REIMBURSEMENT FOR EDUCATION COMPONENTS MUST BE SPECIFICALLY ADDRESSED;

Some areas of the state have a shortage of remedial education funds. In other areas, specialized programs have been established to serve SNAP E&T populations. Minnesota is quite generous in supporting federal ABE funds. Even with state support, the influx of welfare reform has created a burden on resources and staff thus any SNAP E&T funds used are supplementing, not supplanting federal, state or local funds. Each employment and training program bears its portion of the costs for expanded educational services. Last year 84,000 plus Minnesotans received ABE services. This level of participation has strained resources in some areas of the state.

Activity: Orientation

FFY 2016 Activity Cost: \$1,600,000

Participants must receive services within thirty days of SNAP eligibility determination. While this activity is not a 'countable' activity, it is required by state statute. Orientation must inform the participant of:

- the ability to participate in SNAP E&T;
- the date, time, and address to report to for services;
- the name and telephone number of the ESP;
- the services and support services available through the SNAP E&T program and other providers of similar services;
- the need to view SNAP as a temporary means of supplementing the family's needs until the family achieves self-sufficiency through employment;

Orientations may be provided through audio-visual methods, but participants must have the opportunity for face-to-face interaction with program staff.

| Geographic Areas Covered: | Anticipated Number of ABAWDS: | Anticipated Number of Volunteers: | Anticipated Number of Notices of Adverse Action (NOAAs): | Targeted Population: | Duration: | Organizational Responsibilities: | Type of Component: |
|---------------------------|-------------------------------|-----------------------------------|--|----------------------|-----------|----------------------------------|--------------------|
| | | | | | | | |

| Geographic Areas Covered: | Anticipated Number of ABAWDS: | Anticipated Number of Volunteers: | Anticipated Number of Notices of Adverse Action (NOAAs): | Targeted Population: | Duration: | Organizational Responsibilities: | Type of Component: |
|---------------------------|-------------------------------|-----------------------------------|--|--|-----------|----------------------------------|---|
| Statewide | 6,500 | 21,500 | 3,000 | Mandatory SNAP E&T (DWP) (2 Parent cases) (FSS) Participants | 2–4 hours | Employment Services Providers | Non–work – Orientation requires two to four hours of participation effort. Orientation is provided to participants once in a twelve–month period. |

Activity: Assessment and Employment Plan

FFY 2016 Activity Cost: \$2,600,000

Individualized employability assessments are mandatory for all participants within 30 days of eligibility determination. ESPs must consider the following when preparing an assessment: the person’s literacy; ability to communicate in the English language; educational and employment histories; occupational and employment assets; and barriers to employment. This information is incorporated into an employment plan (EP). Assessments are completed in person with client input. Like Orientation, this activity is not countable but is required by state statute.

The results of individual assessments are used to develop EPs. Goals and overall work plans must be achievable and directly relate to participant self–sufficiency. Employment plans are completed in an interactive, face to face meeting with participants. Both provider and participant sign the document. EPs must be written at or below the 7th grade reading level. Participants must receive a copy of the signed EP. Plans specify any support services necessary to achieve goals stated in the EP.

For volunteers who are determined functionally illiterate, the county agency or designated ESP must assign suitable participants to openings in literacy programs and provide transportation to ensure that participants have the opportunity to complete the required training.

| Geographic Areas Covered: | Anticipated Number of ABAWDS: | Anticipated Number of Volunteers: | Anticipated Number of (NOAAs): | Targeted Population: | Duration: | Organizational Responsibilities: | Type of Component: |
|---------------------------|-------------------------------|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------|--|-----------|--|--|
| Statewide | 5,800 | 17,500 | 1,200 | Mandatory SNAP E&T participants, DWP, 2p and FSS participants. | 2–4 hours | This activity is carried out by the ESP with information provided by the county human service agency. Under Minnesota Statute, ESPs are chosen by local service units. | Non–work Orientations, assessments and EPs are generally delivered at the same time. However, county flexibility offers some variation to this sequence. |

Activity: Job Seeking Skills (Job Readiness)

FFY 2016 Activity Cost: \$2,400,000

Structured group sessions ranging from 4 to 20 total hours weekly, with schedules left to the discretion of ESPs. Sessions cover resume writing, finding job openings, telephone techniques, completion of applications, interviewing techniques (with mock interviews), and motivational issues. Sessions normally include out–of–class assignments.

| Geographic Areas Covered: | Anticipated Number of ABAWDS: | Anticipated Number of Volunteers: | Anticipated Number of (NOAAs): | Targeted Population: | Duration: | Organizational Responsibilities: | Type of Component: |
|---------------------------|-------------------------------|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------|--|------------|----------------------------------|--------------------|
| Statewide | 2,700 | 15,500 | 550 | Mandatory SNAP E&T Participants and voluntary FSS, 2p and DWP participants who have little or no work history. | 4–20 hours | Employment Services Providers | Non–work |

Name of Activity: Job Club

FFY 2016 Activity Cost: \$2,850,000

Group monitored job seeking activities involves use of ESP facilities (e.g. phone bank), assistance with telephone techniques, and job reporting to staff. Important aspects of this activity are assistance and direction from staff and interaction with other clients. This segment will involve 8–20 hours per week, depending on participant status and locality of in–office participation.

| Geographic Areas Covered: | Anticipated Number of ABAWDS: | Anticipated Number of Volunteers: | Anticipated Number of (NOAAs): | Targeted Population: | Duration: | Organizational Responsibilities: | Type of Component: |
|---------------------------|-------------------------------|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------|----------------------|-----------|----------------------------------|--------------------|
|---------------------------|-------------------------------|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------|----------------------|-----------|----------------------------------|--------------------|

| Geographic Areas Covered: | Anticipated Number of ABAWDS: | Anticipated Number of Volunteers: | Anticipated Number of (NOAAs): | Targeted Population: | Duration: | Organizational Responsibilities: | Type of Component: |
|---------------------------|-------------------------------|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------|---|------------|----------------------------------|--------------------|
| Statewide | 3,200 | 11,050 | 750 | Mandatory SNAP E&T Participants and voluntary FSS, DWP and 2p | 8–20 hours | Employment Services Providers | Non–work |

Name of Activity: Social Services

FFY 2016 Activity Cost: \$1,250,000

Non–work component consisting of referrals to agencies/programs designed to assist participants with overcoming personal/family barriers which impede successful transition to work. SNAP E&T case managers use other specialized providers to assist clients as part of meeting the goals of their employment plans. The costs of this component are for staff to maintain client records and scheduling appointments with other agencies. No SNAP E&T funds are used to support or pay for non–allowable activities.

| Geographic Areas Covered: | Anticipated Number of ABAWDS: | Anticipated Number of Volunteers: | Anticipated Number of (NOAAs): | Targeted Population: | Duration: | Organizational Responsibilities: | Type of Component: |
|---------------------------|-------------------------------|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------|--|--|--|--|
| Statewide. | 375 | 6,800 | 50 | Mandatory and voluntary participants who are determined to need personal development as determined by assessments. | Individualized to participant's needs. Services are designed to increase participant's employment potential. | The ESP will determine whether this activity is used during the assessment. ESPs are responsible for following up with participants to ensure these activities take place. | Non–Work – Level of Participant Effort: Monthly hours determined by participant needs. Link to Employment: Determined by assessment which is employment focused. |

Name of Activity: Job Search

FFY 2016 Activity Cost: \$5,350,000

Individual participant effort includes telephone calling, walk-in contacts, completion of applications, interviews, and record-keeping, with progress to be reviewed by staff. This segment will involve 15 to 20 contacts per week, depending on locality. Certain aspects of this activity, such as the duration of each segment and the number of job contacts required, may vary among local areas.

| Geographic Areas Covered: | Anticipated Number of ABAWDS: | Anticipated Number of Volunteers: | Anticipated Number of (NOAAs): | Targeted Population: | Duration: | Organizational Responsibilities: | Type of Component: |
|---------------------------|-------------------------------|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------|--|---------------------|--|--|
| Statewide | 6,200 | 16,500 | 1100 | Mandatory and voluntary participants who are Job-ready individuals | 8-32 hours per week | This activity is operated by the ESP which is selected by the county. The provider may be the local WIA provider, Job Service, or a county agency. | Level of Participant Effort: Minimum of 8 hours per week, with actual level of participant effort dependent on the locality and participant status. Job search may be reduced for those participating in other activities. Resources: All available resources are used, as appropriate, to assist the individual in securing employment. These include Job Service, MN Youth and WIA/WIOA, which provide job-search assistance, relocation assistance, and non-SNAP funded subsidized employment. Monitoring Job Contacts: Participants are required to report job contacts and review job search with SNAP E&T staff. Contacts are verified on a sample basis as deemed appropriate at the local level. |

Name of Activity: Job Search

FFY 2016 Activity Cost: \$5,350,000

Individual participant effort includes telephone calling, walk-in contacts, completion of applications, interviews, and record-keeping, with progress to be reviewed by staff. This segment will involve 15 to 20 contacts per week, depending on locality. Certain aspects of this activity, such as the duration of each segment and the number of job contacts required, may vary among local areas.

| Geographic Areas Covered: | Anticipated Number of ABAWDS: | Anticipated Number of Volunteers: | Anticipated Number of (NOAAs): | Targeted Population: | Duration: | Organizational Responsibilities: | Type of Component: |
|---------------------------|-------------------------------|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------|--|---------------------|--|--|
| Statewide | 6,200 | 16,500 | 1100 | Mandatory and voluntary participants who are Job-ready individuals | 8-32 hours per week | This activity is operated by the ESP which is selected by the county. The provider may be the local WIA provider, Job Service, or a county agency. | Level of Participant Effort: Minimum of 8 hours per week, with actual level of participant effort dependent on the locality and participant status. Job search may be reduced for those participating in other activities. Resources: All available resources are used, as appropriate, to assist the individual in securing employment. These include Job Service, MN Youth and WIA/WIOA, which provide job-search assistance, relocation assistance, and non-SNAP funded subsidized employment. Monitoring Job Contacts: Participants are required to report job contacts and review job search with SNAP E&T staff. Contacts are verified on a sample basis as deemed appropriate at the local level. |

Name of Activity: Vocational Training

FFY 2016 Activity Cost: \$4,106,000

Post-secondary education designed to provide the participant with additional skills with which to gain employment. Training programs are selected based on the availability of jobs and the participant’s ability to succeed in completion of course work. This activity includes FastTRAC/Career Pathways and Minnesota Job Skills Partnership bridge training as well.

| Geographic Areas Covered: | Anticipated Number of ABAWDS: | Anticipated Number of Volunteers: | Anticipated Number of (NOAAs): | Targeted Population: | Duration: | Organizational Responsibilities: | Type of Component: |
|---------------------------|-------------------------------|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------|--|---|--|---|
| Statewide | 400 | 4500 | 150 | Mandatory and voluntary participants who require additional training beyond secondary education to become self-sufficient. | From 9–24 months. May also include some short term direct employment related training lasting from 4 to 6 weeks. Again, DWP participants are time restricted. | ESPs and participants jointly determine which fields of study are best suited to the immediate employment openings and the participant’s ability to succeed in the training. | Non-Work – Level of Participant Effort: Usually 30 hours per week depending upon educational institution. Link to Employment: All training is related to job openings and where possible internships are part of the course work. |

Name of Activity: Education

FFY 2016 Activity Cost: \$3,200,000

Remedial, ESL, high school equivalency, high school completion, Adult Basic Education program, Adult Diploma program.

| Anticipated Number of ABAWDS: | Anticipated Number of Volunteers: | Anticipated Number of (NOAAs): | Targeted Population: | Duration: | Organizational Responsibilities: | Type of Component: |
|-------------------------------|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------|--|---|---|---|
| 650 | 5,800 | 70 | Those needing ESL, adult basic education, literacy or other training to become job-ready. Minnesota refers any SNAP E&T participant who is considered functionally illiterate, reading below the 8th grade level, to be involved in literacy training. | Individualized to participant's need and program availability. DWP participants are limited to educational activities which can be completed in 4 months or less. | The ESP, during the initial assessment, will determine whether education is needed through testing, and if so, will either provide this activity directly or refer the individual to another agency and monitor progress. | Non-Work Level of Participant Effort: Determined by structure of remedial education program and literacy status of participants. Educational agencies will determine the amount of effort for certificate or degree programs. Types of Education Activities: ESL, adult basic education, literacy training, GED or other educational activities designed to enhance the employability of participants. Link to Employment: Functional illiteracy is considered a barrier to employment. Education is used where necessary to assist the individual in becoming job-ready. Wherever possible, educational activities are linked to potential labor market attachments. Depending on individual circumstances, the participant may be assigned solely to this activity or may attend remedial education classes in conjunction with job search or other activities. |

Name of Activity: Workfare

FFY 2016 Activity Cost: \$30,000

Workfare: Workfare is a component in which SNAP recipients are required to work off the value of their household’s monthly SNAP allotment through an assignment at a private or public non–profit agency as a condition of eligibility. In lieu of wages, workfare participants receive compensation in the form of their household’s monthly benefit allotment. The primary goal of workfare is to improve employability and encourage individuals to move into regular employment while returning something of value to the community. Workfare assignments cannot replace or prevent the employment of regular employees. Workfare assignments must provide the same benefits and working conditions provided to regular employees performing comparable work for comparable hours.

| Geographic Areas Covered: | Anticipated Number of ABAWDS: | Anticipated Number of Volunteers: | Anticipated Number of (NOAAs): | Targeted Population: | Duration: | Organizational Responsibilities: | Type of Component: |
|---------------------------|--|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------|---|--|--|--|
| Statewide. | Anticipated Number of Work Slots Offered to ABAWDS per Month: 50 The number of anticipated work slots filled per month:15 | 275 | 35 | Mandatory and voluntary participants who are determined to need skill development as determined by assessments. | Individualized to participant’s needs. Most positions last from 1–4 months and are designed to increase participant’s employment potential through actual experience in the workplace. | The ESP will determine whether this activity is used during the assessment. ESPs are responsible for securing work sites, developing work contracts, providing work site supervisor orientation, monitoring time sheet submission and participant performance. | Work Level of Participant Effort: Monthly hours determined by participant SNAP allotment divided by federal minimum wage and depend on the participant’s background, work references, work history and EP. Link to Employment: Work sites are selected where ever possible to match participant needs for unsubsidized employment and skill development. |

Name of Activity: Work Experience

FFY 2016 Activity Cost: \$620,000

Work Experience: is designed to improve the employability of participants through actual work experience and/or training. The goal of this experience is to enable participants to move into regular employment. In contrast to the workfare component, work experience placements can be with private, for-profit companies. Work experience assignments may not replace the employment of a regularly employed individual, and they must provide the same benefits and working conditions provided to regularly employed individuals performing similar work for equal hours. SNAP E&T providers can place E&T participants in work experience positions with private sector entities. However, households that include work experience participants must not be required to work more hours monthly than the total obtained by dividing the household’s monthly SNAP allotment by the Federal minimum wage. Depending on the amount of the household’s monthly SNAP allotment, mandatory E&T participants can be required to work up to 30 hours per week, and the individual’s total hours of participation in both work and non-work components is limited to 120 hours per month.

| Geographic Areas Covered: | Anticipated Number of ABAWDS: | Anticipated Number of Volunteers: | Anticipated Number of (NOAAs): | Targeted Population: | Duration: | Organizational Responsibilities: | Type of Component: |
|---------------------------|--|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------|---|--|--|--|
| Statewide. | Anticipated Number of Work Slots Offered to ABAWDs per Month: 60 The number of anticipated work slots filled per month: 25 | 1050 | 40 | Mandatory and voluntary participants who are determined to need skill development as determined by assessments. | Individualized to participant’s needs. Most positions last from 1–4 months and are designed to increase participant’s employment potential through actual experience in the workplace. | The ESP will determine whether this activity is used during the assessment. ESPs are responsible for securing work sites, developing work contracts, providing work site supervisor orientation, monitoring time sheet submission and participant performance. | Work Level of Participant Effort: Monthly hours equal to 80 or some subset of that if used in conjunction with other allowable activities. . Link to Employment: Work sites are selected where ever possible to match participant needs for unsubsidized employment and skill development. |

2. AN OPERATING BUDGET FOR THE FEDERAL FISCAL YEAR WITH AN ESTIMATE OF THE COST OF OPERATION FOR EACH FEDERAL FISCAL YEAR COVERED BY THE COMBINED PLAN. ANY STATE AGENCY THAT REQUESTS 50 PERCENT FEDERAL REIMBURSEMENT FOR STATE AGENCY E&T ADMINISTRATIVE COSTS, OTHER THAN FOR PARTICIPANT REIMBURSEMENTS, MUST INCLUDE IN ITS PLAN, OR AMENDMENTS TO ITS PLAN, AN ITEMIZED LIST OF ALL ACTIVITIES AND COSTS FOR WHICH THOSE FEDERAL FUNDS WILL BE CLAIMED, INCLUDING THE COSTS FOR CASE MANAGEMENT AND CASEWORK TO FACILITATE THE TRANSITION FROM ECONOMIC DEPENDENCY TO SELF-SUFFICIENCY THROUGH WORK. COSTS IN EXCESS OF THE FEDERAL GRANT WILL BE ALLOWED ONLY WITH THE PRIOR APPROVAL OF FNS AND MUST BE ADEQUATELY DOCUMENTED TO ASSURE THAT THEY ARE NECESSARY, REASONABLE AND PROPERLY ALLOCATED. A STATE MUST SUBMIT A PLAN AMENDMENT TO REQUEST BUDGET ADJUSTMENTS AT LEAST 30 DAYS PRIOR TO PLANNED IMPLEMENTATION;

Table 4 – Operating Budget Federal Fiscal Year 2016

| Components | Salary & Benefits (State Agency Costs) | Other Costs (State Agency Costs) | Contractual Costs | Dependent Care [Participant Reimbursement (State plus Federal)] | Transportation & Other Costs [Participant Reimbursement (State plus Federal)] | State Agency Costs for Dependent Care Services |
|------------|--|----------------------------------|-------------------|---|---|--|
| SNAP E&T | \$480,532 | – | \$10,918,116 | \$4,000,000 | \$632,884 | \$7,835,000 |

| | |
|--|--------------|
| Total Component Costs | \$23,386,000 |
| Overall State Agency E&T Operational Costs | \$480,532 |
| Total State E&T Costs | \$23,866,532 |

3. THE CATEGORIES AND TYPES OF INDIVIDUALS THE STATE AGENCY INTENDS TO EXEMPT FROM E&T PARTICIPATION, THE ESTIMATED PERCENTAGE OF WORK REGISTRANTS THE STATE AGENCY PLANS TO EXEMPT, AND THE FREQUENCY WITH WHICH THE STATE AGENCY PLANS TO REEVALUATE THE VALIDITY OF ITS EXEMPTIONS;

Table 1 – Estimated Participant Levels – Federal Fiscal Year 2016

| | Item | Number |
|----|---|--------|
| A. | Total number of work registrants in the State during the planned Federal Fiscal Year: | 95,000 |
| B. | List exemptions and the number of work registrants categorically exempt from E&T participation: | 0 |
| – | TOTAL | 95,000 |
| C. | List exemptions and the number of work registrants individually exempt from E&T participation: | – |
| – | 1. Involved with protective / court-ordered services | 200 |
| – | 2. Unemployable (as determined by assessment) | 1,250 |
| – | 3. Residing more than two hours round trip | 50 |
| – | 4. Child under age 18 not living with parent or legal custodian* | 2,600 |
| – | 5. DWP adults with dependents under age 18 | 13,600 |
| – | 6. Work registrants between ages of 50–60 | 25,000 |
| – | 7. Receiving RCA or GA | 9,500 |
| – | TOTAL | 52,200 |
| D. | Total number of work registrants exempt from E&T (B+C): | 52,200 |
| E. | Percent of all work registrants exempt from E&T (D/A): | 55% |
| F. | Number of E&T mandatory participants* (A–D): | 42,800 |
| G. | Total number of ABAWDs in the State during the planned FFY: | 43,000 |
| H. | Total number of ABAWDs in waived areas of the State during the planned FFY: | 4,000 |
| I. | Average monthly number of ABAWDs exempted under the State's 15 percent ABAWD exemption allowance: | 3,500 |

*Regulations define someone as a "mandatory participant" if the person is a work registrant who is not exempt under the State E&T program. A mandatory participant is not necessarily actively participating in a State E&T component.

4. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE POPULATION THE STATE AGENCY INTENDS TO PLACE IN E&T;

SNAP Work Registrant Characteristics

Minnesota Statewide Client Demographics

| Categories | 7–1–2013 to 6–30–2014 Total Enrollments % | 7–1–2014 to 6–30–2015 Total Enrollments % | Categories | 7–1–2013 to 6–30–2014 Total Enrollments % | 7–1–2014 to 6–30–2015 Total Enrollments % |
|------------|---|---|-----------------------------|---|---|
| Gender | – | – | Achievement Levels | – | – |
| Female | 54% | 56% | Limited English Proficiency | 4% | 5% |
| Male | 46% | 44% | Family Status | – | – |
| Race | – | – | Family size – 1 Member | 42% | 41% |

| Categories | 7-1-2013 to 6-30-2014 Total Enrollments % | 7-1-2014 to 6-30-2015 Total Enrollments % | Categories | 7-1-2013 to 6-30-2014 Total Enrollments % | 7-1-2014 to 6-30-2015 Total Enrollments % |
|----------------------------|---|---|---------------------------------|---|---|
| White | 57% | 55% | Family size – 2 Members | 43% | 44% |
| African American | 32% | 34% | Family size – 3 Members | 12% | 13% |
| Asian | 7% | 6% | Family size – 4 Members | 2% | 2% |
| Native American | 5% | 5% | Family size – 5 + Members | 1% | 1% |
| Ethnicity | – | – | Labor status | – | – |
| Hispanic or Latino | 6% | 7% | Full Time | 5% | 6% |
| Disability Status | – | – | Part Time | 24% | 27% |
| Yes, Employment Barrier | 5% | 6% | Not Employed | 69% | 67% |
| Age | – | – | Prv Self Employ – Farm | 1% | 1% |
| Age 18 | 3% | 4% | Prv Self Employ – Non Farm | 2% | 1% |
| Age 19 to 21 | 16% | 17% | Barrier to Employment | – | – |
| Age 22 to 39 | 46% | 45% | Offender | NA | NA |
| Age 40 to 54 | 30% | 29% | Recovering Chemically Dependent | NA | NA |
| Education | – | – | Non Citizen | 8% | NA |
| Less than High School | 30% | 28% | Outcomes | – | – |
| High School Graduate / GED | 58% | 59% | Avg. Weeks Participated | NA | NA |
| Post High School | 11% | 10% | Avg. Hourly Wage Placement | NA | NA |
| College Graduate | 2% | 2% | Avg. Hours/Week Placement | NA | NA |
| Beyond Bachelors Degree | 1% | <1% | – | – | – |

*NOTE – PERCENTAGES MAY NOT EQUAL 100% DUE TO ROUNDING OF FIGURES. DATE OF DATA CALL: 8/10/2015 DATA SOURCE: DHS DATA WAREHOUSE

Participants Served with 100% Grant Funds

Minnesota Statewide Client Demographics

| Categories | 7-1-2013 to 6-30-2014 Total Enrollments % | 7-1-2014 to 6-30-2015 Total Enrollments % | Categories | 7-1-2013 to 6-30-2014 Total Enrollments % | 7-1-2014 to 6-30-2015 Total Enrollments % |
|------------|---|---|------------|---|---|
|------------|---|---|------------|---|---|

| Categories | 7-1-2013 to 6-30-2014 Total Enrollments % | 7-1-2014 to 6-30-2015 Total Enrollments % | Categories | 7-1-2013 to 6-30-2014 Total Enrollments % | 7-1-2014 to 6-30-2015 Total Enrollments % |
|----------------------------|---|---|---------------------------------|---|---|
| Gender | - | - | Achievement Levels | - | - |
| Female | 40% | 40% | Limited English Proficiency | 4% | 4% |
| Male | 60% | 60% | Family Status | - | - |
| Race | - | - | Family size – 1 Member | 77% | 76% |
| White | 74% | 71% | Family size – 2 Members | 11% | 15% |
| African American | 20% | 20% | Family size – 3 Members | 6% | 5% |
| Asian | 3% | 3% | Family size – 4 Members | 3% | 2% |
| Native American | 4% | 3% | Family size – 5 + Members | 3% | 1% |
| Ethnicity | - | - | Labor status | - | - |
| Hispanic or Latino | 6% | 7% | Full Time | 3% | 3% |
| Disability Status | - | - | Part Time | 14% | 15% |
| Yes, Employment Barrier | 0% | 12% | Not Employed | 79% | 78% |
| Age | - | - | Prv Self employ – Farm | 1% | 1% |
| Age 18 | 3% | 6% | Prv Self employ – Non Farm | 2% | 3% |
| Age 19 to 21 | 11% | 13% | Barrier to Employment | - | - |
| Age 22 to 39 | 52% | 52% | Offender | 19% | 25% |
| Age 40 to 64 | 34% | 29% | Recovering Chemically Dependent | 12% | 15% |
| Education | - | - | Non Citizen | 4% | 1% |
| Less than High School | 20% | 18% | Outcomes | - | - |
| High School Graduate / GED | 60% | 56% | Avg. Weeks Participated | 12.0 | 13.5 |
| Post High School | 12% | 16% | Avg. Hourly Wage Placement | \$10.24 | \$10.35 |
| College Graduate | 3% | 4% | Avg. Hours/Week Placement | 29.9 | 30.1 |
| Beyond Bachelors Degree | 2% | 2% | - | - | - |

*NOTE – PERCENTAGES MAY NOT EQUAL 100% DUE TO ROUNDING OF FIGURES. DATE OF DATA CALL: 8/10/2015 DATA SOURCE: MN WORKFORCE ONE

Diversionsary Work Program (DWP)

Minnesota Statewide Client Demographics

| Categories | 7-1-2013 to 6-30-2014 Total Enrollments % | 7-1-2014 to 6-30-2015 Total Enrollments % | Categories | 7-1-2013 to 6-30-2014 Total Enrollments % | 7-1-2014 to 6-30-2015 Total Enrollments % |
|-----------------------------|---|---|----------------------------|---|---|
| Gender | - | - | Education | - | - |
| Female | 75% | 77% | Less than High School | 24% | 23% |
| Male | 25% | 23% | High School Graduate / GED | 55% | 52% |
| Race | - | - | Post High School | 15% | 16% |
| White | 58% | 51% | College Graduate | 3% | 3% |
| African American | 32% | 34% | Beyond Bachelors Degree | 1% | 1% |
| Asian | 6% | 6% | Family Status | - | - |
| Native American | 8% | 6% | Family size - 1 Member | 9% | 7% |
| Ethnicity | - | - | Family size - 2 Members | 29% | 30% |
| Hispanic or Latino | 7% | 7% | Family size - 3 Members | 28% | 28% |
| Age | - | - | Family size - 4 Members | 18% | 17% |
| Age 18 to 19 | 2% | 2% | Family size - 5 + Members | 17% | 18% |
| Age 20 to 29 | 45% | 45% | Labor status | - | - |
| Age 30 to 39 | 36% | 37% | Full Time | 9% | 7% |
| Age 40 to 49 | 14% | 13% | Part Time | 16% | 10% |
| Age 50 to 59 | 3% | 3% | Outcomes | - | - |
| Achievement Levels | - | - | Avg. Weeks Participated | 11.9 | 11.3 |
| Limited English Proficiency | 9% | 10% | Avg. Hourly Wage Placement | \$10.77 | \$11.02 |
| - | - | - | Avg. Hours/Week Placement | 31.7 | 32.1 |

*NOTE – PERCENTAGES MAY NOT EQUAL 100% DUE TO ROUNDING OF FIGURES. DATE OF DATA CALL: 8/10/2015 DATA SOURCE: MN WORKFORCE ONE

Two Parent Family Participants

Minnesota Statewide Client Demographics

| Categories | 7-1-2013 to 6-30-2014 Total Enrollments % | 7-1-2014 to 6-30-2015 Total Enrollments % | Categories | 7-1-2013 to 6-30-2014 Total Enrollments % | 7-1-2014 to 6-30-2015 Total Enrollments % |
|------------|---|---|--------------------|---|---|
| Gender | - | - | Achievement Levels | - | - |

| Categories | 7-1-2013 to 6-30-2014 Total Enrollments % | 7-1-2014 to 6-30-2015 Total Enrollments % | Categories | 7-1-2013 to 6-30-2014 Total Enrollments % | 7-1-2014 to 6-30-2015 Total Enrollments % |
|----------------------------|---|---|---------------------------------|---|---|
| Female | 44% | 45% | Limited English Proficiency | 28% | 22% |
| Male | 56% | 55% | Family Status | - | - |
| Race | - | - | Family size - 1 Member | <1% | <1% |
| White | 43% | 44% | Family size - 2 Members | 3% | 3% |
| African American | 36% | 37% | Family size - 3 Members | 35% | 37% |
| Asian | 16% | 15% | Family size - 4 Members | 26% | 25% |
| Native American | 8% | 7% | Family size - 5 + Members | 35% | 33% |
| Ethnicity | - | - | Labor status | - | - |
| Hispanic or Latino | 6% | 5% | Full Time | 10% | 11% |
| Disability Status | - | - | Part Time | 9% | 8% |
| Yes, Employment Barrier | NA | NA | Not Employed | 81% | 80% |
| Age | - | - | Prv Self Empl0y - Farm | NA | NA |
| Age 18 and under | <1% | 1% | Prv Self Empl0y - Non Farm | NA | NA |
| Age 19 to 21 | 4% | 5% | Barrier to Employment | - | - |
| Age 22 to 39 | 74% | 73% | Offender | NA | NA |
| Age 40 to 54 | 23% | 22% | Recovering Chemically Dependent | NA | NA |
| Education | - | - | Non Citizen | NA | NA |
| Less than High School | 41% | 42% | Outcomes | - | - |
| High School Graduate / GED | 48% | 46% | Avg. Weeks Participated | 51.4 | 52.2 |
| Post High School | 8% | 10% | Avg. Hourly Wage Placement | \$10.54 | \$10.67 |
| College Graduate | 1% | 1% | Avg. Hours/Week Placement | 33.5 | 35.2 |
| Beyond Bachelors Degree | 1% | 1% | - | - | - |

*NOTE – PERCENTAGES MAY NOT EQUAL 100% DUE TO ROUNDING OF FIGURES. DATE OF DATA CALL: 8/10/20115 DATA SOURCE: MN WORKFORCE ONE

Family Stabilization Service Participants (FSS)

Minnesota Statewide Client Demographics

| Categories | 7-1-2013 to 6-30-2014 Total Enrollments % | 7-1-2014 to 6-20-2015 Total Enrollments % | Categories | 7-1-2013 to 6-30-2014 Total Enrollments % | 7-1-2014 to 6-20-2015 Total Enrollments % |
|----------------------------|---|---|---------------------------------|---|---|
| Gender | - | - | Achievement Levels | - | - |
| Female | 83% | 84% | Limited English Proficiency | 18% | 17% |
| Male | 17% | 16% | Family Status | - | - |
| Race | - | - | Family size – 1 Member | 5% | 4% |
| White | 41% | 40% | Family size – 2 Members | 39% | 40% |
| African American | 37% | 38% | Family size – 3 Members | 28% | 27% |
| Asian | 13% | 12% | Family size – 4 Members | 6% | 5% |
| Native American | 11% | 12% | Family size – 5 + Members | 5% | 6% |
| Ethnicity | - | - | Labor status | - | - |
| Hispanic or Latino | 5% | 6% | Full Time | 5% | 6% |
| Disability Status | - | - | Part Time | 11% | 10% |
| Yes, Employment Barrier | NA | NA | Not Employed | 85% | 84% |
| Age | - | - | Prv Self Employ – Farm | NA | NA |
| Age 18 | 0% | 1% | Prv Self Employ – Non Farm | NA | NA |
| Age 19 to 21 | 3% | 4% | Barrier to Employment | - | - |
| Age 22 to 39 | 72% | 71% | Offender | NA | NA |
| Age 40 and over | 27% | 26% | Recovering Chemically Dependent | NA | NA |
| Education | - | - | Non Citizen | 15% | 14% |
| Less than High School | 36% | 37% | Outcomes | - | - |
| High School Graduate / GED | 54% | 52% | Avg. Weeks Participated | NA | NA |
| Post High School | 11% | 12% | Avg. Hourly Wage Placement | NA | NA |
| College Graduate | NA | NA | Avg. Hours/Week Placement | NA | NA |
| Beyond Bachelors Degree | NA | NA | - | - | - |

*NOTE – PERCENTAGES MAY NOT EQUAL 100% DUE TO ROUNDING OF FIGURES. DATE OF DATA CALL: 8/10/2015 DATA SOURCE: MN WORKFORCE ONE

Heading Home Participants

Client Demographics

| Categories | 7-1-2013 to 6-30-2014 Total Enrollments % | 7-1-2014 | Categories | 7-1-2013 to 6-30-2014 Total Enrollments % | 7-1-2014 |
|----------------------------|---|----------|---------------------------------|---|----------|
| Gender | – | – | Achievement Levels | – | – |
| Female | 24% | 25% | Limited English Proficiency | 2% | 3% |
| Male | 76% | 75% | Family Status | – | – |
| Race | – | – | Family size – 1 Member | 97% | 95% |
| White | 29% | 25% | Family size – 2 Members | 3% | 4% |
| African American | 68% | 67% | Family size – 3 Members | NA | NA |
| Asian | 2% | 2% | Family size – 4 Members | NA | NA |
| Native American | 5% | 5% | Family size – 5 + Members | NA | 0% |
| Ethnicity | – | – | Labor status | – | – |
| Hispanic or Latino | 4% | 5% | Full Time | 11% | 6% |
| Disability Status | – | – | Part Time | 5% | 5% |
| Yes, Employment Barrier | 6% | 8% | Not Employed | 81% | 88% |
| Age | – | – | Prv Self Employ – Farm | NA | NA |
| Age 18 | 1% | NA | Prv Self Employ – Non Farm | NA | 1% |
| Age 19 to 21 | 2% | NA | Barrier to Employment | – | – |
| Age 22 to 39 | 29% | 32% | Offender | 44% | 47% |
| Age 40 to 64 | 68% | 67% | Recovering Chemically Dependent | 23% | 29% |
| Education | – | – | Non Citizen | 0% | 0% |
| Less than High School | 15% | 16% | Outcomes | – | – |
| High School Graduate / GED | 51% | 51% | Avg. Weeks Participated | 38.5 | 38.5 |
| Post High School | 25% | 21% | Avg. Hourly Wage Placement | \$10.47 | 10.52 |
| College Graduate | 3% | 4% | Avg. Hours/ Week Placement | 35 | 34 |
| Beyond Bachelors Degree | 2% | 2% | – | – | – |

*NOTE – PERCENTAGES MAY NOT EQUAL 100% DUE TO ROUNDING OF FIGURES. DATE OF DATA CALL: 8/10/2015 DATA SOURCE: MN WORKFORCE ONE

5. THE ESTIMATED NUMBER OF VOLUNTEERS THE STATE AGENCY EXPECTS TO PLACE IN E&T;

Orientation: 21,500 Assessment and Employment Plan: 17,500 Job Seeking Skills (Job Readiness): 15,500 Job Club: 11,050 Job Search: 16,500 Work Experience: 1,050 Education: 5,800 Vocational Training: 4,500 Workfare: 275 Social Services: 6,800

6. THE GEOGRAPHIC AREAS COVERED AND NOT COVERED BY THE E&T PLAN AND WHY, AND THE TYPE AND LOCATION OF SERVICES TO BE OFFERED

The counties that offer SNAP E and T services are: Anoka Becker Big Stone Blue Earth Brown Carlton Chippewa Chisago Clay Cook Cottonwood Crow Wing Dakota Dodge Douglas Faribault Goodhue Grant Hennepin Houston Isanti Itasca Jackson Kandiyohi Kittson Lac Qui Parle Lake LeSueur Lincoln Lyon Marshall Martin McLeod Meeker Mille Lacs Morrison Mower Murray Nicollet Nobles Norman Otter Tail Pennington Pine Pipestone Polk Pope Ramsey Red Lake Redwood

Renville Rock Roseau Scott Sherburne Sibley St. Louis Steele Stevens Swift Todd Traverse
Wabasha Wadena Waseca Washington Watonwan Wilkin Wright Yellow Medicine

7. THE METHOD THE STATE AGENCY USES TO COUNT ALL WORK REGISTRANTS AS OF THE FIRST DAY OF THE NEW FISCAL YEAR;

The Department of Human Services MIS system, MAXIS, has been programmed to meet SNAP E&T reporting requirements. SNAP cases are entered into MAXIS by SSNs and given case numbers. Once a person is in MAXIS, the case number or SSN allows the person to be opened and closed numerous times while retaining only one identity for reporting purposes.

Unduplicated counts of work registrants who are on-going as of September 30th are calculated. Then all new registrants during the month of October are calculated. Both numbers are derived using case numbers or SSNs to ensure an unduplicated count. The sum of these two numbers is reported on Line 1 of the FNS-583 form.

All pertinent work registrant data is extracted from MAXIS monthly and transferred to DEED's data base for SNAP E&T reporting purposes. This process allows DEED to analyze program performance as well as complete the FNS-583 form. The system is programmed to ensure participants are counted only once in a twelve month period using SSNs as identifiers.

The DHS/DEED Data Warehouse contains client level data from both systems for SNAP. This past summer 583 report programming was reconfigured and approved by FNS staff. It now includes all work registrants according to federal regulations and has increased Minnesota's annual October count as well as monthly counts of work registrants. The updates continue to ensure that counts remain unduplicated.

The October count is achieved by accessing warehouse information on all SNAP recipients determined to be work registered at midnight on September 30th of each year. Each individual must be open on SNAP at the time the data is pulled.

Subsequent monthly counts of new work registrants uses data from the warehouse to determine which SNAP recipients have first opened their case in the past twelve months in the report month. This process ensures that only the openings occurring during the report period are captured. Programming prevents persons from being counted more than once in a federal fiscal year. This process was reviewed and approved by FNS staff this past summer.

8. THE METHOD THE STATE AGENCY USES TO REPORT WORK REGISTRANT INFORMATION ON THE QUARTERLY FORM FNS-583

The Department of Human Services employs a statewide data system (MAXIS) to generate work registrant reports at the state level. County income maintenance workers input information into MAXIS via an online system.

The Department of Employment and Economic Development uses Workforce One statewide MIS system for tracking participation in the SNAP E&T/DWP/MFIP program. Providers will report participant enrollments, status changes and terminations electronically to DEED via a live online system. Edits in Workforce One are designed to prevent duplicate enrollments. All participant characteristics, support services, and component usage are tracked along with termination data.

DEED produces the FNS-583 Report utilizing extracts from MAXIS and information from Workforce One. The only activities listed for provider use are activities approved in Minnesota's SNAP E&T plan.

9. THE METHOD THE STATE AGENCY USES TO PREVENT WORK REGISTRANTS FROM BEING COUNTED TWICE WITHIN A FEDERAL FISCAL YEAR. IF THE STATE AGENCY UNIVERSALLY WORK REGISTERS ALL SNAP APPLICANTS, THIS METHOD MUST SPECIFY HOW THE STATE AGENCY EXCLUDES THOSE EXEMPT FROM WORK REGISTRATION UNDER 7 C.F.R. §273.7(B)(1). IF THE STATE AGENCY WORK REGISTERS NONEXEMPT PARTICIPANTS WHENEVER A NEW APPLICATION IS SUBMITTED, THIS METHOD MUST ALSO SPECIFY HOW THE STATE AGENCY EXCLUDES THOSE PARTICIPANTS WHO MAY HAVE ALREADY BEEN REGISTERED WITHIN THE PAST 12 MONTHS AS SPECIFIED UNDER 7 C.F.R. §273.7(A)(1)(I);

METHOD FOR ENSURING AN UNDUPLICATED WORK REGISTRANT COUNT Numbers for each month are recorded separately. This ensures that numbers used in Line 1 of FNS-583 form are only used once during the federal fiscal year. Again, by programming MAXIS and DEED's MIS to calculate monthly reports using only SSNs, Minnesota is assured of an unduplicated count.

10. THE ORGANIZATIONAL RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE UNITS RESPONSIBLE FOR CERTIFICATION AND THE UNITS OPERATING THE E&T COMPONENTS, INCLUDING UNITS OF THE STATEWIDE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM, IF AVAILABLE. FNS IS SPECIFICALLY CONCERNED THAT THE LINES OF COMMUNICATION BE EFFICIENT AND THAT NONCOMPLIANCE BY THE PARTICIPANT BE REPORTED TO THE CERTIFICATION UNIT WITHIN 10 WORKING DAYS AFTER THE NONCOMPLIANCE OCCURS;

County agencies are required by Minnesota statute to coordinate program service delivery with any and all employment and training programs/providers within their jurisdiction. This includes educational agencies, WIOA providers and other referral agencies as deemed necessary to ensure participants have access to all programs which may benefit them. Coordination may result in financial or non-financial agreements. However, only allowable SNAP E&T Activities are recorded by the DEED staff when the FNS-583 report is completed and sent to FNS.

The service provider contacts the county worker via email or fax with the pertinent information to substantiate non-compliance. The client is notified at the same time as the county worker and within 10 days of the non-compliance occurring a closing notice is issued. County workers will review cases to establish if good cause exits prior to sanctioning.

DEED, in consultation with DHS, developed a Management Information System (MIS) which provides interfaces between DHS' MAXIS system and DEED's Workforce One system. This interface provides live electronic transfer of information pertinent to participant referrals and participant status changes between agencies and the ESP.

11. THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE STATE AGENCY AND OTHER ORGANIZATIONS IT PLANS TO COORDINATE WITH FOR THE PROVISION OF SERVICES, INCLUDING ORGANIZATIONS IN THE STATEWIDE WORKFORCE

**DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM, IF AVAILABLE. COPIES OF CONTRACTS MUST BE
AVAILABLE FOR INSPECTION;**

NARRATIVE COORDINATION STATEMENT SNAP work registration occurs at SNAP application and certification, and again at recertification. The county agency determines eligibility for SNAP and refers voluntary participants to the SNAP E&T program. The Employment Services Provider (ESP) provides orientation; issues advance notices to participants which contain a schedule of activities (employment assignments) for each 30 days of enrollment; and monitors compliance with program requirements. ESPs monitor client progress as established in employment plan. DEED staff monitor both county and ESP compliance for program operation. ABAWDs are referred from counties to service providers in the following manner: SNAP applications are taken at local county human service offices. Once a worker approves a case for benefits, they look to see if the applicant meets Minnesota's mandatory referral to E&T. If so, the worker will select the appropriate provider from a pop up screen in MAXIS and when the SNAP benefits approved the MAXIS system then sends the referral to DEED's WF1 system. WF1 deposits the referrals in the selected agency referral queue. From that point, SNAP staff in each agency retrieve the referrals and create a general information tab in WF1 which is a placeholder for information until clients come in for orientation. At this point, the counselor sends out letters to those in the referral queue inviting them to orientation. When clients attend the SNAP E&T Orientation, a WF1 record is completed and client is enrolled in SNAP E&T. There is a communication between county workers and counselors regarding clients. This communication takes place via status updates which come from MAXIS electronically on case changes and from WF1 via status updates that are faxed to workers.

INFORMATION COORDINATION Information is exchanged between the county agency and the ESP (e.g., referrals and notification of status changes). Currently, this exchange occurs through forms, direct phone contact and computer listings.

DEED, in consultation with DHS, developed a Management Information System (MIS) which provides interfaces between DHS' MAXIS system and DEED's Workforce One system. This interface provides live electronic transfer of information pertinent to participant referrals and participant status changes between agencies and the ESP. The DHS child care management system (MEC²) is part of MAXIS.

The SNAP E&T Coordinator and DHS financial management staff meet quarterly to review expenditures and prepare fiscal material for federal reporting. Reporting requirements have been established and disseminated to all appropriate staff. Additional meetings are held as necessary.

DEED's Adult Services staff monitor operational conditions between county agencies and ESPs. Monitoring includes individual participant file review to determine interagency correspondence related to participant actions. Both State agencies encourage open and regular communication between ESPs and county agencies.

The SNAP E&T expansion with the Office of Higher Education (OHE) will encompass biweekly meetings between DHS, DEED and OHE at the project manager level throughout the next year. Managers will continuously meet to discuss program operations and program performance.

Data exchanges between DEED and OHE will take place two weeks after the add/drop dates issued by the local institutions. This data will be uploaded to OHE and a composite file sent to DEED for verification for SNAP eligibility using the data warehouse and Workforce 1 for SNAP E&T enrollments. This procedure will take place 4 times a year with the start of fall, semester, spring

semester, first summer session and second summer session. DEED will physically monitor local colleges to ensure that data has been properly collected and returned to DEED.

COORDINATION TIME FRAMES • County agency and the ESP ensure that services for participants are scheduled to occur within 30 days of eligibility determination. DWP providers must meet with participants within 24 hours of application. • The ESP notifies the county agency within 24 hours when a DWP participant fails without good cause to comply with program requirements. This action does not affect SNAP eligibility. **INTERAGENCY COORDINATION AREAS OF COORDINATION** County agencies are required by Minnesota statute to coordinate program service delivery with any and all employment and training programs/providers within their jurisdiction. This includes educational agencies, WIOA providers and other referral agencies as deemed necessary to ensure participants have access to all programs which may benefit them. Coordination may result in financial or non-financial agreements. However, only allowable SNAP E&T Activities are recorded by the DEED staff when the FNS-583 report is completed and sent to FNS.

METHODS OF COORDINATION The Departments of Human Services (DHS) and of Employment and Economic Development (DEED) jointly manage the administration of SNAP E&T/DWP/MFIP at the State level via an interagency agreement. Program directives are transmitted to counties and ESPs through DHS/DEED informational and instructional bulletins. Training is provided by state agency staff to local agencies and ESPs as needed.

Minnesota law requires county agencies to submit annual SNAP E&T plans describing how SNAP E&T services are delivered within the county, coordination with other employment programs, and client support systems. Plan development consists of a joint effort between the county and ESP. Counties are also required to outline DWP services in a separate planning document. A copy of the county annual plan guidance is included as an attachment. Development of SNAP E&T Plans (local level) encourage local agencies to coordinate public assistance programs with all other available employment and training resources to maximize the use of funds and resources as well as expertise in the employment and training service provision. Referrals to all applicable programs such as WIOA, Job Service, Rehabilitation Services, ESL, ABE, and various educational programs help ensure that participants receive the necessary services to enable recipients to strive towards self-sufficiency.

The Departments of Employment and Economic Development and Human Services review these plans on an annual basis to determine if counties and ESPs are carrying out their respective roles and responsibilities according to program requirements. DEED performs SNAP E&T monitoring on a scheduled basis and corrective actions are issued to areas where deficiencies occur.

SNAP E&T expansion with OHE extends coordination with DEED and DHS. It further builds on a partnership to provide high quality career/technically based post-secondary training to eligible SNAP recipients. A joint implementation team meets biweekly to establish roles, responsibilities and to plan joint training for college staff, county financial workers and E&T counselors. Training will be conducted statewide by financial worker regions. This approach provides all partners with the same level of understanding of the process and procedures required to implement this component.

DEED and DHS are working together to develop a service delivery pilot which assists SNAP recipients residing in group residential housing facilitates with mental health issues the opportunity to stay employed or gain employment through intensive case management and supports. This will be addressed in more detail in a later plan modification along with a proposed budget. This effort aligns with DEED's program titled Individual Personal Strategy which supports these ideals as well.

Minnesota statute require SNAP E&T services be carried out by statewide system WorkForce Centers unless such services are not available locally.

CONTRACTUAL ARRANGEMENTS The Department of Human Services is not responsible for contracting out SNAP E&T services. This is the responsibility of the counties through the state supervised, county administered arrangement. As noted elsewhere in this plan, counties must contract with ESPs to carry out SNAP E&T program requirements or have received a waiver from DEED. DWP, 2 parent and FSS services may or may not be contracted with ESPs.

The interagency agreement between DHS and DEED is required by Minnesota statute and has been in place since 1987. The agreement, which is renegotiated every two years, specifies work efforts to be carried out by each department.

- DEED contracts with Heading Home partners and the Greater Twin Cities United Way and is reimbursed by DHS under the terms of the interagency agreement. Heading Home consists of five agencies: Catholic Charities, Goodwill Easter Seals and Project for Pride and Living. Greater Twin Cities United Way, will continue to fund three service providers in the SNAP Navigator Project. DEED contracts with each of these three providers to carry out Navigator objectives.
- DEED and OHE will enter into an interagency agreement for the purposes of carrying out the data and funding exchanges between the two departments. The amount of funds and work plans for DEED will be part of the DEED/DHS interagency agreement mentioned above. These agreements will be modified as necessary throughout the year to reflect any changes in the amounts or functions of each agency. A copy of the MOU will be sent to FNS upon completion.

12. THE AVAILABILITY, IF APPROPRIATE, OF E&T PROGRAMS FOR INDIANS LIVING ON RESERVATIONS AFTER THE STATE AGENCY HAS CONSULTED IN GOOD FAITH WITH APPROPRIATE TRIBAL ORGANIZATIONS;

For FFY16 and FFY17 all tribal reservations are exempt from the ABAWD work and time limits. If tribal reservations want to use their own funds to operate a volunteer SNAP E&T program they will be able to utilize the Federal Financial Participation (FFP) of 75 percent rate for their documented allowable expenses.

Vernon LaPlante, the DHS Commissioner's Tribal Representative, is kept apprised of SNAP Program changes including SNAP E&T by DHS/DEED staff. Mr. LaPlante connects with each tribe/reservation in Minnesota on behalf of DHS.

DHS/DEED staff will continue to work with Mr. LaPlante and his staff to discuss potential SNAP E&T opportunities with each reservation utilizing FFP at the 75 percent rate. Tribal Reservations will be encouraged, with DHS/DEED assistance, to develop local programs designed to provide volunteer SNAP E&T services/activities to their members. As these programs develop, they will be added to this SNAP E&T Plan and submitted for approval to FNS. DEED is currently working with the Northwest Indian Occupational Industrialization Center (OIC) which was provided a Career Pathways grant to provide Career Pathways opportunities for Indians residing on or off the reservations. We hope to expand this project to other areas along with increasing Adult Basic Education (ABE) to better reach and serve this population.

13. IF A CONCILIATION PROCESS IS PLANNED, THE PROCEDURES THAT WILL BE USED WHEN AN INDIVIDUAL FAILS TO COMPLY WITH AN E&T PROGRAM REQUIREMENT. INCLUDE THE LENGTH OF THE CONCILIATION PERIOD

ABAWDs are sanctioned for failure to comply with E&T requirements. The sanctioning process work like this. The service provider contacts the county worker via email or fax with the pertinent information to substantiate non-compliance. The client is notified at the same time as the county worker and within 10 days of the non-compliance occurring a closing notice is issued. County workers will review cases to establish if good cause exits prior to sanctioning. The first time sanctioning occurs the client is closed for one month. The second sanction period is two months and the third is three months. Once a sanction is imposed it cannot be cured. The sanction period must be served out unless the client provides an exemption reason.

14. THE PAYMENT RATES FOR CHILD CARE ESTABLISHED IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE CHILD CARE AND DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT PROVISIONS OF 45 CFR 98.43, AND BASED ON LOCAL MARKET RATE SURVEYS.

Minnesota has implemented the support service changes outlined in last year's plan which were taken from a planning document from FNS regarding the changes in support services.

The Diversionary Work Program, 2 parent and FSS provide support services including child care.

Child care costs for 2 parent and FSS are included in this plan. Procedures have been developed to ensure that all child care costs are non-employment related. All participants complete an employment plan. Counselors and participants decide if child care is necessary in order to complete plan requirements. Once a determination on the hours of child care needed is made, the counselor and/or the participant contacts the county child care worker to set up child care services. The type of child care offered the participant is dependent on location and type of child care service available. In most situations, the county pays child care providers directly rather than reimburse clients for out of pocket expenditures. Each county has a listing of approved child providers from which the participant can choose. Child care is provided from infants to children through age 12. Child care is provided beyond age 12 as warranted. Maximum reimbursement rates for the Child Care Assistance Programs in Minnesota are set by the Minnesota State Legislature. Results of the Minnesota Provider Business Update, a survey of prices charged by licensed child care providers in Minnesota, are used to inform the rate setting process. A complete schedule of those rates is available at <https://edocs.dhs.state.mn.us/lfsrserver/Public/DHS-6441B-ENG>

15. THE COMBINED (FEDERAL/STATE) STATE AGENCY REIMBURSEMENT RATE FOR TRANSPORTATION COSTS AND OTHER EXPENSES REASONABLY NECESSARY AND DIRECTLY RELATED TO PARTICIPATION INCURRED BY E&T PARTICIPANTS. IF THE STATE AGENCY PROPOSES TO PROVIDE DIFFERENT REIMBURSEMENT AMOUNTS TO ACCOUNT FOR VARYING LEVELS OF EXPENSES, FOR INSTANCE FOR GREATER OR LESSER COSTS OF TRANSPORTATION IN DIFFERENT AREAS OF THE STATE, IT MUST INCLUDE THEM HERE.

All participants complete an employment plan. Counselors and participants decide if child care is necessary in order to complete plan requirements. Once a determination on the hours of child care needed is made, the counselor and/or the participant contacts the county child care worker to set up

child care services. The type of child care offered the participant is dependent on location and type of child care service available. In most situations, the county pays child care providers directly rather than reimburse clients for out of pocket expenditures. Each county has a listing of approved child providers from which the participant can choose. Child care is provided from infants to children through age 12. Child care is provided beyond age 12 as warranted.

16. INFORMATION ABOUT EXPENSES THE STATE AGENCY PROPOSES TO REIMBURSE. FNS MUST BE AFFORDED THE OPPORTUNITY TO REVIEW AND COMMENT ON THE PROPOSED REIMBURSEMENTS BEFORE THEY ARE IMPLEMENTED.

Minnesota does not provide direct participant reimbursement for transportation, child care and other support services.

(B) ABLE-BODIED ADULTS WITHOUT DEPENDENTS (ABAWD)

A State agency interested in receiving additional funding for serving able-bodied adults without dependents (ABAWDs)* subject to the 3-month time limit, in accordance with 7 C.F.R. §273.7(d)(3), must include the following for each Federal fiscal year covered by the Combined Plan under WIOA:
*7 CFR § 273.7(c)(7)

1. ITS PLEDGE TO OFFER A QUALIFYING ACTIVITY TO ALL AT-RISK ABAWD APPLICANTS AND RECIPIENTS

Its pledge to offer a qualifying activity to all at-risk ABAWD applicants and recipients;

Minnesota is not a pledge state.

2. ESTIMATED COSTS OF FULFILLING ITS PLEDGE

NA

3. A DESCRIPTION OF MANAGEMENT CONTROLS IN PLACE TO MEET PLEDGE REQUIREMENTS

NA

4. A DISCUSSION OF ITS CAPACITY AND ABILITY TO SERVE AT-RISK ABAWDs.

NA

5. INFORMATION ABOUT THE SIZE AND SPECIAL NEEDS OF ITS ABAWD POPULATION

NA

6. INFORMATION ABOUT THE EDUCATION, TRAINING, AND WORKFARE COMPONENTS IT WILL OFFER TO MEET THE ABAWD WORK REQUIREMENT.

NA

(C) PLAN MODIFICATION

If FNS determines that the performance of a State agency with respect to employment and training outcomes is inadequate, FNS may require the State agency to make modifications to the State E&T plan to improve the outcomes.*

*7 U.S.C. 2025(h)(5)(E) as amended by Agricultural Act of 2014 .

FUNDING DISCLAIMER

Funds may not be available when SNAP E&T portions of a Combined State Plan under WIOA are approved. FNS's obligation after approving a SNAP E&T plan submitted as part of a Combined State Plan is contingent upon the availability of an appropriation from which payment can be made. Any FNS funding resulting from an approval of a SNAP E&T plan submitted as part of a Combined State Plan is subject to FNS receiving sufficient funds (in the Program Financial Control System for FNS) to fund this and all prior approved SNAP E&T plans submitted as part of a Combined State Plan in their entirety in the time and date order received. Federal reimbursement to States for 50 percent of State administrative expenditures and for participant reimbursements is subject to the above conditions.

WORK PROGRAMS UNDER THE SUPPLEMENTAL NUTRITION ASSISTANCE
PROGRAM (PROGRAMS AUTHORIZED UNDER SECTION 6(O) OF THE FOOD AND
NUTRITION ACT OF 2008 (7 U.S.C. 2015(O))

(C) OPTIONAL WORKFARE

State agencies or other political subdivisions must describe in detail in the plan how the political subdivision, working with the State agency and any other cooperating agencies that may be involved in the program, will fulfill the provisions of 7 C.F.R. §273.7(m). If a State opts to operate an optional workfare program or modify an existing optional workfare program, through a combined plan under WIOA, it must provide the following: * 7 CFR § 273.7(m)

1. SUBMITTING A WORKFARE PLAN MUST SUBMIT WITH THE PLAN AN OPERATING BUDGET

State agencies or political subdivisions submitting a workfare plan must submit with the plan an operating budget covering the period from the initiation of the workfare program's implementation schedule to the close of the Federal fiscal year for each year covered by the combined plan. In addition, an estimate of the cost for one full year of operation must be submitted together with the workfare plan for each Federal fiscal year covered by the combined plan.

Minnesota's Work Programs are a part of the SNAP E&T programs. Information is contain in that section of the State Combined Plan

2. FNS WILL DETERMINE WHICH POLITICAL SUBDIVISION WILL HAVE ITS PLAN APPROVED

If workfare plans are submitted by more than one political subdivision, each representing the same population (such as a city within a county), FNS will determine which political subdivision will have its plan approved. Under no circumstances will a SNAP recipient be subject to more than one SNAP workfare program. If a political subdivision chooses to operate a workfare program and represents a population which is already, at least in part, subject to a SNAP workfare program administered by another political subdivision, it must establish in its workfare plan how SNAP recipients will not be subject to more than one SNAP workfare program.

NA

(D) VOLUNTARY WORKFARE

State agencies and political subdivisions may operate workfare programs whereby participation by SNAP recipients is voluntary. In such a program, the penalties for failure to comply, as provided in 7 C.F.R. §273.7(f), will not apply for noncompliance. The amount of hours to be worked will be negotiated between the household and the operating agency, though not to exceed the limits provided under 7 C.F.R. §273.7(m)(5)(ii). In addition, all protections provided under 7 C.F.R. §273.7(m)(6)(i) shall continue to apply. Those State agencies and political subdivisions choosing to operate such a program shall indicate in their workfare plan how their staffing will adapt to anticipated and unanticipated levels of participation for each Federal fiscal year covered by the Combined Plan under WIOA. FNS will not approve plans which do not show that the benefits of the workfare program, in terms of hours worked by participants and reduced SNAP allotments due to successful job attainment, are expected to exceed the costs of such a program. In addition, if FNS finds that an approved voluntary program does not meet this criterion, FNS reserves the right to withdraw approval. * * 7 CFR § 273.7(m)(8)

NA

(E) COMPARABLE WORKFARE

The State agency or political subdivision must provide a description of its program, including a methodology for ensuring compliance with 7 C.F.R §273.7(m)(9)(ii) for each Federal fiscal year covered by the Combined Plan under WIOA. * *7 CFR § 273.7(m)(9)

NA

(F) PROCESS

The State agency must submit amendments to the SNAP E&T segment of the Combined Plan for FNS approval at least 30 days prior to the planned implementation in order to receive federal SNAP E&T funding for the activities not covered by the approved Combined Plan.* *7 CFR § 273.7(c)(8)

TRADE ADJUSTMENT ASSISTANCE (TAA)

There are no program-specific state planning requirements for TAA. If the state includes TAA in a Combined State Plan, the state must incorporate TAA in its responses to the common planning elements in sections II, III, IV, and V of the WIOA State Plan requirements instrument.

TAA is called out in several sections of the plan. It is closely aligned to all dislocated worker related descriptions and all TAA participants are co-enrolled into State dislocated worker programming.

Has the state incorporated TAA into the sections indicated above? Yes

JOBS FOR VETERANS' STATE GRANTS

The Jobs for Veterans' State Grants (JVSG) are mandatory, formula-based staffing grants to (including DC, PR, VI and Guam). The JVSG is funded annually in accordance with a funding formula defined in the statute (38 U.S.C. 4102A (c) (2) (B) and regulation and operates on a fiscal year (not program year) basis, however, performance metrics are collected and reported (VETS-200 Series Reports) quarterly (using four "rolling quarters") on a Program Year basis (as with the ETA-9002 Series). Currently, VETS JVSG operates on a five-year (FY 2015-2019), multi-year grant approval cycle modified and funded annually.

In accordance with 38 U.S.C. § 4102A(b)(5) and § 4102A(c), the Assistant Secretary for Veterans' Employment and Training (ASVET) makes grant funds available for use in each State to support Disabled Veterans' Outreach Program (DVOP) specialists and Local Veterans' Employment Representatives (LVER) staff. As a condition to receive funding, 38 U.S.C. § 4102A(c)(2) requires States to submit an application for a grant that contains a State Plan narrative, which includes:

(A) HOW THE STATE INTENDS TO PROVIDE EMPLOYMENT, TRAINING AND JOB PLACEMENT SERVICES TO VETERANS AND ELIGIBLE PERSONS UNDER THE JVSG

Services for Minnesota Veterans may be accessed through a variety of systems and service providers in addition to the DVOP's and LVER's. Partner staff are being trained in providing services to Veterans via the NVTI eLearning course "Preparing Veterans for Meaningful Careers", and through a webinar produced by the Workforce Development Division at DEED. In addition, WFC partner staff attend NVTI as non-JVSG seats become available. An eligible veteran or eligible spouse is determined to have a SBE if he or she attests to belonging to at least one of the six criteria identified in VPL 04-13 change 2. Minnesota has developed a standardized process for referring SBE Veterans to a DVOP (please see attached WFC flowchart). This triage approach begins when a customer comes to the entry point at a WFC. All customers are asked if they ever served in the US Military/Armed Forces. If the answer is "yes", the Veteran is given a copy of our "Veterans Questionnaire" with instructions to complete it and return it to the entry point. Non-JVSG staff review the form and complete an assessment of the questionnaire responses. Veterans who indicate a significant barrier to employment are referred to a DVOP if available, or to a "designated intensive service provider" when no DVOP is available. Non-SBE Veterans are provided information on Priority of Service, and screened for additional program eligibility by non-JVSG staff.

Minnesota has had an Intensive Service Coordinator (ISC) for several years. This DVOP is stationed in the VR&E office at the Regional DVA office, and works closely with VR&E counselors and management. The ISC is responsible for the distribution of all CH31 cases to DVOP staff, and coordinates initial communication between the Veteran, the VR&E counselor, and the DVOP. DVOP's typically receive notification of an upcoming CH31 Veteran client within 90 days of graduation or upon designation as "job ready" by the VR&E office. Due to this DVOP's close proximity to DVA hiring managers and staff, she also makes regular referrals on open Federal positions and non-competitive jobs available to those Veterans rated at 30% or more.

Once referred to a DVOP, an Individual Service Plan is created, agreed upon and signed, and an assessment of needs is completed. If there are additional significant barriers to employment or related issues, resources are identified, and referrals made as necessary.

Like other States, Minnesota has begun putting more emphasis on the Veteran coming in the WFC seeking services by converting some of our LVER positions to DVOP positions as the LVER's retire. Minnesota has an active Business Services Program that employs 24 Business Services Specialists that are tasked with providing services to Minnesota businesses. They have been provided with "talking points" regarding the value Veteran employees bring to a business, and contact information for Local Veterans Employment Reps (LVER). In addition, they promote the hiring of Veterans through brochures, fact sheets and discussions with hiring managers. Their focus is Veterans with SBE's, and CH31 Veterans. Additionally, Minnesota has put special emphasis on the following Veteran groups.

* Homeless Veterans

In Minnesota, estimates indicate that a little over 1%, or 4000 Veterans per year will experience homelessness, or struggle with other life crises edging them toward homelessness. Of those 4000 Veterans, 27% have returned from service in Iraq or Afghanistan, and over 30% are disabled Veterans. Approximately 15% of Veterans served that are homeless are women Veterans. Many are single with children to care for.

DVOP staff work closely with Minnesota's HVRP grantee, Minnesota Assistance Council for Veterans (MACV). In addition to referring clients between our two agencies, we also collaborate with them on 3 StandDown events across the state each year, and provide a liaison (LVER) to provide business contacts and help with some of their client focused events.

* Native American Veterans

According to the most recent Census, Minnesota is ranked 13 in number of Native Americans living in our state. Native American population in Minnesota numbers approximately 70,465 or 1.3% of the population. By the end of 2015 it is expected to increase to over 72,000. 31% live on one of 11 different Reservations in Minnesota. Seven of these are in the northern part of the state, with the remaining four located near Minneapolis/St. Paul, or southern Minnesota. In addition, 37% of the Native American population live in the 9 county metropolitan area. Unemployment among Native Americans is reported to be 3–4 times that of non-Indians. The UI rate for Native American Veterans is even higher.

Most of Minnesota's Tribal Reservations have poverty rates double that of the rest of the state. In addition, 93% of white students graduate high school, where only 64% of Native

Americans graduate. This negatively impacts employment opportunities and future training plans.

In fact, among the Shakopee Mdewakanton tribe, the statistics are more unsettling. This is a Tribe located just southwest of a major metropolitan area, near resources and opportunity, but has had little focused effort for their Veteran population. Their high school graduation rate hovers close to 45.7%. Their unemployment rate is over 13%, compared to a Minneapolis/St. Paul rate of around 3.7%. Per capita income is \$27,119. Minnesota's plan to serve this population includes a DVOP position in the Bemidji area to focus on this population on Red Lake, Leech Lake, and White Earth Reservations in the northern part of the state. The local American Indian OIC provides space for this DVOP to conduct outreach activities, and provide employment support and guidance. One additional DVOP focuses on the Native population living on Tribal lands south and west of the Minneapolis/St Paul area.

Both of these DVOP positions are

funded through a recent JVSG grant modification.

* Female Veterans Female Veterans represent approximately 17% of returning National Guard and Reserve troops in Minnesota. Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs estimates there are almost 23,000 female Veterans in Minnesota. Of that number, about 8700 have served in the Persian Gulf, or OIF/OEF/OND. Minnesota has a LVER that is active in two major Women's Veterans groups, and sits on the Board of Directors for a third. She serves as a liaison with the local DAV chapter, and has held posts in the American Legion also. Minnesota currently employs 2 women LVER staff and 3 DVOP staff, including one DVOP that works exclusively with women Veterans on a special initiative. They are all engaged with local organizations that cater to women and women Veterans. As mentioned earlier, we work closely with our local HVRP grantee and our WFC partners to identify female Veterans seeking services.

* Incarcerated Veterans Minnesota currently operates two projects for incarcerated persons. Since these are funded with Wagner-Peyser money, they provide Priority of Service for Veterans wishing to participate. These projects are located in two inner-city offices, using two different models. One is

a case management model, where the other focuses on a two week long workshop incorporating job search and living skills together. This two week workshop is facilitated by Wagner-Peyser staff. Our local DVOP's assigned in those locations participate in the selection of participants, and in the case management process. We also have a special initiative project that provides specialized dedicated staff to work with Veterans being released from correctional facilities. These two DVOP staff are located in our Minneapolis, and St. Paul WFC's, and both are certified as "Offender Employment Specialists", and "Offender Workforce Development Specialists" through MN Dept. of Corrections. Staff in these two inner-city locations estimate that 30-40% of the clients using these WFC's have a criminal background.

In addition, the Minnesota Dept. of Employment and Economic Development has formalized a relationship with the Dept. of Corrections, and provides job search help and counseling for offenders nearing their release date. We also participate in facility sponsored events such as "Transition Fairs". DVOP staff attend and provide workshops on job seeking/keeping skills at these events, and connect with inmates about to be released.

DVOP staff also sit on the steering committee of the Hennepin County Veterans Diversionary Court program. As the first court of its kind in Minnesota, it exists to provide an option for Veterans that have had had encounters with the criminal court system, and to provide an alternative to prison. DVOP staff work closely with the court on assessment, referral, and job placement.

* Demobilizing/Recently Separated Veterans

Minnesota's "Beyond The Yellow Ribbon" Reintegration Campaign is the backbone of post deployment reintegration services. Minnesota DVOP and LVER staff have been a critical part of this process which includes 5 different events for Service members and their families.

The process begins 3-4 months before deployment. "Family Readiness Academies" are designed to give families an opportunity to ask questions, and provide information to Troops and their families on what to expect during the deployment. We provide resource information and referrals for assorted common issues faced by families, information on Veterans benefits, and employment information for spouses.

Approximately 30 to 60 days before Troops return home, a "Yellow Ribbon Community Event" is sponsored to help families understand and support their returning Soldiers.

Business owners, educators, civic leaders and law enforcement are called together for a briefing on what they can expect upon their Soldiers return. We provide resource information, and answers to some difficult questions relating to their combat experience, and how that may affect their lives.

DVOP and LVER staff continue to update and modify some of our material based on the type of unit returning, and the predominant skill set of those Troops. Twenty six (26) Minnesota service providers send staff and materials to various locations as Troops return from overseas deployment for an Initial Reintegration Event. DVOP staff conduct group presentations to Soldiers, and work one-on-one after these sessions to prepare resumes, practice interviewing skills, and assist with job search strategy. We also provide information on unemployment insurance, dislocated worker programs, employment and reemployment, and educational opportunities. Following the initial reintegration events, follow-up events at 30/60/90 days are scheduled. Minnesota DVOP and LVER staff will continue to partner in these events, and plan to provide similar services to all returning Veterans from all branches via similar events.

(B) THE DUTIES ASSIGNED TO DVOP SPECIALISTS AND LVER STAFF BY THE STATE; SPECIFICALLY IMPLEMENTING DVOP AND LVER DUTIES OR ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES AS OUTLINED IN 38 U.S.C. § 4103A AND 4104. THESE DUTIES MUST BE CONSISTENT WITH CURRENT GUIDANCE;

DVOP staff will be assigned to provide case management and intensive services to Veterans with significant barriers to employment in the following locations throughout the State of Minnesota: 1) All 47 WorkForce Centers, 2) VA Vocational Rehab Center, Fort Snelling, 3) VA Medical Center, St Paul, 4) Various community libraries and post-secondary schools as available and necessary. LVER staff will be deployed in many of these same locations for the purpose of employer outreach and education, and to facilitate networking and job search groups with employers and Veterans.

We also participate as an active partner in the Yellow Ribbon Reintegration program. As mentioned, this is a multi-phased program that includes a series of meetings and training events. Outreach, workshops and assessments are all part of these events.

POSITION PURPOSE – DVOP specialist provides intensive services and facilitates placements to meet the employment needs of veterans, prioritizing service to special disabled veterans, other disabled veterans, and other categories of veterans in accordance with priorities determined by the Secretary of Labor. The DVOP Specialist will provide or facilitate a full range of intensive services to eligible Veterans with significant barriers to employment (per VPL 03–14 including change 2 and VPL 04–14) who are unable to obtain suitable employment through universal services in the WorkForce Center system. This position will serve any eligible Veteran with a SBE seeking assistance with employment related needs including: job seeking assistance, referral to other agencies or services, training opportunities, licensing and certification assistance, and any other assistance as identified in order to meet the needs of the Veteran.

Minnesota has developed a standardized process for referring SBE Veterans to a DVOP (please see attached WFC flowchart). This triage approach begins when a customer comes to the entry point at a WFC. All customers are asked if they ever served in the US Military/Armed Forces. If the answer is "yes", the Veteran is given a copy of our "Veterans Questionnaire" with instructions to complete it and return it to the entry point. Non-JVSG staff review the form and complete an assessment of the questionnaire responses. Veterans who indicate a significant barrier to employment are referred to a DVOP if available, or to a "designated intensive service provider" when no DVOP is available. Non-SBE Veterans are provided information on Priority of Service, and screened for additional program eligibility by non-JVSG staff.

DVOP Core Responsibility 1 – Identify and facilitate intensive services needed by Veterans with significant barriers to employment (SBE) so that they can be placed in suitable employment or in a training program commensurate with their EDP/IDP. Tasks for this responsibility will include: 1) In cooperation with U.S Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (VR&E) staff, identify Chapter 31 Veterans (CH31) who have completed or are participating in VR&E programs and who are in need of job search assistance. 2) Through use of the new standardized "Veterans Questionnaire", identify and prioritize services to disabled and other veterans with an SBE. 3) Conduct assessments to determine employment barriers and services needed. 4) Develop a documented case management file in Workforce One (WF1) for each veteran receiving intensive services. 5) Develop an employability development plan for each case managed veteran. 6) Refer veterans to appropriate supportive service providers. 7) Coordinate linkages with other employment and training providers and the VA to support Veterans in their job search

activities. 8) Provide vocational guidance to eligible Veterans. 9) Refer Veterans to appropriate public and private sector jobs

Core Responsibility 2 – Conduct outreach activities to identify and make contact with SBE Veterans who would benefit from, or are in need of intensive services. Tasks for this responsibility will include: 1) Develop outreach programs in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs and DOL–VETS. 2) Participate in all Military reintegration events, DEED’s annual Veterans Career Fair, and all other outreach events as assigned. 3) Conduct outreach activities with VR&E to market all services to Chapter 31 Vets. 4) Conduct outreach activities to other organizations such as state Vocational Rehabilitation Providers, Homeless Veterans Reintegration Projects (HVRP), VA Hospitals and Veteran Centers, County Veteran Service Offices, homeless shelters, civic and community service organizations, other AJC/WFC partners and other sources as identified.

Core Responsibility 3 – Provide vocational guidance to eligible SBE Veterans who need assistance with vocational change or adjustment. Tasks for this responsibility will include: 1) Establish an EDP for all SBE Veterans requesting vocational guidance. 2) Provide vocational guidance using knowledge of labor market information and assessment tools. 3) Refer candidates to a qualified vocational counselor as necessary. 4) Assist Veterans in using electronic assessment and job search tools.

The DVOP works closely with other service providers in the community to provide intensive services to veterans with significant barriers to employment, as defined in VPL 03–14 (including change 2) and 04–14. These providers include, but are not limited to: Veterans Administration, WFC partners, Community based services, Federal, State, county and local programs, educational institutions, VA hospitals & Vet Centers, homeless programs and shelters, Rehabilitation programs, and other service providers. Supervision is provided administratively by Veterans unit Field Operations Manager and functionally by SrVER.

E. LVER STAFF POSITION PURPOSE – The LVER’s principal duties are to: (1) conduct outreach to employers in the area to assist veterans in gaining employment, including conducting seminars for employers and, in conjunction with employers, conducting job search workshops and establishing job search groups; and (2) facilitate employment, training, and placement services furnished to veterans in Minnesota under the State employment service delivery systems. This position exists to provide services to local businesses that will enhance, support, and promote the employment of Veterans, particularly Veterans receiving intensive services from a local DVOP. They will lead in the planning, development, direction, negotiation, marketing and delivery of employment services to Businesses, Veterans and other eligible persons. The LVER will train, teach, and provide technical support to the state of Minnesota staff in the provision of Veteran employment services mandated by legislation and departmental guidelines. Clientele served by this position include employers seeking qualified Veteran applicants or information on employer incentives and training programs, business and professional organizations, and other appropriate business contacts. Other LVER customers include community and Veteran organizations, educational facilities, local elected officials, and other State Departments, as well as other WFC staff and management that are either mandated by law or are seeking assistance in providing priority of service to Veterans in hiring and service delivery.

LVERs should advocate for all veterans served by the AJC with business, industry, and other community–based organizations by participating in appropriate activities such as: • Planning and participating in job and career fairs; • Conducting employer outreach; • In conjunction with employers, conducting job searches and workshops, and establishing job search groups; • Coordinating with unions, apprenticeship programs and businesses or business organizations to

promote and secure employment and training programs for veterans; • Informing Federal contractors of the process to recruit qualified veterans; • Promoting credentialing and licensing opportunities for veterans; and • Coordinating and participating with other business outreach efforts.

Core Responsibility 1 – Develop employer outreach activities to establish, maintain, and facilitate regular contact with employers to promote employment and training opportunities for the benefit of Veterans. Tasks for this responsibility will include: 1) Develop job opportunities for Veteran job seekers through outreach efforts with Minnesota employers: job development phone contacts, in person employer visits, and participation in job fair activities on behalf of Veterans. 2) Communicate and coordinate with Business Services Representatives in the local AJC to facilitate and promote job opportunities for Veterans, especially those with significant barriers to employment. 3) Promote the "Veteran Friendly Employer" initiative to all businesses contacted. 4) Encourage employers to employ Veterans utilizing apprenticeships and OJT programs, State and Federal dislocated worker programs, and GI Bill benefits. 5) Maintain current information on employment and training opportunities. 6) Monitor Federal Contractor Job Listings (FCJL) and Vet Central job orders for Veterans using the WFC, or on the DVOP caseload. 7) Provide contacts and job leads to DVOPs.

Core Responsibility 2 – Advocate on behalf of Veterans seeking employment and training opportunities with business, industry, and community-based organizations. Tasks for this responsibility will include: 1) Contact community leaders, employers, labor unions, training programs, and Veterans organizations. 2) Promote Veterans priority of service in employment and training programs. 3) Maintain current information on employment and training opportunities. 4) Plan and participate in job fairs to promote services to Veterans, and encourage participating employers to become a "Veteran Friendly Employer." 5) Promote licensing and certification assistance and training opportunities for Veterans using training providers and credentialing bodies. 6) Work with unions, apprenticeships programs, and business community to promote employment, On the Job Training (OJT), apprenticeships and other available training opportunities to employ Veterans. 7) Establish and maintain contact with National Guard, Reserve Family Readiness Groups and Family Assistance Centers in the assigned area. Provide education and information regarding DEED Vets employment services, WorkForce Centers, and Beyond the Yellow Ribbon events.

Core Responsibility 3 – Provide technical assistance, guidance and leadwork to DVOP's, professional and support staff, and other WFC staff engaged in the delivery of services to Veteran eligibles. Tasks for this responsibility will include: 1) Plan, guide and evaluate Veteran Program activities of WFC staff to attain program goals and to ensure consistent application of program components by establishing and maintaining workflow/assignment requirements; monitoring and reporting program performance. 2) Train WFC staff and partners to enhance their knowledge of Veterans employment and training issues. 3) Provide technical advice and guidance to WFC staff regarding procedural questions, or issues, to ensure that program services are administered with accuracy and uniformity by providing written and verbal interpretations of applicable federal laws and departmental policies and procedures. 4) Develop and implement a local Veterans employment service delivery plan, in conjunction with local management, Veterans Staff Supervisor and Veterans State Director. Ensure community resources are utilized and eligible customers are served in accordance with federally mandated standards and delivery area objectives. 5) Analyze current delivery area operations and levels of program activity and recommend new or corrective action procedures to local management to enhance existing levels of performance. 6) Participate in interviewing process with Veterans Program Management and local management in the selection of new DVOP/LVER staff to ensure qualified personnel are hired and the integrity of the various Veterans services programs is maintained.

Core Responsibility 4 – Provide capacity building for other service providers to ensure that Veterans and other eligible persons are provided the range of labor exchange services needed to meet their employment and training needs. Work with other workforce development providers to develop their capacity to recognize, and respond to these needs. Tasks for this responsibility will include: 1) Train other staff and WFC partners to enhance their knowledge of Veteran's employment and training issues. 2) Organize and promote public events like Career Fairs that increase the visibility of Veterans. 3) Promote Veterans as a category of job seekers in the workforce development system that have highly marketable skills and experience.

Core Responsibility 5 – Manage and maintain adherence to POS, and DOL priorities for services to Veterans with an SBE, including labor exchange services.

Tasks for this responsibility will include: 1) Facilitate and maintain the provision of labor exchange services by local WFC staff to Veterans including the identification of SBE Veterans, proper referral to a DVOP, or in the absence of the DVOP, to the intensive services provider, and referral to vocational counseling, testing, job search assistance. 2) Provide job development and employer outreach on behalf of Veterans, with a focus on Veterans with an SBE being case managed by a local DVOP. 3) Coordinate or conduct job search assistance and networking workshops in conjunction with employers. 4) Provide Labor Market Information (LMI) to employers. 6) Work with DEED Veterans Chapter 31 Program Coordinator and Veterans Affairs (VA) regarding Chapter 31 clients. 7) Refer Veterans to the Department of Labor (DOL)/Veterans Employment and Training Service (VETS) partner as needed to assist with reemployment rights issues covered under the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act (USERRA) law. 8) Assist employers with special job accommodations for disabled Veterans. This position works closely with community leaders, organizations, employers, labor unions, training programs, institutions, Veterans organizations, Veterans Administration, Veterans Employment and Training Service (VETS), military units and other governmental offices. In addition the LVER must develop and maintain a relationship with management as the Veterans program lead-worker, and technical advisor. The LVER must work closely with WFC partners, supervisors and committees in the development of WorkForce Center policies and procedures as they pertain to Veterans services The position must relate to all WorkForce Center staff so that they are thoroughly informed about the Veterans Employment Program and are aware of their responsibility in ensuring that Veterans are provided the priority service to which they are entitled to as specified by law. The LVER must implement the directives and mandates of management, evaluate the activities of other WFC staff and coordinate efforts with other staff at the state office level. The LVER is responsible to the Veterans Program Director administratively and to State Veterans Supervisor functionally.

(C) THE MANNER IN WHICH DVOP SPECIALISTS AND LVER STAFF ARE
INTEGRATED INTO THE STATE'S EMPLOYMENT SERVICE DELIVERY SYSTEM OR
ONE-STOP DELIVERY SYSTEM PARTNER NETWORK;

The following activities will be used to ensure that service providers and partners work together with DVOP specialists and LVER staff to promote employment, training and placement services for veterans. 1) DVOP/LVER staff will attend and participate in local WFC staff meetings. 2) DVOP/LVER staff will be co-located with partner staff in the 48 WorkForce Centers throughout Minnesota. 3) A DVOP has been assigned as an Intensive Services Coordinator (ISC) at the VR&E location at Fort Snelling to coordinate Chapter 31 placement activity with field staff. 4) LVER staff will train partner staff and service providers on Veteran resources and when to refer veterans to DVOP staff for intensive services. 5) DVOP/LVER staff will be represented on all appropriate WFC work teams, work groups, policy groups, or other appropriate WFC teams.

(D) THE INCENTIVE AWARD PROGRAM IMPLEMENTED USING THE 1% GRANT ALLOCATION SET ASIDE FOR THIS PURPOSE, AS APPLICABLE;

The expected outcomes for Minnesota's incentive award program are:

- To acknowledge superior performance and customer service for Veterans;
- To elevate the visibility and importance of Veteran's services to WorkForce partners and staff;
- To generate a stronger sense of unity and collaboration between the Veteran's program and the state WFC system.

ENCOURAGING EXCELLENT SERVICE TO VETERANS Offering awards provide encouragement and motivation to offer high quality services to Veterans, and offers flexible use of funds for recipients. Examples of selection criteria must show that winning nominations demonstrate a significant impact on Veterans and their job search. A wide range of exemplary employment and training services focused on Veterans will be considered.

TYPES OF AWARDS Total funds available for the Jobs for Veteran's State Grant (JVSG) Performance Incentive Award Program are \$26,000 based on one percent of the total grant monies designated for FFY15. Minnesota will recognize individual recipients, or WFC offices or teams based on the selection criteria outlined below.

EXAMPLES OF APPROPRIATE USE OF CASH AWARDS ARE, BUT NOT LIMITED TO:

- Computer equipment including network printers, laptops, scanners or other related equipment;
- Office furniture and equipment;
- Conference Room equipment such as whiteboards, LED projectors and screens;
- Donations to U.S. Code recognized 501C(3) charities.

SELECTION CRITERIA Selection criteria for award recipients must be based on performance or activities during the fiscal year the award is given. Both objective and subjective data are to be considered in the selection of nominees. Nominees should be considered to have demonstrated outstanding outreach and/or service provision on behalf of Veterans who have significant barriers to employment, especially disabled Veterans, homeless Veterans, and incarcerated Veterans. Attitude, motivation, program improvement, positive feedback and other indicators of outstanding performance may be given consideration above numerical data. The Minnesota Dept. of Employment & Economic Development will convene an awards committee and administer the awards.

Examples of selection criteria may be: • Development of a program, for which the impact may not be directly measurable (e.g., a resume skills building program, special programming for targeted Veteran groups, workshops that address significant barriers to employment);

- Outstanding cooperative case management (between DVOP & WFC partners);

- Ideas that are implemented to improve the service delivery system leading to Veteran living-wage and sustainable employment, improvement in outcome performance for Veterans, reduced time or cost, or that promote collaboration that improve services to Veterans;
- Outreach/community-relations efforts, to include employers, social service entities, and/or educators etc.; or
- Exemplary efforts to assist SBE Veteran populations (homeless, undereducated or under skilled, low income, disabled veterans, or incarcerated Veterans etc.).

ELIGIBLE RECIPIENTS Eligible recipients are defined as entities providing services to Veterans under the WIOA/Wagner-Peyser employment delivery system. The term "employment service delivery system" means a service delivery system at which or through which labor exchange services, including employment, training, and placement services, are offered in accordance with the Wagner-Peyser Act and employment delivery service programs as defined in P.L. 107-288, Section 4112 and P.L. 109-461. Examples of these entities include:

- Joint DEED/WIOA partners and WorkForce Centers
- WFC partners such as Dislocated Worker Program
- Community College Workforce Development staff

NOMINATION PROCESS AND TIMING OF AWARDS

- Nominations will be solicited through Minnesota local workforce development boards (LWDBs) and local WFC Offices.
- Nominations will reflect the accomplishments of the entity, and include sufficient detail to adequately describe to the awards committee the improvements in services to Veterans made by the entity.
- Nomination descriptions should be no more than one page in length; however, supplemental performance data, testimonials, and other related information may be included as attachments.
- Nominations must be received 2 weeks in advance of the Awards Committee meeting date each quarter.
- Nominations will be reviewed by a panel consisting of the State Veteran's Program Director, a representative of U.S. Department of Labor-Veterans' Employment and Training Service (USDOL-VETS), a representative from DEED HR, and a WFC Partner.
- No nomination committee member may be directly connected with any person or office being reviewed for these awards.
- Awards will be announced to the recipient(s) prior to September 30th.

- Award funds must be obligated by the end of the federal fiscal year, September 30. An annual Incentive Award report will be included in the quarterly report due in mid-November. The report will detail all incentive awards made.
- The intent of P.L. 107-288 is to recognize individuals with an award of corporate benefit not to supplant other spending on training, supplies or other expenditures ordinarily made at the state or program level (see P.L.107-288 & 109-461). Due in part to union restrictions no individual awards will be presented.

(E) THE POPULATIONS OF VETERANS TO BE SERVED, INCLUDING ANY ADDITIONAL POPULATIONS DESIGNATED BY THE SECRETARY AS ELIGIBLE FOR SERVICES, AND ANY ADDITIONAL POPULATIONS SPECIFICALLY TARGETED BY THE STATE WORKFORCE AGENCY FOR SERVICES FROM ONE-STOP DELIVERY SYSTEM PARTNERS (E.G., NATIVE AMERICAN VETERANS; VETERANS IN REMOTE RURAL COUNTIES OR PARISHES);

Services for Minnesota Veterans may be accessed through a variety of systems and service providers in addition to the DVOP's, LVER's and AJC. Current and new Partner staff are being trained in providing services to Veterans via the NVTI eLearning course "Preparing Veterans for Meaningful Careers."

An eligible veteran or eligible spouse is determined to have a SBE if he or she attests to belonging to at least one of the six criteria identified in VPL 03-14 change 2.

Minnesota has had an Intensive Service Coordinator (ISC) for several years. This DVOP is stationed in the VR&E office at the Regional DVA office, and works closely with VR&E counselors and management. The ISC is responsible for the distribution of all CH31 cases to DVOP staff, and coordinates initial communication between the Veteran, the VR&E counselor, and the DVOP. DVOP's typically receive notification of an upcoming CH31 Veteran client within 90 days of graduation or upon designation as "job ready" by the VR&E office. Due to this DVOP's close proximity to DVA hiring managers and staff, she also makes regular referrals on open Federal positions and non-competitive jobs available to those Veterans rated at 30 percent or more.

Once referred to a DVOP, an Individual Service Plan is created, agreed upon and signed, and an assessment of needs is completed. If there are additional significant barriers to employment or related issues, resources are identified, and referrals made as necessary.

Like other States, Minnesota has begun putting more emphasis on the Veteran coming in the WFC seeking services by converting some LVER positions to DVOP positions as the LVER's retire. Minnesota has an active Business Services Program that employs 24 Business Services Representatives that are tasked with providing services to Minnesota businesses. They have been provided with "talking points" regarding the value Veteran employees bring to a business, and contact information for Local Veterans Employment Reps (LVER's). In addition, they promote the hiring of Veterans through brochures, fact sheets and discussions with hiring managers. Their focus is Veterans with SBE's, and CH31 Veterans.

Additionally, Minnesota will put special emphasis on the following Veteran groups.

- Homeless Veterans: In Minnesota, estimates indicate that a little over 1 percent, or 4000 Veterans per year will experience homelessness, or struggle with other life crises edging them toward homelessness. Of those 4000 Veterans, 27 percent have returned from service in Iraq or Afghanistan, and over 30 percent are disabled Veterans. Approximately 15 percent of Veterans served that are homeless are women Veterans. Many are single with children to care for.

Minnesota DVOP's work closely with Minnesota's HVRP grantee, Minnesota Assistance Council for Veterans (MACV). In addition to referring clients between the two agencies, we also collaborate with them on several StandDown events across the state each year, and provide a liaison (LVER) to provide business contacts and help with some of their client focused events.

- **Native American Veterans:** According to the most recent Census, Minnesota is ranked 13 in number of Native Americans living in the state. Native American population in Minnesota numbers approximately 72,000. 31 percent live on one of 11 different Reservations in Minnesota. Seven of these are in the northern part of the state, with the remaining four located near Minneapolis/St. Paul, or southern Minnesota. In addition, 37 percent of the Native American population live in the 9 county metropolitan area. Unemployment among Native Americans is reported to be 3–4 times that of non-Indians. The UI rate for Native American Veterans is even higher.

Most of Minnesota's Tribal Reservations have poverty rates double that of the rest of the state. In addition, 93 percent of white students graduate high school, where only 64 percent of Native Americans graduate. This negatively impacts employment opportunities and future training plans.

In fact, among the Shakopee Mdewakanton tribe, the statistics are more unsettling. This is a Tribe located just southwest of a major metropolitan area, near resources and opportunity, but has had little focused effort for their Veteran population. Their high school graduation rate hovers close to 45.7 percent. Their unemployment rate is over 13 percent, compared to a Minneapolis/St. Paul rate of around 3.7 percent. Per capita income is \$27,119. Minnesota's plan to serve this population includes a DVOP position in the Bemidji area focusing on this population on Red Lake, Leech Lake, and White Earth Reservations in the northern part of the state. The local American Indian OIC has agreed to provide employment support and guidance. One additional DVOP works out of the Burnsville WFC with a focus on the Native population living on Tribal lands south and west of the Minneapolis/St Paul area. We have had preliminary discussions with two Tribal Councils, and local WFC management who are anxious to partner with us on this project. Both of these DVOP positions are funded through a recent JVSG grant modification.

- **Female Veterans:** Female Veterans represent approximately 17 percent of returning National Guard and Reserve troops in Minnesota. Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs estimates there are almost 23,000 female Veterans in Minnesota. Of that number, about 8700 have served in the Persian Gulf, or OIF/OEF. Minnesota has a LVER that is active in two different Women's Veterans groups, and serves as a liaison with the local DAV chapter. Minnesota currently employs 2 women LVER staff and 3 DVOP staff. They are all engaged with local organizations that cater to women and women Veterans. As mentioned earlier, our DVOP's work closely with the local HVRP grantee and WFC partners to identify female Veterans seeking services.

We recently received funding via a special initiative grant modification to provide targeted, focused intensive services to women Veterans with an SBE. This female DVOP has been trained by the Military on issues and challenges women may face with Military Service, including MST.

- **Incarcerated Veterans:** Minnesota currently operates two projects for incarcerated persons. Since these are funded with Wagner–Peyser money, they provide Priority of Service for Veterans wishing to participate. These projects are located in two inner–city offices, using two different models. One is a case management model, where the other focuses on a two week long workshop incorporating job search and living skills together. Local DVOP's assigned in those locations participate in the selection of participants, and in the case management process. We are also have a DVOP that provides specialized assistance to Veterans being released from correctional facilities via a special initiative. Staff in these two inner–city locations estimate that 30–40 percent of the clients using these WFC's have a criminal background.

In addition, the Minnesota Dept. of Employment and Economic Development has formalized a relationship with the Dept. of Corrections, and provides job search help and counseling for offenders

nearing their release date, and we participate in facility sponsored events such as "Transition Fairs." DVOP staff attend and provide workshops and one-to-one assistance during these events.

A DVOP also sits on the steering committee of the Hennepin County Veterans Diversionary Court program. As the first court of its kind in Minnesota, it exists to provide an option for Veterans that have had encounters with the criminal court system, and to provide an alternative to prison. DVOP staff work closely with the court on assessment, referral, and job placement.

DEMOBILIZING/RECENTLY SEPARATED VETERANS: Minnesota's "Beyond the Yellow Ribbon" Reintegration Campaign is the backbone of post deployment reintegration services. Minnesota DVOP/LVER staff have been a critical part of this process which includes 5 different events for Service members and their families.

The process begins 3–4 months before deployment. "Family Readiness Academies" are designed to give families an opportunity to ask questions, and provide information to Troops and their families on what to expect during the deployment. DVOP staff provide resource information and referrals for assorted common issues faced by families, information on Veterans benefits, and employment information for spouses.

Approximately 30 to 60 days before Troops return home, a "Yellow Ribbon Community Event" is sponsored to help families understand and support their returning Soldiers.

Business owners, educators, civic leaders and law enforcement are called together for a briefing on what they can expect upon their Soldiers return. LVER staff provide resource information, and answers to some difficult questions relating to their combat experience, and how that may affect their lives.

LVER staff update and modify their marketing material based on their employer audience, the type of unit returning, and the predominant skill set of those Troops.

Twenty six (26) Minnesota service providers send staff and materials to various locations as Troops return from overseas deployment for an Initial Reintegration Event.

LVER staff conduct group presentations to groups of Soldiers. The Soldiers are referred to the AJC staff to determine if they have an SBE, all SBE veterans are referred to the DVOP who works one-on-one with them to provide case management and intensive services, as appropriate. Non-SBE veterans will receive assistance from the AJC staff after these sessions to prepare resumes, practice interviewing skills, and assist with job search strategy. We also provide information on unemployment insurance, dislocated worker programs, employment and reemployment, and educational opportunities.

Following the initial reintegration events, follow-up events at 30/60/90 days are scheduled. Minnesota DVOP, LVER and AJC staff will continue to partner in these events, and plan to provide similar services to all returning Veterans from all branches via similar events.

(F) HOW THE STATE IMPLEMENTS AND MONITORS THE ADMINISTRATION OF
PRIORITY OF SERVICE TO COVERED PERSONS;

Priority of Service to Veterans will be provided to ensure Veterans receive first consideration for all opportunities for which they qualify in the WFC. Signage requests that new clients identify themselves if they are a Veteran. They are further identified through responses to a standardized questionnaire given to Veterans to assist reception to identify them. Access to DOL funded programs – Veterans and other eligible persons entitled to POS will be referred to DOL funded programs immediately. If a waiting list for the program exists, the Veteran will be put at the top of the list for service. Workshops – All workshops available in the WFC will have open slots available to Veterans up to the day the workshop is scheduled. State Job Bank – Veterans (current and former Military members) are able to identify themselves as such, and are listed at the beginning of searches done by recruiters and employers. Employers are also able to self-designate as "Veterans Friendly Employer" so that Veterans can do keyword searches to find employers seeking Veterans for hire. Training of Partner Staff on priority of service to ensure the process is instituted throughout the workforce community. Several processes will be used to monitor POS statewide and within each area of the State in which covered programs operate: 1) Information provided by DVOP/LVER staff or customers, 2) DVET onsite visits (including DOL-VETS audits with the State Director of Veterans Employment Programs, 3) Managers Quarterly Reports.

(G) HOW THE STATE PROVIDES OR INTENDS TO PROVIDE AND MEASURE, THROUGH BOTH THE DVOP AND ONE-STOP DELIVERY SYSTEM PARTNER STAFF:

1. JOB AND JOB TRAINING INDIVIDUALIZED CAREER SERVICES,

Currently Minnesota tracks services for veterans within two different systems. DVOP services to veterans with a significant barrier to employment are enrolled, tracked and managed through our case management system, WorkforceOne. Specific services and resources will vary depending on WFC partners and funding. Typically services are delivered to SBE Veterans via a case management model by a DVOP. Based on need, these services may include resume review and assistance, mock interviewing practice including answers to difficult or challenging questions, assistance with social media strategies, and assistance with an internet job search. Job training/skill assessments are provided by partner staff, and in the case of training/educational needs, the VA CH31 program. Services provided to Veterans with no significant barrier to employment by partner staff and non-JVSG staff are recorded and tracked within Minnesotaworks.net., and also depend on resource availability. Along with other WIOA required titles, options are being considered to have a more unified data collection and management system to streamline systems and provide better reporting on services and outcomes.

2. EMPLOYMENT PLACEMENT SERVICES, AND

Currently Minnesota tracks services, including placement services for veterans within two different systems. DVOP services to veterans with a significant barrier to employment are entered, tracked and managed through our case management system, WorkforceOne. Services provided to veterans with no significant barrier to employment by partner staff and non-JVSG staff are recorded and tracked within Minnesotaworks.net. Activities, services, and performance are also tracked via State Performance Outcome Data reports. Veterans are encouraged to post their resumes on Minnesotaworks.net (among others) so employers can access them as they search for candidates. LVER staff constantly update their working list of SBE and CH31 Veterans seeking work so they can promote specific Vets as they meet with employers. LVER's also do much of their job development and promotion based on the Veterans on the DVOP caseload. LVER staff also plan, organize, promote and facilitate local WFC "Business of the Day" events, and smaller local job fairs and hiring events. Along with other WIOA required titles, options are being considered to have a more unified data collection and management system to streamline systems and provide better reporting on services and outcomes.

Specific services and resources will vary depending on WFC partners and funding.

3. JOB-DRIVEN TRAINING AND SUBSEQUENT PLACEMENT SERVICE PROGRAM FOR ELIGIBLE VETERANS AND ELIGIBLE PERSONS;

LVER's have been trained to interpret Labor Market Information, and to review this data with employers as they look to grow their workforce and develop current employees. Employees with the skill sets to go with updated equipment and technology are critical. LVER staff are familiar with programs like Career Pathways and P2P that help businesses "grow their own" high skilled staff. LVER staff are also familiar with OJT programs and apprenticeships and promote these with employers also. Hiring incentives like WOTC are also promoted when appropriate. Finally, LVER's educate employers on the opportunities the GI Bill and the "Minnesota GI Bill" can provide.

(H) THE HIRE DATE ALONG WITH MANDATORY TRAINING COMPLETION DATES
FOR ALL DVOP SPECIALISTS AND LVER STAFF; AND

JOBS FOR VETERANS STATE GRANT STAFFING and TRAINING DIRECTORY

| LAST NAME | FIRST NAME | Office Address | Date Appointed to Current Position | DV OP | LVER | Position Vacant | Program Manager | DVOP | | | |
|----------------|------------|----------------|------------------------------------|-------|------|-----------------|-----------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| LaBeau | Timothy | Blaine | 11/20/2002 | 1 | - | - | - | 2003-05 | 2016-03 | - | 2011-09 |
| Mann | Mark | Brooklyn Park | 2/15/2008 | - | 1 | - | - | 2008-03 | 2008-04 | - | 2016-01 |
| McCauley | Joann | St. Paul | 4/28/1999 | - | 1 | - | - | - | 2010-12 | 2009-12 | 2008-02 |
| McNair | Kathryn | Mankato | 5/27/2014 | 1 | - | - | - | 2014-08 | 2014-11 | - | - |
| Metcalf | Scott | Rochester | 6/15/2009 | 1 | - | - | - | 2011-08 | 2010-12 | - | 2012-05 |
| Okerstrom | Lee | St. Paul | 8/27/2014 | 1 | - | - | - | 2014-12 | 2015-05 | - | - |
| Pacheco | Valentino | Bemidji | 11/5/2015 | 1 | - | - | - | 2016-02 | - | - | - |
| Platt | Barry | Mankato | 4/22/2015 | - | 1 | - | - | - | - | - | 2015-08 |
| Reese | Amanda | Hibbing | 11/25/2015 | 1 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| Roach | Jennifer | St. Paul | 11/5/2015 | 1 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| Schllinger | LaDean | Alexandria | 8/3/2000 | - | 1 | - | - | 2015-11 | 2010-12 | 2015-11 | 2015-02 |
| Trumbull | Timothy | Duluth | 5/4/2015 | - | 1 | - | - | - | - | - | 2015-09 |
| Vanderscheuren | Benjamin | Duluth | 8/27/2010 | 1 | - | - | - | 2015-03 | 2015-11 | - | 2012-06 |
| Weisenberger | John | Fergus Falls | 8/12/2002 | 1 | - | - | - | 2002-04 | 2010-12 | - | - |
| Williams | Deric | Minneapolis | 4/23/2014 | 1 | - | - | - | 2014-08 | 2014-07 | - | - |
| Wold | David | Brooklyn Park | 6/29/2009 | 1 | - | - | - | 2009-09 | 2015-11 | - | - |
| ** Vacant ** | - | Bloomington | - | 1 | - | 1 | - | - | - | - | - |

(I) SUCH ADDITIONAL INFORMATION AS THE SECRETARY MAY REQUIRE.

N/A, as of the date of submission.

SENIOR COMMUNITY SERVICE EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM (SCSEP)

At minimum, in the SCSEP stand-alone submission and the SCSEP portion of the Combined State Plan, States should comprehensively cover the following elements.

(A) ECONOMIC PROJECTIONS AND IMPACT

States must:

1. DISCUSS LONG-TERM PROJECTIONS FOR JOBS IN INDUSTRIES AND OCCUPATIONS IN THE STATE THAT MAY PROVIDE EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES FOR OLDER WORKERS. (20 CFR 641.302(D))(MAY ALTERNATIVELY BE DISCUSSED IN THE ECONOMIC ANALYSIS SECTION OF STRATEGIC PLAN.)

The Local Workforce Development Areas (LWDA) like Arrowhead Economic Opportunity Agency (AEOA), under the leadership of the Workforce Board, places a strong emphasis on developing job-driven strategies that align with the demand industries and occupations in the local and regional areas. It is vital that the staff and participants have access to current labor market information that they can utilize in making informed decisions regarding skill development and job goals. This is accomplished in a variety of ways and facilitated by program staff. Staff is provided with the necessary tools and resources to remain knowledgeable of in-demand jobs and occupations. Up-to-date information on local regional high-growth, in-demand occupations is readily available, and SCSEP participants are instructed on how to access this information.

The SCSEP staff is supported in this effort through in-service trainings with the DEED's (DEED) local regional labor analyst, data sources through DEED and ISEEK, featured publications, data mining tools, job vacancy survey results, and the Minnesota Occupational Employment Statistics (OES). Staff will be exposed to the DEED Career Profile tool and will begin to utilize this in their work with participants.

Participants are assisted 1-1 in assessing their skills and abilities and in identifying potential job opportunities in the local labor market, including in-demand industries and hot jobs. The development of a participant's community service assignment is very important in establishing goals and objectives to enhance his or her employment opportunities in the local job market.

Given the current economic and demographic trends as well as the desire of many older individuals to remain in or re-enter the work force, issues relating to older workers' "trainability" as well as the economic payoffs from training influence decisions about whom and when to train as well as the participation of older individuals in training.

Most host agencies that we have utilized have been extremely pleased with the older workers that have been placed in their organizations. In fact, employers generally rate older workers highly in terms of their dependability, loyalty, and commitment.

Employers are realizing the ability of older adults to learn new things, especially as related to technological changes in the workplace. Some older workers have had the opportunity in past years, to participate in "work specific" classes to enhance their employability (MJSP Office Works and MN Department of Commerce SETT Sustainable Employment Training and Trade). In addition, all older workers are encouraged to take advantage of the computer classes that are offered through the Adult Basic Education classrooms at the local WorkForce Centers. This year, participation will be mandatory. Studies indicate that older workers can adjust to computerized word processing, but they may take longer to learn and may need more assistance while learning.

Some studies have revealed that the costs and benefits of training older workers suggests that any added costs of training older workers may be offset by savings elsewhere because older workers stay on the job longer than younger workers (3 years as compared to 1 year). Thus, the return on investment for training was actually greater than that of younger workers. Older workers have also proven to be better sales people than younger workers.

As older individuals continue to have successful experiences in both training programs and the work force, the issues of "trainability" payoff are dissipating. Hopefully the forward-looking businesses will look beyond the negative stereotypes and develop or participate in programs that will attract and retain older workers.

2. DISCUSS HOW THE LONG-TERM JOB PROJECTIONS DISCUSSED IN THE ECONOMIC ANALYSIS SECTION OF STRATEGIC PLAN RELATE TO THE TYPES OF UNSUBSIDIZED JOBS FOR WHICH SCSEP PARTICIPANTS WILL BE TRAINED AND THE TYPES OF SKILL TRAINING TO BE PROVIDED. (20 CFR 641.302(D))

Note: Minnesota's American Job Centers established by the Minnesota DEED (DEED) are called "WorkForce Centers" (WFC). Each SCSEP subgrantee work with Labor Market Information (LMI) and their local areas to identify companies in their region that fall into local high growth industry categories and local occupations in demand that have the types of jobs that are appropriate for SCSEP participants.

The following are the current top 10 high growth industries in Minnesota: Education and Health Services, Trade, Transportation and Utilities, Professional and Business Services, Manufacturing, Leisure and Hospitality, Financial Activities, Public Administration, Construction, Other Services and Natural Resources and Mining. Other areas to take into consideration and analyze in determining job opportunities and training is the Occupations in Demand and Employment Projections which are located at these two DEED's websites: Occupations in Demand and Employment Projections. The Employment Outlook tool shows which industries and occupations are expected to grow and which ones are expected to shrink over the next decade in Minnesota. This tool also provides access to short-term – one year – employment forecasts. Data are broken down by region, state and nation.

The following are the current top 10 high growth occupations in demand in Minnesota: Registered Nurses, Combined Food Preparation and Serving Workers, Inc., Stock Clerks and Order Fillers, Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers, Customer Service Representatives, Office Clerks, General, Software Developers, Applications, Personal Care Aides, Cashiers and Licensed Practical and Licensed Vocational Nurses.

Senior workers can be trained to enter jobs in these industries and occupations in demand. Staff work with economic development agencies and the high growth employers to fine-tune individual employer workforce and training needs. Using this information, staff can ensure participants, to the extent possible, are trained for particular jobs in specific high growth industries and occupations.

Community colleges, community education providers, WorkForce Centers, and professional retired individuals may be utilized for training resources. Key organizations that serve diverse populations assist with special needs training plans and assignments. With the increased labor shortage and skills gap, SCSEP participants may need additional training to compete in the labor market, and referrals to other supportive services, co-enrollment into (Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) and funding for other formal training may increase.

Also, Web-based regional labor market profiles are available on DEED's website under the heading Regional Labor Market Information to assist in the assessment of employer needs in each economic development region. Regional economic profiles also help identify short- and long-term skills needed by individuals to secure jobs in the region.

Besides those Regions that are identified in the Section in the Regional Labor Market Information website, there are other regions of the State that have key partners in their regions. For example, Duluth and northeastern Minnesota has the Northland Works (public awareness campaign), the Workforce Strategy Task Force (comprised of several leaders from these sectors: private business, education (primary, secondary and post-secondary), City Council, economic development (both municipal and private) and community based organizations. In addition the Blueprint to End Poverty – Initiated by Community Action – Duluth, this guiding coalition (steering committee) has had three community engagement sessions with low income people and community stakeholders to develop strategies to end poverty. Utilizing SCSEP can be a key component to help low income people out of poverty.

Examples of subsidized jobs that could be developed include: Case Aide; Educational Aide; Occupational Therapy Aide; Recreation Club Manager; Recreation Leader; Health Services Aide; Kitchen Helper; Laundry Laborer; Child Care Attendant; Outreach Worker; Recreation Facility Attendant; Municipal Utilities Worker; Bus Driver; Laboratory Sample Assistant; Library Aide; Clerical Aide; File Clerk; Clerk-Typist; Forest Conservation Aide; Groundskeeper; Maintenance Carpenter; Insulation/Weatherization Worker; Road Maintenance Worker and Building Maintenance Worker.

Minnesota will continue the customized training component with the small businesses that are the primary private sector employers of SCSEP participants. Over the last decade, small businesses have generated 60 to 80 percent of net new jobs annually. In many areas, small businesses may be the only source of jobs for job seekers, particularly when those workers are low-income and elderly. Working with small business employers to provide customized training has proven to be a successful placement model; subgrantees can replicate this model in new and current SCSEP areas.

Transition into unsubsidized jobs at worksite agencies is one method of meeting the 54.3 percent Entered Employment goal. SCSEP staff encourages host agencies to hire participants when permanent positions become available. Another placement method includes the use of a job developer who obtains job openings information or referrals to local Job Service offices who make the placements of SCSEP participants.

During the development of an Individualized Employment Plan (IEP), permanent unsubsidized employment goals for each participant will be identified as well as activities and services necessary to attain their goals. The IEP describes the steps needed to place SCSEP participants into unsubsidized employment.

SCSEP job development requires finding job opportunities inside or outside the project areas which are suitable for participants. Using LMI to determine expanding industries, SCSEP subgrantees and job developers' work with area employers to develop openings which meet the needs of both participants and corporate entities. Some agencies maintain a reservoir of current listings of job opportunities, which facilitates the job match. Job developers perform highly individualized job development efforts resulting in close matches between participant job goals and unsubsidized employment placements resulting in higher motivation to stay on the job. Subgrantees require participants to do job searches, to write sample job application and attend interviewing technique workshops that are conducted periodically throughout the service area for SCSEP participants.

Strategies for organizing job search, application preparation, interviewing techniques and leads on job openings are presented. Participants may secure support services for job search and travel to job interviews.

Minnesota intends to ensure that services are widely available and that wherever possible, publicly funded services will augment, not compete with, services available in the for-profit and nonprofit market. New partnerships can extend the reach of Minnesota's workforce development system. For example, the on-going initiative is to expand the knowledge of the availability of MinnesotaWorks (Minnesota's Job Bank) through the local libraries and beyond.

Examples of sites that may be contacted by staff in the development of worksites are schools, city and county offices, senior citizen sites, nutrition and transportation programs, foster grandparent programs, senior companion programs, chore service, weatherization/energy crews, county garages, state parks, the U.S. Forest Service, state lands and forestry stations, nursing homes and a multitude of other federal, state and local public and private non-profit agencies, departments and organizations.

Positions developed by staff are related as closely as possible to the results of the individual assessment of the participant's abilities and preferences. In developing subsidized employment positions, priority is given to those jobs that directly serve other seniors. Developing positions in geographic proximity to the participant's residence is considered as long as the position provides meaningful work experience.

Worksite placement followed by meetings with the counselor provide further information regarding suitability and desirability of a continued placement, as well as new directions which might be pursued for alternative placements, other employment and training opportunities and unsubsidized job placements. Participant's positions are developed on the basis of an assessment of the individual's needs and aptitudes.

Development of community service assignments is an ongoing process. It requires that staff be aware of local community needs, agencies/organizations that can act as host agencies, and the quality of services that can be provided by the host agency to the participant. Although development is ongoing, selection of an assignment is based primarily on the participants' interests, abilities, goals and other needs as described in the IEP. Subgrantees therefore do not designate specific "priority areas" or types of assignments, because each assignment is based on the IEP.

Program staff uses the assessment and IEP as the basis for community service assignment and training. If we do not have a suitable assignment on file, staff will contact a current or prospective agency to see if a suitable position can be developed for the new participant. In smaller communities, there may be only one eligible agency. If the participant is unable to drive a distance, we may have to develop an assignment which is not a perfect match.

Participants placed in subsidized jobs receive the majority of their training at the worksite (on-the-job training). The teaching of job skills through demonstration, practice and instruction sharpens and upgrades skills not recently used. Worksite supervisors and other regular work station personnel familiar with the various tools, equipment, duties, procedures for task accomplishment and requirements of the site provide the necessary training to participants at no cost to the program. Worksites send participants to workshops and seminars benefiting participant performance which in turn increases employability, and facilitating transition into unsubsidized employment at the site with

another employer. Community education programs and community colleges are also utilized to provide training to improve skill levels, or enhance existing skills.

Extra vocational training may be offered, including time management, effective communication, learning job-seeking skills, interviewing techniques and job application procedures. Workshops may be provided by Career Development Specialists, where available, or taught individually by counselors. The training needs of participants are assessed at least two times per year.

A limited amount of funds will be utilized for auxiliary training which cannot be secured cost-free to the program. Charges for materials and tuition fees will be reimbursed to participants or will be paid directly upon billing on their behalf.

One of the strategies will be to increase the focus on job placement through job development. This may include conducting a thorough assessment of skills, an assessment of community needs relative to employment, and networking within the community to locate and/or develop suitable unsubsidized employment for participants. Additionally, On-the-Job Experience (OJE's) will be utilized to help the participants' transition to other employment as well. At each WorkForce Center site in Rural Minnesota CEP, the teams recruit employers to attend Job Clubs and feature an "Employer of the Week." Employers discuss job openings, job requirements and qualifications. SCSEP participants will be included in these sessions. The job search component is planned become more formalized. Enrollees will need to meet with the SCSEP Employment Coordinator on a weekly basis to review postings through the WorkForce Center.

3. DISCUSS CURRENT AND PROJECTED EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES IN THE STATE (SUCH AS BY PROVIDING INFORMATION AVAILABLE UNDER §15 OF THE WAGNER-PEYSER ACT (29 U.S.C. 491-2) BY OCCUPATION), AND THE TYPES OF SKILLS POSSESSED BY ELIGIBLE INDIVIDUALS. (20 CFR 641.325(C))

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(B) SERVICE DELIVERY AND COORDINATION

States must:

1. PROVIDE A DESCRIPTION OF ACTIONS TO COORDINATE SCSEP WITH OTHER PROGRAMS

This may alternatively be discussed in the State strategies section of the strategic plan, but regardless of placement in document, must include:

(A) ACTIONS TO COORDINATE ACTIVITIES OF SCSEP GRANTEEES WITH WIOA TITLE I PROGRAMS, INCLUDING PLANS FOR USING THE WIOA ONE-STOP DELIVERY SYSTEM AND ITS PARTNERS TO SERVE INDIVIDUALS AGED 55 AND OLDER. (20 CFR 641.302(G), 641.325(E))

Strong partnerships with other agencies and organizations that serve the older worker population will or have been established with the Department of Health and Human Services, State Board on Aging, LWDBs, social service organizations providing services to older individuals such as Mature Worker program, VRS, Job Service, and other organizations including businesses and labor.

Minnesota's SCSEP providers are being offered the opportunity to collaborate with the WorkForce Center System to further the resources available to the older worker by accessing the core, or universal, services of the system. Coordination also increases the availability of SCSEP to appropriate WorkForce Center customers. Through the WorkForce Center System, DEED will bring together those involved in the older worker community through meetings, development of materials (including web resources, publications, and promotional material) and forums (meetings and roundtables) encouraging collaboration and seeking to eliminate service gaps. Easy accessibility, partnering and seamless services will be greater components of SCSEP for providers and their customers.

Local WorkForce Center plans have resulted in partnerships that include a variety of community-based organizations, local collaborations and local referral sources to assist customers in accessing services including transportation, housing, health and other workforce development services.

Minnesota's Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP) providers are being offered the opportunity to collaborate with the WorkForce Center System to further the resources available to older workers by accessing the core or universal services of the system. Coordination also increases the availability of SCSEP to appropriate WorkForce Center customers. Through the WorkForce Center System, DEED will bring together those involved in the older worker community through meetings, development of materials (including web resources, publications and promotional material) and forums (meetings and roundtables) encouraging collaboration and seeking to eliminate service gaps. DEED takes on a proactive approach to resources for older workers. One of the many projects is the Reception and Resource Area Forum (RRAF). This is a website providing current information, best practices and new projects to be viewed and shared by every WorkForce Center. This site is also dedicated to the collaboration, communication, innovation, resources, training and projects related to RRAF and is an extension of the Minnesota DEED (DEED) that serves the interests of the customers visiting the Minnesota WorkForce Centers.

The state encourages co-enrollment, as appropriate, of older workers in the Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP) and WIOA Title I programs in order for them to receive comprehensive training supports and employment services.

The state provides information and referrals to potentially eligible individuals on other federally supported programs (e.g., Community Development Block Grant programs, Social Security Title XX programs, Energy Assistance programs, etc.) so individuals receive assistance in meeting social service and training needs.

(B) ACTIONS TO COORDINATE ACTIVITIES OF SCSEP GRANTEES WITH THE ACTIVITIES TO BE CARRIED OUT IN THE STATE UNDER THE OTHER TITLES OF THE OAA. (20 CFR 641.302(H))

DEED is one of three national Title V Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP) sponsors operating in Minnesota. At the state level, cooperative relationships have been developed with all Title V SCSEP national sponsors operating in Minnesota. These include Experience Works, National Indian Council on Aging, and National Senior Service America, Inc.

The WorkForce Center System has joined with other providers of workforce development services to create a one-stop delivery system. The partnership brings together State, county, and private nonprofit workforce development services under one roof, providing a seamless and comprehensive system to job seekers and employers. As part of the SCSEP State Plan, DEED promotes further coordination and collaboration between SCSEP service providers and the one-stop system.

(C) ACTIONS TO COORDINATE SCSEP WITH OTHER PRIVATE AND PUBLIC ENTITIES AND PROGRAMS THAT PROVIDE SERVICES TO OLDER AMERICANS, SUCH AS COMMUNITY AND FAITH-BASED ORGANIZATIONS, TRANSPORTATION PROGRAMS, AND PROGRAMS FOR THOSE WITH SPECIAL NEEDS OR DISABILITIES. (20 CFR 641.302(I))

DEED has consistently worked to develop strong partnerships with agencies and organizations serving the older worker population and rural areas. Every effort is in place to work with the local economic development offices in the rural areas.

(D) ACTIONS TO COORDINATE SCSEP WITH OTHER LABOR MARKET AND JOB TRAINING INITIATIVES. (20 CFR 641.302(J))

DEED has consistently worked to develop strong partnerships with agencies and organizations serving the older worker population and rural areas. Every effort is in place to work with the local economic development offices in the rural areas.

(E) ACTIONS THE STATE WILL TAKE TO ENSURE THAT SCSEP IS AN ACTIVE PARTNER IN THE ONE-STOP DELIVERY SYSTEM AND THE STEPS THE STATE WILL TAKE TO ENCOURAGE AND IMPROVE COORDINATION WITH THE ONE-STOP DELIVERY SYSTEM. (20 CFR 641.335)

DEED has consistently worked to develop strong partnerships with agencies and organizations serving the older worker population and rural areas. Every effort is in place to work with the local economic development offices in the rural areas.

(F) EFFORTS THE STATE WILL MAKE TO WORK WITH LOCAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OFFICES IN RURAL LOCATIONS.

DEED has consistently worked to develop strong partnerships with agencies and organizations serving the older worker population and rural areas. Every effort is in place to work with the local economic development offices in the rural areas.

2. DESCRIBE THE LONG-TERM STRATEGY FOR ENGAGING EMPLOYERS TO DEVELOP AND PROMOTE OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE PLACEMENT OF SCSEP PARTICIPANTS IN UNSUBSIDIZED EMPLOYMENT. (20 CFR 641.302(E)) (ALTERNATELY, THE STATE MAY DISCUSS THIS IN THE STATE STRATEGIES SECTION OF STRATEGIC PLAN IF SUBMITTING A COMBINED PLAN.)

The SCSEP approach for engaging employers in long-term strategies will stem from business engagement at three levels. These levels include the state board, the regional planning efforts and at the local board level. In working with GWDB, Local Workforce Development Areas, SCSEP agencies and other such entities, below are various strategies that are Minnesota is currently working on.

- 1) Increase opportunities for aging workers to do small business development and become entrepreneurs.
- 2) Train employers to do a better job communicating the type of skills that they need, in ways that do not hinder older applicants.
- 3) DEED sponsors workshops for employers on how to establish on-the-job training and focus on knowledge transfer strategies, which help aging workers.
- 4) Develop a strategy and model for success, including both paid and unpaid work.
- 5) The DEED business services representatives need to work with local employers on aging employee retention and managing a multigenerational workforce effectively.
- 6) Show how Volunteering at an organization/company you want to work at has become quite common, and is helping aging job seekers connect with potential employers.
- 7) Guide employers to network with specific schools that teach skills they need in their workforce, e.g. Hennepin County Technical College

The Governor's Workforce Development Board, made up of a majority of voting members representing private business, will contribute to developing and assessing long-term strategies that contribute to Minnesota's career pathway system. Given the current economic and demographic trends as well as the desire of many older individuals to remain in or re-enter the work force, issues relating to older workers' "trainability" as well as the economic payoffs from training influence decisions about whom and when to train as well as the participation of older individuals in training.

Employers are realizing the ability of older adults to learn new things, especially as related to technological changes in the workplace. Some of our older workers have had the opportunity in past years, to participate in "work specific" classes to enhance their employability (MJSP Office Works

and MN Department of Commerce SETT Sustainable Employment Training and Trade). In addition, all older workers are encouraged to take advantage of the computer classes that are offered through our Adult Basic Education classrooms at the local Workforce Centers. This year, participation will be mandatory. Studies indicate that older workers can adjust to computerized word processing, but they may take longer to learn and may need more assistance while learning. These are just some of the aspects to the opportunities that must be considered by the GWDB and its role in the workforce development system.

As the regions in Minnesota establish their sector strategies for occupations in demand that lead to family sustaining wages, considerations will have to include the older workforce. Some studies have revealed that the costs and benefits of training older workers suggests that any added costs of training older workers may be offset by savings elsewhere because older workers stay on the job longer than younger workers (3 years as compared to 1 year). Thus, the return on investment for training was actually greater than that of younger workers. Older workers have also proven to be better sales people than younger workers. These sector strategies are required to be business led, thus creating another opportunity for engagement in long term strategy that include older workers.

At the local board level, the strategies begin to become more tactical, allowing for SCSEP program providers to more directly engage with employers through sponsored activities, business services activities outlined in other sections of the State Combined Plan, as well directly with employers on the local boards. All of these efforts are contributing to more effective service delivery and opportunities for older workers to leverage services and resources.

3. DESCRIBE THE LONG-TERM STRATEGY FOR SERVING MINORITIES UNDER SCSEP. (20 CFR 641.302 (C))

Since DEED is subgranting program operations, the organizational structure of each project will be discussed individually with lines of authority following the organizational structure explanation of DEED, the grantor. Program management will be handled by the Workforce Development Division (WDD) of DEED. The WDD is responsible for:

- Recommending statewide employment and training policy
- Coordinating state and local employment and training programs
- Providing staff support to the GWDB
- Administering WIOA monies and other employment and training programs available to the Governor of Minnesota
- Initiating fund disbursement process including RFPs
- Making grant award recommendations
- Negotiating contracts
- Conducting program monitoring, assessment, and evaluation
- Interpreting policies

The director has overall responsibility for all activities within WDD. The responsibility for management and administration of SCSEP will be assigned to one Section within WDD. The following information describes the function of each Section, specific staff assigned to the program, percentage of time each staff position is assigned to the program, and a description of staff responsibilities and qualifications:

- WIOA programs, responsible for planning and program development for all WIOA grants • (which includes SCSEP and WIOA) and for providing staff support to the GWDB
- WDD and Fiscal Services, responsible for preparing all grant applications and all • sub-grants entered into by processing all subgrantee invoices and coordinating audits
- Program specialist, responsible for coordinating all SCSEP program activities and ensuring that all WDD staff assigned to the program receives appropriate training in SCSEP program operations, rules, and regulations

SUBPROJECT MANAGEMENT As previously indicated, all current subgrantees' programs will be continued. The rationale for continuing all current subgrantees is based upon subgrantee performance and conformance with the equitable distribution plan. The subprojects to be utilized under this contract are as follows: • Anoka County (governmental unit) • Arrowhead Economic Opportunity Agency (private, nonprofit corporation) • Duluth, City of (a municipal corporation, unit of government) • Experience Works (private, nonprofit corporation) • Inter County Community Council (nonprofit corporation) • Minnesota Chippewa Tribe (Tribal unit of government) • Minnesota Valley Action Council, Inc. (nonprofit corporation) • Rural Minnesota CEP, Inc. (nonprofit corporation) • Scott County (governmental unit) • Southwestern Minnesota Opportunity Council, Inc. (private, nonprofit corporation) • Washington County (governmental unit)

Each of these organizations has a proven record for providing both employment and training services and the needed fiscal and management accountability.

TRAINING OF SUBPROJECT (LOCAL) STAFF The following methods will be used to provide training for subgrantee staff and will be the responsibility of the program specialist: • At least once each year, the program specialist or field representative may meet with all subgrantees to review Title V program operations, highlight effective elements of the various programs, discuss common concerns, and answer programmatic questions. Subgrantees will have input in developing the agenda for these meetings. • As a part of regular monitoring visits, the program monitor will identify individual training and technical assistance needs and communicate these needs to the program specialist who will be responsible for assuring that appropriate training and technical assistance needs are met. For example, if a subgrantee has a new staff person working on the Title V program, the program specialist would provide that person with individual training regarding eligibility determination, program operations and related topics. • During the course of the year, many training opportunities and seminars are offered by various organizations that are relevant for SCSEP subgrantees. For example, the WDD provides staff training in employment and training-related activities such as outreach and recruitment, job development techniques, counseling, and disadvantaged and financial management. While these are primarily for WIOA staff, SCSEP program operators are invited to attend. Another example is the various training opportunities sponsored by the State Board on Aging and other Title V national sponsors.

As these training opportunities become available, subgrantees are notified and encouraged to attend.

PROJECT MONITORING Monitoring and evaluation involves the following procedures and will be the responsibility of staff indicated below:

- **Desk Monitoring/Technical Assistance:** Technical assistance regarding delays, problems and adversities which may materially affect the sub-grant project directors in obtaining their proposed goals will be provided via telephone, particularly during the start-up phase. Phone calls will continue periodically throughout the grant year to ensure the projects are progressing smoothly; invoices indicate balanced expenditures; and required regulations are met, as well as to answer any program-related questions which may develop.
- **Onsite Monitoring:** A monitoring review guide has been designed to assist WDD monitors in its planned onsite visits. General subcontractors and/or host agency areas to be monitored include program operations worksites and worksite records to ensure required on-the-job supervision is in fact being provided, application operations, complaints, orientation operations, and other proposed and necessary operations.

Upon completion of onsite visits, a monitoring report is written addressing all program operations with a corrective action Section if applicable. This Section will list all program discrepancies which must be alleviated, the time period by which corrections must be made, and a directive requesting the affected program sponsors to submit to WDD, in writing, the means they intend to employ in amending the cited problems. If any corrective action is required and noted in a monitoring report, a 30-day onsite follow-up with the program operator may be conducted to determine what steps have been taken to alleviate the problem. All monitoring reports, corrective action requests and follow-up will be made in writing and will be included in the permanent file for each subgrantee.

FINANCIAL MONITORING • Desk Monitoring: Subgrantees are required to submit invoices at least monthly which identify both actual expenditures and accrual estimates for the invoicing period. The program specialist, field representative and contracts officer receive a copy of the monthly invoices for review. In addition to reviewing the invoices for accuracy, the actual rate of expenditures will be compared with planned expenditures for each subgrantee. If a subgrantee is found to be over expended or under expended by more than 15 percent, the program specialist will follow-up with the subgrantee to determine the reason for the variance and to recommend corrective action, if necessary. • **Onsite Monitoring:** As a part of regular monitoring visits by the program monitor, each subgrantee's financial management system, including the system for internal controls, will be reviewed. A fiscal monitoring review guide is used as a basis for monitoring subgrantee financial management systems. Financial monitoring will include, but not be limited to, the following:

- o Trace amounts claimed on monthly invoices back to books of original entry and source of documentation to ensure that there is an adequate audit trail
- o Ensure that sources of documentation are complete and accurate
- o Ensure that costs are being assigned to proper cost categories, allowable, and accrued properly
- o Ensure that adequate internal controls have been established

If any problems are disclosed as a result of monitoring subgrantee financial management systems, corrective action will be cited in the monitoring report that will include a description of discrepancies that must be alleviated, the time period by which corrections must be made and the requirement that the subgrantee submit to WDD, in writing, the way in which the problems will be resolved. Both Minnesota's Office of the Legislative Auditor and DEED have staff available to more closely investigate financial management systems and provide technical assistance to subgrantees to correct problems. When necessary, onsite follow-up will be conducted to ensure that financial problems have been resolved.

If a SCSEP provider desires additional state slots, new state slots, or to renegotiate the number of state slots, a Request for Proposal (RFP) process may need to happen to judge the process fairly.

4. LIST NEEDED COMMUNITY SERVICES AND THE EXACT PLACES WHERE THESE SERVICES ARE MOST NEEDED. SPECIFICALLY, THE PLAN MUST ADDRESS THE NEEDS AND LOCATION(S) OF THOSE INDIVIDUALS MOST IN NEED OF COMMUNITY SERVICES AND THE GROUPS WORKING TO MEET THEIR NEEDS. (20 CFR 641.330)

The needed community services are primarily focused on office and clerical support. The place locations include SCSEP sub-grantee offices, libraries, WorkForce Centers, healthcare centers and non-profit agencies supporting other social issues. In greater Minnesota, which is primarily rural, sub-grantees rely on locating with organizations in the larger communities, serving as county administrative locations or regional hubs of economic activity. In the metro area, locations focus more on connectivity to services and host sites.

With Minnesota's focus on career pathways and sector partnerships, it will be necessary to develop a deeper understanding of the role of older workers in meeting the needs of business through career pathway approaches. With Minnesota's aging workforce, solutions to keeping older workers actively engaged and meeting their economic needs presents an opportunity for business to rethink their labor supply chain. Sector partnerships will be asked to support an assessment of the role of older workers and their potential in meeting the needs of sector strategies. For the purposes of the State Plan, this assessment has not been completed. The state will work with the sub-grantees and local workforce development boards to provide this information to the Regional FPO within 30 days.

5. DESCRIBE THE LONG-TERM STRATEGY TO IMPROVE SCSEP SERVICES, INCLUDING PLANNED LONG-TERM CHANGES TO THE DESIGN OF THE PROGRAM WITHIN THE STATE, AND PLANNED CHANGES IN THE USE OF SCSEP GRANTEEES AND PROGRAM OPERATORS TO BETTER ACHIEVE THE GOALS OF THE PROGRAM. THIS MAY INCLUDE RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE DEPARTMENT AS APPROPRIATE. (20 CFR 641.302(K))

The ratio of eligible individuals in each of the service areas to the total eligible population in Minnesota is determined by the job demand relative to current employment levels and the ratio of available claimants to job vacancies, serve as indicator to possible occupationally associated skill gaps and their level of demand. The table in VII.c.1 is a snapshot of what is happening for each of the counties in Minnesota.

The total number of older adults (age 55-plus) is anticipated to double between 2010 and 2030, rising to 1.3 million. By then, more than one in five Minnesotans will be an older adult.

Currently, one in seven Minnesotans age 65 and older lives in poverty and over half of them (38,463) are women. While the labor force participation rate of men age 55-plus will continue to exceed that of women during the current decade, most of the increases in labor force participant of this age group will come from women.

6. DESCRIBE A STRATEGY FOR CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT IN THE LEVEL OF PERFORMANCE FOR SCSEP PARTICIPANTS' ENTRY INTO UNSUBSIDIZED EMPLOYMENT, AND TO ACHIEVE, AT A MINIMUM, THE LEVELS SPECIFIED IN OAA SECTION 513(A)(2)(E)(II). (20 CFR 641.302(F))

The State's Strategy for continued improvement in the level of performance is reviewing Minnesota's needs in terms of occupations in demand (OID) and training the SCSEP participants in those occupations and industries that are in demand.

The following are the current top 10 high growth occupations in demand in Minnesota: Registered Nurses, Combined Food Preparation and Serving Workers, Inc., Stock Clerks and Order Fillers, Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers, Customer Service Representatives, Office Clerks, General, Software Developers, Applications, Personal Care Aides, Cashiers and Licensed Practical and Licensed Vocational Nurses.

Senior workers can be trained to enter jobs in these industries and OIDs. Staff will work with economic development agencies and the high growth employers to fine-tune individual employer workforce and training needs. Using this information, staff can ensure participants, to the extent possible, are trained for particular jobs in specific high growth industries and occupations.

Community colleges, community education providers, Workforce Centers, and professional retired individuals may be utilized for training resources. Key organizations that serve diverse populations assist with special needs training plans and assignments. With the increased labor shortage and skills gap, SCSEP participants may need additional training to compete in the labor market, and referrals to other supportive services, co-enrollment into (Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) and funding for other formal training may increase.

(C) LOCATION AND POPULATION SERVED, INCLUDING EQUITABLE DISTRIBUTION

States must:

1. DESCRIBE THE LOCALITIES AND POPULATIONS FOR WHICH PROJECTS OF THE TYPE AUTHORIZED BY TITLE V ARE MOST NEEDED. (20 CFR 641.325 (D))

The location of services and populations to be served are determined by a number of factors. The USDOL determines the slot allocations for each state at the county level based on census data and poverty rates. Once this is determined, local service providers, using labor market information, prepare strategies and approaches for delivering the SCSEP program. Minnesota will focus efforts in the areas of greatest need based on the unemployment rate. Using the following Labor Market data based on the current unemployment rates for Minnesota, identifies those counties for which projects of the type authorized by SCSEP are most needed where the unemployment rate is above the state average.

In reviewing the below Unemployment Statistics for Minnesota Aitkin 8.2%, Cass 9.3%, Clearwater 13.1%, Hubbard 8.6%, Itasca 9.2%, Kanabec 10%, Lake 9.7%, Marshall 9.8%, Red Lake 8.9% will be counties that will have more focus on during the upcoming years and will recommend minor changes to the distribution of authorized positions to the counties with the highest unemployment in the State.

The location of services tend to be in the towns that are county seats or major cities serving as regional hubs for the rural areas. The metro area focuses more on location connections to other service providers. Sub-grantees are often collocated with other service providers, such as Workforce Centers, Colleges, or human service agencies. Location can be critical to address the challenges of inadequate resources to enable program requirements to be met (e.g., few host agencies or employers, lack of transportation, etc.). Nevertheless, all sub-grantees will work to follow and meet the equitable distribution formula released by Department of Labor. Minnesota's equitable distribution formula ensures rural and urban counties are served equitably. Strategies will include specific host agency recruitment in rural areas that are undeserved.

Experience Works, Minnesota Chippewa Tribe, National Indian Council on Aging and others have a long history of successfully partnering with other service providers to serve as host agencies. Participants are provided community service assignments at many libraries, senior centers, schools and nutrition sites. SCSEP sub-grantees assists with outreach and recruitment efforts and hire participants when possible. They also provide supportive services, such as transportation, medical services, free meals, wellness classes, legal aid, elder-abuse prevention, tax preparation, and socialization, to address barriers to employment.

Minnesota will be working with SCSEP sub-grantees in these areas to develop steps to correct inequities to achieve employment opportunities and equitable distribution. A few strategies are as follows:

- Utilize equitable distribution report provided on www.SCSEPed.org to monitor and track the equitable distribution.
- Develop strategies to address over and underserved areas. Strategies will include the following:

- o Recruit host agencies in underserved counties;
 - o Outreach to participants who have the greatest barriers to employment in underserved areas;
 - o Enroll more in underserved areas and close enrollments in over served areas and ; and
 - o Increase specialized training and job development activities in underserved areas.
- Discuss the potential to move state program participants located in over served areas to the national program.
 - Advertising within local community papers, utilizing TV PSA's, providing flyers, pamphlets, and other marketing tools that will aid in educating city/county government agencies;
 - Holding face-to-face presentations and discussions with non-profit and for-profit agencies/employers and city/county officials as well as community clubs and organizations whose focus are community improvement and employment for the older population; and
 - Continuing to open host agencies within those communities which serve those that are most-in-need and have the greatest barriers to employment and continue to make referrals to other additional resources if available.

As part of the overall State strategy to create career pathways through sector partnerships, the six regions in Minnesota will be required to include SCSEP sub-grantees in their career pathway development models. With Minnesota's rapidly aging population and many seniors needing to postpone retirement and seeking new work opportunities, it is critical to include all possible workforce participants and the opportunities that may benefit them and businesses. This process will begin to take shape during the first two years of the WIOA plan and will be assessed with the following two years of the WIOA plan.

| Area - | Labor Force | Employment | Unemployment | Unemployment Rate |
|-------------------|-------------|------------|--------------|-------------------|
| Aitkin County | 6,849 | 6,290 | 559 | 8.2% |
| Anoka County | 194,170 | 186,270 | 7,900 | 4.1% |
| Becker County | 18,746 | 17,616 | 1,130 | 6% |
| Beltrami County | 24,224 | 22,776 | 1,448 | 6% |
| Benton County | 22,531 | 21,254 | 1,277 | 5.7% |
| Big Stone County | 2,677 | 2,492 | 185 | 6.9% |
| Blue Earth County | 40,105 | 38,679 | 1,426 | 3.6% |
| Brown County | 14,613 | 13,846 | 767 | 5.2% |
| Carlton County | 17,610 | 16,468 | 1,142 | 6.5% |
| Carver County | 55,946 | 53,888 | 2,058 | 3.7% |
| Cass County | 13,650 | 12,383 | 1,267 | 9.3% |
| Chippewa County | 6,968 | 6,528 | 440 | 6.3% |
| Chisago County | 29,640 | 28,058 | 1,582 | 5.3% |
| Clay County | 36,819 | 35,264 | 1,555 | 4.2% |
| Clearwater County | 4,854 | 4,217 | 637 | 13.1% |
| Cook County | 3,050 | 2,875 | 175 | 5.7% |
| Cottonwood County | 5,903 | 5,564 | 339 | 5.7% |
| Crow Wing County | 31,284 | 29,115 | 2,169 | 6.9% |
| Dakota County | 237,712 | 228,973 | 8,739 | 3.7% |

| Area - | Labor Force | Employment | Unemployment | Unemployment Rate |
|--------------------------|-------------|------------|--------------|-------------------|
| Dodge County | 11,694 | 11,113 | 581 | 5% |
| Douglas County | 20,101 | 19,179 | 922 | 4.6% |
| Faribault County | 7,380 | 6,983 | 397 | 5.4% |
| Fillmore County | 11,572 | 10,942 | 630 | 5.4% |
| Freeborn County | 16,225 | 15,510 | 715 | 4.4% |
| Goodhue County | 27,193 | 25,979 | 1,214 | 4.5% |
| Grant County | 3,334 | 3,098 | 236 | 7.1% |
| Hennepin County | 688,592 | 665,255 | 23,337 | 3.4% |
| Houston County | 10,773 | 10,175 | 598 | 5.6% |
| Hubbard County | 9,400 | 8,594 | 806 | 8.6% |
| Isanti County | 21,002 | 19,778 | 1,224 | 5.8% |
| Itasca County | 23,346 | 21,196 | 2,150 | 9.2% |
| Jackson County | 6,327 | 6,052 | 275 | 4.3% |
| Kanabec County | 8,991 | 8,096 | 895 | 10% |
| Kandiyohi County | 24,101 | 22,876 | 1,225 | 5.1% |
| Kittson County | 2,449 | 2,308 | 141 | 5.8% |
| Koochiching County | 6,181 | 5,665 | 516 | 8.3% |
| Lac qui Parle County | 3,757 | 3,542 | 215 | 5.7% |
| Lake County | 5,737 | 5,178 | 559 | 9.7% |
| Lake of the Woods County | 2,601 | 2,485 | 116 | 4.5% |
| Le Sueur County | 16,162 | 15,145 | 1,017 | 6.3% |
| Lincoln County | 3,358 | 3,176 | 182 | 5.4% |
| Lyon County | 15,254 | 14,567 | 687 | 4.5% |
| Mahnomen County | 2,481 | 2,333 | 148 | 6% |
| Marshall County | 5,736 | 5,173 | 563 | 9.8% |
| Martin County | 10,421 | 9,926 | 495 | 4.8% |
| McLeod County | 20,271 | 19,253 | 1,018 | 5% |
| Meeker County | 13,507 | 12,713 | 794 | 5.9% |
| Mille Lacs County | 13,265 | 12,198 | 1,067 | 8% |
| Morrison County | 18,082 | 16,660 | 1,422 | 7.9% |
| Mower County | 20,689 | 19,914 | 775 | 3.7% |
| Murray County | 5,090 | 4,731 | 359 | 7.1% |
| Nicollet County | 20,626 | 19,960 | 666 | 3.2% |
| Nobles County | 11,682 | 11,137 | 545 | 4.7% |
| Norman County | 3,394 | 3,176 | 218 | 6.4% |
| Olmsted County | 84,904 | 82,040 | 2,864 | 3.4% |
| Otter Tail County | 30,864 | 28,995 | 1,869 | 6.1% |
| Pennington County | 9,180 | 8,555 | 625 | 6.8% |
| Pine County | 15,077 | 13,909 | 1,168 | 7.7% |
| Pipestone County | 4,933 | 4,676 | 257 | 5.2% |
| Polk County | 17,600 | 16,758 | 842 | 4.8% |
| Pope County | 6,531 | 6,239 | 292 | 4.5% |
| Ramsey County | 284,339 | 273,705 | 10,634 | 3.7% |
| Red Lake County | 2,351 | 2,141 | 210 | 8.9% |
| Redwood County | 8,177 | 7,747 | 430 | 5.3% |
| Renville County | 8,477 | 7,956 | 521 | 6.1% |
| Rice County | 36,079 | 34,562 | 1,517 | 4.2% |
| Rock County | 5,949 | 5,773 | 176 | 3% |
| Roseau County | 8,636 | 7,975 | 661 | 7.7% |
| Saint Louis County | 102,593 | 95,732 | 6,861 | 6.7% |
| Scott County | 80,403 | 77,472 | 2,931 | 3.6% |

| Area - | Labor Force | Employment | Unemployment | Unemployment Rate |
|------------------------|-------------|------------|--------------|-------------------|
| Sherburne County | 50,846 | 48,316 | 2,530 | 5% |
| Sibley County | 8,708 | 8,244 | 464 | 5.3% |
| Stearns County | 90,865 | 86,820 | 4,045 | 4.5% |
| Steele County | 20,537 | 19,666 | 871 | 4.2% |
| Stevens County | 5,654 | 5,452 | 202 | 3.6% |
| Swift County | 5,166 | 4,821 | 345 | 6.7% |
| Todd County | 13,194 | 12,390 | 804 | 6.1% |
| Traverse County | 1,792 | 1,699 | 93 | 5.2% |
| Wabasha County | 12,231 | 11,663 | 568 | 4.6% |
| Wadena County | 6,509 | 5,977 | 532 | 8.2% |
| Waseca County | 9,681 | 9,166 | 515 | 5.3% |
| Washington County | 139,846 | 134,791 | 5,055 | 3.6% |
| Watsonwan County | 6,303 | 5,929 | 374 | 5.9% |
| Wilkin County | 3,687 | 3,534 | 153 | 4.1% |
| Winona County | 29,640 | 28,510 | 1,130 | 3.8% |
| Wright County | 73,740 | 70,231 | 3,509 | 4.8% |
| Yellow Medicine County | 5,569 | 5,292 | 277 | 5% |

2. LIST THE CITIES AND COUNTIES WHERE THE SCSEP PROJECT WILL TAKE PLACE. INCLUDE THE NUMBER OF SCSEP AUTHORIZED POSITIONS AND INDICATE IF AND WHERE THE POSITIONS CHANGED FROM THE PRIOR YEAR.

| Subgrantee | Organization | Location | Authorized Positions | County(s) Served |
|---|--|----------|-------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| STATE Sponsor | STATE OF MINNESOTA DEPARTMENT OF EMPLOYMENT AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT | St. Paul | 211 | 86 Counties Statewide |
| MN Subgrantee & Senior Service America, Inc. (SSA) National Subgrantee | ANOKA COUNTY JOB TRAINING CENTER | Blaine | 17 State 23 National | Anoka |
| MN Subgrantee | ARROWHEAD ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY AGENCY | Virginia | 7 | Itasca, Koochiching, Lake, St. Louis |
| MN Subgrantee & Senior Service America, Inc. (SSA) National Subgrantee | CITY OF DULUTH WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT | Duluth | 12 State 28 National | St. Louis |

| Subgrantee | Organization | Location | Authorized Positions | County(s) Served |
|--|--|---------------|--------------------------|---|
| MN Subgrantee & EW National Subgrantee | EXPERIENCE WORKS, INC. | Sauk Centre | 60 State 471 National | Becker, Beltrami, Benton, Big Stone, Cass, Carver, Chippewa, Clay, Clearwater, Crow Wing, Dakota, Dodge, Douglas, Fillmore, Freeborn, Goodhue, Grant, Hennepin, Houston, Hubbard, Kandiyohi, Kittson, Lac Qui Parle, Le Seuer, Lincoln, Lyon, Mahnomen, Marshall, Morrison, Mower, Norman, Olmsted, Otter Tail, Pennington, Polk, Pope, Ramsey, Redwood, Renville, Rice, Roseau, Sibley, Stearns, Steele, Stevens, Swift, Todd, Traverse, Wabasha, Wadena, Waseca, Washington, Wilkin, Winona, Yellow Medicine. |
| MN Subgrantee | INTER-COUNTY COMMUNITY COUNCIL | Oklee | 10 | Clearwater, Lake of the Woods, Pennington, Polk, Red Lake, Roseau |
| MN Subgrantee | MINNESOTA CHIPPEWA TRIBE | Cass Lake | 6 | Becker, Carlton, Cass, Cook, Itasca, Koochiching, Mahnomen, Mille Lacs, St. Louis |
| MN Subgrantee | MINNESOTA VALLEY ACTION COUNCIL | Mankato | 46 | Blue Earth, Brown, Faribault, Martin, Nicollet, Watonwan |
| MN Subgrantee | RURAL MINNESOTA CEP, INC. | Detroit Lakes | 14 | Becker, Beltrami, Cass, Clay, Clearwater, Crow Wing, Douglas, Grant, Hubbard, Lake of the Woods, Mahnomen, Morrison, Otter Tail, Pope, Stevens, Todd, Traverse, Wadena, Wilkin |
| MN Subgrantee | SCOTT COUNTY WORKFORCE CENTER | Shakopee | 6 | Scott |
| MN Subgrantee | SOUTHWESTERN MINNESOTA OPPORTUNITY COUNCIL | Worthington | 27 | Cottonwood, Jackson, Murray, Nobles, Pipestone, Rock |
| MN Subgrantee | WASHINGTON COUNTY WORKFORCE CENTER | Woodbury | 6 | Washington |
| Senior Service America, Inc. (SSA) National Subgrantee | CENTRAL MINNESOTA JOBS & TRAINING SERVICES | Monticello | 77 | Aitkin, Carlton, Chisago, Isanti, Kanabec, Meeker, McLeod, Mille Lacs, Pine, Sherburne, Wright |
| Senior Service America, Inc. (SSA) National Subgrantee | EAST SIDE NEIGHBORHOOD SERVICE, INC. | Minneapolis | 175 | Hennepin |
| Senior Service America, Inc. (SSA) National Subgrantee | ELDERCIRCLE | Grand Rapids | 27 | Cook, Itasca, Koochiching, Lake, St. Louis |

| Subgrantee | Organization | Location | Authorized Positions | County(s) Served |
|--|----------------------------------|-------------|--------------------------|---|
| MN Subgrantee & EW National Subgrantee | EXPERIENCE WORKS, INC. | Alexandria | 60 State 471 National | Becker, Beltrami, Benton, Big Stone, Cass, Carver, Chippewa, Clay, Clearwater, Crow Wing, Dakota, Dodge, Douglas, Fillmore, Freeborn, Goodhue, Grant, Hennepin, Houston, Hubbard, Kandiyohi, Kittson, Lac Qui Parle, Le Seuer, Lincoln, Lyon, Mahnomen, Marshall, Morrison, Mower, Norman, Olmsted, Otter Tail, Pennington, Polk, Pope, Ramsey, Redwood, Renville, Rice, Roseau, Sibley, Stearns, Steele, Stevens, Swift, Todd, Traverse, Wabasha, Wadena, Waseca, Washington, Wilkin, Winona, Yellow Medicine. |
| NICOA National Subgrantee | NATIONAL INDIAN COUNCIL ON AGING | Minneapolis | 34 in Minnesota | Becker, Beltrami, Cass, Clearwater, Hennepin, Mahnomen, Ramsey, St. Louis |

3. DESCRIBE ANY CURRENT SLOT IMBALANCES AND PROPOSED STEPS TO CORRECT INEQUITIES TO ACHIEVE EQUITABLE DISTRIBUTION.

There are no current slot imbalances. If a SCSEP provider desires additional state slots, new state slots, or to renegotiate the number of state slots, a Request for Proposal (RFP) process may need to happen to judge the process fairly.

4. EXPLAIN THE STATE'S LONG-TERM STRATEGY FOR ACHIEVING AN EQUITABLE DISTRIBUTION OF SCSEP POSITIONS WITHIN THE STATE THAT:

A. MOVES POSITIONS FROM OVER-SERVED TO UNDERSERVED LOCATIONS WITHIN THE STATE IN COMPLIANCE WITH 20 CFR 641.365.

The state continues to develop cooperative and coordinative relationships among State administered SCSEP, program operators and national sponsors. The state and national sponsors have made every effort to correct any equitable distribution slot imbalances. At the State level, cooperative relationships have been developed with all Title V national sponsors operating in Minnesota. This includes Experience Works, Senior Service of America and the National Indian Council on Aging.

Regular meetings and telephone conversations are held to discuss mutual concerns, develop an equitable distribution plan and take into consideration all factors that may impede the equitable distribution of slots. Activities are also coordinated with the State Board on Aging, Job Service and WIOA administrators. In all cases, additional slots will be allocated to underserved counties of the state. By the same token, any slot reductions will come from over-served counties of the state.

Minnesota does not have an imbalance of slots at this time. If an imbalance does occur, the state will negotiate with counties impacted by the imbalance and transfer slots from one to another to ensure the Equitable Distribution Table remains accurate.

B. EQUITABLY SERVES BOTH RURAL AND URBAN AREAS.

Minnesota positions subgrantees in locations to target rural areas and those specific urban areas with high unemployment rates, where most of Experience Works and other sub-grantee SCSEP

positions are now concentrated. In general, rural areas have higher unemployment than any other areas other than inner cities, and competition for available jobs is more intense. Without up-to-date in-demand skills, an older, disadvantaged job seeker is unlikely to find work, and often these training and support services cannot be fully provided by host agencies or without cost from other community resources.

Minnesota will expand training with the small businesses that are the primary private sector employers of SCSEP participants. Over the last decade, small businesses have generated 60 to 80 percent of net new jobs annually. In many areas, small businesses may be the only source of jobs for job seekers, particularly when those workers are low-income and elderly. Working with small business employers in the rural and urban area to provide training has proven a successful placement model.

In addition, transportation is a major problem for many rural participants, particularly for those in rural areas who do not have cars. More support service dollars will expand staff ability to work with community partners to address this problem.

C. SERVES INDIVIDUALS AFFORDED PRIORITY FOR SERVICE UNDER 20 CFR 641.520. (20 CFR 641.302(A), 641.365, 641.520)

SCSEP sub-grantees provided priority and special consideration is extended to individuals with incomes below the poverty level, those with greatest social and/or economic need, eligible minorities, limited English speakers, Native Americans and Veterans, at least in proportion to their numbers in the state and by taking into consideration their rates of poverty and unemployment. SCSEP sub-grantees are monitored at least annually to ensure program participation by those individuals with priority needs.

Minnesota ensures that SCSEP opportunities are spread across cultural, racial, gender and geographic boundaries. Minnesota seeks enrollees with ethnic diversity and limited English proficiency by working with the Community Connectors who provide these populations with translation services and program information to meet their economic needs. Some provide program information by supplying brochures in Spanish, Somali, Hmong, Vietnamese, Lao, Arabic, Russian and English to the Workforce Centers, the Veteran's Office and each county Family Services Office.

Minnesotans' have access to the language line and a contract with qualified interpreters services. We provide SCSEP information in diverse forms such as palm cards, and brochures in languages other than English. We also take referrals from other departments within their own agencies (sub-grantees). We display SCSEP posters or brochures at food shelves, senior apartment complexes, senior dining centers and grocery stores. We include this information on agencies' resources listings and brochures.

All current sub-grantees employ outreach staff who assist locating individuals who are most-in-need of SCSEP services, and the identification of minority participants eligible for the program. In addition, referrals are expected to introduce many prospective participants to the program. Referral sources, which may include County Social Services, Vocational Rehabilitation, Job Service/State Employment Service, Senior Citizens Centers/Groups, Area Agencies on Aging, WIOA programs, community-based organizations, and Minnesota's Workforce Centers, have been developed and will be continued through staff contact.

5. PROVIDE THE RATIO OF ELIGIBLE INDIVIDUALS IN EACH SERVICE AREA TO THE TOTAL ELIGIBLE POPULATION IN THE STATE. (20 CFR 641.325(A))

The ratio of eligible individuals in each of the service areas to the total eligible population in Minnesota is determined by the job demand relative to current employment levels and the ratio of available claimants to job vacancies, serve as indicator to possible occupationally associated skill gaps and their level of demand. The table in VII.c.1 gives a snapshot of what is happening for each of the counties in Minnesota.

The total number of older adults (age 55-plus) is anticipated to double between 2010 and 2030, rising to 1.3 million. By then, more than one in five Minnesotans will be an older adult.

Currently, one in seven Minnesotans age 65 and older lives in poverty and over half of them (38,463) are women. While the labor force participation rate of men age 55-plus will continue to exceed that of women during the current decade, most of the increases in labor force participant of this age group will come from women.

| Counties | Ratio | Population 55+ | Total Population by County |
|-----------------------|-------|----------------|----------------------------|
| Aitkin County, MN | 49% | 7,618 | 15,702 |
| Anoka County, MN | 26% | 88,853 | 344,151 |
| Becker County, MN | 35% | 11,606 | 33,386 |
| Beltrami County, MN | 27% | 12,460 | 45,672 |
| Benton County, MN | 26% | 10,281 | 39,710 |
| Big Stone County, MN | 42% | 2,133 | 5,040 |
| Blue Earth County, MN | 24% | 15,982 | 65,787 |
| Brown County, MN | 35% | 8,896 | 25,313 |
| Carlton County, MN | 31% | 11,015 | 35,569 |
| Carver County, MN | 23% | 22,546 | 98,741 |
| Cass County, MN | 41% | 11,770 | 28,706 |
| Chippewa County, MN | 35% | 4,196 | 12,109 |
| Chisago County, MN | 28% | 15,207 | 54,293 |
| Clay County, MN | 24% | 14,859 | 62,324 |
| Clearwater County, MN | 34% | 3,006 | 8,803 |
| Cook County, MN | 45% | 2,361 | 5,194 |
| Cottonwood County, MN | 37% | 4,251 | 11,549 |
| Crow Wing County, MN | 36% | 22,899 | 63,428 |
| Dakota County, MN | 26% | 107,328 | 414,686 |
| Dodge County, MN | 26% | 5,332 | 20,364 |
| Douglas County, MN | 37% | 13,677 | 37,075 |
| Faribault County, MN | 39% | 5,428 | 14,050 |
| Fillmore County, MN | 35% | 7,360 | 20,834 |
| Freeborn County, MN | 37% | 11,215 | 30,613 |
| Goodhue County, MN | 34% | 15,765 | 46,435 |
| Grant County, MN | 38% | 2,261 | 5,903 |
| Hennepin County, MN | 26% | 312,339 | 1,223,149 |
| Houston County, MN | 36% | 6,828 | 18,773 |
| Hubbard County, MN | 41% | 8,373 | 20,655 |
| Isanti County, MN | 29% | 11,020 | 38,429 |
| Itasca County, MN | 38% | 17,401 | 45,435 |
| Jackson County, MN | 36% | 3,653 | 10,079 |
| Kanabec County, MN | 35% | 5,607 | 15,837 |

| Counties | Ratio | Population 55+ | Total Population by County |
|------------------------------|-------|----------------|----------------------------|
| Kandiyohi County, MN | 32% | 13,757 | 42,542 |
| Kittson County, MN | 40% | 1,764 | 4,424 |
| Koochiching County, MN | 40% | 5,195 | 12,841 |
| Lac qui Parle County, MN | 43% | 2,926 | 6,856 |
| Lake County, MN | 43% | 4,578 | 10,631 |
| Lake of the Woods County, MN | 42% | 1,663 | 3,923 |
| Le Sueur County, MN | 30% | 8,424 | 27,663 |
| Lincoln County, MN | 39% | 2,268 | 5,771 |
| Lyon County, MN | 27% | 7,034 | 25,673 |
| McLeod County, MN | 31% | 11,183 | 35,932 |
| Mahnomen County, MN | 30% | 1,650 | 5,457 |
| Marshall County, MN | 35% | 3,309 | 9,423 |
| Martin County, MN | 38% | 7,605 | 20,022 |
| Meeker County, MN | 34% | 7,750 | 23,102 |
| Mille Lacs County, MN | 32% | 8,224 | 25,788 |
| Morrison County, MN | 33% | 10,757 | 32,775 |
| Mower County, MN | 31% | 12,234 | 39,116 |
| Murray County, MN | 40% | 3,381 | 8,413 |
| Nicollet County, MN | 27% | 9,110 | 33,347 |
| Nobles County, MN | 28% | 6,124 | 21,770 |
| Norman County, MN | 36% | 2,404 | 6,678 |
| Olmsted County, MN | 27% | 41,376 | 151,436 |
| Otter Tail County, MN | 39% | 22,605 | 57,716 |
| Pennington County, MN | 30% | 4,320 | 14,219 |
| Pine County, MN | 34% | 9,931 | 29,069 |
| Pipestone County, MN | 35% | 3,210 | 9,271 |
| Polk County, MN | 31% | 9,827 | 31,533 |
| Pope County, MN | 40% | 4,385 | 11,041 |
| Ramsey County, MN | 26% | 138,175 | 538,133 |
| Red Lake County, MN | 35% | 1,403 | 4,055 |
| Redwood County, MN | 35% | 5,386 | 15,471 |
| Renville County, MN | 36% | 5,401 | 14,892 |
| Rice County, MN | 27% | 17,730 | 65,400 |
| Rock County, MN | 34% | 3,280 | 9,600 |
| Roseau County, MN | 30% | 4,793 | 15,770 |
| St. Louis County, MN | 33% | 66,169 | 200,431 |
| Scott County, MN | 21% | 29,274 | 141,660 |
| Sherburne County, MN | 22% | 20,044 | 91,705 |
| Sibley County, MN | 32% | 4,751 | 14,875 |
| Stearns County, MN | 26% | 39,810 | 154,708 |
| Steele County, MN | 30% | 10,935 | 36,755 |
| Stevens County, MN | 28% | 2,750 | 9,796 |
| Swift County, MN | 37% | 3,425 | 9,340 |
| Todd County, MN | 35% | 8,494 | 24,257 |
| Traverse County, MN | 41% | 1,393 | 3,401 |
| Wabasha County, MN | 34% | 7,320 | 21,239 |
| Wadena County, MN | 35% | 4,909 | 13,875 |
| Waseca County, MN | 30% | 5,789 | 18,989 |
| Washington County, MN | 27% | 67,860 | 251,597 |
| Watonwan County, MN | 34% | 3,700 | 10,952 |
| Wilkin County, MN | 34% | 2,158 | 6,396 |

| Counties | Ratio | Population 55+ | Total Population by County |
|----------------------------|-------|----------------|----------------------------|
| Winona County, MN | 28% | 14,496 | 50,885 |
| Wright County, MN | 23% | 30,147 | 131,311 |
| Yellow Medicine County, MN | 35% | 3,502 | 9,875 |
| TOTAL | 28% | 1,533,614 | 5,489,594 |

6. PROVIDE THE RELATIVE DISTRIBUTION OF ELIGIBLE INDIVIDUALS WHO:

A. RESIDE IN URBAN AND RURAL AREAS WITHIN THE STATE

Minnesota positions subgrantees in those areas to target rural areas and those specific urban areas with high unemployment rates, where most of Experience Works and other sub-grantee SCSEP positions are now concentrated. In general, rural areas have higher unemployment than any other areas other than inner cities, and competition for available jobs is more intense. Without up-to-date in-demand skills, an older, disadvantaged job seeker is unlikely to find work, and often these training/support services cannot be fully provided by host agencies or without cost from other community resources. The overall current distribution of urban and rural older workers is 65% and 35%, respectively. The SCSEP distribution of this factor will be provided to the Regional FPO within 30 days.

B. HAVE THE GREATEST ECONOMIC NEED

Minnesota's overall poverty rate was 11.5% in 2014, statistically unchanged from the prior year. About 611,000 Minnesotans, including 189,000 children under 18 and 56,000 older adults (65+), lived in households with annual income below the federal poverty threshold (about \$24,200 for a family of four) in 2014. Despite growth in their rates of employment, data for some populations of color continued to show widespread economic insecurity. More than 4 in 10 Black and American Indian children in Minnesota lived in poverty in 2014, as well as 3 in 10 Hispanic children.

The table below also fits into the eligible population who are in these categories that could reasonably be said to correlate with potential for having the greatest economic need. Data is from 2014 or 2015, depending upon the characteristic. This data is only available for the counties with an MSA. The SCSEP distribution of this factor will be provided to the Regional FPO within 30 days. DEED will work toward expanding our capacity to assess minority characteristics in the future, working with service providers and the local workforce development boards to survey and gather information in communities that have higher levels of minority older workers. This information will support the on-going development of career pathways and sector partnerships, thus providing inclusion of older workers.

| County | Number Below Poverty | Share Below Poverty |
|----------------------|----------------------|---------------------|
| 000 – Rural Counties | 26,163 | 10.2% |
| 003 – Anoka | 4,415 | 5.7% |
| 037 – Dakota | 5,728 | 6.1% |
| 053 – Hennepin | 29,355 | 10.3% |
| 109 – Olmsted | 2,527 | 6.8% |
| 123 – Ramsey | 14,538 | 11.3% |
| 137 – St. Louis | 2,825 | 11.6% |
| 145 – Stearns | 2,660 | 11.5% |
| 163 – Washington | 3,319 | 5.6% |
| 171 - Wright | 1,409 | 8.5% |

| County | Number Below Poverty | Share Below Poverty |
|--------|----------------------|---------------------|
| TOTAL | 92,939 | 9.3% |

C. ARE MINORITIES

In order to ensure equitable participation of minorities, subgrantees such as the Minneapolis Urban League, Minnesota Chippewa Tribe, and the National Indian Council on Aging work in the geographic areas having the highest percentage of minority populations. This data is only available for counties with MSAs. The SCSEP distribution of this factor will be provided to the Regional FPO within 30 days. DEED will work toward expanding our capacity to assess minority characteristics in the future, working with service providers and the local workforce development boards to survey and gather information in communities that have higher levels of minority older workers. This information will support the on-going development of career pathways and sector partnerships, thus providing inclusion of older workers.

| County | minority | white | | Share minority |
|--------------------------|----------|---------|-----------|----------------|
| 000 – all other counties | 5,674 | 250,595 | 256,269 | 2.2% |
| 003 – Anoka | 3,763 | 73,921 | 77,684 | 4.8% |
| 037 – Dakota | 4,723 | 89,685 | 94,408 | 5.0% |
| 053 – Hennepin | 30,261 | 254,474 | 284,735 | 10.6% |
| 109 – Olmsted | 1,944 | 35,084 | 37,028 | 5.3% |
| 123 – Ramsey | 14,994 | 113,238 | 128,232 | 11.7% |
| 137 – St. Louis | 509 | 23,822 | 24,331 | 2.1% |
| 145 – Stearns | 1,002 | 22,068 | 23,070 | 4.3% |
| 163 – Washington | 2,135 | 57,178 | 59,313 | 3.6% |
| 171 - Wright | 121 | 16,455 | 16,576 | 0.7% |
| TOTAL | 65,126 | 936,520 | 1,001,646 | 6.5% |

D. ARE LIMITED ENGLISH PROFICIENT.

Minnesota has the Office of Diversity and Equal Opportunity that SCSEP taps into that has a whole division devoted to LEP and regulations. One of the purposes of this division is to ensure that DEED and Minnesota as a whole communicates effectively with LEP individuals so that DEED customers have meaningful access to program information and services. The site is located at <https://apps.deed.state.mn.us/assets/policies/PDF/lepplan.pdf>

The 2013 Total Population was 5,074,000; the LEP populations was 211,500; the LEP share of population was 4.2%; and the State share of total LEP population was .8%.

Minnesota has one of the highest proportion of refugees (to total legal immigrants) compared to any other state. The English Language Learners (ELL) population in Minnesota has increased 130 percent in the past decade, more than twice the national average. The State has communicated the obligation of recipients (including local workforce development areas [WDAs], WorkForce Centers, and service providers) to make efforts, including outreach, to broaden the composition of the pool of those considered services to include members of both sexes of the various racial and ethnic groups, as well as individuals with disabilities. DEED is currently developing a Limited English Proficiency Plan which will cover all DEED programs. LWDBs identify in their integrated local plans for WIOA:

- Priority groups or special populations targeted locally

- How WIOA Adult and Dislocated Workers programs and the Senior Community Services Employment program (SCSEP) implement priority of service

- Criteria for being a member of a priority group (and services the priority groups receive preference for)

- How the LWDBs measures their progress in meeting the local goals of serving special targeted populations Staff training is provided to:
 - Designated equal opportunity officers (EOOs) at the local level. DEED staff are also available to consult with EOOs
 - Staff at the local WorkForce Centers
 - SCSEP providers
 State monitors evaluate whether a WSA is meeting the needs of the targeted special populations as designated under the integrated local plan for WIA. Many WSAs provide targeted information through local immigrant community resources. The Hmong are the fastest-growing minority population in the Minneapolis/St. Paul Metropolitan Area. New immigrants face significant language and other cultural barriers. The Minneapolis/St. Paul Metropolitan Area offers bilingual staff to support the services targeted to this population. Minnesota’s WIOA Incentive Grant will achieve three goals:
 - Increase the number of ELL and incumbent workers who receive workplace training and increase the productivity and value of those workers to their employers
 - Promote and expand the use of contextual occupational English learning models
 - Strengthen relationships among local and State stakeholders to collectively serve businesses and workers more efficiently with other available public and private funds
 WIOA Incentive Grant funds will be used to deliver ELL and skill training services to incumbent workers through local service providers who have developed an integrated service plan for their region. The UI poster and the UI teleclaim phone system are available in Spanish, Somali, and Hmong. Youth with limited English skills are often referred to WIA Youth programs through community education programs. The community services staff maintains a contract with interpreter services (phone-based and in-person). Often, the parents of WIOA-eligible youth need interpreter services. Dislocated workers who are identified as limited English-speaking receive Dislocated Worker program (DWP) services from DWP service providers either by way of bilingual staff, hiring of interpreters, and contract services with agencies that can communicate in the individual’s native language. For example, Lao Family Services in St. Paul is currently under contract with Ramsey County Workforce Solutions to provide a full array of DWP services. Anthony will double check this statement. English as a second language (ESL) training is also provided through Adult Basic Education (ABE) programs in conjunction with DWP service providers when applicable.

This data element is not available at the level requested. The SCSEP distribution of this factor will be provided to the Regional FPO within 30 days. DEED will work toward enhancing the available data through our work with the sub-grantees and the local workforce development boards. Understanding this data at a regional level will impact career pathway strategies and the sector partnerships.

Share with limited English proficiency

| County | Does not speak English | Yes, speaks only English | Yes, speaks very well | Yes, speaks well | Yes, but not well | Total | Share with limited English proficiency |
|--------------------------|------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------|------------------|-------------------|---------|--|
| 000 – all other counties | 648 | 245,918 | 7,112 | 1,228 | 1,363 | 256,269 | 0.78% |
| 003 – Anoka | 567 | 73,061 | 2,247 | 1,009 | 800 | 77,684 | 1.76% |
| 037 – Dakota | 619 | 88,914 | 3,067 | 832 | 976 | 94,408 | 1.69% |
| 053 – Hennepin | 3,498 | 259,256 | 11,353 | 4,483 | 6,145 | 284,735 | 3.39% |
| 109 – Olmsted | 215 | 34,523 | 1,503 | 354 | 433 | 37,028 | 1.75% |

| County | Does not speak English | Yes, speaks only English | Yes, speaks very well | Yes, speaks well | Yes, but not well | Total | Share with limited English proficiency |
|------------------|------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------|------------------|-------------------|-----------|--|
| 123 – Ramsey | 2,882 | 114,265 | 5,205 | 2,296 | 3,584 | 128,232 | 5.04% |
| 137 – St. Louis | 0 | 23,315 | 895 | 121 | 0 | 24,331 | 0.00% |
| 145 – Stearns | 52 | 22,096 | 730 | 120 | 72 | 23,070 | 0.54% |
| 163 – Washington | 550 | 56,090 | 1,773 | 517 | 383 | 59,313 | 1.57% |
| 171 - Wright | 0 | 16,354 | 196 | 26 | 0 | 16,576 | 0.00% |
| TOTAL | 9,031 | 933,792 | 34,081 | 10,986 | 13,756 | 1,001,646 | 2.27% |

E. HAVE THE GREATEST SOCIAL NEED. (20 CFR 641.325(B))

In order to ensure equitable participation of minorities, subgrantees such as the Minneapolis Urban League, Minnesota Chippewa Tribe, and the National Indian Council on Aging work in the geographic areas having the highest percentage of minority populations. Within all enrollment priorities, persons with poor employment prospects are given preference. All applicants are required to complete an application/intake form which is processed for completeness and probable veracity by the subsponsors. Applications needing to be returned for additional or clarifying information are returned by mail, or staff delivery in those cases where one-to-one contact is needed. All applicants are notified of the eligibility determination made regarding their application within 30 days. Applicants who are determined ineligible are informed of the first step they may take in the grievance procedure to contest any unfavorable determination. Those ineligible are advised of alternative courses of action through WorkForce Centers and other local service providers.

All subgrant program operators are instructed to ensure program services to eligible individuals with the greatest economic need and those with poor employment prospects. Priority and special consideration is given to those individuals who are identified as minorities, limited-English-speaking, Indian, and veterans with poor employment prospects and the greatest social and/or economic need. Program operators will be monitored at least annually to ensure program participation by those individuals with those priority needs.

These subgrantees have considerable experience in recruiting and providing services to low-income minorities. Priorities for selection include:

- Veterans and qualified spouses who meet the special consideration criteria
- Eligible individuals with the greatest economic need
- Eligible individuals who are 60-years of age or older
- Eligible individuals who are limited-English-speaking, minority, and Indian

The table below also fits into the eligible population who are in these categories that could reasonably be said to correlate with potential for greater social need. Data is from 2014 or 2015, depending upon the characteristic. This data is only available for counties with MSAs. The SCSEP distribution of this factor will be provided to the Regional FPO within 30 days. DEED will work toward expanding our capacity to assess minority characteristics in the future, working with service providers and the local workforce development boards to survey and gather information in

communities that have higher levels of older workers. This information will support the on-going development of career pathways and sector partnerships, thus providing inclusion of older workers.

Greatest Social Need as Ratios

| County | Percent |
|--------------------|---------|
| All Other Counties | 26.5% |
| Anoka | 7.0% |
| Dakota | 7.8% |
| Hennepin | 23.8% |
| Olmsted | 5.2% |
| Ramsey | 19.3% |
| Stearns | 1.9% |
| Washington | 3.6% |
| Wright | 4.9% |
| Totals | 100.00% |

7. DESCRIBE THE STEPS TAKEN TO AVOID DISRUPTIONS TO SERVICE FOR PARTICIPANTS TO THE GREATEST EXTENT POSSIBLE, WHEN POSITIONS ARE REDISTRIBUTED, AS PROVIDED IN 20 CFR 641.365; WHEN NEW CENSUS OR OTHER RELIABLE DATA BECOMES AVAILABLE; OR WHEN THERE IS OVER-ENROLLMENT FOR ANY OTHER REASON. (20 CFR 641.325(I), 641.302(B))

In the case of any transition of positions, Minnesota's subgrantees will ensure clear communication and coordination with participants, host agencies, other grantees, and U.S. Department of Labor (USDOL). The Regional Federal Project Officer will be consulted and will subsequently approve any movements of positions. Minnesota will not initiate any movement or transfer of positions until all subgrantees, are notified. Through any transition process, Minnesota will ensure that participants are paid, and where possible, shifts will be gradual and ensure minimum disruption to the participants.

SCSEP ASSURANCES

The State Plan must include assurances that where SCSEP is included in the Combined Workforce Plan, the State has established a written policy and procedure to obtain advice and recommendations on the State Plan from:

Representatives of the State and area agencies on aging; Yes

State and local boards under WIOA; Yes

Public and private nonprofit agencies and organizations providing employment services, including each grantee operating a SCSEP project within the State, except as provided under section 506(a)(3) of OAA and 20 CFR 641.320(b); Yes

Social service organizations providing services to older individuals; Yes

Grantees under Title III of OAA; Yes

Affected Communities; Yes

Unemployed older individuals; Yes

Community-based organizations serving older individuals; Yes

Business organizations; and Yes

Labor organizations. Yes

STATE COMMENTS ON SCSEP ASSURANCES

Minnesota provided an extended comment period for public input and held 7 public listening sessions around the state and a special session of the State Board to hear public comment and gather input on the State Combined Plan.

APPENDIX 1. PERFORMANCE GOALS FOR THE CORE PROGRAMS

Include the State's expected levels of performance relating to the performance accountability indicators based on primary indicators of performance described in section 116(b)(2)(A) of WIOA.

Instructions: Performance Goals for the Core Programs

Each State submitting a Unified or Combined Plan is required to identify expected levels of performance for each of the primary indicators of performance for the first two years covered by the plan. The State is required to reach agreement with the Secretary of Labor, in conjunction with the Secretary of Education on state adjusted levels of performance for the indicators for each of the first two years of the plan.

TABLE 1. EMPLOYMENT (SECOND QUARTER AFTER EXIT)

| Program | PY 2016 Proposed/ Expected Level | PY 2016 Negotiated/ Adjusted Level | PY 2017 Proposed/ Expected Level | PY 2017 Negotiated/ Adjusted Level |
|--------------------------------|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Adults | 77.40 | 80.00 | 77.40 | 80.00 |
| Dislocated Workers | 83.60 | 83.60 | 83.60 | 83.60 |
| Youth | 74.20 | 74.20 | 74.20 | 74.20 |
| Adult Education | Baseline | Baseline | Baseline | Baseline |
| Wagner-Peyser | 64.00 | 64.00 | 64.00 | 64.00 |
| Vocational Rehabilitation</ | Baseline | Baseline | Baseline | Baseline |

User remarks on Table 1

TABLE 2. EMPLOYMENT (FOURTH QUARTER AFTER EXIT)

| Program | PY 2016 Proposed/ Expected Level | PY 2016 Negotiated/ Adjusted Level | PY 2017 Proposed/ Expected Level | PY 2017 Negotiated/ Adjusted Level |
|------------------------------|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Adults | 74.70 | 76.00 | 74.70 | 76.00 |
| Dislocated Workers | 81.30 | 81.30 | 81.30 | 81.30 |
| Youth | 71.60 | 71.60 | 71.60 | 71.60 |
| Adult Education | Baseline | Baseline | Baseline | Baseline |
| Wagner-Peyser | 68.00 | 68.00 | 68.00 | 68.00 |
| Vocational Rehabilitation | Baseline | Baseline | Baseline | Baseline |

User remarks on Table 2

TABLE 3. MEDIAN EARNINGS (SECOND QUARTER AFTER EXIT)

| Program | PY 2016 Proposed/ Expected Level | PY 2016 Negotiated/ Adjusted Level | PY 2017 Proposed/ Expected Level | PY 2017 Negotiated/ Adjusted Level |
|------------------------------|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Adults | 5,339.00 | 5,700.00 | 5,339.00 | 5,700.00 |
| Dislocated Workers | 8,400.00 | 8,400.00 | 8,400.00 | 8,400.00 |
| Youth | Baseline | Baseline | Baseline | Baseline |
| Adult Education | Baseline | Baseline | Baseline | Baseline |
| Wagner-Peyser | 6,400.00 | 6,400.00 | 6,400.00 | 6,400.00 |
| Vocational Rehabilitation | Baseline | Baseline | Baseline | Baseline |

User remarks on Table 3

TABLE 4. CREDENTIAL ATTAINMENT RATE

| Program | PY 2016 Proposed/ Expected Level | PY 2016 Negotiated/ Adjusted Level | PY 2017 Proposed/ Expected Level | PY 2017 Negotiated/ Adjusted Level |
|------------------------------|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Adults | 64.50 | 70.00 | 64.50 | 70.00 |
| Dislocated Workers | 70.10 | 70.10 | 70.10 | 70.10 |
| Youth | 49.70 | 49.70 | 49.70 | 49.70 |
| Adult Education | Baseline | Baseline | Baseline | Baseline |
| Wagner-Peyser | n/a | n/a | n/a | n/a |
| Vocational Rehabilitation | Baseline | Baseline | Baseline | Baseline |

User remarks on Table 4

TABLE 5. MEASUREABLE SKILL GAINS

| Program | PY 2016 Proposed/ Expected Level | PY 2016 Negotiated/ Adjusted Level | PY 2017 Proposed/ Expected Level | PY 2017 Negotiated/ Adjusted Level |
|------------------------------|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Adults | Baseline | Baseline | Baseline | Baseline |
| Dislocated Workers | Baseline | Baseline | Baseline | Baseline |
| Youth | Baseline | Baseline | Baseline | Baseline |
| Adult Education | 43.00 | 43.00 | 44.00 | 44.00 |
| Wagner-Peyser | n/a | n/a | n/a | n/a |
| Vocational Rehabilitation | Baseline | Baseline | Baseline | Baseline |

User remarks on Table 5

TABLE 6. EFFECTIVENESS IN SERVING EMPLOYERS

| Program | PY 2016 Proposed/ Expected Level | PY 2016 Negotiated/ Adjusted Level | PY 2017 Proposed/ Expected Level | PY 2017 Negotiated/ Adjusted Level |
|------------------------------|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Adults | Baseline | Baseline | Baseline | Baseline |
| Dislocated Workers | Baseline | Baseline | Baseline | Baseline |
| Youth | Baseline | Baseline | Baseline | Baseline |
| Adult Education | Baseline | Baseline | Baseline | Baseline |
| Wagner-Peyser | Baseline | Baseline | Baseline | Baseline |
| Vocational Rehabilitation | Baseline | Baseline | Baseline | Baseline |

User remarks on Table 6

TABLE 7. COMBINED FEDERAL PARTNER MEASURES

| Measure | PY 2016 Proposed/ Expected Level | PY 2016 Negotiated/ Adjusted Level | PY 2017 Proposed/ Expected Level | PY 2017 Negotiated/ Adjusted Level |
|---------|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| | | | | |

User remarks on Table 7

APPENDIX 2. OTHER STATE ATTACHMENTS (OPTIONAL)

SEPTEMBER 1, 2016

The Minnesota State Combined Plan for WIOA has been updated per the letter issued by the USDOL on July 1, 2016, with the following comments to the USDOL:

1 - The modification to the Minnesota State Combined Plan for WIOA has not completed a 30 day public comment period. The comment period ends on September 10, 2016.

2 - The Minnesota State Combined Plan for WIOA has not been approved by the Governor's Workforce Development Board. This is scheduled for September 14, 2016.

3 - There were issues with the deficiencies cited for the Carl Perkins portion of the plan. - A site monitoring visit in July resulted in a few modifications to the CP plan, but was determined not significant enough to warrant public comment by OCTE. - The deficiencies cited in the letter could not be traced back to actual plan requirements, reading more like direct comments and conflicted with OCTE directives provided to the State of Minnesota. The Carl Perkins plan has been approved by OCTE and a modification to current responses in the Minnesota State Combined Plan for WIOA will not occur until reauthorization this fall.

We do want to thank the Chicago office for assistance in completing this phase of developing our modifications to our State Plan. If further action is required, we will be requesting more specific technical assistance to complete the remaining deficiencies.