

Minnesota's Unified Plan for the Workforce Investment Act



July 2007 to June 2010



STATE OF MINNESOTA

Office of Governor Tim Pawlenty

130 State Capitol ♦ 75 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard ♦ Saint Paul, MN 55155

May 1, 2007

Assistant Secretary Emily Stover DeRocco
Employment and Training Administration
U.S. Department of Labor
200 Constitution Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20210

ATTN: Janet Sten, Coordinator of the State Unified Plan Review Process

Dear Ms. DeRocco:

I am pleased to present Minnesota's Unified Plan for the Workforce Investment Act (Plan). This modified Plan fulfills regulatory reporting requirements to submit a state unified plan and sets the direction for achieving the state's workforce development system vision and goals between July 1, 2007, and June 30, 2010.

Minnesota has much to be proud of in terms of its national ranking on various education, employment and economic measures. However, we recognize that we live in a competitive world in which the key to prosperity is our ability to innovate within both the private and public sectors. I am confident that Minnesota's Unified Plan will provide a solid foundation to help our state develop an educated and prepared workforce that is able to meet the needs of employers, contribute to economic prosperity, and compete in the global economy.

This Plan is the product of numerous contributors, including state agency staff, local service providers, and stakeholders around the state – building upon partnerships that are the hallmark of Minnesota's WorkForce Center System. Minnesota's Unified Plan emphasizes the priority for better alignment of public policies and practices among education, employment, and economic development entities.

Thank you for your kind attention.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "T. Pawlenty".

Tim Pawlenty
Governor

Attachment

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Introduction

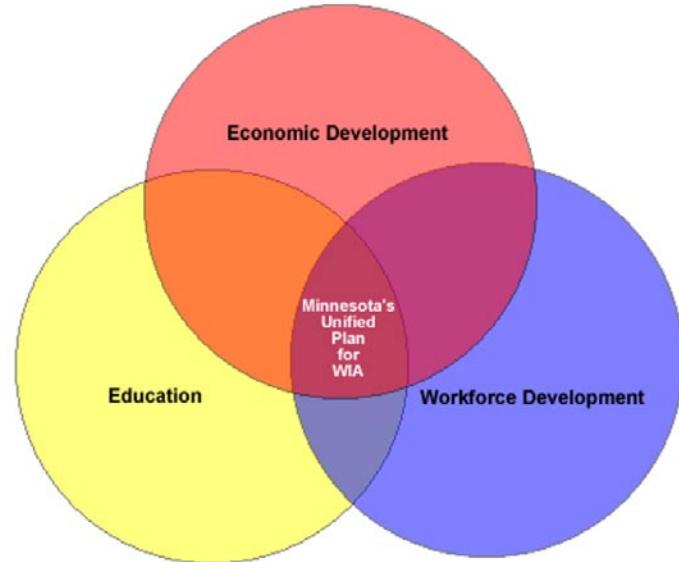
Minnesota's *Unified Plan* fulfills the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) Title V, Section 501 requirement to submit a state unified plan. This modified plan is based on the April 12, 2005, guidance issued by the United States Department of Labor (U.S. DOL). This modification is updated to reflect national strategic directions identified in Section 5 of Training and Employment Guidance Letter (TEGL) 13-06 and take into account proposed revisions to the regulations governing WIA and the Wagner-Peyser Act (December 20, 2006, Federal Register). Minnesota's *Unified Plan* embodies the Governor's vision and goals for the workforce development system and sets the course for achieving the state's workforce development vision between July 1, 2007, and June 30, 2010.

Background

- In 1998, Congress passed WIA to consolidate, coordinate, and improve training, literacy, and vocational rehabilitation programs.
- An approved state plan under WIA is required in order to draw-down federal dollars under the Act. It is primarily a compliance document.
- The focus is to maximize the use of resources through the coordination, planning, and implementation of federally funded workforce development services.
- U.S. DOL published unified planning guidance for the first two years of the five-year planning cycle on April 12, 2005.
- On May 30, 2005, *Minnesota's Unified Plan* was submitted. This plan was approved and expires on June 30, 2007.
- Proposed revisions to the regulations governing WIA and the Wagner-Peyser Act were published on December 20, 2006 (Federal Register).
- U.S. DOL issued TEGL 13-06, "*Instructions for Workforce Investment Act and Wagner-Peyser Act State Planning and Waiver Requests for Years Three and Four of the Strategic Five-Year State Plan (Program Years 2007 and 2008)*" on January 24, 2007.
- The plan is due to U.S. DOL no later than May 1, 2007.
- *Minnesota's Unified Plan* is aligned with the strategic direction set forth in the Pawlenty - Molnau Administration Values, Goals & Principles.

The workforce development system is the service delivery system that has a role in developing the skilled workers that businesses need to compete globally. Chart Intro.1 illustrates the high-level elements that are part of the State's workforce investment system.

**Chart Intro.1 -
Minnesota's Workforce Investment System**



Scope

There are many contributors to Minnesota's workforce investment system. See Chart E.1 in Section E.1.(b)(i)2. for a list of the contributors. *Minnesota's Unified Plan* reports efforts by the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development, Minnesota Department of Human Services, Minnesota Department of Education, and Governor's Workforce Development Council with respect to the following programs:

- WIA Title I - Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth
- WIA Title II - Adult Basic Education
- WIA Title III - Wagner-Peyser (Business Services, Job Seeker Services, and Labor Market Information)
- WIA Title IV - State Services for the Blind
- WIA Title IV - Vocational Rehabilitation - General
- Food Support Employment and Training
- Migrant and Seasonal Farmworker
- Registered Apprenticeship Program
- Senior Community Service Employment
- Trade Act Assistance (Chapter 2 of Title II of the Trade Act of 1974)

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- Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (known in Minnesota as Minnesota Family Investment Program)
- Unemployment Insurance
- Veterans
- Work Opportunity Tax Credit

The 2006 Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act (Perkins IV) is not included in *Minnesota's Unified Plan* because the State is in the process of establishing a new structure for conducting Perkins activities. The new structure will include both high schools and colleges as local consortium members. The new consortiums will be expected to submit a single local Perkins plan that focuses on key educational elements. During this transition, Minnesota will submit a one-year Perkins IV Transition Plan in May 2007. Perkins goals, objectives, and strategies will be submitted in Minnesota's five-year Perkins Plan in May 2008.

Plan Structure

This plan includes the sections listed below.

- A. State Vision and Priorities
- B. One-Stop Delivery System
- C. Plan Development and Implementation
- D. Needs Assessment
- E. State and Local Governance
- F. Funding
- G. Activities to Be Funded
- H. Coordination and Non-Duplication
- I. Special Populations and Other Groups
- J. Professional Development and System Improvement
- K. Performance Accountability
- L. Data Collection
- M. Corrective Action
- N. Waiver and Work-Flex Requests



Acknowledgments

Over 100 people representing the workforce development system in Minnesota contributed to *Minnesota's Unified Plan*, building on the partnerships that are the hallmark of Minnesota's workforce development system.

The Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED) extends its thanks and appreciation to these contributors who provide services at the State and local levels and who work together to develop the skilled workers that Minnesota businesses need to compete globally:

- DEED's State agency partners
 - Minnesota Department of Education
 - Minnesota Department of Human Services
 - Minnesota Department of Labor and Industry
 - Minnesota State Colleges and Universities
- Governor's Workforce Development Council
- Local workforce investment boards
- Public, private, and non-profit service providers

These contributors' efforts and service to customers will ensure that Minnesota remains a great place to live, work, and do business.

DEED specifically wishes to acknowledge the important contributions from the following content experts:

Erik Aamoth	Marti Fishbach	Brenda Norman	Barry Shaffer
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Lynn Douma	Cristine Leavitt	Rick Roy	Jim Warnest
Larry Eisenstadt	Mark Loftus	Steve Serkland	
Bonnie Elsey	Michael Murphy	Deb Serum	
Steve Erbes	David Niermann	Ann Sessoms	

Minnesota's Unified Plan (July 2007 to June 2010) was coordinated by Cristine Leavitt, and assisted by Deanne White, of DEED's Workforce Development Division. DEED's Communications Office staff helped produce *Minnesota's Unified Plan*.

For More Information

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A. State Vision and Priorities

WIA/Wagner-Peyser Plan requirements:

1. Describe the Governor's vision for a Statewide workforce investment system. Provide a summary articulating the Governor's vision for utilizing the resources of the workforce system in support of the State's economic development that address the issues and questions below. States are encouraged to attach more detailed documents to expand upon any aspect of the summary response if available. (WIA §112(a) and (b)(4)(A-C))

One of Governor Tim Pawlenty's top goals for his administration is, "Increase Jobs and Economic Opportunities: We will support the economic success of individuals, businesses, and communities by improving opportunities for growth." This principle is the mission of the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED), the lead State agency driving Minnesota's workforce investment system. The Governor and the DEED commissioner have set an ambitious goal of adding 150,000 jobs to the State over the course of this administration. Workforce development is critical to the success of this effort.

While DEED has a primary responsibility for providing workforce development services, the Minnesota Department of Education (MDE), Minnesota Department of Human Services (DHS), Minnesota State Colleges and Universities (MnSCU) system, University of Minnesota (U of M), local governments, and private and nonprofit organizations are important contributors to Minnesota's workforce development system. In addition, the Governor's Workforce Development Council (GWDC) is Minnesota's State workforce investment board, responsible for providing a vision and strategic direction to the State's workforce development system.

In January 2007, the GWDC adopted a new vision to transform Minnesota's current workforce development system into a more agile, next-generation model that is highly responsive to changing needs and preferences of employers and workers in a knowledge-based economy. That new vision is:

Minnesota's public, private, and community resources are strategically aligned to competitively position Minnesota's citizens and businesses for increased and sustained economic success.

The Governor's vision for Minnesota's *Unified Plan* is:

- Minnesota's businesses lead the world in innovation and are strong global competitors.
- Minnesota's workers lead the world in talent, productivity, and economic self-sufficiency.
- Minnesota's comprehensive education, employment, and economic development systems are aligned to maximize public investment.

Below is a recap and expansion of trends and environmental scans included in *Re-imagining Minnesota's Workforce Development System*. These system drivers were considered in establishing Minnesota workforce development system goals and strategies.

Factors that affect Minnesota's success towards achieving its workforce development system vision are:

- Customer needs and preferences
- Federal and State requirements
- System-provider relationships and willingness to align policies and resources to achieve system initiatives
- Leadership direction and commitment to system initiatives
- Staff capability, understanding, and willingness to implement system initiatives
- Clarity of provider roles and responsibilities
- Performance information to track progress and outcomes
- Available resources

Trends that influence how Minnesota will achieve its workforce development system vision are:

- There is increased customization of products and services.
- Service delivery is becoming increasingly multi-modal, using a mix of physical and electronic means. Private business efforts are expanding the reach of self-service options, while at the same time offering higher-quality personal advising and service.

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- Innovation is increasingly important in producing new and better quality products and services in shorter time and at lower cost.
- The rate of adoption of new technologies is accelerating, making market transactions faster, more convenient, and less expensive. (Making a transaction at the bank using traditional tellers at the counter costs the bank 60 times more than the same transaction online.)
- Partnerships are evolving into strategic alliances, "coopetition" (cooperative competition, such as when Apple and Microsoft, competitors in most ways, build closer ties on software development for their mutual good).
- Customers want service on-demand, available 24/7 from the convenience of their computers or portable devices. When they interact with staff, they want well-informed professionals who add value to the experience.
- Minnesota's job market increasingly demands better-educated workers with transferable skills who are comfortable with technology, have a career strategy, engage in lifelong learning, and are able and willing to transfer their skills from one job and industry to another as the economy changes.
- Minnesota has an economic environment that more highly rewards businesses that are connected to global markets, invest in development of their incumbent workers, accommodate the changing demographics of the labor force, maximize the use of technology, cooperate with other companies in their industry, and participate in building the long-term sustainability of their businesses and communities.
- Minnesota's economic environment rewards communities that develop and strengthen their existing businesses, act regionally and collaboratively, and align their human development pipelines with the needs of community businesses and industries.

Table A.1 presents strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and challenges (SWOC) that further define Minnesota's workforce development system environment and considerations.

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Table A.1 - SWOC Analysis

Strengths	Opportunities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Minnesota was identified as one of the seven honor role states in the <i>2007 Overview Development Report Card for the States</i> produced by the Corporation for Enterprise Development, a national and international nonprofit organization that expands economic opportunity. Minnesota ranked 3rd in the <i>2007 Chance for Success</i> index that reflects a state's combined performance with respect to 13 indicators on an individual's life from cradle to career. This report was prepared by the Editorial Projects in Education, a nonprofit organization based in Bethesda, Maryland, whose mission is to raise awareness and understanding among professionals and the public of American education issues. Regional economic competitiveness (i.e., sectoral) projects are underway in nearly all of Minnesota's 16 workforce service areas (WSAs). Most workforce development services are integrated within Minnesota's WorkForce Centers. Minnesota is a national leader in labor market information. Technology advances are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In June 2007, the State will launch one of the best Web-based job banks in the nation. Also in 2007, the State will launch the Customer Relationship Management (CRM) System to provide a more systematic and effective means for coordinating business services among staff within DEED and the Minnesota Chamber of Commerce. In 2006, the State launched the Customer Registration System (CRS) to provide data on services used by WorkForce Center customers. There is a renewed focus on sharing best practices, such as Minnesota Workforce Council Association's (MWCA) best practices initiative adopted in 2006. Minnesota has service delivery staff that are passionate about helping their customers, especially individuals with employment barriers. Human capital investment includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demand-driven training of all WorkForce Center staff to establish a shared understanding of what it means to provide business-driven services and how to align service delivery practices and tools with demand-driven principles. Cluster (i.e., Porter) training to raise Workforce Development Division leadership understanding of economic principles and jump-start regional economic development initiatives. The State is a national leader in student performance within the K-12 system. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bringing business, economic, employment, and education leaders together to strengthen regional economies Exploring ways to increase collaboration among State and local workforce, education, and economic development agencies to address regional workforce issues, align policies and resources, streamline processes, and measure performance Helping business find and retain skilled workers and embrace Minnesota's increasingly diverse workforce Helping workers change careers more quickly and set an employment path that aligns with high-wage, high-growth industries Establishing performance criteria for the system and creating an integrated performance measurement system Moving from a customer-choice model for job seekers to a business-driven model of informed customer choice and aligning resources and policies to support demand-driven approaches Leveraging the National Governor's Association's (NGA) Innovation America resources to take Minnesota to the next level of workforce development performance improvement Analyzing the use of the Workforce Investment in Regional Economic Development (WIRED) framework for local plans to help address regional workforce issues (see the WIRED website for more information)

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Table A.1 - SWOC Analysis

Weaknesses	Challenges
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Political implications of closing a WorkForce Center make it very difficult to adopt a more cost-effective workforce development service delivery structure. WSA boundaries may not always be aligned with regional economies. There is a lack of resources and staff expertise to develop a virtual workforce development system. The State lacks system performance measures and an integrated performance measurement system to drive improvements. There is no common language and understanding of work readiness and English, math, and writing skill assessment results among system providers, employers, and job seekers. There is difficulty in setting clear expectations for individuals receiving intensive and training services. DEED faces challenges in integrating economic development initiatives within DEED. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increasing global economic competition Increasing dynamic economy with high levels of job “churn” Growing immigrant population with limited English-proficiency Large and growing academic achievement gap between minority and white students in the K-12 system A growing need for incumbent worker training Shrinking public workforce development resources Healthcare costs and coverage concerns Health pandemics, like SARS or Bird Flu Environmental disasters from floods, tornados, droughts, and possible impacts from global warming

While the urgency of globalization and growth of the knowledge-economy drive Minnesota's vision, the ability to successfully achieve its vision will require unprecedented convergence and alignment among education (P-12, post-secondary, and Adult Basic Education [ABE]), economic development, workforce development, and human services. Success will also depend on strong leadership and adherence to the following guiding principles:

- Provide business-driven workforce development services.
- Focus on core mission (i.e., what Minnesota is the best at) and avoid mission creep.
- Align resources, policies, and strategies to achieve a demand-driven system.
- Communicate key initiatives horizontally as well as vertically.
- Duplicate good practices (i.e., avoid reinventing the wheel).
- Invest in staff development and share knowledge.
- Foster and reward innovation.
- Continuously evaluate and improve.

In January 2007, DEED convened key workforce development partners (DEED, DHS, GWDC, MDE,

MnSCU, and WSA directors) to define goals, strategies, and initiatives for achieving Minnesota's workforce development vision between now and 2010. The strategic goals identified were:

- Enhance the innovative capacity of Minnesota businesses to compete in the global economy.
- Help employers find and retain the skilled workers needed to grow their businesses.
- Provide workforce intelligence (information) and training so Minnesota's workforce leads the world in talent and productivity.
- Align policies and practices across education, employment, and economic development agencies to support business innovation and provide demand-driven, outcome-based, and streamlined workforce development services to businesses, individuals, and communities.

Table A.2 lists State-level strategies and initiatives to achieve workforce development system goals (Note: Carl Perkins initiatives are not included within this plan). While the goals and strategies are not anticipated to change over the course of *Minnesota's Unified Plan*, additional initiatives may be added.

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Table A.2 - State-Level Workforce Development System Initiatives (2007-2010)

Goal 1: Enhance the innovative capacity of Minnesota businesses to compete in the global economy.		
Strategies	Initiatives	State Lead
Strengthen regional economies by rewarding sectoral strategies and planning regionally.	<p>1. NGA Sectoral Academy Workplan (program year [PY] 2006)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alignment of assessment process • Alignment of sectoral work across State and local agencies • Preparation of State and regional communication plan • Coordinate with MnSCU's Centers of Excellence <p>Initiative will increase and enhance partnerships and communications with economic development-related organizations and individuals including local workforce investment boards (LWIBs), WorkForce Centers, business services specialists, and other groups</p> <p>2. Provide incentive dollars to assist LWIBs develop regional plans representing regional economies for use in PY08 (PY07)</p> <p>3. Joyce Foundation Initiative Planning Grant (PY06)</p> <p>4. University Enterprise Network System Analysis (PY06)</p> <p>5. Annual Minnesota Development Conference (September 2007)</p> <p>6. WIRED Request for Proposal (PY06)</p> <p>7. Federal WIA Incentive Grant for Sectoral Work (PY06-07)</p> <p>8. <u>Re-imagining Minnesota's Workforce Development System</u> (PY06-08)</p> <p>9. Conduct listening sessions across the State with local elected officials, educational institutions, and economic developers to explore more cost-effective workforce development service delivery options, including redesignation of WSA boundaries.</p>	Workforce Investment Federal Incentive Grant Managing Partners Team (DEED, GWDC, MDE's Carl Perkins and ABE, and MnSCU's Carl Perkins and Centers of Excellence Leadership Group)
Identify and develop apprenticeship programs to meet employer needs	<p>10. Monticello and St. Cloud Employer Apprenticeship Consortium (PY06-07)</p> <p>11. Medical Lab Tech Apprenticeship program ((PY06)</p> <p>12. Interpreters and Translators Stakeholders Group (PY06-07)</p>	DEED, DLI - Registered Apprenticeship, Employers, MnSCU DEED, GWDC, MDE, and MnSCU DWDC DEED

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Goal 1: Enhance the innovative capacity of Minnesota businesses to compete in the global economy.

Strategies	Initiatives	State Lead
Increase staff capacity in economics and business relationship management and outreach.	13. Launch the CRM system for business services (PY06)	DEED's Business Development, Business Services, and Trade Offices; and the Minnesota Chamber of Commerce
	14. Cluster Based Economic and Workforce Strategy Development (October 2006 to September 2007)	DEED; Central Minnesota (MN), Southwest MN Private Industry Council, and Stearns-Benton Employment and Training Council WSAs; and National Center for Education and the Economy
	15. Become more knowledgeable about market forces, trends, and high-demand occupations in order to serve customer needs more effectively	MDE's ABE
	16. Continue to receive workforce education training to improve staff skills in working directly with businesses	MDE's ABE
	17. Demand-driven training of WorkForce Center staff (PY06)	DEED and MWCA
	18. Launch Business Services University (January 2007)	DEED and MnSCU (with Hennepin Technical College the lead partner)
	19. Cluster (i.e., Porter) training for 70 WorkForce Centers, DEED, and MnSCU staff	DEED and U of M

Goal 2: Help employers find and retain the skilled workers needed to grow their business.

Strategies	Initiatives	State Lead
Improve service effectiveness and efficiency to employers.	20. Launch new Minnesota's Job Bank (June 2007)	DEED
	21. Develop Minnesota's Job Bank marketing campaign with Carlson School of Business students to reposition the image of Minnesota's Job Bank	DEED

Goal 3: Provide workforce intelligence and training so that Minnesota's workforce leads the world in talent and productivity.

Strategies	Initiatives	State Lead
Further integrate workforce and economic development policies and practices to respond to long-term skill projections and skill shortages.	22. Establish and implement common referral protocol between WorkForce Centers and ABE	DEED and MDE's ABE
	23. Increase collaborations with local post-secondary institutions to establish more continuity regarding student testing, curricula, placement, and referral	MDE's ABE
	24. Streamline and align workforce development policies to promote a demand-driven workforce development system (PY06-07)	DEED
	25. Strengthen connections between Registered Apprenticeship programs and the WorkForce Center System	DEED and DLI

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Goal 3: Provide workforce intelligence and training so that Minnesota's workforce leads the world in talent and productivity.

Strategies	Initiatives	State Lead
Align training and education to better support economic growth.	26. Explore providing instructional support for the career readiness credential	MDE's ABE
	27. Implement career pathway projects such as pre-certified nursing assistant training to offer customers increased employability opportunities	MDE's ABE
	28. Increase participation with Minnesota businesses to provide ABE and ESL contextual instruction onsite	MDE's ABE
	29. Promote life-long learning	DEED
	30. Increase the system's capacity to provide talent development through education and/or training	DEED
	31. Increase the system's capacity to provide career guidance to all WorkForce Center customers (may be virtual or in-person)	DEED
Adopt uniform work readiness and skill assessment instruments.	32. Pilot and evaluate interagency use of common assessment tools that demonstrate the work readiness or skills of job seekers (PY06); goal is to have full implementation of a work readiness credential by 2008	DEED, MDE's ABE, and MnSCU's Remedial Education Programs
Improve service effectiveness and efficiency to workers and job seekers.	33. Implement the Deficit Reduction Act (DRA)	DEED and DHS
	34. Engage with Minnesota Family Investment Program (MFIP) applicants early and continue engagement to help job-ready MFIP parents move into unsubsidized employment	DEED and DHS
	35. <u>Shared Youth Vision</u> (SYV) activities for interagency projects designed to improve services for the neediest youth	DEED, DHS, MDE, MHFA, MN Department of Corrections, MN Department of Health (MDH), MN Department of Public Safety, MnSCU, PACER, U.S. Department of Labor's Job Corps, and White Earth Indian Reservation
	36. Increase partnership arrangements for co-locating ABE services at post-secondary institutions	
	37. Discern best practices for MFIP parents who are least likely to be successful in the labor market	DHS and DEED
	38. Increase the percent of women and people of color participating in registered apprenticeship programs.	DLI

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Goal 4: Align policies and practices across education, employment, and economic development agencies to support business innovation and provide demand-driven, outcome-based, streamlined workforce development services to businesses, individuals, and communities.

Strategies	Initiatives	State Lead
Align workforce programs, policies, resources, and strategies structurally to reduce duplication and focus on agency core mission.	39. Define mission, roles, and responsibilities of State and locals within WorkForce Centers	State and local strategic planning committee ("Gang of 8")
	40. Streamline and align workforce development policies to promote demand-driven services (PY06-07)	DEED
	41. Align workforce and economic development efforts to strengthen regional economies and sectoral efforts.	DEED
Create workforce development system accountability standards and measure performance outcomes.	42. Set and implement an integrated system of outcome-based workforce development system performance measures (PY07)	DEED, DHS, GWDC, MDE, MnSCU, and others to be named
	43. Develop interfaces among CRS, CRM, Minnesota's Job Bank, and Workforce One to improve the data access needs of program operators (PY06-08)	DEED
	44. Implement criteria for certification of WorkForce Centers	DEED

Minnesota also wishes to acknowledge the following sectoral efforts aimed at improving regional economic competitiveness:

- Northland Works (Wisconsin GROW [Growing Regional Opportunities in Wisconsin] Grant) (PY06). This initiative involves City of Duluth, Northeast MN, and Rural Minnesota Concentrated Employment Program (CEP) WSAs; and Northwest Wisconsin CEP.
- 7 Rivers Project (Wisconsin GROW Grant) (PY06). This initiative involves Southeastern MN and Winona County WSAs; LaCrosse, Wisconsin; and northeast Iowa.
- Regional Area Economy Report (PY06). This Minneapolis-St. Paul metropolitan area report involves ABE, DEED, LWIBs, and MnSCU customized training partners.
- Blandin Foundation Sponsored Community Economic Development Initiative (PY06). This initiative involves City of Duluth, Rural MN CEP, and Northeast MN WSAs; Grand Rapids Chamber of Commerce; and MnSCU.

- The Regional Economic Development (RED) Project of The McKnight Foundation and the Blandin Foundation to create new wealth in Greater Minnesota.

2. *What are the State's economic development goals for attracting, retaining, and growing business and industry within the State? (§112(a) and (b)(4)(A-C))*

Minnesota is fortunate to have a growing population, a generally healthy business sector, and a strong economic foundation. Minnesota is one of seven states on the Corporation for Enterprise Development's "Honor Roll" with an "A" in economic performance, an "A" in development capacity, and a "B" in business vitality. To capitalize on its strengths, Minnesota's broad economic goals are:

- Stimulate investment in Greater Minnesota through the Job Opportunity Building Zones (JOBZ) initiative. (See below for further explanation of JOBZ.)
- Supply businesses with the nation's most talented and productive workforce at the right time and in the right place.

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- Ensure that Minnesota has a competitive regulatory climate for business location and expansion.
- Support entrepreneurs and small businesses to accelerate the rate of new business start-ups.
- Identify and respond to the needs of competitive sectors.
- Help Minnesota's businesses enter international markets.

Minnesota is, by its history, government, and culture, a higher-cost state, but that has translated into high-value services and a productive, well-educated workforce. The overall goal (as evidenced by the Governor's desire not to raise taxes) is to ensure that Minnesota's business costs are competitive with other locations while keeping the quality services and workforce that make Minnesota attractive to businesses.

Stimulate Investment in Greater Minnesota

Minnesota has many less-prosperous rural areas and smaller cities in Greater Minnesota. The Governor's key initiative to stimulate economic development in these rural areas is the JOBZ initiative. Ten JOBZs that encompass over 29,000 acres in 325 subzone communities across Greater Minnesota provide businesses locating into or expanding within their boundaries a maximum of 12 years of growth and investment exempt from most State and local taxes. The tax-free zone concept at the heart of JOBZ is light-years beyond what Minnesota has ever done to promote rural economic development. As of February 2007, there were 291 signed business subsidy agreements for JOBZ projects in communities around the State. These projects promise to create at least 4,361 new jobs, retain at least 9,144 existing jobs, and pay an average wage-plus-benefits package of \$11.37 per hour.

Supply Businesses with a Talented and Productive Workforce

Minnesota's workforce investment system will create a skilled workforce that gives Minnesota's businesses a competitive advantage. Minnesota will provide the nation's most talented and productive workforce, at the right time and in the right place, to employers of all types across the State. By reducing employee search costs and ensuring that employees outperform competitors, Minnesota will accelerate the growth of its businesses.

Minnesota has the nation's highest labor force participation rate, the highest percentage of the population with a high school diploma (*U.S. Census Bureau, Population Division, 2004 data*), and the tenth-highest percentage with a Bachelor's degree; clearly, Minnesota has an active, engaged, qualified, educated, and productive workforce to meet business needs.

The State's first strategy is investing in incumbent worker training to address the estimated 80 percent of the workforce of 2010 already working. For example, the Minnesota Job Skills Partnership (MJSP) awards approximately \$7 million per year in grants to educational institutions that partner with businesses to create educational infrastructure improvements. The State's second strategy is to reduce employee search costs by creating and streamlining the connection between job seekers and job hirers. Minnesota is preparing to launch a nation-leading job bank.

Ensure a Competitive Business Climate

Attracting and retaining growing businesses requires a regulatory and environmental management system that supports appropriate growth within existing State standards. In the past, communication between State regulators and expanding businesses has been poor, and businesses complained about Minnesota's regulatory delays. To promote business growth, Minnesota BizNice, a collaboration between DEED and the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency, is working to ensure that both businesses and regulators are swiftly able to meet permitting and other requirements. DEED is extending this process to other regulatory areas by bringing officials from transportation, agriculture, and natural resources departments to the table to resolve business expansion problems.

Support Entrepreneurs and Small Businesses to Accelerate the Rate of New Business Start-ups

Minnesota provides an extensive array of information and counseling to entrepreneurs and small businesses to support their decision-making. A network of Small Business Development Centers across the State offers free-of-charge counsel and assistance on a range of business management issues. DEED's Small Business Assistance

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Office provides free counsel on tax and regulatory issues and jointly produces a series of free publications with private sector collaborators. In February 2007, Minnesota launched www.getgomm.org, a no-cost Web-based community for entrepreneurs and investors. Links to this resource were installed on all WorkForce Center resource area computers that are used by the public.

Identify and Respond to the Needs of Competitive Sectors

Minnesota's economic development policy focuses on sectors where the State is strong and anticipates future growth. For example, the manufacturing sector needs stronger unified strategies and clarity regarding manufacturing industry priorities. DEED has created a "manufacturer's advocate" position to work with over 30 manufacturing trade groups to create a common strategy. Manufacturers confront current and increasing challenges such as finding ways to attract young people to manufacturing careers, and strategies across all manufacturers can help. Similarly, the Governor's Biosciences Initiative focuses attention on Minnesota's competitive medical device, industrial biotechnology, and agricultural sectors and how they are transitioning into bioscience applications.

Help Minnesota's Businesses Enter International Markets

Minnesota continues to outpace the nation in the growth of its manufacturing exports, and DEED's Trade Office continues to assist Minnesota's businesses in entering international markets, including a State of Minnesota mission to India in October 2007 and a number of initiatives with Minnesota's strongest trading partner, Canada. In February 2005, Governor Pawlenty announced the [Minnesota-China Partnership](#), a set of initiatives to strengthen and broaden Minnesota's relationship with China. Minnesota's fourth-largest trade partner, China buys more than \$650 million worth of Minnesota products every year. By enhancing relationships with Chinese officials and businesspeople, Minnesota will open the door wider to one of the world's most promising export markets. The Minnesota-China Partnership will strengthen and build those bonds by focusing efforts in four primary areas: trade development, promotion of Chinese investment in Minnesota, education and training, and collaborative initiatives.

3. Given that a skilled workforce is a key to the economic success of every business, what is the Governor's vision for maximizing and leveraging the broad array of Federal and State resources available for workforce investment flowing through the State's cabinet agencies and/or education agencies in order to ensure a skilled workforce for the State's business and industry? (§112(a) and (b)(4)(A-C))

Through the coordinated efforts of DEED, DHS, MDE, the GWDC, and higher education partners Statewide, Minnesota can direct appropriate State and federal resources to meet its workforce needs. Efforts such as the [Inventory of Publicly-Funded Workforce Development Programs](#) allow the State to identify the workforce investment resources at-hand, while DEED's business services initiative promotes understanding of the needs of Minnesota's employers. By maintaining communication and collaborative partnerships across agencies and with local and nonprofit partners, Minnesota will continue to ensure that its business customers receive the skilled workforce they need.

The final link in Minnesota's linkages is a dynamic career information system. Available via the Internet, Minnesota's career information tools translate businesses' hiring needs into self-assessments that allow Minnesotans to match their skills and interests to career opportunities. Closely integrated with catalogs of training opportunities, these skill profilers help ensure that students and career-changers, particularly those who do not avail themselves of formal workforce development assistance, make well-informed decisions and find training that matches their skills and interests to hiring opportunities with Minnesota's businesses.

Later sections of *Minnesota's Unified Plan* will provide more detail on this vision.

4. Given the continuously changing skill needs that business and industry have as a result of innovation and new technology, what is the Governor's vision for ensuring a continuum of education and training opportunities that support a skilled workforce? (§112(a) and (b)(4)(A-C))

Minnesota's vision for ensuring a continuum of education and training opportunities that supports a skilled workforce depends on strong labor market information (LMI);

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extensive involvement with, and input from, the business community; and career information systems that connect the knowledge, skills, and abilities of job seekers to business needs. Minnesota promotes the use of career ladder strategies. Career ladder strategies are designed to create opportunities for low-wage workers to learn new skills and advance through a progression of high skilled and better paying jobs. Simultaneously, career ladders also aim to meet employers' needs to recruit and retain a skilled, highly trained workforce. Staff working in career ladder programs clarify what training or education is required to move to the next step on the ladder, and they typically provide workers with the support services and financial assistance they need to complete training.

DEED is proud to have one of the nation's best LMI offices, with staff who lead the nation in developing innovative ways to use core labor market data to meet workforce development planning needs. For example, Minnesota's Statewide [Job Vacancy Survey](#) and the [Skill Projections Model](#) are national models. The connections created by DEED's business services initiative provide qualitative information about business needs to complement the quantitative LMI. Minnesota's workforce development system uses this information to prioritize education and training opportunities that meet business needs. For example, program planners at MnSCU have worked with DEED's LMI Office to create a gap analysis model that ensures that MnSCU's programs align with local labor market needs. DEED's local planning guidance to LWIBs requires LWIBs to identify high-demand occupations and industries in their local area. WIA Title I-B monitoring activities ensure that WIA-funded training prepares job seekers for high-demand areas of local economies.

Career information and exploration tools ensure that Minnesota's career seekers make education and training decisions that align with business needs. For example, [MnCareers](#), an award-winning career information publication produced by ISEEK (Internet System for Education and Employment Knowledge), is distributed annually to Minnesota's high school students. ISEEK, a Web-based career information system, links career information with education and training opportunities and includes information on the wage outcomes of graduates of education and training programs (e.g., the *Consumer Report*).

The Minnesota Job Skills Partnership Board (MJSB) provides grants to educational institutions partnering with Minnesota businesses to meet incumbent worker training needs when no curriculum is available. Educational institutions that provide the customized training then share the training with other institutions, thus increasing the capacity of the State's education and training providers to meet the most current business needs. In addition, the 2005 Minnesota legislature approved legislation to establish centers of excellence within the MnSCU system. MnSCU's Board of Trustees approved the designation and funding of four centers of excellence in the fall of 2006. The centers are designed to integrate the academic and training outcomes based on business clusters that have a significant multiplier effect on the State's economy based on projections of job, income, or general economic growth. The centers of excellence are required to create an advisory committee representing local, State, and national leaders in the field.

In addition to these ongoing activities, the GWDC has identified a series of opportunities for further investigation:

- Develop a Statewide vision and intent to use regional industry sector development as a means to identify and address employee training, education, and career pathways within an industry and develop strategic partnerships among all of the provider organizations to address these needs.
- Assess policy and program gaps for low-income adult learners making transition from low-wage jobs, workforce development programs, and short-term customized training to post-secondary certificates and degrees.
- Identify opportunities to move from non-credit workforce education to credit-bearing post-secondary education.
- Examine policy and program issues related to defining integrated performance measures for programs serving low-wage, low-skilled workers.
- Identify strategies to include assessing industry needs and opportunities for low-wage worker advancement through MJSP training.
- Increase access to career exploration and planning for middle school and high school students.
- Strengthen connection between preparing high school students equally successfully for post-secondary education and work readiness.

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5. *What is the Governor's vision for bringing together the key players in workforce development including business and industry, economic development, education, and the workforce system to continuously identify the workforce challenges facing the State and to develop innovative strategies and solutions that effectively leverage resources to address those challenges? (§112(b)(10))*

The creation of DEED in 2003 brought together the State's workforce development agency and the State's economic development agency into one shared organization. As a merged agency, DEED is in a strong position to identify and develop innovative strategies and solutions that leverage all of the State's workforce and economic development resources. DEED reaches out to business and industry, communities, local economic development authorities, nonprofits, foundations, and higher education, seeking new ways to use public resources to address business needs.

The primary vehicle for bringing together business and industry, economic development, education, and the public workforce system is the GWDC. A new chair was appointed in September 2004 and a new executive director hired in March 2005. The GWDC plan addresses how it can leverage its advisory role and the contributions of the talent diversity of council members to strengthen its role in identifying and addressing the State's workforce challenges. Particular interests of the GWDC for the future include:

- Prioritize and provide incentives for regional planning and using an industry sector workforce development approach for increased economic competitiveness for business and individuals.
- Use the GWDC as a venue to convene and facilitate system and policy changes that will reduce barriers.
- Disseminate best practices in combining economic development and workforce development efforts and provide recognition to champions.
- Facilitate innovation and integration across agency and program silos through grants and other incentives for collaboration.

DEED has undertaken a number of initiatives to strategically leverage key partners in addressing workforce development challenges. One effort includes working

with the Minnesota Chamber of Commerce and DEED's Business Services, Business Development, and Trade Offices to establish a CRM system that allows workforce and economic development staff to coordinate and share information on business needs and site visits.

Three additional efforts are the State Sector Initiatives, Basic Skills Assessment and Training Initiative with the ABE program, and Minnesota's Job Bank redesign. (See Attachment L for *Director's Insight* publications that describe these innovative and collaborative efforts.) An additional example is an all-day session hosted by DEED in January 2007 for program directors, local WorkForce Center leaders, and LWIB chairs to hear from State agencies (DEED, MDE, DHS, and MnSCU) and the GWDC about key workforce development initiatives. The purpose of this first-time event was to better inform and prepare local leaders for upcoming initiatives and to identify what Statewide support may be needed to improve the success of State agency initiatives. In addition, this session provided an opportunity to hear where Minnesota needs to improve communications and align resources and policies.

The MJSPB provides another venue for business and industry, higher education, economic development, and the WorkForce Center System to come together to address workforce issues. The members of the MJSPB are responsible for oversight of the federal and State Dislocated Worker programs. The MJSPB also grants money to educational institutions to support customized incumbent worker training for Minnesota businesses.

DEED and a number of partnering agencies and organizations have also transformed what used to be an annual economic development conference into an event focusing on the synthesis of issues facing economic development, workforce development, and education. The conference, and the meetings necessary to plan such an event, stimulate the type of cross-institutional thinking that must occur to advance the common mission of improving economic opportunity for all. At the substate level, regional economic summits and conferences, often held by LWIBs and regional foundations, are providing similar opportunities to address workforce issues.

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6. *What is the Governor's vision for ensuring that every youth has the opportunity to develop and achieve career goals through education and workforce training, including the youth most in need, such as out of school youth, homeless youth, youth in foster care, youth aging out of foster care, youth offenders, children of incarcerated parents, migrant and seasonal farmworker youth, and other youth at risk? (§112 (a))*

Minnesota's vision for improving services to youth includes the following major themes:

- Coordination of resources at the State and regional level
- Connecting youth with quality educational and high-growth employment opportunities
- Meeting the demands of business
- Performance accountability and a commitment to improving the quality of youth services

Minnesota supports partnerships that help young people--the future workforce--attain the skills, knowledge, and aptitudes to become productive workers. A qualified and educated workforce is critical to Minnesota's economic development in this era of national and global competition for jobs. Minnesota's commitment to improving services to the neediest youth is reflected in its SYV activities. Minnesota has several interagency initiatives which focus on creating Statewide change to improve its ability to reach and serve the neediest youth.

DEED developed the [SYV website](#) to show the depth, breadth, and actual capacity of Minnesota's interagency projects to support and sustain efforts to improve services to youth. The website includes information on the following projects, which support a collaborative cross-agency approach:

- Project C3, Connecting Youth With Communities and Careers
- The Dropout Prevention, Retention, and Graduation Initiative
- The Interagency Task Force on Homelessness
- The NGA's Policy Academy on Youth Transitioning Out of Foster Care

Minnesota is one of 16 states selected to participate in the Advanced Level SYV Forums. Minnesota's State team includes representatives from:

- DEED's offices of Youth Development, Rehabilitation Services (RS), and State Services for the Blind
- Department of Corrections' Juvenile Services
- MDE's Dropout Prevention, Retention and Graduation Initiative; Indian Education; Special Education; Adult and Career Education; and Safe and Healthy Learners
- MDH's Adolescent Health
- DHS' Adolescent Services, Pathways to Employment, and Office of Economic Opportunity
- Minnesota Housing Finance Agency's Homelessness and Supportive Housing
- ISEEK Solutions, CareerOneStop, Perkins Unit, and Student Affairs
- Department of Public Safety's Office of Justice programs
- Department of Labor and Industry's Minnesota OSHA (MNOSHA) Workplace Safety Team

Other partners on Minnesota's SYV Team include the:

- Hubert H. Humphrey Job Corps Center
- Parent Advocacy Coalition for Education Rights (PACER) Center
- White Earth Indian Reservation (Regional Training Center)

LWIBs and youth councils established under WIA promote local coordination with education, economic development, juvenile justice, human services, and community-based and faith-based organizations, RS, and migrant and seasonal farmworker programs to ensure that youth from all backgrounds can access a variety of youth services.

User-friendly, regional LMI is available on DEED's [LMI website](#) to assist LWIBs in assessing the workforce needs of local employers. Identification by LWIBs of in-demand occupations and targeted industries supports Minnesota's SYV and the regional partnerships that help young people attain the skills, knowledge, and aptitudes to become productive workers.

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7. *Given the labor shortage that will continue to increase over the next 25 years, describe the Governor's vision for how it will ensure that older individuals receive workforce training that will prepare them to reenter the labor market and become a workforce solution for employers. (§112 (b)(17)(A)(iv))*

Older individuals remain a vibrant and important part of Minnesota's labor market and its economic success. The State expects to offer entrepreneurial assistance to individuals of all ages through DEED's Small Business Assistance Office, the Small Business Development Centers, and extensive partnerships with nonprofit organizations that serve targeted populations in the creation of new business opportunities Statewide. Further, the Minnesota WorkForce Center System Business Plan notes that LWIBs will leverage all available labor resources, including older Americans, to the benefit of its overall economy. The State expects to actively participate with any number of social programs in continuing to encourage and support older Americans as they engage in the labor market.

Strong partnerships with other agencies and organizations that serve the older worker population exist among DHS, the State Board on Aging, the GWDC, LWIBs, social service organizations providing services to older individuals such as the Mature Worker Program, RS, Wagner-Peyser, and other organizations including businesses and labor.

In Minnesota, the Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP) is administered by DEED. 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. 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 Internet resources, publications, and promotional material), and forums (meetings and roundtables) encouraging collaboration and seeking to eliminate service gaps. Easy accessibility, partnering, and seamless service for providers and their customers will be greater components of SCSEP.



B. One-Stop Delivery System

1. Describe the State's comprehensive vision of an integrated service delivery system, including the role each program incorporated in the Unified Plan in the delivery of services through that system.

See Section A for a description of Minnesota's workforce development system vision, including the vision governing *Minnesota's Unified Plan*. This comprehensive vision emphasizes the importance and need for greater alignment of education, employment, and economic development policies and work practices in order to address workforce development system challenges. The new vision, guiding principles, goals, strategies, and initiatives guide and influence all workforce development program activities.

In answering this question, if your Unified Plan includes:

(a) WIA Title I and Wagner-Peyser Act and/or Veterans Programs:

(i) Identify how the State will use WIA Title I funds to leverage other Federal, State, local, and private resources in order to maximize the effectiveness of such resources and to expand the participation of business, employees, and individuals in the Statewide workforce investment system? (§112(b)(10))

Minnesota uses Workforce Investment Act (WIA) Title I-B funds in coordination with other resources, including:

Federal Resources

- Wagner-Peyser resources are used interchangeably with WIA Title I-B core services to maximize the number of staff-assisted services the Minnesota WorkForce Centers are able to provide.
- Wagner-Peyser resources dedicated to the Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED) business services initiative are coordinated with WIA Title I-B business outreach, sharing one employer database.
- Minnesota is using a U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) waiver, allowing it to use \$1 million of Rapid Response funds to leverage additional private funds to serve incumbent workers.

- Rehabilitation Services (RS) and State Services for the Blind (SSB) resources are used to supplement the provision of core services to individuals with disabilities who are on the RS waiting list.
- RS and SSB business outreach is coordinated with WIA Title I-B and Wagner-Peyser to form a business services team with a shared database.
- The State encourages co-enrollment, as appropriate, of older workers in the Senior Community Service Employment Program and WIA Title I-B programs so they receive comprehensive training support in achieving social and economic self-sufficiency; host sites benefit from the participation of these individuals.
- The State provides information on and referrals to interested and 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.
- The State provides information on and referrals to interested and potentially eligible individuals on Temporary Assistance for Needy Families programs; co-enrollment, as appropriate, is encouraged, enabling participants to obtain a comprehensive set of employment and training services and enhancing social and economic self-sufficiency.
- The State provides information on and referrals to interested and potentially eligible youth on Job Corps programs.

State Resources

- DEED provides the opportunities, as appropriate, for dislocated workers to co-enroll in the WIA Title I-B Adult Program and the State-supported Dislocated Worker Program, enabling both resources to support eligible individuals pursuing employment and training opportunities.
- DEED provides resources for Minnesota businesses to obtain the training they need for their employees; and accredited Minnesota educational institutions partner with businesses to develop customized new-job training or retraining for existing employees via the Minnesota Jobs Skills Partnership Program.
- Various economic development programs work in combination with the WIA Title I-B programs, creating opportunities for job seekers as well as providing

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businesses with the resources to hire more individuals.

- DEED's economic development specialists coordinate business contacts with business services teams (comprised of WIA Title I-B, Wagner-Peyser, RS, Veterans, and higher education staff) to provide higher-value engagements.

Private Resources

- The State works with private funding sources (e.g., private foundations) to provide employment and training opportunities to targeted populations, within the context of the Minnesota WorkForce Center System.

Other Resources

- Various local governmental entities (e.g., City of Minneapolis) provide job training opportunities through the WorkForce Center System using locally derived funds.

(ii) What strategies are in place to address the national strategic direction discussed in Part II of this guidance, the Governor's priorities, and the workforce development issues identified through the analysis of the State's economy and labor market? (§112(a) and 112(b)(4)(D))

See Table A.2 for a list of Minnesota's workforce development system strategies and initiatives over the course of Minnesota's Unified Plan.

(iii) Based on the State's economic and labor market analysis, what strategies has the State implemented or plans to implement to identify and target industries and occupations within the State that are high growth, high demand, and vital to the State's economy? (§112(a) and 112(b)(4)(A)) The State may want to consider:

- *Industries projected to add a substantial number of new jobs to the economy; or*
- *Industries that have a significant impact on the overall economy; or*
- *Industries that impact the growth of other industries; or*

- *Industries that are being transformed by technology and innovation that require new skill sets for workers; or*
- *Industries that are new and emerging and are expected to grow.*

The State has three broad strategies to target industries and occupations that are high-growth, high-demand, and vital to the State's economy:

- Request local workforce investment boards (LWIBs) to identify high-growth, high-demand occupations in their local areas and provide training accordingly.
- Hire industry specialists to establish connections with key high-growth, high-demand industries.
- Direct the activity of Wagner-Peyser business services specialists to support the LWIB plans by targeting and then addressing the needs of the targeted high-growth, high-demand industries.

DEED's Labor Market Information (LMI) Office has developed a methodology to assist LWIBs in identifying high-demand occupations. These proposed criteria are that high-wage, high-growth occupations:

- Employ at least 0.1 percent of total regional employment.
- Are projected to grow at least as fast as overall regional employment growth.
- Pay a median hourly wage equal to or greater than a region's overall median wage.

Applied to the six planning regions, these criteria produce lists of about 60 occupations, or about ten percent of all occupations, in each region. (Note that employment projections and occupational employment information are not available for the 16 Workforce Service Areas [WSAs] due to the small labor markets served by some local areas.) The number of occupations identified may be changed by relaxing, tightening, or eliminating some or all of the criteria.

In the planning guidance distributed to LWIBs, DEED asked each LWIB to identify the high-demand, high-growth industries and occupations that are critical to local and regional economic vitality. While DEED encourages LWIBs to base their lists on the methodology outlined

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above, DEED wants each LWIB to take ownership of their lists and to approve a list that is meaningful to their understanding of their local or regional economy.

In addition to the LMI produced by DEED, LWIBs may choose to examine training placement outcomes data or other information that aids them in using training dollars wisely. DEED is encouraging local areas to direct their WIA Title I-B training resources to focus on the specific occupations and industries identified by the LWIBs. WIA

Title I-B monitoring activities will ensure that WIA-funded training is preparing job seekers for these high-demand areas of local economies. Once each LWIB identifies specific local industries, DEED's business services specialists will prioritize meeting the needs of businesses in that specific industry.

While each LWIB will create its own list of high-demand, high-wage occupations, Table B.1 displays the occupations that meet the criteria when applied at the State level.

Table B.1 - High-Demand, High-Wage Occupations

Occupational Title	2004 Employment	Net Growth 2004-2014	Total Job Openings 2004-2014*	Median Hourly Wage in 2006	Median Annual Salary in 2006
Network Systems and Data Communications Analysts	4,825	52.8%	3,116	\$34.38/hr.	\$71,509.62
Computer Software Engineers, Applications	16,007	47.4%	9,173	\$37.72/hr.	\$78,464.83
Dental Hygienists	3,460	38.1%	1,618	\$26.93/hr.	\$65,022.94
Dental Assistants	5,146	37.6%	3,375	\$17.35/hr.	\$36,079.19
Community and Social Service Specialists, Other	4,377	36.4%	2,415	\$17.32/hr.	\$36,004.70
Network and Computer Systems Administrators	6,075	35.3%	2,813	\$29.50/hr.	\$61,347.50
Computer Software Engineers, Systems Software	6,233	35.3%	2,822	\$39.90/hr.	\$82,994.05
Medical and Clinical Laboratory Technicians	3,451	32.3%	2,045	\$18.16/hr.	\$37,764.32
Computer Systems Analysts	9,004	31.0%	3,814	\$33.14/hr.	\$68,927.44
Radiological Technologists and Technicians	3,459	30.2%	1,695	\$24.57/hr.	\$51,112.51
Family and General Practitioners	3,661	29.2%	1,560	\$70.85/hr.	\$147,381.86
Employment, Recruitment and Placement Specialists	3,077	28.5%	1,347	\$21.78/hr.	\$45,307.99
Registered Nurses	49,119	28.0%	24,042	\$29.76/hr.	\$61,888.93
Business Operations Specialists, All Other	43,236	27.9%	19,444	\$22.55/hr.	\$46,890.30
Medical and Clinical Laboratory Technologists	3,061	27.8%	1,682	\$24.53/hr.	\$51,018.80
Vocational Education Teachers, Postsecondary	3,670	27.2%	1,828	\$22.52/hr.	\$46,843.59
Human Resources, Training and Labor Relations Specialists	6,277	25.6%	2,674	\$24.27/hr.	\$50,478.95
Computer and Information Systems Managers	8,311	24.7%	3,563	\$49.66/hr.	\$103,284.84
Highway Maintenance Workers	6,221	23.6%	2,366	\$18.93/hr.	\$39,364.52
Pharmacists	4,058	23.0%	1,725	\$48.30/hr.	\$100,475.80
Medical and Health Services Managers	4,931	22.3%	2,062	\$36.80/hr.	\$76,530.27
Industrial Engineers	5,158	22.3%	2,398	\$33.61/hr.	\$69,906.17
Property, Real Estate and Community Association Managers	4,021	20.5%	1,576	\$20.84/hr.	\$43,353.36

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Table B.1 (continued) - High-Demand, High-Wage Occupations

Occupational Title	2004 Employment	Net Growth 2004-2014	Total Job Openings 2004-2014*	Median Hourly Wage in 2006	Median Annual Salary in 2006
Clinical, Counseling, and School Psychologists	3,401	19.8%	1,413	\$29.08/hr.	\$60,493.72
Marketing Managers	4,939	19.6%	1,878	\$52.98/hr.	\$110,203.59
Sales Managers	7,722	19.6%	2,941	\$49.73/hr.	\$103,439.97
Sales Representatives, Services, All Other	10,811	19.5%	4,167	\$25.47/hr.	\$52,968.04
Market Research Analysts	7,003	19.0%	3,151	\$29.59/hr.	\$61,555.74
Accountants and Auditors	25,833	18.7%	9,722	\$25.52/hr.	\$53,095.46
Cost Estimators	4,964	18.6%	2,034	\$27.33/hr.	\$56,859.93
Special Education Teachers, Preschool, Kindergarten	6,094	18.4%	2,573		\$48,582.39
Educational, Vocational, and School Counselors	4,579	17.7%	1,860	\$18.85/hr.	\$39,190.77
Cement Masons and Concrete Finishers	3,836	17.6%	1,444	\$21.41/hr.	\$44,549.52
Plumbers, Pipe fitters, and Steamfitters	9,519	17.3%	3,837	\$27.51/hr.	\$57,211.29
Police and Sheriff's Patrol Officers	7,982	16.3%	3,373	\$23.81/hr.	\$49,518.63
Human Resources Assistants, Except Payroll	3,272	16.2%	1,240	\$16.83/hr.	\$34,997.65
Sales Representatives, Wholesale and Manufacturing	8,424	15.3%	3,497	\$34.92/hr.	\$72,619.16
Compliance Officers	3,135	15.1%	1,214	\$26.79/hr.	\$55,711.97
First-Line Supervisors/Managers of Transportation	5,920	14.9%	2,271	\$22.91/hr.	\$47,634.97
Payroll and Timekeeping Clerks	3,786	14.5%	1,549	\$16.82/hr.	\$34,976.92
Mechanical Engineers	6,062	14.4%	2,532	\$32.15/hr.	\$66,876.28
Bus and Truck Mechanics and Diesel Engine Specialists	6,494	14.0%	2,576	\$19.38/hr.	\$40,318.56
Sheet Metal Workers	3,271	13.5%	1,221	\$24.85/hr.	\$51,673.71
Engineering Technicians, Executive Drafters, All Other	3,526	13.0%	1,309	\$24.59/hr.	\$51,143.74
First-Line Supervisors/Managers of Mechanics, Installers and Repairers	9,718	12.5%	3,652	\$26.11/hr.	\$54,307.69
Automotive Service Technicians and Mechanics	14,265	12.4%	5,575	\$16.51/hr.	\$34,335.07
Operating Engineers and Other Construction Equipment	9,556	11.8%	3,588	\$22.56/hr.	\$46,924.61
Sales Representatives, Wholesale and Manufacturing	31,208	11.2%	11,695	\$25.32/hr.	\$52,675.05

* Total openings include openings due to employment growth plus replacement openings (openings due to retirement and other exits from the labor force).

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(iv) What strategies are in place to promote and develop ongoing and sustained strategic partnerships that include business and industry, economic development, the workforce system, and education partners (K-12, community colleges, and others) for the purpose of continuously identifying workforce challenges and developing solutions to targeted industries' workforce challenges? (§112(b)(8))

The following State-level strategies promote and develop ongoing strategic partnerships with business and industry, economic development, the WorkForce Center System, and education partners and serve to identify and address workforce challenges, including industry-specific challenges:

- Strengthen regional economies by rewarding sectoral strategies and planning regionally.
- Identify and develop apprenticeship programs to meet employer needs.
- Increase staff capacity in economics, business relationship management, and outreach.
- Improve service effectiveness and efficiency by:
 - Integrating workforce and economic development policies and practices to respond to long-term skill projections and skill shortages.
 - Aligning training and education to better support economic growth.
 - Aligning workforce programs, policies, resources, and strategies structurally to reduce duplication and focus on agency core mission.
- Adopt uniform work readiness and skill assessment instruments.
- Create workforce development systems accountability standards and measure performance outcomes.

See Table A.2 for a list of specific State-level initiatives for each strategy.

DEED intends to contact State and local partners for input in developing a better process for identifying and addressing workforce development system challenges, including an improved process for preparing Minnesota's next unified plan.

(v) What State strategies are in place to ensure that sufficient system resources are

being spent to support training of individuals in high growth/high demand industries? (§112(b)(4)(A) and 112(b)(17)(A)(i))

As outlined in Section B.1.(a)(iii), DEED has asked each LWIB to identify high-growth, high-demand industries that are vital to their local economies as part of the local plans. Local business services specialists are then targeting businesses in the demand-industries identified in the local plans. The employment and training needs of those businesses are presented to the local partners, and resources are strategically targeted to the needs of those businesses. All Statewide field staff who work with job seekers completed Demand-Driven Training in 2006 and 2007. WIA Title I-B monitoring activities ensure that WIA-funded training is preparing job seekers for these high-demand areas of local economies.

(vi) What workforce strategies does the State have to support the creation, sustainability, and growth of small businesses and support for the workforce needs of small businesses as part of the State's economic strategy? (§112(b)(4)(A) and 112(b)(17)(A)(i))

DEED's Small Business Assistance Office facilitates the incubation and survival of new businesses, jobs, and wealth by serving as a point of first- and continuing-contact for information and assistance regarding the start-up, operation, or expansion of a small business in Minnesota. The office provides potential, new, and existing small businesses with:

- Free publications which address topics and issues with the potential to affect the success of small business operations. Of the office's 13 publications, the two most-popular are *A Guide to Starting a Business in Minnesota* and *An Employer's Guide to Employment Law Issues in Minnesota*.
- Workshops and training programs on topics which cut across industry lines (e.g., capital formation), topics specific to particular industries (e.g., product liability for medical device manufacturers), and topics specific to new business circumstances (e.g., how to write a business plan).
- One-on-one counseling to small businesses on business planning, financing, marketing, regulations, and other areas of business management and

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operations. Much of this counseling is delivered through a Statewide network of 32 Small Business Development Center (SBDC) service delivery sites.

Wagner-Peyser business services staff continue to receive training on the services and publications available through the Small Business Assistance Office and make referrals to the SBDCs and other organizations supporting entrepreneurship and small businesses. Some WorkForce Centers offer SBDC training and workshops onsite.

The connections to small business development extend to job seekers as well. In northeastern Minnesota, the WorkForce Centers forged a strong partnership with the Northeast Entrepreneur Fund, a regional economic development organization focused on helping the unemployed and underemployed start businesses. By understanding the profile of successful entrepreneurs, WorkForce Center staff are able to refer unemployed and underemployed individuals to entrepreneurship resources.

Minnesota surveys indicate that about one in ten dislocated workers express an interest in starting a business as an alternative or in addition to returning to full-time employment. Given the State's economic interest in new businesses, Minnesota wants to promote this type of entrepreneurial activity. However, the WIA Title I-B performance measures, through their reliance on employment as the only successful outcome, discourage local providers from promoting entrepreneurship as a viable alternative. In 2005, Minnesota requested a waiver of the performance measures for WIA Title I-B participants who pursue entrepreneurship rather than reemployment. This request was denied.

(vii) How are the funds reserved for Statewide activities used to incent the entities that make up the State's workforce system at the State and local levels to achieve the Governor's vision and address the national strategic direction identified in Part II of this guidance? (§112(a))

Funds reserved for Statewide activities provide incentive grants to local WSAs that exceed WIA Title I-B adult, dislocated worker, and youth performance standards. The incentive grants support staff training, allowing administrators and program service providers to learn

how to best effectuate the Governor's vision and national strategic direction. Specifically, State-level funds are being reserved to assist local WSAs with regional planning using criteria such as industry clusters, commuting patterns, demographics, etc., rather than political boundaries. A portion of the funds may be used to secure data that will define regional economies and to establish and modify planning and review mechanisms. Some funds may also be used to explore the implications of this change on service delivery. These funds have been used to serve hard-to-serve individuals, including youth most-in-need. Incentive funds have also been used to enhance service delivery to job seekers. Statewide activity funds also pay partial salaries of DEED's regional administrators who are charged with integrating workforce development, economic development, and education within their regions. DEED regional administrators also help LWIBs establish appropriate partnerships and linkages with community and faith-based organizations.

(viii) Describe the State's strategies to promote collaboration between the workforce system, education, human services, juvenile justice, and others to better serve youth that are most in need and have significant barriers to employment, and to successfully connect them to education and training opportunities that lead to successful employment.
(§112(b)(18)(A))

DEED is a partner in several interagency initiatives that focus on strategies to improve services to vulnerable youth. Specific examples of regional activities that support Minnesota's Shared Youth Vision (SYV) include:

- Youth aging out of foster care. See the [SYV](#) website for regional best practices and strategies for improving services to youth aging out of foster care through coordination between the WIA youth workforce system and human services staff. Three WSAs are highlighted for their recent success in working with foster youth: Anoka County, Rural Minnesota Concentrated Employment Program, and Southeast Minnesota Workforce Development, Inc.
- Dropouts and potential dropouts. Seven pilot sites (Brooklyn Center, Duluth, Hibbing, Park Rapids, Red Lake, Richfield, and St. Paul) are working to decrease

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dropout rates in schools and among students of color and low-income students by identifying successful dropout-prevention strategies that meet unique community needs and increase the quality of school-community collaboration. For more information, see Minnesota's [Dropout Prevention, Retention and Graduation Initiative](#).

- Youth with disabilities. [Project C3](#), Connecting Youth with Communities and Careers, is an interagency project to improve transition outcomes for youth with disabilities. Project C3 provides an online resource designed to connect youth, families, professionals, and employers to services in their regions based on need, interest, and location. There is Web-based information on employment resources, health, post-secondary education, and housing; and a separate online resource map of services for youth in specific geographic regions. The project will increase access to accurate, current information on resources in each region. Local, State, and regional decision-makers are provided data on service gaps and overlap. Youth who are employed as interns in the resource mapping projects at the local level develop marketable skills and valuable work history. There is an implementation plan in place to expand Project C3 to all Minnesota regions over the next two years. The project was piloted in three WSAs: City of Minneapolis, Ramsey County, and the 11 counties served by Central Minnesota Jobs and Training Services.
- Youth councils established under WIA. These councils promote local collaboration between the workforce system, education, human services, economic development, juvenile justice, RS, SSB, community-based and faith-based organizations, Job Corps, and others to better serve youth who are most in need and have significant barriers to employment.

Youth councils:

- Assure that the youth services strategy fits into the overall vision and strategic direction for workforce development established by the LWIBs.
- Assure that youth participants can plan employment and career paths using current labor market information on high-growth, targeted industries in the region, in-demand occupations, and regional industries hiring for jobs above average earnings.

- Prioritize services to youth who are most-in-need at the local level and develop a mix of services based on an individualized assessment. Different populations of youth have different needs. Language and cultural barriers are considered in the local design of youth service strategies.
- Complete a Promising and Effective Practices Network self-assessment to evaluate youth services in the areas of management, programmatic approach, youth development, and performance results.
- Include representatives from the community and technical colleges in their membership and coordinate with local plans for technical education and Carl Perkins each year to ensure a coordinated effort and avoid duplication of resources.
- Conduct focus groups with local school districts (including alternative schools) to determine how LWIBs, youth councils, and WorkForce Centers can partner with the K-12 system to help young people--the future workforce--connect to education and training opportunities that lead to successful employment.
- Provide opportunities for youth to be involved in the community and decision-making. Youth are partnered with adults in cooperation with the mentoring services available in each local area. Foster parents are active on local youth councils.
- Sponsor life skills transition workshops for alternative school students. WSAs also offer independent living skills training and focus groups aimed at youth aging out of foster care and youth transitioning back to the community after being incarcerated.
- Reconnect out-of-school youth who enter the youth workforce system to an educational program where they earn a high school diploma or general equivalency degree and transition to a post-secondary training program.
- Initiate youth summits to enhance service coordination and identify youth needs and service gaps. Coordination with education, human services, RS, community corrections, health, community-based and faith-based organizations, migrant and seasonal farmworker programs, and Job Corps, ensures that youth from all backgrounds can access a variety of services.

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(ix) Describe the State's strategies to identify State laws, regulations, policies that impede successful achievement of workforce development goals and strategies to change or modify them. (§112(b)(2))

In accordance with Minn. Stat. § 14.05, subd. 5, all State agencies must annually review State rules to determine whether they are obsolete, unnecessary, or duplicative of other State or federal statutes or rules. State agencies must submit their rule review conclusions in a report to the Governor, including an explanation of why the rule or portion of the rule is obsolete, unnecessary, or duplicative; and a timetable for its repeal.

Less formal, but more-targeted strategies for identifying State laws, regulations, and policies impeding successful achievement of workforce development goals include: meetings among State staff and meetings with local WSA directors to identify opportunities to change legislation and to develop and/or change policy. The Governor's Workforce Development Council (GWDC), the Minnesota Job Skills Partnership Board, and the Minnesota Workforce Council Association (MWCA) may also be the source of a policy change. When legislation is necessary, DEED staff, the MWCA, and/or the GWDC draft language and shepherd the legislation through the process. When policy changes are sufficient, staff members propose alternative policies and distribute drafts to all interested parties.

DEED's Workforce Development Division is currently in the process of reviewing all program policies to determine whether they align and support workforce development system guiding principles. Those that do not will be proposed for repeal. In addition, this division will be revising its process for adopting and communicating Statewide workforce development policies over the course of the 2007 calendar year.

(x) Describe how the State will take advantage of the flexibility provisions in WIA for waivers and the option to obtain approval as a Work-Flex State pursuant to §189(i) and §192.

Minnesota waiver requests are detailed in Section N. Minnesota is not exercising its option to obtain approval as a work-flex State.

2. Describe the actions the State has taken to ensure an integrated One-Stop service delivery system Statewide. (§112(b)(14) and 121)

(a.) What State policies and procedures are in place to ensure the quality of service delivery through One-Stop Centers such as development of minimum guidelines for operating comprehensive One-Stop Centers, competencies for One-Stop Career Center staff or development of a certification process for One-Stop Centers? (§112(b)(14))

DEED staff maintain the Minnesota WorkForce Center System Reference Manual, including operating standards, on DEED's website. It includes policies for:

- Resource area services
- Job seeker and employer services
- WorkForce Center certification and recertification policy

Resource area staff must have the appropriate knowledge, skills, and abilities (KSAs) to provide consistent, high-quality customer service. Managers and staff alike use a KSA tool developed by a team of resource area front-line experts to set goals for acquiring further knowledge and competencies; the tool is used to optimize KSAs available to customers in resource areas. For staff new or part-time to the resource area, the tool serves as a set of building blocks; for managers, it helps in building employee development plans or a staffing plan for resource areas based on various employees' strengths. Training sessions are held regularly for resource area front-line staff. Sessions for new and experienced staff include dealing with hostile customers and coaching customers on Internet job-seeking skills, LMI use, etc.

Starting in Spring 2007, DEED and the MWCA will design and implement a staff certification process. Curriculum will be developed that trains and certifies that employees possess the necessary KSAs.

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Facilitators/presenters of *Creative Job Search* (CJS), a core service of the WorkForce Center System, must be certified. To become certified, facilitators must demonstrate competencies in both CJS content and presentation and facilitation skills; each area has specific objectives and competency measures.

All Wagner-Peyser-funded business services specialists completed 80 hours of classroom training on identifying business needs and learning resources available to provide business solutions. In 2007, all Wagner-Peyser- and RS-funded business services staff will be enrolled in a one-year competency-based training program titled Business Services University. The training will take place on four Minnesota State Colleges and Universities (MnSCU) System campuses throughout the State and is provided through instructor-led training, interactive televised sessions, and self-assessment tools. MnSCU will award ten continuing education units to each business services staffperson who successfully completes Business Services University training.

All RS counselors have a Master's degree in vocational rehabilitation (VR) counseling or an equivalent/related field.

(b.) What policies or guidance has the State issued to support maximum integration of service delivery through the One-Stop delivery system for both business customers and individual customers? (§112(b)(14))

WorkForce Center System policies provide an employer and job seeker services matrix template for local WorkForce Center partners; the template helps outline which partners are responsible for what services within each WorkForce Center.

WorkForce Centers share a common brand identity, visually depicted in a common brand logo, interior and exterior signage, a shared website, and marketing materials and publications. The brand name is consistent, descriptive, and connotes a gathering place focusing on Minnesota's workforce.

Integrated Service Delivery to Business Customers

Minnesota's business services initiative is a key component of the State's transformation into a demand-driven workforce investment system. The positions of business services specialists were created to serve as single points of contact for business in the workforce development system; business services specialists have been hired, trained, and deployed in WorkForce Centers throughout the State. These specialists build business relationships with local business decision-makers, assess business needs, and identify business solutions. They work with their regional labor market analysts and their LWIBs to identify and then target key industries. WorkForce Center business services teams are coordinating business outreach, brainstorming solutions to business needs, and communicating business needs with staff and partners in career guidance and individual customer services. Business services specialists are engaged in regional economic development, workforce development, and education issues and initiatives.

DEED and an external partner, the Minnesota Chamber of Commerce, will implement a customer relationship management (CRM) system in Spring 2007. The CRM will be used by the primary business units who work directly with business customers. All DEED business units involved in this project will electronically coordinate their business outreach dates; and record services requested by businesses, services delivered to businesses, and referrals provided to businesses. DEED's business units involved in this project include:

- Business and Community Development Division
- Minnesota Trade Office
- Workforce Development Division (including business services specialists)
- Minnesota Chamber of Commerce (the external partner)

The Policy, Planning, and Measures Unit is active in this project to ensure that valid measures of the services to businesses can be calculated.

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Integrated Service Delivery to Job Seekers

DEED requires LWIBs to demonstrate that integrated service delivery is implemented as part of their local plans. LWIBs must also describe how the local menu of workforce development resources addresses local and regional economic needs. Although the local planning guidance incorporates required program planning, it encourages LWIBs to think about integrated service delivery and asks LWIBs to describe the services available to job seekers beyond reference to specific programs. DEED managers who are housed in local WorkForce Centers are required to write and/or provide input into these sections of the local plans.

In several WorkForce Centers, DEED negotiated agreements with WSAs where a local manager provides day-to-day supervision of DEED employees who work with job seekers. By having all employees, both State and local, report to one supervisor, better integration is ensured.

DEED and the MWCA developed and conducted demand-driven training for all WorkForce Center staff to ensure that all partners have a shared understanding of how to provide job seeker services in a demand-driven system. The training was completed in January 2007. Local cross-agency teams are now in the process of creating work plans to implement demand-driven services for job seekers. These projects will be posted on DEED's website.

The VR program has redesigned procedures to improve service effectiveness and capacity. VR customers in priority categories 2, 3, and 4 now receive modified universal services. VR staff conduct customer orientations to resource area services that are also offered to universal customers. These changes also better integrate VR services and staff within one-stop service delivery.

(c.) What actions has the State taken to promote identifying One-Stop infrastructure costs and developing models or strategies for local use that support integration? (§112(b)(14))

In 2006, DEED required LWIBs to separate infrastructure costs from program costs in their local plans. DEED will be using this information to help the State and LWIBs make future decisions, with the goal of reducing

infrastructure costs, and devise new strategies that support integration.

Minnesota's policy on memoranda of understanding (MOUs) describe agreements between local WorkForce Center partners and LWIBs about the delivery of services, referrals, funding, etc.; see a [sample MOU template](#). Policies on cost allocation plans outline the agreements between local WorkForce Center partners and describe how partners share infrastructure operating costs such as common space, copiers, data lines, etc.; see the [cost allocation guidelines](#).

In April 2006, Minnesota implemented the WorkForce Center Customer Registration System (CRS) to capture information on universal customers using WorkForce Center resource areas and attending workshops. The State and local partners are using reports from this system to help them understand who is using resource areas, as well as the program affiliation of these customers. In the future, this data will be compared to program participation rates and census data to determine the extent to which target populations use the available resources. This knowledge will enable long-term strategic planning for integrated services and create an information foundation for an efficient allocation of resources.

(d.) How does the State use the funds reserved for Statewide activities pursuant to §129(b)(2)(B) and 134(a)(2)(B)(v) to assist in the establishment and operation of One-Stop delivery systems? (§112(b)(14))

Minnesota uses a portion of its Statewide activity funds to support the WorkForce Center System through the following activities:

- The *GWDC LWIB Orientation Guide* and a new *Policy Guide*
- Demand-driven training for all State and local WorkForce Center staff, as well as DEED headquarters staff, completed in January 2007
- Fiscal and management systems
- Training for front-line staff working in WorkForce Center resource areas
- The eligible training provider list, distributed via Internet System for Education and Employment Knowledge (ISEEK)

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- Development and implementation of the new Minnesota's Job Bank (scheduled to be implemented in June 2007)
- Marketing Minnesota's Job Bank
- WorkForce Center customer satisfaction surveys
- Data validation
- Regional LMI analysts deployed in WorkForce Centers
- Technology upgrades in WorkForce Center resource areas
- Lean Enterprise training for WorkForce Center and DEED management and National Governor's Association members
- Incentive grants for regional sector initiatives
- Microeconomics of Competitiveness training for DEED and local management
- Minnesota Career Information System licenses for all WorkForce Centers
- CRS (implemented in April 2006)
- Grand Rapids Chamber of Commerce/DEED business services pilot project
- DEED's annual workforce and economic development conference
- Business Services University competency-based training for business services specialists

(e.) How does the State ensure the full spectrum of assets in the One-Stop delivery system support human capital solutions for businesses and individual customers broadly? (§112(b)(14))

DEED maintains business customer and job seeker customer satisfaction surveys. Results from these surveys are regularly evaluated by LWIBs and State and local leadership to identify service strengths and opportunities for improvement. [Survey questions and customer responses](#) can be found on the DEED website.

In addition to customer feedback, the business services initiative has strengthened relationships with businesses, thus creating a foundation for ongoing dialogue on how well the WorkForce Center System is providing human capital solutions for businesses. WorkForce Center business services teams are coordinating business outreach, brainstorming solutions to business needs, and communicating business needs to staff providing career guidance and individual customer services. Businesses also serve on the GWDC, the LWIBs, and the Business

Advisory Group for RS Projects with Industry, all of which are spending more time addressing how they may leverage the resources of the WorkForce Center System to address the needs of businesses.



C. Plan Development and Implementation

1. Describe the methods used for joint planning and coordination of the programs and activities included in the Unified Plan. (WIA §501(c)(3)(A))

State Consultation with Local Areas in Development of Plan: The authorizing statutes for many of the programs that may be included in a Unified Plan require that the State Plan be developed in consultation with various public and private entities, as well as members of the general public. Some statutes also require formal public hearings. Depending upon the programs that a State chooses to include in its Unified Plan, it may be possible for the State to satisfy many of these consultation requirements through a single set of processes. For example, both WIA Title I and Perkins III require that the business community be involved in the development of the State Plans for these programs. The State may satisfy both of these requirements by involving the business community in the development of a Unified Plan that includes the two programs. Separate consultations are not necessary.

The programs represented in *Minnesota's Unified Plan* for the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) engaged their respective constituencies in the development of this plan through workgroup and coordination meetings, practitioner workgroups, consortia, councils, advisory boards, and committees where activities described in the plan were discussed. Planning is an ongoing activity conducted through these broad and diverse venues, ensuring appropriate stakeholder engagement in joint planning and coordination of the programs and activities described in *Minnesota's Unified Plan*.

Table C.1 identifies Minnesota's efforts to consult with public and private entities in developing *Minnesota's Unified Plan*. Minnesota believes *Minnesota's Unified Plan* has provided a vehicle for building stronger relationships with its key partners and for improving workforce development services to businesses, individuals, and communities.

Table C.1 - Minnesota's Input and Comment Activity

DATE	INPUT AND COMMENT ACTIVITY
November 9, 2006	Initiated preparation of <i>Minnesota's Unified Plan</i> by sending a message to content experts and partner agencies and organizations
January 17, 2007	Distributed draft Training and Employment Guidance Letter (TEGL) Talking Points and sent plan updates to content experts
January 19, 2007	Discussed <i>Minnesota's Unified Plan</i> vision with Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED), Department of Human Services (DHS), Minnesota Department of Education (MDE), Governor's Workforce Development Council (GWDC), and Minnesota Workforce Council Association (MWCA) representatives
January 24, 2007	Issued Unified Planning Guidance (TEGL 13-06) and sent to content experts
January 31, 2007	Held briefing with <i>Minnesota's Unified Plan</i> leads; partner meeting and operational discussion
March 5, 2007	Published Public Notice in Minnesota's State Register and posted draft <i>Minnesota's Unified Plan</i> on external website
March 5 - April 5	Held 30-day public review and comment period
March 21, 2007	Held GWDC Executive Committee meeting
March 22, 2007	Held full GWDC meeting
April 6 - April 13	Reviewed and incorporated public comments into draft <i>Minnesota's Unified Plan</i> as appropriate
April 16 - April 27	Executive review (DEED, GWDC, MDE)
May 1, 2007	Submit <i>Minnesota's Unified Plan</i> for WIA to U.S. Department of Labor

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Table C.2 identifies vehicles that Minnesota uses to inform key audiences of workforce development system changes and opportunities to provide input on planning efforts and initiatives.

Table C.2 - State Workforce Development System Communication Vehicles

Product	Primary Audience
Websites	
BizLinks	Businesses and economic development audiences
DEED	Businesses, job seekers, workers, local workforce investment boards (LWIBs), economic and workforce development entities and State agency staff, legislators, elected officials, faith-based and community-based organizations, and community leaders.
Focus on Ability	Persons with disabilities and providers of services to persons with disabilities
Minnesota WorkForce Center	Businesses, job seekers, workers, WorkForce Center staff
GWDC	GWDC members, State agency partners, LWIBs, businesses
Intraweb	DEED and WorkForce Center employees
ISEEK	Students, parents, businesses, workers, education and training providers, public workforce development entities
Job Vacancy Survey	Employment and training providers, economic development entities, LWIBs
MN Careers	Students, job seekers, workers, parents, training providers/guidance counselors
MN Certified Veterans Program	Veterans
Minnesota's Job Bank	Job seekers and employers
MN SILC	Service providers, council members, and individuals with disabilities
Office of Youth Development	Youth providers and youth
MN Work Incentives Connections	Individuals with disabilities
Minnesota LINCS	Adult Basic Education (ABE) educators, current clients, and potential clients
Workforce Education	ABE Workforce Education educators, current clients, and potential clients
Minnesota Workforce Council Association	Workforce Service Area Directors
Pathways to Employment	Persons with Disabilities
State Services for the Blind	Persons with visual impairment
Unemployment Insurance Minnesota	Minnesota employers and unemployed individuals
Newsletters	
INDEED	DEED staff
Director's Insight	Workforce Development Division staff (see Attachment L)
Positively Minnesota: Partners for Job Growth	LWIBs and other essential partners
Videos	
Dislocated Worker Program	Employees facing layoff
Dislocated Worker Program	Employers
Other	
Brochures, Customers Registration System Announcements, E-mails, Handouts, Job Fairs, Media Outreach, Minnesota DEED Daily News Clips, News Releases, Pamphlets, Personal Appearances, Posters, Public Service Announcements, Publications, Statistics, Trade Shows	All customers

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2. Describe the process used by the State to provide an opportunity for public comment and participation for each of the programs covered in the Unified Plan.

Tables C.1 and C.2 identify input activities related to *Minnesota's Unified Plan*. Minnesota's process has allowed input from all entities responsible for planning and administering the programs and activities described in its plan. In addition, the 30-day public notice period allowed additional opportunities for programs and for business, labor, and the public to provide input on *Minnesota's Unified Plan*.

To engage partners and stakeholders in the plan's development, Minnesota electronically sent the *State Register* public comment notice to the following entities:

- ABE Consortia - Consortia of 54
- Business services specialists
- Community action agencies
- Community rehabilitation programs for the blind
 - o BLIND, Inc.
 - o The Duluth Lighthouse for the Blind and Visually Impaired
 - o Vision Loss Resources
- Customer organizations for the blind
 - o The American Council of the Blind of Minnesota
 - o Minnesota DeafBlind Association
 - o The National Federation of the Blind of Minnesota
 - o The United Blind of Minnesota
- DEED interested parties - headquarters staff
- DEED regional administrators
- Governor's Office
- GWDC chair and each member
- Local business groups
- Local elected officials of LWIBs
- Local labor market information analysts
- LWIB chairs and members
- MDE - secondary career/technical/vocational education administrators
- MDE - secondary directors under Perkins Act
- Migrant seasonal farmworker service providers
- Minnesota Job Skills Partnership Board
- Minnesota State Colleges and Universities (MnSCU) system - Leadership Council (presidents, vice-chancellors)
 - o MnSCU post-secondary Perkins directors

- o MnSCU strategic partnerships/workforce development
- Minnesota WorkForce Center managers (core partners)
 - o Wagner-Peyser managers
 - o Rehabilitation Services (RS) managers
 - o State Services for the Blind (SSB) managers
 - o Workforce service area (WSA) directors
- Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP) providers
- SSB advisory groups
 - o Operator Management Committee of the Business Enterprises Program
 - o State Rehabilitation Council for the Blind
- State agency heads: DEED, DHS, Labor and Industry, Housing Finance Agency, and MDE
- State Independent Living Council
- State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) chair and each member
- Veterans employment and training staff - U.S. Department of Labor
- Youth council chairs

Comments and responses on the draft *Minnesota's Unified Plan* are posted on DEED's external website. DEED received 22 comment letters and messages, of which one was received after the close of the public comment period. Comment letters and messages included 31 comments on separate issues (some letters and messages contained more comments on multiple issues). Key themes from public comments were:

- Concerns regarding re-evaluation of workforce service area boundaries (16 comments)
- Concerns regarding MFIP (8 comments)
- Concerns regarding State and local governance (2 comments)

Minnesota made a number of changes to the plan based upon public comments. Responses to comments and information on changes made to the plan in response to public comments are posted on the [DEED website](#).

Listed below is information on public comments received during the review and comment period of March 5 through April 5, 2007.

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- The total number of visits to the website during the review and comment period was 4,100.
- Visitors viewed an average of 234 pages per day for the duration of the comment period, with an average of 1.83 pages viewed during each visit.
- Ninety-four percent of visitors came to the website for only one visit.

The entire [report](#) is available online.

In addition, if your Unified Plan includes:

(b) WIA Title I and Wagner-Peyser Act and/or Veterans Programs, describe the process used by the State, consistent with section 111(g) of WIA, to provide an opportunity for public comment, including comments by representatives of business and representatives of labor organizations, and input into development of the Plan, prior to submission of the Plan.

See responses to items 1 and 2 above.

(c) Adult Education and Family Literacy, describe the process that will be used for public participation and comment with respect to the AEFLA portion of the Unified Plan. (§224(b)(9))

In addition to the public comment and participation activities described for *Minnesota's Unified Plan*, the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (AEFLA) administrators of MDE conducted the following activities to seek participation in plan development and comment on planned AEFLA activities:

- Pre-planning sessions were held in August 2006 with local ABE directors and with State ABE officials to discuss AEFLA-related plan content and activities.
- Three regional ABE meetings, led by State ABE staff, were held in March 2006 to present and discuss the draft content of the plan.
- The AEFLA plan content was posted for public comment on the MDE website along with links to *Minnesota's Unified Plan*.
- Presentations (committee hearings) were provided to the Minnesota House of Representatives' Family and Early Childhood Education Committee and

the Minnesota Senate regarding plan content (in conjunction with State ABE policy and funding presentation information).

- As requested, presentations regarding plan content were made to other Minnesota legislative committees that have oversight for employment and job training.
- Print-copies of the draft AEFLA activities included in *Minnesota's Unified Plan* were mailed to key individuals in State agencies and public organizations who maintain collaborative relationships with the Minnesota ABE program, including DEED, DHS, the Department of Corrections, MnSCU, and the Governor's Office.

All State requirements for public participation and comment related to AEFLA have been addressed. Plan-development coordination meetings occurred on a regular basis between the Minnesota ABE director and DEED members who have overall responsibility for the development of *Minnesota's Unified Plan*.

(d) TANF, the State shall make available to the public a summary of any Plan or Plan amendment submitted by the State under this section. With respect to the TANF plan design, local governments and private sector organizations have been consulted regarding the plan and design of welfare services in the State so that the services are provided in a manner appropriate to local populations; and have had at least 45 days to submit comments on the plan and the design of such services. (§402(c))

The State complies with (402(c)) regarding public comment and duration period on *Minnesota's Unified Plan* submitted under this section.

3. This section should describe the types of activities and outcomes that were conducted to meet the consultation requirement. Demonstrate, as appropriate, how comments were considered in the plan development process including specific information on how the various WIA agency and program partners were involved in developing the unified State Plan.

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The following agencies, groups or individuals must be consulted, if your Unified Plan includes:

(b) WIA Title I and Wagner-Peyser Act and/or Veterans Programs: (§§112(b)(1) and 112(b)(9))

- *The Governor of the State and State Board.*
- *Local Chief elected officials.*
- *Business community.*
- *Labor organizations.*
- *The following agencies, groups and individuals should also be consulted:*

Local Boards and Youth Councils, Educators, Vocational Rehabilitation Agencies, Service providers, Welfare agencies, Faith-based and Community organizations and the State Employment Security Agency.

In addition, describe the role of the State Board and Local Boards in planning and coordination in the Unified Plan (§501(c)(3)).

NOTE: While WIA only requires the involvement of State Board and Local Boards in the planning and coordination of the programs and activities authorized under title I, the intent of the Unified Plan approach is to enable all the relevant parties in an area, if they so choose, to come together more readily to coordinate their activities in the best interests of the population to be served. However coordination is achieved, nothing in the Unified Plan or in WIA itself permits a Board or any other entity to alter the decisions made by another program grantee in accord with that grantee's statutes.

The following activities highlight Minnesota's efforts to conduct an open and inclusive planning process that engages stakeholders in developing *Minnesota's Unified Plan*:

- In June 2006, the GWDC tasked an ad hoc committee (Systems Excellence Committee) to revisit Minnesota's vision and goals for Minnesota's workforce development system.
Re-imagining Minnesota's Workforce Development System is the product of this effort, which includes significant contribution by DEED leadership. This

document sets a new vision to inspire workforce development partners towards a system of strategically aligned resources that are flexible and responsive to the changing world and is consistent with the Governor's WIA vision.

- The State and local strategic planning group that includes DEED leadership staff and representatives from the MWCA (aka, "Gang of Eight") has continued to meet on a monthly basis over the course of the past few years on a variety of topics described in *Minnesota's Unified Plan*, including but not limited to the vision for the system, performance standards, regulatory changes, and the State's proposed WIA Title I-B waivers.
- On January 3 and 19, 2007, DEED held planning meetings with key State agency partners and representatives from the GWDC and MWCA to discuss Minnesota's workforce development system vision and define system goals, initiatives, and measures. Work from these sessions is embodied in this plan.
- On January 31, 2007, DEED held an all-day session with key State agency partners, GWDC representatives, WIA program directors, WSA directors, and LWIB chairs to inform participants of State agency missions and initiatives that will impact the workforce development system and to discuss local implementation roles and State support needed to ensure successful implementation of State initiatives.

Finally, see the description of activities and processes in Section C.1. and C.2.(b) above regarding the opportunity for all public stakeholders to provide input on the draft plan. All comments received on the draft *Minnesota's Unified Plan* are available for review.

(c) Adult Education and Family Literacy:

- *Governor of the State (any comments made by the Governor must be included in the Plan) (§224(d))*

The Governor's Office is provided with the opportunity to comment on the AEFLA annual plan required by the U.S. Department of Education as well as the AEFLA portion of *Minnesota's Unified Plan*. Previous-year Title II AEFLA plans were provided to the Governor's Office; resulting

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comments were included with the submission of the AEFLA Plan to the U.S. Department of Education.

(d) Vocational Rehabilitation:

- *State Rehabilitation Council (include the response of the designated State unit to such input and recommendations). (§101(a)(21)(A)(ii)(III))*

Vocational Rehabilitation/Rehabilitation Services - General

Statewide Studies and Evaluations

The designated state unit, RS-Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) currently collects and analyzes considerable data regarding the need for VR services and the effectiveness of its programs. The SRC recommends year-to-year reporting of data to the SRC, customers, and other stakeholders:

- In a way that permits comparison of information from year-to-year and analysis of employment outcomes, including comparative analysis with other employment programs; addresses outcomes for traditionally underserved populations and people with the most severe disabilities, particularly those outreach populations identified in *Minnesota's Unified Plan*; and provides information to establish and monitor measurable goals for program achievement.
- And that RS-VR adopts and incorporates into the measurement of VR goals and priorities a measure expressing the degree of gender equity in wage outcomes within and across ethnic and cultural minorities and types of disabilities served by RS-VR, and that this information be included in the annual report on goals and priorities.

RS-VR Response: RS-VR accepts these recommendations and will continue to implement them in collaboration with the SRC, through the data elements published in the SRC's annual report, periodic reporting and dialogue at SRC meetings, and in preparation of the joint report on goals and priorities. RS-VR welcomes further elaboration of SRC findings in this area.

RS-VR Participation in the Minnesota WorkForce Center System

The considerations and recommendations of the SRC regarding VR participation in the Minnesota WorkForce Center System are that:

- The partnerships between RS-VR and other service delivery entities that are called for by WIA and amendments to the Rehabilitation Act present similar challenges to those of the original WorkForce Center System initiative. These partnerships are of historic importance to individuals with disabilities. Therefore, the SRC and its leadership will address the challenges of collaboration anew in 2006-2007.
- The SRC expresses satisfaction with DEED-RS' diligent work to build a workforce service delivery system that addresses the needs of individuals with disabilities and that important issues continue to be addressed.
- The SRC's six identified issues regarding RS-VR partnership at WorkForce Centers express concerns that are not unique to Minnesota. These issues require attention wherever RS-VR enters into collaborative endeavors with programs funded outside the provisions of the Rehabilitation Act. Most of the SRC's previous recommendations have been incorporated in or addressed by DEED-RS policy; however, the following issues should be kept at the forefront of the SRC's work:
 - Training of all staff in applicable human rights law, DEED-RS policy about inclusivity, and the human and customer relationship skills that support successful program use by individuals with disabilities.
 - The allocation of RS-VR program funding in partnership with other service delivery entities, so there is a verifiable cost basis developed to substantiate the appropriateness of direct and indirect assessed costs.
 - The SRC's earliest partnership in discussions and decisions affecting RS-VR program participation in the WorkForce Center System and in local planning; this is in keeping with the 1998 amendments to the Rehabilitation Act.
 - Program and physical accessibility at all WorkForce Centers.

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- o Privacy and confidentiality of VR customer data in WIA partnerships.
- o The measurement of all WorkForce Center System activity for the quality of its performance and outcome.

RS-VR Response: RS-VR is in agreement with the SRC about the enduring importance of these recommendations and regards them as substantially implemented.

The State's Comprehensive System of Staff Development and Issues of VR Staff Recruitment, Retention, and Development

Such factors as the significant level of disability experienced by VR customers, the cultural diversity of individuals with disabilities in Minnesota, the complexity of State and federal benefits programs used by Minnesotans with disabilities, and advances within the fields of medical and vocational rehabilitation make the continuing education of staff ever more important. There is presently no standardization of, or minimum requirement for, continuing education of RS-VR staff. The SRC recommends DEED-RS adopt a policy and method that establishes a minimum requirement for the continuing education of staff.

RS-VR Response: RS-VR agrees with this recommendation and has assigned the VR staff development group the task of creating such a policy and method.

The availability of adequately prepared staff to deliver VR services to persons with disabilities in Minnesota is threatened by numerous factors, including:

- The rate of counselor retirement is increasing annually.
- The attrition of experienced counselors is increasing significantly, in part due to less-competitive VR program compensation of experienced counselors.
- Enrollment in rehabilitation counseling programs is declining.
- Fewer persons of color are enrolling and graduating from rehabilitation counseling programs.
- Recruitment of persons of color and counselors with disabilities, including persons who are deaf or hard of hearing, is crucial to effectively serve these populations.

- The rehabilitation counseling profession is not highly visible as a career alternative for secondary and post-secondary students.

The following actions are recommended to the VR program regarding the recruitment, retention, and development of VR counseling staff:

- RS, DEED, and the Department of Employee Relations study the current classification and compensation of Master's-level rehabilitation counselors, including a Hay study as soon as possible, so that objective information can inform discussion of counselor classification and compensation.
- RS staff develop and make information about careers in VR available to secondary and post-secondary students in Minnesota, particularly with respect to recruitment of persons of color and individuals with significant disabilities. Mindful that time and resources are scarce, the SRC notes that very modest efforts, at DEED-RS' discretion, are likely to make a difference and that collaboration with professional organizations and the area's rehabilitation counseling programs will also raise awareness about the profession and magnify staff efforts. It is further recommended that the widely used publication, *MnCareers*, and other resources available through the WorkForce Center System include information about VR counseling as a professional career.
- Use of paid internships, which has proven highly effective in the recruitment of recently graduated counselors, be continued and strengthened as a counselor recruiting tool, and that compensation for interns be increased from \$8.50 to \$10.00 per hour.
- Paid education and development of RS support and paraprofessional staff representative of people of color and of individuals with disabilities, which has proven an effective means of recruiting such persons into counseling positions, be pursued strategically by the VR program, that is, with established objectives.

RS-VR Response: RS-VR welcomes these recommendations of the SRC following the jointly sponsored forum, "Sustaining Excellence." Some of these recommendations have been implemented. RS reported to the SRC on December 1, 2004, that given the analysis of RS staff roles and responsibilities

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currently underway, recent administrative reorganization, and closure of priority for service categories, it is advisable to defer a Hay review for several months. DEED-RS concurs in general with the SRC, with the possible exception of the appropriateness of a Hay review at this time, but will continue to inform and consult with the SRC as elements of the recommendation are addressed.

The Study of Customer Satisfaction and Program Effectiveness

At the SRC meeting on August 24, 2005, the following recommendation was proposed as a motion and adopted unanimously:

- Establish a study group--SRC members to be appointed by chairpersons of the SRCs, and program staff members to be appointed by SSB and RS directors--to develop common concerns for augmenting current customer satisfaction studies of persons with disabilities at WorkForce Centers, particularly VR customers. The study group would be comprised of three members of the State Rehabilitation Council for the Blind (SRC-B), three SSB staff, and three RS-VR staff. DEED technical support would be made available as appropriate.

RS-VR Response: RS-VR concurs with this recommendation and will work to implement it. Following passage of this recommendation, the SRC-B declined to participate. Regardless, RS-VR has continued to work with the SRC work group to support development of a consumer satisfaction study that will focus on satisfaction of transition-age youth and their families with services. Research methods will include telephone surveys to be completed in September 2007 and focus group research to be completed in October 2007.

RS-VR Strategic Goals for 2007-2010

The SRC respectfully recommends to RS-VR, that reference and consideration be given to the following SRC reports in the development and implementation of the agency's mission, vision, and values statements, and in the joint development of RS-VR strategic goals for 2007-2010:

- *Considerations on RS Mission, Vision and Values* presented to the RS-VR director on April 28, 2006
- *Considerations on VR Strategic Goals* presented to the RS-VR director on November 17, 2006

RS-VR Response: These considerations and recommendations have been and will continue to be basic references in the development and implementation of agency statements of purpose and planning. The chairpersons of the SCR and the Statewide Independent Living Council will further participate in proceedings to develop strategic goals for the VR program.

Vocational Rehabilitation/State Services for the Blind - Blind Agency

The Minnesota SRC-B provides advice and recommendations to SSB during meetings held throughout the year. The explicit advice and recommendations provided by the SRC-B, along with SSB's responses, are listed below. A review of SRC-B meeting minutes for meetings held since *Minnesota's Unified Plan* submission effective July 1, 2005, reveals nine instances of the SRC-B providing explicit recommendations to SSB.

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Table C.3 - SRC-B Recommendations and SSB Response

Number	SRC-B Recommendation	SSB Response
1	At its August 2005 meeting, the SRC-B recommended that SSB adopt the goals and priorities presented at that meeting.	SSB was in complete agreement with the SRC-B and adopted these goals and priorities for federal fiscal year 2006 as recommended by the SRC-B. SSB commended the SRC-B on the importance of this work on goals and priorities, which along with the work plans and other SRC-B committee charges have helped this council and the agency get its work done.
2	At its October 2005 meeting, the SRC-B recommended that SSB allot \$18,000 for the SRC-B's budgetary needs for 2006.	SSB accepted the recommendation of the SRC-B for its resource plan and thanked the SRC-B members for their excellent work.
3	At its February 2006 meeting, the SRC-B adopted the Needs Assessment Task Force's recommendation on the <i>Needs Assessment Process Framework</i> and recommended to SSB that it be followed when conducting the required triennial comprehensive Statewide assessment of rehabilitation needs.	SSB accepted the recommendation of the SRC-B and began to immediately implement the <i>Needs Assessment Process Framework</i> for the comprehensive Statewide assessment of rehabilitation needs.
4	At its April 2006 meeting, the SRC-B recommended that SSB continue to select randomly an impartial hearing officer for a particular hearing from the pool of administrative law judges available from the Minnesota Office of Administrative Hearings.	SSB accepted the recommendation of the SRC-B and continued to randomly select an impartial hearing officer for a particular hearing from the pool of administrative law judges available from the Minnesota Office of Administrative Hearings .
5	At its April 2006 meeting, the SRC-B recommended that the SSB resource plan for 2007 be set at \$18,000.	SSB accepted the recommendation of the SRC-B for its resource plan and thanked the SRC-B members for their excellent work.
6	At its June 2006 meeting, the SRC-B reviewed and approved the report on the comprehensive Statewide assessment of the rehabilitation needs of Minnesotans with disabilities.	SSB thanked the SRC-B for the work it did throughout the year that contributed to the preparation of the needs assessment report for the 2007 State plan submission.
7	At its August 2006 meeting, the SRC-B recommended that SSB adopt the fiscal year 2007 goals and priorities presented at that meeting.	SSB is in complete agreement with the SRC-B and adopts these goals and priorities for federal fiscal year 2007 as recommended by the SRC-B. SSB commends the SRC-B on the importance of this work on goals and priorities.
8	At its August 2006 meeting, the SRC-B recommended that SSB allot \$18,000 for the SRC-B's resource plan for 2007.	SSB accepted the recommendation of the SRC-B for its resource plan and thanked the SRC-B members for their excellent work.
9	At its October 2006 meeting, the SRC-B agreed to revisions in goal and priority statements 3 and 5 as presented at the meeting.	SSB is in agreement with these revisions and thanked the SRC-B for its advice and counsel during the development of the 2007 SSB goals and priorities as submitted to the Rehabilitation Services Administration in the 2007 State plan.

(f) TANF:

- With respect to the TANF plan design, local governments and private sector organizations 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; and have had at least 45 days to submit comments on the plan and the design of such services.

The State complies with (402(c)) regarding public comment and duration period on Minnesota's Unified Plan submitted under this section.



D. Needs Assessment

1. Describe the educational and job-training needs of individuals in the overall State population and of relevant subgroups of all the programs included in the Unified Plan.

Many of the programs that may be included in a Unified Plan require a needs assessment. State agencies should fulfill these assessment responsibilities collaboratively or, at a minimum, create a planning process that promotes the sharing of needs assessment information among all agencies involved in preparing the Unified Plan. Sharing of assessment data can create a framework for the coordinated and integrated services that are to be provided through the One-Stop delivery system. The State may organize the presentation of assessment data in its Unified Plan in a manner it deems most appropriate and useful for planning, such as on a program-by-program basis, by geographic region, or by special population.

In answering the above question, if your Unified Plan includes:

(a) WIA Title I and Wagner-Peyser Act and/or Veterans Programs, identify the types and availability of workforce investment activities currently in the State. (§112(b)(4)(A-D))

Under the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) Title I-B Adult and Dislocated Worker programs and in accordance with regulations, workforce investment activities are divided into core, intensive, and training categories.

Core activities are primarily self-service or informational in nature, such as:

- WIA eligibility determinations (outreach; intake, which may include Unemployment Insurance [UI] worker profiling; and orientation to the Minnesota WorkForce Center System services), and assistance in establishing eligibility for non-WIA financial aid programs including public assistance.
- Rudimentary assessment of skill levels, aptitudes, abilities, and supportive service needs and information on programs that might assist individuals in upgrading skills and in filling needs.

- Information services including Minnesota's Job Bank and other job listing services, job skills information, jobs in-demand, local area performance, supportive services, information on how to file for UI, and performance and program cost on WIA-certified and non-certified training providers.
- Group services such as job club and job search activities, assessment activities, employability planning, career planning, resume writing workshops, *Creative Job Search* workshops, etc.
- Follow-up services regarding the workplace for participants in WIA Title I-B Adult and Dislocated Worker activities who are placed in unsubsidized employment, for not less than 12 months after the first day of employment, as appropriate.

Tracking of core service utilization is done using the Customer Registration System. This system allows local leaders to view summary reports on customers that come into their WorkForce Centers and what services are received. Local operators use this information to improve job seeker services.

Intensive activities begin with the development of an Individual Service Strategy (ISS) plan. These activities require service registration. Beyond ISS plan development are such activities as:

- Comprehensive and specialized assessments of skill levels and service needs.
- Group counseling, individual counseling, and career planning.
- Case management, work experience, and internships.
- Short-term pre-vocational services, including the development of learning skills, communication skills, interviewing skills, punctuality, personal maintenance skills, and professional conduct skills to prepare individuals for unsubsidized employment or training.
- Short-term courses not designed to provide immediate employment and/or credential but to provide the skills necessary to enable the individual to become more employable (included in this category are one-course work seminars that provide instruction in specific computer software packages).
- Adult Basic Education (ABE)/English as a Second Language (ESL) courses not tied to any other training program.

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Training activities also require registration and include such activities as:

- Occupational skills training resulting in a credential, including training for nontraditional employment; skill upgrading and retraining; academic skills training; and entrepreneurial training.
- On-the-job training; programs that combine workplace training with related instruction, which may include cooperative education programs; and training programs operated by the private sector.
- Adult education and literacy provided in combination with services described by the above bullets.
- Customized training, including apprenticeships, conducted with a commitment by an employer or group of employers to employ an individual upon successful completion of the training.

All core services are accessible to the "universal customer" at all of the WorkForce Centers throughout the State. The other services are generally available to individuals based on need and available funding. Each of the WorkForce Centers has a priority of service policy, which gives preference to certain groups of individuals such as veterans, public assistance recipients, individuals having multiple barriers to employment, etc. Where appropriate and where WIA funding is not available, referrals are made to other sources where support might be available.

Wagner-Peyser Program Activities

The Wagner-Peyser program assists both job seekers and businesses in Minnesota. The State has implemented a demand-driven approach by focusing more Wagner-Peyser resources on building relationships with business decision-makers, assessing the needs of businesses, and facilitating a coordinated response with Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED) staff and partners. Wagner-Peyser funds are now paying for 38 business services specialists. Wagner-Peyser funds are also used to support industry specialist positions that have Statewide responsibility, work directly with businesses, and assist the business services specialists as needed. Currently, DEED employs industry specialists for the healthcare, manufacturing, and financial industry sectors.

The Wagner-Peyser program also provides job preparation and placement assistance to job seekers, including

workshops on career exploration, job-seeking skills, resume writing, interviewing, and using the Internet to find jobs. Special efforts are made to serve UI claimants, veterans, migrant and seasonal farmworkers, and individuals with disabilities. Wagner-Peyser funds support Minnesota's Job Bank, a Web-based labor exchange system that links job seekers and employers with the largest employment database in the State. Other public employment and training programs in Minnesota rely on the program's labor exchange system to help their program-eligible customers find employment.

Veterans Programs

Veterans programs, like Wagner-Peyser, assist both job seekers and businesses in Minnesota. Veterans services are provided at Minnesota WorkForce Centers. Business services are provided by senior program staff, who work with Wagner-Peyser-funded business services specialists and other partners to provide a demand-driven approach to assisting businesses. Staff work with business decision-makers to identify their needs and develop solutions to meet their needs and provide the following services to veterans:

- Individual, intensive employment assistance.
- In-person orientation to WorkForce Center services and procedures.
- Job search information, resume assistance, cover letters, and job search videos.
- Eligibility determination for special programs and services to employ and train veterans (veterans with disabilities from the military may apply for vocational rehabilitation services).
- Information on veterans' employment benefits, rights, and preferences.
- Instruction and training on use of the Internet for job searches.
- Information on how to apply for federal, State, and county positions.
- Direct referral to job openings.
- Information and referral to appropriate agencies and services.
- Minnesota Transition Assistance Program (MnTAP) workshops to assist separating Guard/Reserve service members and their spouses in their reintegration as citizen-soldiers.

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- Transition Assistance Program (TAP) workshops to assist recently separating military personnel and their spouses and those retiring from Guard/Reserve forces as they transition to civilian careers.

(b) Adult Education and Family Literacy, objectively assess the adult education and literacy needs of individuals, including an assessment of those most in need and hardest to serve, including low income students, individuals with disabilities, single parents, displaced homemakers, and individuals with multiple barriers to educational enhancement (including individuals with limited English proficiency, criminal offenders in correctional institutions and other institutionalized individuals). (§§224(b)(10) and 225)

This response provides demographic and educational information, which clearly supports the need for literacy and basic skills training for many Minnesota residents. There is evidence that the need for ABE is growing, especially in areas of ESL, general equivalency degree (GED), workplace education, and family literacy programming.

Table D.1 - Minnesota's Educational Attainment Levels - 2000

Minnesota Population	Individuals	Percent of State Population
Total Population	5,059,375	100%
Persons 25 years and over	2,770,562	54.8%
Educational Attainment		
Less than 9th grade	239,332	8.6%
9th - 12th grade, no diploma	249,443	9.0%
Population without a high school diploma	488,775	17.6%

Source: 2000 U.S. Census

- One of every five adults over the age of 25 in Minnesota lacks a high school diploma.
- High school dropouts have increased from 8,780 (2.5 percent) in 1985 to 14,878 (5.9 percent) in 2004.
- The minority dropout rate was 16 percent for 2004.

Refugee and Immigrant Information - Immigration in Minnesota (excerpts from a report from the League of Women Voters prepared in 2004)

Like the nation, Minnesota is a haven for new Americans. Minnesota has the highest proportion of refugees (compared to total legal immigrants) compared to any other state.

Minnesota has the largest population of Somali immigrants, 15,000, most having arrived within the last five years. The majority of Somalis live in Minneapolis; however, the cities of Rochester, Owatonna, and Marshall have seen an influx of Somali families. Minnesota has the second-highest population of Hmong and the largest urban Hmong population in the U.S.

Minnesota ranks 21st in the number of immigrants (239,000) residing in the State with 42.3 percent arriving in the 1990s. Minnesota ranks 29th in the percentage of population made up of immigrants at 4.9 percent. Minnesota ranks 15th in the estimated impact immigration has had on population growth. Minnesota's population growth between 2000 and 2002 was 72,000 and it is estimated that 37.1 to 48.2 percent of this growth was due to immigration.

During the 1990s, the largest single country of origin for new Minnesotans was Mexico, contributing 16 percent (41,592) people to Minnesota's foreign-born population. Between 1990 and 2000, Minnesota's Hispanic/Latino population grew 168 percent to over 143,000. Minnesota's total population grew 12 percent to 4.92 million. It is expected that by 2025, the percentage of the Minnesota population that is of Hispanic/Latino origin will be 5.6 percent.

Similarly, the African population experienced the largest growth in immigration during the 1990s, more than 600 percent. The majority of these immigrants are from Somalia, Ethiopia, and Liberia.

These new Americans, and new Minnesotans, may experience problems as they adjust to living in a new country. They may not speak the language and may have difficulty finding affordable housing, getting a driver's license, or obtaining employment. New Americans contribute to the national and State economy: in addition to the new customs and traditions they teach Americans, it is estimated that immigrants contribute up to \$10 billion to gross domestic product and more than ten times that in federal, State, and local tax dollars nationwide.

The role new Americans play in the workforce may be even more significant. Between 1996 and 2000, foreign-

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born workers comprised half of the net increase in the U.S. labor force. About one in 15 workers in Minnesota were born in another country and the number of foreign-born workers has increased 90 percent between 1994 and 2000.

Conclusion

Minnesota's strong economy during the late 1990s through 2000 drew both legal immigrants and undocumented workers in search of jobs. The influx of immigrants has not slowed down nationwide since the beginning of the recession or since the terrorist attacks in 2001. Immigration is projected to contribute the largest share of population growth in Minnesota over the next several decades. Lower-than-average educational attainment and lack of English language skills are barriers to entry into the workforce. New Americans play a significant role in Minnesota's economy and will likely be the fastest-growing segment of Minnesota's workforce into the future.

Table D.2 - Language Spoken at Home in Minnesota - 2000

Minnesota Population	Individuals	Percent of Population Five Years and Over
Persons 5 years and over	4,038,861	100%
Speak a language other than English	227,161	5.6%
Do not speak English "very well"	79,341	2.0%
Speak Spanish	42,362	1.0%
Do not speak English "very well"	14,200	0.4%
Speak Asian or Pacific Island language	47,776	1.2%
Do not speak English "very well"	30,163	0.7%

Source: U.S. Census

Table D.3 - National and State Literacy Levels -1993

Literacy Level for Population Age 16 and Older*	U.S.	Minnesota
Population age 16 and older	195,000,000 (100%)	3,204,000 (100%)
- Lowest level: Level 1 (illiterate)	44,000,000 (22%)	256,300 (8%)
- Second level: Level 2 (functionally illiterate)	50,000,000 (27%)	640,800 (20%)
- Top three levels of performance: Levels 3 to 5 (functionally literate to highly literate)	101,000,000 (51%)	2,306,900 (72%)

*Literacy levels: 1=illiterate, 2=functionally illiterate... 5=high level of literacy
Source: 1993 National Adult Literacy Survey

Minnesota's population will become more racially and ethnically diverse, according to a new report from the State Demographic Center at the Minnesota Department of Administration. Between 2005 and 2015, the nonwhite population is projected to grow 35 percent, compared to seven percent for the white population. The Hispanic/Latino origin population is expected to increase 47 percent.

The State demographer reports that Minnesota is changing, though it is less diverse than the nation, and that much of the rapid growth in the nonwhite and Hispanic/Latino population stems from migration from other states and from outside the U.S.

Nonwhites and Hispanic/Latinos are younger than white Minnesotans, which will continue to be true in the future. In 2015, the projections show that 19 percent of children under age 15 will be nonwhite, compared to only five percent of people over age 65. The report says that by 2030, about 16 percent of Minnesotans will be nonwhite and five percent will be Hispanic/Latino. By comparison, the Census Bureau estimates that in 2003, 20 percent of Americans were nonwhite and 14 percent were of Hispanic/Latino origin.

Three functional literacy categories were measured under this national survey process: quantitative, prose, and documents. All survey items were based on everyday, practical applications.

Adult Basic Education Literacy Needs Presentation to the Minnesota Senate (excerpt) - February 1, 2005

- Of Minnesotans over age 25 (381,345 adults), 12 percent lack high school equivalency. Of the ABE target population, which is 16 and over and not enrolled in school, a total of 624,250 persons lack their high school equivalency. *2000 U.S. Census*
- The National Adult Literacy Survey (NALS) study reports eight percent of Minnesota's adult population is at the lowest of five levels of functional literacy and 20 percent have functional literacy needs. *1993 National Adult Literacy Survey*
- Forty-two percent of the current Minnesota Family

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Investment Program (MFIP) caseload does not have a high school degree or the equivalent. Many participants who have completed a high school education have reading and math abilities far below the 12th grade level. It is difficult for this group to find and retain jobs. *Department of Human Services (DHS) Temporary Assistance for Needy Families Report*

- Minnesota's immigrant and refugee population has expanded to record levels, especially Asian, Hispanic/Latino, and African population groups; 5.3 percent of all Minnesotans are foreign-born; and an estimated 200,000 are in need of ESL. *DHS 2001*
- Approximately 35,000 permanent Minnesota residents lack U.S. citizenship. *2000 DHS est.*
- Public schools report that the numbers of parents are growing, not declining, whose lack of basic skills are barriers to the success of their children. *Minnesota Department of Education (MDE)*
- Major Minnesota employers report large costs to train and retrain employees whose lack of basic skills or ability to speak English are liabilities to the profit line. The average dropout earns \$7,000 less annually than the average high school or GED graduate. *Minnesota Business Partnership and 2000 U.S. Census*
- Thirty-six percent of job applicants tested by major U.S. firms in 1998 lacked the reading and math skills to do the job they sought. This figure is up from 23 percent in 1997, and 19 percent in 1996. *American Management Association 2000*
- Job seekers with educations below that of a typical dropout will qualify for just nine percent of the new jobs created between 1998 and 2008. Dropouts in 1998 earned an average of \$20,300 while earners with some college brought home \$31,600 that year. *ETS Study, 2002*

Characteristics of Individuals Most in Need

Most-in-need learners are characterized by three factors:

- Low-literacy
 - ABE levels 1 and 2
 - ESL levels 1 and 2
- Low-income
 - under 175 percent of the federal poverty level
 - At least one other factor that hinders adults from fulfilling their roles as workers, and as family and community members. Examples of these factors include:
 - Single parents with small children
 - Disabled adults including those with learning, social-emotional, and physical disabilities
 - Victims of sexual or domestic violence
 - Institutionalized or incarcerated adults
 - Homeless adults
 - Displaced homemakers
 - Individuals with multiple barriers to educational enhancement
 - Individuals from under-served populations as defined by the federal government to include people of minority, racial, or ethnic origins

Hardest-to-serve students are characterized by many factors, including:

- People whose living situations are unstable because of homelessness, or non-supportive, restrictive, and/or abusive family members.
- Single parents with small children for whom there is no adequate or safe alternative care.
- Individuals who are geographically isolated.
- Those who do not know services exist or how to access them.
- Individuals who are intimidated by institutional environments or large groups of people.
- People with negative school experiences, which undermine their faith in their ability to learn.
- People whose learning style or needs are not accommodated by common educational settings, cultural expectations, or practices.
- Individuals whose participation is mandated and who have no goal or interest in education.

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It is a major concern throughout the Minnesota ABE system that all adults who need ABE services have access to them. Considerable energy and effort is made to reach out to those who need services most and have the most difficulty accessing them.

Bearing in mind the needs and barriers experienced by adults, the system must ensure responsiveness to students. It must also acknowledge the economic and social demands of communities as identified by agency partners, policy-makers, and opinion leaders. The system must adopt improved strategies for serving the most-in-need and hard-to-serve. It is important to recognize that the characteristics of most-in-need/hard-to-serve populations vary from region to region, urban or rural, and agricultural or industrial. In order to more effectively serve communities, local service providers will identify the characteristics of the target populations, formulate appropriate strategies to reach out to those populations, and create services that lead to improved outcomes.

Enhanced services in the future will build on current programs. The Minnesota system now includes adult and family literacy, workplace skills enhancement, English language instruction, citizenship preparation, high school equivalency preparation, alternative high school diploma, and similar programs. These programs provide opportunities for adults to practice, learn from, and master the skills required for responsible community membership, productive employment, and family self-sufficiency. Adults also gain foundation skills, which allow access to further academic and vocational education.

The delivery system is designed to meet the basic skills needs of adults. While the system targets services to most-in-need and hard-to-serve populations, it is important to recognize that the adult literacy and basic skills system is not the appropriate solution for all adults. Students who participate in the adult literacy system must show skill gains toward agreed-upon goals. When a mismatch occurs between the needs of adults and the educational services described in this plan, referrals are made so individuals are guided to viable alternatives. *Minnesota's Unified Plan* recommends that all agencies that serve adults focus their resources on core missions and coordinate with each other to ensure that appropriate services are provided when and where they are needed.

(c) Food Stamp Employment and Training (E&T), provide an answer and explain the method used to:

(i) Estimate the number and characteristics of the expected pool of work registrants during the fiscal year;

The State estimates 39,500 work registrants for federal fiscal year (FFY) 2007. This figure is based on historical data from the DHS data warehouse and projections for the current year.

(ii) Estimate the number of work registrants the State agency intends to exempt from E&T, along with a discussion of the proposed exemption criteria;

The State estimates that 16,664 individuals will be exempt during FFY07. Minnesota exempts individuals who are under the age of 18, over age 49, and others who are receiving cash assistance.

(iii) Estimate the number of placements into E&T components during the fiscal year;

The estimated number of placements into employment and training components during FFY07 is 21,000.

(iv) Estimate the number of ABAWDs (able-bodied adults without dependents) in the State during the fiscal year;

The estimated number of able-bodied adults without dependents in Minnesota in FFY07 is 11,050.

(v) Estimate the number of ABAWDs in both waived and unwaived area of the State during the fiscal year;

The estimated number of able-bodied adults without dependents in both waived and unwaived areas of Minnesota during FFY07 is 15,050.

(vi) Estimate the average monthly number of ABAWDs included in the State's 15 percent exemption allowance, along with a discussion of how the State intends to apply the exemption;

Not applicable.

(vii) Estimate the number of qualifying education/training and welfare opportunities for ABAWDs the State will create during the fiscal year.



The estimated number of qualifying education/training and workforce opportunities for able-bodied adults without dependents in Minnesota during FFY07 is 2,300.

(d) Vocational Rehabilitation:

(i) Assess the needs of individuals with disabilities in the State, particularly the vocational rehabilitation needs of individuals with the most significant disabilities (including their need for supported employment services), individuals with disabilities who have been unserved or underserved by the vocational rehabilitation program, and individuals with disabilities served through other components of the statewide workforce investment system. (§§101(a)(15)(A)(i)(I-III) and 625(b)(2))

Vocational Rehabilitation/Rehabilitation Services - General

The following paragraphs summarize Minnesota's comprehensive needs assessment through FFY06. These findings will be updated throughout 2007-2010, and will include new studies of selected topics to be determined in consultation with the State Rehabilitation Council (SRC).

Summary Need Finding 1

A substantial difference exists between the number of Minnesotans of working age who are potentially eligible for and would benefit from vocational rehabilitation (VR) services, and the number of these Minnesotans who access VR services. U.S. Census and other prevalence information permits a conservative estimate that approximately 100,000 Minnesotans of working age are potentially eligible for and could benefit from VR services. Currently, the VR program's capacity to serve persons with significant disabilities in an active caseload is approximately 15,000 persons annually, with acceptance for service of approximately 7,500 new persons annually. The total number of Minnesotans with significant disabilities increases annually.

Summary Need Finding 2

As a group, Minnesotans with disabilities earn substantially less at work and experience poverty to a greater extent than do individuals without disabilities. U.S. Census data show that the median household income for Minnesotans with disabilities in 2004 was

\$40,000, while the median income for Minnesotans without disabilities was \$62,500. The poverty rate for Minnesotans with disabilities is found to be one-third higher than that for Minnesotans without disabilities. The need for individualized case services to assist persons with disabilities to prepare for, find, and retain employment is powerfully stated by these differences.

Summary Need Finding 3

Minnesotans who are members of cultural and ethnic minority populations, including immigrants who are political refugees, are underserved by the VR program. The degree to which these populations are underserved is not yet well understood, due to factors both subject to--and remote from--program influence and must continue to be studied. Rehabilitation Services (RS)-VR data shows that members of Minnesota's minority populations access RS-VR services in higher proportions than their representation in the State's population, but experience an employment outcome rate that is lower than might be predicted based on their representation in the VR caseload.

Summary Need Finding 4

The service needs of individuals with significant disabilities are diverse. Apart from vocational counseling, services most frequently demanded across virtually all categories of disability conditions are post-secondary education, transportation and vehicle repair, employment or education-related materials and equipment, and job placement services. The degree to which job placement appears in the plans of individuals with mental illness suggest that placement coordinator knowledge and experience related to mental illness is crucial. The limited demand for rehabilitation technology, except with respect to individuals with spinal cord injury, suggests an underutilization of this service.

Summary Need Finding 5

Programmatic and fiscal resources to meet the long-term employment support needs of Minnesotans with significant disabilities for integrated competitive employment are insufficient to meet demand for these services. While the VR program continues to supplement Title VI B funding for supported employment with approximately \$2,250,000 in purchased service for approximately 1,400 VR customers annually, the frequent unavailability of long-term supports in the community for individuals exiting VR effectively bars a larger VR contribution.



Summary Need Finding 6

Minnesota Community Rehabilitation Programs (CRPs) are an essential part of VR service delivery in Minnesota. However, in the absence of new program funding for VR or for long-term supported employment in the community, the capacity of CRPs to meet the increasing need for service is constricted. Consultation with CRP managers by the RS director finds that CRP managers seek a more purposeful and collaborative relationship with RS to improve the Statewide availability of VR services.

Summary Need Finding 7

VR and other State infrastructure assisting youth with disabilities to make their transitions from school to work must be better coordinated, made more consistent Statewide, and must serve an increased number of youth and young adults. The population of transition-age youth is not sufficiently represented in VR caseloads Statewide and must be substantially increased.

Summary Need Finding 8

Several strategies have been undertaken to improve WorkForce Center services to Minnesotans with disabilities who are not served by the VR program. These efforts must now be collaboratively studied by the WorkForce Center System itself, to determine results and the degree to which the needs of universal customers with disabilities are being met.

Summary Need Finding 9

During 2005 and 2006, an organizational change study engaged all RS-VR staff and yielded the following summary needs' recommendations and conclusions:

- A source of VR customer success is service flexibility and individualized service.
- Inconsistency of service delivery among field offices affects the quality of VR service.
- Administrative barriers to quick engagement of customers in their employment plan must be eliminated.
- Trials of performance-based compensation of providers should be carried-out to determine if this would improve customer outcomes.
- Orientation to one-stop and VR services for individuals with disabilities must be revised and made consistent Statewide.

- VR senior leadership must better define and lead the VR mission, while building leadership skills of all agency managers.
- Customers will benefit from increased attention to the professional development of staff and succession planning.
- Better agency communication, internally and externally, will improve public awareness of the VR program.
- There should be increased stakeholder and other public support for meeting the employment needs of Minnesotans with disabilities.

Requests for additional information or comments and suggestions about needs assessment and the vocational needs of persons with disabilities in Minnesota may be directed to DEED RS or the Minnesota SRC.

Vocational Rehabilitation/State Services for the Blind - Blind Agency

During FFY06, State Services for the Blind (SSB) and its State Rehabilitation Council for the Blind (SRC-B), addressed its triennial comprehensive Statewide needs assessment responsibility. SSB together with the SRC-B developed a process framework for conducting the needs assessment. A wide range of data has been gathered and analyzed; and areas of concern or gaps in services have been identified. Finally, current agency goals and priorities along with specific action steps have been reviewed in light of the findings of this comprehensive Statewide needs assessment.

At its August 2005 meeting, the SRC-B appointed members to a Needs Assessment Task Force to work with SSB staff in exploring the best way to conduct a needs assessment. The purpose of the task force was to:

- Identify data sources--reports, surveys, etc.--that provide information on the needs of Minnesotans who are blind, visually impaired, or DeafBlind.
- Advise SSB on the scope and methods for conducting a needs assessment as required under the Rehabilitation Act.
- Make recommendations, based on needs assessment findings, regarding the VR needs of Minnesotans who are blind, visually impaired, or DeafBlind.

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At its February 2006 meeting, the Needs Assessment Task Force presented a Needs Assessment Process Framework and recommended to SSB that it be followed when conducting the required triennial comprehensive Statewide assessment of rehabilitation needs. That recommendation was accepted by SSB. The task force members consider the process for needs assessment to be continuous, ongoing, and drawing on a variety of sources of information. Here is that framework:

Needs Assessment Process Framework

- Step 1 Identify the service needs of individuals. Sources of this information might include customer satisfaction survey results, federal standards and indicators, demographic data, disability incidence, or ratio of people served to the general population.
- Step 2 Identify services provided by SSB to customers. Sources of this information might include case service expenditure patterns.
- Step 3 Identify concerns or gaps in services between what is needed and what is provided. Sources of this information might include customer satisfaction survey results, outreach efforts, trend data, training and staff development, customer service needs (supported employment, services from community rehabilitation programs, computers/assistive technology, etc.), or goals and priorities.
- Step 4 Identify the results obtained. Sources of this information might include employment outcomes, closures without an employment outcome, comparison of findings of the VR Longitudinal Study with SSB results, progress on meeting goals and priorities, federal standards and indicators, or customer satisfaction survey results and customer service improvements (phone calls returned, relationships that are more productive, etc.).
- Step 5 Allocate/realign resources; and make recommendations.
- Step 6 Return to step 1 and continue through the framework to conduct a needs assessment that is ongoing and systematic.

With this guidance from the SRC-B, a comprehensive Statewide assessment of the rehabilitation needs of Minnesotans who are blind, visually impaired, or DeafBlind was begun.

Incidence of Disability

Minnesota SSB collaborated with the University of Minnesota Center for Survey Research to purchase a question for its 2005 Minnesota State Survey. This survey was conducted from September to November 2005. A total of 805 telephone interviews were completed of adults, age 18 and over, who reside in Minnesota. The question asked for SSB was, "Does anyone in your household have a vision problem that makes it difficult for them to read material in regular-size print such as books, magazines, or newspapers even when they are wearing glasses or contact lenses?" Four percent of the respondents answered "yes," four percent said "someone else in the household has a vision problem," and two percent said "both [they] and another person in the household had a vision problem." Ninety percent answered "no" to that question.

The results from this survey suggest that ten percent of Minnesotans have a visual impairment that makes it difficult to read material in regular-size print such as books, magazines, or newspapers even when wearing glasses or contact lenses. With a population in Minnesota of five million, that would equate to 500,000 individuals. Of those who responded to the survey, 84 percent were between the ages of 18 and 64. That reduces the estimate to 410,000. This is significantly more than previous research or national data would suggest is accurate.

According to the 2000 U.S. Census, the unemployment rate for persons with disabilities in Minnesota is 35 percent. Applying that statistic to the Minnesota survey findings would suggest that 143,500 Minnesotans with a visual impairment are unemployed. The National Organization on Disability found in a 1994 study that 79 percent of individuals with a disability and who are unemployed, want to work. Applying that finding to Minnesota data suggests that 113,365 individuals have a visual impairment, are unemployed, and want to work. If even half met the eligibility criteria for SSB VR services, SSB would have the resources to serve only a fraction of that estimate.

The Social Security Administration's Office of Policy Data publishes annual statistics on Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) and Supplemental Security Income (SSI) recipients by State and by congressional district. The December 2004 data, released in March 2006, indicates that there are 1,381 Minnesotans receiving SSDI and 720 receiving SSI because they are blind.

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Previous studies have estimated the range of blind or visually impaired Minnesotans, across all ages and not only those persons traditionally thought of as working age, is 4,000 to 25,000. At the time, these estimates of Minnesotans with a visual disability were believed to be a high estimate of the number potentially eligible for VR services from SSB. Many blind Minnesotans are elderly and need independent living rather than VR services. A significant number of these persons are served by the SSB Senior Services Unit. Many blind Minnesotans function on an equal basis with their sighted peers and do not desire nor require VR services from SSB.

MDE gathers annual data on the child count for each school. The most recent unduplicated child count was published on December 1, 2005. That count indicates that of the students of transition age, 14-22 years, receiving special education services or services under a 504 plan, 26 were students identified as DeafBlind and 145 as having a visual impairment. The average number of students of transition age receiving SSB services is approximately 150 each year.

The child count is also reported by race/ethnicity, disability, and age. The race/ethnicity of the 26 students identified as DeafBlind is:

- White, 22
- American Indian, 0
- Asian, 1
- Black, 3
- Hispanic, 0

The race/ethnicity of the 145 students identified as having a visual impairment is:

- White, 112
- American Indian, 1
- Asian, 9
- Black, 17
- Hispanic, 6

During each of the past five years, SSB counselors have served approximately 80 DeafBlind customers. According to the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) estimates, approximately 498 Minnesotans (.0146 percent of the total population of Minnesota) age 21 and over would be considered to be DeafBlind. Other estimates from the Helen Keller National Center suggest one in 8,000 individuals are DeafBlind. For Minnesota, that would equate to approximately 625 individuals.

Outreach Events

Over the last two years, SSB has carried-out the most extensive marketing campaign on record. Twice during 2006, nearly 1,000 letters were sent to all Minnesota ophthalmologists and optometrists describing SSB services and included information on the eye-care professional's legal requirement to refer patients to SSB who are legally blind. A creative outreach effort currently in process is for public library staff to place large-print bookmarks advertising SSB services in large-print books when they are checked out.

Between December 2004 and December 2006, 190 presentations on SSB services were made at health fairs, senior expos, professional conferences, in-service training sessions for service provider staffs, presentations to service clubs and community organizations, support groups, and seniors in assisted and long-term care facilities. In addition, advertisements have been made over public radio and public television and have appeared in magazines and local newspapers.

As a result of these marketing efforts, SSB has experienced an increase in referrals of senior citizens for independent living services but not a similar increase for VR services.

Finding

Based on all of the data reviewed, SSB believes that the number of individuals that have traditionally come to SSB for VR services represents a more realistic picture of the number who need VR services by Minnesotans who are blind, visually impaired, or DeafBlind than estimates on incidence of visual impairment would suggest.

Rehabilitation Needs of Minnesotans with Disabilities

In FFY06, SSB provided VR services to 1,140 Minnesotans who are blind, visually impaired, or DeafBlind through 17 qualified rehabilitation counselors in its Workforce Development (WFD) Unit at 13 locations throughout the State, with most locations in Minnesota's WorkForce Centers. Sources of information about the rehabilitation needs of Minnesotans with disabilities are taken from VR caseload data, federal standards and indicators, and customer satisfaction survey results.

**Table D.4 - Workforce Development Performance Results for the Last Six Federal Years**

	FY 2000*	FY 2001	FY 2002	FY 2003	FY 2004	FY 2005
Number of Customers Served	1,046	1,039	1,538	1,374	1,311	1,219
Number of Paid Closures	115	91	179	126	103	125
Number of Homemakers	81	23	4	1	6	3
Total Achieved Successful Employment Outcome	196	114	183	127	109	128
Weekly Salary at Application	\$105.03	\$63.23	\$219.81	\$209.81	\$157.49	\$207.07
Weekly Salary at Closure	\$297.74	\$293.17	\$386.70	\$352.62	\$330.76	\$415.34
Difference of Salary Applied to Closure	\$192.71	\$229.95	\$166.89	\$142.81	\$173.27	\$208.27
Full Time \$ per Hour	\$10.67	\$11.51	\$12.86	\$14.43	\$11.87	\$14.64
Part Time \$ per Hour	\$8.76	\$7.45	\$11.30	\$9.49	\$10.41	\$11.51
Average \$ per Hour	\$9.96	\$10.37	\$12.28	\$12.00	\$11.29	\$13.38
Unsuccessful Closures Before Plan	96	108	80	178	95	88
Unsuccessful Closures After Plan	19	83	171	188	153	149

*Order of Selection 12/1998-9/2000

Vocational Rehabilitation Caseload Data

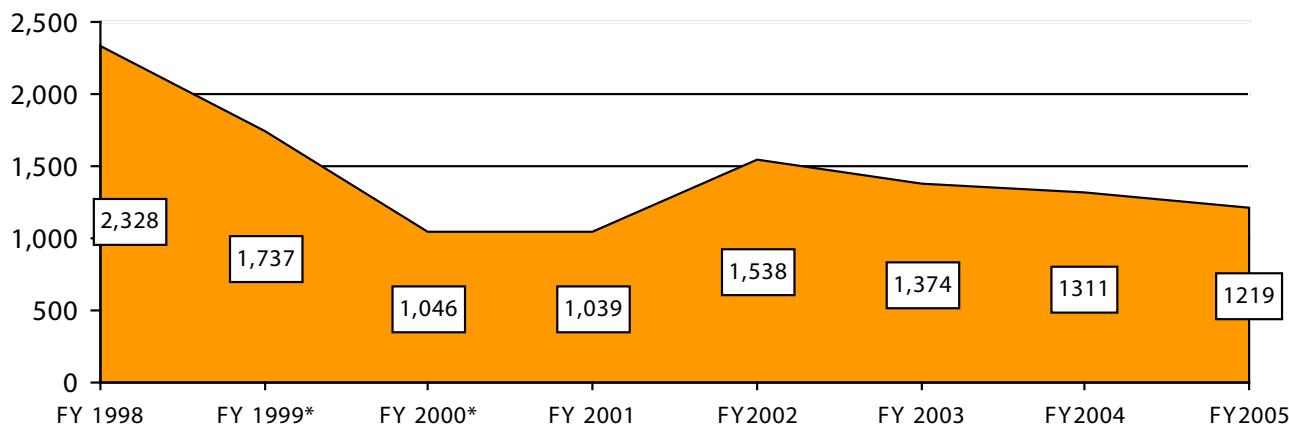
SSB publishes a *Quality Results* report every year. Highlights from the report covering FFY05 are:

- In workforce development, the number of paid closures increased from 103 to 125 from FFY04 to FFY05, a 21 percent increase.
- The number of unpaid homemaker closures continues to be reduced from a high of 450 in 1998 to three in 2005.
- Unsuccessful closures before plan decreased from 95 to 88 from FFY04 to FFY05, a seven percent decline. Unsuccessful closures after plan decreased from 153 to

149 from FFY04 to FFY05, a three percent decline.

- The difference in weekly salary from application to closure increased from \$173.27 in FFY04 to \$208.27 in FFY05, a 20 percent rise.
- The WFD Unit placed 128 blind customers into employment in FFY05 compared with 109 in FFY04, a 17 percent increase in FFY05.
- For workforce development in FFY05, the average weekly wage at closure for full-time work was \$14.64 per hour, 23 percent more than the \$11.87 per hour average in FFY04.

Chart D.1 - Number of Customers Served



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Chart D.2 - Paid Closures

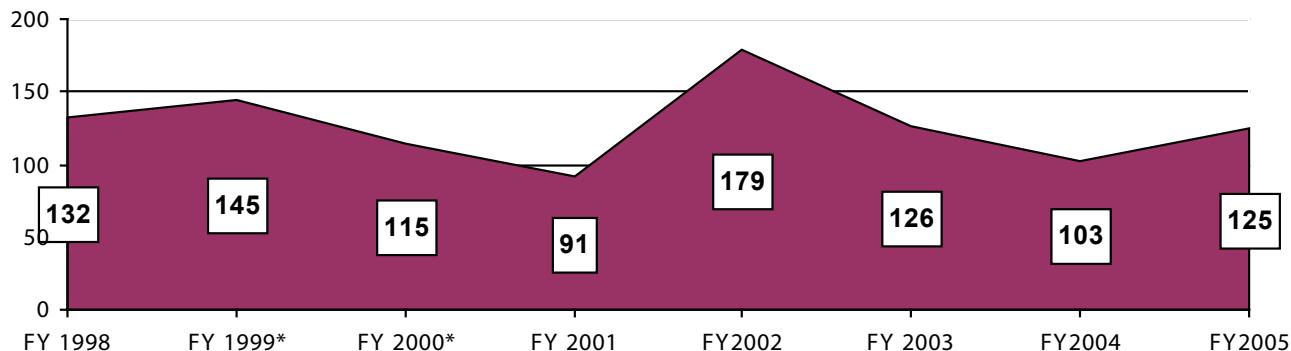


Chart D.3 - Weekly Salary: At Application, Closure, and Difference

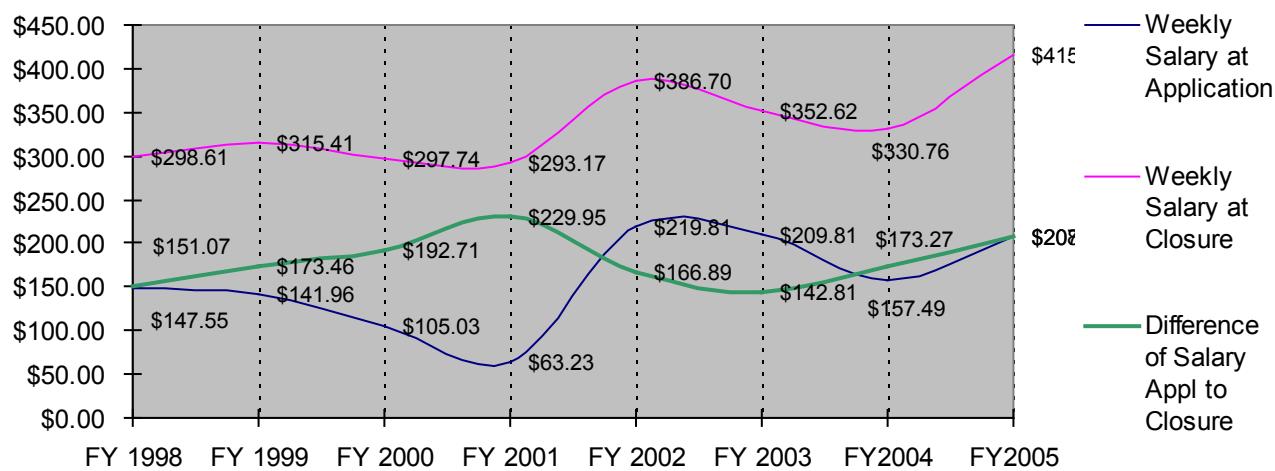
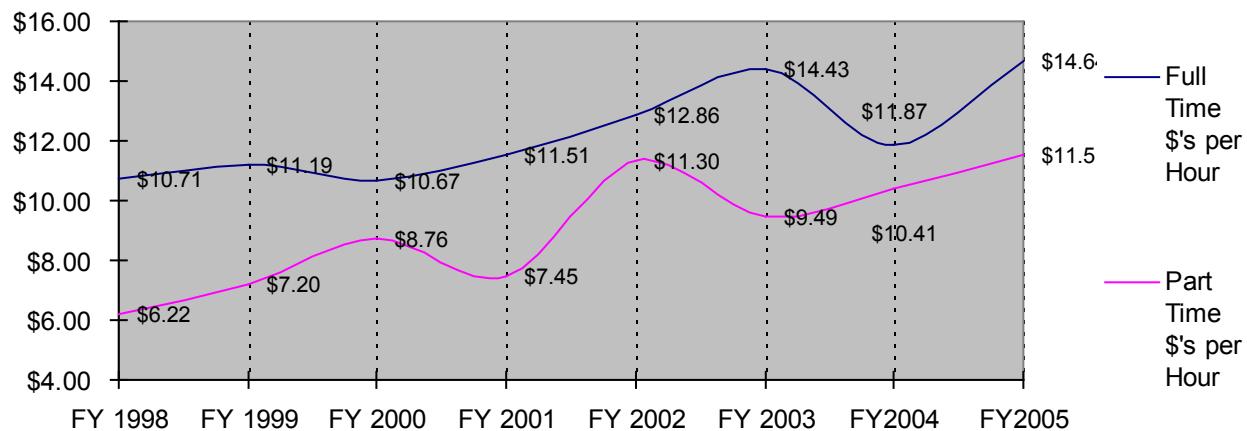


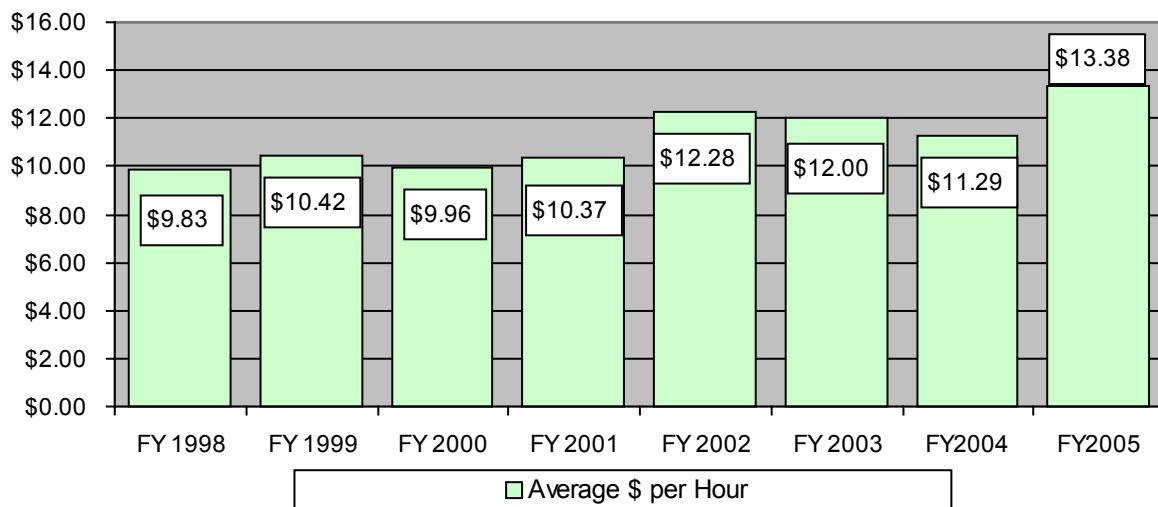
Chart D.4 - Hourly Wages for Full-time and Part-time Employment



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Chart D.5 - Average Overall Hourly Wages



Case Service Expenditure and Service Provision Patterns - Title I, Part B

Reviewing case service expenditure patterns presumes that the needs of current SSB customers mirror the needs of Minnesotans with visual impairments.

SSB case service expenditures show the following pattern for 2004 and 2005 for the top 11 categories of purchased services. Not all case service expenditures are listed.

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Table D.5 - Expenditure Rankings for Services Provided

Expenditure Rankings For Services Provided	2004 Rank Order	2005 Rank Order	2005 Expenditures
Adjustment to Blindness Training	1	1	\$1,280,285
Maintenance	2	2	519,023
Post-Secondary Training	3	3	476,998
Adaptive Equipment	4	4	287,299
Computer Equipment	5	5	241,955
Transportation	6	6	192,510
Miscellaneous Training	8	7	165,446
Job Placement	11	8	155,490
Low Vision Equipment	7	9	151,543
Miscellaneous Supplies	9	10	118,581
Vocational Education/Business College	10	11	83,621
TOTAL EXPENDITURES			\$4,079,615

SSB service provision--the services provided to the most number of people--show the following pattern for 2004 and 2005. Not all purchased services are listed. Most customers receive multiple services.

Table D.6 - Service Provision Rankings

Service Provision Rankings	2004 Rank Order	2005 Rank Order	2005 Number of Customers
Transportation	1	1	371
Miscellaneous Supplies	2	2	305
Adjustment to Blindness Training	3	3	229
Maintenance	4	4	206
Adaptive Equipment	6	5	142
Health Services	5	6	139
Post-Secondary Training	7	7	136
Training Supplies, Books	8	8	122
Miscellaneous Training	9	9	103
Computer Equipment	10	10	101
Low Vision Equipment	11	11	91
TOTAL NUMBER OF CUSTOMERS			1,219 (unduplicated)

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Later sections address in more depth the VR service needs of SSB customers in supported employment, Title VI, Part B, those who meet the Minnesota definition of individuals with the most significant disability, those who are underserved (DeafBlind), and those from minority backgrounds. Tables D.7, D.8, and D.9 make comparisons among the four specific groups with Title I, all SSB workforce development customers.

SSB case service expenditures show the following rank order for 2005 case service expenditures for each of the following groups.

Table D.7 - Expenditure Rankings for Services Provided

Expenditure Rankings For Services Provided	Title I	Title VI	Most Significant	Deafblind	All Minority
Adjustment to Blindness Training	1	1	1	1	1
Maintenance	2	4	2	2	2
Post-Secondary Training	3	11	7	6	4
Adaptive Equipment	4	7	3	3	3
Computer Equipment	5	0	6	5	6
Transportation	6	8	4	9	9
Other Training/Education	7	12	5	14	12
Job Placement	8	5	11	4	5
Low Vision Equipment	9	0	8	11	11
Miscellaneous Supplies	10	0	9	10	10
Average Expenditures Per Customer	\$3,347	\$2,280	\$6,067	\$6,550	\$7,012

SSB service provision, the services provided to the most number of people, shows the following rank order for 2005 for all SSB customers under Title I and for each of the other customer groups.

Table D.8 - Service Provision Rankings

Service Provision Rankings	Title I	Title VI	Most Significant	Deafblind	All Minority
Transportation	1	3	3	2	1
Miscellaneous Supplies	2	5	1	4	2
Adjustment to Blindness Training	3	1	2	3	3
Maintenance	4	5	5	5	5
Adaptive Equipment	5	9	7	11	6
Health Services	6	7	21	7	13
Post-Secondary Training	7	7	10	12	9
Training Supplies, Books	8	7	8	8	10
Other Training/Education	9	7	4	20	18
Computer Equipment	10	0	9	13	12

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Since Adjustment to Blindness Training (ATB) is the number-one expenditure of case service funds and ranks within the top three services provided for all groups, further analysis of the distribution of that service is provided in Table D.9.

The average cost per customer for ATB, the number-one service expenditure for all groups, is shown for all SSB customers under Title I and for each of the other customer groups.

Table D.9 - Adjustment to Blindness Training

	Title I	Title VI	Most Significant	Deafblind	All Minority
ATB Expenditure Rank	1	1	1	1	1
ATB Service Rank	3	1	2	3	3
Number of Customers	229	10	76	29	56
Percent Receiving ATB	19%	17%	33%	55%	42%
Total Expenditures for ATB	\$1,280,285	\$39,412	\$509,135	\$129,960	\$331,014
Total Expenditures for All Services	\$4,079,615	\$72,976	\$1,407,548	\$347,155	\$932,650
ATB as Percent of Total Expenditures for each Group	31%	54%	36%	37%	35%
Average Expenditure per Customer for ATB	\$5,590	\$3,941	\$6,620	\$4,481	\$5,910

Federal Standards and Indicators

The RSA has established standards and indicators for measuring the performance of VR programs across the nation. Standard 1 centers on employment outcomes; and standard 2 centers on service rate to persons from a minority background. SSB's performance for the last five years is shown Table D.10.

Table D.10 - SSB Performance on Standard 1 and Standard 2 by Federal Fiscal Year

	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
Ind. 1.1: Change in Employment Outcomes(>=0)	-289	-13	+13	-74	+1
Ind. 1.2: Percent of Employment Outcomes (>=68.9%)	60.43%	51.56%	46.34%	40.91%	43.90%
Ind. 1.3: Competitive Employment (>=35.4%)	45.48%	81.82%	96.77%	93.22%	94.10%
Ind. 1.4: Significant Disability (>=89.0%)	95.74%	97.53%	98.00%	99.55%	98.66%
Ind. 1.5: Earnings Ratio (>=.59)	0.634	0.656	0.676	0.645	0.664**
Ind. 1.6: Self-Support (>=30.4)	39.72%	31.28%	30.67%	36.82%	35.42
Number of Indicators in Standard 1 that were Passed	4	4	5	4	5
Number of Primary Indicators (1.3 to 1.5) in Standard 1 that were Passed	3	3	3	3	3
Ind. 2.1: Ratio of Minority to Non-Minority Service Rate (>=.80)			.86		.74

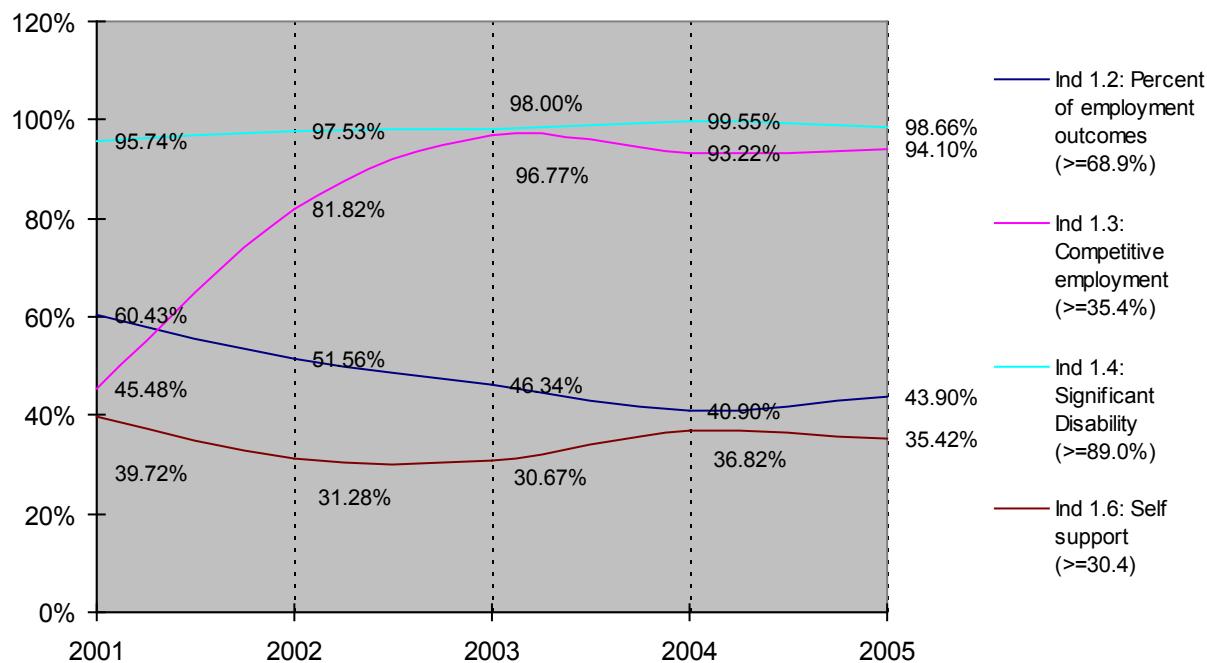
** Calculated using State Average Annual Pay (SAAP) for 2004; SAAP for 2005 not yet available

The federal standard requires that each agency pass at least four of six indicators and two of three primary indicators on standard 1. In 2005, SSB passed five of the six indicators and all three of the primary indicators; but did not pass indicator 2.1.

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Chart D.6 - Federal Indicators



For any given year, calculations for indicators 1.1 through 1.6 for designated state units (DSUs) such as SSB that exclusively serve individuals with visual impairments or blindness are based on aggregated data for the current year and the prior year, i.e., two years of data (34 CFR §361.81(4)).

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: DSUs' performance in current period must equal or exceed performance in previous period. In 2005, SSB assisted 19 more individuals to obtain employment than in 2004.

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: For the general and combined DSUs, the level is 55.8 percent; for agencies serving individuals who are blind, the level is 68.9 percent. In 2005, SSB's performance level was 43.9 percent.

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: For the general and combined DSUs, the level is 72.6 percent; for agencies serving individuals who are blind, the level is 35.4 percent. In 2005, SSB's performance level was 94.10 percent.

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: For the general and combined DSUs, the level is 62.4 percent; for agencies serving individuals who are blind, the level is 89.0 percent. In 2005, SSB's performance level was 98.66 percent.

1.5 The average hourly earnings of all individuals who exit the VR program in competitive, self-, or BEP

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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: For the general and combined DSUs, the level is a ratio of .52; for agencies serving individuals who are blind, the ratio is .59. In 2005, SSB's performance level was .666.

- 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: For the general and combined DSUs, the level is an arithmetic difference of 53.0; for agencies serving individuals who are blind, the level is a difference of 30.4. In 2005, SSB's performance level was 35.42.

- 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: All agencies must attain a ratio level of .80. In 2005, SSB's performance level was .74.

Findings

From 2004 to 2005:

- Paid closures were up 21 percent
- Unpaid homemaker closures are down from six to three; and down from a high of 450 in 1998
- All employment closures, paid and unpaid, were up 17 percent
- Unsuccessful closures before a plan is developed were down 7 percent
- Unsuccessful closures after a plan is developed were down 3 percent
- Weekly salary from application to closure increased 20 percent
- Average weekly wage at closure increased 23 percent

Learning and applying blindness skills is foundational to vocational success for individuals who are visually impaired, blind, or DeafBlind. Nineteen percent of all SSB workforce development customers received adjustment to blindness training. A significantly higher percentage of individuals with the most significant disabilities (33 percent), those who are DeafBlind (55 percent), and minorities (42 percent) received adjustment to blindness training.

Average expenditures per person for all workforce development customers were \$3,347. Average expenditures were significantly higher for individuals with the most significant disabilities, \$6,067; those who are DeafBlind, \$6,550; and minorities, \$7,012.

SSB did not meet standard 1.2: The percentage of individuals who exit the VR program after services who achieved an employment outcome.

SSB did not meet standard 2.1: The service rate of all individuals with disabilities from minority backgrounds as a ratio to the service rate for all individuals with disabilities from non-minority backgrounds.

Current SSB/SRC-B Goals and Activities

In spite of the encouraging findings from 2004 to 2005, SSB continues to work on increasing employment outcomes as reflected in FFY07 goal and priority #1: Employment outcomes; SSB will meet RSA indicator 1.1. In December 2005, the WFD director and supervisors completed a review of all unsuccessful closures for the most recent year. No specific trends were identified through this review.

A great deal of focus has been placed on training to improve counselor placement skills and their work with employers. The FFY07 in-service training plan includes two days of training on the *Comprehensive Assessment of VR Needs* so that counselors improve their skills when working with the individual to develop an employment plan. In addition, specific training on placement skills is included in upcoming training on *Serving the DeafBlind Customer, Improving Cultural Competencies, and Low Vision Training*.

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Targeted outreach activities are essential to maintain SSB's current market penetration. While SSB believes that the numbers of individuals that have traditionally come to SSB for VR services represent a realistic picture of the need for services, a variety of outreach activities, including presenting information on SSB services at various professional and customer conferences, will continue. The effectiveness of these outreach activities will be measured through documentation of referrals over the three-year period of FFY07 through FFY09 as documented in the RSA 113. Strategies for improving SSB's performance on RSA indicator 1.1 will also assist in meeting RSA indicator 2.1, the service rate for all individuals from minority backgrounds.

SSB has identified strategies to improve performance on indicator 1.2. Two days of training in late 2006 will focus on the *Comprehensive Assessment of VR Needs* so that counselors improve their skills when working with the individual to develop an employment plan. In-service training will be used to improve counselor placement skills, identify placement needs of specific populations, and work with employers.

SSB continues to improve performance and has set for FFY07 a goal and priority #2: Minority service rate. By the end of FFY07, at least 100 persons from minority backgrounds will exit services annually and SSB will meet RSA indicator 2.1. In addition to the training on *Improving Cultural Competencies*, an organizational assessment will be completed as a result of focus groups with staff where each participant will also complete a self-assessment cultural diversity instrument. These activities are being carried out for SSB by staff from Century College, a school within the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities (MnSCU) System.

Customer Satisfaction Survey Results

Beginning in 2000, the Minnesota Department of Economic Security (the former agency name of what is now part of DEED), SSB's designated state agency (DSA), began working with all of its programs to create a joint customer satisfaction survey. Some of the survey questions were those required of U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) programs and the rest were crafted by program staff to obtain additional needed information. SSB was, and continues to be, a partner in this endeavor.

Minnesota commissioned the Center for Survey Research and Analysis at the University of Connecticut to conduct a telephone survey to find out how well Minnesota's WorkForce Center System, and each of its partners, was serving its customers. The survey was first conducted via telephone in November 2001 on a sample of customers provided by each agency program and continued surveying customers quarterly until the end of its contract in 2005. In 2005, the contract was awarded to Strategic Research Group of Columbus, Ohio, who continued the same process. Providing for an outside entity to conduct the surveys ensures neutrality in interviewing and independence in reporting. Quarterly telephone surveys have been conducted since that time. Approximately 200 SSB customers are interviewed each year. The timeframe for the survey results is from April 1 to March 31 of each year to accommodate certain DOL programs.

The results of the quarterly surveys are provided to the SRC-B's Customer Satisfaction and Outcomes and Measures Committee. That committee reviews and analyzes the quarterly survey results. Its analysis is included in its annual report. In the [SRC-B Annual Report for 2005](#), the committee wrote:

“The Committee reviewed the Customer Satisfaction Survey (CSS) results through March 31, 2005. Thirteen survey items were analyzed to compare the results for years ending 3/31/03, 3/31/04, and 3/31/05. Results for 3/31/03 were also merged with those for the year ending 3/31/04 and compared with results for the year ending 3/31/05. In these comparisons, no significant changes in results were seen from year-to-year. The year ending 3/31/05 has approval ratings ranging from a high of 85% and a low of 70%. The 85% approval rating was for SSB question 3, “How satisfied are you with your role in making the final decisions about your rehabilitation plan?” The 70% approval rating was the result for SSB question 5, “How satisfied are you that you got all the necessary services quickly enough to meet your needs?”

Table D.11 was included in the SRC-B's 2005 annual report and provides more information on the survey results and the council's analysis.



Table D.11 - Customer Satisfaction Survey Review for Customer Satisfaction and Outcomes and Measures Committee of the Minnesota SRC-B

	YE 3/31/03	YE 3/31/04	Two Years Ending 3/31/04	YE 3/31/05	Standard Deviation ('03 vs. '05, '04 vs. '05)	Standard Deviation ('03 + '04, vs. '05)	Signif. From '04-'05)	Signif. 03 vs. '05	Signif. '03 + '04 vs. '05
Q1: Overall satisfaction with services provided	76%	78%	77.0%	82%	8.2%	6.5%	NO	NO	NO
Q2: Extent to which services have met expectations	66%	70%	68.0%	74%	9.2%	6.5%	NO	NO	NO
Q3: Comparison with "ideal" set of services	66%	69%	67.0%	72%	9.2%	6.5%	NO	NO	NO
Q5: Satisfied that counselor understood customer's needs	86%	81%	83.5%	80%	8.4%	6.5%	NO	NO	NO
Q6: Satisfaction of customer with own input into plan	77%	78%	77.5%	79%	8.4%	6.5%	NO	NO	NO
Q7: Satisfaction with employment plan	73%	72%	72.5%	71%	9.2%	6.5%	NO	NO	NO
Q8: Awareness of services available	81%	78%	79.5%	82%	8.4%	6.55	NO	NO	NO
Q19: How satisfied are you with the time it usually took to get your answer	NA	76%	76%	84%	8.4%	8.4%	NO	NA	NO
SSB1: How satisfied are you with your role in choosing your job goal?	78%	78%	78%	77%	8.4%	6.5%	NO	NO	NO
SSB2: How satisfied are you that you had adequate information to make decisions about services in your plan?	79%	76%	77.5%	80%	8.4%	6.5%	NO	NO	NO
SSB3: Satisfied with your role in making final decisions	82%	83%	82.5%	85%	8.0%	6.5%	NO	NO	NO
SSB4: Satisfied that you got services needed to get job wanted	67%	69%	68.0%	74%	9.2%	6.5%	NO	NO	NO
SSB5: Get services quickly enough	66%	70%	68.0%	70%	9.4%	6.5%	NO	NO	NO

[†] Results are significant if they are more than one standard deviation from the figure with which they are being compared. The standard deviation is equal to two times the average standard error rate.

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The survey questions were modified by a DSA committee, including SSB, when the contract was moved to the Strategic Research Group in 2005. Questions 7 through 10 are specific to SSB. The questions now asked are:

- What is your overall satisfaction with the services provided?
- To what extent have the services met your expectations?
- How well do the services you received compare with the ideal set of services?
- How satisfied are you that staff understands your needs?
- How satisfied are you that staff responded to your request for help in a reasonable amount of time?
- Which of the following best describes the reason you were receiving services?
- Which services, if any, were the most helpful to you in getting a job?
- Which services, if any, do you believe will most help you in keeping your job?
- Which services, if any, do you believe will help you the most in getting a better job?
- What about these services that you received could be improved?

The CSS results for SSB for the quarter ending September 30, 2005 were:

- Overall satisfaction with services: 91 percent
- Extent to which services met expectations: 77 percent
- Comparison with "ideal" set of services: 71 percent
- Satisfied that counselor understood customer needs: 89 percent
- How satisfied with the time to get answer: 84 percent
- Why was customer receiving services? 75 percent wanted help finding a job
- What reason best describes why customer was receiving services? 61 percent to find a job; 16 percent to find a better job; 7 percent help to keep their job

When asked what services would help them the most to get a job, the answers were:

- Developing and learning job-related skills: 29 percent
- Help with job search; job leads and testing: 18 percent
- Nothing: 17 percent

- Resources: equipment, materials, website: 17 percent
- Financial help and gas vouchers: 15 percent
- Learning job search skills: 7 percent
- Staff helpfulness: 7 percent
- Other: 13 percent

When asked what about their services could be improved, the answers were:

- Compliment given by the customer or noted no improvement needed: 38 percent
- Provide more services from a WorkForce Center: 37 percent
- Resources, financial and material support: 22 percent
- Improve staff services: 16 percent
- Improve the quality of WorkForce Center services - job leads and advice: 14 percent
- Provide more job skills training improvements: 5 percent

Findings

While there is much to celebrate in the CSS results, there are always areas that could be improved. SSB, along with the SRC-B, have chosen to focus on the overall customer satisfaction score in setting agency goals. In addition, the WFD director shares with the SRC-B's Customer Satisfaction and Outcomes and Measures Committee, the comments that respondents make so that a more in-depth review can be done of the findings and necessary actions taken.

Based on these findings, people want services so that they can prepare for--learn job-related skills--and obtain employment. Access to equipment and help with transportation costs were also important. These are services among the top service expenditures for the last two years. Comments suggesting the need for improvements included these areas as well.

Current SSB/SRC-B Goals and Activities

SSB continues to work on its goal and priority #4: Increase customer satisfaction with services provided with a goal of reaching 85 percent on the question on overall satisfaction with the services provided. Through March 2005, the response was 82 percent. The response of 91 percent for the quarter ending September 30, 2005, will be averaged-in with the rest of the year when the results for all quarters are completed.

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Because customer satisfaction is highly correlated with informed choice, SSB has established goal and priority #5: Insure every SSB customer has the information needed to make an informed choice in selecting providers for adjustment to blindness training. The customer is given information about the programs that are available and provided with a tour of each one. SSB counselors complete the "Choosing ATB Training" form with each customer who is considering ATB. Customers affirm on the form that they received the information they needed to make an informed choice in the selection of the provider and state why they selected that provider.

SSB continues to meet its goal and priority #6: 100 percent of VR staff members new to SSB receive *Introduction to Blindness - Phase 1 and/or Phase 2* training on the essential aspects of blindness and visual impairment. Phase 2 is four weeks of experiential adjustment to blindness training under sleep shades at two community rehabilitation programs (CRPs) that is required for all direct-service staff. Learning the alternative blindness techniques that SSB customers need to be successful in their homes, communities, and at work improves the counselor's ability to provide appropriate and responsive services.

VR Service Needs of Individuals with the Most Significant Disabilities including their Need for Supported Employment

While nearly 97 percent of SSB customers are individuals with a significant disability, 19 percent meet SSB's criteria as an individual with the most significant disability. An individual with a most significant disability is 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 job seeking skills.
- Is expected to require multiple VR services over an extended period of time.

Case Service Expenditure and Service Provision Patterns

Case service expenditures for SSB customers with the most significant disabilities show the following pattern for 2004 and 2005 for the top ten categories of purchased services. Not all case service expenditures are listed.

Table D.12 - Expenditure Rankings for Services Provided

Expenditure Rankings For Services Provided	2004 Rank Order	2005 Rank Order	2005 Expenditures
Adjustment to Blindness Training	1	1	\$509,135
Maintenance	2	2	251,921
Adaptive Equipment	3	3	82,252
Transportation	11	4	82,203
Other Training/Education	6	5	80,285
Computer Equipment/Software	5	6	77,462
Post-Secondary Training	4	7	77,191
Low Vision Equipment	7	8	40,644
Miscellaneous Supplies	10	9	36,639
Vocational Assessment	13	10	34,282
TOTAL EXPENDITURES			\$1,407,548
Average Expenditure per Customer			\$6,067

SSB service provision, the services provided to the most number of people, show the following pattern for 2004 and 2005 for customers with the most significant disabilities. Not all purchased services are listed. Most customers received multiple services.

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Table D.13 - Service Provision Rankings

Service Provision Rankings	2004 Rank Order	2005 Rank Order	2005 Number Of Customers
Miscellaneous Supplies	1	1	96
Adjustment to Blindness Training	2	2	76
Transportation	2	3	72
Other Training/Education	8	4	52
Maintenance	5	5	44
Medical Assessments/Evaluations	4	6	42
Adaptive Equipment	6	7	40
Textbooks and Supplies	7	8	38
Computer Equipment/Software	12	9	32
Post-Secondary Training	9	10	31
Vocational Assessment	10	10	31
Job Placement	11	10	31
TOTAL NUMBER OF CUSTOMERS			232

Those receiving services under a supported employment plan are considered to be those with the most significant disability. The following is an analysis of case services provided and expenditures for 2005 for individuals in a supported employment plan.

Case Service Expenditure and Service Provision Patterns - Title VI, Part B

SSB case service expenditures under a supported employment plan show the following pattern for 2005 for the top ten categories of purchased services. Not all case service expenditures are listed.

Table D.14 - Expenditure Rankings for Services Provided

Expenditure Rankings For Services Provided	2005 Rank Order	2005 Expenditures
Adjustment to Blindness Training	1	\$39,412
OJT/Job Coach	2	10,144
Health Services	3	7,864
Maintenance	4	5,487
Job Placement	5	2,851
Vocational Evaluation/Assessment	6	1,825
Adaptive Equipment	7	1,622
Transportation	8	993
Vocational Education/Business College	9	776
Rehabilitation Technical Assessment	10	670
TOTAL EXPENDITURES		\$72,976
Average Expenditure per Customer		\$2,280

SSB service provision--the services provided to the most number of people--under a supported employment plan show the following pattern for 2005. It is a duplicate count of customers since most receive more than one purchased service.

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Table D.15 - Service Provision Rankings

Service Provision Rankings	2005 Rank Order	2005 Number Of Customers
Adjustment to Blindness Training	1	10
OJT/Job Coach	2	8
Job Placement	3	7
Transportation	3	7
Miscellaneous Supplies	5	5
Maintenance	5	5
Health Services	7	4
Vocational Evaluation/Assessment	7	4
Adaptive Equipment	9	2
Other Non-Medical	9	2
TOTAL NUMBER OF CUSTOMERS		32 (unduplicated)

Findings

SSB customers who meet SSB's criteria as an individual with the most significant disability made up 19 percent of all workforce development customers, accounted for 35 percent of all expenditures, and the average expenditure per person was nearly two times the average expenditure per person for all SSB workforce development customers.

Learning and applying blindness skills is foundational to vocational success for individuals who are visually impaired, blind or DeafBlind. While 19 percent of all SSB workforce development customers receive ATB training, a significantly higher percentage of individuals with the most significant disabilities, 33 percent, received ATB training. The average expenditure per customer for ATB training was the highest of all groups at \$6,620.

Average expenditures per person for all workforce development customers were \$3,347. Average expenditures were significantly higher for individuals with the most significant disabilities, \$6,067.

The array of services provided to individuals through Title VI, Part B funds are very similar to services provided to individuals through Title I, Part B funds. The above tables show that six of the service expenditure areas are common between the two funds: ATB training, maintenance, job placement, adaptive equipment, transportation, and vocational education or business college training.

While expenditure and service patterns were similar to those for SSB workforce development customers as a whole, expenditures for this group were ranked higher for "other training" (than post-secondary) and for "vocational assessments." Services that included medical assessment and evaluation, vocational assessment, and job placement were ranked higher in terms of the number of individuals receiving those services than for SSB workforce development customers as a whole. That is a similar ranking for individuals who are minorities.

A total of 35 SSB customers have a supported employment plan so far in FFY06. Twenty-five of those were individuals meeting the criteria of most significant disability. Three individuals had their case files closed because they needed supported employment but no source of ongoing supports was available.

VR Service Needs of Individuals with Disabilities who are Underserved

Previous needs assessment activities, including the findings of a 2002 Minnesota legislature-directed study, identified individuals who are DeafBlind as underserved by the VR program. Resulting activities were the creation of a SRC-B DeafBlind Committee, focused outreach to the DeafBlind community, staff in-service training, and the development of a "best practices" guide for counselors.

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SSB is now assessing the impact of these activities through a targeted needs assessment and customer satisfaction survey. The survey, developed in May 2006, is being administered to each SSB customer with a dual sensory loss or who is DeafBlind. All surveys will be completed by July 31, 2006. The survey results will be compiled and analyzed with the SRC-B DeafBlind Committee to identify service needs and strategies to meet those needs.

As noted in the needs assessment, SSB did not meet the minority service rate set in standard 2.1. As a result,

minorities are also considered to be underserved and that is addressed later in the document.

Case Service Expenditure and Service Provision Patterns

Case service expenditures for SSB customers who are DeafBlind show the following pattern for 2004 and 2005 for the top ten categories of purchased services. Not all case service expenditures are listed.

Table D.16 - Expenditure Rankings for Services Provided

Expenditure Rankings For Services Provided	2004 Rank Order	2005 Rank Order	2005 Expenditures
Adjustment to Blindness Training	1	1	\$129,960
Maintenance	2	2	38,003
Adaptive Equipment	5	3	33,576
Job Placement	8	4	21,465
Computer Equipment/Software	6	5	18,232
Post-Secondary Training	3	6	18,130
Reader/Driver/Note taker/Interpreter	10	7	14,204
Physical or Mental Restoration	7	8	13,852
Transportation	4	9	12,592
Miscellaneous Supplies	15	10	10,765
TOTAL EXPENDITURES			\$347,155
Average Expenditure per Customer			\$6,550

SSB service provision--the services provided to the most number of people--show the following pattern for 2004 and 2005 for SSB customers who are DeafBlind. Not all purchased services are listed. Most customers receive multiple services.

Table D.17 - Service Provision Rankings

Service Provision Rankings	2004 Rank Order	2005 Rank Order	2005 Number of Customers
Transportation	1	1	48
Adjustment to Blindness Training	2	2	29
Miscellaneous Supplies	4	3	27
Maintenance	7	4	23
Reader/Driver/Note taker/Interpreter	3	5	19
Medical Assessments/Evaluations	5	6	16
Textbooks and Supplies	5	6	16
Job Placement	14	7	14
Vocational Assessment	9	9	13
Adaptive Equipment	12	10	10
TOTAL NUMBER OF CUSTOMERS			53

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Findings

SSB customers who are DeafBlind, including all with a dual sensory loss, made up four percent of all workforce development customers and accounted for eight percent of the expenditures. The average expenditure per person, \$6,550, was nearly two times the average expenditure per person for all SSB workforce development customers, \$3,347.

SSB requested the chairperson of the SRC-B DeafBlind Committee to review the case-service expenditure and service-provision data and advise SSB on whether using this data to describe the needs of individuals who are DeafBlind was valid. The chairperson responded, "I found it very informative to look through the comparisons among the groups receiving services from WFD. In my opinion, I would say that the services included in the document seem pretty inclusive of the needs that people who are DeafBlind in general would have in terms of services. I can't think of any service needs that are missing."

As would be expected given the communication needs of individuals who are DeafBlind, expenditures were ranked higher for the category of readers, drivers, note takers, and interpreters. While SSB data combines readers, drivers, note takers, and interpreters into one service category, it is most likely that expenditures in this category were primarily for American sign language and tactile sign interpreters. Expenditures were also ranked higher for physical and mental restoration services.

Services that included readers, drivers, note takers, and interpreters; job placement; and vocational assessment ranked higher in terms of the number of individuals receiving those services than for SSB workforce development customers as a whole. Proportionately less was spent on other training and education services or low-vision equipment. The ranking for adaptive equipment, post-secondary training, other training and education, and computer equipment was ranked lower than for all SSB workforce development customers.

The number of individuals who are DeafBlind that are served by SSB has risen significantly from 19 when this was identified as an underserved group in 2003 to 53 in 2006.

Current SSB/SRC-B Goals and Activities

To address the service needs of Minnesotans who are DeafBlind, SSB and the SRC-B developed goal and priority #3: DeafBlind outreach and services - enhance services for persons who have a dual sensory loss, including persons who are DeafBlind. During FFY07, at least eight individuals with a dual sensory loss will secure employment as a result of SSB services.

Specific strategies to achieve this goal are outlined in Section M. SSB received an in-service quality training grant to provide comprehensive staff training on understanding DeafBlindness and increase staff competency in serving SSB customers who are DeafBlind. The training will assist VR counselors, placement staff, and assistive technology staff to improve their knowledge and understanding of deafness and DeafBlindness.

SSB and the SRC-B will analyze the results of the needs assessment and customer satisfaction survey administered to each SSB customer with a dual sensory loss. It is expected that the analysis will result in future recommendations on goals and strategies as well as new outreach, service, and placement strategies.

Finally, SSB will continue to promote collaborative efforts with other State agencies that provide services to individuals who are DeafBlind, so that specific vocational needs, like the need for supported employment, can be met. Results of SSB's needs assessment and customer satisfaction survey will be shared with those agencies.

VR Service Needs of Individuals with Disabilities who are Underserved

Based on the outreach activities described earlier in the needs assessment, SSB has concluded that there is not an unserved population for VR. Outreach activities suggest that the lack of service availability is primarily in the elderly population.

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VR Service Needs of Individuals with Disabilities Served through other Components of the Workforce Investment System

SSB is a partner in the WorkForce Center System. Minnesota, with 16 Workforce Service Areas (WSAs) and 47 WorkForce Centers, has been a leader since 1995 in developing a more integrated service system. Because of SSB's small size, counselors are located in 11 of the 47 WorkForce Centers and are available to meet with customers or WorkForce Center staff at other locations as needed. The WIA Title I, Title III, and Title IV partner programs are co-located in WorkForce Centers.

Table D.18 - WSA Services

WSA	No Customers	No Way to Track	Refer to SSB	Services Provided
1		X		
2				Classroom Training
3				Summer Youth Program (2)
5	X			
6				Large print on computer; assist with job search
7	X			
9			X	
14			X	
15	X			
16	X			
17				Job Fair, Resource Room, Minnesota Youth Program
18		X		
Job Corps	X			

There was an additional response from an ABE provider located in St. Paul who partners with Ramsey County WSA 15. The partners indicated that over the last two years, they have served 110 blind and vision-impaired learners. They do not maintain information on whether these individuals were also SSB customers or customers of other partner agencies in the WorkForce Center System. Through a grant, they have obtained equipment (closed circuit televisions, large screen monitors, magnifiers, embosser) and software (ZoomText, JAWS [job access with speech]), and have materials available in Braille so that their services are accessible.

During FFY05, 12 SSB customers also received services from other WorkForce Center partners. However, the Title I partner only lists the services provided in the management information system after the individual has completed services. Since four are still receiving services, information is only available on eight individuals. Two SSB customers were dually served

SSB's State director surveyed all WSA directors in Minnesota, asking them whether their program staff have provided employment services to individuals who are blind, visually impaired, or DeafBlind and who were not also customers of SSB. If they had provided employment services, they were asked to describe the specific services that were provided. Responses were received from 12 of the 16 WSA directors. Table D.18 displays their responses.

by the WIA Title I - Adult program and six by the older youth. Consistent with SSB and the general VR agency's policy, no individuals were dually served with the general VR agency.

The Title I Adult program provided the following services to SSB customers: career counseling; individual plan development; staff-assisted assessment, job placement, and job search; and work experience. The older youth program provided the following services to SSB customers: basic skills training; comprehensive guidance and counseling; occupational skills training; partnering; staff-assisted assessment, job placement, job search; summer employment; work experience; and work readiness skills training. This listing of services does not include the self-service or online services available to the universal customer that SSB customers may have accessed on their own.

SSB provided the following services to these 12 customers:

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Table D.19 - Services to SSB Customers

Service	Number of Customers	Expenditures
Adjustment to Blindness Training	1	\$2,800
Assessment	2	Counselor provided
Information and Referral	1	Counselor provided
Job Readiness Training	1	Counselor provided
Medical Assessment/Evaluation	3	\$864
Miscellaneous Supplies	1	\$63
On the Job Supports	1	Counselor provided
Physical or Mental Restoration	2	\$4,464
Self-employment Services	1	\$75
Transportation	1	\$264
VR Counseling and Guidance	12	Counselor provided
TOTAL EXPENDITURES		\$8,530

Findings

While SSB is established as a partner in the WorkForce Center System and has provided training and advice to other partners on providing services to individuals with visual impairments, it remains the more prevalent practice to call SSB or refer individuals to SSB for services. For these eight customers jointly served by WIA Title I and Title IV, it appears that the services were complementary and not duplicated.

Current SSB/SRC-B Goals and Activities

SSB will continue to provide the WorkForce Centers with technical assistance so that all computer hardware and software available for public use in the resource areas of each of the WorkForce Centers is accessible to any individual with a visual impairment. SSB's chief technology officer serves on the Workforce Center System's Resource Area Advisory Team. SSB counselors will continue to educate other WorkForce Center partners so that individuals with visual impairments can access and benefit from other partner program services when appropriate. SSB is part of the local WorkForce Center planning groups at the executive management level within DEED and at the local level.

Conclusions

The needs assessment process framework developed by the SRC-B's Needs Assessment Task Force provided the foundation for completing SSB's 2006 triennial comprehensive Statewide assessment of the rehabilitation needs of Minnesotans who are blind, have visual impairments, or are DeafBlind. The needs assessment process is considered to be continuous and ongoing. This framework will guide SSB in conducting those ongoing needs assessment activities.

SSB's VR program has achieved the following successes in the last year:

- Twenty-one percent increase in the number of paid closures over 2004.
- Continuing reduction in the number of homemaker closures.
- Three percent decline in the number of unsuccessful closures over 2004.
- Twenty percent increase in the difference in weekly salary from application to closure from 2004.
- Seventeen percent increase in the number of employment outcomes over 2004.
- Twenty-three percent increase in the average weekly wage at closure for full-time workers over 2004.

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Service patterns and expenditure patterns for workforce development customers as a group are very consistent from year to year. It may be presumed that these patterns reflect the need for services of SSB customers and the needs that individuals who are not SSB customers have in terms of employment. Service patterns and expenditure patterns are very similar between SSB customers receiving services under an individualized plan for employment and those who are receiving services under a supported employment plan. The differences are in the additional needs of vocational assessments and job coaching.

Learning and applying blindness skills is foundational to vocational success for individuals who are visually impaired, blind, or DeafBlind. Nineteen percent of all SSB workforce development customers received adjustment to blindness training. The percentage for specific groups receiving adjustment to blindness training was significantly higher: individuals with the most significant disabilities, 33 percent; DeafBlind, 55 percent; and minorities, 42 percent.

Average expenditures per person for all workforce development customers were \$3,347. Average expenditures were significantly higher for individuals with the most significant disabilities, \$6,067; those who are DeafBlind, \$6,550; and minorities, \$7,012.

SSB needs to continue to work on meeting federal standard 1.2 by finding ways to further reduce the number of individuals who exit the VR program without an employment outcome. SSB needs to find more effective strategies in order to meet federal standard 2.1 and increase the number of customers from minority backgrounds. SSB has achieved a high level of customer satisfaction with overall services.

(ii) Include State estimates of the number of individuals in the State who are eligible for services under title I of the Rehabilitation Act, the number of such individuals who will receive services provided with funds provided under part B of title I and under part B of title VI (including, if the designated State agency uses an order of selection, estimates of the number of individuals to be served under each priority category within the order), and the costs of the services provided (including, if the designated State agency uses an order of selection, the service costs for each priority category within the order). (§101(a)(15)(B))

Vocational Rehabilitation/Rehabilitation Services - General

In FFY08, RS-VR anticipates serving approximately 21,500 eligible persons, all of whom are individuals with a significant disability. Of these individuals, approximately 17,630, or 82 percent, will be persons who have a most significant disability; approximately 3,870, or 18 percent, will be persons with a significant disability under the Minnesota "order of selection" in effect.

Priority category four of the order has been closed since 1993. While the potential for closure of other priority categories can affect the rate at which the RS-VR program initiates employment plans for new applicants, applicants qualifying in priority categories one and two are unlikely to experience any delay in service during FFY08. Costs for establishing the eligibility status of new applicants and costs of previously approved employment plans would continue to be funded without interruption if a category were closed to new applicants.

Estimates within Priority Categories

In FFY08, under the order of selection currently in effect, approximately 17,630 customers with three or more serious functional limitations (priority category one) will be served, at an approximate direct services cost of \$11.890 million. Approximately 2,940 customers will be served who have two serious functional limitations (priority category two), at an approximate direct services cost of \$2.175 million. Approximately 840 customers will be served annually who have one functional limitation (priority category three) at an approximate direct services cost of \$435,000.

Estimate of Supported Employment Services

To implement individualized employment plans with a supported employment goal in FFY07, approximately 1,400 persons will receive employment services under Title VI, Part B (Supported Employment) of the Rehabilitation Act, at an approximate cost of \$1,825,000. Under the administrative rule that sets forth Minnesota's order of selection, all persons receiving supported employment services have three or more serious functional limitations (priority category one).

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Estimate of Outcomes

In FFY08, approximately 2,750 persons will obtain a competitive, supported, or other vocational outcome that is approved by the U.S. Secretary of Education. More than 99 percent of these will be persons with significant or most significant disabilities.

Vocational Rehabilitation/State Services for the Blind - Blind Agency

During FFY06, 1,228 individuals were eligible for VR services from SSB. Of those, the case files of 87 individuals were closed before a plan was developed or services were implemented. The remaining 1,140 persons were served using Title I, Part B funds.

Also, in FFY06, 54 individuals were served under a supported employment plan and services were purchased using Title VI, Part B funds. The number of individuals served in 2006 increased substantially from the 32 in 2005. It is projected that the service provision levels for FFY07 and FFY08 will be similar to those in 2006.

Case service expenditures for FFY06 for purchased services for Title I, Part B customers was \$4.3 million and \$93,503 for Title VI, Part B plans. Expenditures for Title VI, Part B plans were up 28 percent over 2005. Expenditure levels are expected to remain at these approximate levels for FFY07 and FFY08.

Minnesota SSB did not operate under an order of selection during FFY06 and does not anticipate the need to close categories during the remainder of 2007.

During the development of the triennial needs assessment completed in 2006, expenditure patterns for various customer groups were reviewed. The following tables provide a description of the case service expenditure patterns for the top ten expenditure categories and the service provision patterns for Title I, Part B, and Title VI, Part B.

Title I, Part B

SSB case service expenditures show the following pattern for 2004 and 2005 for the top 11 categories of purchased services. Not all case service expenditures are listed.

Table D.20 - Expenditure Rankings for Services Provided

Expenditure Rankings For Services Provided	2004 Rank Order	2005 Rank Order	2005 Expenditures
Adjustment to Blindness Training	1	1	\$1,280,285
Maintenance	2	2	519,023
Post-Secondary Training	3	3	476,998
Adaptive Equipment	4	4	287,299
Computer Equipment	5	5	241,955
Transportation	6	6	192,510
Miscellaneous Training	8	7	165,446
Job Placement	11	8	155,490
Low vision Equipment	7	9	151,543
Miscellaneous Supplies	9	10	118,581
Vocational Education/Business College	10	11	83,621
TOTAL EXPENDITURES			\$4,079,615

SSB service provision--the top 11 services provided to the most number of people--show the following pattern for 2004 and 2005. Most customers receive multiple services.

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Table D.21 - Service Provision Rankings

Service Provision Rankings	2004 Rank Order	2005 Rank Order	2005 Number Of Customers
Transportation	1	1	371
Miscellaneous Supplies	2	2	305
Adjustment to Blindness Training	3	3	229
Maintenance	4	4	206
Adaptive Equipment	6	5	142
Health Services	5	6	139
Post-Secondary Training	7	7	136
Training supplies, books	8	8	122
Miscellaneous Training	9	9	103
Computer Equipment	10	10	101
Low vision Equipment	11	11	91
TOTAL NUMBER OF CUSTOMERS			1,219 (unduplicated)

Title VI, Part B

SSB case service expenditures under a supported employment plan show the following pattern for 2005 for the top ten categories of purchased services. Not all case service expenditures are listed.

Table D. 22 - Expenditure Rankings for Services Provided

Expenditure Rankings For Services Provided	2005 Rank Order	2005 Expenditures
Adjustment to Blindness Training	1	\$39,412
OJT/Job Coach	2	10,144
Health Services	3	7,864
Maintenance	4	5,487
Job Placement	5	2,851
Vocational Evaluation/Assessment	6	1,825
Adaptive Equipment	7	1,622
Transportation	8	993
Vocational Education/Business College	9	776
Rehabilitation Tech Assessment	10	670
TOTAL EXPENDITURES		\$72,976

SSB service provision--the services provided to the most number of people--under a supported employment plan show the following pattern for 2005. It is a duplicate count of customers since most receive more than one purchased service.

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Table D.23 - Service Provision Rankings

Service Provision Rankings	2005 Rank Order	2005 Number Of Customers
Adjustment to Blindness Training	1	10
OJT/Job Coach	2	8
Job Placement	3	7
Transportation	3	7
Miscellaneous Supplies	5	5
Maintenance	5	5
Health Services	7	4
Vocational Evaluation/Assessment	7	4
Adaptive Equipment	9	2
Other Non-Medical	9	2
TOTAL NUMBER OF CUSTOMERS		32 (unduplicated)

The array of services provided to individuals through Title VI, Part B funds are very similar to services provided to individuals through Title I, Part B funds. The above tables show that six of the top ten case service expenditures areas are common between the two funds: adjustment to blindness training, maintenance, job placement, adaptive equipment, transportation, and vocational education or business college training. SSB anticipates that service patterns will remain similar for FFY07 and for 2008.

*(iii) Provide an assessment of the need to establish, develop, or improve community rehabilitation programs within the State.
(§101(a)(15)(A)(ii))*

Vocational Rehabilitation/Rehabilitation Services - General

Needs of CRPs in the State for development or improvement are determined locally by these programs, to a large extent within the structure of Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF) accreditation requirements. It is instructive that virtually all RS-VR program innovation and expansion activities are carried out in collaborative partnerships with the State's CRPs. A CRP director is currently chairperson of the SRC. Well-qualified service providers, capable of providing a wide array of individualized services, must be available Statewide. The importance of the public/private partnership in the delivery of VR services in Minnesota is

reflected in the substantial percentage of VR case service dollars expended for the services of CRPs and by the partnerships that nurture expansion and improvement of services to customers. CRPs play a crucial role in the delivery of VR services, including supported employment services to Minnesotans with significant disabilities.

For RS approval as a CRP for customer referrals and program participation, an organization must be accredited by CARF for the services purchased by RS and have negotiated an operating agreement with RS detailing services and specific fee schedules. RS works to maintain a collegial and mutually supportive professional relationship with CRPs. More frequent consultation by the RS director with CRP leadership has been undertaken to improve RS-CRP collaboration. Regional quarterly meetings promote goals held in common by the RS-VR program and CRPs:

- To develop and maintain choices for customers of VR services.
- To assure that VR services are provided in integrated settings.
- To facilitate State-level planning and coordination of training needs of CRP staff.
- To facilitate communication between VR and CRP staff at the administrative level regarding service delivery, to increase CRP awareness of State and national VR issues.

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The array of services available to VR customers in the community through CRPs is importantly influenced by the decisions of customers and VR counselors as they select services in support of customer rehabilitation goals. RS field counseling staff and managers work with providers to develop needed service programs. In addition, the process for awarding grants that address specific customer needs shapes the picture of services available through CRPs. Distribution of State funding among CRPs providing extended services also influences the direction and decisions of these organizations. This funding through the RS Extended Employment (EE) program is substantially determined by needs and an annual formula-derived funding adjustment based on provider performance. Agency and provider staff are surveyed annually to identify service needs. To adjust funding on the basis of performance, relative program performance is measured by a formula that uses the following criteria:

- Cost of providing hours of work and services to customers
- Severity of disability
- Economic condition of the provider's geographic area
- Average wages paid workers with disabilities
- Proportion of EE work in a community setting
- Number of customers placed in competitive employment
- Retention rate of EE employees retained in competitive employment
- Number of customers transferring from work activity to long-term sheltered employment

Many rural areas of the State experience the predominance of a single provider, limiting customer choice of providers. Additionally, in the face of declining Statewide funding of long-term supports for supported employment, these providers must reduce essential staff providing these services, a further reduction of Statewide service capacity.

CRPs are an essential part of VR service delivery in Minnesota. However, in the absence of new funding for VR services and for long-term supported employment in the community, the capacity of these programs to meet the needs of VR customers is limited. Consultation with CRP managers by the RS-VR director finds that the leadership of these programs seek a more purposeful and collaborative relationship with RS to increase the Statewide availability of VR services.

Vocational Rehabilitation/State Services for the Blind - Blind Agency

Findings

SSB does not believe there is a need to establish or develop CRPs. SSB recognizes that there is a continuous need to improve service delivery, to assure a high level of customer satisfaction with vendor services, and to assure a high level of skill among the vendors used.

The number-one expenditure in both Title I, Part B, and Title VI, Part B is for ATB training at CRPs or by individual vendors. In 2005, a total of \$1.280 million, 31 percent of all case service dollars, was spent on behalf of 229, 19 percent, of SSB customers.

SSB continues to work cooperatively with the CRPs for the blind in Minnesota to improve service delivery, especially relative to adjustment to blindness services. CRPs are the major provider of these services and ATB is arguably the most critical service for a blind person to receive. SSB and the SRC-B are committed to assuring that customers are making an informed choice when choosing the CRP they will attend for ATB. Actions that SSB is taking to work with CRPs to improve their services are outlined in the next section.

Current SSB/SRC-B Goals and Activities

Informed Choice

To address the issue of customer choice in the selection of their ATB provider, SSB and the SRC-B developed goal and priority #5: Insure every SSB customer has the information needed to make an informed choice in selecting ATB providers.

The customer is given information about the providers that are available and strongly encouraged to take a tour of each CRP. SSB counselors complete the "Choosing ATB Training" form with each customer who is considering ATB. Each customer answers the question, "I was given the opportunity to make an informed choice in the selection of my ATB provider" with a yes or no response. The measure for this goal is that 100 percent of SSB customers attending ATB half-time or more will indicate that they were given the opportunity to choose their provider. Customers also state why they selected that provider. The information is compiled and reported to the SRC-B on a semi-annual basis.

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Customer Satisfaction with Vendor Services

SSB realized it did not have (nor did the CRPs and other vendors) a standard methodology in place for assessing and continually improving delivery of this service or a system for specifically assessing customer satisfaction with ATB services. In 2006, SSB and the SRC-B's Vendor Outcomes and Measures Committee developed and implemented a CSS for SSB customers who have completed ATB training. Each customer is surveyed by a DEED surveyor six months after completion of ATB training or at time of case file closure, whichever comes first. Each month an estimated ten to 15 customers are contacted to complete the telephone survey of 18 questions. Those questions are:

- Were you satisfied with the quality of the training you received?
- Were you satisfied with what you learned from the training you received?
- Were you treated with respect during the training?
- Were you challenged to develop your skills in the alternative techniques of blindness?
- Were you satisfied that (the trainer) challenged you to develop skills in the alternative techniques of blindness?
- As a result of this training, I am able to travel safely around my community (able to/not able to).
- As a result of this training, I am able to access, use and maintain a computer or personal note taker (able to/not able to).
- As a result of this training, I am able to take care of my personal needs like grooming, cooking, laundry, etc. (able to/not able to).
- As a result of this training, I am able to read and write Braille (able to/not able to).
- As a result of this alternative technique training, I have the same self-confidence as my sighted peers in doing everyday activities (complete self-confidence/no self-confidence).
- As a result of this training, I am satisfied that I met my personal goals (completely satisfied/completely dissatisfied).
- Would you recommend this training to others?
- Were you satisfied that (name of the trainer) was prepared?
- Were you satisfied that (name of the trainer) understood your training needs and questions?

- Were you satisfied that (name of the trainer) showed patience with your individual needs?
- Were you satisfied that (name of the trainer) was knowledgeable about the subject?
- Were you satisfied that (name of the trainer) was on time for the training?
- Overall, were you satisfied that (name of the trainer) was a good teacher?

When sufficient data is gathered, it will be linked back to service providers for continuous improvement purposes. The data also will be formatted and posted externally for customer review when selecting a service provider to meet their rehabilitation needs. The results will also be reported to the SRC-B.

Improving Vendor Skills and Quality Services

SSB will continue to require individual vendors who provide training to SSB customers on access and assistive technology to pass a test, developed by SSB staff, on the software programs they wish to teach in order to be on the list of approved vendors. In addition, each individual vendor and CRP trainer must take and pass an adult learning course, which was developed for SSB by Century College. That course provides training on learning styles, teaching methods, multiple intelligences, and how to write individualized training plans and learning objectives.

Improving Staff Knowledge and Feedback

A second agency goal is relevant to this topic. As noted earlier, SSB continues to meet its goal and priority #6: 100 percent of VR staff members new to SSB receive *Introduction to Blindness - Phase 1 and/or Phase 2* training on the essential aspects of blindness and visual impairment. Phase 2 is four weeks of experiential adjustment to blindness training under sleep shades at two CRPs that is required for all direct service staff. Learning the alternative blindness techniques that SSB customers need to be successful in their homes, communities, and at work improves the counselor's ability to provide appropriate and responsive services. All staff attending the training report on their experiences and complete a questionnaire upon completion of the training. The questionnaire includes the opportunity for the staff person to provide information to the CRP on ways to improve the training. That information is shared with the CRP and with the SRC-B.

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All of these actions are intended to improve communications and relationships with all CRPs and individual vendors and improve the quality of services provided to SSB customers.

2. WIA Title I and Wagner-Peyser Act: Economic and Labor Market Analysis (§112(b)(4)): As a foundation for this strategic plan and to inform the strategic investments and strategies that flow from this Plan, provide a detailed analysis of the State's economy, the labor pool, and the labor market context. Elements of the analysis should include the following:

After being hard-hit by the recessions of the 1980s, Minnesota's economy rebounded strongly during the 1990s, outperforming the national economy for most of the decade. Minnesota increased its payroll employment by 26 percent during the 1990s while the nation's employment numbers increased 20 percent. The State's labor force swelled 18 percent during the decade compared to the 13 percent increase nationwide. Unemployment in the State dropped below three percent for two years (1998 and 1999) and labor shortages developed in many occupations as job growth outpaced labor force growth.

The State's strong job growth and tight job market during the late 1990s pushed per capita income in Minnesota up sharply during the second half of the decade. Minnesota's per capita ranking jumped from 16th in 1990 to 10th in 1999, increasing from two to seven percent above national per capita income.

Minnesota's robust economic expansion during the 1990s was fueled by job growth in the manufacturing, financial activities, and construction sectors that was significantly above that of corresponding national industry sectors. Minnesota's economy also captured its fair share of information technology jobs and the high-wage professional jobs generated in the professional, scientific, and technical services sectors.

During the 1990s, the mix of occupations in Minnesota shifted more rapidly than the national mix into managerial and professional specialty occupations. In 2000, 23.4 percent of Minnesota jobs were in managerial and professional specialty occupations while 15.6 percent were in service occupations. Managerial and professional specialty occupations accounted for 21.9 percent of jobs

nationally in 2000, while service jobs made up 21.5 percent of all jobs nationwide. The above-average job growth combined with the shift towards higher paying jobs explains why Minnesota's per capita income climbed during the 1990s.

The arrival of the 2001 recession and the economic aftermath of the September 2001 terrorist attacks ended Minnesota's 19-year run of job growth. Payroll employment in Minnesota and nationwide peaked in the first quarter of 2001. Job cutbacks in manufacturing accounted for the bulk of employment loss in the State over the 2001-2003 time period. Other sectors with significant jobs loss over the last three years were transportation, information, and professional and business services sectors. Minnesota's high-tech expansion was not as big as the boom in other states such as Colorado, California, and Massachusetts, so the crash in the State's high-tech industries was not as steep as in other parts of the country.

Job losses bottomed out in May 2003 nationally and November 2003 in Minnesota. The State's peak-to-trough decline was roughly the same as the national drop, 2.0 and 2.1 percent, but the employment rebound in Minnesota was initially slightly slower than nationally. Only in 2006 did Minnesota's employment growth rate exceed that of the nation. As of December 2006, over-the-year employment growth in Minnesota stood at 2.0 percent compared to 1.4 percent nationally.

(a.) What is the current makeup of the State's economic base by industry?)

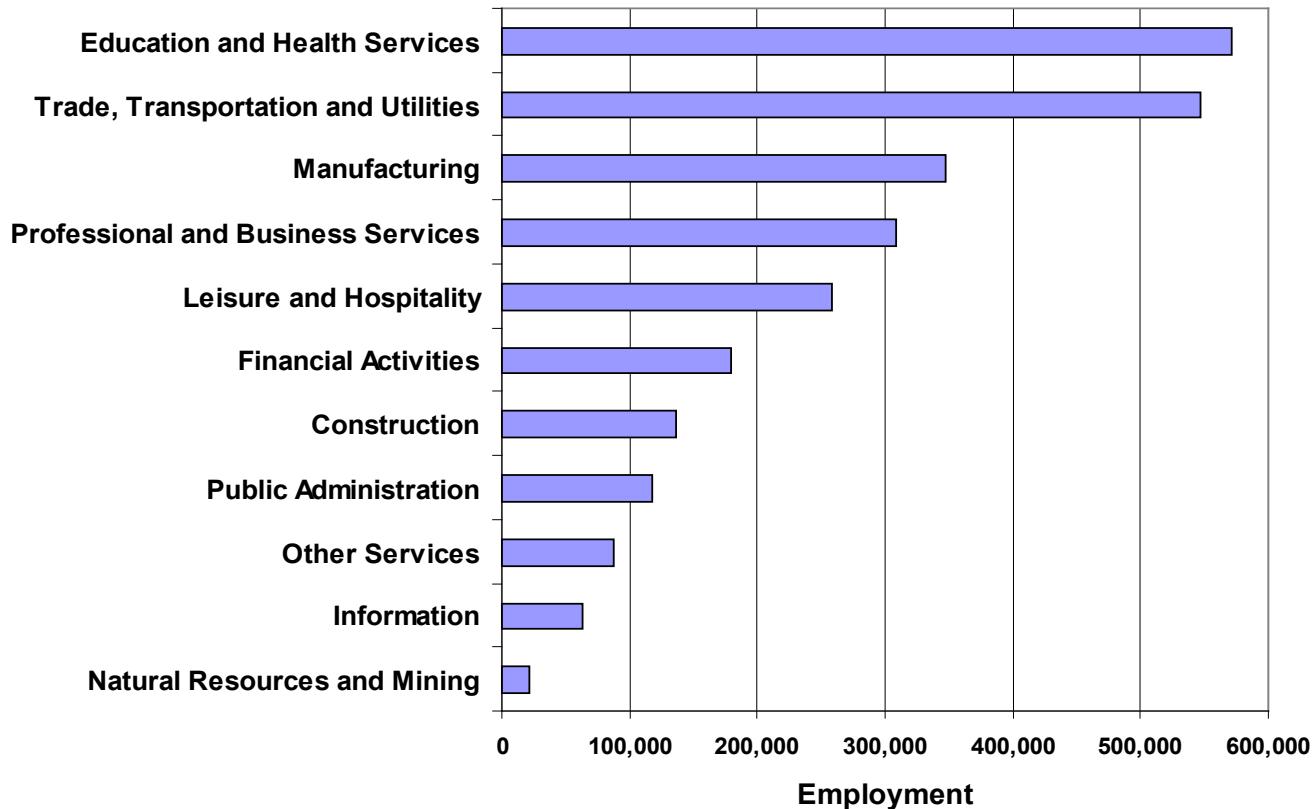
Industry Mix

As of 2005, Minnesota was home to 167,159 firms, with a total employment level of 2,639,492 jobs (DEED *Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages*). Some of the largest sectors of employment include trade (wholesale and retail), transportation and utilities, healthcare and social assistance, manufacturing, and professional and business services (see Chart D.7).

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Chart D.7 - Employment in Minnesota by Industry, 2005



Source: DEED, *Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages*

Differences between State or regional industry mixes and a typical (national average) industry mix can be summarized by calculating the region's share of the national employment in each industry. (Location coefficients are ratios comparing State or regional industry activity to the average (nationwide) industry mix. Location coefficients used here are defined $L_{qind} = (employment - industry, local)/(employment - total, local)/(employment - industry, U.S.)/(employment - total, U.S.)$. Overall, the State represents 2.1 percent

of the nation's private sector employment. A sorting of industry statistics reveals 22 "distinguishing industries" in which the State has more than its share of the nation's employment. Some of the largest are clustered in the finance and insurance, transportation, and manufacturing sectors (see Table D.24). These areas of specialization distinguish the State economy. They are influential in shaping the job market and workforce talent needs.

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Table D.24 - Distinguishing Industries: Industries in which Minnesota has an Above-Average Share of National Employment

Industries	Employment 2005	Percent Employment Change 2003-05	Average Weekly Wage 2005
Printing and Related Support Activities	32,102	4.2%	\$844
Computer and Electronic Product Manufacturing	54,287	1.6%	\$1,267
Air Transportation	19,651	NA	\$1,224
Animal Production	7,868	5.7%	\$480
Management of Companies and Enterprises	62,565	5.2%	\$1,763
Miscellaneous Manufacturing	21,539	10.6%	\$1,013
Electronic Markets and Agents/Brokers	23,125	2.0%	\$1,509
Wood Product Manufacturing	17,184	2.7%	\$876
Transit and Ground Passenger Transportation	11,801	3.6%	\$357
Nursing and Residential Care Facilities	86,688	3.7%	\$403
Machinery Manufacturing	34,417	-0.7%	\$1,019
Food Manufacturing	43,337	-6.0%	\$713
Fabricated Metal Product Manufacturing	42,572	5.0%	\$889
Publishing Industries	25,077	1.9%	\$1,107
Gasoline Stations	23,897	-7.3%	\$297
Social Assistance	55,626	13.5%	\$381
Membership Organizations and Associations	34,249	-1.4%	\$405
Insurance Carriers and Related Activities	55,249	-1.6%	\$1,340
Financial Investment and Related Activity	20,465	3.5%	\$2,238
Paper Manufacturing	12,099	-8.0%	\$995
Mining (except Oil and Gas)	5,093	-0.3%	\$1,170
Non-store Retailers	10,177	-2.7%	\$777
Total, All Industries	2,269,331	2.8%	\$788

Source: DEED, *Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages*

Are These Distinguishing Industries Good to Have?

A few commonly used yardsticks are available including average industry wages and recent industry growth. In Minnesota, 14 of the distinguishing industries appear to have above-average wages. Some industries such as mining and animal production make up a very small part of total State employment but are important industries at a regional level.



Table D. 25 - Distinguishing Industries by Region (Planning) of the State

Central	Northeast	Northwest	Southeast	Southwest	Twin Cities
Electrical Equipment & Appliance Manufacturing	Mining	Transportation Equipment Manufacturing	Leather & Allied Prod Manufacturing	Animal Production	Air Transportation
Animal Production	Forestry & Logging	Wood Product Manufacturing	Nonmetallic Mineral Product Manufacturing	Electrical Equipment & Appliance Manufacturing	Management of Companies & Enterprises
Wood Products Manufacturing	Paper Manufacturing	Crop Production	Ambulatory Healthcare	Food Manufacturing	Printing & Related
Nonmetallic Mineral Product Manufacturing	Accommodation	Accommodation	Food Manufacturing	Printing & Related Support Activities	Computer & Electronic Product Manufacturing
Paper Manufacturing	Utilities	Gasoline Stations	Animal Production	Truck Transportation	Financial Investment & Related
Heavy & Civil Engineering Construction	Wood Product Manufacturing	Heavy & Civil Engineering Construction	Wood Products Manufacturing	Merchant Wholesalers, Nondurable Goods	Miscellaneous Manufacturing
Crop Production	Hospitals	Animal Production	Computer & Electronic Manufacturing	Primary Metal Manufacturing	Insurance Carriers
Utilities	Broadcasting (except Internet)	Nursing & Residential Care Facilities	Hospitals	Gasoline Stations	Electronic Markets & Agents/Brokers
Food Manufacturing	Gasoline Stations	Building Material & Garden Supply Stores	Transit & Ground Passenger Transport	Heavy & Civil Engineering Construction	ISPs, Search Portals, & Data Processing
Gasoline Stations	Nursing & Residential Care Facilities	Motor Vehicle & Parts Dealers	Nursing & Residential Care Facilities	Nursing & Residential Care Facilities	Machinery Manufacturing
Non-store Retailers	Nonmetallic Mineral Manufacturing	Food & Beverage Stores	Accommodation	Machinery Manufacturing	Publishing Industries
Truck Transportation	Health & Personal Care Stores	Food Manufacturing	Educational Services	Transportation Equipment Manufacturing	Performing Arts & Spectator Sports
Fabricated Metal Products Manufacturing	Membership Organizations/Associations	Membership Organizations/Associations	Transportation Equipment Manufacturing	Publishing Industries	Fabricated Metal Products Manufacturing
Motor Vehicle & Parts Dealers	Building Material & Garden Supply Stores	Utilities	Fabricated Metal Product Manufacturing	Nonmetallic Mineral Product Manufacturing	Social Assistance
Building Material & Garden Supply Stores	General Merchandise Stores	Construction of Buildings	Gasoline Stations	Food & Beverage Stores	Transit & Ground Passenger Transport

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Table D. 25 (continued) - Distinguishing Industries by Region (Planning) of the State

Central	Northeast	Northwest	Southeast	Southwest	Twin Cities
Nursing & Residential Care Facilities	Heavy & Civil Engineering Construction	Truck Transportation	Food & Beverage Stores	Transit & Ground Passenger Transport	Non-store Retailers
Plastics & Rubber Products Manufacturing	Food Services & Drinking Places	Telecommunications	Building Material & Garden Supply Stores	Membership Organizations & Associations	Personal & Laundry Services
Transit & Ground Passenger Transport	Ambulatory Healthcare Services	Merchant Wholesalers, Nondurable Goods		Plastics & Rubber Products Manufacturing	Merchant Wholesalers, Durable Goods
Food & Beverage Stores	Motor Vehicle & Parts Dealers	Health & Personal Care Stores		Wood Product Manufacturing	Membership Organizations & Associations
Transportation Equipment Manufacturing		General Merchandise Stores		Telecommunications	
Specialty Trade Contractors		Food Services & Drinking Establishments		Social Assistance	
Furniture & Home Furnishings Stores		Fabricated Metal Product Manufacturing			

Source: DEED and U.S. BLS *Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages*

As for growth, nine of the 22 distinguishing industries listed in Table D.24 have been expanding at an above-average rate and four have exhibited some growth, providing opportunities for workers to advance into new positions and for new workers to enter the workforce. Other industries have less certain futures. The manufacturing sector has been hardest hit by slowing economic growth. Until recently, many manufacturers were either downsizing or cutting back on hiring. The Minnesota manufacturing industry has shed 13.9 percent of its employment (about 48,200 jobs) between 2nd quarter 2000 and 2nd quarter 2006.

At the regional level, the mix of distinguishing industries differs substantially. Table D.25 summarizes the major distinguishing industries for each of Minnesota's six planning regions. Some of these distinguishing industries are among those identified at the State level while others are highly specific to a given region.

(b.) What industries and occupations are projected to grow and/or decline in the short term and over the next decade?

Growing Industries

Between 2nd quarter 2004 and 2nd quarter 2006, private sector employment in the State grew 2.5 percent. Those industries adding jobs were distributed across several different sectors (see Table D.26). The leading growth industries included some in health, professional and technical services, finance, retail trade, construction, and manufacturing.

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Table D.26 - Minnesota Industries (Private Sector) with the Greatest Recent Growth

Industries	Employment Q2 2006	Employment Change Q2 2004-06	Percent Employment Change Q2 2004-06	Average Weekly Wage Q2 2006
Ambulatory Health Care Services	108,164	8,467	7.8%	\$1,046
Administrative and Support Services	117,293	8,273	7.1%	\$521
Professional and Technical Services	119,147	7,554	6.3%	\$1,179
Social Assistance	55,025	7,335	13.3%	\$396
Educational Services	209,968	6,325	3.0%	\$785
Management of Companies and Enterprises	63,454	3,176	5.0%	\$1,782
Hospitals	106,073	2,864	2.7%	\$880
General Merchandise Stores	57,861	2,624	4.5%	\$358
Merchant Wholesalers, Durable Goods	63,345	2,516	4.0%	\$1,094
Nursing and Residential Care Facilities	91,444	2,286	2.5%	\$420
Fabricated Metal Product Manufacturing	41,348	2,282	5.5%	\$898
Miscellaneous Manufacturing	20,554	2,209	10.7%	\$995
Electronic Markets and Agents/Brokers	22,828	1,826	8.0%	\$1,437
Truck Transportation	22,739	1,584	7.0%	\$764
Clothing and Clothing Accessories Stores	20,753	1,269	6.1%	\$307
Printing and Related Support Activities	30,469	1,255	4.1%	\$814
Health and Personal Care Stores	14,464	1,151	8.0%	\$568
Computer and Electronic Product Mfg	53,545	1,137	2.1%	\$1,381
Food and Beverage Stores	53,007	858	1.6%	\$361
Construction of Buildings	30,077	839	2.8%	\$947
Real Estate	27,410	818	3.0%	\$905
Total, All Industries	2,695,025	65,535	2.5%	\$789

Source: DEED, *Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages*

Declining Industries

Several industries have downsized due to changing demands of the market, increased automation, industry consolidation, or other restructuring, business closure, or

relocation out of the State. The information management, manufacturing, and retail industries have been particularly hard-hit (see Table D.27). More recent dislocations (since 2nd quarter 2006) are not reflected in these statistics.

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Table D.27 - Minnesota Industries (Private Sector) with the Greatest Declines

Industry	Employment Q2 2006	Employment Change Q2, 2004-06	Percent Employment Change Q2 2004-06	Average Weekly Wage Q2 2006
Telecommunications	13,492	-1,574	-10.4%	\$1,207
Food Manufacturing	41,828	-1,524	-3.5%	\$694
Miscellaneous Store Retailers	18,769	-1,468	-7.3%	\$363
Motor Vehicle and Parts Dealers	34,705	-1,221	-3.4%	\$708
Gasoline Stations	23,463	-1,211	-4.9%	\$301
Publishing Industries	24,924	-1,131	-4.3%	\$1,101
Amusement, Gambling & Recreation	36,803	-1,107	-2.9%	\$330
ISPs, Search Portals, & Data Processing	8,569	-1,048	-10.9%	\$1,254
Rental and Leasing Services	9,602	-907	-8.6%	\$603
Repair and Maintenance	21,684	-838	-3.7%	\$644
Plastics & Rubber Products Manufacturing	15,884	-580	-3.5%	\$819
Heavy & Civil Engineering Construction	23,654	-471	-2.0%	\$997
Paper Manufacturing	11,959	-420	-3.4%	\$1,041
Building Material & Garden Supply Stores	28,725	-360	-1.2%	\$517
Mining (except Oil and Gas)	4,960	-345	-6.5%	\$1,316
Motion Picture & Sound Recording	4,824	-298	-5.8%	\$352
Wood Product Manufacturing	16,679	-271	-1.6%	\$819
Broadcasting (except Internet)	5,539	-239	-4.1%	\$885
Couriers and Messengers	10,389	-142	-1.3%	\$629
Leather and Allied Product Manufacturing	1,248	-101	-7.5%	\$866
Total, All Industries	2,695,025	65,535	2.5%	\$789

Source: DEED, *Quarterly Census of Covered Employment and Wages*

(c.) In what industries and occupations is there a demand for skilled workers and available jobs, both today and projected over the next decade? In what numbers?

Workforce shortages beginning in the 1990s have raised concerns about finding qualified workers to fill current and future jobs, especially in high-demand fields such as healthcare. The *Minnesota Job Vacancy Survey* serves as a barometer in identifying occupations in the highest-demand. Labor market conditions have changed dramatically since the first survey in 4th quarter 2000. Overall, Minnesota job vacancies have collapsed from 129,000 in the 4th quarter of 2000 to 64,000 in the 2nd quarter of 2006. Occupations in-demand have fluctuated during this time.

Of particular interest are “skilled” occupations, occupations that typically require training beyond high school and generally pay higher than average wages. In Minnesota, there is strong demand for skilled workers in the healthcare and personal service-related occupations (see Table D.28). Pockets of demand are also present in the computer and mathematical (software engineers and computer programmers); business and financial operations (loan officers and financial analysts); production (welders and computer-controlled machine tool operators); and installation, maintenance, and repair (auto body repairers, diesel engine mechanics, and HVAC mechanics and installers) occupations.

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Table D.28 - Top Occupations in Minnesota with the Most Job Vacancies by Post-Secondary Educational Requirement (4th Quarter 2005 and 2nd Quarter 2006 Average)

Occupational Group	Average Number of Vacancies	Average Job Vacancy Rate	Percentage of Vacancies Requiring Post-Secondary Education
Registered Nurses	2,159	4.4%	100%
Nursing Aides, Orderlies, and Attendants	1,253	4.1%	70%
Licensed Practical and Licensed Vocational Nurses	758	4.1%	99%
Hairdressers, Hairstylists, and Cosmetologists	593	7.1%	100%
Computer Software Engineers, Applications	530	3.1%	99%
Welders, Cutters, Solderers, and Brazers	362	3.9%	60%
Automotive Service Technicians and Mechanics	341	3.1%	75%
Medical and Clinical Laboratory Technicians	321	9.6%	90%
Management Analysts	319	3.6%	100%
Network Systems and Data Communications Analysts	317	7.1%	98%
Computer Systems Analysts	313	3.5%	99%
Child Care Workers	297	6.7%	41%
Computer and Information Systems Managers	262	3.1%	100%
Industrial Engineers	237	4.6%	100%
Machinists	230	3.1%	81%
Sales Managers	219	3.0%	94%
Personal Financial Advisors	207	14.8%	86%
Financial Analysts	206	4.3%	100%
Electrical and Electronic Engineering Technicians	190	5.0%	87%
Training and Development Specialists	183	4.2%	59%
Physical Therapists	176	5.1%	99%
Chief Executives	176	3.9%	100%
Computer-Controlled Machine Tool Operators, Metal and Plastic	174	5.4%	93%
Bus and Truck Mechanics and Diesel Engine Specialists	172	2.9%	96%
All Occupations	62,596	2.5%	41%

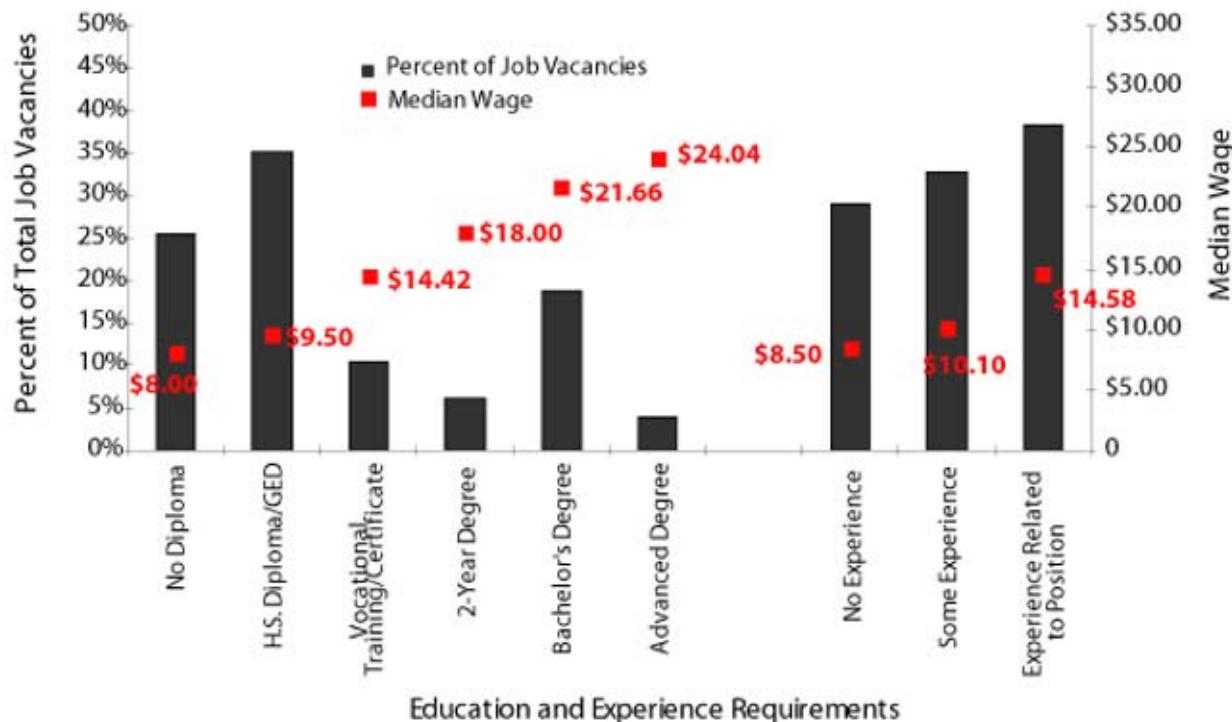
Source: DEED, *Minnesota Job Vacancy Survey, 4th Quarter 2005 and 2nd Quarter 2006*

While job seekers in some parts of the State might have little trouble finding and filling an entry-level job, finding a job that pays a higher-than-average wage might be more difficult. Of the 64,000 job openings identified by the latest *Minnesota Job Vacancy Survey*, about half pay less than \$10.00 per hour. Wage offers increase with higher levels of education. Vacancies requiring a two-year or Bachelor's degree have median wage offers of \$18.00 and \$21.66 respectively (see Chart D.8).

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Chart D.8 - Minnesota Job Vacancies by Education and Experience Requirement (2nd Quarter 2006)



Source: DEED, *Minnesota Job Vacancy Survey, 2nd Quarter 2006*

Coupled with occupations in-demand are skill and education requirements necessary in those occupations. Table D.29 below lists a set of “units of analysis” that represents a proxy for skills in-demand. The units of analysis are sets of distinct academic programs that prepare students for one or more occupations. Researchers with MnSCU compared existing occupational demand information from DEED to the output of graduates in

various programs to deliver a list of units of analysis where there are fewer graduates than current or projected future job openings. It should be noted that the units of analysis outlined in the Table D.29 are a rough estimate of areas that might face shortages. The total output of graduates from all Minnesota universities is not taken into account. Graduates from other states are also not included in the analysis.

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Table D.29 - Minnesota Units of Analysis Facing Current or Future Workforce Shortages

Current Units of Analysis (2003/2004)	Projected Units of Analysis (2003/04-2005/06)
Behavioral Sciences	Food Svc., Mgmt., Waiter/Waitress, Bartending
Licensed Practical Nurse Training (LPN, Cert., Dipl., AAS)	Applied Horticulture/Horticultural Operations
Education, Other	Mental & Social Health Services & Allied Professions, Miscellaneous
Teacher Education & Professional Development, Specific Levels & Methods, Other	Insurance
Cosmetologist & Related Personal Grooming Services	Securities Services Admin./Management
Nursing - Registered Nurse	Receptionist
Psychology, Miscellaneous	Health Aides/Attendants/Orderlies
Economics	Customer Service Support/Call Center/Teleservice Operation
School, Child & Developmental Psychology	Computer Engineering Technologies/Technicians
Allied Health Diagnostic, Intervention, & Treatment Professions, Miscellaneous	Behavioral Sciences
Rehabilitation & Therapeutic Professions, including Alternative/Complementary	Library Science
Allied Health Diagnostic, Intervention, & Treatment Professions, Other	Teacher Assistant/Aides
Counseling Psychology	Sales, Merchandising & Marketing Operations
Veterinary Medicine (DVM)	System & Network Administration
Child Care Provider/Asst & Support Services	Medium/Heavy Vehicle & Truck Technology/Technician
Veterinary Biomedical & Clinical Sciences (Cert., MS, PhD.)	Protective Services, Other
Social Sciences, Miscellaneous	Medical Illustration & Informatics
Health Aides/Attendants/Orderlies	Security & Loss Prevention Services
Physician Assistant	Medical Insurance Coding Specialist/Coder
Mental & Social Health Services & Allied Professions, Miscellaneous	Medical Reception/Receptionist
Diesel Mechanics Technology/Technician	Computer Systems Analysis/Analyst
Health Professions & Related Clinical Sciences, Miscellaneous	Operations Management & Staff Supervision
Clinical/Medical Laboratory Technician/Assistant (Certified)	Real Estate
Industrial & Manufacturing Engineering	Allied Health Diagnostic, Intervention, & Treatment Professions, Other
Kindergarten/Preschool/Early Child Education & Teaching	Data Processing & Data Processing Technology/Technician

Source: Minnesota State Colleges and Universities (MnSCU)

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(d.) What jobs/occupations are most critical to the State's economy?

The recent pick-up in job growth is concentrated in the healthcare, professional, and business services; leisure and hospitality; and finance and insurance sectors. Over the next seven years, job growth is expected to run around 1.3 percent annually, creating a net annual gain of 37,000 jobs each year. Since the labor force is expected to increase by 1.1 percent annually, the unemployment rate is expected to gradually decline. Severe labor shortages as experienced during the late 1990s are not expected to return to Minnesota over the short term but the pool of unemployed workers will shrink and employers will start to have increasing difficulties finding qualified workers. Job growth over the next five years in Minnesota and nationally is not expected to be as strong as during the 1990s. Between 1993 and 2000, Minnesota's annual average increase in payroll jobs was 61,000.

The trend of job creation occurring primarily in the service side of Minnesota's economy will continue over the next decade. Nine out of ten new jobs are projected to be created in service-providing sectors even though service-providing jobs accounted for 81 percent of all employment in Minnesota in 2005. The health services and professional and business services sectors will grow the fastest while the education and health services sector will create the most new jobs. Professional and business services employment will be driven by rising employment in employment services, computer systems design and related services, and management of companies. Employment growth is also expected to be strong in services to buildings and dwellings; accounting, tax preparation, bookkeeping, and payroll services; and management, scientific, and technical consulting services industries.

There are now more educational and health services jobs (when State and local government educational and hospital employees are included) in Minnesota than total employment in the goods-producing sector (mining, construction, and manufacturing). The trend towards more educational and health service jobs is expected to continue as lifetime learning becomes more of a reality and the aging baby boomers drive up the demand for healthcare. Thirty one percent of net job creation over the next ten years is expected to occur in the educational and health

services sectors. More than half of the new educational and healthcare jobs are projected to be created by the hospital, college, physician offices, residential mental retardation, mental health and substance abuse facilities, and individual and family services industries.

Three other major sectors are projected to increase faster than overall job growth: leisure and hospitality, financial activities, and construction. Limited-service eating places and full-service restaurants are projected to create the most jobs in the leisure and hospitality sector. Depository credit institutions (banking) and insurance agencies are expected to add the highest numbers of jobs in finance. The top construction job-generator will be specialty trade contractors.

Manufacturing employment peaked in 2000, before stumbling for more than three years. Manufacturing employment will gradually rebound but likely will recover only a fraction of the roughly 50,000 jobs lost over the last few years. Nine of the State's 21 manufacturing subsectors are expected to add employment over the next few years while the other 12 subsectors are projected to shrink payroll numbers. Miscellaneous manufacturers and wood products manufacturers are projected to add the most employment. Job loss is projected to be the highest at machinery and electrical equipment and appliances manufacturing plants.

All major occupational groups are projected to add jobs over the next decade. Computer and mathematics, healthcare (support and practitioners), community and social service, and business and financial operations occupations are among the larger groups projected to grow faster than overall employment. Employment is projected to increase about as fast as overall employment in architecture and engineering, construction, legal, and protective service occupations. Education, management, transportation, and sales jobs are expected to grow at a rate slightly below overall job growth. Office and administrative support, agriculture-related, and production occupations are projected to grow at less than half the rate of overall job growth.

Approximately 14 percent of the 782 occupations that Minnesotans currently work in are expected to see declining job numbers over the next ten years. More than 80 percent of projected job growth is predicted to occur in

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the 377 occupations that are expected to grow faster than overall job growth. The remaining 405 occupations, those occupations projected to show no growth or slower than average growth, will account for the remaining 20 percent of employment growth.

The 50 largest occupations accounted for about 50 percent of all jobs in 2004 and are expected to account for roughly the same percent of projected employment growth. Three of the largest occupations are expected to decline in size: farmers and ranchers; stock clerks and order fillers; and secretaries (not including legal, medical, and executive secretaries). The top 50 fastest-growing occupations (with employment of more than 500 workers in 2004) combined for roughly ten percent of total employment in 2004. These fast-growing occupations are projected to account for about 27 percent of projected new jobs (see Table D.30).

As presented in Table D.30, projected employment growth can be viewed from two perspectives: percent change and numerical change. Some occupations, which start with a large number of workers in 2004, are projected to grow slower than overall employment growth but will add large numbers of workers by 2014. Other occupations, which have relatively small numbers of workers in 2004, are projected to grow rapidly over the next ten years but will add relatively few new jobs. The distinction between occupations with fast employment growth and occupations expected to add the most jobs is made obvious by comparing the 20 fastest-growing occupations (see Table D.30) to the 20 occupations that will add the most jobs (see Table D.31).

Table D.30 - Projected Fastest-Growing Minnesota Occupations (2004-2014)

Occupations	2004-2014 Percent Change	2004-2014 Numeric Change
Physician Assistants	53.7	631
Network Systems and Data Communications Analysts	52.8	2,546
Home Health Aides	51.7	11,548
Computer Software Engineers, Applications	47.4	7,593
Biomedical Engineers	45.3	233
Medical Assistants	42.3	2,809
Personal and Home Care Aides	42.1	10,306
Medical Scientists, Except Epidemiologists	42	672
Dental Hygienists	38.1	1,318
Database Administrators	37.7	1,082
Dental Assistants	37.6	1,935
Community and Social Service Specialists, Other	36.4	1,595
Diagnostic Medical Sonographers	35.4	289
Computer Software Engineers, Systems Software	35.3	2,202
Network and Computer Systems Administrators	35.3	2,143
Social and Human Service Assistants	32.7	5,247
Medical and Clinical Laboratory Technicians	32.3	1,115
Medical Records and Health Information Technicians	31.9	1,170
Computer Systems Analysts	31	2,794
Hazardous Materials Removal Workers	30.9	229
Total, All Occupations	12.8%	370,000

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Table D.31 - Projected Occupations Adding the Most Jobs in Minnesota (2004-2014)

Occupations	2004-2014 Percent Change	2004-2014 Numeric Change
Retail Salespersons	17.2	14,952
Registered Nurses	28	13,762
Combined Food Preparation and Serving Workers, Inc	25.4	13,217
Business Operations Specialists, All Other	27.9	12,084
Home Health Aides	51.7	11,548
Personal and Home Care Aides	42.1	10,306
Customer Service Representatives	21.2	8,302
Janitors and Cleaners, Except Maids and Housekeeping	17.4	7,624
Computer Software Engineers, Applications	47.4	7,593
Waiters and Waitresses	13.6	6,526
General and Operations Managers	16.4	5,576
Social and Human Service Assistants	32.7	5,247
Office Clerks, General	6.8	5,051
Accountants and Auditors	18.7	4,842
Truck Drivers, Heavy and Tractor-Trailer	13.5	4,612
Receptionists and Information Clerks	18.1	4,416
Nursing Aides, Orderlies, and Attendants	14.7	4,392
Sales Representatives, Wholesale and Manufacturing	11.2	3,505
Maids and Housekeeping Cleaners	13.2	3,455
Carpenters	11.4	3,403
Total, All Occupations	12.8%	370,000

Source: DEED, Minnesota Long-term Projections, 2006

Only four occupations, home health aides, social and human service assistants, personal and home care aides, and computer software engineers, make both lists. The fastest-growing occupations tend to be either healthcare or information technology occupations. Occupations adding the most jobs tend to be spread across more sectors than the fastest-growing occupations and had larger employment bases in 2004.

Job opportunities tend to be better in occupations that are growing, but such openings are only part of the future job openings picture. Opportunities in any occupation also depend on how many workers are leaving an occupation permanently and how many job seekers are competing for the openings. Roughly 89 percent of the jobs that are

projected for Minnesota in 2014 already exist in 2004 when looked at from the occupational side. There was an estimated 85,200 workers employed in the largest occupation, retail salespersons, in Minnesota in 2002. The number of retail salesperson jobs is projected to climb to 99,700 by 2014. The 14,950 new retail salesperson jobs expected to be created over the next ten years will represent only 15 percent of all retail salesperson jobs in 2014; the other 85 percent of employment in this occupation already exists.

Many of the 87,000 individuals working as retail salespersons in 2004 will not be working as retail salespersons in 2014. They will switch occupations, retire, or leave the labor force for other reasons. The need to replace

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workers who leave their jobs is an important aspect of future job openings. For most occupations, the number of job openings arising from the need to replace workers is projected to be higher than job openings from employment growth.

Even occupations that are expected to decline in numbers over the next ten years will have replacement openings. There will be fewer telephone operators employed in Minnesota in 2014 than in 2004, but some individuals new to telephone-operating work will be hired over the next ten years since job turnover among telephone operators will be higher than the job cutbacks.

Because of the importance of replacement needs, estimates of net replacement openings for each occupation over the next ten years are included in the 2004-2014 employment projections for Minnesota. Net replacement openings (entrants minus separations) are based on nationwide census data, which tracks the entrants and separations of an occupation by age cohorts. Net replacement openings underestimate the total number of job openings in an occupation, but it best represents the job openings available to new labor force entrants.

In addition to the 370,000 job openings projected to be created by job growth over the next ten years, 679,000 net replacement openings are projected. Occupations with high numbers of net replacement openings tend to be occupations with a large employment base in 2004 and high turnover rates (see Table D.32). About 78 percent of the occupations are projected to have more net replacement openings than openings from employment growth.

(e.) What are the skill needs for the available, critical and projected jobs?

According to the 2004 skills projection system, based on a ranking O*Net (occupational information network) skills-by-skills gap index, the top ten skills in terms of high demand in Minnesota, and therefore, high potential for a skills gap in the future, are:

- Reading Comprehension
- Active Listening
- Speaking
- Critical Thinking
- Writing

- Active Learning
- Coordination
- Instructing
- Monitoring
- Learning Strategies

See the [O*Net descriptors](#).

(f.) What is the current and projected demographics of the available labor pool (including the incumbent workforce) both now and over the next decade?

Minnesota's annual unemployment rate fell to 2.7 percent in 1998 with 75,000 unemployed workers. Labor shortages were prevalent in many occupations. As the economy slowed over the next few years, unemployment increased, climbing to 4.9 percent in 2003. The jobless recovery in 2002 and 2003 eased labor shortage problems for most occupations. The State's unemployment rate has been gradually improving since early 2004 when job growth accelerated for the first time in three years. Seasonally adjusted unemployment was 4.2 percent in December 2006 with 127,000 unemployed workers searching for jobs.

In the years prior to the most recent recession, job growth outstripped workforce growth, resulting in widespread workforce shortages and historically low unemployment rates under four percent. While available workers are relatively plentiful in the current economy, demographic shifts indicate that workforce shortages of some nature could be a reality with the onset of economic growth.

In 2000, the working age (15 to 64) population made up about 66 percent of Minnesota's population. The State demographer projected that this population would make up 68 percent of the population by 2010 before collapsing to 61 percent in 2030. These population trends have an obvious impact on the State's labor force. Workforce growth will slow dramatically as members of the "baby boom" generation, currently the largest share of the workforce, begin to retire. Chart D.9 figures show projected labor force changes between 2000 and 2030. Workers in the oldest cohorts (65+) grow by over 200 percent over the 30-year span while numbers of younger workers (16 to 24) grow only 18 percent.

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Table D.32 - Occupations with the Most Projected Replacement Openings in Minnesota (2004-14)

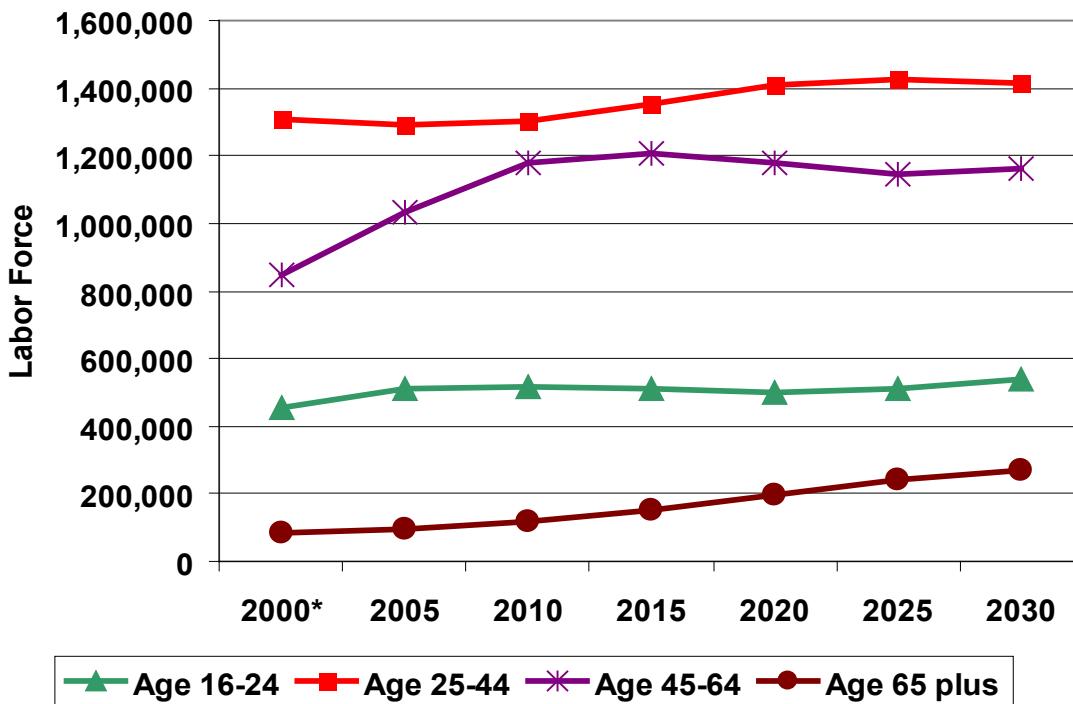
Occupations	Net Replacement Openings 2004-2014	Job Openings from Employment Growth 2004-2014
Retail Salespersons	31,610	14,952
Cashiers	30,640	956
Waiters and Waitresses	24,650	6,526
Combined Food Preparation and Serving Workers, Inc.	22,540	13,217
Office Clerks, General	16,490	5,051
Stock Clerks and Order Fillers	12,910	-2,424
Laborers & Freight, Stock & Material Movers, Hand	11,610	2,130
Registered Nurses	10,280	13,762
Janitors and Cleaners, Except Maids and Housekeeping	8,300	7,624
Sales Representatives, Wholesale and Manufacturing	8,190	3,505
Team Assemblers	7,790	2,406
Child Care Workers	7,740	1,676
Business Operations Specialists, All Other	7,360	12,084
Bookkeeping, Accounting, and Auditing Clerks	7,210	2,110
Secondary School Teachers, Except Special and Vocational	6,800	1,325
General and Operations Managers	6,410	5,576
Bartenders	6,280	757
Receptionists and Information Clerks	6,000	4,416
First-Line Supervisors/Managers of Office and Administration	5,830	2,032
Customer Service Representatives	5,810	8,302
Total, All Occupations	676,765	424,930

Source: DEED, Minnesota Long-term Projections, 2006

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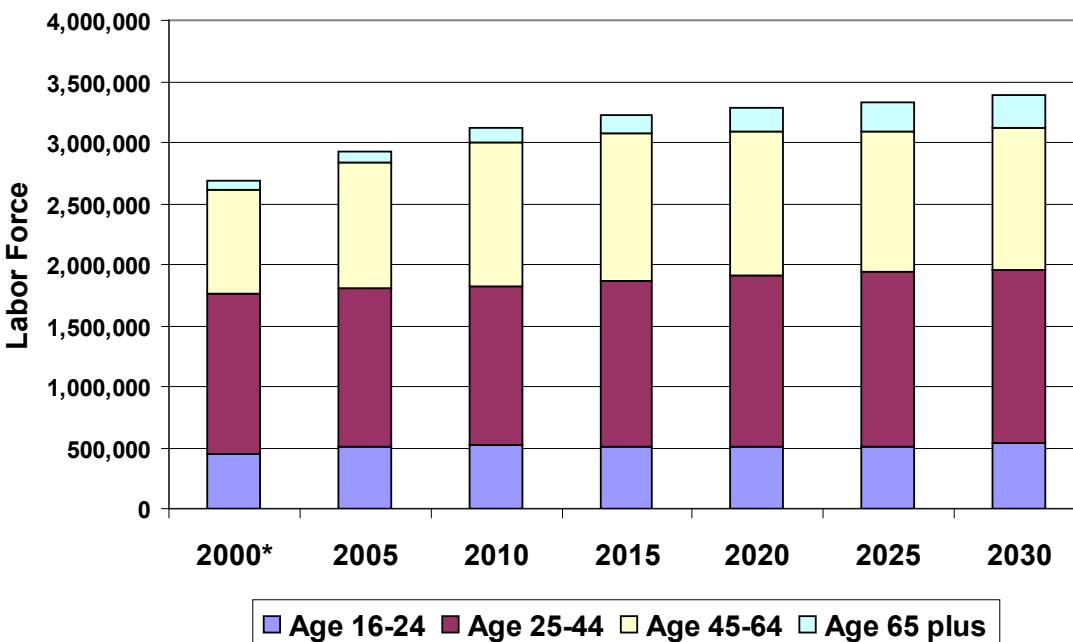


Chart D.9 - Labor Force Projections by Age Group (Minnesota, 2000-2030)



Source: Office of the State Demographer, *Population and Labor Force Projections to 2030*

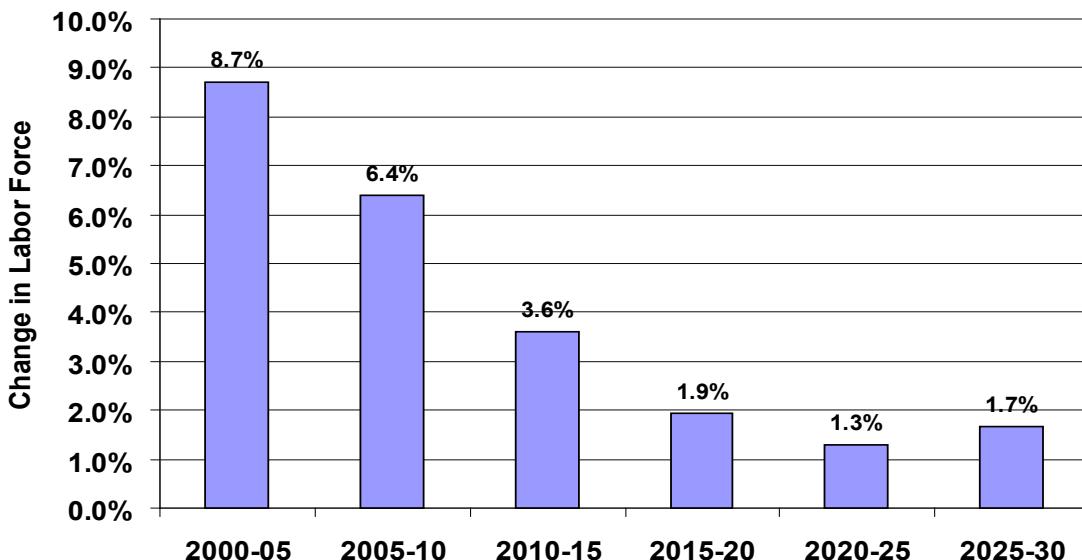
Chart D.10 - Projected Age Distribution of the Labor Force (Minnesota, 2000-2030)



Source: Office of the State Demographer, *Population and Labor Force Projections to 2030*



Chart D.11 - Projected Percent Increase in Labor Force (Minnesota, 2000-2030)



Source: Office of the State Demographer, *Population and Labor Force Projections to 2030*

While the labor force is expected to continue growing, the rate of increase will slow dramatically in coming years. Between 2000 and 2005, Statewide labor force numbers are expected to grow almost nine percent. However, this growth rate is projected to slow to 1.3 percent between 2020 and 2025 (see Chart D.11).

(g.) *Is the State experiencing any "in migration" or "out migration" of workers that impact the labor pool?*

While demographic trends point to a labor force that cannot keep up with employment growth, in-migration might hold the key to solving some shortages. Between 1995 and 2000, there were 366,000 persons who moved to Minnesota from other states and an additional 82,000 persons who moved in from other countries (DEED, *Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages*). At the same time, 347,000 Minnesotans moved out of the State for a net gain of about 101,000 residents.

Over this five-year period, the overall labor force grew, since persons moving into Minnesota from other states had high levels of workforce participation (80 percent) compared to persons who left the State (74 percent). Persons moving into Minnesota from other states resulted in a net gain to the labor force of 24,000 workers.

Persons moving to Minnesota from other countries added even more workers to the labor force, about 43,000 between 1995 and 2000. It should be noted that immigrants typically have lower levels of workforce participation, 66 percent for those entering the country after 1995. This is due (in part) to only one partner of a couple having a work permit. Besides lower levels of workforce participation, immigrants are more likely than the rest of the population to face issues that limit workplace productivity, such as English proficiency. As of 2000, about 2.1 percent of Minnesotans between the ages of 18 and 64 lived in linguistic isolation, living in a household where no one over the age of 14 speaks only English or speaks English very well. While this is a fairly small part of the population, it represents a portion of the workforce that is likely to be underutilized due to language constraints. It is more likely to be of concern in those parts of the State where immigrant populations make up an increasingly large part of the workforce.

(h.) *Based on an analysis of both the projected demand for skills and the available and projected labor pool, what skill gaps is the State experiencing today and what skill gaps are projected over the next decade?*

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It is difficult to discern the potential gap between workforce demand and supply. However, using labor force and employment projections, it is possible to get a rough idea of the magnitude of the mismatch. Between 2004 and 2014, Minnesota is projected to add 370,000 new jobs to the economy, a growth rate of about 15 percent over ten years. Between 2002 and 2012, the State is expected to add about 425,000 new workers, roughly matching the demand for new workers. However, given the expected rate of future labor force growth, Minnesota will not be able to sustain a job growth rate of 35,000 to 400,000 new positions every ten years. Between 2010 and 2020, the State is projected to add only 174,000 new workers to the population. It should be noted that the 400,000 projected new jobs do not count replacement openings, jobs left vacant due to employee retirement, or other forms of attrition. Therefore, the comparison of projected job growth and labor force growth is likely to underestimate the gap between worker supply and demand. This gap is subject to numerous other factors. Tighter labor conditions may have the effect of increased outsourcing to other states or nations, thus lessening actual employment growth. New technologies may further displace employment levels. Rapid economic growth relative to the rest of the country may increase in-migration, thus mitigating shortage conditions.

(i.) Based on an analysis of the economy and the labor market, what workforce development issues has the State identified?

DEED, its State agency partners, and the Governor's Workforce Development Council have identified the following challenges facing Minnesota's workforce development system:

- Increasing global economic competition
- Increasingly dynamic economy with high levels of job "churn"
- Aging population and workforce
- Growing immigrant populations with limited-English-proficiency
- Large and growing academic achievement gap between minority and Caucasian students in the K-12 system
- A growing need for incumbent worker training
- Shrinking public workforce development resources

To succeed in today's global economy, it has become increasingly evident that Minnesota must maintain its comparative advantage that its high-quality workforce provides. As the demands for technical skills and workforce preparedness grow, so must the State's ability to meet those demands with a trained and flexible labor force. While Minnesota remains a state with one of the highest educational attainment rates in the nation¹, evidence also suggests that an increasing share of its high school graduates require some remedial coursework in order to succeed in college.

Those that enter the workforce, whether directly from high school or after gaining some type of post-secondary education, find themselves in an increasingly dynamic environment, one that requires constant learning of newly emerging skills and frequent adoption of new technologies and techniques. It often also involves much more frequent job changing--a process that also demands flexibility and adaptability--than in the past. Over the past few years, during a typical month, approximately 50,000 people leave their current jobs and another 50,000 enter new ones. In other words, about 600,000 jobs in an economy with just under 3 million jobs in total change hands at some point during a typical year. And this does not include those employees that take new positions within their current organization. Considering the diversity of skills that different jobs require, this level of churn requires that successful employees quickly adjust to new demands and that growing businesses provide an environment conducive to employee development.

This dynamism will inevitably result in mismatches between those skills demanded by businesses and those possessed by the available supply of workers at any given time. Achieving success in our global economy not only requires proper preparation at the primary, secondary, and post-secondary educational levels, it also demands that Minnesota ensure that its incumbent workers have the ability to develop new skills and abilities as conditions evolve. The learning necessary for success in the workplace no longer ends with high school or college, but rather continues on throughout one's work life.

¹ According to the American Community Survey, in 2005 MN ranked 11th in percentage of adult population over age 25 with a college degree at 30.7 percent and 3rd in share of population with a high school diploma at 90.9 percent.

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Finally, global success demands that Minnesota takes full advantage of all available resources, including its rapidly growing immigrant population, especially those for whom language is a challenge, those with physical or other challenges, veterans, and the older population. Minnesota must also ensure that the achievement gap between the State's minorities and their white counterparts, a gap that has become one of the largest in the nation, begins to shrink. Demographic changes such as the slowing growth and aging of the State's population will soon begin to put pressures on its abilities to meet business demands for a qualified workforce. These changes are imminent as Minnesota's baby boom population begins to turn 62 next year, so it is imperative that the State ensures the full employability of all members of its workforce--both current and future--immediately.

(j.) What workforce development issues has the State prioritized as being most critical to its economic health and growth?

The State has identified four broad workforce development system goals to address economic health and growth challenges:

- Enhance the innovative capacity of Minnesota businesses to compete in the global economy.
- Help employers find and retain the skilled workers needed to grow their businesses.
- Provide workforce intelligence and training so Minnesota's workforce leads the world in talent and productivity.
- Align policies and practices across education, employment, and economic development agencies to support business innovation and provide demand-driven, outcome-based, and streamlined workforce development services to businesses, individuals, and communities.

Minnesota is considering, and in many instances is implementing, the following actions:

- Minnesota's State and local workforce development organizations recognize that they must work together to build a globally competitive and prepared workforce.
- Minnesota's workforce development system is undertaking efforts to provide more occupational English and other services targeted to its limited-English-proficient population.
- The Governor's World-Class Students Initiative seeks to close the racial achievement gap by focusing resources on at-risk students before they enter kindergarten and by extending time available for remediation.
- Additional world-class student initiatives include:
 - requiring each student to take at least one-year of post-secondary education while in high school
 - providing funding to create "3R" (rigor, relevance, and results) high schools
 - improving teacher professional development and linking student achievement to teacher compensation
 - requiring more rigorous science, technology, engineering, and math coursework
 - instituting new accountability standards for the P-12 (preschool through 12th grade) education system
- Minnesota will continue to invest in incumbent worker training.
- Minnesota's higher educational institutions must continue to provide flexible customized training that meets the needs of working adults and must continue to encourage the State's employers to make investments, occasionally with public support, in the skills of their workers.
- State and local organizations are increasingly collaborating to improve system services, eliminate duplication, and reduce service costs.



E. State and Local Governance

1. What is the organization, structure, and role/function of each State and local entity that will govern the activities of the Unified Plan?

In answering the above question, if your Unified Plan includes:

(b) WIA Title I and Wagner-Peyser Act and/or Veterans Programs:

(i) Organization of State agencies in relation to the Governor:

1. Provide an organizational chart that delineates the relationship to the Governor of the agencies involved in the public workforce investment system, including education and economic development and the required and optional One-Stop partner programs managed by each agency.

See the organizational chart in Chart E.1. Asterisks indicate services that are primarily delivered through the Minnesota WorkForce Center System (Minnesota's one-stop delivery system).

2. In a narrative, describe how the agencies involved in the public workforce investment system interrelate on workforce and economic development issues and the respective lines of authority.

The Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED) coordinates the public workforce investment system on behalf of the Governor and the State's economic development programs, strategies, and initiatives. In DEED's Workforce Development Division are the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth programs (Title I-B); the Wagner-Peyser (WIA Title III) programs; labor market information services (WIA Title III); State Services for the Blind programs (WIA Title IV); Unemployment Insurance program; and Vocational Rehabilitation program (WIA Title IV), as well as additional State-funded programs

delivered alongside the federally funded programs. DEED's leadership team includes both economic development and workforce development members, and the agency's strategic priorities focus on how workforce development initiatives support and advance the State's overall economic prosperity.

Commissioners of the four cabinet agencies in workforce development—DEED and the Minnesota Departments of Education (MDE), Human Services (DHS), and Labor and Industry (DLI)—are appointed by, and serve at the pleasure of, the Governor with the advice and consent of the Minnesota senate. The chancellor of the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities (MnSCU) system is accountable to MnSCU's board of trustees, whose members are appointed by the Governor with the advice and consent of the Minnesota senate.

Local workforce investment boards (LWIBs) hold four distinct roles within workforce service areas (WSAs):

1. LWIBs administer the delivery of WIA Title I-B programs, the State Dislocated Worker Program, and the Minnesota Youth Program.
2. LWIBs collaborate with State-administered programs such as Wagner-Peyser, Rehabilitation Services, and State Services for the Blind, to integrate programs and resources. LWIBs do not direct or manage State programs, but provide strategic direction through the local planning process.
3. LWIBs serve as a convener of regional leaders to facilitate regional planning and collaboration between workforce development, economic development, and education.
4. LWIBs are Minnesota Family Investment Program vendors for some counties.

(ii) State Workforce Investment Board:

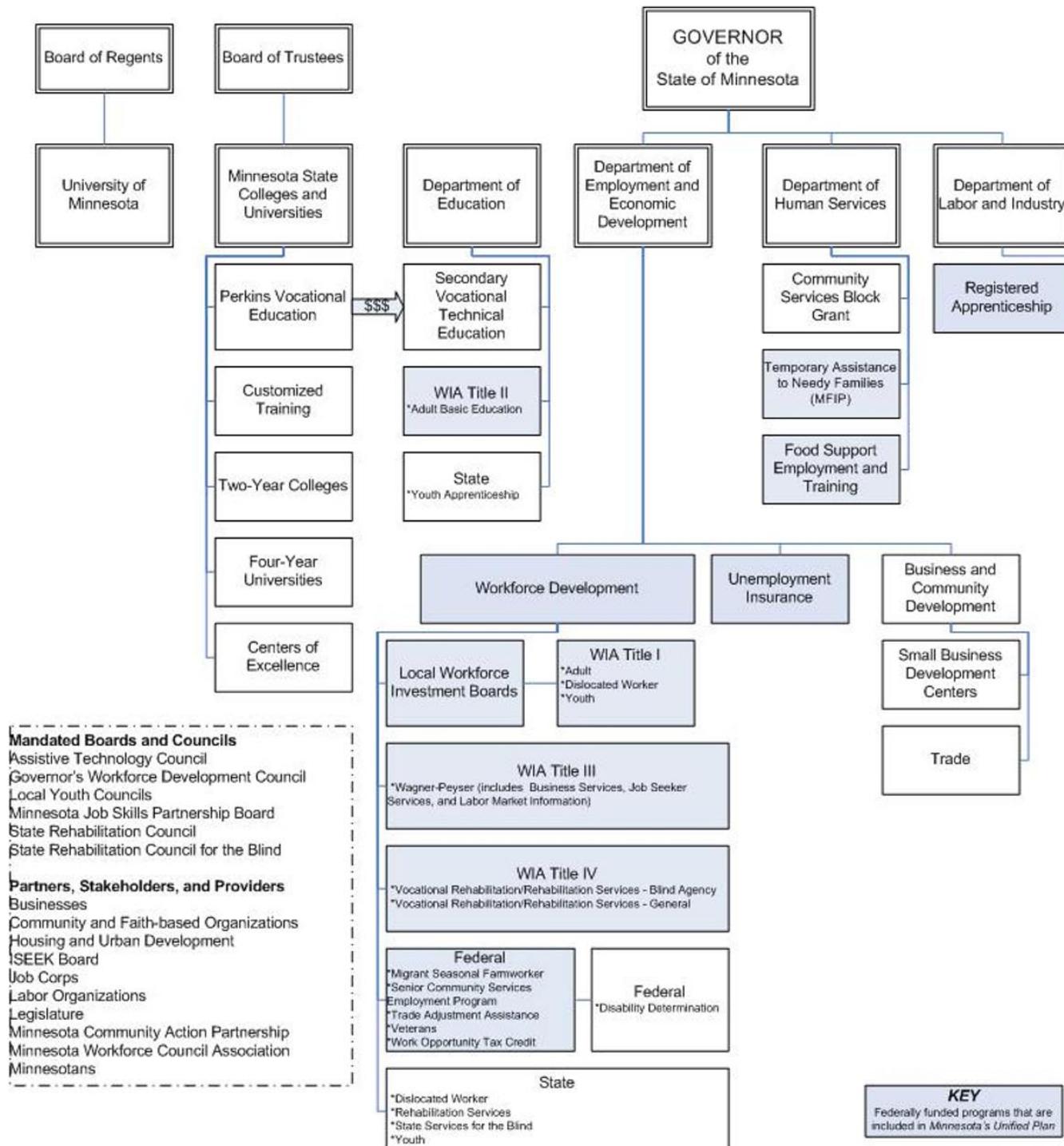
1. Describe the organization and structure of the State Board. (§111)

The Governor's Workforce Development Council (GWDC) functions as the State workforce investment board under the WIA of 1998 and is further defined by Minnesota statute regarding its composition and role. The GWDC plays an important role in bringing citizen involvement, engagement, and oversight to the State's

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Chart E.1 - Minnesota's Public Workforce Development System



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workforce development efforts and to providing strategic leadership for workforce development and local/regional leaders.

The GWDC defines system goals for all workforce programs, collects information on the specific needs of the State's economy and business community, proposes solutions to address workforce issues, serves as a forum to stimulate new partnerships, and has oversight responsibilities for the "coordinated human resources system in Minnesota," as stated in Minn. Stat. § 116L.665.

Much of the GWDC's work is accomplished through its committee structure to look at all facets of developing and achieving Minnesota's workforce investment goals and to create a *Policy Advisory* for the Governor. The GWDC may establish additional ad hoc committees and task forces to address emerging workforce development issues. The committees and their assignments for July 2006-June 2008 are as follows:

Table E.1 - GWDC Committees and Assignments

GWDC Committee	Assignments
Business and Community Connections	This committee is responsible for strengthening connections between workforce development and economic development through the GWDC. This includes making connections with State and local chambers of commerce, promoting sector-based initiatives, encouraging regional capital assessments, and/or convening local-level stakeholders to prioritize and respond to local requests as resources permit.
Diversity Action	This committee's charge is to research, identify, and recommend inclusive policies and practices that reduce barriers and provide terms and accommodations that will accelerate populations such as individuals with disabilities, new immigrants, seniors at or near post-retirement, and returning veterans, etc., into the workforce more quickly.
Education Action	This committee's charge is to identify barriers or gaps in education systems at all levels that prevent demand-driven, flexible educations and affordable, accessible higher education and to identify system alignment or investment opportunities that reduce barriers and increase entry and exit at multiple points in an individual's lifetime.
Executive	This committee provides leadership and direction to the GWDC and serves as the interim decision-making body in-between full council meetings. It sets the overarching agenda for the GWDC and its committees; and serves as the forum for discussion between the Governor's cabinet leaders and citizen leaders from the GWDC. The chair and vice-chair of the GWDC serve as chair and vice-chair of this committee.
Legislative Affairs/Ad Hoc	This committee will be the group that provides follow-up and advocacy to implement policy recommendations that emerge from GWDC. Ad hoc committees will be formed as topics or needs emerge from other committees, meet long enough to formulate appropriate action or response, and then reconvene as additional items require action.
Public Relations	The role of this committee is to elevate the profile of the GWDC to make it more visible at the national, State, and local levels. This includes developing the GWDC's brand and marketing strategy; pursuing the Governor's participation or facilitating listening sessions with legislators; working with other GWDC committees to disseminate reports, or gathering information on potential opportunities for exposure (funding and otherwise) at the national level.
Skill and Wage Advancement	This committee will examine and recommend ways to build the short-term skills training components of Minnesota's education and training infrastructure in order to increase advancement opportunities for more workers; fill employers' skill needs; and strengthen the connection between short-term skills-training programs and higher education.
Systems Excellence	This committee is a standing committee charged with creating the <i>WorkForce Center System Strategic Plan</i> every two years and reviewing and adopting Statewide performance measures for the WorkForce Center System.

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As the GWDC completes its biennial *Policy Advisory* and undertakes strategic planning in 2008, it will reassess the committee structure based on current issues facing Minnesota's economy and the workforce development system.

2. Include a description of the process by which State and Local Boards were created.

Minnesota elected to grandfather its existing GWDC as the State's workforce investment council; it was in existence prior to December 31, 1997, and was established pursuant to Title VII of the Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA). The GWDC is comprised of 31 members, four of whom are heads of these State agencies: DEED, DHS, MDE, and MnSCU. There are six individuals representing business and industry; six individuals representing labor organizations; four individuals representing community-based organizations; five individuals representing education; two individuals representing units of local government; and four elected officials, two from each house of the legislature.

Nominations for membership were evaluated by State agency officials with a view to selecting individuals who met the criteria outlined in WIA and who could help in the formulation of Minnesota's workforce development strategy. Recommendations on nominations were sent to the Governor's Office for final selection and appointment. GWDC members include State leaders of business and industry and the public sector, and they represent all areas of the State.

Local and State councils were grandfathered into existence since each met the guidelines as outlined in WIA. As new members were brought into the councils, they were required to meet the WIA position requirements for members outlined in WIA Section 117(2). These requirements include the need to have individuals on local councils who have decision-making authority in their organizations. In one case where a new geographic entity was created, a new LWIB was established using WIA guidelines. Its members were drawn from the two existing board memberships as well as individuals who met the general public meeting eligibility criteria.

3. Identify the organizations or entities represented on the State Board. If you are using an alternative entity which does not contain all the members required under section 111(b)(1), describe how each of the entities required under this section will be involved in planning and implementing the State's workforce investment system as envisioned in WIA. How is the alternative entity achieving the State's WIA goals? (§§111(a-c), 111(e), and 112(b)(1))

Organizations and entities represented on the GWDC include:

- Business and industry
- Community-based organizations
- DEED (Adult, Dislocated Worker, Rehabilitation Services, Senior Community Service Employment Program [SCSEP], State Services for the Blind, Unemployment Insurance, Veterans, Wagner-Peyser, and Youth programs)
- DHS (Food Support Employment and Training [FSET]) and Temporary Assistance to Needy Families [TANF])
- Local elected officials
- MDE (P-12 education programs and Adult Basic Education [ABE])
- MnSCU (two-year and four-year post-secondary education)
- Organized labor
- State-elected officials (two from each house of the legislature)

Although the GWDC includes members from each of the entities listed under WIA Section 111(b)(1), the GWDC does not have a business majority. Additional business members are engaged in GWDC work through the involvement of LWIB members in GWDC activities and committees. The GWDC engages other stakeholders in a similar fashion.

The GWDC's membership structure and ongoing engagement of key stakeholders enables it to maintain a strong focus on coordination and collaboration between economic development, education, and workforce development. The GWDC's additional education and

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labor representatives enhance its ability to solidify relationships among the key stakeholders. The GWDC fosters innovation, encourages the dissemination of best practices, and outlines the roles that business, education, and workforce development play in ensuring Minnesota has the workforce it needs to grow economically.

- 4. Describe the process your State used to identify your State Board members. How did you select Board members, including business representatives, who have optimum policy-making authority and who represent diverse regions of the State as required under WIA? Describe how the Board's membership enables you to achieve your vision described above. (20 CFR 661.200)*

GWDC members are selected by the Governor. State and local leadership, GWDC staff, and LWIB staff encourage potential candidates from specific sectors to apply for open positions on the GWDC. By encouraging specific individuals to apply, the GWDC supports the Statewide vision and goals outlined by the Governor and develops policy and budget recommendations to support that vision. State statute requires that half of the GWDC members who are appointed by the Governor be endorsed by LWIBs. This encourages adequate representation from greater Minnesota and creates a stronger connection between the GWDC and the LWIBs.

- 5. Describe how the Board carries out its functions as required in Section 111(d) and 20 CFR 661.205. Include functions the Board has assumed that are in addition to those required. Identify any functions required in Section 111(d) the Board does not perform and explain why.*

Development of the State Plan

The GWDC played a substantial role in developing the vision for *Minnesota's Unified Plan*. The GWDC's Systems Excellence Committee created a broad outline of the GWDC's vision for workforce development, and this vision was used to help inform the Governor's vision for workforce development in Minnesota. The GWDC reviews and approves the final version of *Minnesota's Unified Plan*.

WorkForce Center Strategic Plan Development and Continuous Improvement

The 2007 WorkForce Center System strategic plan, entitled *Re-Imagining Minnesota's Workforce Development System*, fulfills the GWDC's obligation to the State legislature and provides Governor Tim Pawlenty, his cabinet agencies, and local workforce development leaders with a vision for a sustainable and adaptable WorkForce Center service delivery system.

As required by the State legislature in 2002, the GWDC developed a vision and business plan that affirms that:

- Business is the primary customer of the WorkForce Center System. Workforce development services are provided to satisfy the needs of business customers and add value to job seekers who are the direct beneficiaries of a business-focused workforce development system.
- Services must be accessible (easy-to-use), widely available (no wrong door), and add value to the product (workforce services; and prepared and trained workers) for the customer (business).
- Publicly funded services should not duplicate that which is available in the for-profit and nonprofit market for customer segments adequately served by those providers not competing for the same public funds.

Carl D. Perkins Vocational and Applied Technology Education Act

The GWDC's Education Action Committee and its Perkins/Career and Technical Education Subcommittee provide input into Minnesota's *Carl D. Perkins State Plan*.

Development of Allocation Formulas

As permitted under WIA Sections 128(b)(3)(B) and 133(b)(3)(B) for the distribution of funds for adult employment and training activities and youth activities to local areas, the GWDC will be involved by providing a convening function and facilitation role in the planning and development of allocation formulas as necessary.



Development and Continuous Improvement of Comprehensive State Performance Measures

As required under WIA Section 136(b), the GWDC is currently involved in the discussion, planning, and development of a set of common measures for integrated performance information, including State-adjusted levels of performance, to assess the effectiveness of the workforce investment activities in the State.

Preparation of the Annual Report to the Secretary

The GWDC participates in the preparation, review, and approval of the annual report to the Secretary of Labor as described in WIA Section 136(d).

Statewide Employment Statistics System

The GWDC works closely with DEED's Labor Market Information (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 Grant

The GWDC plays an integral role in setting the vision and direction for incentive grant proposals. The GWDC convenes GWDC members, program partners, and key stakeholders to identify how incentive funds can be used to meet the demands of employers and job seekers.

- 6. How will the State Board ensure that the public (including people with disabilities) has access to Board meetings and information regarding State Board activities, including membership and meeting minutes? (20 CFR 661.207)*

The GWDC ensures that the public has access to meetings and information through its [website](#). The website includes notices of upcoming full-GWDC meetings, minutes and materials from past meetings, and information on each of the GWDC committees.

- 7. Identify the circumstances which constitute a conflict of interest for any State or Local Workforce Investment Board*

member or the entity that s/he represents, and any matter that would provide a financial benefit to that member or his or her immediate family. (§§111(f), 112(b)(13), and 117(g))

When an appointed member of the GWDC or an LWIB has a personal or private interest in a proposal or decision pending before the body of which the individual is a member, the individual must publicly disclose the fact to the body in an open meeting. Members should avoid even the appearance of a conflict of interest. Specifically, the member may not:

- Vote or participate in discussion on a matter under consideration by the body:
 - Regarding the provision of services by such member (or by an entity that such member represents).
 - That would provide direct financial benefit to such member or the immediate family of such member.
- Engage in any other activity determined to constitute a conflict of interest as specified in a local or State plan.
- Use, or attempt to use, the appointment to secure benefits, privileges, exemptions, or advantages for the member, members of the immediate family, or an organization with which the member is associated, which are different from those available to a member of their business classification, profession, or organization.

If a member has publicly disclosed a potential conflict of interest and it is not possible to assign the matter to another member who does not have a similar conflict, interested parties will be notified of the conflict, the matter will be documented in the minutes, and the member may continue with the assignment. If a member of the GWDC reasonably suspects that another member or members of the GWDC did not publicly disclose a potential conflict, the member will take the following actions for the purpose of removing doubt concerning a potential conflict of interest:

- Prepare a written statement describing the matter, action, or decision on which a conflict is perceived to exist; and outline the facts which give rise to the member's belief and the reason(s) thereof.

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- Submit the statement to the GWDC chairperson.

The GWDC chairperson will request staff assistance in determining if the issue can be reasonably resolved between parties or whether the conflict statement should be submitted to the chief local elected official of the WSA, in the case of a local issue, or to the commissioner of DEED, in the case of a GWDC issue, for an opinion and resolution. If the chief local elected official or the commissioner determines that a conflict of interest exists, the matter will be assigned to another member who does not have a conflict of interest. If it is not possible to assign the matter to a member who does not have a similar conflict of interest, interested parties will be notified of the conflict, the matter will be documented in the minutes, and the member may proceed with the assignment.

8. What resources does the State provide the Board to carry out its functions, i.e., staff, funding, etc.?

The GWDC develops a biennial budget based on federal funding. The GWDC is provided with staff support from the three partner cabinet agencies (DEED, DHS, and MDE); MnSCU; and the University of Minnesota. Each partner agency supports one or more of the GWDC committees. DEED provides additional professional and administrative support to the GWDC's work and also houses the GWDC's executive director, policy analyst, and administrative support person.

(iii) What is the structure/process for the State agencies and State Board to collaborate and communicate with each other and with the local workforce investment system (§112(b)(8)(A))?

An agreement between the GWDC and DEED designates DEED as the employer-of-record for the GWDC. The GWDC executive director and the supporting staff members are employees of DEED, although the employees report directly to the GWDC rather than DEED management. This arrangement creates more opportunities for collaboration since both organizations are housed in the same building and attend many management meetings together.

The Workforce Systems Coordination branch was created in November 2005 to support Statewide workforce partnerships and facilitate linkages between DEED workforce investment programs (WIA Title I-B), LWIBs, the GWDC, and other State agencies. This branch solicits input from these partners on planning and policy matters, information collection and reporting systems, WorkForce Center staff certification, and other workforce development system issues.

The GWDC and the State agencies have other mechanisms for communicating with LWIBs. At least half of the Governor's appointees to the GWDC must be nominated by the LWIBs. Many of the GWDC members are also members of LWIBs. The GWDC and the State agencies meet monthly with the staff of the LWIBs, which enhances communication. Regional administrators from DEED act as liaisons between the State agencies and the LWIBs and are always available to present information to or get feedback from LWIBs and/or LWIB subcommittees. The regional administrators work on aligning State initiatives with local and regional organizations in the arenas of economic and workforce development.

1. Describe the steps the State will take to improve operational collaboration of the workforce investment activities and other related activities and programs outlined in section 112(b)(8)(A), at both the State and local level (e.g., joint activities, memoranda of understanding, planned mergers, coordinated policies, etc.). How will the State Board and agencies eliminate any existing State-level barriers to coordination? (§§111(d)(2) and 112(b)(8)(A))

See response in question 2 below.

2. Describe the lines of communication established by the Governor to ensure open and effective sharing of information among the State agencies responsible for implementing the vision for the workforce system and between the State agencies and the State Workforce Investment Board.

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The 2003 creation of DEED consolidated the vast majority of State-level workforce investment activities into one State agency. Other than post-secondary education, only ABE, FSET, and TANF are major federal workforce development programs outside of DEED. An interagency agreement between DEED and DHS provides additional communication and coordination around TANF and FSET via shared staff. In 2006, a more formal strategic alliance between DEED and ABE took place around creating common skill assessment instruments and new referral protocols between the WorkForce Center System and local ABE providers.

Leaders from DEED, DHS, MDE, and MnSCU sit together on the GWDC and its executive committee. The GWDC and its committee structure provide a common venue for both agency leadership and staff to communicate workforce development issues. As an example, DEED, MDE, MnSCU, and the GWDC are collaborating on distributing the WIA Incentive Grant that Minnesota received in 2006.

One of DEED's key priorities is to enhance the agency's partnerships with MnSCU. DEED and MnSCU leadership collaborate in several venues, including the Minnesota Job Skills Partnership Board, the ISEEK career guidance tools, development of sector initiatives, and other common activities. At a regional level, DEED's regional administrators are building strong partnerships with their regional counterparts in the MnSCU system. One goal of this partnership is to align WorkForce Center services and MnSCU training programs with the needs of key industry sectors.

In February 2006, DEED, DHS, and the Minnesota State Council on Disability began implementing a four-year comprehensive employment opportunities grant from the federal Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services. With the grant, DEED and DHS are developing a comprehensive system of employment supports for individuals with disabilities. This project will support their ability to address both current and long-term employment needs of Minnesotans with disabilities and improve their relationship and understanding of a key workforce system partner.

At the local level, memoranda of understanding (MOUs) provide a structure for local workforce investment partnerships and service delivery in the Minnesota WorkForce Centers. Representatives of education, vocational rehabilitation, and public assistance agencies, and the public employment service (WIA Title III) serve on nearly all LWIBs. State law requires that a representative of the public employment service be on each LWIB. Most LWIBs have a WIA Title IV person on their board representing vocational rehabilitation.

DEED distributed local planning guidance to its 16 LWIBs in 2005. Prior to this, Minnesota's local areas submitted annual updates to their local plans that focused on a portion of the workforce investment system (WIA Title I-B, State Dislocated Worker, and the SCSEP. The local planning guidance asks LWIBs to describe an integrated service delivery system with a focus on demand-driven services, not programs. All local plans submitted in 2006 were required to use this new approach. DEED is continuing to update the requirements for 2007 local plans and in that process will begin moving toward regional plans based on regional economies and laborsheds. Beginning in July 2008, DEED will complete the move to regional plans, which focus on regional economic competitiveness.

3. Describe the lines of communication and mechanisms established by the Governor to ensure timely and effective sharing of information between the State agencies/ State Board and local workforce investment areas and Local Boards. Include types of regularly issued guidance and how Federal guidance is disseminated to Local Boards and One-Stop Career Centers. (§112(b)(1))

Minnesota's 16 LWIB chairs, the chief elected official of each WSA, and the 16 WSA directors make up the Minnesota Workforce Council Association (MWCA). The MWCA operations committee, comprised of staff directors and other employment and training providers, meets monthly. DEED and GWDC staff, including the regional administrators and the strategic projects manager, regularly attend these monthly meetings to discuss federal guidance, State policies, and other issues. DEED staff use both the operations committee meetings and DEED's

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website to distribute federal program policy guidance to LWIBs and local staff. State staff solicit local input in the development of State policy (draft policies are provided electronically for local comment). DEED distributes final policies by e-mail and posts them on DEED's website. Additionally, the MWCA establishes ad hoc committees on an as-needed basis to ensure communication among its members and with State staff. At present, some of these committees are addressing common measures, LWIB development, and adult/dislocated worker issues.

State and local staff and LWIB members collaborate on a number of issues such as system marketing, performance measures, technology systems, and continuous improvement. DEED staff facilitate roundtables and practitioner meetings for local staff from the WSAs; certified service providers from the Dislocated Worker program also participate. DEED's regional administrators also meet regularly with local staff and LWIBs and serve as a regional point of communication with DEED. Regional administrators provide leadership, technical assistance, and capacity-building opportunities.

DEED's strategic projects manager works directly with LWIB leadership to assess local board capacity, identify training needs, and provide training to meet LWIB development needs. This position also does research and provides information and State assistance to LWIBs for funding opportunities and new partnerships. DEED has introduced Positively Minnesota: Partners for Job Growth, a regular newsletter for LWIB members. It is e-mailed to LWIB members and contains articles such as the DEED commissioner's column, descriptions of innovative service delivery strategies, local best practices, descriptions of the evolving role of the LWIB from program management to community convener, information on the move toward regional work as well as sectoral and cluster work underway around the State, and a regular column on WorkForce Center performance.

In order to improve WIA Title I-B performance management at both the State and local levels, Minnesota subscribes to FutureWork Systems, Inc., Web-based service (known at DEED as MN Performs). Every conceivable cross-tabulation of WIA Title I-B standardized record data is preprogrammed into MN Performs. The highly intuitive graphical user interface allows users to

point-and-click location, customer characteristics, services, and measures; and a date parameter to view historical, current, and predicted performance outcomes. The views are updated monthly. Access to the MN Performs website is on a subscription basis; however, all employment and training service providers in the State receive monthly performance reports by program and quarterly rosters (individual participant records used in generating each performance measures) regardless of their subscription status.

(iv) Describe any cross-cutting organizations or bodies at the State level designed to guide and inform an integrated vision for serving youth in the State within the context of workforce investment, social services, juvenile justice, and education. Describe the membership of such bodies and the functions and responsibilities in establishing priorities and services for youth. How is the State promoting a collaborative cross-agency approach for both policy development and service delivery at the local level for youth? (§112(b)(18)(A))

DEED is a partner in several interagency initiatives that support the Shared Youth Vision and are described on the Internet. The following collaborative efforts lead to shared positive outcomes for all youth-serving partners:

Project C3 (Connecting Youth with Communities and Careers)

Project C3, formerly funded by the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) Office of Disability Employment Policy, is now funded by a partnership of Minnesota State agencies that serve youth. The scope of the project is wide, but at its heart is the goal to use facilitated collaboration and information-sharing between agencies to improve transition outcomes for youth. Project C3 has added a new locality to its resource mapping website. By the spring of 2007, Project C3 will be working with regions in Minnesota that are home to 87 percent of the State's population. Project C3 implemented a "communities of practice (CoP)" model, which brings together key local partners to identify gaps and issues in serving youth with disabilities and communicates those issues to State-level

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partners. The PACER Center is a key partner in this multi-agency initiative.

The Dropout Prevention, Retention, and Graduation Initiative

MDE, in partnership with DHS, the Department of Public Safety, and DEED, secured funding from the U.S. Department of Education for the Dropout Prevention, Retention, and Graduation Initiative to decrease the dropout rate in schools and among students of color and low-income students in seven pilot sites. The project uses inter- and intra-agency workgroups to manage project implementation and develop comprehensive and community-tailored guidance on dropout prevention strategies.

The Interagency Task Force on Homelessness

The Minnesota Housing Finance Agency (MHFA) chairs the Interagency Task Force on Homelessness, comprised of ten state agencies working to effectively use State resources to prevent and end homelessness. MHFA, with State and community partners, identifies strategies to ensure that youth leaving foster care and other youth at-risk of homelessness have access to housing, support services, and skills necessary to maintain housing stability.

National Governor's Association Policy Academy on Youth Aging Out of Foster Care

The members of the Shared Youth Vision State Team partnered with DHS to participate in the National Governors Association's Policy Academy on Youth Aging Out of Foster Care. The Shared Youth Vision website includes best practices highlighting coordination between county human services staff, the WIA youth workforce system, county corrections, and others in serving youth aging out of foster care, juvenile offenders returning to the community, youth in juvenile diversion programs, and youth with ties to inner-city gangs.

Youth@Work: Teaching Teens about Safety and Health in the Workplace

Minnesota was selected to receive free youth safety training from the National Young Worker Safety Resource Center at the University of California, Berkeley. Two train-the-trainer workshops will be co-sponsored by DEED

and DLI. The *Youth@Work: Talking Safety* curriculum includes instructors' notes and training materials for teaching youth basic job health and safety knowledge and skills, including youth with developmental and learning disabilities.

Those trained at the workshops will be able to provide similar training to youth, educators, worksite supervisors, workforce professionals, employers, community and faith-based organizations, youth council members, and others interested in promoting youth safety on the job. Minnesota will have two master trainers who will be able to provide continued support to local trainers.

Tri-State Peer-to-Peer Youth Forum

Minnesota co-sponsored, along with Iowa and Wisconsin, a Tri-State Peer-to-Peer Youth Forum providing youth workforce professionals from three states with capacity-building opportunities and a chance to share best practices. Eight local youth council members from Minnesota were recognized at the forum for outstanding contributions to the development of local partnerships to improve the quality of youth services. Youth participants shared how youth programs have impacted their lives, providing advice on what works (and what does not work). [Handouts](#) from the forum are available.

Youth Councils Established Under WIA

Youth councils increase awareness of the importance of youth issues and work with local partners to improve the quality and effectiveness of youth services. Youth service providers are held accountable to the LWIBs and youth councils that are responsible for strategic planning, program oversight, coordination of resources, and selection of youth service providers.

Youth councils engage in strategic planning sessions that bring together WIA-funded services and other youth-serving partners to identify gaps in service and develop new strategies for serving the neediest youth. WIA-funded youth services serve as a catalyst for increasing the quality and quantity of alternative learning opportunities available in each region. Out-of-school youth are reconnected to an educational program where they can earn a high school diploma and transition to post-secondary training.

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DEED promotes the sharing of best practices relating to regional partnerships serving youth most-in-need. Specific examples, as described on the [Shared Youth Vision Forum](#) website, include:

- Northeast Minnesota Office of Job Training in Aitkin County – best practices in reaching youth in juvenile diversion programs through coordination between the youth workforce system, Aitkin County Health and Human Services, county corrections staff, and other local partners.
- Ramsey County Workforce Solutions, HIRED, county corrections staff, and other partners developed the Building Lives model – best practices in assisting young offenders exiting the juvenile corrections system to effectively re-enter the community.
- Guadalupe Alternative Programs and other community partners – best practices using the YouthBuild model to serve young offenders who have exited the juvenile corrections system or have ties to inner-city gangs.

(v) Describe major State policies and requirements that have been established to direct and support the development of a Statewide workforce investment system not described elsewhere in this Plan as outlined below. (§112(b)(2))

1. What State policies and systems are in place or planned to support common data collection and reporting processes, information management, integrated service delivery, and performance management? (§§111(d)(2) and 112(b)(8)(B))

The State's one-stop information system (Workforce One) supports common data collection, reporting, and information management. This system collects participant information from most WIA partner programs and reports program results. Input into this Web-based system is completed at the local level. Information/report retrieval is accomplished under the guidelines of State and federal data privacy laws.

DEED activated the Customer Registration System (CRS) in 2006 to measure core and other less-than-intensive services being provided to customers from all WIA and

partner programs. This data is currently used by LWIBs and local management teams to assist in providing better-integrated services. DEED will convene a CRS steering committee in 2007 to begin writing Statewide policies and review other potential uses of data from this system.

2. What State policies are in place that promote efficient use of administrative resources such as requiring more co-location and fewer affiliate sites in local One-Stop systems to eliminate duplicative facility and operational costs or to require a single administrative structure at the local level to support Local Boards and to be the fiscal agent for WIA funds to avoid duplicative administrative costs that could otherwise be used for service delivery and training? Include any specific administrative cost controls, plans, reductions, and targets for reductions, if the State has established them. (§§111(d)(2) and 112(b)(8)(A))

Minnesota's [WorkForce Center System policy manual](#) is located on DEED's website. This site includes policies regarding co-location, the administration of core services without duplication, partnerships, cost allocation plans, issuances regarding affiliate sites, and much more. In 2007, DEED plans to clarify the process for adopting and communicating Statewide workforce development policy, review existing policy for relevance, and edit online policy so it is clear and consistent.

3. What State policies are in place to promote universal access and consistency of service Statewide? (§112(b)(2))

To ensure physical and program access is available Statewide, there are resources available on DEED's website for operations staff and planners, including the [Assistive Technology Manual](#) (currently being updated and located on DEED's website), which provides information on the WorkForce Center resource areas' tools for accessibility, language resources, and alternate formats; DEED's *Marketing Style Guide*, which provides guidance on requirements for accessible meetings, publications, and alternate formats; State resources such as the DEED

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Office of Diversity and Equal Opportunity (ODEO); and national resources such as the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Accessibility Guidelines for Buildings and Facilities and The Access Board.

To ensure consistent standards for access, DEED's ADA coordinator and Workforce Systems Coordination staff routinely inspect and approve all space/facility relocation or remodeling plans prior to confirmation, conduct a comprehensive assessment identifying universal access issues, and again inspect the physical space prior to move-in. The Site Selection Program Access Standards and Guidelines are currently under development and will be used as a planning tool for any major changes to WorkForce Centers.

- The local planning guidance for LWIBs identifies an ADA coordinator, equal employment opportunity officer, and English as a Second Language coordinator for all program partners in the local area. It requires LWIBs to address if there have been any changes or enhancements in service accessibility within their workforce development programs. The goals are to ensure that programs, services, activities, and sites are accessible to and useable by individuals with disabilities; people with limited English-proficiency; both sexes; various racial and ethnic groups; and different age groups.

In support of these goals, planners refer to:

- The above-noted Assistive Technology Manual that highlights the technology currently available and offers suggestions for usage and placement of signage to improve customer awareness and use.
- The Resource Area Advisory Team's (RAAT) objective to maintain and improve as needed the quality of services provided in the WorkForce Center resource areas. RAAT members represent the core partners in the WorkForce Center System as well as administrative staff from areas such as technology, ADA, ODEO, and labor market information. RAAT agendas, meeting minutes, surveys, and the resource area certification process support resource area staff, including receptionists and other staff who are assigned to work in the resource areas.

- The Disability Awareness Checklist was designed to ensure meaningful participation of people with disabilities in programs and activities operated by recipients of financial assistance under WIA, including those that are part of the one-stop delivery system.
- The *WIA Title I-B and Related Activities Manual* provides the administrative oversight on policy and procedure matters under WIA.
- The Logistics Team reviews all issues concerning the operation of the WorkForce Centers. Access issues are identified and resolved through this collaborative effort. WorkForce Centers must meet all established access standards before they receive certification as a Minnesota WorkForce Center.
- The Site Selection Program Access Standards and Guidelines are currently under development.
- DEED's Limited English Proficiency Plan draft has been developed and is awaiting implementation.
- A Limited English-Proficiency Survey was conducted to represent the activities of DEED and the Hennepin/Carver LWIB.

The WorkForce Center System is designed to be a significant element of service delivery in employment, training, and educational services and has the potential to serve the full-range of a diverse population. The *Assistive Technology Manual* supports the efforts of all WorkForce Centers in providing seamless access to all programs, services, and activities. Additional future universal access policies will be developed with assistance from the GWDC.

4. *What policies support a demand-driven approach, as described in Part II, Section B. "Demand-driven Workforce Investment System," to workforce development – such as training on the economy and labor market data for Local Board and One-Stop Career Center staff? (§§112(b)(4) and 112(b)(17)(A)(iv))*

DEED has not yet written formal policies to support the demand-driven approach described in Section B. DEED is currently reviewing its policies and will be writing and/or changing policies to support demand-driven approaches throughout 2007. Future planning guidance for LWIBs will reflect these policy changes.

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In addition to the approaches described in Section B, DEED has encouraged demand-driven approaches by:

- Creating and conducting demand-driven training for all WorkForce Center employees and management. The classroom-training portion was completed in February 2007. Local teams of employees are now creating demand-driven project recommendations to be implemented in local WorkForce Centers.
- Providing Harvard Business School Microeconomics training to DEED and WSA managers and directors so they have additional tools to analyze local economies that support demand-driven approaches.

In addition, local areas are accessing a variety of development opportunities (see Attachments B and C).

5. What policies are in place to ensure that the resources available through the Federal and/or State apprenticeship programs, the Job Corps and the Senior Community Service Employment Program are fully integrated with the State's One-Stop delivery system? (§§112(b)(17)(A)(iv) and (b)(18)(C))

Each of the WorkForce Center partners has an MOU in place, which specifies roles and responsibilities in each WorkForce Center and describes how resources will be shared.

DEED takes a proactive approach to identifying youth who could benefit from the services available through the Hubert H. Humphrey Job Corps Center in St. Paul. Job Corps staff are invited to give presentations at WorkForce Center RAAT meetings. This is another strategy in place to assure that Job Corps marketing information is available in all WorkForce Centers.

Job Corps representatives serve on local youth councils; and youth council members serve on the Job Corps Industry Council. Job Corps is represented on Minnesota's Shared Youth Vision State Team; see the [Shared Youth Vision Forum website](#) for a list of team members.

WSA youth staff set-up tours of the Job Corps Center for youth so they have first-hand knowledge of the academic

and vocational experiences available. WSA staff also work with youth returning to their local communities following graduation from Job Corps.

All WorkForce Centers have information regarding apprenticeship programs operated through DLI and MDE. Many WorkForce Centers have a youth zone, which is a dedicated space that invites use by young people and has dedicated resources and curriculum for youth. Youth zone computers are "bookmarked" with websites and special Internet resources to answer questions from young adults. WorkForce Centers offer a variety of activities related to life skills, work, and career exploration.

Minnesota's 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.

(vi) Local Area Designations - Identify the State's designated local workforce investment areas and the date of the most recent area designation, including whether the State is currently re-designating local areas pursuant to the end of the subsequent designation period for areas designated in the previous Unified Plan. (§112(b)(5))

Include a description of the process used to designate such areas. Describe how the State considered the extent to which such local areas are consistent with labor market areas: geographic areas served by local and intermediate education agencies, post-secondary education institutions and area vocational schools; and all other criteria identified in section 116(a)(1) in establishing area boundaries, to assure coordinated planning. Describe the State Board's role,

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Table E.2 - Local Workforce Service Areas and their Designation Dates

Local WSA	Designation Date
Northwest Minnesota	July 1, 2000
Rural Minnesota Concentrated Employment Program Mandatory	July 1, 2000
Northeast Minnesota Office of Job Training	July 1, 2000
City of Duluth	July 1, 2000
Central Minnesota	July 1, 2000
Southwest Minnesota	July 1, 2000
South Central Minnesota	July 1, 2000
Southeast Minnesota	July 1, 2000
Hennepin/Scott/Carver Counties (revised to Hennepin/Carver Counties on July 1, 2005)	July 1, 2000
City of Minneapolis	July 1, 2000
Anoka County	July 1, 2000
Dakota County (revised to Dakota/Scott Counties on July 1, 2005)	July 1, 2000
Ramsey County (includes St. Paul)	July 1, 2000
Washington County	July 1, 2000
Stearns/Benton Counties	July 1, 2000
Winona County	July 1, 2000

including all recommendations made on local designation requests pursuant to §116(a)(4). (§§112(b)(5) and 116(a)(1)) Describe the appeals process used by the State to hear appeals of local area designations referred to in §116(a)(5) and 112(b)(15).

The original designation procedure consisted of a multi-stage process:

- The JTPA service delivery areas (SDAs) were asked whether they wished to become WSAs. (The result was that 15 out of the original 17 SDAs wished to remain intact. Two of the original 17 indicated a wish to combine [City of St. Paul and Ramsey County]).
- These applications were signed by the private industry council (PIC) chairs and the appropriate local elected officials. The applications were reviewed by State

staff to determine whether such local areas were consistent with: labor market areas; geographic areas served by local and intermediate education agencies, post-secondary education institutions and area technical colleges; and other criteria identified in WIA Section 116(a)(1).

- Staff recommendations were forwarded to the Governor and the GWDC.

The result of the process was that all of the 16 applications were approved to be WSAs under WIA and no appeals were filed.

The GWDC published a study on *Minnesota's Workforce Service Area Boundaries* in June 2004. The study recommends that WSA boundaries be evaluated on an ongoing basis to ensure that WSA structures continue to be effective and efficient means for providing workforce

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development services. The study also recommended that future review efforts include chief elected officials, GWDC members, the Governor, and LWIB chairs and that the analytical framework developed through the course of the study be used for future analyses of WSA boundaries.

In July 2005, Scott County voluntarily moved from the original Hennepin/Scott/Carver group to the contiguous Dakota County as indicated above. The move occurred after the appropriate petition was submitted and a public comment period was completed.

In 2007, Minnesota intends to reconsider the local area designation of WSAs in light of dramatic shifts in demographics, technology, transportation, and other economic factors that have occurred since the adoption of WSA boundaries over 30 years ago. The State wants to listen to a variety of interests and study the appropriate alignment of State and federal resources to maximize its ability to build and support strong regional economies. The process will include listening sessions across the State with local elected officials, educational institutions, and economic developers to gather information on the opportunities for aligning workforce and economic development, and educational resources, in the most-effective, cost-efficient way to serve all Minnesotans. The State intends to take into account all input before any decision is made to re-designate.

(vii) Local Workforce Investment Boards - Identify the criteria the State has established to be used by the chief elected official(s) in the local areas for the appointment of Local Board members based on the requirements of section 117. (§§112(b)(6) and 117(b))

Based on WIA Section 117(i), WSAs with no change in geography were automatically allowed to transition from a PIC to an LWIB. The following criteria is used by local elected officials in those areas to appoint replacements. Additionally, where the local area's geography has changed (as in the case of the changes indicated above), these are definite criteria that are used to select LWIB members:

- Representatives of businesses in the local area who have optimum policy-making or hiring authority.

- Representatives of businesses that reflect the economic makeup of the local area.
- Representatives of businesses that are nominated by local business organizations and trade associations.
- Representatives of local educational agencies representing local school boards, adult education and literacy program providers, and post-secondary educational institutions.
- Representatives of labor organizations nominated by local labor federations or, in certain cases, by representatives of employees.
- Representatives of community-based organizations.
- Representatives of economic development agencies.
- Representatives of one-stop partners (in cases where geography has changed).

(viii) Identify the circumstances which constitute a conflict of interest for any State or Local Workforce Investment Board member or the entity that s/he represents, and any matter that would provide a financial benefit to that member or his or her immediate family. (§§111(f), 112(b)(13), and 117(g))

See Section E.1.(b)(ii)7.

(ix) Identify the policies and procedures to be applied by local areas for determining eligibility of local level training providers, how performance information will be used to determine continuing eligibility and the agency responsible for carrying out these activities. Describe how the State solicited recommendations from Local Boards and training providers and interested members of the public, including representatives of business and labor organizations, in the development of these policies and procedures.

DEED has published a manual on its [website](#) describing the policies and procedures for determining the initial and continuing eligibility of training providers. In developing this policy manual, the State solicited comments from LWIBs, training providers with whom the State and local areas have had contacts, representatives of businesses, and labor representatives on the LWIBs. The manual will be updated with the implementation of the December 20, 2006, changes in regulations.

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(x) Individual Training Accounts (ITAs):

1. What policy direction has the State provided for ITAs?

DEED issued policy guidance through its website. The WIA policy manual provides the WSAs/LWIBs with flexibility in constructing and issuing individual training accounts (ITAs).

2. Describe innovative training strategies used by the State to fill skills gaps. Include in the discussion the State's effort to broaden the scope and reach of ITAs through partnerships with business, education, economic development, and industry associations and how business and industry involvement is used to drive this strategy.

The State, with the active participation of LWIBs, has undertaken an effort to profile each of its economic regions to determine employment and training needs now and in the future. As part of this effort, the State and the LWIBs are identifying the high-growth, high-demand jobs in each region. This effort involves the active cooperation of local businesses and business associations. The State is analyzing the degree to which the WIA-certified educational institutions meet the needs of LWIBs. In areas where there are insufficient certified programs, the State, with the active participation of the LWIBs, is working to certify additional programs as well as working with businesses to develop customized training and on-the-job training programs.

3. Discuss the State's plan for committing all or part of WIA Title I funds to training opportunities in high-growth, high-demand, and economically vital occupations.

DEED's LMI Office has developed a methodology to assist LWIBs in identifying high-demand occupations. These proposed criteria are that high-wage, high-growth occupations:

- Employ at least 0.1 percent of total regional employment.

- Are projected to grow at least as fast as overall regional employment growth.
- Pay a median hourly wage equal to or greater than the region's overall median wage.

Applied to the six planning regions, these criteria produce lists of about 60 occupations or about ten percent of all occupations in each region. (Note that employment projections and occupational employment information are not available for the 16 WSAs due to the small labor markets served by some local areas.) The number of occupations identified may be changed by relaxing, tightening, or eliminating some or all of the criteria.

In the planning guidance distributed to LWIBs in April, DEED has asked each LWIB to identify the high-demand, high-wage industries and occupations that are critical to local and regional economic vitality. While DEED encourages LWIBs to base their lists on the methodology outlined above, DEED wants each LWIB to take ownership of their lists and to approve a list that is meaningful to their understanding of their local or regional economy. In addition to the LMI produced by DEED, LWIBs may choose to examine training placement outcome data or other information that aids them in using training dollars wisely. DEED is encouraging local areas to direct their WIA Title I-B training resources to focus on the specific occupations and industries identified by LWIBs. WIA Title I-B monitoring activities will ensure that WIA-funded training is preparing job seekers for these high-demand areas of local economies. Local planning guidelines call for each LWIB to strive to have 60 percent of its trainees in training for high-growth/high-demand occupations/industries.

4. Describe the State's policy for limiting ITAs (e.g., dollar amount or duration).

State policy allows LWIBs to establish specific limits for ITAs (e.g., dollar amount and/or duration) and the State monitors to ensure that these limits are met.

5. Describe the State's current or planned use of WIA Title I funds for the provision of training through apprenticeship.

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The State does not have an explicit policy concerning the use of WIA Title I funds for apprenticeship. The State encourages providers of apprenticeship opportunities to partner with LWIBs.

6. Identify State policies developed in response to changes to WIA regulations that permit the use of WIA Title I financial assistance to employ or train participants in religious activities when the assistance is provided indirectly) such as through an ITA. (Note that the Department of Labor provides Web access to the equal treatment regulations and other guidance for the workforce investment system and faith-based and community organizations at <http://www.dol.gov/cfbci/legalguidance.htm>).

With the guidance of TEGL 1-05 (issued 7/6/05) and DOL's Center for Faith-Based and Community Initiatives, DEED has developed State policy regarding the use of WIA Title I financial assistance to employ or train participants in religious activities when the assistance is provided indirectly (such as through an ITA). All policies regarding faith-based partnerships and all funding opportunities are available on [DEED's website](#).

(xi) Identify the criteria to be used by Local Boards in awarding grants for youth activities, including criteria that the Governor and Local Boards will use to identify effective and ineffective youth activities and providers of such activities. (§112(b)(18)(B))

The following criteria will be used by the Governor, LWIBs, and youth councils to identify effective youth activities and providers; the criteria will also be used by LWIBs in awarding grants for youth activities:

Adult Support, Structure, and Expectations

- Initiatives that serve to connect young people with adults who are willing to take time with young people, who advocate and broker on their behalf, guide them, connect them to the broader institutions of society, and who have the training and professional 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 set clear and high, yet attainable expectations.

Creative Forms of Learning

- Initiatives that incorporate basic and high-level skills, knowledge, and competencies and promote methods that increase an ongoing desire to learn.
- Youth settings that promote learning with ongoing challenges and use of materials that are attuned to the interests of the learners; and provide effective career pathways to finish high school and move successfully into college or other forms of post-secondary training.
- Work-based learning, emphasizing experiential learning, can also be a powerful tool in creating an effective learning environment.

A Combination of Guidance and Connections to the Workplace

- Use of LMI to assess employment opportunities in high-growth industries and in-demand occupations.
- Activities that demonstrate the involvement of the business/employer community.
- Initiatives that provide encouragement to learn how to work; stimulate growth as a result of work experience, success or failure; and develop a sound perspective on work and careers.
- 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, especially for youth who have weak institutional ties and lack positive adult and peer relationships.
- Activities with strong built-in follow-up mechanisms to design better student outcomes.
- Effective case management skills that provide comprehensive guidance, counseling, and referrals to

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- coordinate a progression of services and activities.
- Policies that stress the quality of individual initiatives and the richness of the youth support network.

Youth as a Resource

- Initiatives that recognize young people are an important resource in improving their own lives.
- Activities that promote youth participation in helping solve their own problems and that empower youth to contribute to their community's growth.

Implementation Quality

- Initiatives with well-thought-out implementation designs that are followed and tracked through a continuous improvement process.
- Initiatives requiring flexibility to both local needs and proven methodologies.

(xii) Describe the competitive and non-competitive processes that will be used at the State level to award grants and contracts for activities under title I of WIA, including how potential bidders are being made aware of the availability of grants and contracts. (§112(b)(16))

The Department of Administration (DOA) has been authorized by Minnesota law to buy all items needed for the proper functioning of State governmental agencies. DOA authorizes and audits agencies' use of authority for local purchase; buys all items that exceed the limits of authority for local purchase; and authorizes certain purchases that DEED employees may purchase directly from vendors. DOA certifies targeted group (TG) vendors or economically disadvantaged (ED) vendors; State legislation mandates purchasing from TG/ED vendors. DOA lists these two vendor groups in the *Directory of Certified Targeted Group and Economically Disadvantaged Area Small Businesses*. Minnesota State agencies must follow the laws governing purchases.

DEED's Fiscal Management Office processes DEED purchase requests, assists with purchase-related issues, and coordinates DEED inventory activity. It also establishes financial management procedures, processes payments to vendors, and operates the agency cost accounting system and the purchasing and accounting system.

DEED staff must purchase equipment and services according to DOA and Department of Finance regulations. DEED purchases must also conform to the procedures in DEED's *Policy and Procedures Manual* and to program regulations of federal and State funding authorities. The Fiscal Management Office maintains financial documents to support audit trails; however, all DEED offices must retain bid documentation. Program divisions must maintain other documents required by program audit regulations. [Minn. Stat. § 16A, 16B, and 16C](#) govern State purchasing. Some specific DEED requirements are:

- Buying Contract Items: Items valued at \$5,000 or more, including those on State contract, must be purchased through the DEED Central Purchasing Unit.
- Bid Requirements: When a needed item is not available from a contract vendor, it may be ordered from a non-contract vendor. Bids must be obtained, and the low bid must be selected. Bid documentation should be retained according to the office's records retention schedule.
- Non-Contract Items Costing More than \$2,500 per Order: This category covers the purchase of services, non-tagged equipment, and sole source items that are not on State contract and cost more than \$2,500 per order; maintenance/rental agreements; fixed assets; and printing that costs \$500 or more. It also covers conferences that include meeting rooms and/or overnight lodging if the value exceeds \$2,500. All of these purchases must be processed through the DEED Central Purchasing Unit.
- Professional/Technical (P/T) Service Contracts: DEED employees follow the procedures developed by DOA's Materials Management Division (MMD) for certifying the need for P/T service contracts; developing requests for proposals (RFPs) and publishing them in Minnesota's State Register or posting them on MMD's website; and monitoring contract processing. DEED also evaluates contract vendors' products before closing-out a contract and paying the vendor; and accepts appeals from vendors who were not selected. The procedures for processing P/T service contracts vary by the dollar amount for the contract. Bids for services that will cost over \$50,000 must be announced in Minnesota's State Register or posted on MMD's website.
- Grants: WIA Title I-B funding flows to the LWIBs by formula as required under WIA law. The State has

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discretion as to the use of funds reserved for Statewide workforce investment activities (WIA Section 128(a) and 133(a)). Some of the funds are issued as incentive funding to the LWIBs as defined in WIA Section 134(a)(2)(B)(iii). Funding may be issued in grants through an RFP process governed in the same manner as contracts specified above for P/T service contracts and/or to nonprofit organizations at the discretion of the Governor, as allowed under WIA Section 134.

(c) Vocational Rehabilitation, designate a State agency as the sole State agency to administer the Plan, or to supervise the administration of the Plan by a local agency, in accordance with section 101(a)(2)(A). (§101(a)(2)(A))

Vocational Rehabilitation/Rehabilitation Services - General

The designated State agency for the Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Program and the State-supported Employment Services Program is DEED.

Vocational Rehabilitation/State Services for the Blind - Blind Agency

DEED is the sole State agency to administer *Minnesota's Unified Plan* in accordance with 101(a)(2)(A). There are two designated State units: State Services for the Blind (SSB) and Rehabilitation Services (RS).

(d) TANF, describe the objective criteria for the delivery of benefits and the determination of eligibility and for fair and equitable treatment, including an explanation of how the State will provide opportunities for recipients who have been adversely affected to be heard in a State administrative or appeal process.
(§402(a)(1)(B)(iii))

An applicant must meet the eligibility requirements specified in State law before receiving services for temporary assistance ([Minn. Stat. 256J.001 - 256J.95](#)). 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 State law. Assistance is provided equitably to all recipients in accordance with State and federal law.

In Minnesota, TANF is known as the Minnesota Family Investment Program (MFIP). MFIP does not require basis-of-eligibility tests, such as the 100-hour rule requirement for two-parent families. The asset limit is \$2,000 for applicants and \$5,000 for participants. The value limit of vehicles is \$7,500. There are Statewide payment standards based on the number of eligible persons in the assistance unit. Caregivers who fail without good cause to comply with work requirements within the specified time will have their grant reduced and vendor paid. Persons convicted of a drug offense committed after July 1, 1997, may receive cash assistance if they comply with conditions set forth in [Minn. Stat. § 256J.26](#).

There is a 60-month lifetime limit on assistance, with exclusions in certain situations. Time-limit exclusions apply to the months in which individuals are living in Indian country, claiming the family violence waiver option, age 60 and over, a minor caregiver under age 18 complying with the educational and living arrangement requirements or age 18 or 19 and complying with the educational requirements, caring for another person in the household who meets special medical criteria under Minnesota statute, or received cash assistance as part of MFIP field trials. Minnesota statute on time-limit exemptions can be found in [Minn. Stat. § 256J.42](#).

Extensions of the time limit are possible per [Minn. Stat. § 256J.425](#) if the following conditions are met:

- The adult is ill or incapacitated for more than 30 days.
- The adult is a caregiver with a child or adult in the household who meets the special medical criteria for home care services under Minnesota statute.
- The participant's presence in the home is required as a caregiver because of a professionally certified illness or incapacity of another member in the assistance unit, a relative in the household, or a foster child in the household and the illness or incapacity is expected to continue for more than 30 days.
- The person is employed a required number of hours.
- The person is determined to be hard-to-employ because the individual belongs to any of the following groups:
 - A person diagnosed by a qualified professional as a person with mental retardation or a person with a mental illness and that condition prevents the person from obtaining or retaining unsubsidized employment.

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- A person assessed by a vocational specialist or the county agency to be unemployable.
- A person who has been assessed to have an IQ below 80.
- A person who is determined by county agency assessment to have a learning disability.
- A person who qualifies for a family violence waiver.

Applicants and recipients 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 DHS Appeals Office. A DHS judge will conduct a hearing in-person at the county office or by telephone. Decisions will be issued by the DHS 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 ([Minn. Stat. § 256.045](#), Administrative and Judicial Review of Human Services Matters).



F. Funding

1. What criteria will the State use, subject to each program's authorizing law, to allocate funds for each of the programs included in the Unified Plan? Describe how the State will use funds the State receives to leverage other Federal, State, local, and private resources, in order to maximize the effectiveness of such resources, and to expand the participation of business, employees, and individuals in the Statewide workforce investment system. (WIA §112(b)(10)) In answering the above question, if your Unified Plan includes:

(c) WIA Title I and Wagner-Peyser Act and/or Veterans Programs (§112(b)(12):

(i) If applicable, describe the methods and factors (including weights assigned to each factor) your State will use to distribute funds to local areas for the 30% discretionary formula adult employment and training funds and youth funds pursuant to Sections 128(b)(3)(B) and 133(b)(3)(B).

For program year (PY) 2007, Minnesota will not use a discretionary formula for its adult or youth programs

funded under the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) Title I-B. Over the course of PY07, Minnesota plans to evaluate the current adult formula to see how it aligns with the State's overall strategic direction and the needs identified by labor market information. Minnesota would begin to implement any resultant changes in PY08. Minnesota plans no changes to the youth formula.

(ii) Describe how the allocation methods and factors help ensure that funds are distributed equitably throughout the State and that there will be no significant shifts in funding levels to a local area on a year-to-year basis.

For PY07, Minnesota will not use a discretionary formula for its adult or youth programs funded under WIA Title I-B. When (and if) implementing the changes to the adult formula outlined in (i), Minnesota will include a hold-harmless provision to minimize any significant shifts in funding.

(iii) Describe the State's allocation formula for dislocated worker funds under 133(b)(2)(B).

For PY07, Minnesota will use the following formula.

Table F.1 - Allocation Formula

Four Factors	Definition and Data Source	Assigned Weight
Percentage Share of "Seeking Work"	Estimate of the average number of unemployed individuals receiving unemployment insurance (UI) benefits who are actively seeking work. Source: <i>Unemployment Insurance</i>	42.8%
Percentage Share of UI	Estimate of the average monthly number of unemployed individuals, including those not collecting UI benefits. Source: <i>Local Area Unemployment Statistics</i>	42.8%
Percentage Share of Total Weeks Paid to Permanently Separated Applicants	Estimate of the number of weeks of benefits paid to UI applicants. Source: <i>Unemployment Insurance</i>	9.5%
Job Density	Calculated by dividing the number of jobs in the area by area's square miles. Source: <i>Labor Market Information</i>	5%

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- Minnesota will maintain a 90 percent hold-harmless provision as well as a 130 percent funding cap.
- This formula was developed after extensive discussions with Minnesota's advisory committees and representatives of the State's employment and training community.
- These factors accurately represent the populations that the Dislocated Worker program is designed to serve.

(iv) Describe how the individuals and entities on the State Board were involved in the development of the methods and factors, and how the State consulted with chief elected officials in local areas throughout the State in determining such distribution.

After consultation with local partners, the proposed distribution formula was presented to the Governor's Workforce Development Council (GWDC) for review, comment, and approval. All individuals consulted in the review process indicated that the proposed formula was a satisfactory method for distributing WIA funds Statewide.

(v) Describe the procedures and criteria that are in place under 20 CFR 663.600 for the Governor and appropriate Local Boards to direct One-Stop operators to give priority of service to public assistance recipients and other low-income individuals for intensive and training services if funds allocated to a local area for adult employment and training activities are determined to be limited.

(§§112(b)(17)(A)(iv) and 134(d)(4)(E))

Adult employment and training funds are limited and priority of service is implemented. If a local area determines that a limitation does not exist and priority of service is not needed, the local workforce investment board (LWIB) provides this information in its integrated local plan for WIA, and the workforce service area (WSA)/LWIB cites evidence that sufficient funds are available and that public assistance recipients and other low-income individuals will be adequately served without a priority of service mechanism. The State reviews the evidence and if it finds it satisfactory, allows the LWIB to operate without a priority of service.

(vi) Specify how the State will use the 10 percent Wagner-Peyser Act funds allotted to it under section 7(b) in accordance with the three provisions of allowable activities: performance incentives; services for groups with special needs; and extra costs of exemplary service delivery models. (§112(b)(7) and 20 CFR 652.204))

The Wagner-Peyser ten percent funds will be used to provide job development and job placement services for individuals with disabilities. Wagner-Peyser will work in partnership with the Rehabilitation Services (RS) programs to assist individuals with disabilities who need help finding work. Both Wagner-Peyser and RS are housed in the Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED) and are mandatory partners in the Minnesota WorkForce Centers. RS is unable to provide comprehensive services to all individuals who apply for services due to limited funding. Individuals who have applied for RS services, but are not enrolled, will be called into a WorkForce Center, and if it is determined that they need assistance in looking for work, the WorkForce Center staff will be available.

(d) Adult Education and Family Literacy:

(i) Describe how the eligible agency will fund local activities in accordance with the considerations described in Section 231(e) and the other requirements of title II of WIA. (§224(b))

Eligible Providers

Eligible providers for a grant using Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (AEFLA) funds include:

- A local education agency
- A community-based organization of demonstrated effectiveness
- A volunteer literacy organization of demonstrated effectiveness
- An institution of higher education
- A public or private nonprofit agency
- A library
- A public housing authority
- A nonprofit institution (e.g., community-based

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- organization and faith-based organization) that is not described in the bullets above and has the ability to provide literacy services to adults and families
- A consortium of the eligible agencies, organizations, institutions, libraries, or authorities described in the bullets above

Criteria for Funding

Local providers are eligible to receive funds if they meet the following criteria:

- Measurable Goals
- Past Effectiveness
- Serving Those Most-in-Need
- Intensity of Services
- Effective Practices
- Use of Technology
- Real-Life Context
- Staffing
- Coordination
- Flexible Schedules
- Management Information
- English Literacy

Funding Process

Under WIA Title II, local adult education providers desiring a grant must submit an application containing all criteria required under State and federal law. Upon request, the Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) will distribute an application for funding. If an adult education provider wishes to obtain funding, it must develop a formal response to each of the parts contained in the application. Reviewers of the applications note the thoroughness of the proposed plan by specific criteria and recommend that applicants, deemed to have fully and adequately responded to the application review criteria, be considered for funding.

From funds made available under WIA Section 211(b)(1), Minnesota will award multiyear grants and/or contracts on a competitive basis to eligible providers within the State to develop, implement, and improve adult education and literacy activities. Each eligible provider receiving a grant or contract under this subtitle will establish one or more programs that provide instruction or services in one or more of the following categories:

- Adult education and literacy services, including workplace literacy services
- Family literacy services
- English as a Second Language (ESL) literacy programs

Successful applicants for AEFLA funding receive allocations under a formula system in proportion to their prior-year service levels (i.e., learner contact hours). If new programs are added to the system through the review and approval process, an estimate of their capacity will be made by MDE. The total amount of available AEFLA funds will be divided by the total number of prior-year contact hours from the successful applicants in order to establish the funding rate. Historically, that rate has been around one dollar per prior-year contact hour. State contact hour rates have typically been around five dollars per contact hour.

Administrative Cost Limit and Total Allocation

MDE will negotiate with local providers to increase the local administrative cost above the five percent WIA limit. Funds for administration include planning, administration, personnel development, and interagency coordination. As required by federal law, MDE will set aside 82.5 percent of its federal Title II allocation for local programs' distribution (direct service).

(ii) Describe the process to show that public notice was given of the availability of Federal funds to eligible recipients and the procedures for submitting applications to the State, including approximate time frames for the notice and receipt of applications. (§231(c))

MDE will announce the availability of funds through Minnesota's *State Register*, Web-based communications, and direct mailing of application materials to all known eligible providers who participated in prior competitions or who contacted MDE and asked to be placed on the request for proposal (RFP) mailing list. Grant application workshops will be held in three regions of the State, and notice for these workshops will be made available using the processes stated above. The annual timeframe for the notice and receipt of applications is as follows:

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March 10-15	Minnesota's <i>State Register</i> notice prepared and submitted
March 25-30	Grant application packet/RFP prepared
April 1-30	Regional grant application workshops held
June 1	Applications due
June 15-30	Funding awards made

(iii) Describe how the eligible agency will use funds made available under Section 222(a)(2) for State leadership activities. (§223(a))

State leadership funds will be used to support and promote the effective delivery of Adult Basic Education (ABE). Some State leadership funds are used within MDE to support activities carried out by State ABE staff and other funds are designated for use by contracted supplemental service providers. Annually, a supplemental service provider RFP is prepared and nonprofit organizations submit proposals to MDE. Below is a description of the major supplemental service providers that have been successful in receiving State leadership funding over the past five years and are expected to continue to serve in this capacity given stable federal State leadership funding.

The Literacy Training Network

The Literacy Training Network (LTN) was developed to assist MDE in implementing the goals of *Minnesota's Unified Plan* for adult education and to help empower ABE staff to discover, master, and implement effective adult education practices. Staff development activities are conducted through the LTN under a contract with the ABE section of MDE. The LTN is a valued program within the University of St. Thomas.

The Minnesota Literacy Council

A major supplemental service provider that receives State leadership funding is the Minnesota Literacy Council (MLC). The MLC is a nonprofit, Statewide volunteer literacy organization located in St. Paul, Minnesota. As a supplemental service provider, the MLC uses State leadership funds for the following activities:

- Conducts tutor training for ABE-funded programs
- Maintains a literacy materials library and resource lending center
- Provides literacy technology training and technical assistance

- Maintains literacy program websites
- Promotes literacy activities and understanding Statewide
- Maintains and operates the Minnesota Literacy Hotline service
- Supports the ABE-sponsored program for delivering online instruction to ABE students making the transition to post-secondary education

Special Needs Organizations

Three nonprofit entities are funded using State leadership resources:

- The Learning Disabilities Association provides services, programming, and technical assistance to ABE providers who serve adults with learning disabilities.
- The Communication Services for the Deaf provides services, programming, and technical assistance to ABE providers who serve adults with hearing loss.
- Robbinsdale Special Needs Project provides services, programming, and technical assistance to ABE providers who serve adults with physical, neurological, sensory, and visual disabilities.

See Table F.2 for other major activities supported by State Leadership resources.

(iv) Describe the steps the eligible agency will take to ensure direct and equitable access, as required in section 231(c). (§224(b)(12))

MDE ensures that all eligible providers have direct and equitable access to apply for grants and contracts. MDE requires all WIA Section 231 and 225 eligible providers to use the same application and application process so that applications can be judged by the same review and scoring criteria. Review teams of ABE practitioners, community education specialists, and State ABE staff are formed to evaluate and rate applications. The recommendations of the review panel are forwarded to the State director of adult education for review and approval.

MDE uses several steps to ensure that there is direct and equitable access to the grant funds. In order to be eligible for WIA Section 231, 225, and 223 funding consideration, all currently funded providers, public schools, and all other

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Table F.2 - Other Major Activities Supported by State Leadership Resources

Activity	Focus
Workforce Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide incentives for ABE providers to expand their capacity to deliver workforce education services. Establish and support a professional development system within the workforce education arena. Monitor the State requirement that all ABE programs must have a memorandum of understanding with their local WorkForce Center. Promote the development of more linkages with employers to provide an understanding of the requirements of specific jobs, volunteer opportunities, job shadowing experiences, and internships. Actively promote the integration of workforce-related materials and resources in literacy instruction. Work with other State agencies to develop linkages for cooperative planning and workforce education. Develop and build connections with Minnesota State Colleges and Universities to communicate the basic skill services ABE can provide and to strengthen referrals and support from their system into the ABE system (and vice versa). Work with post-secondary institutions to do cooperative training in workforce education.
ESL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide three to four intensive Statewide seminars/workshops for ESL practitioners annually and present a minimum of five shorter workshops to audiences within ABE, human services, or community services. Content typically includes ESL instructional methodology and best practices and focus on issues in the field such as welfare reform, citizenship, family literacy, and workforce education. Annually, provide technical assistance to the field regarding the implementation of State and federal policies and reporting requirements (12 inquiries a week). Conduct research with local employers and job training entities to ascertain the current needs of the State labor market. Integrate this information into ESL curriculum modules. Promote workforce education and provide Statewide training (two to three per year) for local staff to support this endeavor. Consult with business staff who wish to organize onsite programs, and/or refer them to appropriate ABE programs. Catalog names of workforce providers and compile best practices. Articulate a service plan between ABE and post-secondary institutions serving ESL learners. Coordinate assessment efforts to define common levels. Guide local efforts to organize referral systems in the community so that students have access to appropriate programs.
Family Literacy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide an annual three-day Statewide family literacy conference that provides pertinent information including best practices, new information and resources, research, and trends in the field of family literacy. Provide one to three Statewide, one-day workshops to enhance skill development in new areas in the family literacy field. Consult with adult educators, early childhood educators, and parenting educators regarding the development and continuation of effective family literacy programs and respond to all requests for assistance. Provide information to communities to develop community-based family literacy programs Statewide. Provide consultative services to ABE program providers regarding questions about workforce education and its implementation onsite and its integration into ABE teaching. Provide ongoing support for the development of curriculum that incorporates building reading comprehension skills through parenting and family-related reading materials. Support the development of creative and systematic curriculum that enhances adult learners' previous knowledge and provides them with opportunities to learn in the classroom and transfer their learning to their daily life. Develop curriculum that integrates employability skills into basic skills instruction.
ABE Program Management and Administration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Annually provide three two-day data management workshops for local consortia staff. Workshop content would include required data elements, data collection procedures, and use of program management software. Annually conduct two to four training sessions at Statewide workshops regarding reporting and accountability requirements, assessment, and data management. Respond to written and verbal requests for assistance regarding assessment, data collection, and reporting (approximately 20 inquiries per week). Maintain a website that includes State policies and procedures regarding assessment, data collection, and reporting. Facilitate consortium staff communications by maintaining online discussion forums regarding assessment, data management, and reporting. Develop and maintain an ABE Statewide student record system. The system will include individual student-level demographic, participation, and outcome data.

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identified eligible agencies receive a grant application packet. This includes all known community-based organizations, community colleges, libraries, literacy councils, public housing authorities, and any other provider that is eligible under WIA Section 203(5). MDE publishes a notice for RFPs in Minnesota's *State Register* and in other Statewide publications for the availability of funding in all categories.

During the initial WIA Section 231 and 225 grant application submission time, any eligible agency that contacts MDE with an interest in participating will be provided the information needed. After the initial year, any new interested agency will be added to the list of potential new providers. In addition to the general distribution of the WIA Section 231 and 225 application packets, MDE will post a notice of the availability of funding in Minnesota's *State Register* and on the website maintained by MDE. Also, information will be distributed at conferences, workshops, and other activities where potential eligible providers are in attendance. MDE will ensure that all eligible providers have direct and equitable access to apply for grant, and the same grant announcement process and application process will be used for all eligible providers in the State.

At the present time, Minnesota ABE maintains one of the highest community-based organization (CBO) and faith-based organization (FBO) involvement systems in the nation. Over twenty CBOs and FBOs receive funding through the Title II system either directly through MDE or through a Title II-funded ABE provider. Many more work closely with the ABE system and receive support and technical assistance. Approximately 20 percent of the State's learner contact hours during 2005-2006 were delivered through CBOs and FBOs.

(e) Food Stamp Employment and Training, estimate the total cost of the State's E&T program and identify the source of funds according to the format for Table 5, Planned Fiscal Year Costs, contained in the most current release of "The Handbook on Preparing State Plans for Food Stamp Employment and Training Program."

Minnesota's federal fiscal year (FFY) 2007 Food Support Employment and Training (FSET) budget is projected at

\$6,674,635. Of this amount, \$3,991,635 are federal funds, of which \$1,308,635 is 100 percent grant monies and the remainder is 50 percent federal financial participation funds. All other funds are State-appropriated funds eligible for federal financial participation.

(f) TANF, indicate the name, address, and EIN number of the TANF administering agency and estimate for each quarter of the fiscal year by percentage the amount of TANF grant that it wishes to receive.

The Temporary Assistance For Needy (TANF) Families administering agency is:

Minnesota Department of Human Services
P.O. Box 64951
St. Paul, MN 55164-0951
EIN 1416007162B5

Minnesota plans to receive its TANF grant in even increments of 25 percent each quarter.

(g) Vocational Rehabilitation:

(i) Describe how the State will utilize funds reserved for the development and implementation of innovative approaches to expand and improve the provision of vocational rehabilitation services to individuals with disabilities under the State Plan, particularly individuals with the most significant disabilities. (§101(a)(18)(B))

Vocational Rehabilitation/Rehabilitation Services - General

Approximately 5.5 percent of Minnesota's vocational rehabilitation (VR) appropriation is 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. The activities and the categories of disability populations that follow are served by these funds. The cultural and ethnic minority populations served with innovation and expansion funds are separately described in *Minnesota's Unified Plan*, as are transition activity, outreach, and service to diverse

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cultural and ethnic populations, and activity related to the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Each of these activities has been undertaken to improve employment outcomes for persons with the most significant disabilities.

State Rehabilitation Council

Monthly meetings of the State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) in FFY05 and FFY06 heightened awareness for council members of their oversight and consultative roles; increased their participation in development of the VR State plan; and, improved organizational process for carrying out customer satisfaction study and the joint development of program goals and priorities. This work continues. A strategic goal has been adopted by RS-VR and the SRC for 2007-2010 to increase the effectiveness of council participation in the work of the agency. Measurable methods for accomplishing this are in development as this plan is submitted.

Persons with Mental Illness

Collaborative activity at State and local levels between VR and the Minnesota Department of Human Services (DHS) Mental Health Division continue to build supports and services for persons with serious mental illness, who now comprise 32 percent of the VR program's total caseload and 29 percent of employment outcomes.

Six innovative projects for persons with serious mental illness are funded in both urban and rural areas of the State. One project focuses on mental illness self-management by combining wellness recovery action planning with vocational planning and employment supports. A new project focuses on integration of VR staff into assertive community treatment (ACT) teams. The Ramsey County ACT project will create a model for VR and county mental health collaboration predicated on evidence-based practices of ACT that can be replicated Statewide.

Four additional projects in rural and urban Minnesota are based on evidence-based practice of supported employment (EBP-SE). Thirty earlier such projects made a transition to extended services funding through the RS Extended Employment-Serious Mental Illness (EE-SMI) program. These programs demonstrate methods for providing SE and are reported in the comprehensive *Report on Employment and Support Service Needs of*

Persons with Mental Illness in Minnesota, published jointly and updated biannually since December 2000 by RS-VR and the DHS Mental Health Division.

VR's interagency collaborative agreement with DHS will guide collaborative efforts regarding persons with mental illness. Joint activities on the State level include joint management team meetings, reviews of grant applications and existing programs, joint participation in the DEED/DHS Pathways to Employment Project (Minnesota's Medicaid Infrastructure Grant) and joint staff training. Local-level activities include VR staff membership on county mental health advisory committees, in local interagency cooperative agreements, and participation in adult mental health systems initiative implementation committees. RS-VR is also represented on the State of Minnesota Mental Health Advisory Council and the Governor's Interagency Task Force on ending long-term homelessness.

A five-year partnership with the Dartmouth Psychiatric Research Center and the DHS Mental Health Division has been funded by a Johnson and Johnson Community Health Programs Grant. Grant activity focuses on fidelity to evidence-based practice of SE and to develop sustainable SE practices and funding sources for persons with SMI. This grant will guide the delivery of interagency services through FFY09.

Acquired and Traumatic Brain Injury

Needs analysis demonstrates that more Minnesotans with brain injury could benefit from VR services than are being served. Approximately 62,472 Minnesotans of working age live with brain injury. Historically, the VR program serves approximately 1,300 persons with brain injury annually. Each VR team has the option of providing specialized services through the designation of specific counselors as traumatic brain injury (TBI) resource persons. Professional development of VR counselors is encouraged through dispersal of information on research and trends, training, and professional networking. Collaboration was promoted through participation in bimonthly TBI case manager meetings, monthly Brain Injury Community Committee meetings, and consultation with VR counselors. Research was encouraged through participation in quarterly meetings with the Mayo TBI Model Systems Advisory Committee and the Minnesota Trauma Data Bank Advisory Committee.

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Persons who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing

Through 25 specialized staff located throughout the State, a grant to the Minnesota Employment Center (MEC) for people who are deaf or hard of hearing, and training and technical assistance to community rehabilitation programs (CRPs), the VR program will meet the specific needs of customers who are deaf or hard of hearing. Each VR team has a designated specialist counselor assigned to work with customers who are hard of hearing or late-deafened. In addition, staff specialists working with deaf customers are located in the Minneapolis-St. Paul metropolitan area, Brainerd, Duluth, Faribault, Rochester, Winona, Mankato, Marshall, Moorhead, St. Cloud, and St. Peter. Ongoing community liaison and advisory relationships will be maintained with the Minnesota Commission Serving Deaf and Hard of Hearing People, the DHS Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services Division, and MEC. A rehabilitation program specialist in the administrative office will address public inquiries about hearing loss, assistive technologies, and related community resources.

A \$120,000 VR grant, managed by RS-VR, will continue the MEC partnership among Rise, Inc., and Lifetrack Resources. MEC is a key provider for vocational services to deaf and hard of hearing customers in the Twin Cities metropolitan area. Service in greater Minnesota has been augmented through technical assistance to CRPs. MEC will continue its support services for traditionally underserved or "low functioning" deaf individuals. A new collaboration will provide EE services to deaf and hard of hearing residents in St. Louis, Cook, and Itasca Counties.

RS-VR provides ongoing support for bimonthly community meetings of occupational communication specialists (OCSs) who serve persons with hearing loss. An interdepartmental collaboration, the quad-agency agreement among DHS, DEED, MDE, and the Department of Health supervises the activities of the DHS Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services Division. An interagency agreement clarifies the procedures, purposes, and responsibilities of the participating agencies with the shared goal of assisting in the development and implementation of interagency systems to meet the needs of deaf, DeafBlind, and hard of hearing adults, children, and their families. Important relationships will be sustained with the Minnesota Association of Deaf Citizens, the Minnesota Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf,

the Minnesota Chapter of Hearing Loss Association of America, the Midwest Center for Postsecondary Outreach, the Minnesota Resource Center Deaf/Hard of Hearing, the Minnesota State Academy for the Deaf, and Northstar Academy.

Persons in Receipt of SSDI and SSI

The Ticket-to-Work and Work Incentives Improvement Act was enacted to improve services and increase choices for persons receiving Social Security Administration benefits. Advanced training for counselors and the availability of work incentives specialists increase the likelihood that persons receiving Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) and Supplemental Security Income (SSI) benefits will achieve self-sufficiency while protecting their public health care benefits when needed.

Minnesota Business Leadership Network and Other Business Community Initiatives

VR participates in activity to enlist the business community as a collaborative partner, seeking a widespread business understanding that Minnesotans with disabilities are an important part of the Statewide solution to employers' workforce needs. VR participation as a provider member of the Minnesota Business Leadership Network will build the influence and visibility of the VR program among the State's major employers. DEED's business services specialists will target WorkForce Center marketing efforts to develop relationships that foster employment of persons with disabilities. RS-VR provides technical assistance and training for this common effort. Five business services specialists have expertise in issues related to disability and are funded by the VR program. In addition, VR placement staff working exclusively on behalf of VR customers was increased from 30 to 35. VR placement coordinators are also active members of DEED's business services teams.

RS-VR will continue to participate in the development and implementation of a national VR-business network, labeled the NET (National Employment Team). This partnership with the Council of State Administrators of Vocational Rehabilitation is an effort to coordinate VR programs nationally to identify and meet the recruitment needs of corporations with a workforce based in many states. An RS-VR program specialist is the designated point of contact for NET in Minnesota and has served on

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the national Institute on Rehabilitation Issues panel on VR-business partnership. The NET is currently implementing software to share employer profiles and other information so that all State agencies can work from common information.

Literacy as the Path to Employment

This ongoing project is a collaborative model for improving the literacy levels, future employment, and earnings of individuals with disabilities in St. Paul and Minneapolis. The project uses the Wilson Reading System as its curriculum and establishes a collaboration among RS-VR, the University of Minnesota-Institute on Community Integration, and the Minnesota Literacy Council. When completed, the project is expected to disclose new strategies for addressing literacy as a barrier to employment of individuals with disabilities and to convey the importance of VR customer literacy to VR employment outcomes.

Access

Minnesota's innovation and expansion activity addresses identified and potential barriers to access that are associated with cultural and ethnic status, specific disability, and receipt of SSDI, SSI, and other public benefits. This activity addresses program access and adherence to employment non-discrimination principles that also address requirements of Section 427 of the General Education Provisions Act. Access to VR services, WorkForce Centers, CRPs, Centers for Independent Living (CILs), and other service providers requires a strategic vision and ongoing action. The RS-VR approach seeks partnerships with other public and private entities to increase the access of individuals with disabilities to VR and other employment services. It has also engaged organizations that have not historically addressed issues of access.

Training ensures that RS staff know key ADA and Minnesota Human Rights Act (MHRA) concepts and are able to use appropriate resources to address disability law issues. Program access relating to CRPs and CILs is supported through use of a three-page ADA monitoring tool developed to assist these organizations self-assess and address their ADA and MHRA responsibilities. CRPs and CILs in Minnesota completed a comprehensive ADA

review process and now complete a one-page ADA review document periodically as part of the process for renewing their operating agreements. The DEED document, *CRP Guidelines on Auxiliary Aids and Services*, assists RS and CRP staff in facilitating effective communication for all customers. Community partner staff are kept informed of training opportunities, legal issue updates, and community resources to assist them in staying current on issues of customer access and participation.

Rehabilitation Technology

Rehabilitation technology, also referred to as assistive technology, is a consideration for VR customers at each stage of their rehabilitation process when it contributes to an employment or independent living outcome. Incorporation of rehabilitation technology into the assessment and planning can enhance employment outcomes, including higher-paying jobs. Staff surveys and comprehensive case reviews indicate that rehabilitation technology is an underused tool in the development of employment plans and demonstrate the need for training and coaching to increase its use by both experienced and new staff.

Implementation of the VR *Rehabilitation Technology Services Plan* brings focus to rehabilitation technology activity, and honors the work of VR program counselors serving as technology liaison to their own VR teams. A revised plan to train staff to required levels of skill and ability, establish resources for staff information, and improve collection of data on the provision of rehabilitation technology services is being implemented. Onsite assistance to field staff and VR customers will increase in frequency. Placement coordinators will continue to participate in planning sessions on the use of assistive technology in placement and as a part of WorkForce Center business services consultation.

Staff can access regularly updated information on a rehabilitation technology page on DEED's website while meeting with customers and employers. During 2007-2010, broad-based training on the application of rehabilitation technology during plan development will continue. In addition, advanced training will be developed to prepare selected staff as certified assistive technology practitioners. These practitioners will serve regions of the State, making technology services and

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expertise geographically accessible to staff, increasing the likelihood of their use in planning and implementation of employment plans.

Vocational Rehabilitation/State Services for the Blind - Blind Agency

During FFY06, State Services for the Blind (SSB) used Title I funds under the Rehabilitation Act for innovation and expansion efforts in support of the State Rehabilitation Council for the Blind (SRC-B). Title I funds under the Rehabilitation Act in the amount of \$15,063 were spent in support of SRC-B full-council meetings and for meetings of council committees and task forces. The initial resource plan that was approved by the SRC-B and agreed to by SSB was for \$18,000 for 2006. The approved SRC-B resource plan for FFY07 is \$18,000. SSB resources for support of the Statewide Independent Living Council come from Title VII of the Rehabilitation Act rather than Title I funds of the Rehabilitation Act. SSB will continue to use Title I funds for innovation and expansion in support of the SRC-B during FFY08.

(ii) Describe the quality, scope, and extent of supported employment services authorized under the Act to be provided to individuals who are eligible under the Act to receive the services. (§625(b)(3))

Vocational Rehabilitation/Rehabilitation Services - General

Supported employment services promote the integration of people with the most significant disabilities into the Minnesota workplace. The use of funds from Title VI of the Rehabilitation Act initially allowed for expansion of SE services and outcomes. Currently, the demand for SE exceeds the capacity of systems in Minnesota to provide the extended ongoing supports needed. RS-VR continues to work cooperatively with customers, family members, advocates, employers, service providers; and State, county, and local agencies to improve and expand the use of SE Statewide.

Approximately 2,500 VR customers were served in FFY06 with SE funds. VR uses all federal funds authorized under Title VI-B in addition to Title I of the Rehabilitation Act funds to purchase services for customers on a fee-

for-service basis. Funds are distributed to field office counselors to purchase needed services for customers with a vocational goal that requires ongoing supports. Title VI-B funds are administered and tracked separately in accordance with federal requirements.

The quality of SE services is given assurance by a State rule requirement that vendors from whom more than \$20,000 in services are purchased annually must be fully Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF)-accredited or have applied for accreditation and be actively pursuing that credential. In addition, vendors providing services under \$20,000 annually must be granted a limited-use provider status by RS under which providers agree to meet professional standards of service.

The state's major challenge regarding SE is the provision of extended ongoing supports. 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' Developmental Disabilities Division provides daily training and habilitation services that may include such extended supports. People with mental illness may receive work-related support through the State Comprehensive Mental Health Act. Each county determines what level of service will be provided. The Coordinated Employability projects described elsewhere in *Minnesota's Unified Plan* represent a collaborative effort by RS to innovate service delivery, including SE to this population.

RS-VR collaboration with the State's EE program contributes significantly to the quality, scope, and effectiveness of the State's overall SE efforts. When developing a customer's employment plan, the customer and VR counselor identify the time-limited services to be provided by RS, the expected extended services needed, and the source of those extended services; this may include natural supports. RS-VR is a partner in several State-level agreements that facilitate provision of these needed extended services.

RS-EE develops contracts with each accredited 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

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employment hours that will be funded by the EE program. The CRPs also provide time-limited SE services. SE funds are distributed on a fee-for-service basis. Fee schedules are developed with each program to specify costs on an individual basis.

The EE program provides \$11 million per year to CRPs to support ongoing vocational services through long-term employment and supported employment. Well over half of these State EE funds provide extended ongoing services to people working in supported employment. VR and EE programs work together to coordinate and make best use of time-limited and ongoing funds to serve persons in supported employment. Part of the funding is dedicated to providing extended supports to persons with serious and persistent mental illness, since it is difficult to obtain other funds for ongoing SE services for these populations. Additionally, a total annual State appropriation of \$465,000 administered by RS-VR and RS-EE provides for ongoing supports for persons who are deaf or hard of hearing. The EE system provides ongoing work supports to approximately 6,500 individuals in SE annually. Most of these individuals received time-limited VR services prior to entering supported employment.

SE funds expended on an active VR case under an employment plan with a goal of SE are used to match federal VR funding. Only cases that meet this criteria are used for the federal match. These cases are identified by the RS information management system as active VR program customers with SE goals who are also served by the EE program. RS then applies to the federal match only expenditures for employment and employment-related services from the time a plan is initiated to the time a case is closed. This fiscal coordination of the VR and EE programs is consistent with the provisions of 34 CFR 361.53, which states that the State agency may provide for facilities and services, including services provided at rehabilitation facilities, which may be expected to contribute substantially to the rehabilitation of a group of individuals.

RS and the DHS Mental Health Division also collaborate on special projects for the provision of community-based employment for adults with serious and persistent mental illness. The projects are designed to provide functional assessment, individualized career planning, job skill acquisition, job placement, job development, and the

provision of non-time-limited supports necessary to maintain and advance in employment. All recipients of the grants are required to demonstrate collaboration with counties, the local community support program, RS, and providers of employment services such as CRPs, regional treatment centers, and community mental health centers.

Vocational Rehabilitation/State Services for the Blind - Blind Agency

Minnesota SSB's 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 VR 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 SE plan. The money is administered and tracked, in accordance with federal requirements, through SSB's electronic tracking system.

During FFY06, SSB provided services to 54 individuals under a plan for supported employment. It is anticipated that approximately the same number of individuals will receive services under an SE plan during FFY07 and FFY08. The total expenditures for 2006 were \$93,503. If current efforts to secure funding for ongoing supports for individuals who are DeafBlind are successful, future estimates of the number of individuals served under a plan for SE could increase.

SSB purchases needed services from CRPs. Those purchases are governed by operating agreements with either SSB or the general VR agency for the specific services required.

During the development of the triennial needs assessment completed in 2006, expenditure patterns for various customer groups were reviewed. Tables F.3 and F.4 list the primary services provided to individuals in SE plans as well as the primary expenditure categories. This pattern of service provision is expected to remain similar in 2007 and 2008.

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Title VI, Part B

SSB case service expenditures under an SE plan show the following pattern for 2005 for the top ten categories of purchased services. Not all case service expenditures are shown here.

Table F.3 - 2005 Expenditure Rankings for Services Provided

EXPENDITURE RANKINGS FOR SERVICES PROVIDED	2005 RANK ORDER	2005 EXPENDITURES
Adjustment to Blindness Training	1	\$39,412
On the Job Training/Job Coach	2	10,144
Health Services	3	7,864
Maintenance	4	5,487
Job Placement	5	2,851
Vocational Evaluation/Assessment	6	1,825
Adaptive Equipment	7	1,622
Transportation	8	993
Vocational Education/Business College	9	776
Rehabilitation Technical Assessment	10	670
TOTAL EXPENDITURES		\$72,976

SSB service provision, the services provided to the most number of people, under an SE plan shows the following pattern for 2005. It is a duplicate count of customers since most receive more than one purchased service.

Table F.4 - 2005 Service Provision Rankings

SERVICE PROVISION RANKINGS	2005 RANK ORDER	2005 NUMBER OF CUSTOMERS
Adjustment to Blindness Training	1	10
OJT/Job Coach	2	8
Job Placement	3	7
Transportation	3	7
Miscellaneous Supplies	5	5
Maintenance	5	5
Health Services	7	4
Vocational Evaluation/Assessment	7	4
Adaptive Equipment	9	2
Other Non-Medical	9	2
TOTAL NUMBER OF CUSTOMERS		32 <i>(unduplicated)</i>

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(iii) In the event that vocational rehabilitation services cannot be provided to all eligible individuals with disabilities in the State who apply for services, indicate the order to be followed in selecting eligible individuals to be provided vocational rehabilitation services and provide the justification for the order. (§101(a)(5)(A)-(B))

Table F.5 - Vocational Rehabilitation Individual Definitions

Definitions	
Eligibility for VR Services	In general, a person is eligible for VR services when they have a physical or mental impairment that constitutes or results in a substantial impediment to employment, and they require VR services to prepare for, secure, retain, or regain employment.
Qualifications for VR Services	In general, a person is qualified for VR services when they are eligible and found to have serious functional limitations due to a severe impairment and wish to obtain, retain, or regain employment.
Service Priority	The order of selection establishes service priority based on the number of functional areas in which a person has serious 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.
Functional Areas	Applicants have a serious limitation if their functioning in an area is so restricted that services or accommodations not routinely needed for most individuals are required for the applicant to prepare for, secure, retain, or regain employment. The functional areas in which applicants are evaluated are mobility, self-direction, communication, work skills, interpersonal skills, work tolerance, and self-care.
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.
Four Service Priority Categories	<p>Persons are served in order of 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.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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.

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Table F.5 (continued) - Vocational Rehabilitation Individual Definitions

Most Severe (Significant) Disability	<p>An eligible customer who has:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A severe physical or mental impairment that results in a serious functional limitation in terms of employment in three or more functional areas and whose VR can be expected to require multiple VR services over an extended period of time. • One or more 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. • Another disability or combination of disabilities determined on the basis of an assessment for determining eligibility and VR needs to cause comparable serious functional limitation.
Severe (Significant) Disability	<p>An eligible customer who has:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A severe physical or mental impairment that results in a serious functional limitation in terms of employment in one or two functional areas and whose VR can be expected to require multiple VR services over an extended period of time. • One or more 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. • Another disability or combination of disabilities determined on the basis of an assessment for determining eligibility and VR needs to cause comparable serious functional limitation.

Vocational Rehabilitation/Rehabilitation Services - General

State and federal resources allocated annually for the Minnesota VR program are not sufficient to serve all Minnesotans who are potentially eligible or who are found eligible for the program. As the Rehabilitation Act requires, Minnesota has established an order of selection which describes who will be served first when the program cannot serve everyone who is eligible.

Determination of eligibility and qualification for service in individual cases is based on the applicable Minnesota rule and the *Minnesota Vocational Rehabilitation Policy and Procedure Manual*. Persons requiring the most-precise technical information about eligibility and qualification for VR services should consult those sources.

Before October 1, 1993, all Minnesotans eligible for VR services could receive service promptly. Since October 1, 1993, when the order of selection was implemented, persons newly qualifying in priority category four have

not been served. Individuals qualifying in this category are offered information and referral regarding alternate services, including core services through WorkForce Centers.

As of January 1, 2007, priority categories one, two, and three remain open Statewide. Applicants for service found eligible in these categories do not experience a delay in service.

Vocational Rehabilitation/State Services for the Blind - Blind Agency

An approved order of selection plan has been in place since December 19, 1998. It is available for implementation but, as of the beginning of FFY07, it is not operationalized. If it becomes necessary to implement the following approved plan for implementing order of selection, public meetings will be held throughout the State relative to that issue.

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SSB will determine eligibility for services for all applicants within 60 days of their application. SSB-VR will provide services to all eligible individuals until a reduction in services must be imposed due to a shortage of funds, staff, or other resources. In the event such a shortage occurs, SSB-VR will implement an order of selection for services for individuals who are found

eligible on and after the implementation date. Services will, consistent with federal law, continue to be provided without restriction to all individuals who have begun to receive services under an employment plan prior to the implementation date of the order of selection. There will be no restriction of services to individuals receiving post-employment services.

Table F.6 - State Services for the Blind Individual Definitions

Eligible Individuals	Individuals with a disability who require VR services to prepare for, secure, retain, or regain employment. For SSB-VR, an eligible individual must have: visual acuity of 20/60 or less in the better eye with best correction; a limitation of the field of vision not greater than 20 degrees; the absence of at least one full quadrant of binocular vision; or a physical condition or progressive loss that will more likely than not result in legal blindness. The visual impairment must constitute or result in a substantial impediment to employment and the individual can benefit in terms of an employment outcome from VR services.
Functional Limitations	Serious limitations in life skills in one or more of the following areas: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mobility - the ability to travel safely and comfortably in any environment • Communication - the ability to effectively handle information through spoken or written words, sign, braille, concepts, gestures, or any other means • Self-care - the ability to manage one's own basic tasks of daily living in the areas of personal hygiene and grooming, and eating and meal preparation • Self-direction - the ability to plan, initiate, problem-solve, and carry-out goal-directed activities • Work skills - the ability to effectively perform tasks required for a particular job with or without accommodations • Interpersonal skills - the ability to make and maintain personal, family, and community relationships • Job seeking skills - the ability to conduct a successful job search
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.

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Table F.6 (continued) - State Services for the Blind Individual Definitions

Individuals with the Most Significant Disabilities	Eligible individuals who: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have a severe physical or mental impairment that results in serious limitations in terms of an employment outcome in <i>five or more</i> of the following functional areas: mobility, communication, self-care, self-direction, work skills, interpersonal skills, or job seeking skills; and Are expected to require multiple VR services over an extended period of time; and Meet the definition contained in "list of physical or mental disabilities."
Individuals with More Significant Disabilities	Eligible individuals who: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have a significant physical or mental impairment that results in serious limitations in terms of an employment outcome in <i>more than two and less than five</i> of the following functional areas: mobility, communication, self-care, self-direction, work skills, interpersonal skills, or job seeking skills; and Are expected to require multiple VR services over an extended period of time; and Meet the definition contained in "list of physical or mental disabilities."
Other Individuals with Disabilities	All eligible individuals who do not meet the definition of "individuals with the most significant disabilities" or the definition of "individuals with more significant disabilities."
Implementation Determination	The SSB director monitors the budget, referrals, staffing levels, and caseload size to determine the necessity of implementing the order of selection plan (an approved plan has been available since December 1998). If possible, the director will make this decision prior to the start of a fiscal year. Examples of reasons to invoke an order of selection are a 20 percent reduction of staff with no ability to fill vacancies, such as in the case of a hiring freeze; 75 percent of case service funds are encumbered prior to April 1 in any given fiscal year; or the average caseload exceeds 150 individuals per counselor. The SRC-B will be consulted and public meetings will be held throughout the State prior to implementation.

A waiting list will be established and maintained, by category and by application date, for all eligible individuals. Within categories, individuals will be served on a first-come, first-served basis. Individuals in a particular category will be served in order of their date of application for services, with those persons in a particular category with early application dates being served before persons in the same category with later application dates. Based on availability of funds, individuals in category A will be served first. Individuals in other categories will be served in descending order (from category A down through category C) based on the availability of funds. Order of selection requirements will be applied uniformly throughout the State.

Priority categories for services under an order of selection:

- Eligible individuals with the most significant disabilities
- Eligible individuals with more significant disabilities
- Other eligible individuals

Implementation

At the time of application, customers will be informed of the State's policy regarding order of selection for services. Definitions of priority categories and the criteria used in assigning individuals to these categories will be provided to the individual in writing and will be explained by SSB-VR staff. If the applicant is determined eligible for services, the rehabilitation counselor will assign that individual to the highest priority category for which he or she is qualified. The category and the rationale for the decision will be documented in the case record along with a detailed description of how the functional limitations restrict the individual's capacity to obtain, maintain, or prepare for employment. The individual will be notified, in writing, as to the category he or she has been assigned and which categories are currently being served; the right to appeal that decision; and information about the Client Assistance program.

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An individual, once assigned to a specific category, cannot be moved from that category unless there are changes in the individual's disability that would warrant such a change. In that case, the individual will be advised in writing of the change that will be made, the right to appeal the decision, and information about the Client Assistance program. Individuals who have not yet begun to receive services under an individualized plan for employment prior to the date the order of selection is implemented will be advised, in writing, of the implementation and their classification, the right to appeal that decision, and information about the Client Assistance program.

The State will inform staff, customers, customer groups, referral resources, and vendors that an order of selection is being implemented. Regional supervisors in the Workforce Development Unit (WDU) of SSB-VR will be responsible for reviewing assignments to categories and monitoring the provision of services to individuals based on the principles of the order of selection. The WDU director will monitor the activities of the order of selection to determine if any changes need to be made in terms of the number of individuals served by opening or closing additional order of selection priority categories. Categories will be opened on the basis of the availability of resources. Individuals within categories will be served on a first-come, first-served basis as determined by the date of application for services.

Information and referral services will be made available and provided to all eligible individuals on a waiting list for services. Information and referral services are designed to ensure that individuals on a waiting list are provided accurate VR information and guidance, using appropriate modes of communication, to assist them in preparing for, securing, retaining, or regaining employment. Individuals will be appropriately referred to federal and State programs (other than the VR program), including other components of the Statewide workforce investment system, best suited to address the specific employment needs of the blind, visually impaired, or DeafBlind individual. An appropriate referral will include notifying the individual of the referral by SSB-VR to the agency carrying out the program; a specific point-of-contact within the agency carrying out the program; and information and advice regarding the most suitable services to assist the individual to prepare for, secure, retain, or regain employment.

Service Goals and Projected Outcomes

Prior to implementing an order of selection, the SSB director will prepare a projection of the service goals and projected outcomes for each category based on the best current information regarding available resources for the projected timeframe.



G. Activities to be Funded

1. For each of the programs in your Unified Plan, provide a general description of the activities the State will pursue using the relevant funding.

In answering the above question, if your Unified Plan includes:

(c) WIA Title I and Wagner-Peyser Act and/or Veterans Programs:

(i) Service Delivery - Describe the approaches the State will use to provide direction and support to Local Boards and the One-Stop Career Center delivery system on the strategic priorities to guide investments, structure business engagement, and inform service delivery approaches for all customers.

(§112(b)(17)(A))

The Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED) has taken several actions to provide direction and support to local workforce investment boards (LWIBs). The goal is to assist the LWIBs in accomplishing their demand-driven strategic goals.

DEED employs six regional administrators who are key to expanding the Minnesota WorkForce Center System's workforce and business services, providing leadership and technical assistance, driving capacity-building in the system, and coordinating workforce investment resources locally.

Serving as a focal point for DEED's locally delivered services, the regional administrators promote and develop sustained strategic partnerships to ensure that public workforce investment resources address regional economic needs. Specifically, the regional administrators maintain collaborative working relationships between DEED and the LWIBs and align the work of the LWIBs with the strategic initiatives of other regional organizations engaged in workforce development and economic development, including Minnesota State Colleges and Universities (MnSCU), the McKnight Foundation, Small Business Development Centers, Adult Basic Education (ABE), Minnesota Technology, Inc., and trade associations.

Minnesota's business services initiative is a key component of the State's transformation into a demand-driven workforce investment system. The positions of business services specialists were created to serve as single points of contact for business in the workforce development system; business services specialists have been hired, trained, and deployed in WorkForce Centers throughout the State. These specialists build business relationships with local business decision-makers, assess business needs, and identify business solutions. They work with their regional labor market analysts and their LWIBs to identify and then target key industries. WorkForce Center business services teams are coordinating business outreach, brainstorming solutions to business needs, and communicating business needs with staff and partners in career guidance and individual customer services. Business services specialists are engaged in regional economic development, workforce development, and education issues and initiatives.

DEED promotes the sharing of best practices among LWIBs. For example, the Annual Minnesota Development Conference, now focusing on the integration of workforce development and economic development, provides breakout sessions to share best practices. DEED's newsletter for LWIBs, *Positively Minnesota: Partners for Job Growth*, sent electronically to all LWIB members in the State, communicates DEED's vision and priorities to the LWIBs and highlights LWIB best practices from around the State. DEED's RAs attend LWIB meetings and regularly share best practices between LWIBs.

*1. One-Stop Service Delivery Strategies:
(§111(d)(2) and 112(b)(2))*

*a. How will the services provided by each of the required and optional One-Stop partners be coordinated and made available through the One-Stop system?
(§112(b)(8)(A))*

Minnesota's WorkForce Center System Strategic Action Plan provides guidance as to who provides and supports WorkForce Center services.

Minnesota's memoranda of understanding (MOUs) are agreements between the WorkForce Center partners and

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the LWIBs on the delivery of services, referrals, funding, etc. A sample [MOU template](#) is available on DEED's website. The intent of an MOU is to coordinate resources, prevent duplication, and ensure the effective and efficient delivery of workforce services.

b. How are youth formula programs funded under §128(b)(2)(A) integrated in the One-Stop system?

The youth services strategy fits into the overall vision and strategic direction for workforce development established by the LWIBs. Workforce Service Areas (WSAs) ensure that youth participants can plan employment and career paths using current regional labor market information, such as targeted growth industries in the region, in-demand occupations, and employers hiring for jobs with above average earnings. LWIBs provide youth services through a network of public and private nonprofit youth service providers and WorkForce Centers.

Many WorkForce Centers have a “youth zone,” a dedicated space that invites use by young people and has dedicated resources and curriculum for youth. Youth zone computers are marked with websites and special interest resources to answer questions from emerging workers.

DEED has implemented the Outreach to Schools - Career Guides pilot project, which is a partnership between the WSAs, LWIBs, youth councils, WorkForce Centers, and local educational agencies (including alternative schools). The project addresses an unmet need - delivering effective career counseling and labor market information (LMI) to the region's youth and families. Post-secondary students in counseling and related fields are trained as “career guides” and placed in high schools and alternative schools to bring career exploration, counseling, college information, and current LMI about in-demand occupations to thousands of youth each year. Career guides earn college credit and a wage or a stipend.

This pilot project raises local youth and parent customer awareness and usage of Minnesota's workforce development system, engages local workforce and economic development partners, and builds on the work of the LWIBs in identifying strategic industries and high-growth, in-demand occupations. More information can be found on DEED's [youth website](#).

c. What minimum service delivery requirements does the State mandate in a comprehensive One-Stop Centers or an affiliate site?

DEED mandates standard sets of services for WorkForce Centers. Job seekers receive information on careers, training, and community resources; skills assessment; job seeker orientation; eligibility determination; income support; career counseling; and case management. Every WorkForce Center is required to house a resource area that meets established standards. Minimum services to businesses include seminars, a skills-based list of job seekers, customized recruitment, local labor market information, and rapid response. These [minimum service delivery requirements](#) are posted online.

d. What tools and products has the State developed to support service delivery in all One-Stop Centers Statewide?

Web-based tools available to all persons with Internet access are:

- [Minnesota's Job Bank](#), a database maintained by DEED that job seekers access to list their resumes and search for job openings and employers access to list job openings and search for job candidates.
- The [Minnesota WorkForce Center website](#) directs users to employment-related and business-related resources available through the WorkForce Centers and DEED.
- [ISEEK](#) (Internet System for Education and Employment Knowledge), a website that provides access to career planning, job search, and education resources. DEED is a partner in this Statewide collaboration among education, employment and training, and business partners.
- [Creative Job Search](#), a comprehensive curriculum that teaches the skills needed to conduct a successful job search. This book was written with the help of professionals and job seekers throughout Minnesota and continues to be a highly regarded resource. In 2007, WorkForce Center staff and employment and training professionals from all over the State will begin the task of reviewing and updating a new edition. DEED is committed to providing a high-quality publication that continues to strive for excellence.

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- Answers to Your Job Search and Career Planning Questions, a sixteen-item questionnaire that identifies and directs users to the most relevant resource area and Web resources.

In addition to the above Web-based tools, other key tools available in the resource areas of WorkForce Centers include:

- Minnesota Career Information System software that integrates career assessment, occupational research, and education resource information
- WinWay Resume software
- Typing tutor software
- Focus on Ability, an online and/or CD-ROM-based training program to improve services to individuals with disabilities

e. What models/templates/approaches does the State recommend and/or mandate for service delivery in the One-Stop Centers? For example, do all One-Stop Centers have a uniform method of organizing their service delivery to business customers? Is there a common individual assessment process utilized in every One-Stop Center? Are all One-Stop Centers required to have a resource center that is open to anyone?

All WorkForce Centers have a resource area open to the public. Early in 2006, all resource area computers were installed with a registration screen that customers must log in before using the services in a resource area. DEED purchases and maintains the hardware and licensing of software so that each location provides personal computers with a customer interface designed to link quickly the user to relevant software and websites for job search, resume writing, business research, career planning, and education resources. Assistive technology is available for users who have disabilities. Staff assistance is available at all sites. Access to phones, fax, and copiers is available at all resource areas in support of job search activities. Also standard in all resource areas is a library of books, videos, and newspapers related to job search and career research, based on the core materials standards. Workshops on

resume writing, interview preparation, job search, and career planning are available at most WorkForce Centers.

DEED organizes and facilitates the Resource Area Advisory Team (RAAT). Composed of front-line resource area staff from across the State and DEED headquarters staff, this team provides guidance to DEED and LWIBs on resource area operations. The group maintains resource area quality and standards and is responsive to customer, staff, and leadership needs. Based on annual needs assessments, the team coordinates annual resource area staff training to maintain skills and awareness of new issues and tools. It also coordinates the annual purchase of new and replacement materials to refresh resource area libraries.

WorkForce Centers use the “customer service protocol” to simplify and clarify the process of assisting customers effectively in the resource areas. The steps are to greet the customer, assess needs and expectations with the customer, take action on expressed needs, and confirm customers’ needs were met. With the variation in resource areas, how each step is met differs depending on available staff, staff expertise, a customer’s computer comfort level, the specific needs or interests of the customer, etc. Staff are encouraged to find the language that serves the function of each step effectively for them. To conduct the needs assessment portion of the protocol, different locations have developed approaches that are meaningful for their sites. These approaches include providing the customer with a printed checklist of service options and a “menu of services” sign and brochure; or utilizing the online tool, Answers to Your Job Search and Career Planning Questions, a sixteen-item survey that identifies relevant Web-based and resource area tools and resources for the user.

Business services specialists within the WorkForce Centers build relationships with local business decision-makers, assess business needs, and identify business solutions. Business services specialists convene and facilitate WorkForce Center business services teams that include other partner employees who provide services to businesses. The goal of the WorkForce Center business services teams is to better serve business with an integrated, coordinated, and single point-of-contact approach to LWIBs’ targeted industries and employers.

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By the summer of 2007, DEED will launch a business services tracking database for use by the primary business units who directly work with business customers. All business units involved in the project want to electronically coordinate their business outreach, communicate needed services, record service delivery and referrals, and share business solutions. Business units and staff involved in this project include DEED's Business and Community Development Division, Workforce Development Division (including Minnesota Job Skills Partnership), Trade Office, business services specialists, the Minnesota Chamber of Commerce, and local business services teams that include partners in the WorkForce Centers. The Policy, Planning, and Measures Unit is active in this project to ensure that valid measures of the services to businesses can be calculated.

2. Workforce Information - A fundamental component of a demand-driven workforce investment system is the integration and application of the best available State and local workforce information including, but not limited to, economic data, labor market information, census data, private sources of workforce information produced by trade associations and others, educational data, job vacancy surveys, transactional data from job boards, and information obtained directly from businesses. (§§111(d)(8), 112(b)(1), and 134(d)(2)(E))

a. Describe how the State will integrate workforce information into its planning and decision-making at the State and local level, including State and Local Boards, One-Stop operations, and case manager guidance.

DEED's LMI Office produces a variety of materials in paper and online formats designed to help job seekers, employers, workforce development professionals, and LWIB members make informed employment and training decisions. These resources are available through all of Minnesota's WorkForce Centers and on DEED's [LMI website](#).

Minnesota's LWIBs use a diverse array of economic and LMI resources in their strategic planning processes to identify specific areas where they can devote their efforts and resources. For example, Minnesota's LWIBs rely upon LMI to identify key regional industries, occupations in-demand, or segments of the population that might represent pools of underutilized labor.

DEED's Regional Analysis Unit publishes regional reports that outline industry and occupational trends, labor force availability statistics, and other population demographic information that may affect labor utilization around Minnesota. These regional profiles give a broad view of the regional economy and provide the basis for future research on specific industry, occupation, or population groups that might be of interest to LWIBs.

In the local planning guidance distributed to LWIBs, DEED asks each LWIB to identify the high-demand, high-wage industries and occupations that are critical to local and regional economic vitality. In the local plans, LWIBs describe how this information will be communicated to career guidance counselors and other staff who work with job seekers. DEED has developed a methodology to assist LWIBs in identifying high-demand occupations and examining long-term employment projections and current wages.

A network of five regional labor market analysts stationed across the State work directly with LWIB members and staff to carry out specialized research to understand regional labor market needs and issues. Regional analysts present this information in the form of customized reports, presentations to LWIBs or their subcommittees, or in direct consultation with members and staff. They also provide consultation and training services to LWIBs and staff in accessing and interpreting LMI and learning about new and existing data products relevant to regional economies and labor markets. Training sessions that are particularly relevant:

- *Labor Market Intelligence for Decision-Making*, designed for employment counselors and other professionals who assist persons in career planning and finding employment; topics include industry employment, current and future occupations in-demand, occupational wages, and career information tools.

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- *Labor Market Intelligence for Employer Services*, designed for Wagner-Peyser-funded business services specialists and other field staff who interact with employers; topics include commuting and labor availability, occupational wages, and occupational-demand information.

b. Describe the approach the State will use to disseminate accurate and timely workforce information to businesses, job seekers, and employment counselors, in easy to use formats that are readily accessible within One-Stop Career Centers and at remote locations such as libraries, schools, worksites, and at home.

Strategy for Workforce Information Delivery

DEED's LMI Office has an outreach strategy to extend awareness, access, and use of LMI. As a result, stakeholders are aware of its competitive advantage; i.e., LMI produces the official numbers and has access to microdata. Pursuant to this strategy, new workforce information products and services are communicated to the general public through proactive contact with news media; workforce development professionals through electronic communications, training sessions, presentations, and published materials; the business community through presentations, briefings, and seminars offered throughout the year; and all audiences through referral to the LMI and ISEEK websites and the LMI analyst helpline (888.234.1114).

In calendar year (CY) 2006, the LMI analyst helpline and regional analysts responded to 2,350 questions and requests for information and delivered over 260 presentations, briefings, and seminars. The majority of presentations were delivered to external audiences

(professional and trade associations, regional groups, conferences, and economic summits). Minnesota's LMI collection is available online. Most of the statistical products and reports can be found on DEED's [website](#). *Labor Market Intelligence for Decision-Making* can also be found at www.mncareers.org and www.ISEEK.org. In CY06, DEED's LMI website handled 1,517,900 visits (or user sessions).

LMI Delivery through the Minnesota's WorkForce Center System

WorkForce Center staff are notified of new online tools and resources through electronic communications and presentations from DEED's regional analysts. Printed reports and resources from Minnesota's LMI collection are required materials in the career resource areas of WorkForce Centers. Materials are also distributed, on request, to other employment service providers that are external from the WorkForce Center System.

Customized analysis and internal consulting services are also available to WorkForce Center staff through the regional analysts, who collaborate with local stakeholders and other researchers to develop new research and information resources. Recent projects include local labor market assessments and economic impact analyses requested by Dislocated Worker projects and economic development agencies.

Finally, DEED provides workforce development and economic development professionals with training on access and use of LMI resources. The half-day *Labor Market Intelligence for Decision-Making* and *Labor Market Intelligence for Employer Services* trainings have been offered for six years by DEED's regional analysts; 30 sessions of these trainings were offered in CY07. In addition, *Work the Numbers: Data Analysis for Economic Developers* was offered three times.

Table G.1 - Minnesota Workforce Information Delivery Measures

Measure	Measure Format	CY 2004	CY 2005	CY 2006
Requests Handled	Number	2,844	2,950	2,350
Website Visits (user sessions) to LMI	Number	1,554,600	1,715,100	1,517,900
Presentations, Trainings, and Briefings	Number	224	160	260

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c. Describe how the State's Workforce Information Core Products and Services Plan is aligned with the WIA State Plan to ensure that the investments in core products and services support the State's overall strategic direction for workforce investment.

Minnesota's Core Products and Services Plan is aligned with *Minnesota's Unified Plan* to ensure that the investments in core products and services support the State's overall strategic direction for workforce investment. Minnesota's workforce investment vision consists of the following points:

- Minnesota's businesses lead the world in innovation and are strong global competitors.
- Minnesota's workers lead the world in talent, productivity, and economic self-sufficiency.
- Minnesota's comprehensive education, employment, and economic development systems are aligned to maximize public investment.

Minnesota's LMI system supports *Minnesota's Unified Plan* by:

- Providing information on high-demand occupations and industries for career and business planning to students, job seekers, workforce system professionals, and businesses
- Providing information on the economy, including high-demand occupations and industries, so that workforce development professionals, educational planners, and policy makers can make better strategic decisions in support of the needs of Minnesota businesses
- Providing more and better local LMI including regional profiles, regional salary surveys, and regional job vacancy data
- Providing more and better LMI electronically through the LMI website and LMI customer e-mail lists
- Providing more and better LMI to the WorkForce Center System

DEED has five regional analysts stationed at WorkForce Centers across the State who provide a vital connection between LWIBs and the LMI Office, addressing local information and research requests. They also serve as

outreach agents, trainers, and experts on Minnesota's employment statistics system. Since passage of WIA, the regional analysts have worked with LWIBs to promote market-responsive service planning. The LMI Office director is a frequent presenter to the GWDC, providing LMI to address analytic, research design, and fact-finding requests.

d. Describe how State workforce information products and tools are coordinated with the national electronic workforce information tools including America's Career Information Network and Career Voyages.

The LMI Office collects occupational licensing data on an annual basis and provides this information to the National Crosswalk Service Center for inclusion in America's Career Information Network (CareerInfoNet). Other LMI (Occupational Employment Statistics, Local Area Unemployment Statistics, Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages, and Long-term Occupation and Industry Projections) is provided indirectly to CareerInfoNet through their corresponding federal program channels. CareerInfoNet, in turn, provides Career Voyages with LMI content via Web services. The LMI Office maintains a website and provides content development services for other State-level career information websites and hard-copy products. These resources provide links to the national tools as appropriate. LMI analysts act as an information and technical assistance resource on Bureau of Labor Statistics and Employment and Training Administration (ETA) programs for CareerInfoNet staff.

3. Adults and Dislocated Workers

a. Core Services. (§112(b)(17)(a)(i))

(i) Describe State strategies and policies to ensure adults and dislocated workers have universal access to the minimum required core services as described in §134(d)(2).

All WorkForce Centers must provide a staffed resource area to serve the public without regard for eligibility. Services available to the public must include:

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- Career exploration resources
- Information on supportive resources and other WorkForce Center services
- LMI from DEED
- Job listings (including Minnesota's Job Bank)
- Job search resources (including ISEEK)
- Information on how to file an account for Unemployment Insurance (UI)

As resources allow, resource area staff provide assistance to the customers accessing these core services and identify customers for whom core services will be inadequate assistance. Further information on services available to all customers at WorkForce Centers can be found on the [WorkForce Center website](#).

(ii) Describe how the State will ensure the three-tiered service delivery strategy for labor exchange services for job seekers and employers authorized by the Wagner-Peyser Act includes (1) self-service, (2) facilitated self-help service, and (3) staff-assisted service, and is accessible and available to all customers at the local level.

Minnesota's WorkForce Centers provide a full array of job seeker and employer services under the Wagner-Peyser Act:

- Self-help services include access to Minnesota's Job Bank and other computer/web-based information and publications that are available in the resource area of each WorkForce Center. Most of the self-service information is also available on the Internet, so individuals can access it from their homes, libraries, and other locations.
- Facilitated self-help services include both job seeker and employer workshops. Job seeker workshops include *Creative Job Search*, how to write a resume, how to interview for a job, and other sessions to assist job seekers in improving their ability to obtain employment. Employer workshops include how to use Minnesota's Job Bank and other Internet recruiting sites, employment law, and other relevant subjects.
- Staff-assisted services include answers to questions

and advice to individuals, access to Minnesota's Job Bank help desk, and other individualized assistance as needed.

Each WorkForce Center must comply with both program and physical accessibility requirements. Staff monitor physical accessibility using a survey tool and guidelines developed by the Minnesota Council on Disability and Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). WorkForce Center resource areas offer customers with disabilities publications in alternative formats and access to software, hardware, the Internet, and printed materials via assistive technology. As an example, DEED has taken steps to be sure Minnesota's Job Bank rebuild is accessible to persons who use speech software by having State Services for the Blind (SSB) technical experts test the software for accessibility.

(iii) Describe how the State will integrate resources provided under the Wagner-Peyser Act and WIA title I for adults and dislocated workers as well as resources provided by required One-Stop partner programs, to deliver core services.

DEED issued a policy in January 2005 regarding the provision and funding of core services. The directive states that there is no one clear source for guidance on paying for costs in the one-stop environment and outlines a new policy direction that all WorkForce Center partners must participate in the provision of core services. The [policy](#) is available on DEED's website. This directive is in accordance with the December 20, 2006 Department of Labor (DOL) issuance that allowed this kind of cost sharing. The policy also requires that each local MOU, as required in WIA Section 121(c), include a description of how core services will be provided and how each partner will contribute to the costs.

b. Intensive Services. Describe State strategies and policies to ensure adults and dislocated workers who meet the criteria in §134(d)(3)(A) receive intensive services as defined.

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Intensive services include the writing of Individual Service Strategy (ISS) plans; skill assessments; individual and group career counseling; short-term, pre-vocational skill development; and non-credential courses to enhance employability. Individuals who are unable to obtain jobs from the use of core services alone may be entitled to receive intensive services. Workforce One, a DEED management information system, records the acquisition of intensive services. In determining eligibility for intensive services, LWIBs use any existing priority of service mechanism including priority for veterans. For more information, see the [State policy regarding the use of intensive services](#) on DEED's website.

c. Training Services. Describe the Governor's vision for increasing training access and opportunities for individuals including the investment of WIA title I funds and the leveraging of other funds and resources.

Training services include credential occupational skills training, on-the-job training, and customized training among others. Individuals are eligible to receive training services if:

- The goals in the ISS (prepared as part of receipt of intensive services) can be met with the proposed training.
- Available LMI suggests a reasonable expectation that there are opportunities for full-time employees with the proposed training where the participant will (or is willing to) reside upon completion of the program.
- The average wage for employees with this training can lead toward self-sufficiency.
- The participant is unable to obtain grant assistance from other sources to fully cover the comprehensive cost of such training.
- The participant can meet the requirements for admission into the program.
- There is a reasonable expectation that the participant will complete the training program.

Individuals who are unable to obtain jobs from the use of core and intensive services alone may be entitled to receive training services. Workforce One records the acquisition of training services. In determining eligibility for training

services, LWIBs use any existing priority of service mechanism including priority for veterans.

The Governor seeks to increase effective training access and opportunities for individuals by investing Title I-B funds in training primarily in high-growth and high-demand occupations. For more information, see Section B.1.(a)(v). Coordination with other funding sources (e.g., Pell Grants, private foundation resources, etc.) is encouraged at both the State and local levels, enabling more individuals to be trained with existing resources. Furthermore, the State encourages a wide variety of training providers to become WIA-certified, enabling them to provide training services.

d. Eligible Training Provider List. Describe the State's process for providing broad customer access to the statewide list of eligible training providers and their performance information including at every One-Stop Career Center. (§112(b)(17)(A)(iii))

Minnesota's *Consumer Report* and eligible training provider list are available on the Internet as part of [ISEEK](#). By accessing ISEEK, any customer can compare information on training program graduate's employment rates, training-related employment rates, retention rates, and average hourly wages. Customers can also access information on program prerequisites, costs, and accessibility. Staff are available at WorkForce Centers to help individuals interpret the data and to make the appropriate training decisions.

e. On-the-Job (OJT) and Customized Training (§112(b)(17)(A)(i) and 134(b)). Based on the outline below, describe the State's major directions, policies and requirements related to OJT and customized training.

(i) Describe the Governor's vision for increasing training opportunities to individuals through the specific delivery vehicles of OJT and customized training.

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The State recognizes that on-the-job training (OJT) and customized training provide excellent opportunities for trainees to obtain skills and expertise that are directly applicable to business needs. OJT benefits both businesses and job seekers: businesses are reimbursed for the cost of training new employees who learn new skills and earn a wage simultaneously, and trainees benefit from the support services available from WorkForce Center staff during the length of the OJT. It is a just-in-time solution for urgent staffing needs. Emphasis is placed on serving the needs of small businesses.

OJT may be available for job seekers who are dislocated workers or who meet certain income guidelines. The business agrees to provide occupational training and supervision for the new employee while the employee is earning a regular wage through the duration of the OJT contract. The business will be reimbursed up to one-half of the employee's wage for the training period. Duration of reimbursement depends on the job, education, and work experience of the employee. OJT can be written for permanent positions only and, in most cases, must be for full-time (at least 32 hours per week) jobs. OJT contracts can be written for part-time hours if the employee has a certified disability or is over the age of 55. The new employer has the full hiring decision and is expected to keep the new employee working on a permanent basis after the OJT is completed.

The State encourages local areas to develop OJT contracts and customized training opportunities with growing businesses. Staff, including business services specialists and other WorkForce Center partner staff who work closely with businesses, are in the optimal position to identify businesses that would be interested in OJT or customized training. The State's credential policy encourages the development of such opportunities by counting business-awarded credentials toward the credentialing performance measure where the trainees have met business-driven criteria.

(ii) Describe how the State:

(a) Identifies OJT and customized training opportunities;

Business services specialists and other WorkForce Center staff who work closely with businesses are in the optimal position to identify businesses that would be interested in OJT or customized training. When, in their course of visiting and working with a business in a high-growth industry, they can identify an opportunity and create a connection to local staff managing WIA Title I-B and State Dislocated Worker resources.

(b) Markets OJT and customized training as incentives to untapped employer pools including new business to the State and employer groups;

Business services specialists include OJT and customized training as tools in their portfolio of services to meet the needs of business. As with the entire business services initiative, the emphasis is on the economic advantages to the business of participating in these programs.

(c) Partners with high-growth, high-demand industries and economically vital industries to develop potential OJT and customized training strategies;

The business services specialists focus their efforts on the high-growth, high-demand industries and economically vital industries identified by the LWIBs.

(d) Taps business partners to help drive the strategy through joint planning, competency and curriculum development; and determining appropriate lengths of training, and

Local staff, working within the overall framework of LWIBs and the State, work with businesses to develop OJT and customized training curriculums that meet the needs of the businesses as well as providing jobs for successful trainees. The State, as part of its policy on OJT and customized training, asks that each contract contain a training timeline that is appropriate to the needs of

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the business and the kind of skills and expertise that are initially present with the trainee. As circumstances dictate, timelines and curriculum are modified.

(e) Leverages other resources through education, economic development, and industry associations to support OJT and customized training ventures.

The State encourages local areas to obtain other resources to support OJT and customized training programs. Local areas have been somewhat successful in obtaining in-kind and financial support from affected businesses. Some businesses have had a great impact on curriculum development and have devoted staff to teach appropriate courses.

f. What policies and strategies does the State have in place to ensure that, pursuant to the Jobs for Veterans Act (PL 107-288)(38 U.S.C. 4215), that priority of service is provided to veterans and certain spouses who otherwise meet the eligibility requirements for all employment and training programs funded by the U.S. Department of Labor, in accordance with the provisions of TEGL 5-03 (9/16/03)?

Staff funded by DOL programs provide focused services to veterans. Priority is given to eligible veterans and other eligible persons by giving preference over non-veterans for workforce development services, which include registration, job referral, guidance, counseling, dislocated worker services, referral to supportive services, job development, *Creative Job Search* workshops, and resume preparation. Senior veterans employment representatives train WorkForce Center staff on veterans' preference and priority of service. Minnesota's Job Bank identifies veterans first in lists of eligible job seekers.

g. Rapid Response. Describe how your State provides Rapid Response services with the funds reserved under Section 133(a)(2).

Rapid Response services in Minnesota serve the federal and State Dislocated Worker (DW) programs. Both programs require speed and quality of service from Rapid Response 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 what appears to be a mass layoff is announced, the Rapid Response Team works with the employer, the local partners, and any other relevant entities (e.g., unions) 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 11 independents) to determine who may be interested in competing for a project, if one is announced. Within 24 hours, the State has a list of interested organizations.

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 participants, conducts an orientation for customers if necessary, and keeps future contact to an absolute minimum as the local partner takes over and provides DW 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 an employee management committee (EMC) has chosen a service provider. Team staff convene EMCs, 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 an EMC makes its selection, Rapid Response staff advise other State staff on the formal proposal that comes from the service provider (this formal proposal gives the State the necessary opportunity to confirm the EMC's choice). Finally, Rapid Response staff follow-up with EMC members several weeks after provider selection and administer a survey to assess both their own performance and the early performance of the provider.

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

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the EMC to choose them. Further details about the [Rapid Response](#) services and the [competitive process](#) in Minnesota can be found on the DEED website.

(i) Identify the entity responsible for providing Rapid Response services. Describe how Rapid Response activities involve Local Boards and Chief Elected Officials. If Rapid Response activities are shared between the State and local areas, describe the functions of each and how funds are allocated to the local areas.

The State has designated the DEED's Dislocated Worker Unit as the entity responsible for Statewide rapid response services. Its Rapid Response Team includes three State employees, a labor representative under contract with the Minnesota American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations, and an employer representative under contract with Employers' Association, Inc.

LWIBs select a local liaison for communication with the State Rapid Response Team for all mass layoffs in their area. During the Rapid Response process, if there is competition, these liaisons and other local staff must abide by the policies for project competition in Minnesota, as all competitors do. [Rapid Response](#) and [Projects and Competitive Process](#) policies can be found on the DEED website.

In the event of a large mass layoff or plant closing, the Rapid Response Team provides a set of early start-up services to employers and the affected employees to assist in the reemployment of workers. The team facilitates in the establishment and funding of a project to provide tailored services to the particular workforce.

(ii) Describe the process involved in carrying out Rapid Response activities.

(a) What methods are involved in receiving notice of impending layoffs (include WARN Act notice as well as other sources)?

The Dislocated Worker Unit receives all Worker Adjustment and Retraining Notification (WARN) notices of mass layoffs and/or plant closings. It also learns of dislocations through newspapers, unions, employers, employees, elected officials, economic development practitioners, program operators, or other sources.

(b) What efforts does the Rapid Response team make to ensure that rapid response services are provided, whenever possible, prior to layoff date, onsite at the company, and on company time?

Upon receipt of a notice of a dislocation event, the Rapid Response Team contacts the employer to confirm the layoff and request an onsite employee meeting, preferably within 24 to 48 hours. The goal is to provide rapid response services prior to the layoffs and ideally at the company site, on company time. The team has made a video for businesses, explaining the program and its benefits to the employer, which is available on the [Dislocated Worker website](#).

(c) What services are included in Rapid Response activities? Does the Rapid Response team provide workshops or other activities in addition to general informational services to affected workers? How do you determine what services will be provided for a particular layoff (including layoffs that may be trade-affected)?

The team's activities include:

- Holding orientation meetings for employees to describe services available through the Dislocated Worker program
- Conducting an employee survey of their needs
- Arranging job search workshops and/or job fairs
- Providing occupational and labor market information
- Forming an EMC
- Providing a competitive environment for service provider selection

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- Arranging for a full program of training and placement services.

The team determines what services will be provided through a variety of ways:

- A worker-needs survey
- Discussion with the employer
- Individual conversations with workers and their co-workers.

The EMC can also help identify needed services.

(d) How does the State ensure a seamless transition between Rapid Response services and One-Stop activities for affected workers?

An EMC for a project will consider all eligible service providers seeking to conduct the program of services for this group. Minnesota uses a competitive process to select a service provider. Once selected, the provider may request an early readjustment grant, which provides funds to begin some services immediately. Within three weeks of completing the provider selection process, the Rapid Response Team revisits with the EMC and conducts a quality control survey, to ensure services are being delivered.

(e) Describe how Rapid Response functions as a business service. Include whether Rapid Response partners with economic development agencies to connect employees from companies undergoing layoffs to similar companies that are growing and need skilled workers? How does Rapid Response promote the full range of services available to help companies in all stages of the economic cycle, not just those available during layoffs? How does the State promote Rapid Response as a positive, proactive, business-friendly service, not only a negative, reactive service?

The Rapid Response Team functions as a business service in a variety of ways:

- The team provides information to employers to help mitigate the impact of a dislocation event.
- The employer representative on the team has access to business information and services that an employer may need and would be interested in.
- The team informs the business of any relevant economic development services from DEED, including economic development assistance, trade assistance, and special economic development funds.

(f) What other partnerships does Rapid Response engage in to expand the range and quality of services available to companies and affected workers and to develop an effective early layoff warning network?

The Rapid Response Team, in addition to its standing liaisons with organized labor and private industry, maintains regular contact with business and labor organizations, the nonprofit community, and training institutions to expand its network. This network has already proven useful in alerting the team to several layoffs over the past few years. The team is also generating a closer partnership with DEED's LMI staff.

(g) What systems does the Rapid Response team use to track its activities? Does the State have a comprehensive, integrated Management Information System that includes Rapid Response, Trade Act programs, National Emergency Grants, and One-Stop activities?

Minnesota developed and implemented Workforce One, a DEED management information system, that has been expanded to include data from rapid response and national emergency grants. In addition, a new dislocated worker database tracks financial data needed for reporting and program management; and rapid response data tracking, including WARN and other notices, record of services, and activities in response to WARN or other notices.

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(h) Are Rapid Response funds used for other activities not described above; e.g., the provision of additional assistance to local areas that experience increased workers or unemployed individuals due to dislocation events?

Funds are budgeted as follows:

- The first priority is to ensure that a sufficient amount of funds are reserved to support the Rapid Response Team throughout the program year.
- The next priority use of these funds is to provide early readjustment grants to service providers, allowing for some immediate transition services.
- Remaining funds will be used to fund dislocated worker projects.

4. Veterans Programs. For the grant period FY 2005 - FY 2009, States submitted five year strategic plans to operate the Local Veterans' Employment Representative (LVER) and Disabled Veterans' Outreach Programs (DVOP) Specialist programs under the Jobs for Veterans Act. These plans may be incorporated by reference as part of a state's Unified Plan. Modifications to these five-year Jobs for Veterans Act plans will be managed in accordance with policy guidance from the Veterans' Employment and Training Service.

Minnesota's approved five-year plan is available on DEED's website.

5. Youth. ETA's strategic vision identifies youth most in need, such as out of school youth and those at risk, youth in foster care, youth aging out of foster care, youth offenders, children of incarcerated parents, homeless youth, and migrant and seasonal farmworker youth as those most in need of service.

State programs and services should take a comprehensive approach to serving these youth, including basic skills remediation, helping youth stay in or return to school, employment, internships, help with attaining a high school diploma or GED, post-secondary vocational training, apprenticeships and enrollment in community and four-year colleges. (§112(b)(18))

a. Describe your State's strategy for providing comprehensive, integrated services to eligible youth, including those most in need as described above. Include any State requirements and activities to assist youth who have special needs or barriers to employment, including those who are pregnant, parenting, or have disabilities. Include how the State will coordinate across State agencies responsible for workforce investment, foster care, education, human services, juvenile justice, and other relevant resources as part of the strategy. (§112(b)(18))

LWIBs and youth councils ensure collaboration across agencies responsible for workforce investment, foster care, education, Job Corps, human services, rehabilitation services, juvenile justice, migrant and seasonal farmworker programs, and the business community. The youth council assures that the youth services strategy fits into the overall vision and strategic direction for workforce development established by the LWIBs.

Minnesota co-sponsored along with Iowa and Wisconsin a Tri-State Peer-to-Peer Youth Forum providing youth practitioners from three states opportunities for capacity-building and sharing of best practices. Eight local youth council members from Minnesota were recognized for outstanding contributions to the development of quality youth programs. The forum highlighted best practices from Minnesota, Iowa, and Wisconsin for engaging youth with multiple challenges such as criminal records, substance abuse, and mental health issues, in addition to being poor. Handouts from the forum are available on DEED's youth website.

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Youth service providers are held accountable to the LWIB and youth council, which are responsible for strategic planning, oversight, coordination and non-duplication of resources, and selection of youth service providers. WIA-funded youth services are provided to economically disadvantaged and/or at-risk youth between the ages of 14 and 21 who are:

- School dropouts
- Basic literacy skills-deficient
- Homeless or runaway
- Pregnant or parenting
- Offenders
- In need of assistance to complete an education program or to secure or hold employment

Different populations of youth have different needs. Language and cultural barriers are a factor in designing and providing services. Local youth service providers work closely with schools, parents, social services, and other agencies to meet the unique needs of foster youth, pregnant or parenting teens, youth with disabilities, juvenile offenders, and other youth with barriers to employment.

Minnesota has several interagency initiatives that support the Shared Youth Vision. These cross-agency projects are described on the [Shared Youth Vision forum website](#) and in Sections A and B of this plan. These collaborative efforts support an integrated vision for serving youth within the context of workforce investment, social services, juvenile justice, education, and economic development.

b. Describe how coordination with Job Corps and other youth programs will occur. (§112(b)(18)(C))

Job Corps is represented on Minnesota's Shared Youth Vision State Team. See the [Shared Youth Vision forum website](#) for a list of team members. Job Corps representatives also serve on local youth councils and youth council members serve on the Job Corps Industry Council.

WSA youth staff set-up tours of Minnesota's Job Corps Center in St. Paul so youth and parents have first-hand knowledge of the academic and vocational experiences

available. WSA youth staff also work with youth returning to their local communities following graduation from Job Corps.

DEED takes a proactive approach to identifying youth who could benefit from the services available through Minnesota's single Job Corps Center in St. Paul. Job Corps staff are invited to do presentations at the WorkForce Center RAAT meetings. This is another strategy to assure that Job Corps marketing information is available in all WorkForce Centers. Many WorkForce Centers have a youth zone, which is a dedicated space that invites use by young people and has dedicated resources and curriculum for youth.

c. How does the State plan to utilize the funds reserved for Statewide activities to support the State's vision for serving youth? Examples of activities that would be appropriate investments of these funds include:

- (i) utilizing the funds to promote cross agency collaboration;*
- (ii) demonstration of cross-cutting models of service delivery;*
- (iii) development of new models of alternative education leading to employment; or*
- (iv) development of demand-driven models with business and industry working collaboratively with the workforce investment system and education partners to develop strategies for bringing these youth successful into the workforce pipeline with the right skills.*

Minnesota does not plan to use ten percent Statewide funds for youth activities.

d. Describe in general, how your State will meet the Act's provisions regarding youth program design. (§§112(b)(18) and 129(c))

Minnesota supports partnerships that help young people--the future workforce--attain the skills, knowledge, and aptitudes to become productive workers. The overall structure of youth services and activities includes:

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- Coordinating resources at the state and regional level
- Connecting youth with quality educational and high-growth employment opportunities
- Meeting the demands of business
- Enhancing performance accountability and a commitment to improving the quality of youth services

WSAs make the following required WIA youth program elements available:

- Paid and unpaid work experience, internships
- Adult mentoring
- Leadership development
- Occupational skills training
- Alternative secondary school services
- Comprehensive guidance and counseling
- Support services
- Tutoring, study skills training/dropout prevention strategies
- Follow-up services

Youth service providers are held accountable to the LWIB and youth council, which are responsible for strategic planning, coordination and non-duplication of resources, program oversight, and selection of youth service providers. The youth council assures that the youth services strategy fits into the overall vision and strategic direction for workforce development established by the LWIBs.

Long-term benefits of participation include:

- Engaging an extremely disadvantaged group of young men and women. Youth participants have multiple challenges such as substance abuse, criminal records, and mental health issues, in addition to being poor.
- Youth councils and WSAs use current LMI to assess employment opportunities in high-growth industries and in-demand occupations. Emerging workers acquire the skills and competencies needed to satisfy employer requirements.
- Participants (current and former) are highly positive about their program experiences. They remark on the high quality of staff who "stick with them" until they master a concept and worksite supervisors who are mentors.
- Setting high expectations and high standards of

responsibility, respect, and hard work. The high expectations, combined with support from staff, create an environment where real and sustained growth can take place.

- Work experience with tangible results is valued by youth participants and is a reminder to the community of the value of the contributions of young people; the youth and the community benefit from the work performed under WIA.
- Connects disadvantaged youth to other community resources and provides education, training, and leadership opportunities that would otherwise not be available.

6. Business Services.

- a. Describe how the needs of employers will be determined in the local areas and on a statewide basis.*

At the state level, the GWDC engages business involvement through the following means:

- Business representation on the GWDC
- Business representation on the GWDC committees, where much of the policy work of the GWDC is conducted
- Engagement in the Minnesota WorkForce Council Association meetings and activities, including visiting all 16 of the LWIBs at their locations
- Business engagement in public policy forums
- Approval of the annual plan for the State LMI office
- Developing Statewide strategy for workforce development activities that are determined by industry need.

The GWDC also works closely with the Minnesota Job Skills Partnership Board to effect policy that addresses business and industry needs.

LWIBs play the same role at the local level. By State and federal law, half of LWIB members are representatives of the private sector. In addition to the LWIBs, WorkForce Center staff also work with local business advisory councils and/or a human resources-related networking group(s). Regional economic summits and conferences, often held by LWIBs and regional foundations, also provide opportunities to determine business needs.

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DEED conducts a number of surveys of Minnesota's businesses that inform the workforce development agenda. Biannual job vacancy surveys assess the hiring needs of Minnesota businesses and identify occupations by regions with a high current demand for workers. Biannual manufacturing business conditions surveys attempt to gauge the sentiments of Minnesota manufacturers concerning themselves and the State economy. The employer satisfaction survey provides quarterly data on satisfaction with WorkForce Center System services. In addition to these regular surveys, DEED occasionally conducts one-time surveys, such as 2004's survey of chief executive officers to determine how they would prioritize and prefer to receive workforce and economic development services.

In the Minneapolis-St. Paul metropolitan area, the Employer Services Partnership (ESP) brings together employer services and educational organizations to meet common goals of both employers and the providers that serve them. Working in a public/private collaborative model, the ESP is working to:

- Develop models to coordinate a comprehensive range of employer services
- Create new cross-organizational services that address marketplace service gaps
- Implement a simplified connection point for employers to access all available resources
- Use marketing funds provided to the WSAs by DEED for coordinated marketing efforts

The ESP aims to produce a comprehensive inventory of information and services for employers, increase business customer satisfaction, enhance efficiency among workforce service providers, and align education and workforce service organizations to promote overall economic development.

Minnesota's business services initiative is a key component of the State's transformation into a demand-driven workforce investment system. The positions of business services specialists were created to serve as single points of contact for business in the workforce development system; business services specialists have been hired, trained, and deployed in WorkForce Centers throughout the State. These specialists build business relationships with local business decision-makers, assess business needs, and

identify business solutions. They work with their regional labor market analysts and their LWIBs to identify and then target key industries. WorkForce Center business services teams are coordinating business outreach, brainstorming solutions to business needs, and communicating business needs with staff and partners in career guidance and individual customer services. Business services specialists are engaged in regional economic development, workforce development, and education issues and initiatives.

The Governor named DEED's economic development manufacturing specialist as the "Minnesota manufacturing advocate" to channel communications between the Governor's Office and Minnesota's manufacturers. This specialist is active in the Minnesota Manufacturing Coalition consisting of 26 trade associations. Coalition goals include an increase in the availability of skilled workers in Minnesota's manufacturing industries. DEED expanded its capacity to meet the manufacturing industry's workforce demand through an innovative workforce partnership with the Minnesota Precision Manufacturing Association. Partnership activities include hiring an additional manufacturing industry specialist to enrich the connection between this industry and DEED's business services.

b. Describe how integrated business services, including Wagner-Peyser Act services, will be delivered to employers through the One-Stop system.

WorkForce Centers have formed business services teams, led by business services specialists. Each core partner is represented on the team. Several local teams include external partners such as the local or regional MnSCU customized training representative. The goal of the WorkForce Center business services teams is to better serve business with an integrated, coordinated, and single point-of-contact approach to the LWIB's key industries and employers. The teams brainstorm business solutions, provide businesses with resources and referrals, and most importantly, coordinate and communicate outreach and service delivery. Skilled worker needs are shared with all partners including those who work with career guidance and job seekers. Business services specialists conduct service delivery follow-up and customer satisfaction surveys.

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DEED will implement a business services tracking database in the summer of 2007 for use by the primary business units who work directly with business customers. All business units involved in the project want to electronically coordinate their business outreach, communicate needed services, record service delivery and referrals, and share business solutions. The goals of the system are to:

- Foster deeper and more efficient relationships between DEED and its business customers, partly by providing information about customers and existing relationships
- Facilitate relationships between partners, both inside and outside DEED
- Encourage creativity and support DEED's activities and research
- Simplify evaluation and reporting

The ultimate goal is to use technology to efficiently and effectively provide business customers with seamless business services from a team of specialists.

c. How will the system streamline administration of Federal tax credit programs within the One-Stop system to maximize employer participation (20 CFR 652.3(b), §112(b)(17)(A)(i))

The Work Opportunity Tax Credit and the Welfare-to-Work Tax Credit (WOTC) programs were combined as the WOTC program effective January 1, 2007; the program is administered from a centralized location in DEED. All program certifications, denials, and requests for additional information are generated through an automated database system. DEED connects to the Department of Human Services (DHS) database to directly obtain information verifying target group eligibility for recipients of Minnesota Family Investment Program (MFIP) benefits, food stamps, and Supplemental Security Income (SSI) benefits. Business services specialists can serve as "first contact" for the WOTC program by introducing employers to the potential of federal tax credits as they hire needed workers.

DEED markets the program in the following ways:

- Delivers informational presentations to WorkForce Center staff and business organizations identified by business services specialists
- Provides printed materials to business services specialists and WorkForce Centers for display and distribution to the employer community and the general public
- Meets with Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) counselors
- Provides informational presentations and conditional certification training for MFIP and county financial workers
- Attends transition fairs sponsored by the Minnesota Department of Corrections
- Provides informational presentations to county and federal probation officers
- Creates PowerPoint presentations and provides printed program materials for the employer community and social service agencies who serve customers in the targeted group categories
- Maintains a website with program information and application forms

*7. Innovative Service Delivery Strategies.
(§112(b)(17)(A))*

a. Describe innovative service delivery strategies the State has or is planning to undertake to maximize resources, increase service levels, improve service quality, achieve better integration, or meet other key State goals. Include in the description the initiative's general design, anticipated outcomes, partners involved and funds leveraged (e.g., title I formula, Statewide reserve, employer contributions, education funds, non-WIA State funds).

Minnesota has a number of innovative service delivery strategies underway to improve the overall operational efficiency of the WorkForce Center System. These strategies fall into three broad categories: integration, information, and innovation in services.

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Integration

The highlight of Minnesota's innovations in integration is the complete incorporation of the WIA Title IV VR programs - Rehabilitation Services (RS)-VR and State Services for the Blind (SSB) - into the WorkForce Center System. Minnesota considers VR and SSB among the four core WorkForce Center partners. VR staff are housed in nearly every WorkForce Center, SSB staff are located in some WorkForce Centers, and SSB services are available in WorkForce Centers on an itinerant basis. This close connection has allowed RS-VR to offer classes and job clubs to address the needs of individuals with disabilities who are universal customers or are customers receiving services from other programs such as MFIP. In addition, RS-VR has provided six VR business services specialists to work within the business services units; they enhance the offering of business solutions by addressing the concerns businesses have about employees with disabilities.

DEED's six RAs provide integrated leadership to the WorkForce Center System. The regional administrators are responsible for expanding the WorkForce Center System's workforce and business services, providing leadership and technical assistance, driving capacity-building in the system, and coordinating workforce investment resources locally. Serving as a focal point for DEED's locally delivered services, the regional administrators promote and develop sustained strategic partnerships to ensure that public workforce investment resources address regional economic needs.

Information

Since 2005, DEED has published *Positively Minnesota: Partners for Job Growth*, a quarterly online newsletter for LWIB members. It contains articles such as the DEED commissioner's vision of local control, descriptions of innovative service delivery strategies, local best practices, and a regular column on WorkForce Center performance.

Project C3, Connecting Youth with Communities and Careers, is an interagency project to improve transition outcomes for youth with disabilities. [Project C3](#) provides an online resource designed to connect youth, families, professionals, and employers to youth services in their regions based on need, interest, and location. There is

web-based information on employment resources, health, post-secondary education, and housing, and a separate online resource map of services for youth in specific geographic regions.

DEED has implemented the Outreach to Schools - Career Guides pilot project, an innovative partnership between the WSAs, LWIBs, youth councils, WorkForce Centers, and local educational agencies (including alternative schools). The project addresses an unmet need: delivering effective career counseling and LMI to the region's youth and families. Post-secondary students in counseling (and related fields) are trained as "career guides" and placed in high schools and alternative schools to bring career exploration, counseling, college information, and current LMI about in-demand occupations to thousands of youth and parents each year. Career guides earn college credit and a wage or a stipend. The pilot project raises local youth and parent customer awareness and usage of Minnesota's workforce development system, engages local workforce and economic development partners, and builds on the work of the LWIBs in identifying strategic industries and high-growth, in-demand occupations.

Innovation

Minnesota's business services initiative is a key component of the State's transformation into a demand-driven workforce investment system. The positions of business services specialists were created to serve as single points of contact for business in the workforce development system; business services specialists have been hired, trained, and deployed in WorkForce Centers throughout the State. These specialists build business relationships with local business decision-makers, assess business needs, and identify business solutions. They work with their regional labor market analysts and their LWIBs to identify and then target key industries. WorkForce Center business services teams are coordinating business outreach, brainstorming solutions to business needs, and communicating business needs with staff and partners in career guidance and individual customer services. Business services specialists are engaged in regional economic development, workforce development, and education issues and initiatives.

Specific examples of solutions locally provided by DEED business services specialists are:

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- Better recruitment strategies to attract quality workers.
- Improved retention strategies that allow businesses to retain their quality workers.
- Referrals to training providers who can provide customized training to increase productivity of employees of businesses.
- Specific information regarding issues such as employment law, UI, ADA, and other human resources issues.
- Access to important LMI that will allow the company to make better decisions regarding their future workforce needs.

Minnesota is able to introduce innovations into its workforce development system with two unique funding streams: the Minnesota Job Skills Partnership (MJSP) and the State Dislocated Worker program. The MJSP, funded with State general fund dollars, awards approximately \$7 million per year in grants to educational institutions that partner with businesses to create educational infrastructure improvements. Minnesota supplements the WIA Title I-B dislocated worker resources with the State Dislocated Worker program, funded by employers via the Workforce Development Fee, a surcharge on the UI contribution. Depending on fee collections, approximately \$26 million is available to assist dislocated workers in addition to federal resources. While most policies for the State Dislocated Worker program mirror those of the federal program, there are slight differences. Chief among these are:

- A slightly different eligibility policy, which focuses more tightly on those with non-transferable skills.
- A requirement that service providers spend at least 50 percent of their funds on training.

8. Strategies for Faith-based and Community Organizations (§112(b)(17)(i)). Describe those activities to be undertaken to: (1) increase the opportunities for participation of faith-based and community organizations as committed and active partners in the One-Stop delivery system; and (2) expand the access of faith-based and community organizations' clients and customers to the services offered by the One-Stops in the State. Outline those action steps designed to strengthen State

collaboration efforts with local workforce investment areas in conducting outreach campaigns to educate faith-based and community organizations about the attributes and objectives of the demand-driven workforce investment system. Indicate how these resources can be strategically and effectively leveraged in the State's workforce investment areas to help meet the objectives of the Workforce Investment Act.

On October 7, 2005, Governor Tim Pawlenty issued an executive order creating the 15-member Governor's Council on Faith and Community Service Initiatives to focus on reaching-out and improving the lives of all Minnesotans through expanded partnerships with the faith community. The council partners with State and local agencies, existing religious organizations, and the White House Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives to ensure that groups providing public services have a level playing-field to access grants and a single point-of-contact for information about these opportunities. The council does not favor one religion over another. Governor Pawlenty also appointed a special advisor to lead development of a stronger connection between State government and faith and community services; DEED is working closely with the Governor's advisor to develop and expand the role of faith-based and community organizations (FBCOs).

The Governor's Council on Faith and Community Service Initiatives [website](#) serves as a comprehensive tool to connect FBCOs with available resources, including funding, technical support, training, and referrals. This website is also a gateway to additional information on the DEED [website](#) regarding partnerships between faith-based organizations and the workforce development system that can be used to help WSAs meet the objectives of WIA.

Information on the DEED website that may be of particular interest to FBCOs includes a presentation, *Faith-Based and Community Organizations in the Workforce Investment System*, and material relating to the U.S. DOL's equal treatment regulations. The presentation was developed to educate FBCOs on the attributes and objectives of the demand-driven workforce investment

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system and how these organizations can effectively contribute to meeting the goals of WIA. The equal treatment regulations help ensure that FBCOs have equal opportunity as other eligible organizations to partner with the federal government in providing services and obtain DOL funding.

DEED is also partnering with the Governor's Council on Faith and Community Service Initiatives and DHS to implement a Minnesota alternative to DOL's SHARE Network and "Access Points" for the State. Access Points are faith-based or community-based organizations operating under agreement with a WSA to provide job seeker services, including computer access and employment referrals. This effort builds upon an existing database of service providers and website that job seekers may use to support their employment efforts. The State is in the process of adding information about services provided by faith communities to this database. In order to sustain the partnership with FBCOs, Minnesota is leveraging the resources that DHS has already invested in and continues to support. DHS anticipates making faith- and community-based contact information available by the fall of 2007.

DEED informs State staff and local organizations that receive U.S. DOL financial assistance of web-based training opportunities on federal "equal treatment" regulations. Access Point training was provided to several Workforce Service Areas in 2006. DEED assures State compliance with federal "equal treatment" regulations. As an example, Minnesota's WIA Master Grant Agreement includes the following provision: "Equal Protection of the Laws for Faith-based and Community Organizations - (Executive Order 13279) Signed December 12, 2002: Prohibits discrimination against grant seeking organizations on the basis of religion in the administration or distribution of federal financial assistance under social service programs, including grants, contracts and loans." This provision is expected to be reflected in subgrantee agreements.

(d) Adult Education and Literacy Services, including workplace literacy services:

(i) Family literacy services.

In addition to the supplemental service activities described in Section F.1.(d)(iii) of *Minnesota's Unified Plan*, the following activities are planned:

- Employ a full-time family literacy consultant as a permanent staff member of the Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) ABE Office.
- Develop and support a regional cadre of family literacy trainers and mentors.
- Conduct an annual family literacy conference.
- Monitor family literacy programs, using quality indicators developed for family literacy programs.
- Coordinate family literacy activities with other MDE programs such as Even Start, Head Start, Learning Readiness, and Early Childhood Family Education.

(ii) English literacy programs.

In addition to the supplemental service activities described in Section F.1.(d)(iii) of *Minnesota's Unified Plan*, the following activities are planned:

- Conduct at least two Statewide English as a Second Language (ESL) workshops annually.
- Coordinate all ESL categorical grant programs including English Language/Civics, Refugee ESL program, and the WIA Incentive Grant ESL program.
- Provide technical assistance to all State and federally funded ESL programs.
- Coordinate services with other State and local agencies that work with immigrants and refugees.
- Disseminate ESL best practices.
- Evaluate ESL curricula and instructional programs

Workforce Education Programs

Under the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (AEFLA), MDE has established workforce education as a content and service priority area. Two major initiatives were established in 2004-2005 and are continuing:

- **The Minnesota Department of Education Adult Basic Education Workforce Education Local Program Initiative**

This effort provides AEFLA funding to all eligible ABE providers (54 ABE Consortia) to build the capacity of adult education providers to deliver

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workforce education services locally and to expand the number and quality of local workforce education programs. In addition, this initiative provides a consultative service of mentors and workforce education practitioners to work with local programs to deliver needed workforce education professional development.

- **The WIA Incentive Grant**

Under the provisions of WIA, Minnesota has been awarded WIA Incentive Grants in 2004, 2005 and 2006. The GWDC has approved a grant implementation concept that was developed by a working group of staff from the State WIA partner agencies and other State workforce stakeholders.

This grant program is an excellent example of collaboration between WIA partner agencies and supporting organizations, including DEED, MDE, MnSCU, LWIBs, WorkForce Centers, ABE providers, and individual community and technical colleges. A variety of related community-based organizations have also been involved in this dynamic project.

The general concept of this grant is to assist Minnesota employers to address the English language training (ELT) needs of their workers who have limited English language skills. Minnesota has seen a dramatic increase in the need for ELT services in recent years, and like many states, faces significant training needs to keep businesses competitive and workers prosperous. The lack of basic English skills in the workplace prevents businesses from maximizing productivity and hinders their ability to compete in the marketplace. Additionally, the grant promotes and enhances collaborations between major players in the State's economic development future.

The purpose of the WIA Incentive Grant is to:

- Expand workplace training opportunities for Minnesotans with limited English language skills
- Promote communication and collaborative efforts in Minnesota's workforce development arena

The planning and implementation of this grant requires significant coordination between State and local WIA partners as well as between the providers of ELT in the workplace. Therefore, this program promotes increased communication and collaborations between groups and organizations that have important roles in the State's workforce development.

Also, the grant is designed to stimulate the identification of training needs relative to incumbent limited English-proficient (LEP) workers and to identify and clarify training roles of ELT providers that have valuable services to offer employers. LWIBs are the eligible entities for the implementation of this grant and have key responsibilities for the communication of grant availability, identifying employer needs relative to their LEP workers, and selecting ELT providers.

(e) Food Stamp Employment and Training:

(i) Describe the components of the State's E&T program.

The State's Food Support Employment and Training (FSET) program consists of job search; job club; and education, which includes post-secondary, GED, high school completion up to age 22, ESL, and other short-term training programs which result in an increase in employability or upgrading of current skills, work experience, or workfare.

(ii) Discuss the weekly/monthly hours of participation required of each program component.

Minnesota serves only able-bodied adults without dependents (ABAWDs) in its FSET program. As a result, all participants must meet the 20 hours per week/80 hours per month federal rule in order to be compliant. Individuals participating in workfare work 23 hours per month to satisfy federal requirements. However, they may be required to participate in job club or job search activities in addition to workfare.

(iii) Describe planned combinations of components to meet the statutory requirement of 20 hours of participation per week to qualify as a work program for ABAWDs.

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All FSET participants are assessed and have an individual employment plan (IEP) prepared for them. This plan incorporates the needs of the customer with program requirements for continued compliance.

(f) TANF, outline how the State intends to:

(i) 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 and become self-sufficient. (§402(a)(1)(A)(i))

MFIP was formed with the premise that work is the path to supporting a family and moving that family out of poverty. The program centers on work by building on jobs in today's economy and focusing on future workforce development. Training is short-term and work-focused. MFIP encourages employment through simplified work incentives, support services, and personal responsibility by expecting families to actively pursue self-sufficiency. Minnesota began its Statewide Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) reform program on July 1, 1997, and completed implementation and conversion of the cases in April 1998.

MFIP employment services are delivered at the county level and in many counties, sub-contracted to the WorkForce Centers and private, non-profit intermediaries. One of the challenges these providers currently face is meeting the documentation and monitoring requirements of the Deficit Reduction Act.

Minnesota also supports families through the Family Homelessness Prevention and Assistance program, Transitional Housing, and the Minor Parent Supportive program.

Minnesota believes that the support of families through child care assistance is critical in the State's strategy to help families leave and remain off of welfare. Child care services are fully funded in the State's budget for families receiving MFIP and participating in approved work activities. Transition-year child care is also fully funded

and is available to families that exit MFIP due to increased earnings, child support, or a combination of earnings and child support. The basic sliding fee child care assistance program is available to low-income families to maintain employment and avoid welfare; it is funded through a capped allocation of State funds and local match funds.

Healthcare services are a key component of helping families move toward self-sufficiency. Families receiving MFIP may apply for healthcare programs using the same application that is used to apply for MFIP. Families have access to the Medical Assistance program and the MinnesotaCare program, Minnesota's healthcare program for the uninsured.

Finally, in federal fiscal year (FFY) 2005, Minnesota rated third in the nation in the percentage of current support collections (the percentage collected and distributed of the total amount that was due) with 69 percent. Minnesota rated eleventh in the nation in the actual dollar amount of support collected and distributed with \$569 million in FFY05, an increase of 11 percent since FFY01. Both rankings have remained stable since FFY01.

(ii) Require a parent or caretaker receiving assistance under the program to engage in work (as defined by the State) once the State determines the parent or caretaker is ready to engage in work, or once the parent or caretaker has received assistance under the program for 24 months (whether or not consecutive,) whichever is earlier; consistent with section 407(e)(2). (§402(a)(1)(A)(ii))

The overall goal of MFIP is to assist participant families in taking the most direct path to unsubsidized employment. Participants in one- and two-parent households must begin work participation activities immediately. Until September 30, 2002, Minnesota had a federally approved waiver for MFIP work activities. Effective October 1, 2002, the State began reporting on work activities allowed under TANF regulations.

(iii) Ensure that parents and caretakers receiving assistance under the program engage in work activities in accordance with section 407. (§402(a)(1)(A)(iii))

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MFIP moves families to employment and self-sufficiency through a combination of work incentives and required work activities that may include job search, work, and training. Support services include child care and transportation. Work activity requirements are included in an individualized employment plan and are enforced through sanctions consisting of grant reductions and vendor payments of shelter costs deducted from the grant.

Support services are provided to participants to motivate and enable them to obtain employment. Services available for participants with an employment plan can include, but are not limited to: supported work, the work literacy program, and other programs for the hard-to-employ. Activities include individual assessment, job search, job clubs, vocational counseling, job coaching, job skills training, work experience, subsidized employment, OJT, educational programs and post-employment follow-up services. DHS and DEED jointly supervise the operation of MFIP employment services.

Minor caregivers under the age of 20 who have not received a high school diploma or its equivalent are required to engage in appropriate educational programs and are provided child care assistance, housing supports, and supportive services to enable successful participation. Bilingual employment and training services and work literacy language programs are available for those lacking English proficiency through programs such as intensive ESL, although the lack of proficiency in English is not necessarily presumed to be a barrier to employment.

Employment programs for families with children or pregnant women that go beyond the MFIP income test for eligibility, but are limited to income at or below 200 percent of the federal poverty guidelines (FPGs) include the Health Services Worker program, the Displaced Homemaker program, job gap vouchers, and the Tuition Waiver program.

(iv) Take such reasonable steps as deemed 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. (§402(a)(1)(A)(iv))

Data on welfare recipients is classified as private and may not be disclosed pursuant to [Minn. Stat. § 13](#). Access to Minnesota's computer system, MAXIS, is defined by a security role that is attached to a person's identification (ID), and access to information is defined and limited by job responsibilities. A personal logon ID cannot be issued until the individual completes a State-developed orientation course that includes a review of data privacy and ethics as they pertain to customer information. Printed reports distributed by the State are reviewed individually to ensure data provided to the requestor are appropriate for the recipient of a report.

(v) Describe the financial eligibility criteria and corresponding benefits and services covered with State Maintenance of Effort (MOE) funds. This description applies to State MOE funds that are used in the State's TANF program or used to fund a separate State program.

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(g) SCSEP, provide a description of each project function or activity and how the State will implement the project. The following activities should be discussed separately: (title V of the Older Americans Act)

(i) Describe how the services proposed support the State Senior Employment Services Coordination Plan.

DEED is one of four 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. This includes Experience Works, National Indian Council on Aging, National Senior Service America, Inc., and Quality Career Services.

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 Coordination Plan, DEED promotes further coordination and collaboration between SCSEP service providers and the one-stop system.

Table G.2 - State Maintenance of Effort Funds

Major Program Benefits, Services, and Activities	Purpose	Eligibility Criteria
Minnesota Family Investment Program		
MFIP grants provide integrated cash and food assistance to families with children or to pregnant women while the caregiver works toward becoming self-sufficient. Caregivers are expected to participate in employment services requirements. (Minn. Stat. § 256J.001 - 256J.95)	The purpose of MFIP is to provide temporary cash (60-months or less) and food assistance to families with children or to pregnant women while the caregiver works toward becoming self-sufficient. Caregivers are expected to participate in employment service requirements. If necessary, assistance with child care costs is provided by the State while the caregiver looks for employment, works, or participates in training preparatory to employment. The 2001 legislature passed laws regarding the extension of certain MFIP families beyond the 60-month time period. Families not eligible for or not requesting an extension receive materials designed to assist the family in meeting their needs as they leave MFIP. The materials are given to the family at a face-to-face meeting prior to the end of the 60-month time limit, or if the family chooses not to attend the interview, the materials are mailed to them.	Pregnant women or a caregiver with a child under age 18, or under age 19 if in secondary education; resource limit is \$2,000 for applicants and \$5,000 for participants; income eligibility is with 115 percent of FPG adjusted for family size; and participants must be citizens or legal noncitizens.
Two-Parent Separate State Program - MFIP		
MFIP grants provide integrated cash and food assistance to families with children or to pregnant women while the caregiver works toward becoming self-sufficient. Caregivers are expected to participate in employment services requirements. (Minn. Stat. § 256J.001 - 256J.95)	MFIP grants provide basic assistance to eligible families. The combined cash and food benefit program also includes an earned income disregard factor that has been shown to encourage work. In addition, a longitudinal study shows that the grant structure as it relates to two-parent families has a positive impact on two-parent formation.	Pregnant women or a caregiver with a child under age 18, or under age 19 if in secondary education; resource limit is \$2,000 for applicants and \$5,000 for participants; income eligibility is with 115 percent of FPG adjusted for family size; and participants must be citizens or legal noncitizens.

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Table G.2 (continued) - State Maintenance of Effort Funds

Major Program Benefits, Services, and Activities	Purpose	Eligibility Criteria
Consolidated Fund Emergency Needs		
Short-term, nonrecurring shelter and utility needs that are excluded from the definition of assistance under TANF, for families who meet the MFIP residency requirements.	Grants provide short-term, basic help to eligible families who find themselves in a crisis or emergency situation.	Families with a minor child, a pregnant woman, or a noncustodial parent of a minor child receiving assistance with an income below 200 percent of the FBG for a family of the applicable size are eligible for services funded under the consolidated fund.
State Administration		
State administration funds represent the State share of the administrative costs of running the MFIP program as allocated through the State's approved cost allocation plan.	The purpose of State administration is to oversee county administration of the MFIP program to ensure that customers are served under federal and State guidelines.	State staff administer TANF program rules and regulations by supervising county administration of TANF funds.
County Administration		
County administration represents the State share of the administrative costs of running the MFIP program as allocated through the State's approved cost allocation plan.	The purpose of county administration is to provide eligibility determination, case maintenance, fraud control and prevention, and related administrative services.	County staff administer the TANF program rules and regulations under federal and State guidelines.
MFIP Child Care Assistance		
The MFIP Child Care Assistance program under Minn. Stat. § 119B helps caregivers receiving MFIP assistance who are looking for work, employed, or participating in short-term training programs (less than two years) with child care costs. In addition, a family that leaves MFIP that has received MFIP at least three out of the past six months can receive child care subsidies in the first year off of assistance.	The purpose of MFIP child care assistance is to help families with the cost of providing child care while they are participating in MFIP employment activities or working while on MFIP, or in their first year off of the MFIP grant or until they reach the top of the Basic Sliding Fee waiting list.	Child care through MFIP is available to families that have an approved job search support or employment plan under Minn. Stat. § 256.52 or meet the employment requirements under Minn. Stat. § 119B (2003 Minnesota State Plan, Number 8).
Basic Sliding Fee (BSF) Child Care Subsidy		
The BSF program under Minn. Stat. § 119B provides subsidies to families to help with the cost of child care (2003 Minnesota State Plan, Number 8).	The purpose of the BSF program is to help families maintain employment, look for employment, or participate in education and avoid the need for cash assistance through TANF by subsidizing the cost of child care (2003 Minnesota State Plan, Number 8).	Families may enter the BSF program if their income is less than or equal to 175 percent of the FPGs, adjusted for family size. Families moving from transition-year to BSF are considered to have met the income entry requirement in the first sub-program in which they participated. Families may receive child care assistance until their income reaches 250 percent of the FPGs, 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 or training activity.

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Table G.2 (continued) - State Maintenance of Effort Funds

Major Program Benefits, Services, and Activities	Purpose	Eligibility Criteria
Noncitizen Medical Assistance Program		
This program provides medical assistance to recently arrived noncitizens who are barred from the federal Medicaid program during their first five years of residence in the U.S., and other "lawfully residing" noncitizens who are not eligible for the federal Medicaid program due to immigration status.	One purpose of this program is to provide medical benefits to noncitizens so that adults can pursue employment and work activities. Another reason was to provide preventive and primary health care rather than waiting until there is a health crisis and care is much more expensive.	To be eligible for the program, the person must meet all requirements of the federal Medicaid program except the immigration status requirements of the Personal Responsibility Work Opportunities Reconciliation Act.
Minnesota Working Family Credit		
This program provides a tax benefit to eligible low-income families through a refundable income tax credit.	The purpose of the program is to provide economic support to low-income families as well as to encourage employment among low-income parents.	To be eligible for the program, a family with one child must have an income under \$32,001, and a family with two or more qualifying children must have an income of \$36,348 or less.
Employment and Training Services		
These grants are State funds provided to counties to pay for employment services for MFIP and Diversionary Work Program (DWP) participants.	These are grants to counties to provide various services to MFIP and DWP customers that assist them in becoming employed. The services include, but are not limited to, job search, job club, GED, employment-related education, work literacy, case management, job retention, and job skills update.	To be eligible for the program, the recipient must be an adult or minor caregiver receiving an MFIP or a DWP grant.
Diversionary Work Program		
DWP began on July 1, 2004. It is short-term and can be received for a maximum of four-months in a twelve-month period. DWP is a work-focused program that requires immediate engagement with employment services. The months on DWP are considered non-assistance and do not count toward the TANF 60-month time-limit. Additional information on DWP can be found in Minnesota's July 30, 2003 amendment to the State TANF Plan.	DWP is intended to move people to work as quickly as possible, diverting families from having to apply for MFIP. All adult caregivers must complete an employment plan before DWP benefits are issued and are expected to cooperate with employment service requirements. The monthly benefit amount that can be received under DWP is the difference between the family's countable income and the family's maintenance needs (rent, mortgage, and utilities), plus up to \$70 personal needs. The benefit amount cannot exceed the cash portion of the appropriate MFIP standard for that family size.	Families with a minor child, a pregnant woman, or a noncustodial parent of a minor child may be eligible for DWP. Child-only cases do not receive benefits through DWP. The resource limit is \$2000 for applicants and \$5000 for participants. Income eligibility is 115 percent of the FPG adjusted for family size. Participants must be citizens or legal noncitizens.

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(ii) Describe how recruitment and selection of participants will be achieved under TEGL 12-06 and the regulations at 20 CFR 641.500 and 641.525. Include a description of the new recruitment strategies that will be used to reach the target population.

DEED subcontracts with 15 agencies, including some national SCSEP sponsors and WIA program deliverers, to ensure equitable program coverage Statewide. Because of the range of providers, local programs may vary in design while adhering to program requirements.

All current subgrantees employ outreach staff who assist in locating individuals most-in-need of services available through SCSEP and in identifying 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 welfare departments, WorkForce Centers, senior citizen centers/groups, area agencies on aging, and other community-based organizations, have been developed and will be continued through staff contact. Recruitment efforts include those of the Minneapolis Urban League and the Minnesota Band of Chippewa, both of whom are program subgrantees who work in areas having the highest percentage of American Indians and African Americans. They have considerable experience in recruiting and providing services to low-income individuals, and their participation ensures inclusion of both cultural communities.

Priorities for selection will be:

- Veterans and qualified spouses who meet the special consideration criteria
- Individuals with the greatest economic need
- Individuals who are 60 years of age or older
- Individuals who are limited-English-speaking, minority, and American Indian
- Individuals who seek reenrollment following termination of employment because of illness, or engaging in unsubsidized employment, providing that reenrollment is sought within one year of termination

Within all enrollment priorities, those with poor employment prospects will be given preference. All

subgrant program operators will be instructed to ensure program services for eligible individuals with the greatest economic need and those with poor employment prospects. Program operators will be monitored to ensure participation by individuals identified as poor employment prospects and having the greatest economic need.

(iii) Describe how participant income will be recertified each year, including where eligibility records will be maintained.

All enrollees will be recertified annually to determine income and place of residence. Subgrantees have the discretion of recertifying eligibility either at the beginning of each program year or on the enrollee's anniversary date. Subgrantees are required to indicate which method will be used in their annual subgrant application. Recertification forms will be signed by the enrollee and examined by the subgrantee staff as well as randomly sampled by the State to verify accuracy and eligibility.

When an enrollee is found to be ineligible for continued participation, an immediate written notice explaining the reason for termination will be provided and the enrollee will be given 30 days to terminate from the program. Efforts will be made to assist disenrolled participants in obtaining other employment prior to their termination from the program. All participant documentation will be maintained at the subgrantee agency.

(iv) Describe the arrangements that will be made to offer physical examinations as a required fringe benefit.

All applicants selected for participation will be offered a physical examination within 60 days after the commencement of any paid participation in the program. Once an applicant has been selected for participation, he or she will be given authorization to select a physician of choice, or if public health units are used, will be assigned a doctor/nurse and an examination time. The physician will be required to forward evidence that the exam was accomplished along with a statement of charges to the agency. The results of the physical exam will be maintained in a separate file stored apart from the enrollee file. The agency will pay the cost, if not already provided at no cost by an examining agency. Many subgrantees

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have been successful in arranging physicals at little or no cost to the program.

Applicants/enrollees who are in need of additional medical services will be referred for appropriate services. SCSEP staff will work with other agencies and organizations such as RS and county social service departments to ensure proper referrals. The DEED monitoring staff may review annual physical examination procedures during the course of scheduled onsite visits. Enrollees are not required to have an examination. If an enrollee declines an examination, a signed waiver will be placed in the individual's file prior to the first day of compensated employment. The program operator will obtain additional signed waivers from each enrollee who objects to a physical examination at intervals not greater than 15 months.

(v) Describe the orientation procedures for participants and host agencies.

Because of the number and diversity of subgrantee program operators and customer needs, DEED allows a variety of individual and group orientations. Regardless of whether the orientation approach is individual or group, subgrantees use these sessions to convey much needed work and customer-related information to participants. Work-related information includes available opportunities, work assignments, and information on the many training programs available. Work-related information is provided to the host agency as well as the enrollee.

The orientation also includes information on the responsibilities, rights, and privileges of enrollees and worksites; i.e., job duties, work rules, safety rules, payroll procedures, rates of pay, hours of work, fringe benefits, grievance procedures, nonfederal status of enrollees, and permissible political activities. In addition to the work-related and program-specific topics, orientation sessions may provide information on nutrition, education, health and welfare program assistance, shopping assistance, renting, transportation, and budgeting.

(vi) Describe the procedures for assessing job aptitudes, job readiness, and job preferences of participants and their potential for transition into unsubsidized employment.

Assessment of support service needs, job aptitudes, job readiness, and job preference of the enrollee is made by the subgrantee following initial eligibility determination. This assessment is done through interviews, review of the enrollee's work history, work skills and talents, training, physical examination results, and administration of special testing when appropriate. The assessment is reviewed and signed by the applicant and the project staff member who conducted the assessment.

Assessments focus on the stated needs and preferences of the participant. Subgrantees attempt to use a customer-centered approach to providing services; the participant is viewed as the most-appropriate source of information helping the participant help himself. Worksite placement and follow-up meetings with counselors provide insight to the suitability and desirability of the placement, as well as possible alternatives, training opportunities, and unsubsidized job placements.

Subgrantees are required to complete IEPs for each enrollee upon initial enrollment into the program. Subgrantees will update and record this assessment information and evaluate the participant's potential for transition into private unsubsidized employment at least annually.

(vii) Describe how the assessment will be used to develop the participant's Individual Employment Plan (IEP).

The IEP is based on the initial assessment and subsequent reassessments. The goals developed include employment, training needs, community service assignments, and quality of life and participant aspirations. The IEP is developed in partnership with the enrollee and contains the signatures of both the enrollee and counselor. Action steps towards achieving program goals are identified along with the approximate timeframe for undertaking and completing the action steps. The IEP must reflect the enrollee's support service needs as identified in the assessment. The reassessment should be a continuous process; however, it must be completed at least twice within 12 months. It may be prepared when the eligibility recertification is done and should include consideration of previous assessment findings.

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(viii) Describe how the participant will be assigned to community service including: The types of community service activity that will be emphasized and how they were chosen; methods used to match participants with community service training; the extent to which participants will be placed in the administration of the project itself; the types of host agencies used and the procedures and criteria for selecting the assignments; the average number of hours in a participant's training week; the average wage paid during training; the fringe benefits offered (if any); procedures for ensuring adequate supervision.

Subgrantee staff possess a great deal of experience in developing public and private nonprofit worksites which could be seen as possible placement locations for SCSEP participants. Positions developed by staff will be related as closely as possible to the results of the individual assessment of the participants' abilities and preferences. In developing subsidized employment positions, priority will be given to those jobs that directly serve other seniors. Concern will be given to developing positions in geographic proximity to the participants' residence that can provide a meaningful and worthwhile experience. Staff will be mindful that adequate supervision and safe and healthful conditions exist at the site before participants are placed there. Subgrantees are required to visit each worksite on a regular basis. One of the purposes of these regular visits is to ensure that enrollees are receiving adequate supervision. Additional monitoring will be done by DEED to make certain that proper and adequate worksite supervision is being provided, particularly where it is an in-kind match.

Examples of places that may be contacted by staff in the development of worksites are schools, city and village offices, senior citizen sites, nutrition and transportation programs, foster grandparents, senior companions, chore service, weatherization/energy crews, county garages, State parks, the U.S. Forest Service, State and federal lands and forestry stations, nursing homes and a multitude of other federal, State, and local public and private nonprofit agencies and organizations.

Examples of subsidized job positions which could be developed at these locations are as follows: 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.

A number of program operators use enrollees in the administration of the SCSEP. Examples from past program years include: clerical aids, bookkeepers, counseling assistants, and administrative positions in SCSEP programs. If eligible applicants with adequate background and/or interest can be found/trained, they will be used to fill administrative positions on the program. These administrative positions are used as worksites only when applicants indicate an interest in the type of work, since the subgrantees are required to develop slots that provide employment in relation with enrollees' work experience and personal interest.

Enrollees will work an average of 20 hours per week and will receive at least the current minimum wage. All subgrantees will use the enrollee's anniversary date on the program as the annual time period when tabulating the total hours an enrollee works. All enrollees will be covered by workers' compensation (WC), Federal Insurance Contributions Act, and general liability insurance. In addition, some subgrantees will provide limited fringe benefits to enrollees based upon established personnel policies of the subgrantee agency. These fringe benefits may include: annual leave, sick leave, holidays, health insurance, and when required by law, retirement benefits. The fringe benefits will be available to all enrollees within a subproject but required to be zeroed out at the end of each program year. Enrollees will not be covered by UI because Minnesota unemployment compensation laws exclude from coverage persons participating in any "...work training program financed in whole or in part by any federal agency..."

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(ix) Describe the training that will be provided during community service training and any other types of training provided, including linkages with local One-Stop Career Centers, the Registered Apprenticeship Program, and the Disability Program Navigators.

Enrollees placed in subsidized jobs will receive the majority of their training at the worksite. The teaching of job skills through demonstration, practice, and instruction will seek to sharpen skills not recently used and to upgrade these skills. The acquisition of new skills will also differentially take place at worksites. Work supervisors and other regular workstation staff familiar with tools, equipment, duties, procedures for task accomplishment, and requirements of the site will be prevailed upon to provide the necessary training to participants at no cost to the program through the cooperation of the worksite supervisor.

Auxiliary training outside of the worksite may be sought from available community resources when needed. Worksites often send participants to workshops and seminars offered to other agency personnel that could benefit them in the performance of their duties and increase their employability and transition into unsubsidized employment at the site or to unsubsidized employment with another employer. Community education programs and community colleges may also be used as appropriate to provide the needed training that can improve their skill levels, enhance existing skills, or offer new skills. For example, training of an extra-vocational nature may be offered, including time management, effective communication, learning job seeking skills, interviewing techniques, and job application procedures. Some of these may be offered through workshops provided by career development specialists, where available, and some may be taught individually by the counselors to specific enrollees as the need is assessed. The training may be a continuing process enabling the enrollee to obtain new employment horizons. As stated previously, the training needs of enrollees will be assessed twice in 12 months.

Enrollees will be paid at their established wage rate to participate in training for the purpose of acquiring or improving skills to be used in a job assignment. Paid

training does not have restrictions on training hours for an individual enrollee during a project year, and will be developed in conjunction with the participants' assessment and IEP. SCSEP maximizes services by co-enrolling in WIA programs, dislocated worker programs, and apprenticeship programs if a person needs services beyond what the older worker program can offer.

Workforce development agencies receive postings from various Apprenticeship Programs. Training opportunities for the Disability Program Navigators is offered through the Social Security Administration Work Incentive Program, which refers individuals to local disability advocates for assistance with the SSI/Social Security Disability Insurance application process and access to RS through the WorkForce Center.

(x) Describe the supportive services that will be offered to help participants obtain and retain an unsubsidized job.

Regular supportive services will include at a minimum: information and referral services; job-related and personal counseling; and referral assistance when specific concerns are identified, such as to RS, SSB, Social Security Administration benefits, welfare benefits, and insurance. Career and psychological testing and interpretation services may be used through the WorkForce Centers, county social services department, area mental health agencies, and other local counseling services. Workshops in resume writing, interview techniques, assertiveness training, and budget management may be coordinated with outreach staff, area colleges, technical colleges, YWCA and YMCA (young men's/women's Christian associations), and adult community education programs in local school districts.

Where fees are necessary for participation by enrollees, the project may absorb the cost. The support services will be provided according to the individual's assessed needs and will be established by the counselor and participant during their regular meetings. Other services supportive of the participant will be provided on a purchase or reimbursement basis from local providers. Such things as work clothes, uniforms, shoes, boots, safety and protective apparel, and eyeglasses will be provided if they are not available from the worksite or from other resources in

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the area. Supportive services may also include assistance under the headings of food, housing, legal, clothing, and health and medical emergency assistance, when it is not available elsewhere at no cost to the program.

(xi) Describe arrangements that will be made to provide transportation assistance to participants.

Every effort will be made to develop community service employment positions in the participant's communities that would require a minimum of travel. In all instances, and especially for those who do not drive or who are without access to transportation, every effort will be made to provide transportation to the worksites. This will be done by the use of volunteer transportation programs, Head Start cars, Foster Grandparent Program transportation, city bus service, minibuses, worksite staff, and, when possible, coordinated with school bus services. Participants may, on occasion, be reimbursed for transportation expenses for job interviews or when they are required to attend special training workshops. In these instances, participants will be reimbursed at a rate established by the subgrantee, not to exceed federal reimbursement rates.

(xii) Describe the steps that will be taken to move or place participants into unsubsidized employment, including cooperative measures that will be taken with the One-Stop Delivery System, and that support the Administration's focus on high-growth industries. Any grantee that failed to meet at least 23 percent unsubsidized placements in program year 2006 must submit a corrective action plan.

Transition into unsubsidized jobs at worksite agencies are seen as one method of meeting the 23 percent placement goal. Program staff will encourage host agencies to hire enrollees when permanent positions become available with the agency. Other methods may include use of a job developer who would devote time to the acquisition of unsubsidized openings at locations other than at the participant's worksite. Job placement activities will be coordinated with other placement partners in the WorkForce Center System. Additionally, nine of the 15 SCSEP subgrantees also administer and operate other programs under WIA.

As stated previously, individual needs of older workers vary. Because of this, an IEP will be developed with each individual to enable the project to meet individual needs. At that time, permanent unsubsidized employment goals of each enrollee will be identified as well as activities and services necessary to attain the goal.

Job development involves finding job opportunities inside or outside the project areas that are suitable for the enrollees. Subgrantees will attempt to develop jobs and effectively describe the requirements of the positions. Data from Minnesota's Job Bank and DEED's LMI are assessed and used on a periodic basis to update knowledge of the local labor force and labor market conditions. A highly individualized job development effort should result in a close match between job goals and employment, resulting in higher enrollee motivation to stay on the job. Job development will be carried out by specialists who are familiar with the customers they serve. Subgrantees may invite participants to participate in job search, application, and interview workshops conducted at WorkForce Centers. At these workshops, strategies for organizing job search, application preparation, interviewing techniques, and leads on job openings are presented. Participants needing supportive services in job search and travel to job interviews will be provided the information needed to obtain assistance from the program.

Follow-up for enrollees placed into unsubsidized employment will be conducted at the 30-, 90-, and 180-day (six month) follow-up and additional follow-ups within three-months of termination from the program. If any problems are identified at this time, appropriate action will be taken to assist the former enrollee in alleviating the problem. If a former enrollee is found to be unemployed during follow-up, the individual will receive priority for reenrollment into the program. Other successful types of terminations, such as entry into other workforce development activities, are expected. Staff will inform participants, where applicable, of other programs, activities, and projects in the area from which they might derive benefit. Some enrollees are expected to enter these other programs and subsequently obtain an unsubsidized job placement.

All subgrantees have a 24 percent unsubsidized placement goal. Those subgrantees not attaining a 24 percent

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placement goal will be required to submit a plan of action for addressing the goal in the forthcoming year.

(xiii) Describe any policy for maximum duration of enrollment or maximum time in community service.

DEED opts not to set a maximum duration on enrollment.

(xiv) Describe procedures for terminating a participant, including Individual Employment Plan terminations and the grievance procedures that will address termination from the program.

If a program provider determines that a participant is no longer eligible for SCSEP, the provider must give the participant written notice of termination within 30 days. A participant may be terminated for refusal to accept a reasonable number of job referrals or job offers of unsubsidized employment. The job referrals and/or job offers should be consistent with the IEP. Individuals found ineligible or terminated must be referred to the WorkForce Center for job seeking assistance and provided with a notice of right to appeal the decision.

(xv) Describe the procedures for addressing and resolving participant complaints.

All SCSEP participants will be given a written statement as to their rights and responsibilities on the project. The written statement will be explained to the customers in easily understood terms during the orientation session. The statement will include an explanation of customer attendance requirements, etc., and the right to file a grievance following the subgrantees' normal grievance procedures. At intake, applicants, whether eligible or noneligible, may be provided a copy of a complaint process procedure. They are made aware of what the form means and are encouraged to use it if they feel they have been discriminated against or treated unfairly through any action of the program-affiliated staff.

(xvi) Describe procedures for over enrolling participants, including how over enrollments will be balanced with Equitable Distribution requirements.

Temporary enrollees will be used when it is determined that funds are available. The same procedures and priorities that are used with permanent enrollees will be used to select temporary enrollees. At the time of enrollment, applicants will be notified in writing of their temporary status, and their enrollment records will indicate they are temporary enrollees. A copy of the written notification will also be placed in the enrollee's file. If a permanent enrollment position becomes available, the temporary enrollee with the most seniority will then be given permanent status and notified of this action. As stated in the federal regulations, the number of temporary enrollees will not exceed 20 percent of authorized enrollment positions without a written waiver from DOL. If temporary enrollees must be terminated, every effort will be made to assist these individuals in obtaining other employment.

(xvii) Describe steps that will be taken to ensure compliance with the Maintenance of Effort provision of section 501(b)(1)(F).

As subgrantee staff develop subsidized worksites for enrollees, they will inform host agencies that these enrollees are intended to provide additional services and not to displace current employees or substitute for employees who are on layoff or strike or replace private contractors. Host agencies will be required to sign a worksite agreement indicating that the enrollee will not displace current employees or substitute for laid off employees. If it is found during regular worksite visits that an enrollee has displaced a regular employee, a new worksite will be developed for that enrollee.

(xviii) Describe payroll procedures and how workers' compensation premiums are paid.

Based upon the prior-year payroll amount of SCSEP enrollees, coupled with their job classification and the number, duration, and amount of WC claims filed and paid during the prior-year, an estimated premium amount is set by the WC insurer for the current year. Each agency then makes quarterly payments throughout the year that total the annual estimated premium amount. Once the year has ended, the insurer conducts an onsite audit of the actual payroll amount of SCSEP enrollees for the year along with their job classifications. Based upon actual SCSEP payroll

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expenditures, the agency is either remitted a refund or charged an additional premium amount at the conclusion of the WC audit. WC claims are paid out by the insurer. The premiums are listed under the enrollee wages and fringe benefits category of the financial status report.

(xix) Describe collaboration efforts with the One-Stop System and with other partner programs under the Workforce Investment Act to maximize opportunities for SCSEP participants.

Strong partnerships with other agencies and organizations that serve the older worker population will or has been established with the Department of Health and Human Services, State Board on Aging, LWIBs, social service organizations providing services to older individuals such as Mature Worker program, VR services, Wagner-Peyser, 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 collaboratives, and local referral sources to assist customers in accessing services including transportation, housing and health, and other workforce development services.

(xx) Describe efforts 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.

(xxi) Describe current slot imbalances and proposed steps to correct inequities to achieve equitable distribution.

The State continues to develop cooperative and coordinative relationships among State-administered SCSEP and 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, Quality Career Services, 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, Wagner-Peyser, and WIA 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.

(xxii) List the cities and counties where the project and subprojects will be conducted. Include the number of SCSEP authorized positions and indicate where the positions changed from the prior year.

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Table G.3 indicates are the counties where the SCSEP projects are being conducted in Minnesota. The total number of authorized enrollment positions to be maintained under the program is 287 for PY06/07.
(Note: CEP = concentrated employment program; SSA = Senior Services of America, Inc.)

Table G.3 - SCSEP Projects by County

Central Minnesota Jobs & Training Services (SSA)	Aitkin
Anoka County Job Training Center (21); Quality Career Services	Anoka
Rural Minnesota CEP, Inc. (2); Experience Works; Minnesota Chippewa Tribe (2)	Becker
Rural Minnesota CEP, Inc. (1); Experience Works (0); National Indian Council on Aging	Beltrami
Quality Career Services	Benton
Experience Works	Big Stone
Minnesota Valley Action Council (16)	Blue Earth
Minnesota Valley Action Council (11)	Brown
Central Minnesota Jobs & Training Services (SSA); Chippewa (1)	Carlton
Carver (10)	Carver
Rural Minnesota CEP, Inc. (0); Experience Works; Minnesota Chippewa Tribe (1); National Indian Council on Aging	Cass
Experience Works	Chippewa
Central Minnesota Jobs & Training Services (SSA)	Chisago
Rural Minnesota CEP, Inc. (2); Experience Works	Clay
Inter-County (2); Rural Minnesota CEP, Inc. (1); Experience Works	Clearwater
Minnesota Chippewa Tribe (1); ELDERCIRCLE (SSA)	Cook
Southwestern Minnesota Opportunity Council (6)	Cottonwood
Experience Works; Rural Minnesota CEP, Inc. (1)	Crow Wing
Dakota County Workforce Services (18); Quality Career Services	Dakota
Experience Works	Dodge
Rural Minnesota CEP, Inc. (0); Experience Works	Douglas
Minnesota Valley Action Council (10)	Faribault
Experience Works	Fillmore
Experience Works	Freeborn
Southeastern Minnesota Workforce Development, Inc. (2); Quality Career Services	Goodhue
Rural Minnesota CEP, Inc. (1); Experience Works	Grant
Minneapolis Urban League (23); East Side Neighborhood (SSA); Jewish Vocational Services (SSA), National Indian Council on Aging	Hennepin
Experience Works	Houston
Rural Minnesota CEP, Inc. (2); Experience Works	Hubbard
Central Minnesota Jobs & Training (SSA)	Isanti
Arrowhead Economic Opportunity Agency (2); Chippewa (0), ELDERCIRCLE (SSA)	Itasca
Southwestern Minnesota Opportunity Council (5)	Jackson
Central Minnesota Jobs & Training Services (SSA)	Kanabec
Experience Works	Kandiyohi
Experience Works	Kittson
Arrowhead (3); Chippewa (1); ELDERCIRCLE (SSA)	Koochiching
Experience Works	La Qui Parle
Arrowhead (1); ELDERCIRCLE (SSA)	Lake
Inter-County Community Council (3), Rural Minnesota CEP, Inc. (0)	Lake of the Woods
Experience Works	LeSueur
Experience Works	Lincoln
Experience Works	Lyon

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Table G.3 - SCSEP Projects by County

Rural Minnesota CEP, Inc. (1); Experience Works; Chippewa (2)	Mahnomen
Experience Works	Marshall
Minnesota Valley Action Council (11)	Martin
Central Minnesota Jobs & Training Services (SSA)	McLeod
Experience Works	Meeker
Central Minnesota Jobs & Training Services (SSA); Chippewa (2)	Mille Lacs
Rural Minnesota CEP, Inc. (2); Experience Works	Morrison
Experience Works	Mower
Southwestern Minnesota Opportunity Council (5)	Murray
Minnesota Valley Action Council (7)	Nicollet
Southwestern Minnesota Opportunity Council (9)	Nobles
Experience Works (0)	Norman
Experience Works (18)	Olmsted
Rural Minnesota CEP, Inc. (2); Experience Works	Otter Tail
Inter-County (2); Experience Works	Pennington
Central Minnesota Jobs & Training Services (SSA)	Pine
SW Opportunity Council (5)	Pipestone
Inter-County (3); Experience Works	Polk
Rural Minnesota CEP, Inc. (1); Experience Works	Pope
Quality Career Services	Ramsey
Inter-County (2); Experience Works	Red Lake
Experience Works	Redwood
Experience Works	Renville
Southeastern (5); Experience Works	Rice
Southwestern Minnesota Opportunity Council (4)	Rock
Experience Works; InterCounty (1)	Roseau
Scott County (9)	Scott
Quality Career Services	Sherburne
Experience Works	Sibley
Experience Works	St. Louis
Experience Works	Stearns
Experience Works	Steele
Rural Minnesota CEP, Inc. (2); Experience Works	Stevens
Experience Works	Swift
Rural Minnesota CEP, Inc. (2); Experience Works	Todd
Rural Minnesota CEP, Inc. (1); Experience Works	Traverse
Southeastern Minnesota Workforce Development, Inc.;(3); Experience Works	Wabasha
Rural Minnesota CEP, Inc. (0); Experience Works	Wadena
Experience Works	Waseca
Washington (9); Quality Career Services	Washington
Minnesota Valley Action Council (6)	Watonwan
Rural Minnesota CEP, Inc. (0); Experience Works	Wilkin
Experience Works (6)	Winona
Central Minnesota Jobs & Training Services (SSA)	Wright

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(xxiii) Describe the organizational structure of the project and how subprojects will be managed, including assurances that adequate resources for administrative costs will be provided. Also describe the training that will be provided to local staff and describe how projects will be monitored for program and financial compliance, including audit plans.

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 GWDC
- Administering WIA monies and other employment and training programs available to the Governor of Minnesota
- Initiating fund disbursement process, including requests for proposals (RFPs)
- Making grant award recommendations
- Negotiating contracts
- Conducting program monitoring, assessment, and evaluation
- Interpreting policies

DEED's Workforce Development Division manages and administers the SCSEP. The Job Seeker Services branch within this division is responsible for SCSEP and WIA Title I-B grants planning and program development. Staff in the Job Seeker Services and the Workforce Systems Coordination branches are responsible for preparing grant applications, processing subgrantee invoices, and coordinating legislative audits. A program specialist is responsible for coordinating all SCSEP program activities and ensuring that all WDD staff assigned to the program receive 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 used under this contract are as follows:

- Anoka County (governmental unit)
- Arrowhead Economic Opportunity Agency (private, nonprofit corporation)
- Carver County (governmental unit)
- Dakota County (governmental unit)
- Duluth, City of (a municipal corporation, unit of government)
- Experience Works (private, nonprofit corporation)
- Inter-County Community Council (nonprofit corporation)
- Minneapolis Urban League (private, 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)
- Southeastern Minnesota Workforce Development, Inc. (private, nonprofit corporation)
- 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.

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- As 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 staffperson 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 WIA 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 that may materially affect the subgrant 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 that may develop.

Onsite Monitoring: A monitor checklist 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, orientation operations, and other proposed/necessary operations.

Upon completion of onsite visits, a monitoring report will be written addressing all program operations with a corrective action section if applicable. This section will list all program discrepancies that 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 overexpended or underexpended 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 checklist will be used as a basis for monitoring subgrantee financial management systems. Financial monitoring will include, but not be limited to, the following:

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- 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
- Ensure that sources of documentation are complete and accurate
- Ensure that costs are being assigned to proper cost categories, allowable, and accrued properly
- 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.

(xxiv) Describe how the State will manage its providers and how it will transfer participants if new providers are selected to serve in the State.

If a SCSEP provider desires additional or new State slots or to renegotiate the number of State slots, an RFP process may need to happen to judge the process fairly.

(xxv) Include a proposed level for each performance measure for each of the program years covered by the Plan. While the Plan is under review or through a subsequent modification, the State will negotiate with the Division of Older Worker Programs to set the appropriate levels for the next year. At a minimum, States must identify the performance indicators required under 20 CFR 641.710, and, for each indicator, the State must develop an objective and quantifiable performance goal for the program year. The performance measures include: placement rate; service

level; service to most in need; community service; employment retention; and customer satisfaction of employers, participants, and host agencies. The requirements for reporting are outlined in Older Worker Bulletin 04-06 dated September 7, 2004 and based on data collected during PY2005.

Negotiations for performance levels for PY07/08 will take place during May or June 2007. The measures below reflect PY06/07.

Minnesota SCSEP Performance Measures for PY06

For PY06, Minnesota will be held accountable for collecting information on seven performance measures mandated by the Older Americans Act (OAA) amendments and the implementing regulations. These are:

- Placement Rate
- Service Level
- Service to Most-in-Need
- Community Service Provided
- Employment Retention
- Customer Satisfaction for Employers, Participants, and Host Agencies

Placement Rate: The placement rate will be calculated by dividing the number of SCSEP participants placed in unsubsidized employment by the number of each grantee's authorized community service positions. Consistent with the OAA amendments, placement may be in either full- or part-time employment. A placement requires 30 days of employment, not necessarily continuous, with one or more employers within the first 90 days of exit. Each day that a participant is on the payroll of an employer counts towards the 30-day requirement, regardless of whether the participant actually performs services on that day. Thus, a participant who exits SCSEP for unsubsidized employment on September 1 and remains employed with the same employer through September 30 has achieved a placement. Beginning in PY04, Section 513(a)(2)(C) of the OAA requires the Employment and Training Administration to establish a formal performance measure of not less than 20 percent placement.

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- Minnesota has an unsubsidized placement goal of 24 percent (State is at 24 percent and national is at 30 percent).

Service Level: The service level is defined as the number of a grantee's participants divided by the number of the grantee's authorized positions. Minnesota will maintain the current program requirement for State and national grantees to serve a total number of eligible individuals that is at least 140 percent of the number of authorized community service positions; this is comparable to the Government Performance and Results Act goal for the program.

- The Minnesota goal is 162 percent.

Service to Most-in-Need: Persons who are "most-in-need" are defined in OAA section 641.710 as those who:

- Have an income level at or below the poverty line (OAA sec. 101(27))
- Have physical and mental disabilities; language barriers; and cultural, social, or geographical isolation, including isolation caused by racial or ethnic status that restricts the ability of the individual to perform normal daily tasks, or threatens the capacity of the individual to live independently (OAA sec. 101(28))
- Have poor employment history or prospects
- Are over the age of 60

The service to most-in-need will reflect the percentage of total participants who are at least 60 years old and who meet at least one additional criterion from the following: an income at or below the poverty level; physical or mental disabilities; language barriers (LEP or literacy); cultural, social, or geographical isolation; poor employment history or prospects (for example, displaced homemakers); or other social barriers.

- For PY06, the Minnesota target for serving those most-in-need is 67 percent of all new participants as of July 1, 2006.

Community Service: In addition to the goal of placement in unsubsidized employment, an equally important goal of the Title V program is to benefit communities through community service assignments. The community service measure provides a tracking method with respect to accomplishments in meeting the community benefit goal. The goal is defined as the total number of community service hours worked by all participants compared to the grantee's community service goal expressed in hours.

- For PY06, the Minnesota target for community service hours is 223,860 (approximately 780 hours per authorized position; there are 287 authorized positions.)

Retention Rate: Section 513(b)(3) of the OAA amendments requires performance indicators to include "placement into and retention in unsubsidized public or private employment." The OAA amendments define "retention in public or private unsubsidized employment" in section 513(c)(2)(B) as "full- or part-time paid employment in the public or private sector by an enrollee under this title for 6 months after the starting date of placement into unsubsidized employment without the use of funds under this title or any other Federal or State employment subsidy program." The goal is to measure retention at six months by determining which participants who have been placed into unsubsidized employment are employed by any employer on the 180th day after first starting unsubsidized employment with any employer.

- The Minnesota goal for retention is 59 percent of the qualified placements will be employed at 180 days.

Customer Satisfaction for Employers, Participants, and Host Agencies: Section 513(b)(4) of the OAA amendments states that indicators of SCSEP performance must include satisfaction of the participants, employers, and host agencies with their experience with SCSEP. For the employer customer satisfaction survey, the goal is to have subgrantees deliver a survey form to every employer at a mandatory follow-up interview within 90 days



after a placement. Subgrantees will be responsible for distributing written survey instruments.

Customer satisfaction for all three groups is surveyed using the American Customer Satisfaction Index (ACSI). The ACSI allows SCSEP to look at its own performance and to benchmark its performance against other entities within and outside of the employment and training system. The ACSI is useful in tracking change over time, making it an ideal way to gauge progress in continuously improving performance one of the essential tenets of the OAA amendments. The survey uses a set of three required questions. The responses to these questions are then used to form a customer satisfaction "index." The questions are:

- Using a scale of 1 to 10 where "1" means "Very Dissatisfied" and "10" means "Very Satisfied" what is your overall satisfaction with the services provided by _____?
- Considering all of the expectations you may have had about the services, to what extent have the services met your expectations? "1" now means "Falls Short of Your Expectations" and "10" means "Exceeds Your Expectations."
- Now think of the ideal program for people in your circumstances. How well do you think the services you received compare with the ideal set of services? "1" now means, "Not Very Close to the Ideal" and "10" means "Very Close to the Ideal."

The ACSI score is obtained by combining scores from these three specific questions that address different dimensions of customers' experiences. In order for the ACSI survey to yield meaningful results under the prescribed methodology, the survey questions cannot be modified in any significant way. Only the ACSI score will be used to determine a grantee's performance on this measure.

- Minnesota is expected to have a combined rating of 87 percent satisfaction with the SCSEP services provided to participants, employers, and host agencies.

Setting Performance Levels and Making Adjustments

Performance levels (or standards) for the first five performance measures is set on July 1, 2006, for every State grantee and national grantee organization. DOL bases the performance levels for each of these indicators on data collected by the SCSEP Performance and Results QPR system - version 2 (SPARQ2) in PY06.

(xxvi) Describe any request for an increase in administrative costs consistent with section 502(c)(3) of the Older Americans Act.

There have been no requests for an increase in administrative costs consistent with section 502(c)(3).

(xxvii) Describe plans to provide a copy of this section to Area Agencies on Aging consistent with section 502(d) of the Older American Act.

Copies will be mailed and or e-mailed to area agencies on aging a description of the project, including the location of the project for review and public comment to achieve coordination efforts.



H. Coordination and Non-Duplication

1. Describe how your State will coordinate and integrate the services provided through all of the programs identified in the Unified Plan in order to meet the needs of its customers, ensure there is no overlap or duplication among the programs, and ensure collaboration with key partners and continuous improvement of the workforce investment system. (States are encouraged to address several coordination requirements in a single narrative, if possible.)

In answering the above question, if your Unified Plan includes:

(b) WIA Title I and Wagner-Peyser Act and/or Veterans Programs:

(i) Structure/Process for State agencies and State Board to collaborate and communicate with each other and with the local workforce investment system (§112(b)(8)(A))

(a) Describe the steps the State will take to improve operational collaboration of the workforce investment activities and other related activities and programs outlined in Section 112(b)(8)(A), at both the State and local level (e.g., joint activities, memoranda of understanding, planned mergers, coordinated policies, etc.). How will the State Board and agencies eliminate any existing State-level barriers to coordination? (§§111(d)(2) and 112(b)(8)(A))

The 2003 creation of the Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED) consolidated the vast majority of State-level workforce investment activities into one State agency. Other than post-secondary education, only Adult Basic Education (ABE), Food Support Employment and Training (FSET), Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF), and the Registered Apprenticeship Program are major federal workforce development programs outside of DEED. An interagency

agreement between DEED and the Department of Human Services (DHS) provides additional communication and coordination around TANF and FSET via shared staff.

Leadership of DEED, DHS, the Minnesota Department of Education (MDE), and the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities (MnSCU) system serve together on the Governor's Workforce Development Council (GWDC) and its executive committee. The GWDC, which is the State's workforce investment board, and its committee structure provide a common venue for both agency leadership and staff to communicate on workforce development issues. As an example, DEED, MnSCU, MDE, and the GWDC are currently collaborating on distributing the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) Incentive Grant that Minnesota received in 2004, 2005, and 2006 to leverage system collaboration that results in Statewide benefit.

Since the consolidation of DEED, a key priority has been to enhance the agency's partnerships with MnSCU on both economic development and workforce development. DEED's commissioner meets regularly with the MnSCU system chancellor. Centrally, DEED and MnSCU leadership also collaborate in other venues, including the Minnesota Job Skills Partnership Board and other common activities. At a regional level, DEED's regional administrators are building strong partnerships with their new regional counterparts in the MnSCU system.

With shared legislative leadership, DEED and DHS have been discussing opportunities to collaborate to meet the workforce needs of low-income Minnesotans. DHS, DEED, and the Minnesota State Council on Disability recently received a four-year comprehensive employment opportunities grant from the federal Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services. The grant will be used to develop a comprehensive system of employment supports for individuals with disabilities and provides another important opportunity for interagency collaboration between DHS and DEED to address the employment needs of Minnesotans with disabilities.

At the local level, memoranda of understanding (MOUs) provide a structure for local workforce investment partnerships and service delivery in the Minnesota WorkForce Centers. Representatives of education, vocational rehabilitation, public assistance agencies, and

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the public employment service (WIA Title III) serve on nearly all local workforce investment boards (LWIBs). State law requires that a representative of the public employment service be on each LWIB. Most LWIBs have a WIA Title IV representative on their boards from vocational rehabilitation.

Accompanying the development of *Minnesota's Unified Plan*, DEED distributed new local planning guidance to its 16 LWIBs. In July 2008, Minnesota's local areas will be asked to submit regional plans. The regional plans will not replace individual local plans that focus on a portion of the workforce investment system (WIA Title I-B, State Dislocated Worker, and Senior Community Service Employment Program [SCSEP]). With the regional planning guidance in development, this will create a new emphasis on an integrated service delivery system and a focus on services, not programs, and regional industry needs, not one business at a time. Although local plans will not be developed until after *Minnesota's Unified Plan* is finalized, preliminary feedback indicates that the new planning structure is sparking new conversations about how local partnerships can and will collaborate on addressing their region's workforce investment needs.

(b) Describe the lines of communication and mechanisms established by the Governor to ensure timely and effective sharing of information between the State agencies/State Board and local workforce investment areas and Local Boards. Include types of regularly issued guidance and how Federal guidance is disseminated to Local Boards and One-Stop Career Centers. (§112(b)(1))

Minnesota's 16 LWIB chairs, the chief elected official of each workforce service area (WSA), and the 16 WSA directors make up the Minnesota Workforce Council Association (MWCA). The MWCA Operations Committee, comprised of staff directors and other employment and training providers, meets monthly. DEED and staff, including the regional administrators and the strategic projects manager, regularly attend these monthly meetings to discuss federal guidance, State policies, and other issues. DEED staff use both the operations committee meetings and DEED's website to

distribute federal program policy guidance to LWIBs and local staff. State staff solicit LWIB/WSA input in the development of State policy (draft policies are provided electronically for local comment). DEED distributes final policies by e-mail and posts them on DEED's website. Additionally, the MWCA establishes ad hoc committees on an as-needed basis to ensure communication among its members and with State staff. At present, some of these committees are addressing common measures, LWIB development, "mystery shopper," and adult/dislocated worker issues.

State and local staff and LWIB members collaborate on a number of issues such as system marketing, performance measures, technology systems, and continuous improvement. DEED staff facilitate roundtables and practitioner meetings for local staff from the WSAs; certified service providers from the Dislocated Worker program also participate. DEED's regional administrators and the strategic projects manager also meet regularly with local staff and LWIBs, serve as a regional point of communication with DEED, and provide leadership, technical assistance, and capacity-building opportunities.

DEED's strategic projects manager works directly with LWIB leadership to assess local board capacity, identify training needs, and provide training to meet LWIB development needs. This position also does research and provides information and State assistance to LWIBs for funding opportunities and new partnerships. DEED has introduced *Positively Minnesota: Partners for Job Growth*, a regular newsletter for LWIB members. It is e-mailed to LWIB members and contains articles such as the DEED commissioner and Workforce Development Division director columns, descriptions of innovative service delivery strategies, local and regional best practices, and a regular column on WorkForce Center performance. See Table C.2 for a list of workforce development communication vehicles.

(c) Describe any cross-cutting organizations or bodies at the State level designed to guide and inform an integrated vision for serving youth in the State within the context of workforce investment, social services, juvenile justice, and education.

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- Describe the membership of such bodies and the functions and responsibilities in establishing priorities and services for youth? How is the State promoting a collaborative cross-agency approach for both policy development and service delivery at the local level for youth? (§112(b)(18)(A))

Minnesota has several interagency initiatives that support the Shared Youth Vision. These cross-agency projects are described in the [Shared Youth Vision \(SYV\) forum website](#) and in Sections A and B of this plan.

Minnesota's Shared Youth Vision Team proposes to develop a Regional Career Information website targeted to youth as a pilot in six regions of rural Minnesota. While career information websites exist, they lack a regional focus and omit available labor market information (LMI) on current conditions. Existing career information websites focus on the national and State economies and generally rely solely on occupational projections. Minnesota's rural regional economies are complex with diverse workforce needs as determined by the unique mix of rural businesses and high-growth industries. There is extensive current and regional LMI that is produced but not being adequately disseminated to the neediest youth and parents in Minnesota's rural communities. This project supports the regional roll-out of [Minnesota's SYV activities](#).

The website will include all of the regional LMI on current conditions and projections with a focus on high-growth and high-demand industries, synthesizing this extensive information into a summary of regional occupations in demand. The value of this information is being demonstrated within Minnesota's workforce investment system and its use is accelerating in projects that reach secondary students, parents, and community groups. But the information needs to be integrated with existing career information resources and made available on the Internet so that it is readily accessible to the SYV partners at the State and local level. Young people and parents need help to make informed career decisions and acquire the training for the well-paying occupations in-demand. This project leverages existing information, does not duplicate any existing media, and fills an acute information need that will result in improved outcomes for the neediest youth.

Minnesota co-sponsored, along with Iowa and Wisconsin, a Tri-State Peer-to-Peer Youth Forum providing youth workforce practitioners from three states with capacity-building opportunities and a chance to share best practices. Eight local youth council members from Minnesota were recognized at the forum for outstanding contributions to the development of local partnerships to improve the quality of youth services. Handouts from the forum are available on DEED's [youth website](#).

Youth councils increase awareness of the importance of youth issues and strive to improve the quality and effectiveness of local youth services each year. Youth service providers are held accountable to the LWIBs and youth councils that are responsible for strategic planning, program oversight, coordination and non-duplication of resources, and selection of youth service providers.

The local youth services strategy fits into the overall vision and strategic direction for workforce development established by the LWIBs. Youth councils ensure that youth participants can plan employment and career paths using current regional LMI, such as targeted high-growth industries in the region, in-demand occupations, and industries hiring for jobs with above average earnings.

Minnesota used WIA incentive funds to promote coordination in projects such as:

- Math Works! - Northwest Minnesota partners jointly planned a WIA incentive-funded project to strengthen the math skills of students through contextual learning. A team of eighth graders, twelfth graders, vocational-technical instructors from secondary and post-secondary education, and ABE instructors will develop an alternative math learning method for students who have not had success with traditional textbook instruction. Math Works! will develop modules that provide foundational math instruction within the framework of the northwest regions' high-demand jobs of allied health, construction trades, and manufacturing.

(c) Adult Education and Family Literacy, describe how the Adult Education and Family Literacy activities that will be carried out with any funds received under AEFLA will be integrated with

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other adult education, career development, and employment and training activities in the State or outlying area served by the eligible agency. (§224(b)(11))

Minnesota uses its Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (AEFLA) funds at both the local provider level and the State agency level in a highly coordinated and collaborative manner. At the local provider level, Minnesota integrates and coordinates ABE activities through these initiatives:

- Each ABE provider is required to have a current MOU with the local WorkForce Center in its region that specifies how the two organizations will work cooperatively and share resources.
- Each ABE provider participates in the Workforce Integration and Learning Mentor Academy training activities and has developed specific workforce education plans using AEFLA funding. These plans are reviewed and approved by the MDE ABE Office annually.
- ABE providers maintain collaborative relationships with business organizations in their region such as the local Chamber of Commerce, trade associations and labor unions, and other agencies that serve populations in need of employment such as the county public assistance offices.
- ABE providers serve on a number of LWIBs and other employment-related advisory groups.
- Under the WIA Incentive Grant, many local ABE providers are collaborating with MnSCU providers and WorkForce Centers to deliver high quality English Language Training programs to incumbent workers (see Section G.1.(d)(ii) for a more detailed description).
- Five ABE providers have adult education services co-located within WorkForce Centers and other ABE providers have set up class arrangements with WorkForce Centers to deliver adult education services at the local ABE site.

At the State agency level, federally funded activities are integrated and coordinated in these ways:

- The State director of adult education meets regularly with the WIA partner group (staff from MnSCU

and DEED) to discuss and coordinate important collaborative activities such as the WIA Incentive Grant and services coordination across State agencies.

- The State director of adult education serves on a subcommittee of the GWDC; that subcommittee has a focus to integrate employment services to Limited English Proficient adults and to coordinate WIA activities that serve that group.
- Staff development activities offered by the Title II providers (local and State agency level) are open to WorkForce Center staff and other WIA partner staff.

(d) Vocational Rehabilitation:

(i) Describe the State agency's plans policies, and procedures for coordination with the following agencies or programs:

(a) Federal, State and local agencies and programs, including programs carried out by the Under Secretary for Rural Development of the Department of Agriculture and State use contracting programs to the extent that such agencies and programs are not carrying out activities through the statewide workforce investment system. (§101(a)(11)(C))

Vocational Rehabilitation/Rehabilitation Services - General

Passage of the 1998 WIA, which reauthorized the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and its amendments, aims to secure greater participation in the workforce for individuals with disabilities. It provides for dynamic partnerships among the State's vocational rehabilitation (VR) programs, their partners in the State's workforce investment activity, and many other private and public entities to meet the training, education, and VR needs of Minnesotans with disabilities. Through these collaborations, the Rehabilitation Services (RS)-VR program and its partners can accomplish far more for individuals with disabilities than can each working alone.

Table H.1 displays multiple cooperative arrangements into which the VR program has entered regarding transition from school-to-work, post-secondary education, employer-VR partnerships, specific populations, WorkForce Center

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System development, Community Rehabilitation Programs (CRPs), Centers for Independent Living (CILs), and VR participation on State and non-governmental councils and advisory bodies. These are annotated with their purposes that flow from RS-VR plans and policies. Important collaborations occur with components of the WorkForce Center System, other governmental and non-governmental entities, and the State's business community. The major types of agreements used by the VR program to enter into the collaborations called for by WIA include:

- Interagency cooperation with federal, State, or local agencies and programs that are components of the Statewide workforce investment system.
- Interagency cooperation with federal, State, or local agencies and programs that are not part of the Statewide workforce investment system, including the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA).
 - The WIA Rehabilitation Act refers to a need for "cooperation with and utilization of ...programs carried out by the Under Secretary for Rural Development of the USDA." In Minnesota, this takes place locally at the WorkForce Center level. Customers may be referred to programs funded by USDA rural development community facility, self-help, business and industry, cooperative service, business enterprise, and economic development aids, loans, or grants. The Minnesota USDA Rural Development Office uses technical economic information and forecasting provided by DEED to develop and market its services. There is no formal, written collaborative arrangement between RS and the USDA.
- Arrangements with State agencies and other entities on supported employment and on extended services for individuals with the most significant disabilities.
- Coordination with the MDE Special Education Office on plans, policies, and procedures that facilitate the transition of students with disabilities from the receipt of education services in school to the receipt of VR under *Minnesota's Unified Plan*, and other agreements with education officials that support transition.
- Cooperative agreements with private, nonprofit RS providers.
- Cooperative agreements with CILs.
- Cooperative agreements with American Indian projects.

- Arrangements providing for reciprocal referral services between RS and State Services for the Blind (SSB).

Vocational Rehabilitation/State Services for the Blind - Blind Agency

VR-SSB does not have a formal interagency agreement with the programs carried out by the Department of Agriculture's Under Secretary 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.

SSB continues to work in collaboration with the other designated State unit in Minnesota, RS, and has developed and has in place a formal cooperative agreement with representatives of the higher education system in the State. This agreement involves representatives from MnSCU throughout the State. VR-SSB also has formal interagency agreements with the American Indian VR programs in the State and has arrangements with the general rehabilitation program providing for reciprocal referral services between VR-SSB and RS.

(b) Education officials responsible for the public education of students with disabilities, including a formal interagency agreement with the State educational agency. (§101(a)(11)(D))

Vocational Rehabilitation/Rehabilitation Services - General

Amendments to the Rehabilitation Act, enacted in WIA, require specific collaboration between the State's VR programs and the State's public education system. Consequently, RS, SSB, and MDE have entered into a collaborative agreement regarding the transition of students with disabilities from school to the receipt of VR services and to work. The primary aim of this agreement is to establish a coordinated system between schools and VR services, linking students with disabilities from the school to RS and/or SSB prior to school exit. It also aims to:

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Table H.1 - Selected Collaborative Arrangements

Transition (from school-to-work)	
Interagency Agreement - Special Education	To facilitate working relationships among RS-VR, SSB, and MDE's Special Education regarding program and planning responsibilities for the transition of youth and young adults with disabilities from school-to-work. <i>Rehabilitation Act Section 101(a)(11)(D)</i>
Minnesota State Interagency Committee (MnSIC) Interagency Agreement	To establish the purposes and responsibilities of State agencies for collaboration on the implementation of State and local interagency systems to meet the needs of children with disabilities ages 3 through 21. <i>Minn. Stat. § 125A.023</i>
Interagency Transition Work Group	To develop a common language/terminology for transition services, thereby improving and increasing communication and coordination of services for students with disabilities.
Specific Learning Disabilities Leadership Group	To assist special education to stay up-to-date on practices, emerging issues, and new legislation related to special education.
Pathways to Employment	Pathways is a Medicaid Infrastructure Grant that addresses multiple systemic barriers to the employment of individuals with disabilities. A collaborative partnership of the Minnesota State Council on Disabilities, DHS, and DEED, the improvement of services to transition age youth is among its primary activities.
Post-secondary Education	
Agreement among DEED-RS, DEED-SSB, MnSCU, and University of Minnesota	To improve coordination of services to students with disabilities served in common, increase probabilities of student success, and resolve differences and increase cost effectiveness of services. <i>Rehabilitation Act Section 101(a)(8)(B)</i>
MOU between DEED-RS and the Minnesota Association of Financial Aid Administrators	To coordinate support for the education planning of VR customers, preserve confidentiality, maximize access, and maximize the use of comparable benefits.
Employer - VR Partnerships (see also WorkForce Center System and System Development)	
Business Services Team	All business services specialists develop relationships with employers that foster employment of persons with disabilities. RS-VR contributes technical assistance and training. Five VR staff work as business services specialists and contribute their disability employment expertise on WorkForce Center-based business services teams. VR placement coordinators are active on this collaborative activity.
Minnesota Business Leadership Network	A VR partnership with employers, individuals with disabilities, and governmental and non-governmental agencies to promote community access and employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities.
Specific Populations	
Interagency Cooperative Agreement, Minnesota Plan for the Integration of Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) Services	To coordinate policies on injury prevention and on the provision of VR services and community supports to individuals with TBI.

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Table H.1 (continued) - Selected Collaborative Arrangements

Specific Populations (continued)

Universal Participation, Assessment and Consultation: Collaboration with Hennepin County Human Services Department	To provide technical assistance regarding implementation of new Minnesota Family Investment Program (MFIP) universal participation requirements, ensuring that individuals with disabilities have access to employment-related components of MFIP. <i>Contract</i>
Cooperative Agreement with Self-Help for Hard of Hearing Individuals	To cooperatively pursue shared goals regarding employment of persons who are deaf or hard of hearing, including increased referrals to VR.
Quad Agency Interagency Agreement	Facilitate the development and implementation of interagency systems to meet the needs, including employment needs, of deaf, DeafBlind, and hard of hearing adults, children, and their families. <i>Minn. Stat. § 256C.23-27</i>
Minnesota Employment Center for Individuals Who Are Deaf or Hard of Hearing	Provide services to support the employment of deaf and hard of hearing persons in ten Minnesota counties. <i>State appropriation</i>
Cooperative Agreement: White Earth Reservation - Human Service - VR Division and DEED-RS	To provide information, technical assistance, training opportunities, and support to the White Earth VR program, establishing a process for referral and transfer of cases in accordance with best practices ensuring choice. <i>Rehabilitation Act Section 105 (a)(11)(F)</i>
Cooperative Agreement: Red Lake Nation-Tribal Social Services-Division of Rehabilitation Services and DEED-RS	To provide information, technical assistance, training opportunities, and support to the Red Lake VR program, establishing a process for referral and transfer of cases in accordance with best practices ensuring choice. <i>Rehabilitation Act Section 105 (a)(11)(F)</i>
Interagency Cooperative Agreement between DEED and DHS-Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services Division (DHHSD)	Through training, shared information, and common advocacy, improve employment outcomes for customers who are deaf and hard of hearing.
Work Incentive Connection (Reducing Medicaid and Social Security Barriers to Employment)	To provide work incentive training, benefit analysis counseling and related services that increase the employment of persons who receive Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI). VR liaison continues for purposes of training VR staff and county case managers.
EE Coordinated Employability Projects/VR Staff Technical Assistance and Coordination	Through multiple innovation and expansion grants, demonstrate an effective model for collaborating with employers to provide supports for continued employment of Minnesotans with serious and persistent mental illness. <i>State appropriation</i>
VR Coordinated Employability Projects Grants	Through multiple innovation and expansion grants, demonstrate an effective model of VR services in the community for Minnesotans with serious and persistent mental illness. <i>State appropriation</i>

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Table H.1 (continued) - Selected Collaborative Arrangements

Specific Populations (continued)	
Interagency Cooperative Agreement, Minnesota Department of Human Services - Mental Health Division and DEED-RS	To improve the quantity and quality of rehabilitation and support services to persons with serious and persistent mental illness.
Creating Connections to Work: A Comprehensive Approach to Support the Competitive Employment of Minnesotans with Disabilities	VR-DEED/DHS, work incentives benefits planning grant for January 2005 to January 2008 (annual resubmission) to promote links between Medicaid and other employment-related services and supports, including the State's workforce development entities.
Pathways to Employment	DEED/DHS Minnesota State Council on Disability, implementing a federal Medicaid Infrastructure Grant to remove systemic barriers to employment of individuals with significant disabilities Statewide.
Performance-Based System of Payment and Services for CRPs and Limited-Use Vendors	An innovative compensation system developed in cooperation with CRPs and limited-use vendors providing job placement, job coaching, and job retention services that rewards organizations which facilitate successful outcomes for VR customers. <i>In development</i>
Demonstration Program to Improve the Literacy and Employment Outcomes of Individuals with Disabilities	Research project with the University of Minnesota's Institute on Community Integration, funded by the U.S. Department of Education, to investigate how specific literacy services raise the literacy levels and earnings of individuals with disabilities, compared to those who receive only customary VR services.
WorkForce Center System and System Development	
Minnesota's Unified Plan under the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 - VR component	Describes the State's comprehensive vision of an inclusive workforce investment system, including its broad economic, education, training, and related goals. This document should describe how VR program activity is integrated with the State's economic development goals and activities. This activity includes liaison with the State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) to prepare an annual joint strategic goals progress report and to field and respond to SRC recommendations. <i>Rehabilitation Act Section 101</i>
DEED-RS and DEED-SSB policies and procedures regarding reciprocal referral of VR customers	The written VR policies and procedures of RS provide for reciprocal referral of VR customers between the two VR programs.
LWIBs and Agreements	Collaboration actively maintained by VR staff and managers who sit on LWIBs and/or committees and work groups.
Workforce One	This collaborative information management system provides for a common WorkForce Center System operations database addressing the information management needs of each one-stop partner while protecting the confidentiality of customer information.

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- Provide guidance to RS/SSB staff and school personnel when serving students with disabilities transitioning from school to employment.
- Be a vehicle for consultation and technical assistance to assist educational agencies in planning for the transition of students with disabilities from school to VR services.
- Define the roles and responsibilities, including financial responsibilities, of each agency, including provisions for determining State lead agencies and qualified staff responsible for transition services.
- Design procedures for outreach and identification of students with disabilities who are in need of transition services.
- Provide guidance on the development of policies and procedures that facilitate the transition of students with disabilities from school to employment.
- Promote flexible, coordinated, and collaborative planning and service delivery among MDE, RS, and SSB for eligible youth transitioning from school to employment.

The agreement clarifies how Minnesota VR programs will assist education agencies to plan the transition of students with disabilities from secondary school to the receipt of VR services. Agreed-upon practices for Statewide transition planning include:

- Allocate staff time for ongoing consultation with MDE's Special Education Office to continuously improve transition policies and services.
- Allocate staff time for service on State-level coordination bodies.
- Allocate staff time for participation in the community transition interagency committees (CTICs) that facilitate improved local transition practices.
- MDE's Special Education Office, SSB, and RS will share data that improves transition services planning and the evaluation of transition services.

The agreement delineates critical practices VR programs and the MDE's Special Education Office will implement to facilitate a smooth transition for individuals with disabilities as they complete their individual education programs (IEPs). Agreed-upon practices to facilitate a student's smooth transition include:

- MDE's Special Education Office will encourage local school districts to implement pre-adolescent career exploration and vocational skill development.
- MDE's Special Education Office will encourage school districts to provide complete and timely referral information to RS/SSB two years prior to graduation to promote a timely, efficient engagement with VR services.
- RS/SSB will use information provided by the school district to help determine if a student is eligible for VR services.
- RS/SSB will develop employment plans prior to a student completing secondary school.

The agreement outlines the roles and responsibilities of education and VR. Schools are responsible for providing free and appropriate public education, as defined by the IEP, for students in the special education program. Schools must access available third-party dollar resources to help meet these responsibilities. RS and SSB are responsible for providing services that help prepare an individual to effectively implement post-secondary VR services. RS can collaboratively fund services that help students determine their long-term adult career goal. In this agreement, RS/SSB commits to assigning VR counselors to work with students referred from each secondary education program in Minnesota.

The agreement identifies joint outreach activities such as:

- Identification of prospective RS/SSB participants, including students who have dropped out or are at risk of dropping out and students with disabilities on Section 504 plans.
- Coordination and collaboration of IEP/IIIP/IPE meeting with RS, SSB, and schools, when the IEP/IIIP team has begun to identify transition of other post-secondary employment services (note: IIIP = individual interagency intervention plan; IPE = individual plans for employment).
- Development of an outreach tool 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

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provided to eligible individuals.

- Working with partners at the local WorkForce Centers who work with youth with disabilities to solicit appropriate referrals.
- MDE will encourage school districts to identify students who are prospective VR participants and make them and their families aware of VR services during IEP/IIP meetings: prospective RS customers no later than two years prior to leaving secondary school, prospective SSB customers upon identification of visual impairment.
- MDE will encourage school districts to coordinate IEP/IIP meeting with RS and SSB staff. These meetings with prospective VR applicants will occur when the IEP/IIP team has begun to identify transition or other post-secondary employment services.
- MDE will provide a 504 contact for school districts to identify and refer students with 504 plans to RS and SSB for services.
- RS and SSB will serve as members of a working outreach committee with external agencies such as PACER, Pathways to Employment, Minnesota Council for Independent Living, Social Security PASS Cadre, Disability Law Center, and MDE; the purpose of this outreach committee is to increase awareness of transition-aged students with disabilities about available services and resources.

The agreement's practices are mirrored by the recommendations of the RS-VR transition best practices work group and by current VR staff practices described in the RS-VR policy manual.

Services for Students with Disabilities

RS-VR provides VR services to secondary school students with disabilities who are in transition from school to employment. VR works closely with the schools and other community service providers to ensure a smooth transition from school-to-work for students receiving VR services. The facilitation of long-term transition goals takes place at three levels: the Minnesota Statewide transition interagency workgroup provides a primary focus for services at the State level; the CTICs provide a primary focus for local services; and counselors, assigned to transition liaison work in public and private secondary programs, provide a primary focus for services needed by individual students. VR counselors provide counseling

and planning assistance to students as they develop and implement the transition plans that successfully connect them to activities leading to careers.

Statewide Transition Interagency Workgroup (STIW)

The STIW is comprised of representatives from MDE's Secondary Vocational Education program, special education and community/adult education; MnSCU; the University of Minnesota; the Minnesota State Council on Disabilities; RS-VR; SSB; the Workforce Development Division of DEED; the Department of Corrections; the Social Security Administration (SSA); the Department of Health; the Developmental Disabilities and Mental Health Divisions of DHS; the Department of Administration State Council on Technology; Minnesota Disability Law Center; PACER Center; community service providers; parents; and students. This group intends that customers and parents always have a substantial representation. The workgroup meets eight times annually to address Statewide transition-related issues for secondary students with disabilities, and to provide direction and consultation to the State's 70 community transition interagency committees.

Community Transition Interagency Committee (CTIC)

CTICs are a major vehicle for interagency cooperation. These 70 local groups promote interagency coordination Statewide to remove system barriers and expand community services. CTICs include representation of parents, students, advocacy groups, local businesses, county government, post-secondary education, vocational education, community education, corrections, SSA, healthcare, and other local service providers. VR staff serve on all CTICs. Through participation on these committees, VR improves and expands the vocational services provided to students that result in employment outcomes.

Rehabilitation Counselors Assigned to High Schools

At the heart of RS collaborative efforts are the VR counselors assigned to public and private high schools in every Minnesota school district. The VR counselor is a part of 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. Community agencies are also invited to participate. Outreach efforts include working with school nurses, guidance counselors, case managers, principals, social

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workers, 504 personnel, and work experience coordinators to identify students with disabilities who are not in special education programs. Approximately 11 percent of students referred to VR are not enrolled in special education programs. A referral of all potentially eligible students prior to the student's final year of school is sought so that an employment plan can be completed before the student leaves school. At this writing, strategies to increase substantially the numbers of students who access VR services and to improve the quality of VR services are being developed and undertaken for implementation during 2007-2010.

Coordinated Services for Youth in Special Education

The Minnesota law mandates the development and implementation of a coordinated system of services for youth, birth to 21, who are involved in special education. The MnSIC was formed to develop and implement this system. The VR director for program planning and development is a member. The VR rehabilitation program specialist for transition services is a member of subcommittees that develop service strategies for students aged nine to 21 and recommendations for governance regarding the coordination of the various State and local collaborative efforts.

Vocational Rehabilitation/State Services for the Blind - Blind Agency

VR-SSB, RS-VR, and MDE have a collaborative agreement regarding the transition of students with disabilities from school to the receipt of VR services and to work. The agreement's purpose is to:

- Promote collaborative, flexible service delivery to youth in transition.
- Promote seamless implementation of VR services for students with IEPs.
- Encourage school districts to develop and promote pre-adolescent vocational skill development.
- Define the roles and responsibilities of each agency.

The agreement clarifies how Minnesota's two VR programs will assist education agencies to plan the transition of students with disabilities from secondary school to the receipt of VR services. Agreed-upon practices for Statewide transition planning include:

- Allocate staff time for ongoing consultation with MDE's Special Education Office to continuously improve transition policies and services.
- Allocate staff time for service on State-level coordination bodies.
- Allocate staff time for participation in the CTICs that facilitate improved local transition practices.
- MDE's Special Education Office, VR-SSB and RS will work toward data sharing that improves transition services planning and the evaluation of transition services.

The agreement delineates critical practices VR programs and MDE's Special Education Office will implement to facilitate a smooth transition for individuals with disabilities as they complete their IEPs. Agreed-upon practices to facilitate a student's smooth transition include:

- MDE's Special Education Office will encourage local school districts to implement pre-adolescent career exploration and vocational skill development.
- MDE's Special Education Office will encourage school districts to provide complete and timely referral information to RS/VR-SSB to promote a timely, efficient engagement with VR services.
- RS/VR-SSB will use information provided by the school district to help determine if a student is eligible for VR services.
- RS/VR-SSB will develop and, as appropriate, implement IPEs prior to an eligible student completing secondary school.
- RS/VR-SSB will develop employment plans that appropriately coordinate with the IEP.

The agreement outlines the roles and responsibilities of education and both VR programs. Schools are responsible for providing free and appropriate public education, as defined by the IEP, for students in special education. Schools must access available third-party dollar resources to help meet these responsibilities. RS/VR-SSB is responsible for providing services that help prepare an individual to implement effectively post-secondary VR services. SSB can collaboratively fund services that help a student determine their long-term adult career goal.

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The agreement defines several VR outreach activities:

- MDE's Special Education Office will encourage all school districts to identify students who might benefit from VR services and make families aware of this during IEP meetings no later than the fall of their junior year.
- MDE's Special Education Office will encourage school districts to invite VR-SSB counselors to IEP meetings when the IEP team begins to identify transition services aimed at an adult employment outcome.
- RS/VR-SSB staff will attend IEP meetings to which they are invited, to inform participants about VR services and processes, and to accept applications for service.

In a manner consistent with the requirements of Section 101(a)(11)(D) of the Act, SSB has continued as an active signatory to the *Minnesota Interagency Cooperative Agreement to Plan*, an agreement that has been in place since December 1987. This agreement is an understanding among organizations to facilitate the necessary changes, both within and among the several agencies, to realize an equitable Statewide system for transition services. It provides information about what agency services exist and how agencies work together in Minnesota's communities. With local input, agencies can actively participate in the planning and creating of employment and community living options for individuals with disabilities of transition age.

There are several parts to the *Minnesota Interagency Cooperative Agreement to Plan* including a listing of members and a goals section. Three levels of goals are identified:

- Planning for Individuals
- Community Planning
- Statewide Planning

Another key section is the matrix, which summarizes secondary and post-secondary school services available from each signatory agency to meet transition-related needs of individuals with disabilities. This section identifies available resources and defines the financial responsibility of each agency for necessary transition services.

State Interagency Committee

The mission of MnSIC, as delineated in Minnesota statute, is to "...develop and implement a coordinated, multi-disciplinary, interagency service system for children ages three to 21 with disabilities."

Members of MnSIC include two representatives from the Minnesota Association of Counties; two representatives each from MDE, Commerce, Corrections, DEED (both RS and SSB), Health, and DHS; one representative from the Minnesota School Boards Association and the Minnesota Nurses Association; and one ex-officio representative from the Minnesota Administrators of Special Education. The representatives were appointed by the respective Commissioners or directors and have been meeting regularly since the summer of 1998. MnSIC roles and responsibilities as defined in legislation include:

- Identify and assist in removing State and federal barriers to local coordination of services provided to children with disabilities.
- Identify adequate, equitable, and flexible funding sources to streamline these services.
- Develop guidelines for implementing policies that ensure a comprehensive and coordinated system of all State and local agency services, including multi-disciplinary assessment practices for children with disabilities ages three to 21.
- Develop, consistent with federal law, a standardized written plan for providing services to a child with disabilities.
- Identify how current systems for dispute resolution can be coordinated and develop guidelines for coordination.
- Develop an evaluation process to measure the success of State and local interagency efforts in improving the quality and coordination of services to children with disabilities ages three to 21.
- Develop guidelines to assist the governing boards of the interagency early intervention committees in carrying out the duties assigned to them by Minnesota State statute.
- Carry out other duties necessary to develop and implement within communities a coordinated, multi-disciplinary, interagency intervention service system for children with disabilities.

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Several significant products have been implemented as a result of the interagency activities of this group. An updated formal interagency agreement with the State educational agency was implemented April 1, 2000, and reviewed for the need to update in 2005. The IIIP, a single document that delineates and coordinates all services needed by a child with a disability, was implemented incrementally beginning January 1, 2001. The implementation was completed by the fall of 2003 and included all eligible youth to age 21. This implementation included extensive Statewide training provided by members of the MnSIC. Currently, evaluation methods, additional funding issues, and a coordinated database are being developed and implemented. The MnSIC and the interagency management team (IMT) continue to develop annual goals for interagency collaboration on services to children and youth including transition activities.

Community Transition Interagency Committee

CTICs are another major vehicle for interagency cooperation. They were established at the local level to promote interagency coordination, remove system barriers, and expand community services so that students with disabilities will receive services they need to transition from school to adult life. These committees include educators; parents; students; advocacy groups; local business or industry representatives; county officials; post-secondary, vocational, and community education entities; and representatives from corrections, social security, health professionals, and local service providers. These community-based committees identify local transition needs and solutions. They sponsor job fairs, transition fairs, transition libraries, the development of transition materials, and other projects to improve opportunities for students during their transition from school-to-work.

Several CTICs have co-sponsored "work skills days" for students with disabilities in their school districts. Partners in this event were SSB, RS, Wagner-Peyser, the local Workforce Service Areas, the local school district, CILs, and county social services. Local business representatives served as judges in a morning of mock-job interviewing, filling-out job applications, solving on-the-job problems, and general work knowledge testing. Students used skills they have been learning in their employment skills classes (taught by work experience coordinators). This activity continues in various CTICs throughout the State, with the

exact format individualized to the students and employers in a given area. It has proven a great confidence-builder for students and a great disability awareness-builder for business representatives. While not intended in the program design, it is becoming increasingly common for student participants to be offered jobs during Work Skills Days.

SSB has continued to expand the involvement of their counselors in local CTIC activity. The low incidence of blindness among students of transition age continues to be an issue that SSB staff need to accommodate for in their work with local school districts and CTICs.

Centers for Independent Living

In the past, State monies have been provided for independent living skills training necessary for youths with disabilities to make the transition from family and school to independent living and the workplace. Eight CILs have expanded and enhanced independent living transition services. The Minnesota legislature allocated additional money for transition to be administered through these centers.

Future Direction

SSB staff have been part of a broad array of transition partnerships and relevant school-to-work models. SSB will continue to work with traditional partners to promote these models and facilitate effective implementation of emerging school-to-work efforts.

The STIW, CTICs, SSB, and RS staff in administrative and local offices will continue to build and strengthen partnerships in evolving school-to-work transition initiatives for secondary school students. MDE (the lead department) is working with DEED and MnSCU to implement a school-to-work systems initiative for all learners in Minnesota. SSB counselors, through their involvement with CTICs and WorkForce Centers, are also continuing their involvement with evolving school-to-work partnerships that design and direct local activities. Additionally, SSB and RS managers are the "champions" of an interagency transition workgroup established by the MnSIC in September 2004 and reporting to the IMT. This workgroup will make recommendations to the IMT and MnSIC about a coordinated interagency service system for youth with disabilities ages 14 to 21. The workgroup

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will create an inventory of existing agency services, common definitions, a vision for a coordinated interagency transition system, and recommendations for ways to reach that vision.

At the individual customer level, SSB counselors are actively involved with blind youth and, as appropriate, parents, family members, and authorized representatives in the development and implementation of IEPs or IIIPs, coordinating those plans with IPEs as appropriate. Such planning, development, program implementation, follow-up, and evaluation is coordinated with the local education authority. The IPE addresses the provision of transition services, in a manner consistent with SSB policy (i.e., the SSB Administrative Rule and the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended) and consistent with the matrix portion of the *Minnesota Interagency Cooperative Agreement to Plan*, which in the future will be known as *The State Interagency Agreement*. That matrix delineates responsibilities for the provision of transition services.

The IPE and the IEP/IIIP also detail timeframes for evaluation and follow-up of youth who have received transition services. Staff from local educational authorities (teachers), qualified under the education laws of the State of Minnesota, and staff from SSB, qualified consistent with requirements of the Rehabilitation Act, evaluate and follow-up youth who have received transition services in accordance with timeframes contained in their IEP/IIIP/IPE. Youth of transition age who have realized a satisfactory employment outcome, consistent with an IPE, are followed for at least 90 days by their SSB rehabilitation counselor.

The activities detailed below are designed to facilitate outreach and referral efforts to transition-age students who are blind or visually impaired. The goals of this ongoing involvement by the counselor in the education of a student, beginning at age 14, are to enable a student to live independently before leaving a school setting, have a greater understanding of relevant employment options, and develop self-advocacy skills.

- SSB is actively involved in two unique summer programs focused on transition. Learning Independence from Experience, carried out in cooperation with the Minnesota Academy for the

Blind, provides transition training to as many as 12 students between the ages of 17 and 22 who have impairments in addition to blindness. The Summer Transition Program, now hosted by the St. Paul public schools, serves as many as 18 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.

- A wide range of transition programs, separate and apart from the above summer programs, are individually tailored by counselors to meet the individual needs of each student. Such initiatives might include summer work experiences, advanced computer skills training, college readiness training, advanced training programs in specific educational areas, and attendance at the Helen Keller National Training Center. SSB assigns a staff member as liaison with the State Academy for the Blind, with specific focus on transition needs. That person also serves on the CTIC Council of the Academy. Joint efforts with the State Academy are also focused on better vocational preparation of blind students of transition age.
- Several outreach efforts continue to be part of SSB's transition activities. These activities include involvement with the Statewide Vision Network, vision teachers who meet four times each school year to discuss issues related to the education of blind children of all ages. Outreach and identification of youth of transition age needing transition services are facilitated via this network. Network participants alert SSB of youth needing transition services, some of whom may have just recently accessed the special education service system.
- Counselors also work individually with high schools to focus on outreach and identification of youth in need of transition services (including youth who are not currently receiving special education services). Counselors attend IEPs/IIIPs, at the invitation of the

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parents and vision teacher, to educate prospective customers about SSB services. Additionally, SSB has a Statewide child specialist who provides information and referral services to parents of children who are blind or visually impaired. Relationships developed by the child specialist are expected to result in additional referrals to the VR program once the children reach age 14.

- A final SSB outreach effort is facilitated through law. State law requires eye care professionals, when making an initial diagnosis of legal blindness, to advise the individual that services are available through SSB. This requirement extends to youth of transition age.

(c) Private, non-profit vocational rehabilitation service providers through the establishment of cooperative agreements. (§101(a)(24)(B))

Vocational Rehabilitation/Rehabilitation Services - General

Minnesota standards for approval of an employment-related services provider make a distinction between two categories of vendor: the non-limited-use CRP and the limited-use provider. This arrangement permits the widest selection of services, system flexibility, and emphasizes the use of providers accredited by the national Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF). Providers without CARF accreditation are used, on a more limited basis, so that the total need for employment-related services can be met Statewide. A limited-use category introduces competition to the rehabilitation marketplace, provides an entry point for new vendors responding to an emerging or unmet service need, and increases the Statewide availability of employment-related services.

Regardless of the vendor category, service is provided based on the employment plan developed between the counselor and customer, and there is accountability to ensure that the services of the private provider are consistent with the employment plan and are provided in the most integrated settings. RS-VR's vendor standards policy addresses the provision of the following services provided by the State's approximately 100 approved limited-use vendors: vocational evaluation, work adjustment training, skill training, job development and

job placement, on-the-job training, and time-limited job coaching.

For approval as a non-limited-use CRP, an organization must be accredited by CARF for the services purchased by RS-VR, and have negotiated an operating agreement. These cooperative agreements between RS and CRPs detailing services and specific fee schedules are negotiated by RS community partners staff, with the engagement of RS area managers and counseling staff. RS management reviews the agreement for approval or modification. Approximately 55 CRPs maintain operating agreements with RS Statewide.

RS works to maintain a mutually supportive professional relationship with CRPs. An RS program specialist is assigned to facilitate these relationships and negotiate modifications to agreements. Regional semi-annual meetings are held with CRPs that have operating agreements to promote the following mutually held goals:

- Develop and maintain choices for customers of VR services
- Meet workforce needs identified by the State's employers
- Ensure that VR services are provided in integrated settings
- Facilitate State-level planning and coordination of training needs of CRP staff
- Facilitate communication between VR and CRP staff at the administrative level
- Increase CRP awareness of VR issues at the State and national levels
- Identify and provide training for CRP and VR staff

Non-CARF-accredited providers who are established as a business entity are limited to \$20,000 annually. These providers include small organizations that maintain smaller caseloads and limit themselves to a narrower range of specialized services such as intensive job placement or job coaching for individuals with a particular disability. Some of these providers are private-for-profit entities. In the event a limited-use provider applies for and actively pursues CARF accreditation, dollar limits on utilization no longer apply. Currently, RS uses the services of approximately 100 limited-use providers.

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Written assurances are required of both CRPs and limited-use providers regarding their organizational missions, general operations including audits and lines of authority, staff development, staff qualifications, services, fees, populations served, standards of professional practice, and adherence to customers' employment plans. Written assurance is also required regarding vendor compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, Minnesota Human Rights Act and other employment law, on such topics as individual rights, accessibility, occupational health and safety, and data privacy.

Vocational Rehabilitation/State Services for the Blind - Blind Agency

VR-SSB currently has operating agreements (rather than cooperative agreements) with three full-time adjustment training centers which focus on blindness and also provide other services to blind and visually impaired customers. VR-SSB discusses programs, services, and operating agreements with each CRP as necessary. The director of SSB approves all service costs charged by these CRPs after review by staff internal to VR-SSB.

(d) Other State agencies and appropriate entities to assist in the provision of supported employment services. (§625(b)(4))

Vocational Rehabilitation/Rehabilitation Services - General

Through its administrative office and field offices Statewide, RS-VR maintains cooperative arrangements and relationships with RS-Extended Employment, DHS, and county human service agencies to facilitate the provision of supported employment services Statewide. Plans, policies, and procedures related to these arrangements and relationships are well described at Section H.1.d.(i)(e) below.

Vocational Rehabilitation/State Services for the Blind - Blind Agency

For customers who require other types of training or services from community-based rehabilitation programs, including supported employment program services, SSB-VR uses CRPs that have operating agreements with the general rehabilitation designated State unit, RS.

(e) Other public or nonprofit agencies or organizations within the State, employers, natural supports, and other entities with respect to the provision of extended services. (§625(b)(5))

Vocational Rehabilitation/Rehabilitation Services - General

RS-VR collaborates with MDE, DHS, and county and local service providers to ensure that supported employment (SE) services are available Statewide. During development of a vocational rehabilitation employment plan, the customer and the service team select the supported employment model that best meets a customer's needs. Planning for eventual long-term supports in the community is crucial during VR's time-limited period of service. In general, RS-VR short-term supports are provided to VR customers for a maximum of 18 months. If required to achieve job stability, the employment plan may be amended to allow additional time.

Following the period of VR services, collaborating resources for long-term supports in the community are customarily county case managers and resources, community rehabilitation programs, RS's Extended Employment (EE) program, EE projects for persons with serious mental illness, the grant-funded Minnesota Employment Connection for Persons Who Are Deaf and Hard of Hearing, programs administered by DHS such as traumatic brain injury waiver funding, and the Social Security Administration's Impairment-Related Work Expense exclusions for persons on SSI or SSDI.

Currently, the State's challenge regarding supported employment is the provision of extended ongoing supports. 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 individuals with disabilities. A network of private, not-for-profit organizations in Minnesota licensed by the DHS Developmental Disabilities Division provides daily training and rehabilitation services that may include such extended supports. People with mental illness may receive work-related support through the State Comprehensive Mental Health Act. Each county determines what level of service will be provided. RS-VR and EE coordinated

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employability projects described elsewhere in *Minnesota's Unified Plan* represent a collaborative and innovative service delivery that includes supported employment, to this population.

RS' collaboration with the State's EE program contributes significantly to the quality, scope, and effectiveness of the State's overall SE efforts. When developing a customer's employment plan, the VR counselor and customer identify the time-limited services to be provided by RS, the expected extended services needed, and the source of those extended services; this may include natural supports. RS is a partner in several State-level agreements that facilitate provision of the needed extended services. RS develops contracts with each accredited community rehabilitation program that outlines 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 the EE program. CRPs also provide time-limited supported employment services. Supported employment funds are distributed on a fee-for-service basis. Fee schedules are developed with each program to specify costs on an individual basis.

The EE program provides \$11 million per year to CRPs for employment supported by ongoing vocational services including supported employment services. Well over half of this State funding provides extended ongoing services to people working in supported employment. VR and EE programs work together to coordinate and maximize time-limited and ongoing funds. Part of the funding provides extended supports to persons with serious and persistent mental illness, since it is difficult to obtain other funds for ongoing supported employment services for this population. Additionally, a legislative appropriation provides \$250,000 annually for ongoing supports for persons who are deaf or hard of hearing. In federal fiscal year 2006, the EE program provided ongoing work supports to approximately 7,000 individuals. Most of these individuals received time-limited VR services prior to entering SE.

EE funds expended on an active VR case under an employment plan with a supported employment goal are used to match federal VR funding. VR program customers with a supported employment goal who are also served by the EE program are identified. RS then applies to the

federal match only EE program expenditures for these individuals between plan initiation and case closure. This collaboration of the VR and EE programs is consistent with the provisions of 34 CFR 361.53, which provide that DEED-RS may provide for facilities and services, including services provided at rehabilitation facilities, which may be expected to contribute substantially to the rehabilitation of a group of individuals.

RS and the DHS Mental Health Division also collaborate on special projects for the provision of community-based employment for adults with serious and persistent mental illness. 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 the grants were required to demonstrate collaboration with counties, the local community support program, RS, and providers of employability services such as CRPs, regional treatment centers, and community mental health centers.

Vocational Rehabilitation/State Services for the Blind - Blind Agency

Services to all supported employment program customers have and will continue to be provided under fee-for-service arrangements with CRPs. SSB's relationship with these CRPs is governed by operating agreements with either SSB or RS for the specific services required. Extended services are secured via individual agreements with non-VR organizations, including a number of agreements with an array of counties in Minnesota.

(e) Unemployment Insurance, summarize requests for any Federal partner assistance (primarily non-financial) that would help the SWA attain its goal.

The Unemployment Insurance (UI) program has not submitted a request for any federal partner assistance. Program representatives do not rely on the Information Technology Support Center (ITSC) for information assistance with its ongoing automation project. DOL regional UI staff provide onsite quarterly reviews and discuss national best-practices with the UI program staff.

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The Minnesota UI program is part of two national DOL studies:

- A study that identified effective services associated with reemployment.
- A five-year study that will identify the broad economic impact of the UI program.



I. Special Populations and Other Groups

1. Describe how your State will develop program strategies, to target and serve special populations. States may present information about their service strategies for those special populations that are identified by multiple Federal programs as they deem most appropriate and useful for planning purposes, including by special population or on a program by program basis. In providing this description, if your Unified Plan includes any of the programs listed below, please address the following specific relevant populations:

(b) WIA Title I and Wagner-Peyser Act and/or Veterans Programs (§112(b)(17)(A)(iv) and 112(b)(17)(B));

(i) Service to Specific Populations. (§112(b)(17)(A)(iv))

(a) Describe the State's strategies to ensure that the full range of employment and training programs and services delivered through the State's One-Stop delivery system are accessible to and will meet the needs of dislocated workers, displaced homemakers, low-income individuals such as migrants and seasonal farmworkers, women, minorities, individuals training for non-traditional employment, veterans, public assistance recipients and individuals with multiple barriers to employment (including older individuals, people with limited English-speaking proficiency, and people with disabilities). (§112(b)(17)(iv))

Minnesota ensures that a full range of services are available to the specific populations referenced above through a variety of strategies, including:

- Collaboration with community resource agencies
- Rapid response activities for individuals who have just been dislocated
- Minnesota WorkForce Centers located near population centers and/or near public transportation

- Outreach mechanisms to inform special populations of the services available through WorkForce Centers
- Attendance at meetings of special population groups
- Participation and representation of special populations on the local workforce investment boards (LWIBs) and youth councils
- Use of community forums and the Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED) websites
- Public service announcements
- Attendance at general community forums
- Linkages with community education and alternative schools; and technical colleges
- Barrier-free, accessible WorkForce Centers
- Access to interpreters and bilingual staff
- Assistance in the resource areas from customer service-trained staff
- Customized training and placement services
- Labor market information and career counseling
- Linkages with local immigrant community resources
- Program information and public notice available in alternate languages

(b) Describe the reemployment services you will provide to unemployment insurance claimants and the Worker Profiling services provided to claimants identified as most likely to exhaust their unemployment insurance benefits in accordance with section 3(c)(3) of the Wagner-Peyser Act.

Minnesota is committed to full development of the Worker Profiling and Reemployment System. The economic model is updated on an annual basis, and an individual self-assessment model (created by staff at the University of Minnesota) is used by each unemployment insurance (UI) applicant to develop an individualized work search plan (WSP). Applicants file for their unemployment insurance account electronically (via telephone or the Internet). All applicants without workforce attachment are profiled against a logistical regression model. If filed by phone, forms are mailed to all applicants who are required to seek work; once the self-assessment and WSP is completed and mailed back, UI staff data-enter the information. If the applicant files the account via the Internet, the self-assessment and WSP can be done online at that time. Individuals whose scores indicate likelihood

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of extended unemployment or benefit exhaustion are directed to register with the appropriate WorkForce Center. If not previously selected, then all profiled applicants who have been unable to find reemployment after 12 weeks are entered into the same process.

(c) Describe how the State administers the unemployment insurance work test and how feedback requirements (under §7(a)(3)(F) of the Wagner-Peyser Act) for all UI claimants are met.

Each UI applicant develops an individualized WSP, which may involve access to WorkForce Center services or contacting the WorkForce Center or community partners. UI staff either contact WorkForce Center partner-staff or review WorkForce Center databases to confirm applicant participation in services. All applicants who are profiled have a work search review after three weeks of payment, and their WSPs and ongoing work search efforts are discussed. DEED staff conduct this review as part of the continued claims process. Applicants who fail to participate in services or who have significant barriers affecting availability or work search are denied benefits as appropriate.

(d) Describe the State's strategy for integrating and aligning services to dislocated workers provided through the WIA rapid response, WIA dislocated worker, and Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) programs. Does the State have a policy supporting coenrollment for WIA and TAA? (§112(b)(17)(A)(ii and iv))

The Dislocated Worker program and the Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) program report to the same DEED director. Where dislocated workers are eligible under both programs, TAA provides training. The Workforce Investment Act (WIA) provides wrap-around services to TAA participants; WIA services are those not provided by TAA, which avoids duplication. The State adopted a policy of 100 percent co-enrollment for WIA and TAA, which has been functioning since 2005.

(e) How is the State's workforce investment system working collaboratively with

business and industry and the education community to develop strategies to overcome barriers to skill achievement and employment experienced by the populations listed above in section (b)(i)(a) of this section and to ensure they are being identified as a critical pipeline of workers?

Given the workforce shortages described in Section D of *Minnesota's Unified Plan*, the State's business community is already well-aware of the workforce capacity of the special populations listed in Section I.1.(b)(i)(a). This recognition emerged during the late 1990s when Minnesota's unemployment rates hovered below three percent, and Minneapolis-St. Paul metropolitan area unemployment rates were just barely over two percent. Although higher unemployment in recent years has allowed employers to more-easily find job seekers with fewer barriers, Minnesota's employers have already had experience with special populations.

DEED works with employers and the business community to change attitudes regarding disability and to show employers that hiring people with disabilities makes good business sense. DEED helps employers meet their hiring needs by sending them qualified applicants, including DEED customers with disabilities.

In 2004, DEED and the WorkForce Centers released [Focus on Ability](#), an online education and training program to improve knowledge about how to integrate individuals with disabilities into the workforce. With training modules for both WorkForce Center staff and the business community at-large, the program examines issues of disability and employment through the eyes of people who are closest to the problem, individuals with disabilities and employers. The program presents learning through documentary video segments presenting subjects speaking candidly in their own voices. Among the topics presented are the wants and needs of individuals with disabilities; and disability and the law.

The State has received additional funding to develop strategies for people with disabilities. The Department of Human Services (DHS) and DEED are implementing a joint project called [Pathways to Employment](#), funded by a Medicaid infrastructure grant. During the period of

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this grant (2006-2010), the project will work to increase competitive employment of people with disabilities and to meet Minnesota's workforce needs by bringing together people with disabilities, employers, business, government, and providers. This grant also provides a new, shared position between Pathways to Employment and the Governor's Workforce Development Council (GWDC) committees that will integrate awareness and opportunities to employment of individuals with disabilities and convene and educate employers of this untapped talent pool for filling their workforce needs.

DEED is an active partner in the Minnesota Business Leadership Network (BLN). The mission of the BLN is to enhance employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities. One of the premier activities of the BLN is the annual Mentoring Day and Career Fair hosted by BLN employers for high school and post-secondary students with disabilities.

The GWDC received a planning grant from the Joyce Foundation in 2006 to address system and policy change to advance low-wage, low-skilled workers through three sets of activities:

- Exploring using sector development as a strategy.
- Identifying policy and program gaps for workers transitioning from low-wage jobs to workforce development programs and short-term customized training programs to post-secondary certificates and degrees.
- Identifying opportunities to define integrated performance measures for variously funded and measured programs.

In July 2006, DEED received a grant from the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL), in conjunction with the Social Security Administration, to implement a Disability Program Navigator Initiative. The purpose of the initiative is to help persons with disabilities who are seeking services at the WorkForce Centers to achieve employment. There are three disability program navigators located in three WorkForce Centers and one lead staffperson.

The navigators help WorkForce Center staff meet the information and employment needs of people with disabilities by developing partnerships to:

- Streamline and integrate job seeker services
- Expand the capacity to serve customers with disabilities
- Facilitate the transition of in- or out-of-school youth with disabilities to employment and economic self-sufficiency
- Conduct outreach to agencies that serve people with disabilities
- Inform customers about accommodations available in WorkForce Centers
- Train WorkForce Center staff on topics related to persons with disabilities gaining and retaining employment
- Provide persons with disabilities information about community resources

(f) Describe how the State will ensure that the full array of One-Stop services are available to individuals with disabilities and that the services are fully accessible?

Effective inclusion of individuals with disabilities is a priority, both in physical access and in program access. The local planning guidance for LWIBs identifies an Americans with Disabilities Act coordinator in each WorkForce Center. The local planning guidance also requires LWIBs to address how they will ensure that programs and sites are accessible and useable by individuals with disabilities, including how they comply with the Disability Checklist (WIA Section 188, July 2003). For site access, a set of criteria is in place to ensure standards are met. A review of site plans takes place prior to any site selection. An onsite review is conducted as part of the official certification of a WorkForce Center. In many cases, access to public transportation is a priority. Ongoing monitoring takes place for program access on a scheduled basis. Resource area customers also have tools such as Zoomtext, Job Access with Speech (JAWS), OVAC readers, and alternate communication methods such as braille for ease of program access.

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(g) Describe the role LVER/DVOP staff have in the One-Stop Delivery System? How will the State ensure adherence to the legislative requirements for veterans' staff? How will services under this Plan take into consideration the agreement reached between the Secretary and the State regarding veterans' employment programs? (§§112(b)(7), 322, 38 U.S.C. chapter 41 and 20 CFR 1001.120)

In accordance with Title 38 U.S.C. Chapter 41 and 20 CFR, veterans receive priority service from DOL-funded programs in the WorkForce Center System. Priority for workforce development services is given to eligible veterans and other eligible persons over non-veterans. Services include (but are not limited to) registration, referral to jobs, guidance, counseling, referral to supportive services, job development, *Creative Job Search* workshops, and resume preparation. The State ensures that eligible veterans receive maximum exposure to suitable jobs and priority assistance in preparing to compete for those jobs. In the State's computerized matching system, veterans appear first on lists of matched job seekers.

Veterans are served by approximately 35 Statewide staff funded by the Veterans Employment and Training Service (VETS). While all WorkForce Center staff have a responsibility to give preference and priority of service to veterans, the State's local veterans employment representatives (LVERs) and disabled veterans outreach program (DVOP) representatives are exclusively dedicated to veterans' activities. These two groups of representatives serve a veteran population of about 435,000 Statewide, of which approximately 30,000 register annually for employment services. LVERs oversee the provision of services and provide employer/business outreach services directly for veterans and other eligible persons. DVOP staff engage in veteran outreach and provide individual case management services to special-needs veteran populations. Veterans with disabilities referred for placement by the Veterans Affairs Vocational Rehabilitation program (Chapter 31) are the largest category of veterans receiving case management services.

WorkForce Centers have veterans' staff assigned to perform services as budgets permit. Senior veterans

employment representatives are required to monitor, report on, and ensure that performance standards are met or exceeded as specified in the VETS grant.

(h) Department of Labor regulations at 29 CFR part 37, require all recipients of Federal financial assistance from DOL to provide meaningful access to limited English proficient (LEP) persons. Federal financial assistance includes grants, training, equipment usage, donations of surplus property, and other assistance. Sub-recipients are also covered when Federal DOL funds are passed through from one recipient to a sub-recipient. Describe how the State will ensure access to services through the State's One-Stop delivery system by persons with limited English proficiency and how the State will meet the requirements of ETA Training and Employment Guidance Letter (TEGL) 26-02, (May 29, 2003) which provides guidance on methods of complying with the Federal rule.

It is estimated that there are currently over 325,500 immigrants in Minnesota from over 160 countries.¹ Minnesota has seen a significant increase in both the primary and secondary immigrant populations. According to the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, more immigrants arrived in Minnesota in the year ending September 30, 2005, than in any of the previous 25 years. 2005 saw 15,456 arrivals compared to 8,435 arrivals in 2003.

Minnesota has the largest Somali population in the nation with approximately 25,000 Somali immigrants. There are approximately 65,000 Hmong living in Minnesota, which is the second-highest Hmong population in the nation. Hispanic/Latinos make up the largest immigrant group in Minnesota, with approximately 175,000 in the State.² Other significant immigrant populations include Vietnamese, Russians, Laotians, Cambodians, and Ethiopians, with the fastest-growing group of immigrants coming from African nations.

¹Minnesota State Demographic Center published in June 2004

²Minnesota State Demographic Center published in June 2004

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Minnesota ranked second after California in the number of refugee arrivals, outpacing Florida and Washington, which had ranked higher than Minnesota in 2004. Refugee arrivals in Minnesota in 2005 totaled 6,357 or 11.8 percent of all refugees coming to the U.S. These numbers do not include asylum seekers—people living in the U.S. when they file their application.

The Census Bureau estimates that one in five Americans speak a language other than English at home. In Minnesota, 8.5 percent of State residents five years of age or older speak a language other than English at home. The 2000 Census reported that 66,255 Minnesota residents age 18 or older speak English “not well” or “not at all,” with 38,890 of those individuals in the labor force.³ Providing access to individuals with limited English proficiency (LEP) proactively addresses Minnesota’s need to maintain a competent, skilled workforce for the future and follows DEED’s mission to support the economic success of individuals, businesses, and communities by improving opportunities for growth.

DEED has developed a draft LEP policy and implementation plan which will cover all DEED-administered programs, services, and activities. The documents are based on DOL’s requirements and guidelines. All programs and service areas within DEED are expected to use the plan and implementation strategies once it is completed. DEED’s LEP plan, along with guidelines set forth in the LEP program, can also be used to assist in creating program- or service-specific LEP plans at the local level.

The LEP plan outlines DOL’s four-factor analysis to be considered when deciding what reasonable steps should be taken to ensure meaningful access for customers with LEP. The four-factors are: Assessment, Development and Implementation of a Written Policy on Language Access, Training of Staff, and Vigilant Monitoring. The LEP plan indicates that language-assistance services should be based on what is both necessary and reasonable in light of the four-factor analysis. The more-frequent the contact with a particular language, the more likely it is that enhanced language services are needed in that language. Frequent

contact with customers with LEP may indicate a special need for language assistance. Less-frequent contact with different language groups may suggest different and less-intensified language assistance services. The more important the activity, information, service, or program, or the greater possible consequences of the contact to customers with LEP, the more likely it is that language services are needed. No person will be denied access to any DEED-administered program, activity, or service because he or she does not speak English or communicates in English on a limited basis. DEED will foster effective communication between its staff and customers with LEP by making appropriate language-assistance services available as needed. This will be done in a timely manner and at no cost to the customer.

DEED staff have recently completed a comprehensive directory of over 250 language service providers available for use by DEED and partner staff.

On January 30, 2007, in response to a request from DOL’s Civil Rights Center, DEED submitted the completed WIA Section 188 Language Assistance Planning and Self Assessment Tools for DEED and for Workforce Service Area (WSA) #9, the Hennepin-Carver LWIB. The need to have appropriate levels of service and access for such individuals is paramount, especially in light of Minnesota’s changing demographic trends that indicate greater numbers of individuals who have other than English as their primary language.

LWIBs identify in their integrated local plans for WIA:

- Priority groups or special populations targeted locally
- How WIA Adult and Dislocated Workers program and the Senior Community Services Employment Program (SCSEP) implement priority of service
- Criteria for being a member of a priority group (and services for which the priority groups receive preference)
- How the LWIBs measure their progress in meeting the local goals of serving special targeted populations

³U.S. Department of Labor Employment and Training Administration. (*U.S. Census 2000*) Special tabulations from Census 2000 on the population and characteristics of limited-English speaking adults (CD-ROM)

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Staff training is provided to:

- Designated equal opportunity officers (EOOs) at the local level. DEED EEO headquarters 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. WorkForce Center System providers submit their data on a monthly basis through a State-maintained reporting system. Report-generating capabilities allow for the identification of special populations that include dislocated workers, displaced homemakers, individuals receiving public assistance, and individuals training for non-traditional employment. The system allows for identifying barriers to employment such as applicant age, language limitations, and physical limitations. The WSAs use the results of performance data and customer satisfaction surveys to evaluate program performance. DEED's Monitoring Unit staff is also able to evaluate the WSAs' success in serving targeted populations through the use of data reports.

The UI program conducts outreach to communicate UI benefits information to a broad pool of applicants. Posters, for example, are provided to employers, WorkForce Centers, and community groups with information on how to file an account for UI. These posters are available in Spanish, Somali, and Hmong. UI provides critical forms in these three languages, with a few available in French and Vietnamese as well.

Sign language and second-language translators are available to UI customers and can be reached by calling the UI information line. A list of second-language translators, including their location, position, and contact information is available to UI and other DEED staff via DEED's internal Web.

The State and all recipients of WIA must provide initial and continuing notice that they do not discriminate. DEED has (and will continue to do so) informed providers of WIA Title I-B financially assisted programs/activities

of their obligation to post the approved "Notice to the Public." Posters with the specific wording of the "Notice to the Public" in English are distributed with instructions to post, disseminate internally through memo and e-mail, include in handbooks or manuals, make available to participants and include in participants' files, and make the posters available in alternate formats and languages. DEED currently has the posters available in the following nine languages: English, Somali, Spanish, Russian, Vietnamese, Cambodian, Hmong, Laotian, and Croatian.

Youth with LEP in WIA youth programs are often partnered with community education programs. The community services staff maintain a contract with interpreter services (phone-based and in-person). Often, the parents of WIA-eligible youth need interpreter services. Dislocated workers who are identified as LEP receive dislocated worker program services by way of bilingual staff, hiring of interpreters, and contract services with agencies than can communicate in the individual's native language. English as a second language (ESL) training is also provided through Adult Basic Education (ABE) programs in conjunction with dislocated worker program service providers.

(i) Describe the State's strategies to enhance and integrate service delivery through the One-Stop delivery system for migrant and seasonal farm workers and agricultural employers. How will the State ensure that migrant and seasonal farm workers have equal access to employment opportunities through the State's One-Stop delivery system? Include the number of Migrant and Seasonal Farmworkers (MSFWs) the State anticipates reaching annually through outreach to increase their ability to access core, intensive, and training services in the One-Stop Career Center System.

Assessment of Need

Migrant labor participation was concentrated in the months specified, based on growing or harvesting of particular crops. The use of chemicals reduced the number of migrant and seasonal farmworkers (MSFWs) needed per acre of fieldwork, so many MSFWs have accepted

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Table I.1 - 2006 Labor-Intensive Agricultural Activity

Crop	Minnesota Location	Dates
Sugar Beets	Northwestern/ Southeastern	June - August
Vegetables	Southeastern	June - September
Potatoes	Statewide	September - November
Corn	Central and Southern	July - September
Soybeans	Central and Southern	June - July

employment opportunities in vegetable, meat, and poultry processing companies. Shortage of local workers has also contributed to employers hiring MSFWs 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 estimate the number of actual MSFWs in the State. The total number of registered MSFWs in the last full program year (2005) was 2,920. This number of total registered MSFWs ranks Minnesota as 13th out of 20 states with the highest impact of MSFWs.

Outreach Activities

In Minnesota, there are WorkForce Centers with significant MSFW activity. These local offices employ migrant labor representatives (MLRs) who are bilingual/bicultural and have farmworker backgrounds. They perform outreach activities to make contact, register, inform, and educate MSFWs about available services. Bilingual materials describe services and provide contact information. The information is important to MSFWs, whether they are seeking agricultural or non-agricultural employment.

The MLRs contact MSFWs at their worksites, living areas, and gathering places. Coordination with social service agencies, migrant education centers, migrant health centers, community agencies, migrant headstart, migrant legal services, and other migrant service providers will enable outreach staff to locate farmworkers. Cooperative arrangements with these agencies are based on verbal agreements. The MLRs are expected to contact a minimum of five farmworkers per day. At the rate of 125 outreach days (from six offices and partners), the number of expected contacts in program year (PY) 2007 is 3,000.

Much of the outreach activity is concentrated in the summer months when MSFW activity is at its peak.

The significant WorkForce Centers have each developed an outreach plan which describes the coordination and referral system with other community MSFW service providers and partners. This includes conducting employer contacts for job development and assessment of the needs of both MSFWs and employers. These plans will be monitored by the State MSFW monitor advocate as part of the review process to ensure that MSFWs have full access to all WorkForce Center services. Outreach staff contact agricultural employers, providing them with information about partner services in the WorkForce Centers and the availability of farmworkers and special services. A pamphlet has been developed targeting agricultural and non-agricultural employers.

Wagner-Peyser Services Provided to MSFWs

- Minnesota met all five equity ratio indicators in the fourth quarter of PY05.
- Minnesota met four of the seven (minimum service level) equity indicators in the fourth quarter of PY05 (outreach was performed during the migrant farmworker season; there were no clearance orders or required field checks; and all of the significant offices will be reviewed again this program year).
- WorkForce Centers offer the same full range of programs and services to MSFWs that are provided to non-farmworkers. Services will be actively promoted to MSFWs as described above under the outreach plan.

Wagner-Peyser Services Provided to Agricultural Employers

When job orders are received in the WorkForce Centers, they are coded by type of employment. As staff service those orders, they search for candidates who match the 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. Outreach staff are informed about employers in their areas who repeatedly hire MSFWs. MLRs provide agricultural employers with information on:

- Listing their agricultural job orders with WorkForce Centers

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- 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 MSFW service providers and employers

The referral and placement numbers are impacted by the majority of MSFWs having established working relationships with employers and having job commitments with those employers prior to arriving in Minnesota. There were 3,363 agricultural job openings received in PY05. No interstate clearance orders were received. Information available on computerized job systems appears to be making clearance orders obsolete.

The State MSFW monitor advocate visits communities with substantial MSFW activity to meet with employers, review their needs, determine the effectiveness of the WorkForce Center services provided to them, and discuss how to meet the housing needs of MSFWs. An additional tool for promoting labor exchange services is the DEED website, which contains information of particular importance to agricultural employers.

Other Requirements

Minnesota has a full-time MSFW monitor advocate whose input was incorporated into the PY07 Agricultural Services Plan. Minnesota is a designated significant State for MSFW activity and is required to submit an MSFW Affirmative Action Plan. The MSFW monitor advocate and the MLRs maintain close contact with the following organizations in the interest of providing effective service to customers and input/feedback on the Agricultural Services Plan:

- Red River Valley Sugar Beet Growers Association
- Southern Minnesota Regional Legal Services (Migrant Legal Services)
- Motivation Education and Training Inc.
- Migrant Health Services, Inc.
- Tri-Valley Opportunity Council

(c) Adult Education and Family Literacy:

Minnesota recognizes the importance of serving the special adult population, including students with low income, adults with disabilities, single parents and displaced homemakers, adults with LEP, and others with multiple barriers to literacy, self-sufficiency, and unsubsidized employment. The State has a number of Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (AEFLA) strategies to serve special populations.

Special attention is given to developing the local application criteria for funding. The State will encourage local programs to address ABE activities for special populations and require applicant programs to address criteria in the application that relates to the needs of the hardest-to-serve individuals. The State will develop and implement related teacher training strategies for the adult educators. Because this target group often requires individualized instruction and intervention, the State will work with local and State volunteer groups to recruit and train volunteers to assist in this important task.

Special efforts will be made to coordinate services with other local, regional, and State agencies that work with special populations. The Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) maintains an excellent rapport with agencies such as DHS, DEED, the WorkForce Center System, local homeless shelters, community-based organizations, and church organizations. This effort will be continued and strengthened. The State will develop special program strategies for the target populations identified below.

(i) Low income students (§224(b)(10)(A))

A majority of ABE customers have income levels at or below poverty levels. All individuals receiving State and federally funded ABE services receive these services free-of-charge. Many ABE programs offer multiple services including child care, transportation assistance, counseling, and other services targeted for low-income individuals. Low-income individuals will be referred by ABE programs to appropriate service agencies. The State will assist in this referral process by providing ABE programs with informational resources and contact linkages.

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Given that income is directly correlated to educational levels and the greatest need for ABE services is found among the poor and hard-to-serve disadvantaged adults, the State will develop Statewide outreach efforts that promote participation in adult education programs. Special counseling services will be offered to these individuals that will promote the value of ABE as the point of departure for attaining a general equivalency degree, technical training, and higher education. Computer literacy will be provided as a strategy for building bridges between the poor and the larger community. Participating agencies will work with their local WorkForce Centers to identify current and planned partnerships with community resource agencies in the areas of employment, job training, vocational evaluation, income assistance, customer advocacy, and related services.

The ABE Office, the Minnesota Literacy Training Network (LTN), and the State Literacy Resource Center will develop and offer workshops and technical assistance to prepare instructors in implementing effective strategies to ensure that workplace literacy programs will be successful in offering post-employment services.

(ii) Individuals with disabilities §224(b)(10)(B)

The Minnesota ABE programs have seen a large number of adults with varying disabilities needing services. The most predominant disabilities are developmental or learning disabilities, physical disabilities, and mental disabilities or disorders. Some of these individuals will be integrated into regular adult education classes, while others will be provided educational services in separate groupings or segregated sites. Two types of educational services will be provided: reasonable accommodations and instructional strategies. Accommodations usually refer to modified equipment and materials, but can also include physical access to programs and extended time to complete assessments or assignments.

Instructional strategies include a variety of groupings and techniques to address different learning styles. "Learning disabilities" is a general term that refers to some type of central nervous system dysfunction which interferes with the ability to acquire, store (remember), or retrieve

information or skills. These disorders are often congenital and usually occur across the life span. The majority of individuals with learning disabilities, though requiring some accommodations and special services, will enroll in regular adult education classes. Those individuals with mild developmental disabilities, mild conditions of autism, and many with cerebral palsy will be integrated in adult education classes, depending on the content or subject matter, by providing appropriate accommodations.

To address individuals with disabilities, instructors will:

- Identify the student's needs and goals.
- Analyze learning strengths through discussion, observation, and informal and formal assessments.
- Develop adaptive strategies that support the student's strengths, adjust to the student's difficulties, and make sense to the student, given his or her context.

The ABE Office, Minnesota special-needs supplemental service providers, and the LTN will offer special help to instructors through workshops, training, and special resources to provide service to this target population.

(iii) Single parents and displaced homemakers §224(b)(10)(C)

MDE will encourage adult education providers to make child care available or collaborate with other programs or agencies to enable single parents with small children to attend classes. Participating agencies are encouraged to have counseling and other support service staff and technical assistance available. MDE will encourage agencies to demonstrate linkages and collaborations to ensure that students will receive needed services. In serving displaced homemakers, participating agencies should demonstrate the capacity to refer reentering students to receive career counseling, vocational evaluation and assessment, and educational counseling. Use of distance-learning programs and services will be a priority in working with this population.

The ABE Office, the Minnesota Literacy Council, and the LTN will develop and offer workshops and technical assistance to prepare teachers to implement effective strategies for reaching single parents and displaced homemakers.

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(iv) Individuals with multiple barriers to educational enhancement, including individuals with limited English proficiency (§224(b)(10)(D))

Immigrants and Refugees

Adults with LEP face multiple challenges and have immediate needs for English language skills. These adults need language instruction programs that respond specifically to their needs and goals. Several special programs permit ESL learners to immediately communicate with English speakers, learn about the cultures and customs of the U.S., gain employment or improve job skills, pass citizenship tests, complete their academic education, and maintain their roles as parents and adults without having to rely on others as interpreters.

The ESL programs include the following instructional strategies:

- Select content related to student goals
- Provide opportunities for meaningful interaction
- Use a variety of grouping strategies
- Offer activities that address the various learning modalities
- Integrate language and culture
- Provide activities for the application of critical thinking skills
- Use techniques that help implement effective instructional practices

Staff development will be offered by the ABE Office, the Minnesota Literacy Council, and the LTN to assist with the implementation of model program strategies for ESL programs, including distance learning and family literacy.

Homeless Adults

Minnesota has funded shelter-based programs. Research shows that shelter-based education is important and, over time, the investment pays off. Given their extreme poverty, homeless persons often cannot afford to travel to mainstream adult education programs. Minnesota will continue to design the most effective programs for homeless persons in the shelters. Program strategies for the homeless will include the following considerations:

- Instruction plans related to practical tasks
- Everyday experiences integrated into instruction
- Instruction on self-esteem and life skills
- Program referrals to basic-need services
- Program locations accessible to the homeless
- Workplace education programs will include components to ensure homeless adults are prepared with skills for entry into the workforce and retention in employment

The ABE Office, the Minnesota Literacy Council, and the LTN work to develop collaborative programs and offer technical assistance and training to prepare teachers to effectively deliver instructions.

(v) Criminal offenders in correctional institutions and other institutionalized individuals (§225)

A significant portion of the hard-to-serve population are incarcerated individuals. Every eligible local ABE program will be encouraged to develop partnerships with State prisons, county jails, local jails, and other reform/penal institutions within their local area. The objective of correctional education programs is to provide basic literacy services and educational and job training services, linked to the goal of developing productive and responsible members of society. The MDE will encourage adult education providers to integrate technology into the classroom to meet the unique needs of the students. Academic programs for basic education offer incarcerated adults an increased opportunity to attain the skills to successfully integrate into society.

The ABE Office works directly with the Minnesota Department of Corrections, and supplemental services are provided to all prison and jail programs through the LTN.

(d) TAA and NAFTA-TAA, describe how rapid response and basic readjustment services authorized under other Federal laws will be provided to trade-impacted workers.

The Rapid Response Team includes all dislocation events as part of its responsibility without regard to which program is in effect. Many times, WIA has services before an actual TAA certification is received.

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(e) Vocational Rehabilitation:

(i) Minorities with most significant disabilities. (§21(c))

Vocational Rehabilitation/Rehabilitation Services - General

Rehabilitation Services (RS) - Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) directs program activities to the needs of targeted populations with the most severe disabilities. This includes the following identified minority populations: American Indians, persons of Hispanic/Latino origin, and persons of Southeast Asian and East African origin.

Immigration has increased the numbers of VR customers in Minnesota who do not read or speak English and for whom English is a second language. Therefore, RS-VR contracts with vendors for the translation of its customer forms and brochures. Currently these materials are published in Lao, Hmong, Khmer, Vietnamese, Somali, and Spanish. Staff also use telephone and in-person language interpreting services as needed for meetings with customers.

Activities of outreach and service to diverse populations has resulted in:

- The creation of two American Indian VR programs in Minnesota
- Ongoing implementation of cooperative agreements between the State's general VR program and the American Indian VR programs

- Translation of customer forms and brochures into six languages
- Increased awareness of VR services within the American Indian, Hispanic/Latino, and Southeast Asian communities
- Use of interpreting services for in-person meetings with customers
- Expansion in the diversity of Minnesota VR customers and VR staff

While these diversity-related service and outreach activities taken as a whole have substantially improved outreach to historically underserved populations, RS-VR continues to assess how best to evaluate new and ongoing needs of these populations and of emerging populations. The arrival of approximately 5,000 Hmong refugees in Minnesota since 2005, most of whom settled in St. Paul, brought urgency to this planning. Among questions currently being examined by this activity and by RS-VR needs assessment are: What does demographic information about individuals with disabilities from the most recent U.S. Census and other related research tell the State about the needs of its diverse populations for VR services? Should other languages be added to those already part of RS-VR routine business? How can VR program relationships with Minnesota's ethnic and cultural minority councils and with other bodies representative of diverse cultures within the State be expanded? How can RS-VR best measure the results of its outreach activities? How can the VR program's staff training on cultural diversity issues address the needs of staff, customers, and employers seeking service at the State's WorkForce Centers?

Table I.2 - Vocational Rehabilitation Caseload Statistics

Minnesota Cultural or Ethnic Population	Percent of Total VR Caseload	Percent of Total Employment Outcomes	Percent of Minnesota Population
African American	10.8	6.8	4.1
American Indian	1.9	1.5	1.1
Asian/Pacific Islander	2.4	2.7	3.6
Hispanic/Latino	1.4	1.5	3.6
Multiple Ethnicity	1.8	0.7	1.5
White	81.5	86.8	88.0
Total	100	100	

Cultural and ethnic statistics based on 2005 data from the U.S. Bureau of Census; VR caseload statistics based on DEED-RS information management system data for 2006.

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Vocational Rehabilitation/State Services for the Blind - Blind Agency

State Services for the Blind (SSB) together with the State Rehabilitation Council for the Blind (SRC-B) established a Minority Outreach Committee, and has jointly set goals and strategies to assist SSB in improving its performance in this area. Minnesota has experienced a significant increase in its immigrant population over the last few years and VR counselors have expressed a need to learn about the cultures of these new immigrant groups to serve them better. The following data from the *Minnesota State Demographic Center* published in June of 2004 was used to identify the top five minority/ethnic groups in Minnesota.

Hispanic/Latino	175,000
American Indian	82,000
Hmong	60,000
Somali	25,000
Russian	12,500

Additional racial groups represented in Minnesota include:

Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	2,000
Asian	145,000
Black	203,000
White	4,474,400

Together with the SRC-B, SSB set a specific goal and identified strategies to improve performance in this area. This goal is for federal fiscal year (FFY) 2007 and will be reviewed and strategies modified at mid-year for FFY08 depending on performance achievement.

Goal and Priority #2: Minority Service Rate

By the end of FFY07 at least 100 persons from minority backgrounds will exit services annually and SSB will meet Rehabilitation Services Administration Indicator 2.1.

SSB has identified a number of strategies for meeting this goal:

- In-Service Staff Training: SSB's in-service training grant focuses on developing and improving agency-wide cultural competency. The following activities were identified:

- An organizational assessment - conducted by staff from Century College, a school within the Minnesota State Colleges and University System, and completed in August 2006. This was accomplished through staff participation in focus groups (all SSB management and SSB Workforce Development staff) at which time each staff person completed a cultural diversity self-assessment instrument. During FFY07, this assessment is guiding training curriculum development, and will be used with the SRC-B Minority Outreach Committee to identify other needs and strategies to meet those needs.
- Training plan - specific staff training will be conducted in FFY07 and FFY08 in accordance with the organizational assessment and the training plan as outlined in SSB's in-service quality grant.
- Review other states' best practices and identify other strategies and activities appropriate for application in Minnesota.
- Review and apply literature and research findings that may enhance staff and organizational competency in serving SSB customers from minority backgrounds.
- Continue working with SSB-VR staff in outreach activities to Minnesota's community-based organizations representing minority groups, with emphasis on community-based organizations serving African Americans.
- SSB will work on developing relationships with generic ESL programs to co-train blind individuals from minority backgrounds in braille while also learning English.
- Develop a best practices manual providing ongoing guidance to staff by September 30, 2007.

In addition, Minnesota has two 121 Projects, White Earth and Red Lake. SSB has interagency agreements with each project and enjoys a very positive working relationship. The purpose of each agreement is to "outline areas of mutual interest which will assist both organizations in accomplishing their missions by clarifying strategies, procedures, and provisions for services to American Indians and others with visual impairments who live within the boundaries of the [Red Lake Nation] [White Earth Reservation]." At the present time, the director of the Red Lake Nation VR program is appointed to the SRC-B and the director of the White Earth Reservation is appointed to the General VR Agency's Council.

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Previous strategies in this area have included providing information about Minnesota's five newest cultural and ethnic groups to counselors and bringing in speakers from each group to teach staff about cultural beliefs related to disability, gender, and work. Brochures were translated into native languages and contacts were made to develop relationships between the local VR counselor and community-based organizations to improve outreach efforts.

Some of the challenges faced in providing VR services are the differing cultural views on gender, disability, and work. Another very challenging area is providing adjustment to blindness training for individuals with little or no English proficiency. Assuring that competent translators are available or working with ESL instructors to teach the basic words needed to succeed in adjustment to blindness training programs is a significant need. SSB along with the SRC-B Minority Outreach Committee are continuing to work on this issue. SSB is working on developing relationships with generic ESL programs to co-train blind individuals from minority backgrounds in braille while also learning English.

(f) TANF, indicate whether the State intends to:

(i) Treat families moving into the State from another State differently than other families under the program, and if so, how the State intends to treat such families under the program;

To be eligible for the Minnesota Family Investment Program (MFIP), an assistance unit must have established residency in Minnesota, which means the unit is present in the State and intends to remain here. An assistance unit is considered to have established residency in Minnesota only 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.

(ii) Provide assistance under the program to individuals who are not citizens of the United States, and if so, shall include an overview of

such assistance. (§402(a)(1)(B)(i) and (ii)); and

The State provides MFIP assistance to individuals who are legal non-citizens and who are eligible for assistance in accordance with the provisions of the Aid to Families with Dependent Children Program in effect prior to August 22, 1996. The program provides temporary assistance to families with children or pregnant women. Caregivers are expected to participate and cooperate with employment service requirements. If necessary, assistance with child care costs is provided by the State while the caregiver participates in required employment activities.

(iii) Outline how the State intends to 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 in scope to include men. (§401(a)(1)(A)(vi))

The Children's Justice Act Grant funds strengthen the investigation and prosecution of child abuse cases, reduce trauma to child abuse victims, and promote interagency collaboration. The Children's Justice Act program focuses particularly on improving the handling of child maltreatment cases.

Representatives from child protection, law enforcement, the courts, mental health professions, and other fields review laws, policies, and procedures affecting abused children, and make recommendations for needed changes.

(g) SCSEP (§3(a)(1)): Indicate how the State will serve individuals age 60 and older as a priority (§516(2)), and the following "preference" groups (§502(b)(1)(M)):

- (i) Minorities.*
- (ii) Limited English-speakers.*
- (iii) Indian eligible individuals.*
- (iv) Individuals with the greatest economic need.*

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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. 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

Within all enrollment priorities, persons with poor employment prospects are given preference. All applicants are required to complete an application/intake form that 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.

2. Identify the methods of collecting data and reporting progress on the special populations described in Question 1 of this section.

The Workforce One management information system (MIS) allows local providers delivering WIA Title I-B and MFIP employment service services to collect demographic information on the special populations described in Section I.1. Computer screens call for counselors to enter information that allows both local areas and the State to learn the degree to which the special populations are being served. The information is analyzed periodically at the State level through a desk review to ensure that the proposed service levels described in the individual local service plans are being met. Service levels that fall below the approved levels are met with appropriate corrective action. Additionally, the Workforce One MIS allows both State and local staff to analyze the degree to which these populations are being placed and retained in jobs with wage levels that promote economic and social self-sufficiency.

The Workforce Information System (WINS) is the electronic data system used by Wagner-Peyser and Veterans staff and customers, including the self-service Minnesota's Job Bank users. WINS allows the collection of a chronological display of services delivered by staff that provides the service (e.g., date of service, type of service, and staffperson providing the service).

3. If your Plan includes Perkins III, Tech-Prep, Adult Education and Family Literacy or Vocational Rehabilitation, describe the steps the eligible agency will take to ensure equitable access to, and equitable participation in, projects or activities carried out with the respective funds by addressing the special needs of student, teachers, and other program beneficiaries in order to overcome barriers to equitable participation, including barriers based on gender, race, color, national origin, disability, and age. (§ 427(b) General Education Provisions Act)

All adult education programs are required to have accessible facilities in order to accommodate learners with physical limitations. State leadership funds are used to provide consultative assistance and training in a variety of "special needs" areas. Training organizations funded through AEFLA include the Minnesota Learning Disabilities Association, Minnesota Communication Services for the Deaf, and the Robbinsdale Special Needs Service program (for physically handicapped and sensory

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impaired individuals). In addition, State and federal anti-discrimination law applies to all adult education funded programs in order to ensure equitable participation regardless of gender, race, color, national origin, disability, or age.

Adult education programs are monitored using the Minnesota ABE Compliance Review process to ensure equitable access to, and equitable participation in, projects or activities carried out by adult education programs.

Vocational Rehabilitation/Rehabilitation Services - General

Minnesota's general VR program continues to address barrier-free access to all places where services are delivered and to all aspects of the programs and services themselves. For a description of this activity, see Section F.(g)(i) (Access).

Vocational Rehabilitation/State Services for the Blind - Blind Agency

All programs and services of SSB are carried out consistent with the requirements of pertinent federal and State laws, regulations, and DEED policies to assure equitable participation by all potential program participants. No specific barriers to equitable access have been identified by students, teachers, and other beneficiaries. Nonetheless, SSB continues its practice of minimizing potential barriers to participation by any and all Minnesotans. SSB makes printed materials in alternative formats available to program applicants and participants and provides printed materials in multiple languages. Interpreter services are used for participants who are non-English speaking, deaf and hard of hearing, and DeafBlind. SSB participates in all partner initiatives to ensure blind and visually impaired Minnesotans have access to WorkForce Center System services. All WorkForce Center System partners, including SSB, participate in training and education relative to diversity.



J. Professional Development and System Improvement

1. How will your State develop personnel to achieve the performance indicators for the programs included in your Plan?

In answering the above question, if your Unified Plan includes:

(b) WIA Title I and Wagner-Peyser Act and/or Veterans Programs:

(i) How will your State build the capacity of Local Boards to develop and manage high performing local workforce investment system? (§§111(d)(2) and 112(b)(14))

Minnesota provides a portion of Statewide activity funding to the Minnesota Workforce Council Association (MWCA) for capacity-building activities. Funds are used to plan and implement activities and produce materials for local workforce investment board (LWIB) members, including the sponsorship or co-sponsorship of relevant conferences, guest speakers, and dissemination of relevant information. MWCA also uses these funds to share successful job-training strategies, integrate workforce development efforts, facilitate communication with Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED) staff on program policy concerns, and provide a forum for local workforce service area (WSA) staff to discuss issues of common interest.

Resources also support satellite conferences on LWIB leadership development and seminars. DEED staff work closely with MWCA leadership to coordinate LWIB training activities with State strategic directions and monitor the capacity-building grant.

In June 2004, DEED established six regional administrators who have increased the ability of LWIBs and WSAs to respond to workforce development challenges through relationship building among education, employment, and economic development partners and stakeholders.

Minnesota has also used the local planning guidance (detailed in Section J.1.(b)(ii)) as a means of incorporating federal and State strategic directions into LWIBs' planning and administrative activities. Most recently, local planning guidance has asked how WSAs will prioritize their efforts around key industries, including defining key industries, worker skills needed by key industries, job seeker recruitment efforts to meet industry employment needs, and training for both worker skill requirements and incumbent workers within an industry.

Regional labor market analysts have also played a critical role in building LWIB capacity by providing local and regional industry, employment, and labor force information that informs LWIBs decisions on workforce development matters (see Section G.1.(c)(i)2.a. for a description of regional labor market analysts' activities). Finally, State staff from the Policy, Planning, and Measures Unit assist LWIBs to better understand their business and job seeker customer satisfaction survey results and work with LWIB members to create action plans to improve measured customer satisfaction.

(ii) Local Planning Process - Describe the State mandated requirements for local workforce areas' strategic planning. What assistance does the State provide to local areas to facilitate this process, (§112(b)(2) and 20 CFR 661.350(a)(13)), including:

- What oversight of the local planning process is provided, including receipt and review of Plans and negotiation of performance agreements?*
- How does the local plan approval process ensure that local plans are consistent with State performance goals and State strategic direction?*

DEED's Workforce Development Division (WDD) coordinates and oversees the local planning process. WDD develops and issues planning guidelines to Minnesota's WSAs each program year. WSAs are required to submit their local plans by a specified deadline. The guidelines for local plans typically require WSAs to:

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- State the local vision for a demand-driven workforce development system and how it supports the Statewide vision and priorities.
- Describe the local governance structure and provide Memorandums of Understanding between all one-stop partners.
- Describe Minnesota WorkForce Center operations; including accessibility, partnerships, services to businesses and job seekers, and how services are integrated.
- Designate the WorkForce Center site managers, Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) coordinator, Equal Employment Opportunities officer, English as Second Language coordinator, complaint officer, and the data practices compliance official.
- Describe program operations, including all Workforce Investment Act (WIA) programs and the State Dislocated Worker program.
- Provide program budget projections, as well as costs of infrastructure, administration, etc.
- State performance goals for all programs based on the performance measures from the various funding sources.

The WSAs are required to follow a standard process in writing local plans to ensure that all local WorkForce Center partners have provided input. This helps ensure that attempts to integrate services are truly happening, and that all local partners are planning within the framework of the Statewide demand-driven system. All local partners who were involved in the planning effort are required to sign-off on the plan.

WDD offers technical assistance workshops to WSAs to assist them in writing the local plan, and provides facilitators to convene local and State managers and staff to devise common goals and strategies.

When the local plans are submitted, a team of reviewers from WDD carefully read and approve or reject sections of the local plan that are within their areas of expertise. When a local plan is approved, the WDD director sends an approval letter to the WSA, and funding is released. When a local plan or parts of a local plan are rejected, a corrective action notice is sent to the WSA with a deadline to submit an acceptable answer. If a local plan does not meet the guidelines and standards outlined in the planning

guide, funding can be withheld. This process ensures that WSAs are submitting plans that are following consistent strategies and goals that are set by the State and the U.S. Department of Labor.

(iii) Oversight/Monitoring Process - Describe the monitoring and oversight criteria and procedures the State utilizes to move the system toward the State's vision and achieve the goals identified above, such as the use of mystery shoppers, performance agreements.
(§112(b)(14))

In 2006, DEED combined the monitoring efforts from all Title I-B funding streams into a dedicated monitoring unit. This unit monitors compliance with WIA, final rules, federal regulations, and State policy, emphasizing increased accountability from local providers, and ensures a reliable review process across programs. In addition, the unit administers corrective actions, sanctions, and technical assistance in a consistent manner. DEED systematically monitors all WIA Title I-B programs to ensure that State and local agencies have developed and implemented a comprehensive set of plans, policies, and procedures in compliance with State and federal administrative management requirements. DEED's [monitoring guides](#) can be found on DEED's website.

Onsite monitoring may consist of any combination of fiscal, programs, and systems, including LWIB reviews. Beginning in February 2007, monitoring began to evaluate topical areas that address system-wide activities. Monitors will refer to system-wide strategies in local plans and monitor system elements such as how partners are collaborating, how information is shared among partners, how demand-driven information is driving services to job seekers, and other system-wide measurements. In addition, DEED conducts monthly fiscal reviews and quarterly performance reviews. Wherever discrepancies are noted, DEED offers technical assistance or training.

The MWCA has a "[mystery shopper](#)" program whereby local staff secretly shop WorkForce Centers in other local areas. Results are used for management purposes.



The local planning guidance described in Section J.1.(b)(ii) above lays the foundation for new local performance agreements beyond the traditional local WIA Title I-B negotiated performance standards. DEED asks LWIBs to report their target local area level of performance for State Services for the Blind (SSB), Veterans, Vocational Rehabilitation (VR), and Wagner-Peyser programs.

(c) Vocational Rehabilitation, describe the designated State agency's policies, 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 pursuant to Section 101(a)(7) of the Act. (§101(a)(7))

Vocational Rehabilitation/Rehabilitation Services - General

Comprehensive System of Personnel Development

The Comprehensive System of Personnel Development (CSPD) for the Rehabilitation Services (RS)-VR program is a plan to ensure that VR staff are professionally qualified to carry out their roles in the delivery of VR services.

Minnesota's CSPD is comprised of three primary activities:

- Recruiting, hiring, and retention
- Building a multicultural staff
- Training and development

RS-VR engages in continuous consultation with the State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) on the CSPD, the directors of three area graduate rehabilitation counseling programs, and others. The SRC has offered formal recommendations regarding the CSPD, all of which were accepted for implementation by RS-VR.

Recruitment, Hiring, and Retention of Rehabilitation Counselors

Need for Personnel: The RS-VR program systematically analyzes information about agency personnel needs from several sources. Information from the RS-VR information management system, Workforce One, yields the numbers

of persons served, the ratio of counselors to customers, and a projection of the characteristics and numbers of persons seeking VR services. Analysis of new program directions, growth of customer populations, anticipated staff retirements, and other staff departures are examined. Periodic meetings among the RS staff development manager, the RS-VR field operations director, and rehabilitation area managers disclose staffing needs of RS-VR field offices. Consultation with the SRC makes a contribution.

At present, and as projected through federal fiscal year (FFY) 2010, RS-VR's complement of approximately 155 counselors manage caseloads of approximately 140 total cases per counselor per year. This ratio is deemed adequate for current and projected staffing requirements. The ratio translates to an average daily caseload of approximately 75 per counselor.

The process for recruiting and hiring counselors is carried-out under the provisions and protections of Minnesota's competitive civil service system. This includes affirmative action to recruit and hire individuals with disabilities and persons who are members of the State's diverse cultural and ethnic populations. The current rehabilitation counselor candidate examination, developed by a workgroup comprised of staff from RS-VR, SSB, and the DEED Human Resources Office, rates candidate's education based on a standard of training at the Master's level of VR counseling or a "closely related" field such as rehabilitation education, counseling and guidance, and educational psychology. Candidate interviews are based on a standard of competencies and qualifications that are required for success as a VR counselor.

The Rehabilitation Act and its regulations intend that VR counselors have professional qualifications for the work they do. RS provides for the professional development of its counselors. Qualifications for RS-VR counselors are based on both educational preparation and professional work experience. A candidate interview, candidate appointment, and the successful completion of a probationary period advance the candidate to a permanent position. Rehabilitation counselor positions in Minnesota (counselor-senior and counselor-career) reward a counselor's acquisition of higher levels of professional development and experience. Career counselors assume

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greater responsibility for leadership within their teams, including mentoring and case consultation, and are typically assigned a specialized caseload that may be more professionally demanding. Career counselors may also assume a liaison role in community outreach to specific populations. In 2007-2010, a more structured approach to professional mentoring within teams will be designed and implemented.

The academic degree standard for RS-VR is the Master's degree in rehabilitation counseling or a closely related field. All RS rehabilitation counselors hold a Master's degree in rehabilitation counseling or in a related field.

Counselor retention planning is built around effective management principles, team building, effective communication, performance appraisal and feedback, promotional opportunities, support of staff training and development, employee recognition, and celebration of achievements. It is clear that retention planning is increasingly important to the ongoing capacity of the organization to meet customer needs. Staff attrition due to resignation well before mid-career is currently seven counselors annually. The incidence of staff retirement becomes critical as the number of staff retirements climb. The SRC has made helpful recommendations in this regard and continues to study this topic. Between 2002 and 2006, 42 percent of staff departures were due to resignation. Strategies for improving counselor retention throughout 2007-2010 in support of a recently adopted RS-VR strategic goal are currently being developed for implementation before the end of FFY08. Already in progress to address this concern, a Hay study will assess the adequacy of the current counselor classifications and compensation. This process will be substantially completed during FFY08. A subsequent Hay review is planned to address placement coordinator classification and compensation.

Relationship with Rehabilitation Counseling Graduate Programs: RS-VR consults regularly with three regional graduate schools specializing in VR counseling:

- Minnesota State University-Mankato (MSU-M)
- St. Cloud State University
- University of Wisconsin-Stout

Currently, the VR director of field operations serves as adjunct faculty at MSU-M. To date, staff attrition due to retirement and other causes is approximately equal to the capacity of RS to recruit qualified counselors from these programs and from other employment. However, the pool from which to hire counselors is often slender. Many candidates do not possess needed specialized knowledge, such as that required to serve persons who are deaf and hard of hearing, and many applicants do not choose to interview for openings in all areas of the State. It is commonplace for three or fewer individuals to interview for an open counseling position and for one or no individuals to seek interviews for a rural office opening.

Area graduate programs prepare from 12 to 24 counselors annually. However as RS-VR experiences recruiting competition from increasingly competitive salaries and benefits offered by community rehabilitation programs, other public agencies, private insurance companies, and private practice, a strategic, planned approach to recruiting and retaining professional staff must be adopted. At present, Minnesota finds it must attract more than 50 percent of the area's graduating candidates to fill open counseling positions. In 2007, a staff work group chaired by the RS staff development director will address agency recruitment needs and develop strategies for implementation in 2007-2010.

Leadership Development, Succession Planning, and Related Capacity-Building: At present, leadership development, succession planning, and related capacity-building are carried out at the agency level through RS-VR participation in DEED's ongoing leadership and personnel development initiatives. More recently, the VR staff development group representing all levels and classifications of VR program staff is addressing the need for strategic management of staff development, succession planning, and related capacity-building. Lead by the manager for staff development, strategies for improving counselor retention, in support of a recently adopted RS strategic goal are currently being developed for implementation before the end of FFY08. Also, in anticipation of retirements among current management and rehabilitation specialist staff, new entry-level positions are being sought in supervisor and rehabilitation specialist classifications to improve the organization's foundation for leadership succession.

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Professional Staff Other than Counselors: Individual customers and diverse customer populations benefit from the development of staff professional roles other than rehabilitation counselor. Thinking differently about how to accomplish the agency mission has resulted in alternate assignment of selected tasks from counselors to VR technicians, rehabilitation representatives, and placement coordinators. The emerging staffing pattern in field offices is becoming 50 percent counselors and 50 percent support positions. Support classifications meet customer needs in collaboration with RS-VR's rehabilitation counselors, and are playing an important role in the expansion of employment-related services that include customer workshops, guided resource area activity at WorkForce Centers, job coaching and follow-up with customers to ensure that their needs are being met and that progress is being made.

Business Services Specialists: As DEED, the designated State agency for VR in Minnesota, seeks the creation and retention of high-quality jobs through business growth, expansion, and retention, VR staff participation on DEED's business services teams is crucial. VR staff participation as business services specialists contributes to demand-driven service that help companies locate and expand in Minnesota. An essential service in the business services portfolio is helping the State's businesses find, hire, and retain the employees they need to flourish. Through staff participation on business services teams, VR placement coordinators form strategic relationships within the business community that are productive for VR customers. This participation identifies current and emerging labor market demand and the specific needs of individual employers. Integration of VR program activity at the business-development level of the Minnesota economy yields connections between employers and qualified employees with disabilities.

Placement Coordinators: Placement coordinators lead RS-VR professional job placement activity in support of individual customer employment plans. As members of the business services team at WorkForce Centers, they collaborate with Wagner-Peyser, veterans services, and economic development staff to provide solutions for business workforce needs. They are a visible consulting resource in their communities for employers who want to hire and retain workers with significant disabilities.

Placement coordinators facilitate the emerging employer service role for the VR program within the WorkForce Center System, benefiting employment of individuals with disabilities Statewide. In 2007, an RS-VR placement specialist position has been created to work collaboratively within the Minnesota Department of Employee Relations. This position has the specific task of increasing employment of individuals with significant disabilities in Minnesota State government agencies during 2007-2010.

VR Technician: The VR technician classification permits development of support staff to carry out diverse casework-related duties of increased responsibility in support of customer employment plans. The classification gives interested staff an opportunity for work experience from which they may choose to pursue a rehabilitation counseling degree and career. Development of counseling staff from within RS by promoting support staff to the VR technician classification has facilitated the employment of persons who are minorities and individuals with disabilities as RS counselors.

In 2007, VR technicians have been trained to conduct psychometric testing, which was formerly carried-out through contract with a vendor. For many staff, this has proven to be a welcome skill development activity, and it contributes to the professional development of field staff who carry out support roles.

Rehabilitation Representative: Rehabilitation representatives perform assigned tasks under the supervision of a rehabilitation counselor. These tasks include record-keeping and selected direct services to customers, information, and orientation about VR services and other services for persons with disabilities at WorkForce Centers. This classification serves as an important stepping-stone to counseling positions, and thus, is also a recruiting tool. Qualified rehabilitation representatives are supported when they seek to obtain the education required to apply for counseling positions.

Building a Multicultural Staff

Overall, recruitment to build a multicultural staff includes local, regional, and national advertising to attract individuals with significant disabilities and persons who are representative of the State's cultural and ethnic minorities. Individual VR field offices have adopted

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practices to recruit and develop members of the cultural and ethnic communities who live within their service areas. A model first developed and applied to an RS-VR American Indian project to recruit and develop American Indian staff has been used successfully more recently in the St. Paul-Midway area to recruit persons of color from immigrant communities to serve in RS-VR staff positions.

The director of VR field operations and the RS staff development manager are currently planning replication of this model in selected field offices during 2007-2010. In addition, the RS staff development manager will meet with representatives of the State's diverse cultural and ethnic communities throughout 2007-2010, to identify effective strategies for recruitment from those populations to VR careers. The development of culturally competent outreach, intake, and service to the State's diverse populations of immigrants, including significant populations of Asian and African refugees is reliant to an important degree on the success of these efforts. Serving a community liaison role, positions such as rehabilitation representatives have historically improved VR program communication and service to these communities. This effort includes recruitment of persons with the most significant disabilities for careers in VR.

Paid internships, which have proven a successful strategy, are offered annually to achieve the same goal. Finally, all RS-VR office staff communicate with customers in their preferred language or appropriate mode of communication. Because the availability of multilingual staff is limited, translation and interpreter services are routinely used to communicate effectively with customers.

Training and Development

In late 2006, RS-VR created a management-level position responsible for staff development and training. This manager is responsible for development, implementation, and monitoring of the CSPD, and will play a primary role on the RS-VR management team in the development and implementation of initiatives related to organizational development. Operational plans for achieving RS-VR's new strategic goal on organizational and staff development are being developed in 2007 for implementation in 2007-2010.

Assessment of organizational and staff development needs is conducted through the staff development manager's interviews with field staff, reports from rehabilitation area managers, and through reports from RS operational groups such as the Counselor Advisory Committee, VR Technicians Committee, Policy Development Committee, the Staff Development Group, and the Placement Committee. Comprehensive case reviews also yield information that guides the development of staff training.

The Staff Development Group is made up of the staff development manager, staff development specialist, regional area managers, rehabilitation counselors, placement specialists, VR technicians, and support staff. This group provides guidance and direction for all staff development activities.

The topics of comprehensive annual training for all staff have historically included data privacy practices, effective strategies for customer-counselor relationships, implementing new federal regulations, case-record documentation requirements, and WIA and Rehabilitation Act amendments. Scheduled training for 2007-2010 includes:

- Ticket to Work Training
- Caseload Management, Diagnostic Interviewing, New Counselor Training, Employment Plan Development - a core curriculum for new counselors and interested experienced staff
- Data Privacy
- Ethics
- Vocational Testing
- Assistive Technology
- Medical Factors
- Bridges Out of Poverty - training that addresses practice implications for employment of persons living in poverty
- Advanced Counselor Training - including motivational interview skills

Supplementing these scheduled training events is individual team activity that addresses practice and performance issues identified during RS-VR case review. RS-VR routinely supports staff training from external sources on relevant and emerging topics such as Asbergers' Syndrome, autism, working with ex-offenders, ADA

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and the Minnesota Human Rights Act, school-to-work transition, and community resources.

New training in process is business services training for placement staff aimed at coordinating and integrating VR activity within the State's overall economic and workforce development activity. In addition, in development or currently being implemented are processes to assist new employees to more rapidly understand and apply agency policies and procedures; improve application of casework standards; and a plan for building staff skills and agency capacity in assistive technology.

In 2007, RS-VR is implementing minimum continuing education requirements. In addition to required in-house training, staff will complete a minimum of one self-initiated training activity annually. Guidelines for tuition funding of continued staff education that contributes to succession planning, professional expertise, and leadership capabilities are in development for implementation in 2007-2010.

Developmental Case Review: Casework review is integral to staff development and the quality of service given customers and the State's employers. This activity establishes and maintains casework and review standards while offering coaching to maintain best practices. Developmental case review engages counselors by including them in the review of their team's own cases. It provides staff with assessment and direct feedback on the same day the review is conducted. Information from comprehensive-level case reviews and team reviews is conveyed to the staff development group for use in planning the CSPD. Rehabilitation area managers conduct local case review with staff at their discretion, supplementing formal comprehensive and developmental reviews.

Coordination of Staff Training and Development with MDE under the CSPD for IDEA: A relationship between the RS-VR staff training under the VR CSPD and training/staff development of the State's special education personnel under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) is coordinated through collaborative agreements with the Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) and its participation on the SRC.

Vocational Rehabilitation/State Services for the Blind - Blind Agency

SSB policies, procedures, and activities to maintain a comprehensive system of personnel development is described in this section. This system assures that there is an adequate supply of qualified staff in the ratio and personnel categories needed; staff are available to provide services Statewide; and staff have ongoing personnel development opportunities. The ultimate purpose of this system is to assure that SSB customers, who are blind, visually impaired, or DeafBlind, are provided with high-quality VR services leading to employment outcomes.

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.
- Personnel development including methods to assess individual and organizational staff training needs and the provision of in-service training.

Data System on Personnel and Personnel Development

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 approximately 46 staff positions filled by 53 individuals (excluding those assigned to the Randolph-Sheppard Program). Seventeen positions are currently earmarked for qualified VR counselors. During FFY06, the ratio of qualified VR counselors (17) to individuals

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served (1,140) was one to 67. The ratio of qualified VR counselors to individuals served during FFY07 and into FFY08 is expected to remain at similar levels.

Table J.1 provides the personnel categories used by SSB's VR program, the current complement (full-time equivalents or FTEs), the number of people filling those FTEs, and the projection for new staff needed over the next five years.

Reviewing information on incidence of disability and the results of outreach activities provide insight on the number of individuals who may be accessing SSB services over the next five years. In addition to SSB personnel continuing to make numerous presentations to a wide variety of audiences, SSB carried-out the most extensive marketing campaign on record over the last year. Nearly 1,000 letters were sent to all Minnesota ophthalmologists and optometrists describing SSB services, including information on the eye care professional's legal requirement to refer patients who are legally blind to SSB.

Based on all of the data reviewed, SSB believes that the number of individuals that have traditionally come to SSB for VR services represents a realistic picture of the need for services by Minnesotans who are blind, visually impaired, or DeafBlind. As a result, SSB anticipates needing the same number and mix of staff positions over the next five years, given current trends and anticipated changes in the rehabilitation program.

As has been the case for the last several years, SSB continues to project that staff turnover, rather than program expansion, will drive any shifts in staffing. The strength of this projection increases as SSB has now focused its VR program on individuals pursuing competitive employment outcomes in integrated settings. Essential to this focus is an increased emphasis on rehabilitation counselors working with employers and two rehabilitation specialists whose focus is on placement.

Collaboration with Institutions of Higher Education

Minnesota has two credentialed graduate programs in VR counseling: MSU-M and St. Cloud State University (SCSU). SSB management maintains contact with the directors of the VR counseling graduate programs through direct one-on-one conversations and by serving on advisory committees. Through discussion with the directors of each of the programs, SSB learned that for this current academic year, MSU-M has 30 students and 12 graduates; SCSU has 25 students and 12 graduates. The directors of both graduate school programs expect their numbers to be similar next academic year. All graduates have the necessary credentials to qualify for national certification and 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.

Communication with these graduate programs is enhanced because the director of VR field operations serves on the MSU-M graduate rehabilitation counseling

Table J.1 - SSB's VR Program Personnel

Personnel Category	Current Complement (FTEs)	Current Number of Individuals	Projected New Personnel Needed Over Next 5 Years
Field Operations Director	1	1	1
Field Operations Supervisor	3	3	1
Qualified VR Counselor	17	17	5
Psychologist	1	1	0
Assistive Technology Supervisor	1	1	0
Assistive Technology Specialist	5	5	1
Professional Support Staff	5.13	6	2
Support Staff	7.82	14	3
Central Office Administrative Staff	6.48	9	3
Total Staff	46.08	53	16

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program advisory committee and maintains professional relationships with the graduate rehabilitation counseling program staff at SCSU. The VR field operations director has periodic opportunities to meet with students at MSU-M and, as a result, students with disabilities and from minority backgrounds will frequently express interest in paid internship experiences with SSB. A graduate student with a significant visual impairment just completed her internship at SSB. The VR field operations director provides feedback to the counseling program staff regarding the skill needs of VR counselors at SSB. Less formalized contacts are maintained with out-of-State credentialed VR counseling programs in Wisconsin and Michigan.

Plan for Recruitment, Preparation, and Retention of Qualified Personnel

SSB annually updates its plan to address current and projected needs for qualified personnel. This plan is informed by monitoring data on the number of employees in each personnel category for all of its programs, annually reviewing staffing patterns in light of customer service demands, reviewing each vacancy when it occurs to determine whether a change in personnel category or services is necessary to meet the current and emerging needs of SSB customers, and annually reviewing all positions when the VR program budget is developed.

SSB carefully reviews all staff vacancies, regardless of funding source. During the last year, SSB chose to fill two of the four rehabilitation counselor vacancies resulting from retirements or transfers. One individual fully meets the standards for a qualified VR counselor. SSB was fortunate to hire a qualified VR counselor with American Sign Language (ASL) skills to fill the other position and specialize in serving customers who are DeafBlind. One position, because of reduced customer demands, has been filled by a VR technician and supports a VR counselor who has expanded their territory. The fourth position will not be filled.

SSB has aggressively addressed the recruitment of new staff, including individuals with significant disabilities and individuals from minority backgrounds, via several distinct strategies. One strategy is strengthening relationships with MSU-M. SSB management staff worked with MSU-M in developing its proposal for Rehabilitation Services

Administration (RSA) long-term training funding. The proposal permits students to expedite the completion of their Master's program while serving paid internships with RS-VR and SSB. The program also provides increased opportunities for students to "fast-track" their training by combining the internship experience with class work.

A second strategy continues to be paid 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. This internship program was the source for one of SSB's hires of a qualified VR counselor. The individual, who happens to have a significant disability, indicated a major reason for accepting employment with SSB was the positive internship experience.

A third strategy attempts to address the general climate of recruiting persons to enter employment with State government, which is not inviting given relatively flat pay increases and concern about budget shortfalls. However, SSB is fortunate to have internal options to meet VR staffing needs for qualified VR counselors. As a result of the FFY00 realignment of SSB, at least 12 individuals who meet the standard for qualified VR counselor are currently employed in SSB's Senior Services Unit. If critical counselor vacancies do occur, and no other options for filling the position are identified, strong consideration would be given to staff realignment.

The fourth strategy addresses traditional and nontraditional recruitment efforts. Recruitment efforts use several channels of communication to target potential employees, including individuals from minority backgrounds and individuals with significant disabilities. SSB, through the Minnesota Department of Employee Relations (DOER), publicizes staff vacancies to a wide population via print and internet listings. Employment and paid internship opportunities are, as appropriate, listed on the homepage of the *Rehabilitation Recruitment Center of the National Clearinghouse of Rehabilitation Training Materials*. In

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cooperation with the Rehabilitation Continuing Education Programs (RCEP) at Southern Illinois University, SSB employment and internship opportunities have been included in its publication, *Region V State Rehabilitation Agencies' Employment and Internship Opportunities*. The RCEP distributes the publication to RCEPs nationally for further distribution and to the historically black colleges and universities in Region V. The director of VR field operations has periodic opportunities to meet with students at MSU-M and, as a result, students with disabilities and from minority backgrounds know about SSB, the State personnel system, and how to watch for and apply for employment openings.

The fifth strategy includes initiatives to retain staff, including individuals with disabilities and individuals from minority backgrounds, that encompass paid training experiences and development opportunities consistent with present and projected future needs of both the individual and of SSB.

A final strategy that is expected to positively impact recruitment and retention is the realignment of the rehabilitation counselor classification system within Minnesota's civil service system. This realignment resulted in differentiating the functions of a qualified rehabilitation counselor from those of related positions in the counselor series and created a way to recruit for a "rehabilitation assistant" position leading to opportunities for a career ladder for an individual to move towards becoming a fully qualified rehabilitation counselor. Such a career ladder may be especially attractive to individuals from minority backgrounds and individuals with significant disabilities who need to work and could be supported by SSB in their pursuit of a graduate degree to meet the qualifications of a rehabilitation counselor. An additional factor recently resolved is the ability to hire persons with experience at a relatively higher level in the classification system than had been SSB's practice.

Personnel Standards

Policies and procedures relating to the establishment and maintenance of standards to ensure personnel needed by SSB are appropriately and adequately prepared and trained are in place. 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 DOER.

Both SSB and RS, the two designated State units in Minnesota, have worked cooperatively with DOER to ensure the classification specifications used to certify individuals eligible for employment in the designated State units are consistent with their personnel needs and are based on the highest entry-level degree requirements in the State. Standards for the position of rehabilitation counselor at SSB were refined in 1999 to comply fully with federal requirements, reviewed and approved by RSA, and have not changed. The academic degree standard for a VR counselor at SSB is the Master's degree in rehabilitation counseling or a closely related field. Both SSB and RS continue to work closely with DOER to ensure only those individuals who have earned a Master's degree in rehabilitation counseling or closely related fields qualify for placement on eligible lists for rehabilitation counselor.

SSB has 17 qualified VR counselor positions. All 17 positions are held by staff that meet position standards so SSB will not be reporting expenditures for assisting counselors to obtain Master's degrees this program year.

An analysis of current lists of persons eligible for employment as rehabilitation counselor, as well as information from the two graduate rehabilitation counselor programs, continues to indicate there are no factors that would adversely affect SSB's ability to hire qualified staff, given the standard for rehabilitation counselors.

When SSB has a vacancy, eligible individuals, certified as such by DOER, are interviewed by appropriate SSB staff. Employee selection is based not only on general class qualifications, but also on their ability to meet specific job demands. This process also applies to internal transfers and would be followed if it were necessary to consider realignment of staff from the Senior Services Unit to VR. Thus, the designated State unit continues to play a significant and deciding role in ensuring individuals employed by SSB are appropriately and adequately prepared and trained.

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Personnel Development

SSB, in collaboration with other offices of DEED, continues to be a partner in implementing the employee performance development communication model, the objective of which is to collectively understand how employees' performance and development contributes to the mission, vision, values, and goals of DEED. The model focuses on organizational values, continual improvement, and ongoing dialogue.

Critical to continual improvement is personal responsibility of the employee for professional and job-related development. Meeting the development needs of the individual employee is the explicit responsibility of that employee, with required support of the supervisor, to ensure continuing learning and development take place. Supplemental to formal and more traditional development activities are informal coaching, counseling, and teaching activities among and between supervisors and staff.

For the last three years, SSB has had focused training for all VR staff on the Rehabilitation Act requirements and on State policies and procedures that relate to the Rehabilitation Act amendments of 1998. This training has resulted in the resolution of five of the findings in Minnesota's 107 monitoring case reviews conducted in 2004. Counseling supervisors continue to use the results of the 107 monitoring case reviews as well as subsequent State case reviews for informal coaching and teaching to improve individual counselor performance.

SSB conducts a comprehensive assessment of overall State unit training needs every three years consisting of a staff survey, a review of development plans, and prioritization of training and development needs by the SSB management team. This staff development needs assessment activity is the basis for the in-service training program plan that continues to be updated at least annually to reflect emergent needs.

RSA has accepted the SSB in-service basic and quality training plan for FFY06-10. SSB has just submitted the annual update for the first half of the first year of the training plan. SSB's in-service training grant is designed to assist all State unit personnel to carry out the purpose of the Rehabilitation Act and the agency's mission. It is designed to improve the competencies of all State

VR personnel in providing vocational rehabilitation, independent living, access and assistive technology, and other support services to SSB customers, resulting in improved customer satisfaction, enhanced employment opportunities, and increased employment outcomes.

The training plan addresses three broad goals:

- Increase understanding and application of essential organizational principles and values, including those relative to blindness and diversity.
- Acquire, maintain, and continually improve the ability of staff to apply the wide range of VR tools and skills required in both current as well as future positions with the unit.
- Gain, maintain, and continually improve those essential other (i.e., non-VR-specific) abilities such as computer access, critical thinking, and effective communication skills needed for staff to successfully serve customers.

The additional quality training grant Minnesota SSB received will provide VR staff with specialized, intensive training in three areas:

- Serving customers who are DeafBlind
- Serving customers who are blind, visually impaired, or DeafBlind and from diverse cultures
- Adjustment to blindness - experiential training at a community rehabilitation center "under the blindfold"

This specialized training is designed to provide State agency personnel the tools needed to better serve blind, visually impaired, and DeafBlind customers, including those from diverse cultures, in a changing vocational and social environment.

In addition to the areas already described, specialized training is being arranged on the following topics: low vision, comprehensive assessment of VR needs, and serving individuals with borderline personality disorders.

Additional activities contained in the training plan focus on preparing individuals for future leadership opportunities, capacity-building, succession planning, and retaining qualified staff in government service. Another

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area is access technology, which is constantly changing and for which staff must stay aware.

While staff development efforts continue to focus on employment and rehabilitation technology, it does so in the overarching context of the Rehabilitation Act Amendments of 1998. Training and information continues to be provided on other WIA titles and the relationship of Title IV to the other WIA titles. Future training will be centered on the field application of regulations pertaining to future amendments to the Rehabilitation Act and to WIA.

Information is disseminated to staff from a wide range of sources in a variety of ways, increasingly via Web-based resources. Print material is, as appropriate, made available to staff in braille and other alternate formats. Access to information in a format or form accessible to staff and customers continues to be critical for success. The SSB Communication Center is a resource available to all staff for making materials available to customers in braille and other alternate formats. In addition, each SSB office in the WorkForce Center System has the capacity to produce braille locally for customers.

Foreign language interpreters are available to staff from locally based resources, as are interpreter services for customers who require or request sign language communications. While sign language and tactile interpreters are used when needed to communicate with customers who are DeafBlind or have a hearing impairment, one VR counselor has completed ASL training. SSB is currently recruiting another qualified VR counselor who is proficient in ASL.

Knowledgeable individuals, including representatives from professional associations and organizations, make presentations at regional and sectional staff meetings concerning topical areas of emerging interest. These presentations include SSB staff sharing information following attendance at conferences and other training and development sessions. SSB coordinates personnel development with activities and efforts of MDE 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.

SSB will continue to encourage coordination of personnel development among agencies through the exchange of relevant information and mutually supportive activities. Such coordination includes appropriate involvement of representatives from the education and rehabilitation communities in staff-training activities of each organization.



K. Performance Accountability

Nothing in this guidance shall relieve a State of its responsibilities to comply with the accountability requirements of WIA Title I and II and the Carl D. Perkins Vocational and Technical Education Act of 1998 (Perkins III), including, for example, the requirements to renegotiate performance levels at statutorily defined points in the 5-year Unified Plan cycle. The appropriate Secretary will negotiate adjusted levels of performance with the State for these programs prior to approving the State Plan.

1. What are the State's performance methodologies, indicators and goals in measurable, quantifiable terms for each program included in the Unified Plan and how will each program contribute to achieving these performance goals? (Performance indicators are generally set out by each program's statute.) In answering the above question, if your Unified Plan includes:

(b) WIA Title I and Wagner-Peyser Act and/or Veterans Programs:

(i) Improved performance and accountability for customer-focused results are central features of WIA. To improve, States need not only systems in place to collect data and track performance, but also systems to analyze the information and modify strategies to improve performance. (See Training and Employment Guidance Letter (TEGL) 15-03, Common Measures Policy, December 10, 2003.) In this section, describe how the State measures the success of its strategies in achieving its goals, and how the State uses this data to continuously improve the system.

(i) Describe the State's performance accountability system, including any State-system measures and the State's performance goals established with local areas. Identify the performance indicators and goals the State has established to track its progress toward meeting its strategic goals and implementing its vision for the

workforce investment system. For each of the core indicators, explain how the State worked with Local Boards to determine the level of the performance goals. Include a discussion of how the levels compare with the State's previous outcomes as well as with the State-adjusted levels of performance established for other States (if available), taking into account differences in economic conditions, the characteristics of participants when they entered the program and the services to be provided. Include a description of how the levels will help the State achieve continuous improvement over the two years of the Plan. (§§112(b)(3) and 136(b)(3))

Minnesota is using the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) performance measures (as redefined as part of the common measure effort) as the basis for its performance accountability system. These measures are part of an overall State vision of an effective and efficient employment and training system. In January 2007, the Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED) initiated a multi-agency workgroup to define workforce development system initiatives and begin defining system performance measures. In addition to DEED, representatives from the following organizations are involved in this effort: Minnesota Departments of Education (MDE), Human Services (DHS), Labor and Industry (DLI); Minnesota State Colleges and Universities (MnSCU) system; Minnesota Workforce Council Association (MWCA); and the Governor's Workforce Development Council (GWDC). The group anticipates defining system performance measures by summer 2008. DEED will work with its partners to implement system measures.

- For the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) Title I-B programs, Minnesota is trying to achieve or exceed Minnesota's performance standards for the 17 U.S. DOL performance measures.

The standards Minnesota will negotiate with DOL will reflect the State's continuous improvement effort and will show an expected high level of achievement for program years (PYs) 2007 and 2008. Data on past performance show that Minnesota has achieved a high degree of

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performance success. Minnesota will build on this success as it works with DOL to set standards that reflect excellence in employment and training programs.

As part of this data collection effort, Minnesota staff has concluded that the economic conditions in the State has deteriorated somewhat. Data have shown that overall wage gains have slowed considerably in the last two years. Job growth in many industries has leveled off. The *St. Paul Pioneer Press* (Sunday, April 15, 2007) indicated in an article entitled "Minnesota's Job Drain," that the "State's slow employment growth spurs job seekers to leave for greater opportunities elsewhere." This new economic reality is exhibited in State statistics that show a leveling-off of performance over the last two years.

Given the new situation, Minnesota will propose modest increases in standards. However, these proposals will represent the State's best efforts to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of its employment and training programs.

Prior to negotiations with DOL, Minnesota State staff will work with representatives of the local area to determine the appropriate standards. As indicated above, this determination will be based on past history, present economic conditions (using DOL research as to the effect of these conditions on performance measures), the characteristics of the expected participants (using DOL research as to the effect of these characteristics on performance measures), and the type of service. In negotiating with DOL, Minnesota staff will represent the collective wisdom of the State's employment and training community.

For PY06 local planning, DEED requested that local workforce investment boards (LWIBs) identify target levels of performance using the common measures for all programs, including Wagner-Peyser, Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP), and Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA). LWIBs also had to propose target levels of performance for Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) and State Services for the Blind (SSB) using definitions modified to fit the WIA Title IV programs, and target levels of performance in customer satisfaction and employer market penetration rates.

When Minnesota completes the negotiation process with DOL, Statewide performance goals for WIA youth, adult, and dislocated worker programs for PY07 and PY08 will be incorporated into *Minnesota's Unified Plan*.

(ii) Describe any targeted applicant groups under WIA title I, the Wagner-Peyser Act or title 38 chapters 41 and 42 (Veterans Employment and Training Programs) that the State tracks. (§§111(d)(2), 112(b)(3) and 136(b)(2)(C))

Minnesota has a WorkForce Center registration system for multiple programs including the WIA Title I-B programs (Workforce One) and a separate system for Wagner-Peyser and Veterans programs (WINS). Workforce One collects the following participant status information:

- Race/Ethnicity
- Older Worker
- Veterans
- Limited English Proficiency
- Disability
- Welfare (Temporary Assistance for Needy Families [TANF] and Food Support Employment and Training [FSET])
- At-Risk Youth
- Parenting/Pregnant Teen
- Runaway Youth
- High School Dropout
- Homeless
- Offender
- Recovering Chemically Dependency
- Dislocated Worker
- Unemployment Insurance (UI) Applicant

WINS tracks the following participant status information:

- Migrant and Seasonal Farmworker
- Older Worker
- Race/Ethnicity
- UI Applicant
- Veterans

(iii) Identify any performance outcomes or measures in addition to those prescribed by WIA and what process is the State using to track and report them?

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See discussion below Section K.1.(b)(i) on Minnesota's efforts to define and implement workforce development system measures.

(iv) Describe any actions the Governor and State Board will take to ensure collaboration with key partners and continuous improvement of the Statewide workforce investment system. (§§111(d)(2) and 112(b)(1))

The work of the GWDC Systems Excellence Committee is the venue that addresses continuous improvement for the workforce investment system as specific challenges and opportunities are identified.

(v) How do the State and Local Boards evaluate performance? What corrective actions (including sanctions and technical assistance) will the State take if performance falls short of expectations? How will the State and Local Boards use the review process to reinforce the strategic direction of the system? (§§111(d)(2), 112(b)(1), and 112(b)(3))

In evaluating performance, LWIBs examine data that illustrate whether the workforce service areas (WSAs) have met (or exceeded) the appropriate performance standards. The data is supplied by the various units of DEED on a quarterly basis so that LWIBs can monitor their progress towards achieving their goals. Additionally, a number of LWIBs have established measures (additional qualitative goals) that illustrate how well the WSAs are serving the public.

Corrective actions that the State might take if performance falls short of expectations include:

- Technical assistance and training sessions to staff and/or LWIB members
- More frequent monitoring
- Prohibition against using certain program deliverers
- Denial of requests for cash

After two years of failure:

- Reorganization of the WSA
- Reorganization of the LWIB

The quarterly submittal and review of the data allows the LWIBs to identify areas where strategic goals are not being met and initiate efforts towards achieving the strategic goals outlined in *Minnesota's Unified Plan*.

(vii) Include a proposed level for each performance measure for each of the program years covered by the Plan. While the Plan is under review, the State will negotiate with the respective ETA Regional Administrator to set the appropriate levels for the next two years. At a minimum, States must identify the performance indicators required under section 136, and, for each indicator, the State must develop an objective and quantifiable performance goal for two program years. States are encouraged to address how the performance goals for local workforce investment areas and training provides will help them attain their Statewide performance goals. (§§112(b)(3) and 136)

As indicated above, Minnesota will incorporate the agreed-upon performance standards upon completion of negotiations with the DOL. Presently, Minnesota is examining past performance data, economic indicators, and demographic statistics in preparation for the negotiations. Not all of the necessary data has been obtained. Therefore, Minnesota is not prepared to indicate proposed levels. However, it will be prepared in time for the negotiations at the agreed-upon date.

(c) Adult Education and Family Literacy:

(i) Include a description of how the eligible agency will evaluate annually the effectiveness of the Adult Education and Family Literacy activities, such as a comprehensive performance accountability system, based on the performance measures in Section 212.

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MDE will annually evaluate all adult basic education (ABE) providers on the results of their core performance indicators under the National Reporting System (NRS). All providers report their results to the MDE's ABE Office and results are rank-ordered for purposes of evaluation. All providers are expected to meet or exceed the State-established performance targets.

All providers undergo a “desk audit” conducted by the MDE-ABE staff and programs that do not meet or exceed State targets are scheduled for a compliance and monitoring visit by State staff. If necessary, corrective actions are developed and the provider must show significant progress on those actions in order to be considered for re-funding. ABE providers may request a compliance visit in order to preempt more serious visits at a later date.

The MDE-ABE Office employs a full-time compliance officer whose main duties are to monitor local program performance on core performance indicators. Periodic “accountability updates” are sent electronically to all ABE providers by the MDE-ABE Office. These updates offer guidelines and assistance on topics that are relevant to meeting NRS goals. In addition to the compliance officer position at MDE, the office also employs a full-time evaluation and assessment specialist who oversees program evaluation and testing that aligns directly to the NRS goals.

(ii) Identify levels of performance for the core indicators of performance described in Section 212(b)(2)(A) for the first three program years covered by the Plan (§212(b)(3)(A)(ii)), and any additional indicators selected by the eligible agency. (§212 (b)(2)(B))

Table K.1 identifies NRS outcomes.

Table K.1 - National Reporting System Outcomes

NRS Educational Functioning Level and Core Indicator Goals	FY04		FY05		FY06		FY07		FY08
	Percent Completing Each Level/Goal		Percent Completing Each Level/Goal		Percent Completing Each Level/Goal		Percent Completing Each Level/Goal		NRS Target
	Target	Actual	Target	Actual	Target	Actual	Target	Actual	
Beginning ABE Literacy	25	25	25	21	25	35	25		37
Beginning Basic Education	30	30	25	24	29	35	29		37
Low Intermediate Basic Education	30	30	25	29	33	35	35		37
High Intermediate Basic Education	27	27	25	29	34	31	38		35
Low Adult Secondary	30	30	25	29	33	27	38		30
Beginning ESL Literacy	31	31	25	30	34	44	36		46
*Beginning ESL(Low)	30	30	25	25	29	35	35		37
Beginning ESL High							35		37
Low Intermediate ESL	35	35	25	32	36	41	38		43
High Intermediate ESL	33	33	25	31	35	40	36		42
Low Advanced ESL	22	22	25	17	20	22	22		23
High Advanced ESL	20	20	25	17	19	19	N/A		
Entered Employment	32	32	23	41	43	63	53		65
Retained Employment	54	54	36	62	64	75	60		75
Receipt of Secondary Diploma or GED	34	34	36	35	39	60	43		61
Placement in Postsecondary Education or Training	32	32	23	26	30	37	45		38

**The Beginning ESL level was divided into two levels, Low and High, beginning in FY07*

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(iii) Describe how such performance measures will be used to ensure the improvement of Adult Education and Family Literacy activities in the State or outlying area. (§224(b)(4))

The State is held to a continuous improvement model by the federal Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (AEFLA) officials. Consequently, the MDE ABE Office has established core performance indicators that show improvement every year. Through the compliance monitoring process, all ABE providers are expected to meet or exceed these steadily improving NRS goals. Programs that do not meet performance standards are subject to provisional approval status for one year, the development of corrective action plans, and loss of funding if they do not demonstrate improvement.

(d) Unemployment Insurance:

(i) Submit a Plan to achieve an enhanced goal in service delivery for areas in which performance is not deficient. Goals may be set at a State's own initiative or as the result of negotiations initiated by the Regional Office.

DEED has already submitted to the regional office a corrective action plan so that the UI program will be meeting UI tier 1 goals. This was done as part of the State Quality Service Plan required by DOL.

(ii) Identify milestones/intermediate accomplishments that the SWA will use to monitor progress toward the goals.

DEED met the tier 1 nonmonetary determination timeliness standard as of fourth quarter 2006 and plans to improve nonmonetary determination quality by 10 percent by second quarter 2007.

(e) TANF, outline how the State intends to establish goals and take action to prevent and reduce the incidence of out of wedlock pregnancies, with special emphasis on teenage pregnancies, and establish numerical goals for reducing the illegitimacy ratio of the State for calendar years 1996 through 2005. (§402(a)(1)(A)(v))

The number and spacing of children, as well as whether the household has one or two parents, significantly affects a family's ability to achieve and sustain self-sufficiency. Of particular concern are births to teenagers because they put the mother and child at increased risk of long-term poverty.

Minnesota has had a goal of reducing the out-of-wedlock birth rate to no more than 15/1000 women ages 15 to 44. While Minnesota has been successful in reducing its teen pregnancy rate, overall births to unmarried non-teens remains high. The out-of-wedlock birth rate in Minnesota in 2004 was 18.7/1000 for women ages 15 to 44. This is an increase from 16.9/1000 in 2002, and 17.7/1000 in 2003. To address this issue, Minnesota intends to continue to broaden its focus from reducing teen pregnancies to reducing unintended pregnancies. The State's multi-faceted approach includes the following strategies:

- An abstinence education program targeted at ten- to 14-year-olds. This program, funded by federal 510 abstinence education funds and enhanced with State general revenue funds, involves teens, their parents, and community organizations, including schools, in activities that support and reinforce the message of postponing sexual involvement. Currently, 21 grantees are working to develop a systematic, coordinated approach to affecting behavior change by empowering youth, strengthening parental relationships, and influencing community norms to support positive healthy behaviors.
- A small Title X grant targets funding for family planning services to over 1000 sexually active adolescents in low-income neighborhoods in Minneapolis.
- Funded primarily by TANF, the Family Home Visiting Program goals have included promoting economic self-sufficiency and teen pregnancy prevention. There has been significant program focus on working with pregnant or parenting teens. A large metropolitan county in Minnesota received a national award for the interventions, including home visiting, that led to positive outcomes for pregnant and parenting teens. This program has a history of successfully assisting minor parents in delaying a subsequent birth (only six

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percent of minor parents had a subsequent birth within 18 months of the first child compared to 18 percent of minors who were not in the program).

- Beginning in 2001, \$2 million annually in TANF funds has been specifically targeted through grants to nonprofit organizations. Local public health agencies and tribal governments worked at reducing the disparities in teen pregnancy rates between whites and ethnic and minority communities. Recent data trends for Minnesota indicate a decline in teen birth rates among all populations. The African American teen birth rate measured from 1989-1993 and again from 1999-2003 has decreased by 48.2 percent and the decrease in the America Indian teen birth rate was almost as dramatic at 27.7 percent. The Hispanic/Latino teen birth rate has actually increased by 15.8 percent. Though decreases among African Americans and American Indians are considerable, teen birth rates for all of the nonwhite racial/ethnic groups continue to be two to four times that of the white race.
- Since 1979, the State has directed resources to the delivery of publicly subsidized pre-pregnancy family planning services. In 2004-2005, over \$8 million was made available to 42 local family planning projects. In 2004, Minnesota's Family Planning Special Project grant program provided services to over 28,000 women at risk for unintended pregnancy. To assist individuals in accessing family planning services, the Minnesota Department of Health also funds a 1-800 family planning telephone hotline.
- Even with the availability of subsidized family planning services through Family Planning Special Projects, federal Title X funds, Medicaid, and the State's subsidized health insurance, MinnesotaCare, almost half of the women in need of subsidized family planning services cannot be served. This puts them at risk for an unintended pregnancy. Financial resources, difficulties accessing care, or knowledge of family planning services all play a role. To address this gap in the need for subsidized family planning services, Minnesota has submitted and received federal approval of an 1115 waiver for family planning services. This waiver, scheduled to begin in 2007, will allow the State to serve significantly more individuals at risk for

unintended pregnancy and should ultimately support progress in meeting the State's out-of-wedlock goals and reducing unintended pregnancies.

- A Minnesota State Plan for Teen Pregnancy Prevention and Parenting, developed by a Statewide task force of over 25 members with broad representation from State agencies, community-based organizations, University of Minnesota staff, and youth workers, was published in 2002. The purpose of the action plan is to guide all of Minnesota's efforts to prevent teen pregnancy. The plan recommends use of evidence-based and promising strategies such as the University of Minnesota Healthy Youth Development Center APrimeTime@ program.

(f) SCSEP: Provisions on performance are set forth in section G.1.(g)(xxv) of these instructions.

See response at Section G.1.(g)(xxv).

- Has the State developed any common performance goals applicable to multiple programs? If so, describe the goals and how they were developed.

Other than U.S. DOL common measures, Minnesota has not established any common performance goals applicable to multiple programs. However, Minnesota initiated a multi-agency workgroup to define workforce development system initiatives and performance measures in January 2007. Representatives from the following organizations are involved in this effort: DEED, MDE, DHS, MnSCU, MWCA, and the GWDC. The group anticipates defining system performance measures by summer 2007. DEED will work with its partners to implement an integrated performance measures system and establish performance goals that may be applicable to multiple programs.



L. Data Collection

1. What processes does the State have in place to collect and validate data to track performance and hold providers/operators/subgrantees accountable?

In answering the above question, if your Unified Plan includes:

(b) WIA Title I and Wagner-Peyser Act and/or Veterans Programs, describe the State's common data system and reporting processes in place to track progress. Describe what data will be collected from the various One-Stop partners (beyond that required by DOL), use of quarterly wage records (including how your State accesses wage records), and how the Statewide system will have access to the information needed to continuously improve. (§112(b)(8)(B))

Common Data Systems

Since 2004, the Department of Employment and Economic Development's (DEED) Workforce One (WF1), a Web-based electronic data collection, case management, and reporting system, has been the common data system for most employment programs. These programs include:

- Workforce Investment Act (WIA) Title I-B Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth
- State Dislocated Worker
- WIA Title IV programs (Vocational Rehabilitation and State Services for the Blind)
- Minnesota Youth
- Minnesota Family Investment Program - Employment Services (i.e., Temporary Assistance to Needy Families)
- Diversionary Work Program - a pre-welfare program
- Displaced Homemaker
- Food Support Employment and Training (FSET) programs

In the summer of 2007, the WIA Title III Veterans programs and Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) programs will also migrate to WF1. WF1 is a consolidated case management and management information system (MIS) that enables the delivery of streamlined services within the workforce development system. Service

providers share common data elements, and job counselors share information on individuals enrolled in multiple programs. Customers provide their data only once regardless of how many programs or providers in which they are enrolled. WF1 provides a standardized method of data collection to meet the reporting requirements of all programs the system supports.

The Senior Community Services Employment Program (SCSEP) uses the U.S. Department of Labor's (DOL) Internet-based SCSEP Performance and Results QPR system - version 2.

The Workforce Information System (WINS) is the electronic data system used by Wagner-Peyser and Veterans staff and customers, including the self-service Minnesota's Job Bank (MJB) users. DEED will be replacing WINS with a new reporting system for Wagner-Peyser self-service and core services after the new MJB is launched in June 2007. DEED is currently conducting an evaluation to decide which system will work best at reporting these activities, pending the outcome of federal WIA reauthorization and new DOL requirements for reporting.

Early in 2006, DEED implemented a Customer Registration System (CRS) to capture self-service and seminar use in Minnesota WorkForce Center resource areas, usage that historically was untrackable.

Additional independent electronic data systems exist for the Rapid Response, TAA, and Trade Readjustment Act (TRA) programs. In the summer of 2007, the TAA and TRA programs will migrate to WF1. As the Adult Basic Education program (WIA Title II) resides in the Minnesota Department of Education (MDE), there are no plans to integrate MDE's data systems with those of WIA Title I-B.

Reporting Processes

WF1 provides the reporting interface for all of the programs currently using the system. DEED is in the beginning stages of developing a "back-end" reporting system that will merge data from CRS, WF1, and MJB into consolidated reports.

Because DEED is also the State Unemployment Insurance Agency, DEED staff may access the UI wage detail files

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for program reporting. WIA Title I-B staff individually access DEED's data warehouse to match participant data to wage detail records. By State law, local workforce service areas (WSAs) may receive individual wage detail records provided the individual originally provided informed consent to the data sharing. For WIA Title III reporting, DEED has created an automated reporting process of querying and matching the databases to create the quarterly reports.

DEED is the State's Performance Accountability and Customer Information Agency, and DEED staff access the Wage Record Interchange System (WRIS) to find wage detail information from other states for WIA Title I-B exiters. DEED will begin to use WRIS for Title III participants after implementing the system changes necessary to calculate the new performance measures.

DEED staff create program management reports from WINS to show Wagner-Peyser services provided to employers, detailed job order information, and services provided to job seekers. These reports are available online to all staff users of WINS for continuous improvement. For Wagner-Peyser programs, DEED staff create other system-wide reports for comparative analysis and process improvements at the State level. These reports include the number of self-service registered employers; market penetration of job openings posted in MJB compared to all job vacancies; and Internet activity from the WorkForce Centers and all other DEED sites.

The State is interested in learning more about the amount of WIA dollars that are directly being spent on customer training (e.g., tuition payments, on-the-job training [OJT] reimbursements). Consequently, the State's financial reporting requirements for its WSAs go beyond the federal requirements for reporting on an administration/program basis. In program year (PY) 2006, the State started to require monthly reporting from WSAs for the following categories:

- Administration - as defined in 20 CFR 667.220
- Core Services - as defined in §134(d)(2)
- Direct Customer Training Costs - e.g., tuition, books, fees, OJT reimbursements, and participant wages/ fringes (SCSEP)
- Services-related Expenses: Any staff, office supply, or other cost necessary to process customers in

intensive and/or training type of services (as defined in §134(d)(3) and 134(d)(4)), exclusive of actual monies spent on tuition, books, OJT reimbursements, or other direct and tangible training goods and services received by customers

- Support Services (as defined in §101(46))

The State will "roll up" the appropriate categories for reporting to DOL.

Data Validation

In 2003, DOL introduced a data validation initiative to develop a comprehensive, systematic data validation system to ensure data integrity across programs.

In January 2007, DEED completed its data element validation for PY05. DEED took a random sample of participant records using DOL-supplied software for WIA Title I-B program participants and exiters. The data validators looked at the MIS paper records at the local offices, which included the program application form, status change form, retention form, and any other paper forms that needed to be consulted to validate the information in the electronic MIS record. Validators also looked at supporting documentation such as copies of social security numbers, school transcripts, etc. DEED prepared and submitted a report of findings to DOL.

WIA Title III and Veterans programs are validating data through the use of in-house tools and methodologies. In a test environment, random sample data representing all the required elements needed for WIA reporting are verified to tally and populate the reports correctly.

(c) Food Stamp Employment & Training, describe how employment and training data will be compiled and where responsibility for employment and training reporting is organizationally located at the State level. Include the department, agency, and telephone number for the person(s) responsible for both financial and non-financial E&T reporting.

For the FSET program, DEED and the Department of Human Services (DHS) compile and report employment and training data as follows:

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- Non-Financial Reporting
 - Work Registration/Exemption Data: George Hoffman, DHS, Research and Statistics, 651.297.6154
 - Employment and Training Data: Steve Erbes, DEED, Workforce Development Division, 651.297.4841
- Financial Employment and Training Reporting
 - LeAnn Pederson, DHS, Financial Management Division, 651.431.3761
 - Bruce Lien, DHS, Financial Management Division, 651.431.3728

2. What common data elements and reporting systems are in place to promote integration of Unified Plan activities?

Minnesota has been using the FutureWork Systems, Inc., product for over a year to provide usable data across WIA Title I-B program information to local and State leadership. DEED staff are currently working on a reporting environment to pull data from all the different electronic data systems outlined in Section L.1.(b) into a FutureWork-like environment. Minnesota is using the proposed Employment and Training Administration Workforce Information Streamlined Reporting System table structure to leverage future development efforts. Staff have mapped data from the current electronic data systems to this reporting environment and are developing integration rules. Mapping uncovered additional issues between current and future State data definitions, values, and rules, which are being resolved by program leadership.

As detailed in Section K.1.(b)(i)(vi), Minnesota is moving forward with integrated performance measurement systems designed to assess the outcomes of integrated unified plan activities. These include common measures of employer market penetration and an integrated approach to customer satisfaction.

DEED is currently studying the feasibility and cost of leveraging customer relationship management tools to implement a common business services tracking database to integrate the services provided to businesses. The goals of the system are to:

- Foster deeper and more efficient relationships between DEED and its business customers, partly by providing information about customers and existing relationships.
- Facilitate relationships between partners, both inside and outside DEED.
- Encourage creativity and support DEED's activities and research.
- Simplify evaluation and reporting.

The ultimate goal is to use technology to create the appearance of a seamless team of specialists to DEED's business customers, especially when specialists come from different divisions within DEED or from various governmental and nonprofit entities.



M. Corrective Action

1. Describe the corrective actions the State will take for each program, as applicable, if performance falls short of expectations.

The Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED) identifies performance measures, expectations, corrective action plans, the appeal process, and sanctions measures in the [WIA Title I-B and Related Activities Manual](#).

This is the first year DEED is collecting performance measures on Wagner-Peyser services. The State is monitoring performance results to assure that they meet or exceed negotiated performance standards. The State will take corrective actions if performance falls below negotiated standards.

Section 513 of the Older Americans Act specifies the establishment of performance measures for each grantee and subgrantee providing services under Title V. Corrective action steps are addressed in the policy manual's [Section 10.17](#). "Performance Accountability and Sanctions."

In answering the above question, if your Unified Plan includes:

(a) Vocational Rehabilitation, include the results of an evaluation of the effectiveness of the vocational rehabilitation program, and a report jointly developed with the State Rehabilitation Council (if the State has a Council) on the progress made in improving effectiveness from the previous year including:

(i) An evaluation of the extent to which program goals were achieved and a description of the strategies that contributed to achieving the goals.

(ii) To the extent the goals were not achieved, a description of the factors that impeded that achievement.

(iii) An assessment of the performance of the State on the standards and indicators established pursuant to Section 106 of the Act. (§101(a)(15)(E)(i))

Table M.1 - Performance Indicators

Performance Indicators	National Standard	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
1 - Number of Customers Achieving Employment Outcomes	Equal or exceed previous year	4,278	3,571	3,444	2,821	2,133	2,522
2 - Percent of Customers with Employment Outcomes	55.8%	67.3%	60.7%	54.5%	56.7%	57.6%	60.5%
3 - Percent of Customers with Competitive Employment Outcomes	72.6%	85.7%	94.4%	95%	94.5%	96.1%	92.5%
4 - Percent of Customers with Significant Disability Achieving Competitive Employment Outcomes	62.4%	90%	95%	96%	95%	97%	93%
5 - Customers' Average Wage Compared to All Other Workers	.52	.54	.53	.52	.50	.51	.52
6 - Customer Wage Status - The Difference between Entering and Leaving RS-Vocational Rehabilitation (VR)	53%	50.3%	52.8%	54.2%	57%	62.8%	64.5%
7 - Service Rates for Individuals Who Are Minorities	.80	.836	.831	.819	.803	.786	.745



Vocational Rehabilitation/Rehabilitation Services - General

Evaluation and Report of Progress in Achieving Identified Goals and Priorities and Use of Title I Funds for Innovation and Expansion

Strategic Goal One: Increase and improve the outcomes of all customers served.

As primary measures of improved employment outcomes, the State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) and DEED's Rehabilitation Services (RS) have jointly selected the following seven indicators and the State's studies of job retention and customer satisfaction. They provide an objective and quantifiable comparison of employment outcome performance from year to year and some useful comparisons with other states' programs.

Performance Indicator 1: Number of Customers Achieving Employment Outcomes

This indicator is the number of individuals who exited the Minnesota RS-VR program employed. The national standard for this indicator is to equal or exceed the previous year. During federal fiscal year (FFY) 1999-01, customer employment outcomes increased an average of six percent each year, exceeding the standard. During FFY02-04, employment outcomes declined an average of 12.3 percent annually. During FFY03-05, employment outcomes declined an average of 21 percent each, failing to meet the federal standard in each of those years. In FFY06, this downward trend was reversed. Employment outcomes increased by 18.2 percent from the previous year.

Performance Indicator 2: Percent of Customers with Employment Outcomes

This indicator is the percent of customers, completing an employment plan, who exit the program competitively employed. A job must be paid at or above minimum wage to be termed competitive. The national standard for this indicator is 55.8 percent. Minnesota's performance on this indicator has ranged from 54.5 percent to 69.9 percent. Since 2005, Minnesota's performance has remained above the

national standard. This indicator increased nearly three percentage points, to 60.4 percent, during FFY06.

RS-VR program capacity is under pressure. State and federal RS-VR allocations have not increased significantly for more than a decade even though the costs of services required to implement an employment plan, such as post-secondary tuition and job placement, have continued to climb appreciably. The pull of continued demand for VR services competes with the program's statutory requirement to both underwrite new eligibility determinations and to meet obligations of previously approved employment plans of VR customers in the active RS-VR caseload. Although waiting lists are not currently a significant factor for VR customers, between October 2002 and November 2005, many program-eligible customers waited for service because of this fiscal tension. That period, during which few new customers entered the program, contributed to a reduced caseload and consequently reduced numbers of employment outcomes.

For Performance Indicators 1 and 2, economic factors bear some examination. FFY06 was the fifth consecutive year in which Minnesota's job seekers with disabilities experienced the Statewide impact of recession and persistent but slow economic recovery. During FFY05 and 2006, Minnesota's recovery and modest job growth rate did exceed the nation's, which had not occurred since mid-2003, suggesting that regional economic factors adverse to increased and improved employment outcomes are diminishing (see [current economic statistics](#)).

Comparison of Minnesota's VR performance with that of bordering states gives perspective, and suggests that State RS-VR programs in the upper Midwest face similar economic challenges. Yet, this strategic goal instructs the Minnesota program to maintain or increase employment outcomes each year, as it has done in FFY06. The State Rehabilitation Council and DEED-RS must continue to study and find the means for improved employment outcomes despite fluctuations in the State's economy.

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At this writing, completion of the RS strategic planning process is underway. Comprehensive strategies adopted to implement new strategic goals will be reported by the end of FFY07. In the meantime, the program's interim strategic goals and the strategies adopted to implement them do appear to be favorably influencing both the rate and quality of customer employment outcomes.

Performance Indicator 3: Percent of Customers with Competitive Employment Outcomes

This indicator is the percent of individuals completing an employment plan who exited the program in competitive employment. A job must be paid at or above minimum wage to be competitive. The national standard for this indicator is 72.6 percent. Minnesota's performance, ranging from 85 percent to 96.1 percent during the last six years, continues well above the national standard, reflecting program staff commitment to the success of customers in achieving mainstream jobs and careers.

Performance Indicator 4: Percent of Customers with Significant Disability Achieving Competitive Employment Outcomes

This indicator is the percent of individuals with significant disability who exited the program in competitive employment after completing an employment plan. A job must be paid at or above minimum wage to be competitive. The national standard for this indicator is 62.4 percent. This indicator, ranging from 90 percent to 97 percent during the past six years, reflects favorably on the degree to which RS-VR serves individuals who have historically faced the most barriers finding and keeping employment.

Performance Indicator 5: Customers' Average Wage Compared to All Other Workers

This indicator is the ratio of average hourly earnings of persons who exit the RS-VR program in competitive employment to the average hourly earnings of all employed Minnesotans. The national standard is .52 for this indicator. In 2006, the average hourly wage

of all workers in Minnesota was \$20.70. The average wage of all RS-VR customers exiting the program in competitive employment was \$10.69. Thus, in 2006 for each dollar earned by all hourly workers in Minnesota, RS-VR customers entering employment earned 52 cents, sustaining a gradual increase since 2003 and meeting the national standard. This indicator has ranged from .50 to .54 over the past six years.

Performance Indicator 6: Customer Wage Status - The Difference between Entering and Leaving RS-VR

This indicator is the percentage difference between the percentage of individuals whose own income was their largest source of support when they applied for RS-VR services and when they left the RS-VR program employed. The national standard for this indicator is 53 percent. Minnesota customers who complete their employment plans experience substantial improvement in economic status. Minnesota's 2006 performance improved one percentage point over the previous year.

Performance Indicator 7: Service Rates for Individuals Who are Minorities

This indicator, expressed as a ratio, is the proportion of persons served who are minorities to the proportion of persons served who are not minorities. The national standard for this indicator is .800. Of every 100 Minnesotans served by the program, approximately 21 are individuals who are minorities. This is more than double the representation of minorities that prevails in the general Minnesota population. Approximately eight out of 100 Minnesotans report a racial identity other than white.

Performance indicators 3 - 7 reflect on several qualities of RS-VR program outcomes. They address how well individuals with significant disabilities are represented in the RS-VR caseload, the wages of employed RS-VR customers relative to all employed individuals, the degree to which the self-sufficiency of RS-VR customers improves after service, and whether minorities are adequately represented among individuals served by RS-VR. Fully 100 percent of customers achieving employment outcomes are individuals with significant disabilities; that is, they are

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individuals with significant limitations in one or more functional areas. Over 90 percent of these customers achieve competitive employment when they exit the program. Customers who become employed achieve wages above the national VR program standard. The Minnesota program sustains a five-year trend of favorable impact on the self-support of customers completing employment plans.

With respect to race and ethnicity, Minnesota serves individuals who are minorities in its caseload at a rate close to that set by the national standard. Regardless, DEED and the SRC must examine this area of program performance closely. It is reassuring that these populations have historically been represented in the Statewide caseload and in employment outcomes in greater proportion than their numbers in the State's total population. This has been brought about in significant part through innovative work at the local level by RS-VR teams. However, the extent to which diverse populations are appropriately represented in local areas across the State has not been fully examined. The need for such an examination does not decline with the passage of time, nor become less complex. Over 200,000 individuals, many of them individuals of color, have made new homes in Minnesota during the past decade. The well-documented interplay among factors of poverty, healthcare access, race, and disability suggests a disproportionate and persistent need for VR services among individuals of color and individuals who are refugees. (See a summary of research on the topic from the [National Center for the Dissemination of Disability Research](#). Also, see [Minnesota Children and the 2000 Census: Children with Disabilities](#); the [Children's Defense Fund Minnesota](#); and [Emerging Trends in Disability](#)).

While the State's white population experienced approximately six percent growth during the past decade, the State's diverse populations of color grew at rates ranging from 81 percent to 166 percent. Further, the steadily growing population of political refugees was during the past two years by several thousand more Hmong arriving directly from camps in Thailand, most settling in St. Paul. The demographic picture in Minnesota is dynamic. DEED and the SRC

must continue to deliberate on the need for program outreach to specific populations and continue to monitor program performance relative to race and ethnicity.

Studies of Job Retention and Customer Satisfaction

- Customer Satisfaction Study

Earlier customer satisfaction study (exhaustive studies in 1995 and 2000), as well as ongoing quarterly summary studies, by DEED of Minnesota's WorkForce Center System customers indicate that most VR customers are satisfied and highly satisfied with their services and outcomes. Currently, the SRC and RS-VR have jointly undertaken to focus customer satisfaction study on services to transition-age youth. This population makes up more than one-third of all VR customers. A report of findings is expected early in FFY08.

- Job Retention Study

Historically, the quality of RS-VR program employment outcomes has been reflected in a high retention rate for customers who become employed. The SRC, the RS-VR program, and DEED have conducted studies of both, the results of which were first reported in 2000. Such highly reliable research is costly and demanding of staff time. No determination has been made about how often this type of research should be repeated. Based on examination of closed RS-VR cases and wage information reported to the State's Unemployment Insurance (UI) authority, approximately two-thirds of cases closed after a plan is implemented are successful rehabilitation closures. That is, they meet the following criteria required of countable RS-VR employment outcomes:

- The customer had steadily maintained employment for at least 90 days.
- The customer and the RS-VR counselor agreed that the employment is satisfactory and the customer is performing well on the job.

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- The service provided under the VR employment plan contributed to achieving the employment.
- The employment is in the most integrated setting possible, consistent with the customer's informed choice.

For the period studied, retention of employment was very high. Overall, 86.6 percent of all RS-VR customers working at case closure were still employed one year later. This rate of retention is very similar to that found in a 1995 DEED study in which 90 percent of customers reported they were employed one year after closure. These two studies, conducted at different times with different groups of customers and using different study procedures, found virtually the same rate of retention.

No differences in retention of employment existed when comparing disability condition or gender. The rate of retention of employment of non-minority customers was seven percent higher than the rate of retention of minority customers. The difference of seven percent is just large enough to be considered meaningful, that is, it might not have occurred just by chance. However, it is also possible that the difference is a random occurrence. Without additional study, no conclusion should be made regarding racial difference in job retention.

Strategies to overcome barriers and achieve progress on goal one:

- Strategy A: Focus the work activity of counselors on direct service to customers. The job classification of VR technician is fully approved. Approximately half of VR teams are currently using this option to focus the work of counselors on direct services to customers. No evaluation of this activity has been carried out at this writing.
- Strategy B: Establish a formal small-group review process within all RS teams, facilitated by a seasoned "lead" counselor. These groups will review all cases proposed for closure that have not achieved an employment outcome. This activity, to be instituted Statewide by July 2007, will

identify the reasons for customers' unsuccessful outcomes and reverse the trend of declining employment outcomes. VR team managers are currently implementing this change. No evaluation of this activity has been carried out at this writing.

- Strategy C: Increase the number of placement coordinators employed by RS-VR to support each VR team and the employment goals of customers, and establish a performance-based method of payment for job placement services that are purchased in the community. The number of placement coordinators has doubled during the past year. Performance-based agreements have been implemented with the State's vendors of job placement services as of January 1, 2006, providing for capped compensation based on achievement of milestones. Evaluation of this activity is currently underway.
- Strategy D: Study and ascertain the reasons that employed individuals with disabilities limit their hours of employment to less than 20 hours per week. This investigation is currently underway. It will be comprised of 26 case studies of persons served by six community rehabilitation programs (CRPs). The study will be completed and reported upon in late 2007.
- Strategy E: Study, identify, and implement measures to improve RS-VR services and outcomes for transition-age youth and young adults. A transition study group has completed its work and its recommendations for improving services and outreach are being implemented at this writing. The results of these changes will be reported in late FFY07.
- Strategy F: Study, identify, and implement strategies to achieve greater outreach to the State's cultural and ethnic minority populations, including refugees and recent immigrants. Meetings with rehabilitation area managers conducted by the field operations director will determine strategies necessary to achieve outreach and improve outcomes for persons who are minorities. The Communications Committee will take-up the issue of reaching these populations with information about the VR program. The Staff Development Group will work on recruitment of persons who are minorities for staff positions. These strategies

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are being developed at this writing and will be reported upon by FFY08.

- Strategy G: Participate in and shape the WorkForce Center System's business services initiative. RS placement coordinators participate on DEED's business service teams. Minnesota hosted the national Business Leadership Network Conference in October 2006, in which RS and DEED participated and supported. RS co-sponsored employer attitude research in 2005 to inform this activity. RS is preparing an employer/business resource toolkit to meet the identified needs of employers with respect to hiring and retaining individuals with disabilities noted by that study. VR placement staff participate in this initiative. This relatively new activity is rapidly gathering steam. No evaluation of results has yet been undertaken.

Strategic Goal Two: Improve leadership and build a learning culture within RS.

An organizational learning culture is one in which continuous improvement of individual staff and their teams is nurtured, staff know their roles and their contributions, staff morale is high, and staff perceive their individual and joint responsibilities for leadership of the organization. The culture is one in which individuals and teams experience the professional growth and development they need to carry out the RS-VR mission successfully. A learning organization is nimble, anticipating change.

Implementation of the RS-VR Comprehensive System of Personnel Development (CSPD) should be the foundation for a learning culture. Broadly, three activities are described by the CSPD: recruiting and hiring of rehabilitation counselors, implementation of federal regulations on personnel standards, and a comprehensive system of staff training. The degree to which the diversity of RS-VR staff is comparable to the diversity of VR customers, availability of continuing education resources, quality of the casework review process, and appropriate allocation of personnel among offices Statewide are topics related to the CSPD that have implications for organizational health and the productivity of RS-VR teams.

As a preface to undertaking the examination of this goal, a joint work group of the SRC set forth the following propositions for RS-VR examination:

- In the main, healthy and productive work environments prevail within RS-VR teams. Among other factors, this is attributable to the strong identification of staff with the program's mission, high entry-level standards for the professional preparation of staff, the program's commitment to the training and development of staff throughout their careers, and widespread community respect for the work of the RS-VR program. However, the joint work group has identified two areas of concern, problematic for the agency's future, that merit examination: a staffing issue that brings into question the future availability of candidates to fill rehabilitation counselor positions, which includes the need for linguistic, cultural, and ethnic diversity of staff and organizational morale.
- With respect to the availability of counselors, there is concern about whether there will be an adequate number of professionally prepared and culturally diverse staff to fill program positions over the next decade. Among contributing factors to this problem are the rapidly increasing rate of counselor retirements; attrition among the program's experienced counselors; declining enrollment in area rehabilitation counselor graduate programs; and a decrease in the number of counselors graduating from these programs who are minorities. A VR public forum, (*Sustaining Excellence*), jointly conducted by the SRC, the RS-VR program and three rehabilitation counselor graduate programs deliberated on staff education, recruitment, and retention. Subsequently, specific recommendations were advanced by the SRC that were accepted by the RS-VR program (see Section C.3.(d)). Implementation of these recommendations is currently underway. Progress and achievements will be assessed by early FFY08.
- With respect to morale, the joint work group finds that the matter of organizational and individual morale is raised often enough by staff and in SRC discussions of this strategic goal that the topic merits some examination. As noted, morale is a crucial element of healthy and productive work

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environments. For purposes of this discussion, the following two conditions are what is meant by the term morale: "a: the mental and emotional condition (as of enthusiasm, confidence, or loyalty) of an individual or group with regard to the function or tasks at hand, b: a sense of common purpose with respect to a group: *Esprit de corps.*" (defined by the *Merriam-Webster Dictionary*).

- Factors that seriously stress an organization's morale often originate outside the control of individual employees and of program managers as well, such as State and federal budget deficits, scarcity of program resources resulting in service delays, waiting lists, fewer individuals served, federal legislative struggles over reauthorization of the Rehabilitation Act, and periodic State agency reorganization.
- Responsibility or accountability for morale is not located exclusively with one person, office, or class of individuals in an organization. Both management and individual employees have responsibility for morale.
- Elements that are commonly understood as factors in morale-building within an organization include communication; appreciation and recognition; effective teamwork and team leadership; professional and personal development; equality and fairness in organizational decision-making, and the characteristics attributed in professional business literature to a "learning culture." An examination of these factors is ongoing within the RS management team and with field staff. What is the status of morale within the organization? How might the elements just noted or others be examined and used to build and sustain morale and RS as a learning organization? While it is not necessarily the SRC's responsibility to study or direct such activities, RS-VR welcomes the SRC's stated willingness to consult and confer with RS-VR on this issue.

While implementation of new priorities under interim goal two is only recently underway, staff focus groups, a reorganization of the RS administrative office, RS director meetings with VR teams Statewide, an ongoing strategic planning process, and heightened visibility for the RS staff

development function will yield important results and new initiatives during 2007-2008.

Strategies to overcome barriers and achieve progress on strategic goal two:

- Strategy A: Provide the RS management team with leadership training that facilitates alignment of their daily work with the underlying organizational values of DEED-RS. Four levels of DEED leadership training sessions will instruct managers in methods that foster their capacity for leadership and a learning culture within the organization. All field managers have completed part of this training at this writing. Evaluation of this activity has yet been carried-out.
- Strategy B: Establish a staff development manager position in the classified service, accountable for implementation of the spirit and letter of the comprehensive system of personnel development, coordination of the RS-VR Staff Development Committee, and other planning that fosters a learning culture within RS. This position has been established in the classified service, and a manager has recently been appointed. The manager has met with the SRC, agency managers and staff, and the Staff Development Committee. The staff development manager is currently undertaking the task of developing activities supportive of this goal.
- Strategy C: Establish a lead counselor position in the classified service or a comparable lead counselor role within teams that honors peer leadership and the contributions of experienced, professionally knowledgeable, and productive counselors. This position has not been established in the classified service but will be pursued as a counselor "role." It is expected that this will be accomplished across all VR teams by July 2007.

Strategic Goal Three: Structure RS-VR to adapt to its changing environment.

- Strategy A: Increase funding of customer case services.
- Strategy B: Implement a method whereby individuals with disabilities who seek service at a WorkForce Center exercise informed choice in deciding whether they will receive services from RS-VR or services

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from other components of the WorkForce Center System, positively impacting customer outcomes.

- Strategy C: Implement an RS communications plan to achieve internal and public communications supportive of all RS work including, but not limited to, the need for public outreach with respect to minorities with significant disabilities, transition-age youth and young adults, and the needs of the State's CRPs.
- Strategy D: Facilitate a departmental legislative agenda that sustains and improves the employment of Minnesotans with disabilities, including Minnesotans in need of long-term employment supports.
- Strategy E: Organize the administrative office to reduce costs and increase effectiveness.

Implementation of the established strategies under this goal has only recently begun. However, several activities can be reported. First, heightened consultation with the SRC, including meetings of the council chairperson with the RS director, has increased SRC contributions to VR program decision-making and direction. Second, reorganization of the RS administrative office in FFYs 2005-2006 has resulted in a leaner administrative function with greater role definition regarding support of field operations. These changes have resulted in the allocation of approximately \$500,000 previously budgeted for administrative salaries to the case service budget. Additional assessment of administrative functions continue. Third, activity aimed at increased collaboration with WorkForce Center System partners, other State agencies, CRPs, and the business community have been initiated. Finally, at this writing, the Governor of Minnesota has proposed a requested budget increase for RS-VR that, if approved by the legislature, will bring new federal VR matching funds to Minnesota.

Contributions to Strategic Goal Progress from Innovation and Expansion Activities

Approximately 5.5 percent of Minnesota's total VR appropriation is 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. The activities and the categories of disability populations that follow are served by these funds. The cultural and ethnic minority populations served with innovation and expansion funds are separately described in *Minnesota's Unified Plan*, as are transition activity,

outreach, and service to diverse cultural and ethnic populations, and activity related to the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

In FFY06, these activities were organized and implemented consistent with the following priorities: integration of VR program activity within the WorkForce Center System, particularly with business services; prevention of customers waiting for VR services; and the provision of expanded, meaningful information and referral services to persons who are eligible for VR but are unlikely to be served. It is a priority of RS-VR and the WorkForce Center System that persons who cannot be served by the VR program will receive appropriate alternative services at a WorkForce Center or in their communities.

Each of these activities has been undertaken to improve employment outcomes for persons with the most significant disabilities. Many require the staff creativity and staff development that the SRC has referred to in its deliberations as required of a learning organization. Many activities require some restructuring of RS-VR in order for the agency to adapt to changing circumstances that bring new demands for service and accountability for employment outcomes.

State Rehabilitation Council

Monthly meetings of the SRC in FFY05 and FFY06 heightened awareness for council members of their oversight and consultative roles; increased their participation in development of the VR State plan; and improved the organizational process for carrying out the customer satisfaction study and the joint development of program goals and priorities. This work continues. The result of this activity will be jointly assessed in FFY08.

Persons with Mental Illness

Collaborative activity at State and local levels between VR and DHS' State Mental Health Division continue to build supports and services for persons with serious mental illness (SMI), who now comprise thirty-two percent of the VR program's total caseload and 29 percent of employment outcomes.

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Six innovative projects for persons with SMI were funded in both urban and rural areas in State fiscal years 2006 and 2007. One project focused on mental illness self-management by combining wellness recovery action planning with vocational planning and employment supports. In FFY07, a new project is focused on integration of VR staff into Assertive Community Treatment (ACT) teams in one of the largest counties in Minnesota. The Ramsey County ACT project was developed to create a model for RS and county mental health collaboration predicated on evidence based practices of ACT, for ultimate replication Statewide.

Four additional projects in both rural and urban areas are focused on enhancement of the evidence-based practice of Supported Employment. Thirty earlier projects have made a transition to extended services funding through the Extended Employment-Serious Mental Illness (EE-SMI) program. These programs demonstrate methods for providing supported employment. A [comprehensive report](#) on employment and support service needs of persons with mental illness in Minnesota was published jointly in December 2000 by RS-VR and DHS' Mental Health Division, and has been updated biannually, most recently in 2006.

These highly effective projects have developed and delivered intensive, individualized, non-time-limited employment services for persons with SMI. Outcomes include increased integrated community employment, job retention, and job satisfaction for customers. Since 1992, these projects have demonstrated an average annual employment engagement rate (the percentage of participants in a year who engage in paid community employment) of 59 percent. By comparison, more conventional programs report employment rates of 14-21 percent for persons with SMI. RS dedicated an administrative office rehabilitation program specialist within its Community Partners Unit (0.5 full-time equivalency) to mental health and employment. VR counselor liaisons were designated to grant projects, adult mental health initiatives, assertive case management teams, intensive residential treatment programs, and community support programs across the State.

VR's interagency collaborative agreement with DHS guides efforts regarding persons with mental illness. Joint activities on the State level have included joint management team meetings, reviews of grant applications and existing programs, joint participation in the DEED/DHS Pathways to Employment project (Minnesota's Medicaid Infrastructure Grant), and joint staff training. Local level activities have included VR staff membership on county mental health advisory committees, local interagency cooperative agreements, and adult mental health systems initiative implementation committees. RS-VR is also represented on the State of Minnesota Mental Health Advisory Council and the Governor's Interagency Task Force on ending long-term homelessness.

RS-VR, DHS, and 75 key players and advocates in the area of mental health services developed a vision statement on employment services for persons with mental illness in Minnesota. This statement, in conjunction with the existing interagency agreement, provides an outline for continued collaborative activities. Emphasis on interagency planning and joint funding for programs will be continued to avoid duplication and maximize use of available resources. VR and DHS continue to jointly investigate funding mechanisms for the long-term support necessary for supported employment for persons with SMI and for the continuation of the services developed by the coordinated employability grant projects. Planning will include coordination with the extended employment program, which presently administers funds appropriated by the Minnesota legislature to provide funding for long-term support services for individuals who secured employment through the VR-funded coordinated employability grant projects.

In FFY05, VR and DHS' Mental Health Division were awarded a Johnson and Johnson Community Mental Health Program grant, a five-year collaborative project that started on July 1, 2006. This grant is a partnership with the Dartmouth Psychiatric Research Center and involves staff from both VR and DHS' Mental Health Division. Grant activity is focused on fidelity to evidence-based supported employment, and to development of sustainable supported employment practices and funding sources for persons with SMI. This grant will guide the delivery of interagency services between the two agencies through FFY09.

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Acquired and Traumatic Brain Injury

Needs analysis demonstrates that more Minnesotans with brain injury could benefit from VR services than are being served. Approximately 62,472 Minnesotans of working age live with brain injury. Historically, the VR program serves approximately 1,300 persons with brain injury annually.

Each VR team has the option of providing specialized services through the designation of specific counselors as traumatic brain injury (TBI) resource persons.

Professional development of VR counselors is encouraged through dispersal of information on research and trends, training, and professional networking. Collaboration was promoted through participation in bimonthly TBI case manager meetings, monthly Brain Injury Community Committee meetings, and consultation with VR counselors. Research was encouraged through participation in quarterly meetings with the Mayo TBI Model Systems Advisory Committee and the Minnesota Trauma Data Bank Advisory Committee.

Policy setting and service development in 2006 was addressed through RS-VR participation on the Interagency Leadership Committee which promotes collaboration between departments, seeks grants, and advises and consults with other agencies on the development of services to people with brain injuries. In addition, policy and service development was encouraged through participation in the DHS TBI Advisory Committee and the Community Services Subcommittee.

These activities foster staff learning and increase the capability of the Minnesota program to facilitate employment outcomes for persons with acquired and traumatic brain injury.

Persons who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing

In FFY06, through 25 specialized staff located throughout the State, a grant to the Minnesota Employment Center (MEC) for People Who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing, and training and technical assistance to CRPs, the VR program met the specific needs of customers who are deaf or hard of hearing. VR served 864 persons who are deaf or hard of hearing, achieving 124 employment outcomes.

Of those persons placed without supports, their average hourly wage was \$11.28; of those placed with supports, their average wage was \$8.60 per hour. Nineteen of the 25 designated specialist staff are counselors, two are interpreter/job coaches (vocational communication specialists), one is a job placement specialist, one is a lead clerical person, and one is a rehabilitation program specialist in the administrative office who is responsible for evaluation, service planning, and consultation regarding the unique rehabilitation needs of customers who are deaf, hard of hearing, or late-deafened.

Each VR team has a designated specialist counselor assigned to work with customers who are hard of hearing or late-deafened. In addition, staff specialists working with deaf customers are located in the Minneapolis-St. Paul metropolitan area, Brainerd, Duluth, Faribault, Rochester, Winona, Mankato, Marshall, Moorhead, St. Cloud, and St. Peter.

Ongoing community liaison and advisory relationships were maintained, with the Minnesota Commission Serving Deaf and Hard of Hearing People, the DHS Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services Division, and MEC. A rehabilitation program specialist in the administrative office responds to public inquiries about the VR program and to persons seeking general information about hearing loss, assistive technologies, and related community resources. A \$120,000 VR grant, managed by RS-VR was re-awarded to the managing partners of the MEC, Rise, Inc., and Lifetrack Resources. MEC has continued to be a key provider for vocational services to deaf and hard of hearing customers in the Minneapolis-St. Paul metropolitan area. Service in greater Minnesota was augmented through the provision of technical assistance to CRPs. MEC secured funding to continue its support services for traditionally underserved or "low-functioning" deaf individuals. The current appropriation managed through the RS EE program included a new collaboration to provide services to deaf and hard of hearing residents in St. Louis, Cook, and Itasca counties.

RS-VR provides ongoing support for bimonthly community meetings of occupational communication specialists who serve persons with hearing loss. Ongoing training efforts included staff collaborations with regional partners to provide a single event focused on TBI and

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hearing loss. RS-VR staff provided training throughout 2006 for approximately 50 employers.

An interdepartmental collaboration, the Quad-Agency agreement among the DHS, DEED, MDE, and the Department of Health supervised the activities of the DHS Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services Division. An interagency agreement clarifies the conditions, procedures, purposes, and responsibilities of the participating agencies, with the shared goal of assisting in the development and implementation of interagency systems to meet the needs of deaf, DeafBlind, and hard of hearing adults, children, and their families.

Important relationships were maintained with the Minnesota Association of Deaf Citizens, the Minnesota Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf, the Minnesota Chapter of Hearing Loss Association of America, the Midwest Center for Postsecondary Outreach, the Minnesota Resource Center: Deaf/Hard of Hearing, the Minnesota State Academy for the Deaf, and Northstar Academy.

Persons in Receipt of Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) and Supplemental Security Income (SSI)

The Ticket-to-Work and Work Incentives Improvement Act was enacted to improve services and increase choices for persons receiving Social Security Administration (SSA) benefits. Advanced training for counselors and the availability of work incentives specialists increase the likelihood that persons receiving SSDI and SSI benefits will achieve self-sufficiency while protecting their public health care benefits when needed.

National data indicates that only one-tenth of one percent of the people receiving benefits leave the SSA rolls as a result of VR services. Most of the approximately 5,000 SSA recipients served by Minnesota VR achieve employment outcomes but do not achieve an income level that results in the termination of SSA cash benefits. Many customers continue to fear that if they give up SSA cash benefits they risk their health care coverage or Medicaid waivered support services.

Orientation of VR applicants includes brief information on Ticket-to-Work and work incentives. Applicants receive a handbook that provides more details, including contact information for benefits planning and protection and advocacy services. Work incentives are again discussed during employment plan development to address commonplace fears and concerns about returning to work. A referral is made to the Work Incentives Connection (Minnesota's Work Incentives Planning and Assistance program) when these concerns continue and are likely to impede vocational planning.

New counselors are required to participate in work incentives training sponsored by the Work Incentives Connection. Experienced counselors are encouraged to attend advanced training to further develop their understanding of work incentives, especially for concurrent beneficiaries (dual eligibility for SSDI and SSI). The training focuses on how work incentives may reduce the impact earned income has on SSA benefits, health care coverage, food stamps, and housing assistance.

The Work Incentives Connection was established by RS in 1998. In 2006, this program was spun off as a private non-profit organization. Continuation funding through an SSA work incentives planning and assistance cooperative agreement has allowed expanded service Statewide. VR purchases benefits analysis services from the Work Incentives Connection through a fee for service agreement. Outcome research indicates the cost of a benefits analysis is well compensated by improved vocational outcomes. Nearly nine percent of individuals who receive a benefits analysis from the Work Incentives Connection end their SSA benefits within 18 months. By way of comparison, the national average for all persons ending their SSA benefits annually is .5 percent.

Pathways to Employment, a joint effort of RS, DHS, and the Minnesota State Council on Disability identified five strategic initiatives to improve the status of individuals with disabilities by providing improved access to work incentives, Medical Assistance for Employed Persons with Disabilities (Minnesota's Medicaid Buy-In Option), benefits planning, and employment supports. In 2006, emphasis was placed on improving services for Temporary Assistance for Needy Families participants with disabilities and transition age students.

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VR continues to co-host the *Employment Network Networking Forum* with SSA. Employment Networks (ENs) meet quarterly to discuss EN issues and to participate in in-service training on a variety of Ticket-to-Work and work incentives issues. One of Minnesota's State legislators is a member of the National Ticket-to-Work and Work Incentives Advisory Panel who brings identified issues to the national level. RS, Pathways to Employment, and the Work Incentives Connection will continue in FFY08 to facilitate comprehensive work to remove systemic barriers that discourage individuals with disabilities from pursuing full self-sufficiency. Pathways to Employment has taken a lead role in providing the needed research and evaluation of this effort's success.

Proposed Ticket-to-Work rule changes are expected to benefit RS' partnership with ENs to improve job retention for SSA beneficiaries. Strategies to implement these rule changes will be developed when those final regulations are published in late FFY07.

Minnesota Business Leadership Network and other Business Community Initiatives

VR participates in activities to enlist the business community as a collaborative partner, seeking a widespread business understanding that Minnesotans with disabilities are an important part of the Statewide solution to employers' workforce needs.

VR participation as a provider member of the Minnesota Business Leadership Network (BLN) increased the influence and visibility of the VR program among the State's major employers in 2006, highlighting its role, through the WorkForce Center System, in meeting economic and workforce development needs. VR, along with other WorkForce Center System partners, helped develop and carry-out the 2006 national BLN Conference held in Minneapolis. This event highlighted the RS-VR partnership with business members of the BLN. The conference's annual Mentoring Day and Career Fair featured participation of 400 high school students and 200 college students with disabilities who met with business representatives of over 40 companies. The conference benefited coordination of public and private sector planning for improved employment opportunity for individuals with significant disabilities. The VR specialist for placement represents RS-VR on the Minnesota BLN

and further serves as a liaison between the provider members and business members of that body.

DEED's business services specialists conduct outreach efforts to develop business relationships that foster the employment of individuals with disabilities. RS-VR provides technical assistance and training. Five business services specialists have expertise in issues related to disability and are funded by the VR program. In addition, VR placement staff who work exclusively on behalf of VR customers were increased from 30 to 35. VR placement staff are also active members of DEEDs business service teams.

During 2006, RS-VR has participated in the development and implementation of a National VR-Business Network, labeled the NET (National Employment Team). This partnership with the Council of State Administrators of VR is an effort to coordinate VR programs nationally to identify and meet the recruitment needs of corporations with a workforce based in many states. An RS-VR program specialist is the designated point of contact for NET in Minnesota and has served on the national Institute on Rehabilitation Issues panel on VR Business Partnership. The NET is currently implementing software to share employer profiles and other information so that all State agencies can work from common information.

Literacy as the Path to Employment

This project is a collaborative model for improving the literacy levels, future employment, and earnings of individuals with disabilities in St. Paul and Minneapolis. The project uses the Wilson Reading System as its curriculum and establishes collaboration among RS-VR, the University of Minnesota-Institute on Community Integration, and the Minnesota Literacy Council.

When completed, the project is expected to disclose new strategies for addressing literacy as a barrier to employment of individuals with disabilities and to convey the importance of VR customer literacy to VR employment outcomes. Fifty-four VR customers have been referred to the project. Of these, 39 persons have been identified as project participants. Thirty-two persons are in a treatment (Wilson Reading System) group and seven are in a control (referred to Adult Basic Education) group. Placement of

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the remaining candidates is not yet determined, based on pending assessments.

Substantive research results are not yet obtained or reported. Anecdotal reports indicate that some participants have substantially improved reading levels and have expressed increased self-confidence regarding their plans for education and employment. The project is funded through December 2009.

Access

Minnesota's innovation and expansion activity in FFYs 2005 and 2006 was designed to address identified and potential barriers to access that are associated with cultural and ethnic status, specific disability, and the receipt of SSI, SSDI, and public assistance. In addition, this activity specifically addresses program access, and adherence to employment non-discrimination principles that also address requirements of Section 427 of the General Education Provisions Act. Access to VR services, Minnesota WorkForce Centers, CRPs, Centers for Independent Living (CILs), and the State's vendors providing goods and services to VR customers requires a strategic vision and ongoing action.

The RS-VR approach seeks partnerships with other public and private entities to increase the access of individuals with disabilities to VR and other employment services. It has also engaged organizations that have not historically addressed issues of access.

Training ensures that RS staff know key ADA and Minnesota Human Rights Act (MHRA) concepts and are able to use appropriate resources to address disability law issues. An RS ADA website ensures that VR staff, partners, and customers have access to an array of information, resources, guidance, and Web links addressing employment, government services, and public accommodation issues, technical assistance, consultation on ADA-related issues, e-mailed updates on emerging issues, and court decisions keep staff informed.

Program access relating to CRPs and CILs has been supported through use of a three-page ADA monitoring tool developed to assist these organizations self-assess and address their ADA and MHRA responsibilities. CRPs and CILs in Minnesota completed a comprehensive ADA

review process and now complete a one-page ADA review document periodically as part of the process for renewing their operating agreements. The DEED document, *CRP Guidelines on Auxiliary Aids and Services*, assists RS and CRP staff to facilitate effective communication for all customers. Community partner staff are kept informed of training opportunities, legal issue updates, and community resources to assist them in staying current on issues of customer access and participation.

Rehabilitation Technology

Rehabilitation technology, also referred to as assistive technology, is a consideration for VR customers at each stage of their rehabilitation process when it contributes to an employment or independent living outcome.

Incorporation of rehabilitation technology into the assessment and planning can enhance employment outcomes, leading to better employment outcomes including higher paying jobs. Staff surveys and comprehensive case reviews indicate that rehabilitation technology is an underused tool in the development of employment plans and demonstrate the need for training and coaching to increase its use by both experienced and new staff.

Implementation of the VR *Rehabilitation Technology Services Plan* in 2005 and 2006 involved widespread staff participation, brought focus to rehabilitation technology activity, and honored the work of VR program counselors serving as technology liaison to their own VR teams. A revised plan to train staff to required levels of skill and ability, establish resources for staff information, and improve collection of data on the provision of rehabilitation technology services was initiated. The rehabilitation specialist assigned to rehabilitation technology was directed to increase onsite assistance to field staff and VR customers.

Placement coordinators participate in training and planning sessions on the use of assistive technology in placement, and as a part of Minnesota WorkForce Center business services consultation. To provide staff with the most-current assistive technology information, the RS website has an assistive technology page, with VR topics and links to many nationally recognized assistive technology

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websites. Staff can access this periodically updated information, while meeting with customers and employers.

During 2007-2010, broad-based training on the application of rehabilitation technology during plan development will continue. In addition, advanced training will be developed to prepare selected staff as certified assistive technology practitioners. These practitioners will serve regions of the State, making technology services and expertise geographically accessible to staff, increasing the likelihood of their use in planning and implementation of employment plans.

Implementation of the VR *Rehabilitation Technology Services Plan* in 2005 and 2006 involved widespread staff participation and brought focus to rehabilitation technology activity, honored the work of VR program counselor/technology liaison staff, trained staff to required levels of skill and ability, established resources for staff information, and improved collection of data on the provision of rehabilitation technology services.

Pathways to Employment

Beginning in FFY05 and continuing through 2010, Pathways has been the project home for Minnesota's Comprehensive Employment System-Medicaid Infrastructure Grant. The grant is jointly managed by DHS, DEED, and the Minnesota State Council on Disability. Over the past year, Minnesota has worked to develop a strategic plan for this comprehensive initiative to increase competitive employment of individuals with disabilities. That plan describes how, over the next five years, from early 2006 to the end of 2010, Pathways to Employment, its partners, and its stakeholders will work

together to build a more comprehensive, coordinated system of employment services and supports for Minnesotans with disabilities.

Minnesota is often seen as a national leader in employing individuals with disabilities and in providing a wide range of employment services and supports. Yet those close to the Minnesota system have frequently expressed widespread concern about both the employment rate for individuals with disabilities in Minnesota and about the need for greater coordination of resources across the State's array of employment services and supports. Following intensive planning efforts, interviews, and focus groups with more than 100 individuals with disabilities, direct service providers and leaders in the disability employment arena, and many conversations with other partnering organizations, the Pathways to Employment initiative has developed a strategic plan to improve the State's systemic infrastructure affecting the employment of persons with disabilities. Assessment of the project's impact is underway.

Minorities with Most Significant Disabilities

Minnesota's use of VR funds for expansion and innovation during 2005-2009 is directed to the needs of targeted populations with the most severe disabilities. This includes the following identified minority populations of need: American Indians, Hispanic/Latinos, persons of Southeast Asian and East African origin.

Immigration has increased the numbers of VR customers in Minnesota who do not read or speak English and for whom English is a second language. Therefore, RS-VR contracts with vendors for the translation of its customer

Table M.2 -Vocational Rehabilitation Caseload Statistics

Minnesota Cultural or Ethnic Population	Percent of Total VR Caseload	Percent of Total Employment Outcomes	Percent of Total Minnesota Population
African American	10.1	6.8	4.0
American Indian	1.9	1.5	1.0
Asian Pacific Islanders	2.4	2.7	3.0
Hispanic/Latino	1.8	1.5	4.0
Multiple Ethnicity	1.0	0.6	1.0
White	82.7	86.8	90.0
Not Reported	0.1	0.1	--
Total	100	100	--

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forms and brochures. Currently these materials are published in Lao, Hmong, Khmer, Vietnamese, Somali, and Spanish. Staff also use telephone and in-person language interpreting services as needed for meetings with customers.

Outreach and service to diverse populations has resulted in the creation of two American Indian VR programs in Minnesota, ongoing implementation of cooperative agreements between the State's general VR program and the American Indian VR programs, translation of customer forms and brochures into six languages, increased awareness of VR services within the American Indian, Hispanic/Latino, and Southeast Asian communities, use of interpreting services for in-person meetings with customers, and expansion in the diversity of Minnesota VR customers and staff.

While these diversity-related service and outreach activities taken as a whole have substantially improved outreach to historically underserved populations, RS-VR continues to assess how best to evaluate new and ongoing needs of these populations and of emerging populations. The arrival of approximately 5,000 Hmong refugees in Minnesota since 2005, most of whom settled in St. Paul, brought urgency to this planning. Among questions currently being examined by this activity and by RS-VR needs assessment are: What does demographic information about individuals with disabilities from the most recent U.S. Census and other related research tell the State about the needs of its diverse populations for VR services? Should other languages be added to those already part of RS-VR routine business? How can VR

program relationships with Minnesota's ethnic and cultural minority councils and with other bodies representative of diverse cultures within the State be expanded? How can RS-VR best measure the results of its outreach activities? How can the VR program's staff training on cultural diversity issues address the needs of staff, customers, and employers seeking service at the WorkForce Centers?

Conclusion

For FFY06, the Minnesota VR program established interim strategic goals to address three urgent issues: a persistent decline in program employment outcomes; the organization's administrative and staff development needs; and strategic planning to set and sustain a new direction during 2007-2010. As a result of actions and achievements described above, employment outcomes were increased and the downward trend reversed. In addition, administrative office reorganization promises greater administrative efficiency and permitted \$500,000 to be moved from administrative office funding to customer case services. The creation of a staff development manager position, filled in FFY06, has aggressively addressed recruitment, retention, and staff development issues through changes in the program's Comprehensive System of Personnel Development, described in Section J.1.(c). Finally, a strategic planning process to guide program achievements in 2007-2010 will be completed by July 1, 2007. A revised mission, vision, and values statement, and five new strategic goals have been developed, as reported in the introduction to this answer. The creation of new strategies and adaptation of those listed above will ensure program improvement and achievement during 2007-2010.

Table M.3 - Customer Satisfaction Survey Review

Summary	4/1/02-3/31/03	4/1/03-3/31/04	4/1/04-3/31/05	4/1/05-3/31/06
Q1: Overall satisfaction with services provided	76%	78%	82%	81%
Q2: Extent to which services have met expectations	66%	70%	74%	71%
Q3: Comparison with "ideal" set of services	66%	69%	72%	73%
Q5 (now Q4): Satisfied that counselor (staff) understood customer's needs	86%	81%	80%	85%
Q10 (now Q5): How satisfied are you with the time it usually took to get your answer	NA	76%	84%	83%



Vocational Rehabilitation/State Services for the Blind - Blind Agency

Joint Report on Effectiveness of the VR Program

The *Minnesota State Rehabilitation Council for the Blind's (SRC-B) 2006 Annual Report* was adopted at its December 2006 meeting and submitted to the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA). *SRC-Bs 2006 Annual Report* included the *Report on the Effectiveness of the Vocational Rehabilitation Program*. The report, written by the Customer Satisfaction & Outcomes and Measures Committee, and approved by the full SRC-B, follows.

The committee reviews the effectiveness of and customer satisfaction with SSB's VR program and employment outcomes of persons served by SSB. The committee also evaluates the extent to which SSB achieved its goals and priorities and met the RSA standards and indicators.

Customer Satisfaction Survey

The committee reviewed the Customer Satisfaction Survey (CSS) results through March 31, 2006. Five survey items were analyzed to compare the results for the past four years. While there has been some fluctuation in results, no significant changes have taken place from year-to-year.

The year ending 3/31/06 has approval ratings ranging from a high of 85 percent and a low of 71 percent. The 85 percent approval rating was for question 4, "How satisfied are you that the staff understands your needs?" The 71 percent approval rating was the result for SSB question 2, "To what extent have the services met your expectations?" Complete [CSS Results](#) can be found on the SSB website.

Goals and Priorities

- Goal and Priority #1: Employment Outcomes

The Workforce Development Unit (WDU) of SSB successfully closed 104 cases during FFY06. Of those closures, 96 were in paid employment and 92 were earning minimum wage or higher. However, SSB did not meet RSA indicator 1.1 for standard I as called for in the goals and priorities because this number did not meet or exceed performance in the previous period. All strategies outlined in the goals and priorities were carried-out as stated.

- Goal and Priority #2: Minority Service Rate

The goal of at least 100 persons from minority backgrounds exiting services in FFY06 was not met. All strategies of this goal were completed as described in the goals and priorities with the exception of the completion of best practices for adjustment to blindness (ATB) training for individuals who have little or no English proficiency. The scope of this strategy necessitated continued focus in FFY07 with a revised delineation of strategies.

- Goal and Priority #3: DeafBlind Outreach and Service

With the input and support of the DeafBlind Committee of the SRC-B, the strategies of this goal were completed. The results of the satisfaction survey and needs assessment will continue to have significant impact on the focus and structure of services to DeafBlind customers in future years. The measure of this goal, that more persons with a dual sensory loss were accepted in FFY06 than in FFY03 was met. Nineteen individuals with a dual sensory loss were accepted for services in FFY03 and 20 were accepted for services in FFY06.

- Goal and Priority #4: Increase Customer Satisfaction with Services Provided

While the overall measure of achievement of this goal is not calculated until March 2007, the satisfaction rating for question 1 on the CSS from April 2005-March 2006 was 81 percent, a decrease of one percentage point from April 2004-March 2005. The WDU continues to train staff in topics related to increasing customer satisfaction.

- Goal and Priority #5: Continue to Apply a Procedure Developed in 2005 that Insures Informed Customer Choice in Selecting Providers for ATB Training

This procedure continues to be followed with all customers requiring ATB training. Reports pertinent to this goal have been shared with the SRC-B on a quarterly basis. This goal continues to be met.

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Table M.4 - Performance on Standard 1 and 2

	2006	2005	2004	2003
Indicator 1.1: Change in Employment Outcomes(>=0)	-5	1	-74	13
Indicator 1.2: Percent of Employment Outcomes (>=68.9%)	48.74%	43.97%	40.91%	46.34%
Indicator 1.3: Competitive Employment (>=35.4%)	93.54%	94.09%	93.22%	96.77%
Indicator 1.4: Significant Disability (>=89.0%)	97.70%	98.65%	99.55%	98.00%
Indicator 1.5: Earnings Ratio (>=.59)	.717	.650	.0645	0.676
Indicator 1.6: Self Support (>=30.4)	30.87	35.43	36.82	30.67
Number of Indicators in Standard 1 that were Passed	4	5	4	5
Number of Primary Indicators (1.3 to 1.5) in Standard 1 that were Passed	3	3	3	3
Indicator 2.1: Ratio of Minority to Non-Minority Service Rate (>=.80)		.72		.86

Reference: *SRC-B 2006 Annual Report*, pages 7-9

- Goal and Priority #6: Continue a Goal of 100 Percent of the Portion of VR Staff Members New to SSB Receiving Introduction to Blindness - Phase 1 and/or Phase 2 Training on the Essential Aspects of Blindness and Visual Impairment

In FFY06, all VR staff members new to SSB received phase 1 and, as appropriate, phase 2 training according to the timelines in this procedure. This goal continues to be met.

The SRC-B and SSB jointly review progress on achievement of the goals and priorities through review at the regular Customer Satisfaction & Goals and Priorities Committee meetings. Goals and priorities, and the strategies to achieve them for FFY08, will be jointly set through committee recommendations for approval by SSB and the SRC-B at their April 2007 meeting. Those goals and priorities go into effect October 1, 2007.

RSA Standards and Indicators

The performance of SSB's WDU on the RSA standards and indicators for FFY 2006 follows below.

The RSA requires that at least four of the six indicators must be met. SSB met or exceeded RSA standards on four of the six indicators. The RSA requires that the State agency meet or exceed at least two of the three primary indicators. For FFY06, SSB met or exceeded three of the primary indicators.

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Table M.5 lists the FFY06 goals and priorities and indicates whether each strategy contributed to the respective goal being met. Report on achievement of FFY07 goals and priorities, which went into effect October 1, 2006, will be provided in the next *Minnesota's Unified Plan* update.

Table M.5 - FFY06 Goals and Priorities

Goal and Priority Statement	Was Goal Met?	Strategies	Did the Strategy Contribute to Achieving the Goal?
1 - Employment Outcomes - SSB will meet RSA Indicator 1.1 for Standard 1 dealing with employment outcomes.	Yes	<p>Each counseling supervisor will ensure staff of the Workforce Development (WFD) unit:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agree to explicit paid closure goals by September 30th of each year • Establish and maintain contact with at least four new employers each quarter • Attend DEED training on use of labor market information in the career development process at least once in a two-year period 	<p>Yes</p> <p>Of questionable value and has been replaced with a more effective strategy</p> <p>Yes</p>
		The WFD director will support attendance and participation of counselors and other staff in the Chamber of Commerce or similar organization as part of targeted job development efforts.	Yes; long range activity expected to result in quality contacts with the business community
		As a result of information obtained from the Needs Assessment Task Force of the Rehabilitation Council for the Blind, WFD will develop and implement outreach activities throughout Minnesota. The result of these activities will be increased referrals to WFD. The effectiveness of this initiative will be measured through documentation of referrals over the three-year period of FFY06 through FFY08 as documented in the RSA 113.	No; this strategy has been revamped for FFY07
		The WFD director and supervisors will complete an analysis of the record of service of persons closed in FFY05 without achieving an employment outcome. This analysis will include a review of customers closed because of refused services or further services and be completed by December 31, 2005. As a result of this analysis, training activities may be developed to decrease the number of customers closed without successful employment. Should the analysis indicate the need for additional training, this training will begin no later than May 31, 2006.	Yes; analysis completed with no specific trends identified; need to look for other causes for not meeting indicator 1.2.
		The WFD director and supervisors will develop and implement a plan to increase the knowledge of the business services specialists of the potential SSB customers have to participate in the Minnesota workforce. This plan will be developed no later than October 31, 2005 and implemented no later than January 31, 2006.	No; however does contribute to increased partner knowledge of the skills and abilities of individuals with vision impairments and recognition of their value to the Minnesota workforce

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Table M.5 (continued) - FFY06 Goal and Priorities

Goal and Priority Statement	Was Goal Met?	Strategies	Did the Strategy Contribute to Achieving the Goal?
2 - Minority Service Rate - By the end of FFY06 at least 100 persons from minority backgrounds will exit services annually.	Yes	Continue cooperating on a bi-monthly basis with particular SSB-VR staff in community outreach activities at major community focus points.	Yes; valuable connections to community groups
		With input from counselors, staff, vendors, and relevant experts, including former customers, develop best practices for ATB training for individuals who have limited-English proficiency. Best practices developed by March 2006.	Yes, revamped and continued as a FFY07 strategy
		Develop and implement a plan to train counselors, staff, and vendors in best practices. Training plan implemented no later than June 2006.	Yes, revamped and continued as a strategy for FFY07
3 - DeafBlind Outreach and Service - Increased outreach to and work with persons who have a dual sensory loss, including persons who are DeafBlind.	Yes	A rehabilitation area director and a designated rehabilitation counselor will, with input from the SRC-B and under the overall direction of the WFD director, develop, and then implement explicit and specific actions to increase outreach to persons who have a dual sensory loss. This effort will be fully deployed by December 1, 2005.	Yes
		Additional refresher training, based on revised "Best Practices," will take place no later than January 31, 2006.	Yes
		The DeafBlind committee of the SRC-B will provide the WFD director with specific suggestions for increasing the number of ATB trainers in Minnesota who have American Sign Language (ASL) skills by March 31, 2006.	No; this strategy has been revamped for the FFY07 goal
		The DeafBlind committee of the SRC-B, with support from a rehabilitation area director, will develop and implement a customer satisfaction and needs assessment survey of the DeafBlind customers of SSB. This tool will focus on the satisfaction with services of customers served in WFD since FY04 and an assessment of needs related to vocational rehabilitation services and employment. This survey will be completed by May 31, 2006.	The survey results will be used in FFY07 to revise goals and strategies or develop new ones

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Table M.5 (continued) - FFY06 Goals and Priorities

Goal and Priority Statement	Was Goal Met?	Strategies	Did the Strategy Contribute to Achieving the Goal?
4 - Increase Customer Satisfaction with Services Provided	Yes	WFD management will research, develop, and implement a counselor training program which addresses the essential aspects of developing a productive counselor-customer relationship. This program will be researched by 10/31/05, developed by 12/31/05, and implemented by 1/31/06	Yes
5 - Continue to Apply a Procedure Developed in 2005 that Insures Informed Customer Choice in Selecting Providers for ATB Training.	Yes	Procedures implemented in February 2005 will continue in place for the foreseeable future.	Yes; an ongoing focus
		Monthly case review reports pertinent to this goal will be summarized and shared with the SRC-B on a regular basis.	Yes
6 - Continue a Goal of 100 Percent of the Portion of the VR Staff Members New to SSB Receiving <i>Introduction to Blindness - Phase 1 and/or Phase 2</i> Training on the Essential Aspects of Blindness and Visual Impairment.	Yes	Supervisory staff will ensure all new VR staff will complete Introduction to Blindness - Phase 1 training within three months of hire.	Yes
		Supervisory staff will ensure all new rehabilitation counseling staff will complete Introduction to Blindness - Phase 2 training within three months of hire.	Yes
		Current employees of SSB who have not been exposed to all or part of the material in the Introduction to Blindness - Phase 1 course will be invited and encouraged to receive that training in a timely manner.	Yes
		Phase 2 training will be discussed with and encouraged for other current staff that would otherwise not be required to attend.	Yes

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Table M.6 provides the FFY07 Goals and Priorities as well as a comparison of the FFY06 and FFY07 strategies for each. A comparison of the FFY07 and FFY08 strategies will be provided in the next *Minnesota's Unified Plan* update.

Table M.6 - FFY07 Goals and Priorities

Goals and Priorities	FFY06 Strategies	FFY07 Strategies
1 - Employment Outcomes - SSB will meet RSA Indicator 1.1.	<p>Each counseling supervisor will ensure staff of the Workforce Development Unit:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agree to explicit paid closure goals by September 30th of each year • Establish and maintain contact with at least four new employers each quarter • Attend DEED training on use of labor market information in the career development process at least once in a two-year period 	<p>Each counseling supervisor will ensure staff of the Workforce Development Unit:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agree to specific paid closure goals by September 30th of each year for the following year • Actively participate on local and regional teams facilitated by the DEED business services specialists • Coordinate with DEED business services specialists prior to making employer contacts to ensure current and accurate knowledge of employer needs • Attend DEED training on use of labor market information in the career development process every two years to maintain skills in utilizing the information when assisting customers to choose a career goal • Attend training on occupations in demand for use with customers as part of the informed choice process
	The WFD director will support attendance and participation of counselors and other staff in the Chamber of Commerce or similar organization as part of targeted job development efforts.	The WFD director will support attendance and participation of counselors and other staff in the Chamber of Commerce or similar organization as part of targeted job development efforts.
	As a result of information obtained from the Needs Assessment Task Force of the SRC-B, WFD will develop and implement outreach activities throughout Minnesota. The result of these activities will be increased referrals to WFD. The effectiveness of this initiative will be measured through documentation of referrals over the three-year period of FFY06 through FFY08 as documented in the RSA 113.	
	The director and supervisors of the WFD will complete an analysis of the record of service of persons closed in FFY05 without achieving an employment outcome. This analysis will include a review of customers closed because of refused services or further services and be completed by December 31, 2005. As a result of this analysis, training activities may be developed to decrease the number of customers closed without successful employment. Should the analysis indicate the need for additional training, this training will begin no later than May 31, 2006.	

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Table M.6 (continued) - FFY07 Goals and Priorities

Goals and Priorities	FFY06 Strategies	FFY07 Strategies
1 - Employment Outcomes - SSB will meet RSA Indicator 1.1.	<p>The WFD director and supervisors will develop and implement a plan to increase the knowledge of the business services specialists of the potential SSB customers have to participate in the Minnesota workforce. This plan will be developed no later than October 31, 2005 and implemented no later than January 31, 2006.</p>	<p>In-service training will be utilized to improve counselor placement skills and their work with employers. The current in-service training plan includes two days of training in November of 2006 on the Comprehensive Assessment of VR Needs so that counselors improve their skills when working with the individual to develop an employment plan. Additional training planned in FFY07 on Serving the DeafBlind Customer, Improving Cultural Competencies, and Low Vision will include components on effective job development and placement skills.</p> <p>Targeted outreach activities are essential to maintain the market penetration noted in the findings in Section D.1(d) that "...SSB believes that the numbers of individuals that have traditionally come to SSB for vocational rehabilitation services represents a realistic picture of the need for services...." Outreach activities, such as presenting information on SSB services at various professional conferences, will continue. The effectiveness of these outreach activities will be measured through documentation of referrals over the three-year period of FY07-09 as documented in the RSA 113. Strategies for improving SSB's performance on RSA Indicator 1.1 will also assist in meeting RSA Indicator 2.1 - the service rate for all individuals from minority backgrounds.</p> <p>SSB will continue to require individual vendors who provide training to SSB customers on access and assistive technology to pass a test, developed by SSB staff, on the software programs they wish to teach in order to be on the list of approved vendors. In addition, each individual vendor and CRP trainer must take and pass an adult learning course, which was developed for SSB by Century College, a school within the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities (MnSCU) system. That course provides training on learning styles, teaching methods, multiple intelligences, and how to write individualized training plans and learning objectives.</p>

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Table M.6 (continued) - FFY07 Goals and Priorities

Goals and Priorities	FFY06 Strategies	FFY07 Strategies
2 - Minority Service Rate - By the end of FFY07 at least 100 persons from minority backgrounds will exit services annually and SSB will meet RSA Indicator 2.1.	<p>Continue cooperating on a bi-monthly basis with particular SSB-VR staff in community outreach activities at major community focus points.</p>	<p>Continue working with SSB-VR staff in outreach activities to Minnesota's community-based organizations representing minority groups, with emphasis on community-based organizations serving African-Americans.</p>
	<p>With input from counselors, staff, vendors, and relevant experts, including former customers, develop best practices for ATB training for individuals who have limited-English proficiency. Best practices developed by March 2006.</p>	<p>SSB will attempt to develop relationships with generic English as a Second Language programs to co-train blind individuals from minority backgrounds in braille while also learning English.</p>
	<p>Develop and implement a plan to train counselors, staff, and vendors in the best practices. Training plan implemented no later than June 2006.</p>	<p>Review other states' best practices and identify other strategies and activities appropriate for application in Minnesota.</p> <p>Review and apply literature and research findings that may enhance staff and organizational competency in serving SSB customers from minority backgrounds.</p> <p>Develop a best practices manual providing ongoing guidance to staff by September 30, 2007.</p>
		<p>In-Service Staff Training: SSB's in-service training grant focuses on developing and improving agency-wide cultural competency. The following activities have been identified:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An organizational assessment - conducted by staff from Century College will be completed by the end of July 2006. This will be accomplished through staff participation in focus groups (all WFD staff and all SSB management) at which time each staff person will complete a cultural diversity self-assessment instrument. During FFY07, this assessment will guide training curriculum development, and will be used with the SRC-B Minority Outreach Committee to identify other needs and strategies to meet those needs. • Training plan - specific staff training will be conducted in FFY07 in accordance with the organizational assessment and the training plan as outlined in SSB's in-service quality grant.

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Table M.6 (continued) - FFY07 Goals and Priorities

Goals and Priorities	FFY06 Strategies	FFY07 Strategies
<p>3 - DeafBlind Outreach and Service - Enhance services for persons who have a dual sensory loss, including persons who are DeafBlind.</p> <p>During FFY07 at least eight individuals with a dual sensory loss will secure employment as a result of SSB services.</p>		<p>Implement SSB's in-service training plan and provide comprehensive staff training on understanding DeafBlindness and competency in serving SSB customers who are DeafBlind. The training will assist vocational rehabilitation counselors, placement, and assistive technology staff to improve their knowledge and understanding of deafness and DeafBlindness. This training will focus on understanding deafness and deaf culture, deaf vs. hard of hearing, assistive devices and equipment, communication methods, defining DeafBlindness, DeafBlind vs. hard of hearing/visually impaired, communication styles used by DeafBlind individuals, Support Service Providers and ASL interpreters, adjustment to DeafBlindness, rehabilitation training for DeafBlind vs. hard of hearing people, mobility training, and adaptive technology.</p>
	<p>A rehabilitation area director and a designated rehabilitation counselor will, with input from the SRC-B and under the overall direction of the WFD director, develop and then implement explicit and specific actions to increase outreach to persons who have a dual sensory loss. This effort will be fully deployed by December 1, 2005.</p>	<p>During FFY07 increase usage of the SSB brochure developed specifically for individuals who are DeafBlind; mail it to appropriate groups; provide or post the information on the DeafBlind list serve; and identify other outreach strategies based on the results of the needs assessment and customer satisfaction survey.</p>
	<p>Additional refresher training on revised "Best Practices" by January 31, 2006.</p>	
	<p>The DeafBlind Committee of the SRC-B will provide the WFD director with specific suggestions for increasing the number of ATB trainers in Minnesota who have ASL skills by March 31, 2006.</p>	

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Table M.6 (continued) - FFY07 Goals and Priorities

Goals and Priorities	FFY06 Strategies	FFY07 Strategies
<p>3 - DeafBlind Outreach and Service - Enhance services for persons who have a dual sensory loss, including persons who are DeafBlind.</p> <p>During FFY07 at least eight individuals with a dual sensory loss will secure employment as a result of SSB services.</p>		<p>The results of the needs assessment and customer satisfaction survey administered to each SSB customer with a dual sensory loss or who is DeafBlind will be analyzed by SSB staff and SRC-B members. Recommendations on goals and strategies will be brought to SSB management and the SRC-B to be incorporated into current and future goals and priorities.</p> <p>Assure accurate and consistent coding of DeafBlindness in the management information system by all counselors.</p> <p>Promote collaborative efforts with other State agencies, which provide services to individuals who are DeafBlind, so that specific vocational needs, like the need for supported employment, can be met. Results of SSB's needs assessment and customer satisfaction survey will be shared with those agencies.</p>
<p>4 - Increase Customer Satisfaction with Services Provided.</p> <p>By the end of March 2007, the annual overall satisfaction with services provided by SSB will be at or above 85 percent.</p>		<p>Customer satisfaction surveys will be administered quarterly to approximately 50 SSB customers as part of the DEED customer satisfaction initiative. The surveys are conducted by the Strategic Research Group of Columbus, Ohio.</p>
		<p>SSB and the SRC-B Customer Satisfaction & Goals and Priorities Committee will continue to review and analyze the data on a quarterly basis. During FFY07, in addition to the quantitative results for each survey question, specific customer comments will be reviewed.</p> <p>Based on the analysis of the customer satisfaction survey results, recommendations for program improvements will be brought to SSB and the SRC-B to assure that services are available that meet customer needs.</p>
	<p>WFD management will research, develop, and implement a counselor training program which addresses the essential aspects of developing a productive counselor-customer relationship. This program will be researched by 10/31/05, developed by 12/31/05, and implemented by 1/31/06</p>	

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Table M.6 (continued) - FFY07 Goals and Priorities

Goals and Priorities	FFY06 Strategies	FFY07 Strategies
5 - Insure Every SSB Customer has the Information to Make an Informed Choice in Selecting Providers for ATB Training.		
During FFY07, 100 percent of SSB customers attending ATB halftime or more will indicate that they were given the opportunity to choose their provider.	Procedures implemented in February 2005 will continue in place for the foreseeable future.	During FFY07 SSB counselors will complete the <i>Choosing ATB Training</i> form with each customer who is considering ATB training. Counselors will ensure that all customers are provided information, in an accessible format, about options for receiving ATB services, and strongly encourage each customer to tour each community rehabilitation program. The <i>Choosing ATB Training</i> form is signed by the counselor and customer. The customer affirms that they received the information they needed to make an informed choice in the selection of the provider. A copy of the form will be sent to the SSB director, and the information will be compiled and reported semi-annually to the SRC-B.
During FFY07 the results of the customer satisfaction surveys for customers completing ATB will be posted externally for customer review.		In FFY06, SSB and the Vendor Outcomes and Measures Committee of the SRC-B developed and implemented a customer satisfaction survey for customers who completed ATB training. During FFY07 each SSB customer will be surveyed six months after completion of ATB training or at the time of the case file closure, whichever comes first. When sufficient data is gathered, it will be linked back to service providers for continuous improvement purposes. The data will be formatted and posted externally for customer review when selecting a service provider to meet their rehabilitation needs. The results will be reported to the SRC-B and will be used to identify customer needs and areas for service improvements.
	SSB will continue to require individual vendors who provide training to SSB customers on access and assistive technology to pass a test, developed by SSB staff, on the software programs they wish to teach in order to be on the list of approved vendors. In addition, each individual vendor and CRP trainer must take and pass an adult learning course that was developed for SSB by Century College. That course provides training on learning styles, teaching methods, multiple intelligences, and how to write individualized training plans and learning objectives.	
	Monthly case review reports pertinent to this goal will be summarized and shared with the SRC-B on a regular basis.	

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Table M.6 (continued) - FFY07 Goals and Priorities

Goals and Priorities	FFY06 Strategies	FFY07 Strategies
6 - One hundred Percent of VR Staff New to SSB will Receive <i>Introduction to Blindness - Phase 1 and/or Phase 2</i> Training on the Essential Aspects of Blindness and Visual Impairment.	Supervisory staff will ensure all new VR staff will complete Introduction to Blindness - Phase 1 training within three months of hire.	Supervisory staff will ensure all new VR staff will complete Introduction to Blindness - Phase 1 training within three months of hire.
	Supervisory staff will ensure all new rehabilitation counseling staff will complete Introduction to Blindness -Phase 2 training within three months of hire.	Supervisory staff will ensure all new rehabilitation counseling staff will complete Introduction to Blindness - Phase 2 training within three months of hire.
	Current employees of SSB who have not been exposed to all or part of the material in the Introduction to Blindness - Phase 1 course will be invited and encouraged to receive that training in a timely manner.	Current employees of SSB who have not been exposed to all or part of the material in the Introduction to Blindness - Phase 1 course will be invited and encouraged to receive that training in a timely manner.
	Phase 2 training will be discussed with and encouraged for other current staff that would otherwise not be required to attend.	Phase 2 training will be discussed with and encouraged for other current staff that would otherwise not be required to attend.

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The goals and priorities for FFY07 have been revised along with revised strategies. The goals were selected for one of the following reasons:

- The goal continues to be a federal focus area: customer satisfaction and increased employment outcomes.
- The goal is an ongoing area of concern based on the findings of the needs assessment: increasing outreach and services to individuals who are DeafBlind or from minority backgrounds.
- The goal continues because SSB and the SRC-B agree it is of significant importance or that more improvement is desired: customer informed choice in selection of vendor and staff ATB experiential training.

Goals and priorities, as well as the strategies to achieve them, will be jointly developed with the SRC-B for FFY08 and approved in April of 2007 in time for inclusion in SSB's FFY08 VR State plan updates to RSA.

(b) Unemployment Insurance, explain the reasons for the areas in which the State's performance is deficient. If a Corrective Action Plan was in place the previous fiscal year, provide an explanation of why the actions contained in that Plan were not successful in improving performance. Identify steps to improve performance, including an explanation of why the actions now specified will be more successful.

DEED's UI program does not have sufficient staffing/funding to meet U.S. Department of Labor Tier 1 measures for nonmonetary determinations. In October 2007, the UI program will begin using an automated, self-access system for applicant usage; this development will free-up some staff resources, which can be transferred to nonmonetary activities. With an implementation date of September 30, 2007, any staff resources for training/deployment will not be fully online until January 1, 2008.



N. Waiver and Work-Flex Requests

1. Will your State be requesting waivers as a part of this Unified Plan?

In answering the above question, the following waiver provisions apply if your Unified Plan includes:

(a) WIA Title I and Wagner-Peyser Act and/or Veterans Programs, States may submit a Workforce Flexibility (Work-Flex) Plan under WIA Section 192 and/or a General Statutory Waiver Plan under WIA Section 189(i) as part of the WIA Title I Plan. These waiver Plans may also be submitted separately, in which case they must identify related provisions in the State's Title I Plan. State Waiver Plans should be developed in accordance with planning requirements at Subpart D of 20 CFR Part 661.420 and planning guidelines issued by the Department of Labor.

Minnesota is requesting extension through June 30, 2010, of the following waivers:

- Extension of the waiver allowing local workforce investment boards (LWIBs) to hold up to ten percent of their allocated adult and dislocated worker funds to carry out incumbent worker training (waiver granted July 7, 2005). *See Request 1.*
- Extension of the waiver allowing youth to use individual training accounts (ITAs) (waiver granted July 7, 2005). *See Request 2.*
- Extension of the waiver of the time limit on the period of initial eligibility at WIA Regulations 20 CFR 663.530 (waiver granted July 7, 2005). *See Request 3.*
- Extension of the waiver of the required 50 percent employer match for customized training at WIA Section 101(8)(C) to permit a match based on a sliding scale (waiver granted July 7, 2005). *See Request 4.*
- Extension of the waiver to increase the transfer authority from the current 20 percent to 100 percent for adult and dislocated worker funds (waiver granted July 7, 2005). *See Request 5.*

REQUEST 1: An extension is requested to continue to allow LWIBs, at their discretion and with the approval of the State, to spend up to ten percent of the local area allocated funds (WIA Section 133(b)) to carry-out incumbent worker training programs. The Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED) continues to feel strongly that the extension approval and use of this waiver will continue to help prevent company layoffs and closures. Business entities will be assisted in becoming more competitive through the delivery of needed worker training. The approval of this request will allow the barriers at WIA Section 134 to be waived and allow Minnesota to deliver needed services to incumbent workers. There continues to be no State or local statutory barriers to the continued implementation of this waiver. Opportunity to comment on this request will come through the posting of *Minnesota's Unified Plan*.

REQUEST 2: An extension is requested to continue to allow LWIBs to use ITAs for certain older youth (ages 20-21) and for out-of-school youth eligible to receive services under the WIA Youth Formula Grant without the need for co-enrollment in the adult program (a waiver of WIA Regulations 20 CFR 664.510). The extension of this waiver will continue to allow these individuals to have enhanced customer choice and to benefit from services provided by Minnesota's WIA-certified training programs. Granting this waiver request extension will allow efficiency and customer choice.

REQUEST 3: An extension is requested to continue to allow Minnesota to use the initial WIA program certification list. The approval of this extension will allow Minnesota to better-market the WIA certification. Minnesota will be able to minimize the WIA certification data requirements for programs and maximize participation. A number of program operators have expressed some degree of dissatisfaction with the amount of data that the State was requesting under the process and indicated that they would not participate again through the annual certification process if the present data requirements remained in place. While Congress and Minnesota are considering appropriate data requirements, an extension is being requested to allow the State to continue to use the initial WIA program certification list.

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REQUEST 4: Minnesota is requesting an extension of the waiver of the required 50 percent employer match for customized training at WIA Section 101(8)(C) to permit a match based on a sliding scale. The sliding scale is based on the following factors:

- Labor market demand for the occupation for which customized training is being delivered.
- Labor market demand for the industry in which training is being delivered.
- Percentage of successful completers who are hired by the employer(s).
- Size of the potential employer's workforce.
- Demographic characteristics of the trainees with an emphasis on encouraging training individuals with multiple barriers to employment.

This waiver encourages employers to participate in customized training by providing a financial incentive to hire individuals who meet job needs. For the job-seeking participants of the employment and training system, this waiver affords them the opportunity to receive training and credentials for jobs for which there is a demand.

REQUEST 5: Minnesota is requesting an extension of the waiver to increase the transfer authority from the current 20 percent to 100 percent for adult and dislocated worker funds. This extension will allow LWIBs, at their discretion and with the approval of the State, to have 100 percent transferability between the adult and dislocated worker funding streams. Minnesota feels strongly the extension of this waiver will help Workforce Service Areas (WSAs) meet their individual needs for specific types of employment and training services.

Minnesota is requesting extension through December 31, 2007, of the following waiver:

- Extension of the waiver allowing Minnesota to use up to 25 percent of rapid response funds for incumbent worker training (waiver originally granted August 21, 2006; extension request was submitted to U.S. Department of Labor [DOL] January 12, 2007).
See Request 6.

REQUEST 6: Minnesota has sent a letter to DOL's Chicago Regional Office, asking for an extension of the waiver allowing Minnesota to use up to 25 percent of rapid response funds for incumbent worker training. The letter indicated:

“The delay in approval (of the original waiver) as well as DOL's approved shortened deadline will not allow us to fully use our rapid response funds to implement a pilot designed to serve incumbent workers. In analyzing our present program design and after discussions with our program deliverers, we feel that a December 31, 2007 deadline would be sufficient to carry out our proposed plans. We will be prepared to share with you the final results of this waiver.”

Minnesota is requesting the following new waivers (See Requests 7-10):

REQUEST 7: Approval to extend *Minnesota's Unified Plan* to the end of the five-year planning cycle (June 30, 2010).

Summary

Minnesota is requesting a waiver to extend *Minnesota's Unified Plan* an additional year beyond the two-year extension requirements noted in the Training and Employment Guidance Letter (TEGL) 13-06. This waiver would allow *Minnesota's Unified Plan* to run through the end of the five-year planning cycle (June 30, 2010). Minnesota has worked hard to update its vision, goals, and strategies for the workforce development system to reflect national strategic directions noted in the January 24, 2007 TEGL. In addition, in modifying *Minnesota's Unified Plan*, the State used a June 30, 2010, timeframe to set the workforce development system vision, goals, and strategies. As a result, the plan will effectively guide Minnesota's workforce development system through the end of the five-year unified planning cycle (June 30, 2010). Therefore, we request approval of the waiver to extend the life of *Minnesota's Unified Plan* through June 30, 2010.

Statutory Requirements to be Waived

WIA Section 501, Part III of the unified planning guidance published on April 12, 2005, and TEGLs (e.g., TEGL 13-06, January 24, 2007) describe state unified plan requirements. Section 4 of TEGL 13-06 requires states to

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submit a modification request to extend the life of existing or modified state unified plans for years three and four of the five-year planning cycle. Minnesota believes it is reasonable to allow states that modify their state unified plan based on the April 12, 2005, guidance and national strategic directions stated in Section 5 of TEGL 13-06 to extend their plans through the five-year unified planning cycle, which is June 30, 2010.

State or Local Statutory Barriers

There are no existing State or local statutory or regulatory barriers to the implementation of this waiver request.

Goals of the Waiver and Expected Programmatic Outcomes

Minnesota has aligned its workforce development system vision, goals, and strategies with national strategic directions as part of a thorough and thoughtful process to modify *Minnesota's Unified Plan*. The newly established strategic plan will guide Minnesota's workforce development system through the 2010 five-year State unified planning cycle. Granting this waiver will allow State and local workforce development system service providers to devote their resources to achieving the vision, goals, and initiatives articulated in *Minnesota's Unified Plan*. Allowing State and local workforce development system service providers to focus on service delivery will improve Minnesota's workforce development system and program outcomes.

Description of the Individuals Impacted by the Waiver

Minnesota does not anticipate any negative impacts to employers, individuals, communities, stakeholders, or State and local workforce development partners resulting from approval of this waiver. Minnesota does anticipate the following positive impacts:

- Either more employers and individuals may receive service or current customers may receive better service because service providers who are involved in preparing and reviewing *Minnesota's Unified Plan* are able to focus their resources on customer service and on achieving system goals and initiatives.
- LWIBs and local WSA staff will have more time to achieve workforce development system vision, goals, and initiatives.

- State agencies, including DEED, Minnesota Department of Education, Minnesota Department of Human Services, Minnesota State Colleges and Universities system, the University of Minnesota; and the Governor's Workforce Development Council will be able to direct planning resources to defining and addressing system challenges and aligning policies and practices to provide seamless workforce development services to employers and individuals.

Description of the Process to Monitor Waiver Progress

DEED's Workforce Systems Coordination Office will monitor the progress of this waiver and make any needed adjustments to the plan to ensure that it complies with federal regulations.

Opportunity for LWIBs and the Public to Comment on the Waiver Request

LWIBs and the public were invited to review the waiver request during the 30-day public comment period of the draft *Minnesota's Unified Plan*. No public comments were received regarding this particular waiver.

REQUEST 8: Exclusion of Individuals Engaged in Entrepreneurial Training from the Calculations for Common Performance Measures of the Adult and Dislocated Worker Funding Streams

Summary

Minnesota is requesting a waiver to allow the exclusion of individuals engaged in entrepreneurial training from the calculations for common performance measures of the adult and dislocated worker funding streams. The requested waiver would encourage LWIBs to spend adult and dislocated worker program resources to train individuals to establish and operate their own businesses. Minnesota would further assist these individuals by providing advice and appropriate support through its Business and Community Development (BCD) Division, helping to ensure the viability of the individual enterprise.

This effort at entrepreneurship is in keeping with DOL's emphasis at helping individuals start their own businesses as a way of promoting economic and social self-sufficiency. The Project GATE (Growing America through Entrepreneurship) program is clear evidence of the national importance given to helping individuals achieve

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the American dream of owning their own businesses. This waiver is in keeping with this emphasis by encouraging WIA resources to be spent on the effort.

At present, LWIBs are reluctant to spend resources on entrepreneurship because of the adverse effect on performance standards. Specifically,

- The wages of individuals who successfully complete the training and start their own businesses are not shown on wage detail files, and supplemental data is inadmissible for the performance standard of average wage.
- In spite of efforts made on behalf of small businesses, a large majority of them fail.

Because of these two factors, LWIBs do not spend dollars on this viable way of ensuring self-sufficiency.

This waiver request adheres to the required format identified in WIA Section 189(i)(4)(B) and WIA Regulations (20 CFR 661.420(c)).

Statutory Requirements to be Waived

WIA Section 136 and subsequent TEGLs (e.g., 17-05, February 17, 2006) describe the performance accountability system to which states and local workforce investment areas are subject. These references outline the definition of the various performance measures, the methodology of computing these measures, and the individuals to whom performance measures apply. An examination of these issuances indicates that local areas that use WIA resources to train individuals to develop and run their own businesses are penalized when computing the performance standards that apply to the program's measures. These areas are not allowed to use supplemental data in computing average wages, an important consideration since entrepreneurs' earnings are generally not included in wage detail files. Further, data shows that a majority of small businesses fail within the first year of operation despite all the assistance that might be given to help them succeed. This failure obviously would have a detrimental effect on those other performance measures that can be used. Therefore, in order to encourage local WSAs to use WIA funds for entrepreneurship, DEED is requesting that adults and dislocated workers who are engaged in such training be excluded from performance measures.

State or Local Statutory Barriers

There are no existing State or local statutory or regulatory barriers to the implementation of this waiver request.

Goals of the Waiver and Expected Programmatic Outcomes

This waiver would increase the number of individuals who are being trained with WIA adult and dislocated worker program resources in entrepreneurship. A number of WSAs have indicated a desire to devote more resources to the effort but they have expressed reservations because of the possible detrimental effects on local performance standards. The exemption of such individuals from performance standard calculations would remove this barrier. A specific average wage standard is not being proposed at this time given a lack of experience with such a waiver. However, based on inquiries from the local WSAs, DEED might expect 20-30 individuals who could be enrolled in entrepreneurship.

This waiver would increase local activity flexibility to the LWIBs. These principles would be in keeping with the goals of WIA including:

- Empowering individuals to obtain needed services and information to enhance their employment and economic and social self-sufficiency opportunities.
- Providing increased State and local flexibility to implement innovative and comprehensive workforce investment systems.

Additionally, this waiver would be in keeping with a national emphasis at providing business opportunities to those individuals who might not have any such chance. Through its BCD Division, DEED would provide continuing financial and counseling assistance to these nascent enterprises hoping to ensure continued success. These new businesses could then, in turn, be used to provide employment for other appropriate WIA participants.

In approving requests for entrepreneurship training, an LWIB would analyze its particular area's economic and marketing conditions to determine where opportunities existed for new businesses (i.e., demand-driven analysis). Working with DEED's Labor Market Information (LMI) Unit and the BCD Division, and local economic development agencies, an LWIB would determine

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those economic enterprises that would have the greatest opportunity for success. Based on this determination, the LWIB would develop a priority list indicating those economic areas in which it would like to see new businesses. Requests for entrepreneurship training that match this list would be given priority for funding.

An LWIB would have the option of approving requests for training in “non-prioritized areas” with appropriate justification as determined locally with the approval of the State. Approval of specific participant requests would also be based on assessments of a trainee’s ability to develop and run a business.

This waiver would give an additional tool to the LWIB in providing an economic self-sufficiency opportunity to a participant. Additionally, local and State economies would benefit with tax revenues from the additional business in an expanding industry. Moreover, the local WorkForce Center would gain the reputation of being able to meet the needs of both of its customers: business and the job seeker. WIA will enhance its reputation as being business-friendly.

Description of the Individuals Impacted by the Waiver

The individuals that will be directly impacted by this waiver are:

- LWIBs that will be able to offer entrepreneurship training without fear that local performance measures will be adversely affected.
- Potential entrepreneurs who are now WIA participants that will be afforded the opportunity to obtain training to run their own businesses.
- Local WIA programs that will obtain potential placement sites for other WIA participants.
- Local economies that will benefit from the increased tax revenue coming from new businesses.
- The WorkForce Center that will forge new and beneficial relationships with State and local economic development agencies.

The flexibility afforded to LWIBs by this waiver will encourage them to increase their services and to become more responsive and innovative to meet existing and new customer needs.

Description of the Process to Monitor Waiver Progress

DEED’s Monitoring Unit will monitor the progress of this waiver by ascertaining the degree to which increased entrepreneurship training has been implemented in the local area. This monitoring will occur both onsite and at desk-review levels. Files will be reviewed to ensure that priority lists are maintained and followed and that exceptions to these lists are supported. Management Information System (MIS) information will be used to determine the level of enrollment in the activity in the WIA Title I-B adult and dislocated worker programs and budgetary information will be used to determine the expenditure levels. These pieces of information will be compared to the submitted plan. Additionally, contact information will be obtained from DEED’s BCD Division to determine the degree to which assistance has been provided to new businesses developing as a result of the entrepreneurship training. Corrective action will be implemented as appropriate, including the possible removal of the waiver at the local level.

Opportunity for LWIBs and the Public to Comment on the Waiver Request

LWIBs and the public were invited to review the waiver request during the 30-day public comment period of the draft *Minnesota’s Unified Plan*. No public comments were received regarding this particular waiver request.

REQUEST 9: Waiver of the Provision at WIA Section 181(e) that Limits the Use of Funds for Capitalization of Businesses to Permit the Use of WIA Funds to Capitalize a Small Business Up to \$5,000

Summary

Minnesota is requesting a waiver of the provision that limits the use of funds for capitalization of businesses to permit the use of WIA funds to capitalize a small business up to \$5,000. This waiver is being submitted as part of a State effort to encourage entrepreneurship (i.e., see waiver Request 8). This increase in fund flexibility will provide LWIBs with the resources to not only provide WIA-sponsored training to potential small business owners but also to provide a financial start to the enterprise. The combination of training, initial and ongoing advice, and financial resources would demonstrate a commitment to the creation of small businesses. It is expected that as

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small businesses prosper, there will be the creation of new jobs for the job seekers in the community. Moreover, as small businesses are created in the community, there will be a greater sense of ownership and responsibility in ensuring that a community grows socially and economically.

This waiver request adheres to the required format identified in WIA Section 189(i)(4)(B) and WIA Regulations (20 CFR 661.420(c)).

Statutory Requirements to be Waived

WIA Section 181(e) limits the use of funds for capitalization. Minnesota is requesting a waiver to allow the use of funds (up to \$5,000 per individual enterprise).

An LWIB would approve/disapprove the request for capitalization based on a number of factors outlined below. The approval/disapproval of a request for such capitalization will depend on several factors including:

- An analysis of the particular area's economic and marketing conditions to determine whether the enterprise has a chance for success. This analysis would be done in consultation with DEED's LMI Unit and the BCD Division, and local economic development agencies.
- An analysis of whether the individual has the capability after appropriate training to develop and run a business.
- An analysis of a need for the funds.
- An ability to secure additional funds.

State or Local Statutory Barriers

There are no existing State or local statutory or regulatory barriers to the implementation of this waiver request.

Goals of the Waiver and Expected Programmatic Outcomes

It is expected that this waiver will allow additional individuals who are trained in entrepreneurship to start their own businesses. The start-up resources that this waiver represents will give participants the opportunity to consider the idea of transforming business ideas into enterprises. A number of WSAs have indicated a desire to devote more resources to this effort and this waiver will allow them to do so.

This waiver would increase local flexibility to the LWIBs in the use of WIA resources. This flexibility would be in keeping with the goals of WIA including:

- Empowering individuals to obtain needed services/resources to enhance employment and economic and social self-sufficiency.
- Providing increased State and local flexibility to implement innovative and comprehensive workforce investment systems.

Additionally, as indicated in the previous waiver request, this waiver would be in keeping with a national emphasis at providing business opportunities to those individuals who might otherwise not have the opportunity to engage in entrepreneurship. DEED would provide ongoing support to individuals who were willing to take a chance at starting their own business.

Description of the Individuals Impacted by the Waiver

- LWIBs that will be able to offer entrepreneurship training without fear that local performance measures will be adversely affected.
- Potential entrepreneurs who are now WIA participants who will be afforded the opportunity to obtain training to run their own businesses.
- Local WIA programs that will obtain potential placement sites for other WIA participants.
- Local economies that will benefit from the increased tax revenue coming from new businesses.
- The WorkForce Center that will forge new and beneficial relationships with State and local economic development agencies.

The flexibility afforded to LWIBs by this waiver will encourage them to increase their services and to become more responsive and innovative to meet existing and new customer needs.

Description of the Process to Monitor Waiver Progress

DEED's Monitoring Unit will monitor the progress of this waiver by ascertaining the degree to which increased entrepreneurship training and funding have been accessed at the local area. This monitoring will occur both onsite and at desk-review levels. Files will be reviewed to ensure that industrial/business sector priority lists are maintained and followed and that exceptions to these lists

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are supported. MIS information will be used to determine the level of enrollment in the activity in the WIA Title I-B adult and dislocated worker programs and budgetary information will be used to determine the expenditure levels. Additionally, contact information will be obtained from DEED's BCD Division to determine the degree to which assistance has been provided to new businesses developing as a result of the entrepreneurship training. Corrective action will be implemented as appropriate, including the possible removal of the waiver at the local level.

Opportunity for LWIBs and the Public to Comment on the Waiver Request

LWIBs and the public were invited to review the waiver request during the 30-day public comment period of the draft *Minnesota's Unified Plan*. No public comments were received regarding this particular waiver request.

REQUEST 10: Waiver of the Reallocation Provisions at WIA Sections 128(c)(2) and 133(c)(2) and WIA Regulations 20 CFR 667.160 to Provide Minnesota with Additional Flexibility in the Targeting of WIA Funds

Summary

Minnesota is requesting a waiver of reallocations provisions as given in WIA Sections 128(c)(2) and 133(c)(2) and WIA Regulations 20 CFR 667.160. The present provisions only allow end-of-year reallocation. Reallocations are sometimes needed during a program year because of immediate needs for funds and/or because of a projected lack of expenditures. Waiting until the end of a program year before being allowed to reallocate hinders Minnesota from targeting WIA funds to where they can do the most good. Therefore, Minnesota is requesting the waiver that will allow it to:

- Perform mid-year deobligation and reallocation of local area funds.
- Recapture funds from WSAs that have not expended at least 80 percent of their local funds in the first year.
- Use recaptured funds for Statewide activities or for reallocation to other eligible WSAs.
- Use additional factors in determining WSA eligibility for a reallocation of recaptured funds, including demonstrated need and an ability to use additional funds.

This waiver request adheres to the required format identified in WIA Section 189(i)(4)(B) and WIA Regulations (20 CFR 661.420(c)).

Statutory Requirements to be Waived

Minnesota is requesting the waiver of the reallocation provisions at WIA Sections 128(c)(2) and 133(c)(2) and WIA regulations 20 CFR 667.160. These provisions only allow reallocation at the end of a program year. Minnesota is seeking the flexibility of being able to target WIA funds more effectively by being allowed to reallocate mid-year. There might be needs for WIA funds that cannot wait until an end-of-year reallocation. Minnesota needs the ability to meet these needs on a timelier basis.

Moreover, Minnesota needs the ability to recapture funds from WSAs who have difficulty spending. Instead of allowing these funds to sit dormant, Minnesota seeks the authority to move these funds to another WSA that has the ability to spend them effectively and efficiently.

State or Local Statutory Barriers

There are no existing State or local statutory or regulatory barriers to the implementation of the waiver request.

Goals of the Waiver and Expected Programmatic Outcomes

The overall goal of the waiver is to allow Minnesota to better target WIA resources. The flexibility afforded by this waiver will allow the State to accomplish this goal. It will not have to wait until the end of a program year to reallocate. Quantitatively, this waiver will be expected to allow the State to spend at least 90 percent of its WIA youth, adult, and dislocated worker allocations.

Description of the Individuals Impacted by the Waiver

The individuals most impacted by the waiver will be those participants who will now be able to be served because of the resources that will be devoted to meeting their needs. Fewer participants will be turned away because of a lack of resources. Resources will go to where there are needs.

Description of the Process to Monitor Waiver Progress

DEED's Monitoring Unit will monitor the progress of this waiver by ascertaining the degree to which spending is occurring and the number of participants are increasing.

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This monitoring will occur both onsite and at desk-review levels.

Opportunity for LWIBs and the Public to Comment on the Waiver Request

LWIBs and the public were invited to review the waiver request during the 30-day public comment period of the draft *Minnesota's Unified Plan*. No public comments were received regarding this particular waiver request.

(b) Vocational Rehabilitation, if a State requests a waiver of the Statewide requirement identified in assurance number 13 for the vocational rehabilitation program in Part IV of this unified planning guidance, the request must be made in accordance with the provisions of 34 CFR 361.26(b).

Vocational Rehabilitation/Rehabilitation Services - General

DEED's Rehabilitation Services-Vocational Rehabilitation (RS-VR) requests a waiver from the U.S. Department of Education's Rehabilitation Services Administration with respect to delivery of services in Minnesota Independent School District No. 2170, which includes the city of Staples in north-central Minnesota.

RS-VR serves students with disabilities in all of the State's public school districts and in most Minnesota private schools through Minnesota WorkForce Centers and satellite offices Statewide. The uniform Statewide provision of these services is required by WIA and the Rehabilitation Act except when waived.

Independent School District 2170 and RS-VR have used a service model for several years under which a full-time counselor provides vocational rehabilitation services only to the district's eligible students. The school district employs the RS-VR counselor, sharing costs with RS-VR. Hiring authority and case supervision is a responsibility of the RS-VR local rehabilitation 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. This written contract provides that all non-federal funds allocated by the agreement are made available to RS-VR, that all RS-VR services provided under the agreement are subject

to RS-VR approval, and that all State plan requirements apply to all services approved under the contract.

Vocational Rehabilitation/State Services for the Blind - Blind Agency

No waiver of the Statewideness requirement is requested.

IV. Certifications and Assurances

General Certifications and Assurances

By signing the Unified Plan signature page, you are certifying that:

1. *The methods used for joint planning and coordination of the programs and activities included in the Unified Plan included an opportunity for the entities responsible for planning or administering such programs and activities to review and comment on all portions of the Unified Plan. (WIA, §501(c)(3)(B))*

In addition, if you submit your Unified Plan by posting it on an [Internet Web site](#), you are certifying that:

2. *The content of the submitted Plan will not be changed after it is submitted. Plan modifications must be approved by the reviewing State agency. It is the responsibility of the designated agency to circulate the modifications among the other agencies that may be affected by the changes.*

In addition, the following certifications and assurances apply to the extent that the programs and activities are included in your State Unified Plan.

3. *Nonconstruction Programs. By signing the Unified Plan signature page, you are certifying that:*

1. *The grantee has filed the Government-wide standard assurances for nonconstruction programs (SF 424). States can print SF 424 from <http://ocfo.ed.gov/grntinfo/appforms.htm>.*

EDGAR Certifications, Nonconstruction Programs, Debarment, Drug-Free Work Place, and Lobbying Certifications

You must include the following certifications for each of the State agencies that administer one of these programs: Perkins III, Tech-Prep, Adult Education and Literacy or vocational rehabilitation. A State may satisfy the EDGAR requirement by having all responsible State agency officials sign a single set of EDGAR certifications.

EDGAR Certifications

By signing the Unified Plan signature page, you are certifying that:

1. *The Plan is submitted by the State agency that is eligible to submit the Plan. [34 CFR 76.104(a)(1)]*
2. *The State agency has authority under State law to perform the functions of the State under the program. [34 CFR 76.104(a)(2)]*

3. *The State legally may carry out each provision of the Plan. [34 CFR 76.104(a)(3)]*
4. *All provisions of the Plan are consistent with State law. [34 CFR 76.104(a)(4)]*
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. [34 CFR 76.104(a)(5)]*
6. *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)]*
7. *The agency that submits the Plan has adopted or otherwise formally approved the Plan. [34 CFR 76.104(a)(7)]*
8. *The Plan is the basis for State operation and administration of the program. [34 CFR 76.104(a)(8)]*
9. *A copy of the State Plan was submitted into the State Intergovernmental Review Process. [Executive Order 12372] In 1987, Minnesota discontinued involvement in the State Intergovernmental Review Process of Executive Order 12372. Thus, Minnesota's Unified Plan is not subject to review under this process.*

Vocational Rehabilitation

Original submitted to U.S. Department of Labor	Original signed by Dan McElroy, April 23, 2007
Dan McElroy, Commissioner, Department of Employment and Economic Development	Date

Adult Education and Literacy

Original submitted to U.S. Department of Labor	Original signed by Alice Seagren, April 25, 2007
Alice Seagren, Commissioner, Minnesota Department of Education	Date

Debarment, Drug-Free Work Place, and Lobbying

By signing the Unified Plan signature page, you are certifying that:

1. *The ED grantee has filed ED 80-0013. This form also applies to AEFLA and RSA. States can print ED 80-0013 from <http://ocfo.ed.gov/grmtinfo/appforms.htm>.*
 - See Attachment D - Certification Regarding Lobbying - Vocational Rehabilitation/Rehabilitation Service - General
 - See Attachment E - Certification Regarding Lobbying - Vocational Rehabilitation/Rehabilitation Service - General
 - See Attachment F - Certification Regarding Lobbying - Vocational Rehabilitation/Rehabilitation Service - Blind Agency

- See Attachment G - Certification Regarding Lobbying - Vocational Rehabilitation/Rehabilitation Service - Blind Agency
- See Attachment H - Certification Regarding Lobbying - Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (AEFLA)

WIA Title I/Wagner-Peyser Act/Veterans Programs

By signing the Unified Plan signature page, you are certifying that:

1. *The State assures that it will establish, in accordance with section 184 of the Workforce Investment Act, 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 the allotments made under sections 127 and 132. (§112(b)(11))*
2. *The State assures that it will comply with section 184(a)(6), which requires the Governor to, every two years, certify to the Secretary, that –*
 - a. the State has implemented the uniform administrative requirements referred to in section 184(a)(3);*
 - b. the State has annually monitored local areas to ensure compliance with the uniform administrative requirements as required under section 184(a)(4); and*
 - c. the State has taken appropriate action to secure compliance pursuant to Section 184(a)(5). (§184(a)(6))*
3. *The State assures that the adult and youth funds received under the Workforce Investment Act will be distributed equitably throughout the State, and that no local areas will suffer significant shifts in funding from year to year during the period covered by this Plan. (§112(b)(12)(B))*
4. *The State assures that veterans will be afforded employment and training activities authorized in section 134 of the Workforce Investment Act, and the activities authorized in chapters 41 and 42 of Title 38 U.S. Code. The State assures that it will comply with the veterans priority established in the Jobs for Veterans Act. (38 U.S.C. 4215)*
5. *The State assures that the Governor shall, once every two years, certify one Local Board for each local area in the State. (§117(c)(2))*
6. *The State assures that it will comply with the confidentiality requirements of section 136(f)(3).*
7. *The State assures that no funds received under the Workforce Investment Act will be used to assist, promote, or deter union organizing. (§181(b)(7))*
8. *The State assures that it will comply with the nondiscrimination provisions of section 188, including an assurance that a Methods of Administration has been developed and implemented. (§188)*
9. *The State assures that it will collect and maintain data necessary to show compliance with the nondiscrimination provisions of section 188. (§185)*
10. *The State assures that it will comply with the grant procedures prescribed by the Secretary (pursuant to the authority at section 189(c) of the Act) which are necessary to enter into grant agreements for the allocation and payment of funds under the Act. The procedures and agreements will be provided to the State by the ETA Office of Grants and Contract Management and will specify the required terms and conditions and assurances and certifications, including, but not limited to, the following:*

- a. *General Administrative Requirements:*
 - (i) *29 CFR part 97 - Uniform Administrative Requirements for State and Local Governments (as amended by the Act).*
 - (ii) *29 CFR part 96 (as amended by OMB Circular A-133) - Single Audit Act.*
 - (iii) *OMB Circular A-87 - Cost Principles (as amended by the Act).*
- b. *Assurances and Certifications:*
 - (i) *SF 424 B - Assurances for Non-construction Programs.*
 - (ii) *29 CFR part 37 - Nondiscrimination and Equal Opportunity Assurance (and regulation) 29 CFR 37.20.*
 - (iii) *CFR part 93 - Certification Regarding Lobbying (and regulation).*
 - (iv) *29 CFR part 98 - Drug Free Workplace and Debarment and Suspension Certifications (and regulation).*
- c. *Special Clauses/Provisions:*

Other special assurances or provisions as may be required under Federal law or policy, including specific appropriations legislation, the Workforce Investment Act, or subsequent Executive or Congressional mandates.

11. *The State certifies that the Wagner-Peyser Act Plan, which is part of this document, has been certified by the State Employment Security Administrator.*

12. *The State certifies that veterans' services provided with Wagner-Peyser Act funds will be in compliance with 38 U.S.C. chapter 41 and 20 CFR part 1001.*

13. *The State certifies that Wagner-Peyser Act-funded labor exchange activities will be provided by merit-based public employees in accordance with DOL regulations.*

14. *The State assures that it will comply with the MSFW significant office requirements in accordance with 20 CFR part 653.*

15. *The State certifies it has developed this Plan in consultation with local elected officials, Local Workforce Boards, the business community, labor organizations and other partners.*

16. *As a condition to the award of financial assistance from the Department of Labor under title I of WIA, the grant applicant assures that it will comply fully with the nondiscrimination and equal opportunity provisions of the following laws:*

- a. *Section 188 of the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 (WIA), which prohibits discrimination against all individuals in the United States on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, political affiliation or belief, and against beneficiaries on the basis of either citizenship/status as a lawfully admitted immigrant authorized to work in the United States or participation in any WIA title I - financially assisted program or activity;*
- b. *Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended, which prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color and national origin; Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, which prohibits discrimination against qualified individuals with disabilities;*
- c. *The Age Discrimination Act of 1975, as amended, which prohibits discrimination on the basis of age; and*
- d. *Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, as amended, which prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex in educational programs.*
- e. *The grant applicant also assures that it will comply with 29 CFR part 37 and all other regulations implementing the laws listed above. This assurance applies to*

the grant applicant's operation of the WIA Title I-financially assisted program or activity, and to all agreements the grant applicant makes to carry out the WIA Title I-financially assisted program or activity. The grant applicant understands that the United States has the right to seek judicial enforcement of this assurance.

17. *The State assures that funds will be spent in accordance with the Workforce Investment Act and the Wagner-Peyser Act and their regulations, written Department of Labor Guidance implementing these laws, and all other applicable Federal and State laws.*

Adult Education and Family Literacy

By signing the Unified Plan signature page, you are certifying that:

1. *The eligible agency will award not less than one grant to an eligible provider who offers flexible schedules and necessary support services (such as child care and transportation) to enable individuals, including individuals with disabilities, or individuals with other special needs, to participate in Adult Education and Literacy activities, which eligible provider shall attempt to coordinate with support services that are not provided under this subtitle prior to using funds for Adult Education and Literacy activities provided under AEFLA for support services. (§224(b)(5))*
2. *The funds received under subtitle A of title II of WIA will not be expended for any purpose other than for activities under subtitle A of title II of WIA. (§224(b)(6))*
3. *The eligible agency will expend the funds under subtitle A of title II of WIA only in a manner consistent with fiscal requirements in Section 241. (§224(b)(8))*

Food Stamp Employment and Training (FSET)

By signing the Unified Plan signature page, you are certifying that:

1. *Federal funds allocated by the Department of Agriculture to the State under section 16(h)(1) of the Food Stamp Act of 1977 (the Act), or provided to the State as reimbursements under Sections 16(h)(2) and 16(h)(3) of the Act will be used only for operating an employment and training program under section 6(d)(4) of the Act.*
2. *The State will submit to the Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) annual updates to its Employment and Training Plan for the coming fiscal year. The updates are due by August 15 of each year. The annual update must include any changes the State anticipates making in the basic structure or operation of its program. At a minimum, the annual update must contain revisions to Tables 1 (Estimated Participant Levels), 2 (Estimated E&T Placement Levels), 4 (Operating Budget), and 5 (Funding Categories).*
3. *If significant changes are to be made to its E&T program during the fiscal year, the State will submit to FNS a request to modify its Plan. FNS must approve the modification request before the proposed change is implemented. The State may be liable for costs associated with implementation prior to approval. See "The Handbook on Preparing State Plans for Food Stamp Employment and Training Programs" for additional information.*
4. *The State will submit a quarterly E&T report, FNS-583. Reports are due no later than 45 days after the end of each Federal fiscal quarter. The information required on the FNS-*

583 is listed in Exhibit 3 of the "The Handbook on Preparing State Plans for Food Stamp Employment and Training Programs."

5. *The State will submit E&T program financial information on the SF-269, Financial Status Report. It must include claims for the 100 percent Federal grant, 50 percent matched funding, and participant reimbursements. The SF-269 is due 30 days after the end of each Federal fiscal quarter.*
6. *The State will deliver each component of its E&T program through the One-Stop delivery system, an inter-connected strategy for providing comprehensive labor market and occupational information to job seekers, employers, core services providers, other workforce employment activity providers, and providers of workforce education activities. If the component is not available locally through such a system, the State may use another source.*

Vocational Rehabilitation

By signing the Unified Plan signature page, you are certifying that:

1. *As a condition for the receipt Federal funds under title I, part B of the Rehabilitation Act for the provision of vocational rehabilitation services, the designated State agency agrees to operate and administer the State Vocational Rehabilitation Services Program in accordance with provisions of this title I State Plan, the Act and all applicable regulations, policies and procedures established by the Secretary. Funds made available under section 111 of the Act are used solely for the provision of vocational rehabilitation services under title I and the administration of the title I State Plan.*
2. *As a condition of the receipt of Federal funds under title VI, part B of the Act for supported employment services, the designated State agency agrees to operate and administer the State Supported Employment Services Program in accordance with the provisions of the supplement to this State Plan, the Act, and all applicable regulations, policies, and procedures established by the Secretary. Funds made available under title VI, part B are used solely for the provision of supported employment services and the administration of the supplement to the title I State Plan.*
3. *The designated State agency or designated State unit is authorized to submit this State Plan under title I of the Act and its supplement under title VI, part B of the Act.*
4. *The State submits only those policies, procedures, or descriptions required under this State Plan and its supplement that have not been previously submitted to and approved by the Commissioner of the Rehabilitation Services Administration. (§101(a)(1)(B))*
5. *The State submits to the Commissioner at such time and in such manner as the Secretary determines to be appropriate, reports containing annual updates of the information relating to the: comprehensive system of personnel development; assessments, estimates, goals and priorities, and reports of progress; innovation and expansion activities; and requirements under title I, part B or title VI, part B of the Act. (§101(a)(23))*
6. *The State Plan and its supplement are in effect subject to the submission of such modifications as the State determines to be necessary or as the Commissioner may require based on a change in State policy, a change in Federal law, including regulations, an interpretation of the Act by a Federal court or the highest court of the State, or a finding by the Commissioner of State noncompliance with the requirements of*

the Act, until the State submits and receives approval of a new State Plan or Plan supplement. (§101(a)(1)(C))

7. *The State has an acceptable plan for carrying out part B of title VI of the Act, including the use of funds under that part to supplement funds made available under part B of title I of the Act to pay for the cost of services leading to supported employment. (§101(a)(22))*

8. *The designated State agency, prior to the adoption of any policies or procedures governing the provision of vocational rehabilitation services under the State Plan and supported employment services under the supplement to the State Plan, including making any amendment to such policies and procedures, conducts public meetings throughout the State after providing adequate notice of the meetings, to provide the public, including individuals with disabilities, an opportunity to comment on the policies or procedures, and actively consults with the Director of the client assistance program, and, as appropriate, Indian tribes, tribal organizations, and Native Hawaiian organizations on the policies or procedures. (§101(a)(16)(A))*

9. *The designated State agency takes into account, in connection with matters of general policy arising in the administration of the Plan, the views of individuals and groups of individuals who are recipients of vocational rehabilitation services, or in appropriate cases, the individual's representatives; personnel working in programs that provide vocational rehabilitation services to individuals with disabilities; providers of vocational rehabilitation services to individuals with disabilities; the Director of the client assistance program; and the State Rehabilitation Council, if the State has such a Council. (§101(a)(16)(B))*

10. *The designated State agency (or, as appropriate, agencies) is a State agency that is:*

- a. primarily concerned with vocational rehabilitation, or vocational and other rehabilitation, of individuals with disabilities; or*
- b. X not primarily concerned with vocational rehabilitation, or vocational and other rehabilitation, of individuals with disabilities, and includes within the State agency a vocational rehabilitation bureau, or division, or other organizational unit that: is primarily concerned with vocational rehabilitation, or vocational and other rehabilitation, of individuals with disabilities, and is responsible for the designated State agency's vocational rehabilitation program; has a full-time director; has a staff, all or substantially all of whom are employed full time on the rehabilitation work of the organizational unit; and is located at an organizational level and has an organizational status within the designated State agency comparable to that of other major organizational units of the designated State agency. (§101(a)(2)(B))*

11. *The designated State agency (or, as appropriate, agencies):*

- a. is an independent commission that is responsible under State law for operating, or overseeing the operation of, the vocational rehabilitation program in the State; is consumer-controlled by persons who are individuals with physical or mental impairments that substantially limit major life activities; and represent individuals with a broad range of disabilities, unless the designated State unit under the direction of the commission is the State agency for individuals who are blind; includes family members, advocates, or other representatives, of individuals with mental impairments; and undertakes the functions set forth in section 105(c)(4) of the Act; or*

b. X has established a State Rehabilitation Council that meets the criteria set forth in section 105 of the Act and the designated State unit: jointly with the Council develops, agrees to, and reviews annually State goals and priorities, and jointly submits annual reports of progress with the Council, in accordance with the provisions of section 101(a)(15) of the Act; regularly consults with the Council regarding the development, implementation, and revision of State policies and procedures of general applicability pertaining to the provision of vocational rehabilitation services; includes in the State Plan and in any revision to the State Plan, a summary of input provided by the Council, including recommendations from the annual report of the Council described in section 105(c)(5) of the Act, the review and analysis of consumer satisfaction described in section 105(c)(4), and other reports prepared by the Council, and the response of the designated State unit to such input and recommendations, including explanations for rejecting any input or recommendation; and transmits to the Council all Plans, reports, and other information required under this title to be submitted to the Secretary; all policies, and information on all practices and procedures, of general applicability provided to or used by rehabilitation personnel in carrying out this title; and copies of due process hearing decisions issued under this title, which shall be transmitted in such a manner as to ensure that the identity of the participants in the hearings is kept confidential. (§101(a)(21))

12. The State provides for financial participation, 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 title I, part B of the Act. (§101(a)(3))

13. The Plan is in effect in all political subdivisions of the State, except that in the case of any activity that, in the judgment of the Commissioner, is likely to assist in promoting the vocational rehabilitation of substantially larger numbers of individuals with disabilities or groups of individuals with disabilities, the Commissioner may waive compliance with the requirement that the Plan be in effect in all political subdivisions of the State to the extent and for such period as may be provided in accordance with regulations prescribed by the Commissioner, but only if the non-Federal share of the cost of the vocational rehabilitation services involved is met from funds made available by a local agency (including funds contributed to such agency by a private agency, organization, or individual); and in a case in which earmarked funds are used toward the non-Federal share and such funds are earmarked for particular geographic areas within the State, the earmarked funds may be used in such areas if the State notifies the Commissioner that the State cannot provide the full non-Federal share without such funds. (§101(a)(4))

14. The State agency employs methods of administration found by the Commissioner to be necessary for the proper and efficient administration of the State Plan. (§101(a)(6)(A))

15. The designated State agency and entities carrying out community rehabilitation programs in the State, who are in receipt of assistance under title I of the Act, take affirmative action to employ and advance in employment qualified individuals with disabilities covered under and on the same terms and conditions as set forth in Section 503 of the Act. (§101(a)(6)(B))

16. Facilities used in connection with the delivery of services assisted under the State Plan comply with the provisions of the Act entitled "An Act to insure that certain buildings financed with Federal funds are so designed and constructed as to be accessible to the

physically handicapped," approved on August 12, 1968 (commonly known as the "Architectural Barriers Act of 1968"), with section 504 of the Act and with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. (§101(a)(6)(C))

17. *If, under special circumstances, the State Plan includes provisions for the construction of facilities for community rehabilitation programs -*

- a. The Federal share of the cost of construction for the facilities for a fiscal year will not exceed an amount equal to 10 percent of the State's allotment under section 110 for such year;*
- b. The provisions of section 306 (as in effect on the day before the date of enactment of the Rehabilitation Act Amendments of 1998) shall be applicable to such construction and such provisions shall be deemed to apply to such construction; and*
- c. There shall be compliance with regulations the Commissioner shall prescribe designed to assure that no State will reduce its efforts in providing other vocational rehabilitation services (other than for the establishment of facilities for community rehabilitation programs) because the Plan includes such provisions for construction. (§101(a)(17))*

18. *The designated State unit submits, in accordance with Section 101(a)(10) of the Act, reports in the form and level of detail and at the time required by the Commissioner regarding applicants for and eligible individuals receiving services under the State Plan and the information submitted in the reports provides a complete count, unless sampling techniques are used, of the applicants and eligible individuals in a manner that permits the greatest possible cross-classification of data and ensures the confidentiality of the identity of each individual. (§101(a)(10)(A) and (F))*

19. *The designated State agency has the authority to enter into contracts with for-profit organizations for the purpose of providing, as vocational rehabilitation services, on-the-job training and related programs for individuals with disabilities under part A of title VI of the Act, upon the determination by the designated State agency that such for-profit organizations are better qualified to provide such vocational rehabilitation services than non-profit agencies and organizations. (§101(a)(24)(A))*

20. *The designated State agency has cooperative agreements with other entities that are components of the Statewide workforce investment system of the State in accordance with section 101(a)(11)(A) of the Act and replicates these cooperative agreements at the local level between individual offices of the designated State unit and local entities carrying out activities through the Statewide workforce investment system. (§101(a)(11)(A) and (B))*

21. *The designated State unit, the Statewide Independent Living Council established under section 705 of the Act, and the independent living centers described in part C of title VII of the Act within the State have developed working relationships and coordinate their activities. (§101(a)(11)(E))*

22. *If there is a grant recipient in the State that receives funds under part C of the Act, the designated State agency has entered into a formal agreement that meets the requirements of Section 101(a)(11)(F) of the Act with each grant recipient. (§101(a)(11)(F))*

23. *Except as otherwise provided in part C of title I of the Act, the designated State unit provides vocational rehabilitation services to American Indians who are individuals with disabilities residing in the State to the same extent as the designated State agency*

provides such services to other significant populations of individuals with disabilities residing in the State. (§101(a)(13))

24. *No duration of residence requirement is imposed that excludes from services under the Plan any individual who is present in the State. (§101(a)(12))*

25. *The designated State agency has implemented an information and referral system that is adequate to ensure that individuals with disabilities are provided accurate vocational rehabilitation information and guidance, using appropriate modes of communication, to assist such individuals in preparing for, securing, retaining, or regaining employment, and are appropriately referred to Federal and State programs, including other components of the Statewide workforce investment system in the State. (§101(a)(20))*

26. *In the event that vocational rehabilitation services cannot be provided to all eligible individuals with disabilities in the State who apply for the services, individuals with the most significant disabilities, in accordance with criteria established by the State for the order of selection, will be selected first for the provision of vocational rehabilitation services and eligible individuals, who do not meet the order of selection criteria, shall have access to services provided through the information and referral system implemented under section 101 (a)(20) of the Act. (§101(a)(5)(C) and (D))*

27. *Applicants and eligible individuals, or, as appropriate, the applicants' representatives or the individuals' representatives, are provided information and support services to assist the applicants and eligible individuals in exercising informed choice throughout the rehabilitation process, consistent with the provisions of section 102(d) of the Act. (§101(a)(19))*

28. *An individualized plan for employment meeting the requirements of section 102(b) of the Act will be developed and implemented in a timely manner for an individual subsequent to the determination of the eligibility of the individual for services, except that in a State operating under an order of selection, the Plan will be developed and implemented only for individuals meeting the order of selection criteria; services under this Plan will be provided in accordance with the provisions of the individualized plan for employment. (§01(a)(9).)*

29. *Prior to providing any vocational rehabilitation services, except:*

- a. Assessment for determining eligibility and vocational rehabilitation needs by qualified personnel, including, if appropriate, an assessment by personnel skilled in rehabilitation technology;*
- b. Counseling and guidance, including information and support services to assist an individual in exercising informed choice consistent with the provisions of section 102(d) of the Act;*
- c. Referral and other services to secure needed services from other agencies through agreements developed under section 101(a)(11) of the Act, if such services are not available under this State Plan;*
- d. Job-related services, including job search and placement assistance, job retention services, follow-up services, and follow-along services;*
- e. Rehabilitation technology, including telecommunications, sensory, and other technological aids and devices; and*
- f. Post-employment services consisting of the services listed under subparagraphs (a) through (e), to an eligible individual, or to members of the individual's family, the State unit determines whether comparable services and benefits exist under*

any other program and whether those services and benefits are available to the individual unless the determination of the availability of comparable services and benefits under any other program would interrupt or delay:

Progress of the individual toward achieving the employment outcome identified in the individualized plan for employment;

An immediate job placement; or

Provision of such service to any individual who is determined to be at extreme medical risk, based on medical evidence provided by an appropriate qualified medical professional. (§101(a)(8)(A))

30. *The Governor of the State in consultation with the designated State vocational rehabilitation agency and other appropriate agencies ensures that there is an interagency agreement or other mechanism for interagency coordination that meets the requirements of section 101(a)(8)(B)(i)-(iv) of the Act between any appropriate public entity, including the State Medicaid program, public institution of higher education, and a component of the Statewide workforce investment system, and the designated State unit so as to ensure the provision of the vocational rehabilitation services identified in section 103(a) of the Act, other than the services identified as being exempt from the determination of the availability of comparable services and benefits, that are included in the individualized plan for employment of an eligible individual, including the provision of such services during the pendency of any dispute that may arise in the implementation of the interagency agreement or other mechanism for interagency coordination. (§101(a)(8)(B))*
31. *The State agency conducts an annual review and reevaluation of the status of each individual with a disability served under this State Plan who has achieved an employment outcome 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 (29 U.S.C. 214(c)) for 2 years after the achievement of the outcome (and annually thereafter if requested by the individual or, if appropriate, the individual's representative), to determine the interests, priorities, and needs of the individual with respect to competitive employment or training for competitive employment; provides for the input into the review and reevaluation, and a signed acknowledgment that such review and reevaluation have been conducted, by the individual with a disability, or, if appropriate, the individual's representative; and makes maximum efforts, including the identification and provision of vocational rehabilitation services, reasonable accommodations, and other necessary support services, to assist such individuals in engaging in competitive employment. (§101(a)(14))*
32. *Funds made available under title VI, part B of the Act will only be used to provide supported employment services to individuals who are eligible under this part to receive the services. (§625(b)(6)(A))*
33. *The comprehensive assessments of individuals with significant disabilities conducted under section 102(b)(1) of the Act and funded under title I will include consideration of supported employment as an appropriate employment outcome. (§625(b)(6)(B))*

- 34. *An individualized plan for employment, as required by section 102 of the Act, will be developed and updated using funds under title I in order to specify the supported employment services to be provided; specify the expected extended services needed; and identify the source of extended services, which may include natural supports, or to the extent that it is not possible to identify the source of extended services at the time the individualized plan for employment is developed, a statement describing the basis for concluding that there is a reasonable expectation that such sources will become available. (§625(b)(6)(C))*
- 35. *The State will use funds provided under title VI, part B only to supplement, and not supplant, the funds provided under title I, in providing supported employment services specified in the individualized plan for employment. (§625(b)(6)(D))*
- 36. *Services provided under an individualized plan for employment will be coordinated with services provided under other individualized plans established under other Federal or State programs. (§625(b)(6)(E))*
- 37. *To the extent job skills training is provided, the training will be provided on site. (§625(b)(6)(F))*
- 38. *Supported employment services will include placement in an integrated setting for the maximum number of hours possible based on the unique strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, capabilities, interests, and informed choice of individuals with the most significant disabilities. (§625(b)(G))*
- 39. *The State will expend not more than 5 percent of the allotment of the State under title VI, part B for administrative costs of carrying out this part. (§625(b)(7))*
- 40. *The supported employment supplement to the title I State Plan contains such other information and be submitted in such manner as the Commissioner of the Rehabilitation Services Administration may require. (§625(b)(8))*

Unemployment Insurance

The Governor, by signing the Unified Plan Signature Page, certifies that:

- 1. *The SWA will comply with the following assurances, and that the SWA will institute plans or measures to comply with the following requirements. Because the Signature Page incorporates the assurances by reference into the Unified Plan, States should not include written assurances in their Unified Plan submittal. The assurances are identified and explained in Paragraphs (2)-(11) below.*
- 2. *Assurance of Equal Opportunity (EO). As a condition to the award of financial assistance from ETA:*
 - (a) *The State assures that it will comply with the nondiscrimination provisions of WIA section 188, and its implementing regulations at 29 CFR part 37, including an assurance that a Method of Administration has been developed and implemented. (§§188 and 112(b)(17));*
 - (b) *The State assures that it will collect and maintain data necessary to show compliance with the nondiscrimination provisions of section 188, as provided in the regulations implementing that section (§185))*
- 3. *Assurance of Administrative Requirements and Allowable Cost Standards. The SWA will comply with administrative requirements and cost principles applicable to grants and*

cooperative agreements as specified in 20 CFR Part 601 (Administrative Procedure), 29 CFR Part 93 (Lobbying Prohibitions), 29 CFR Part 96 (Audit Requirements), 29 CFR Part 97 (Uniform Administrative Requirements for Grants and Cooperative Agreements to State and Local Governments), and OMB Circular A-87 (Revised), 60 FR 26484 (May 17, 1995), further amended at 62 FR 45934 (August 29, 1997) (Cost Principles for State, Local, and Indian Tribal Governments), and with administrative requirements for debarment and suspension applicable to subgrants or contracts as specified in 29 CFR Part 98 (Debarment and Suspension). The cost of State staff travel to regional and national meetings and training sessions is included in the grant funds. It is assured that State staff will attend mandatory meetings and training sessions, or unused funds will be returned.

States that have subawards to organizations covered by audit requirements of OMB Circular A-133 (Revised) (Audit Requirements of Institutions of Higher Education and Other Non-Profits) must (1) ensure that such subrecipients meet the requirements of that circular, as applicable, and (2) resolve audit findings, if any, resulting from such audits, relating to the UI program.

- (a) *The SWA also assures that it will comply with the following specific administrative requirements.*
 - (i) *Administrative Requirements.*

Program Income. Program income is defined in 29 CFR 97.25 as gross income received by a grantee or subgrantee directly generated by a grant supported activity, or earned only as a result of the grant agreement during the grant period. States may deduct costs incidental to the generation of UI program income from gross income to determine net UI program income. UI program income may be added to the funds committed to the grant by ETA. The program income must be used only as necessary for the proper and efficient administration of the UI program. Any rental income or user fees obtained from real property or equipment acquired with grant funds from prior awards shall be treated as program income under this grant.

Budget Changes. Except as specified by terms of the specific grant award, ETA, in accordance with the regulations, waives the requirements in 29 CFR 97.30(c)(1)(ii) that States obtain prior written approval for certain types of budget changes.

Real Property Acquired with Reed Act Funds. The requirements for real property acquired with Reed Act or other non-Federal funds and amortized with UI grants are in UIPL 39-97, dated September 12, 1997, and in 29 CFR 97.31 to the extent amortized with UI grants.

Equipment Acquired with Reed Act Funds. The requirements for equipment acquired with Reed Act or other non-Federal funds and

amortized with UI grants are in UIPL 39-97, dated September 12, 1997, and in 29 CFR 97.31 to the extent amortized with UI grants.

Real Property, Equipment, and Supplies. Real property, equipment, and supplies acquired under prior awards are transferred to this award and are subject to the relevant regulations at 29 CFR part 97.

For super-microcomputer systems and all associated components which were installed in States for the purpose of Regular Reports, Benefits Accuracy Measurement, and other UI Activities, the requirements of 29 CFR Part 97 apply. The National Office reserves the right to transfer title and issue disposition instructions in accordance with paragraph (g) of Federal regulations at 29 CFR 97.32. States also will certify an inventory list of system components which will be distributed annually by ETA.

Standard Form 272, Federal Cash Transactions Report. In accordance with 29 CFR 97.41(c), SESAs are required to submit a separate SF 272 for each sub-account under the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) Payment Management System. However, SESAs are exempt from the requirement to submit the SF 272A, Continuation Sheet.

(ii) Exceptions and Expansions to Cost Principles. The following exceptions or expansions to the cost principles of OMB Circular No. A-87 (Revised) are applicable to SESAs:

- Employee Fringe Benefits. As an exception to OMB Circular A-87 (Revised) with respect to personnel benefit costs incurred on behalf of SESA employees who are members of fringe benefit plans which do not meet the requirements of OMB Circular No. A-87 (Revised), Attachment B, item 11, the costs of employer contributions or expenses incurred for SESA fringe benefit plans are allowable, provided that:

For retirement plans, all covered employees joined the plan before October 1, 1983; the plan is authorized by State law; the plan was previously approved by the Secretary; the plan is insured by a private insurance carrier which is licensed to operate this type of plan in the applicable State; and any dividends or similar credits because of participation in the plan are credited against the next premium falling due under the contract.

For all SESA fringe benefit plans other than retirement plans, if the Secretary granted a time extension after October 1, 1983, to the existing approval of such a plan, costs of the plan are allowable until such time as the plan is comparable in cost and benefits to fringe benefit plans available to other similarly employed State employees. At such time as the cost and benefits of an approved fringe benefit plan are equivalent to the cost and

benefits of plans available to other similarly employed State employees, the time extension will cease and the cited requirements of OMB Circular A-87 (Revised) will apply. For retirement plans and all other fringe benefit plans covered above, any additional costs resulting from improvements to the plans made after October 1, 1983, are not chargeable to UI grant funds.

- UI Claimant's Court Appeals Costs. To the extent authorized by State law, funds may be expended for reasonable counsel fees and necessary court costs, as fixed by the court, incurred by the claimant on appeals to the courts in the following cases:

Any court appeal from an administrative or judicial decision favorable in whole or in part for the claimant;

Any court appeal by a claimant from a decision which reverses a prior decision in his/her favor;

Any court appeal by a claimant from a decision denying or reducing benefits awarded under a prior administrative or judicial decision;

Any court appeal as a result of which the claimant is awarded benefits;

Any court appeal by a claimant from a decision by a tribunal, board of review, or court which was not unanimous; and

Any court appeal by a claimant where the court finds that a reasonable basis exists for the appeal.

Reed Act. Payment from the SESA's UI grant allocations, made into a State's account in the Unemployment Trust Fund for the purpose of reducing charges against Reed Act funds (Section 903(c)(2) of the Social Security Act, as amended (42 U.S.C. 1103(c)(2)), are allowable costs provided that:

The charges against Reed Act funds were for amounts appropriated, obligated, and expended for the acquisition of automatic data processing installations or for the acquisition or major renovation of State-owned real property (as defined in 29 CFR 97.3); and

With respect to each acquisition or improvement of property, the payments are accounted for as credit against equivalent amounts of Reed Act funds previously withdrawn under the respective appropriation.

Prior Approval of Equipment Purchases. As provided for in OMB Circular No. A-87 (Revised), Attachment B, item 19, the requirement that

grant recipients obtain prior approval from the Federal grantor agency for all purchases of equipment (as defined in 29 CFR 97.3) is waived and approval authority is delegated to the SESA Administrator.

4. *Assurance of Management Systems, Reporting, and Record Keeping. The SESA assures that:*

- Financial systems provide fiscal control and accounting procedures sufficient to permit timely preparation of required reports, and the tracing of funds to a level of expenditure adequate to establish that funds have not been expended improperly (29 CFR 97.20)

The financial management system and the program information system provide Federally-required reports and records that are uniform in definition, accessible to authorized Federal and State staff, and verifiable for monitoring, reporting, audit, and evaluation purposes.

It will submit reports to ETA as required in instructions issued by ETA and in the format ETA prescribes.

The financial management system provides for methods to insure compliance with the requirements applicable to procurement and grants as specified in 29 CFR Part 98 (Debarment and Suspension), and for obtaining the required certifications under 29 CFR 98.510(b) regarding debarment, suspension, ineligibility, and voluntary exclusions for lower tier covered transactions.

5. *Assurance of Program Quality. The SESA assures that it will administer the UI program in a manner that ensures proper and efficient administration. "Proper and efficient administration" includes performance measured by ETA through Tier I measures, Tier II measures, program reviews, and the administration of the UI BAM, BTQ measures, and TPS program requirements.*
6. *Assurance on Use of Unobligated Funds. The SESA assures that non-automation funds will be obligated by December 31 of the following fiscal year, and liquidated (expended) within 90 days thereafter. ETA may extend the liquidation date upon written request. Automation funds must be obligated by the end of the 3rd fiscal year, and liquidated within 90 days thereafter. ETA may extend the liquidation date upon written request. Failure to comply with this assurance may result in disallowed costs from audits or review findings.*
7. *Assurance of Disaster Recovery Capability. The SESA assures that it will maintain a Disaster Recovery Plan.*
8. *Assurance of Conformity and Compliance. The SESA assures that the State law will conform to, and its administrative practice will substantially comply with, all Federal UI law requirements, and that it will adhere to DOL directives.*
9. *Assurance of Participation in UI PERFORMS. The SESA assures that it will participate in the annual UI PERFORMS State Quality Service Planning process by submitting any Corrective Action Plans (CAPs) required under UI PERFORMS as part of the State Quality Service Planning process.*

10. *Assurance of Financial Reports and Planning Forms. The SESA assures that it will submit financial reports and financial planning forms as required by the Department of Labor to support the annual allocation of administrative grants.*
11. *Assurance of Prohibition of Lobbying Costs (29 CFR part 93). The SESA assures and certifies that, in accordance with the DOL Appropriations Act, no UI grant funds will be used to pay salaries or expenses related to any activity designed to influence legislation or appropriations pending before the Congress of the United States. (k). Drug-Free Workplace (29 CFR part 98). The SESA assures and certifies that it will comply with the requirements at this part.*

Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)

By signing the Unified Plan signature page, you are certifying that:

1. *During the fiscal year, the State will operate a child support enforcement program under the State Plan approved under part D. (§402(a)(2))*
2. *During the fiscal year, the State will 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 State Plan under title XIX. (§402(a)(3))*
3. *Which State agency or agencies will administer and supervise the TANF program for the fiscal year, which shall include assurances that local governments and private sector organizations 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; and have had at least 45 days to submit comments on the Plan and the design of such services. (§402(a)(4))*
4. *That, during the fiscal year, the State will 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 Federally-funded assistance under the State's TANF program (§402(a)(5))*
5. *That the State has established and is enforcing 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. (§402(a)(6))*
6. *(Optional) that the State has established and is enforcing standards and procedures to:*

Screen and identify individuals receiving assistance under this part with a history of domestic violence while maintaining the confidentiality of such individuals;

Refer such individuals to counseling and supportive services; and

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. (§402(a)(7)(A)(i), (ii), (iii))

Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP)

By signing this Unified Plan, you also certify that the State agrees to meet the requirements of or submit the following documents as applicable, in addition to the general ETA requirements for receipt of Federal funds:

- *General Administrative Requirements:*
 - *29 CFR part 97 - Uniform Administrative Requirements for State and Local Governments (as amended by the Act).*
 - *29 CFR part 96 (as amended by OMB Circular A-133) - Single Audit Act.*
 - *OMB Circular A-87 - Cost Principles (as amended by the Act).*
- *Assurances and Certifications:*
 - *SF 424 – Application for Federal Assistance.*
 - *SF 424A – Budget Information – Non-construction Programs.*
 - *SF 424 B - Assurances for Non-construction Programs.*
 - *Hatch Act Notices must be placed in all work locations.*
 - *Privacy Statement must be provided to all participants.*
 - *ETA-5140 – Quarterly Progress Report.*
 - *ETA-8705 – Equitable Distribution Report.*

By signing the Unified Plan signature page, you are certifying that you will abide by the following special clauses:

- *Web site contact information must be updated on a regular basis.*
- *Attendance is required at any significant training to be held during the program year.*
- *Any recipient that did not meet the 20 percent performance goal for unsubsidized placements in Program Year 2003 or 2004 must attach a corrective action plan unless the recipient has already achieved this goal in Program Year 2004 at the time of application.*

Attachment A-1 - Unified Plan Activities and Programs Checklist

Under Section 501 of the Workforce Investment Act, the following activities or programs may be included in a State's Unified Plan. From the list below, please place a check beside the programs and activities your State or Commonwealth is including in this Unified Plan.

The State Unified Plan shall cover one or more of the following programs and activities:

Activities authorized under title I, Workforce Investment Systems (Workforce Investment Activities for Adults, Dislocated Workers and Youth, or WIA title I, and the Wagner-Peyser Act) (Workforce Investment Act of 1998 (29 U.S.C. 2801 et seq.))

Activities authorized under title II, Adult Education and Family Literacy (Adult Education and Family Literacy Programs) (Workforce Investment Act of 1998 (20 U.S.C. 9201 et seq.))

The State Unified Plan may cover one or more of the following programs and activities:

Food Stamp Employment and Training Program, or FSET (7 U.S.C. 2015(d))

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

Programs authorized under Part B of title I of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (29 U.S.C. 720 et seq.), other than Section 112 of such Act (29 U.S.C. 732) (Vocational Rehabilitation)

Activities authorized under chapters 41 & 42 of title 38, U.S.C., and 20 CFR 1001 and 1005 (Veterans Programs, including Veterans Employment, Disabled Veterans' Outreach Program, and Local Veterans' Employment Representative Program)

Programs authorized under State unemployment compensation laws (Unemployment Insurance) (in accordance with applicable Federal law which is authorized under title III, title IX and title XII of the Social Security Act and the Federal Unemployment Tax Act)

Programs authorized under part A of title IV of the Social Security Act (Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF))

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

Attachment A-2 - Contact Information

Please complete one copy for EACH of the separate activities and programs included in your State Unified Plan.

Program	Activities authorized under title I, Workforce Investment Systems (Workforce Investment Activities for Adults, Dislocated Workers and Youth, or WIA title I, and the Wagner-Peyser Act)
State Name for Program/Activity	WIA Title I - Adults, Dislocated Workers, Youth and Wagner-Peyser Act
Name of Grant Recipient Agency for Program/Activity	Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development
Address	1st National Bank Building, 332 Minnesota Street, Suite E200, Saint Paul, Minnesota 55101-1351
Telephone Number	651.259.7114
Facsimile Number	651.296.4772
E-mail Address	deed.customerservice@state.mn.us
Name of Signatory Official	Dan McElroy, Commissioner
Address	1st National Bank Building, 332 Minnesota Street, Suite E200, Saint Paul, Minnesota 55101-1351
Telephone Number	651.259.7119
Facsimile Number	651.296.4772
E-mail Address	Dan.McElroy@state.mn.us
Name of Liaison	Bonnie Elsey, Director, Workforce Development Division
Address	1st National Bank Building, 332 Minnesota Street, Suite E200, Saint Paul, Minnesota 55101-1351
Telephone Number	651.296.1822
Facsimile Number	651.284.3307
E-mail Address	Bonnie.Elsey@state.mn.us

Program	Activities authorized under title II, Adult Education and Family Literacy (Adult Education and Family Literacy Programs)
State Name for Program/Activity	Adult Basic Education
Name of Grant Recipient Agency for Program/Activity	Minnesota Department of Education
Address	1500 Highway 36 West, Roseville, Minnesota 55113-4266
Telephone Number	651.582.8200
Facsimile Number	N/A
E-mail Address	mde.contactus@state.mn.us
Name of Signatory Official	Alice Seagren
Address	1500 Highway 36 West, Roseville, Minnesota 55113-4266
Telephone Number	651.582.8204
Facsimile Number	651.582.8724
E-mail Address	Alice.Seagren@state.mn.us
Name of Liaison	Barry Shaffer
Address	1500 Highway 36 West, Roseville, Minnesota 55113-4266
Telephone Number	651.582.8442
Facsimile Number	651.634.5154
E-mail Address	Barry.Shaffer@state.mn.us

Program	Food Stamp Employment and Training Program or FSET
State Name for Program/Activity	Food Support Employment and Training Program (FSET)
Name of Grant Recipient Agency for Program/Activity	Minnesota Department of Human Services
Address	P.O. Box 64951, Saint Paul, Minnesota 55164-0951
Telephone Number	651.431.4004
Facsimile Number	651.431.7526
E-mail Address	DHS.Info@state.mn.us
Name of Signatory Official	Cal R. Ludeman, Commissioner
Address	P.O. Box 64998, Saint Paul, MN 55164-0998
Telephone Number	651.431.2907
Facsimile Number	651.431.7443
E-mail Address	Commissioner.DHS@state.mn.us
Name of Liaison	Charles E. Johnson, Assistant Commissioner
Address	444 Lafayette Road N, Saint Paul, Minnesota 55155
Telephone Number	651.431.3835
Facsimile Number	651.431.7483
E-mail Address	Chuck.Johnson@state.mn.us

Program	Activities authorized under chapter 2 of title II of the Trade Act of 1974 (Trade Act Programs)
State Name for Program/Activity	Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA)
Name of Grant Recipient Agency for Program/Activity	Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development
Address	1st National Bank Building, 332 Minnesota Street, Suite E200, Saint Paul, Minnesota 55101-1351
Telephone Number	651.259.7114
Facsimile Number	651.296.4772
E-mail Address	deed.customerservice@state.mn.us
Name of Signatory Official	Dan McElroy, Commissioner
Address	1st National Bank Building, 332 Minnesota Street, Suite E200, Saint Paul, Minnesota 55101-1351
Telephone Number	651.259.7119
Facsimile Number	651.296.4772
E-mail Address	Dan.McElroy@state.mn.us
Name of Liaison	Bonnie Elsey, Director, Workforce Development Division
Address	1st National Bank Building, 332 Minnesota Street, Suite E200, Saint Paul, Minnesota 55101-1351
Telephone Number	651.296.1822
Facsimile Number	651.284.3307
E-mail Address	Bonnie.Elsey@state.mn.us

Program	Programs authorized under Part B of title I of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, other than Section 112 of such Act
State Name for Program/Activity	Vocational Rehabilitation/Rehabilitation Services - General
Name of Grant Recipient Agency for Program/Activity	Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development
Address	1st National Bank Building, 332 Minnesota Street, Suite E200, Saint Paul, Minnesota 55101-1351
Telephone Number	651.259.7114
Facsimile Number	651.296.4772
E-mail Address	deed.customerservice@state.mn.us
Name of Signatory Official	Dan McElroy, Commissioner
Address	1st National Bank Building, 332 Minnesota Street, Suite E200, Saint Paul, Minnesota 55101-1351
Telephone Number	651.259.7119
Facsimile Number	651.296.4772
E-mail Address	Dan.McElroy@state.mn.us
Name of Liaison	Bonnie Elsey, Director, Workforce Development Division
Address	1st National Bank Building, 332 Minnesota Street, Suite E200, Saint Paul, Minnesota 55101-1351
Telephone Number	651.296.1822
Facsimile Number	651.284.3307
E-mail Address	Bonnie.Elsey@state.mn.us

Program	Programs authorized under Part B of title I of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, other than Section 112 of such Act
State Name for Program/Activity	Vocational Rehabilitation/Rehabilitation Services - Blind Agency
Name of Grant Recipient Agency for Program/Activity	Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development
Address	1st National Bank Building, 332 Minnesota Street, Suite E200, Saint Paul, Minnesota 55101-1351
Telephone Number	651.259.7114
Facsimile Number	651.296.4772
E-mail Address	deed.customerservice@state.mn.us
Name of Signatory Official	Dan McElroy, Commissioner
Address	1st National Bank Building, 332 Minnesota Street, Suite E200, Saint Paul, Minnesota 55101-1351
Telephone Number	651.259.7119
Facsimile Number	651.296.4772
E-mail Address	Dan.McElroy@state.mn.us
Name of Liaison	Bonnie Elsey, Director, Workforce Development Division
Address	1st National Bank Building, 332 Minnesota Street, Suite E200, Saint Paul, Minnesota 55101-1351
Telephone Number	651.296.1822
Facsimile Number	651.284.3307
E-mail Address	Bonnie.Elsey@state.mn.us

Program	Activities authorized under chapters 41 & 42 of title 38, U.S.C., and 20 CFR 1001 and 1005 (Veterans Programs, including Veterans Employment, Disabled Veterans' Outreach Program, and Local Veterans' Employment Representative Program)
State Name for Program/Activity	Veterans Programs
Name of Grant Recipient Agency for Program/Activity	Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development
Address	1st National Bank Building, 332 Minnesota Street, Suite E200, Saint Paul, Minnesota 55101-1351
Telephone Number	651.259.7114
Facsimile Number	651.296.4772
E-mail Address	deed.customerservice@state.mn.us
Name of Signatory Official	Dan McElroy, Commissioner
Address	1st National Bank Building, 332 Minnesota Street, Suite E200, Saint Paul, Minnesota 55101-1351
Telephone Number	651.259.7119
Facsimile Number	651.296.4772
E-mail Address	Dan.McElroy@state.mn.us
Name of Liaison	Bonnie Elsey, Director, Workforce Development Division
Address	1st National Bank Building, 332 Minnesota Street, Suite E200, Saint Paul, Minnesota 55101-1351
Telephone Number	651.296.1822
Facsimile Number	651.284.3307
E-mail Address	Bonnie.Elsey@state.mn.us

Program	Programs authorized under State unemployment compensation laws (Unemployment Insurance) (in accordance with applicable Federal law which is authorized under title III, title IX and title XII of the Social Security Act and the Federal Unemployment Tax Act)
State Name for Program/Activity	Unemployment Insurance
Name of Grant Recipient Agency for Program/Activity	Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development
Address	1st National Bank Building, 332 Minnesota Street, Suite E200, Saint Paul, Minnesota 55101-1351
Telephone Number	651.259.7114
Facsimile Number	651.296.4772
E-mail Address	deed.customerservice@state.mn.us
Name of Signatory Official	Dan McElroy, Commissioner
Address	1st National Bank Building, 332 Minnesota Street, Suite E200, Saint Paul, Minnesota 55101-1351
Telephone Number	651.259.7119
Facsimile Number	651.296.4772
E-mail Address	Dan.McElroy@state.mn.us
Name of Liaison	Kathy Nelson, Director, Unemployment Insurance Division
Address	1st National Bank Building, 332 Minnesota Street, Suite E200, Saint Paul, Minnesota 55101-1351
Telephone Number	651.296.1692
Facsimile Number	651.296.5196
E-mail Address	Kathy.Nelson@state.mn.us

Program	Programs authorized under part A of title IV of the Social Security Act (Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF))
State Name for Program/Activity	Minnesota Family Investment Program (MFIP)
Name of Grant Recipient Agency for Program/Activity	Minnesota Department of Human Services
Address	P.O. Box 64998, Saint Paul, MN 55164-0998
Telephone Number	651.431.4006
Facsimile Number	651.431.7526
E-mail Address	DHS.Info@state.mn.us
Name of Signatory Official	Cal R. Ludeman, Commissioner
Address	P.O. Box 64998, Saint Paul, MN 55164-0998
Telephone Number	651.431.2907
Facsimile Number	651.431.7443
E-mail Address	Commissioner.DHS@state.mn.us
Name of Liaison	Charles E. Johnson, Assistant Commissioner
Address	444 Lafayette Road North, Saint Paul, Minnesota 55155
Telephone Number	651.431.3835
Facsimile Number	651.431.7483
E-mail Address	Chuck.Johnson@state.mn.us

Program	Programs authorized under title V of the Older Americans Act of 1965 (Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP))
State Name for Program/Activity	Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP)
Name of Grant Recipient Agency for Program/Activity	Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development
Address	1st National Bank Building, 332 Minnesota Street, Suite E200, Saint Paul, Minnesota 55101-1351
Telephone Number	651.259.7114
Facsimile Number	651.296.4772
E-mail Address	deed.customerservice@state.mn.us
Name of Signatory Official	Dan McElroy, Commissioner
Address	1st National Bank Building, 332 Minnesota Street, Suite E200, Saint Paul, Minnesota 55101-1351
Telephone Number	651.259.7119
Facsimile Number	651.296.4772
E-mail Address	Dan.McElroy@state.mn.us
Name of Liaison	Bonnie Elsey, Director, Workforce Development Division
Address	1st National Bank Building, 332 Minnesota Street, Suite E200, Saint Paul, Minnesota 55101-1351
Telephone Number	651.296.1822
Facsimile Number	651.284.3307
E-mail Address	Bonnie.Elsey@state.mn.us

Attachment A-3 - Plan Signatures

Governor

As the Governor, I certify that for the State of Minnesota, for those activities and programs included in this Plan that are under my jurisdiction, the agencies and officials designated above under "Contact Information" have been duly designated to represent the State in the capacities indicated for the programs and activities indicated. I will provide subsequent changes in the designation of officials to the designated program or activity contact as such changes occur.

I further certify that, for those activities and programs included in this Plan that are under my jurisdiction, we will operate the workforce development programs included in this Unified Plan in accordance with this Unified Plan and the assurances described in Part IV of this Unified Plan.

Original Submitted to U.S. Department of Labor
Governor Tim Pawlenty

Original Signed by Governor Tim Pawlenty on April 30, 2007
Date

Responsible State Official for Eligible Agency for Vocational Rehabilitation

*I certify that for the State of **Minnesota**, for those activities and programs included in this Plan that are under my jurisdiction, the agencies and officials designated above under "Contact Information" have been duly designated to represent the State in the capacities indicated for the programs and activities indicated. I will provide subsequent changes in the designation of officials to the designated program or activity contact as such changes occur.*

I further certify that we will operate those activities and programs included in this Unified Plan that are under my jurisdiction in accordance with this Unified Plan and the assurances described in Part IV of this Unified Plan.

Original Submitted to U.S. Department of Labor

Dan McElroy, Commissioner

Department of Employment and Economic Development

Original Signed by Commissioner Dan McElroy on April 23, 2007

Date

Responsible State Official for Eligible Agency for Adult Education

I certify that for the State of Minnesota, for those activities and programs included in this Plan that are under my jurisdiction, the agencies and officials designated above under "Contact Information" have been duly designated to represent the State in the capacities indicated for the programs and activities indicated. I will provide subsequent changes in the designation of officials to the designated program or activity contact as such changes occur.

I further certify that, for those activities and programs included in this Plan that are under my jurisdiction, we will operate the programs included in this Unified Plan in accordance with this Unified Plan and the applicable assurances described in Part IV of this Unified Plan.

Original Submitted to U.S. Department of Labor

*Dan McElroy, Commissioner
Minnesota Department of Education*

Original Signed by Commissioner Alice Seagren on April 25, 2007

Date

Attachment B - Current Capacity-Building Underway in Regions Linking Education, Economic Development, and Workforce Development

Funder of Regional Capacity-Building	Workforce Service Area Members/Key Partners	Title/Focus	Convener	Timeline
U.S. DOL (all 3)	1 - Central, Stearns-Benton and Southwest 1 - DEED 2 - MnSCU 3 - ABE 4 - Key Businesses 5 - Regional Development Commissions 6 - Regional Initiative Foundations 2 - Community Based Job Training Grant in Healthcare 1 - Riverland CC 2 - SE WIB and Winona WIB 3 - Business Leadership Network	1 - Cluster Based Economic and Workforce Development Strategy Development	1 - National Center for Education and the Economy	1 - October 2006 - September 2007. Seminars presented on January 9 and 10 in St. Cloud and Marshall. More are planned
Wisconsin GROW Grant	Northeast and City of Duluth with Northwest Wisconsin CEP and 1 - DEED 2 - K-12 3 - Community Colleges 4 - Area Media	Northland Works		Current Grant
Wisconsin GROW Grant	Winona and Southeast with LaCrosse, WI and Northeast Iowa	7 Rivers Project		Current Grant
Minnesota Workforce Council Association and Member LWIBS/Metro Area	Metro LWIB; Anoka, Dakota/Scott, City of Minneapolis, Hennepin/Carver, Washington, Ramsey LWIBS, and their ABE, MnSCU Customized Partners	Regional Area Economy Report	Luke Works	Ongoing

Funder of Regional Capacity-Building	Workforce Service Area Members/Key Partners	Title/Focus	Convener	Timeline
Blandin Foundation	Grand Rapids Chamber of Commerce is leading community and economic development strategy with input from CEP, City of Duluth, and Northeast WSAs, as well as MnSCU campuses		Paula Frings	Current Project
DEED		Demand-Driven Training, Business Services University, Enterprise Network System Analysis, Others		
Minnesota Development Conference	Sponsors are DEED, MnSCU, U of MN, MWCA, and GWDC			

Attachment C - Training

WSA	TYPE OF TRAINING					
1 - Northwest Private Industry Council						WIA Incentive
2 - Rural Minnesota Concentrated Employment Program	Porter					WIA Incentive
3 - Northeast Minnesota					Northland Works	WIA Incentive
4 - City of Duluth						
5 - Central Minnesota	Porter	National Center for Education and the Economy				
6 - Southwest Minnesota	Porter	National Center for Education and the Economy				
7 - South Central	Porter					
8 - Southeastern Minnesota	Porter		Aspen Sectoral Boot Camp	Business Leadership Network (DOL)	Northland Works	Lead on DOL Community Based Job Training Grants
9 - Hennepin/Carver	Porter					
10 - City of Minneapolis						
12 - Anoka County	Porter					WIA Incentive
14 - Dakota/Scott						
15 - Ramsey County	Porter		Corporation for a Skilled Workforce/Network for Innovation by WIBS			
16 - Washington County	Porter					
17 - Stearns-Benton Employment and Training Council	Porter	National Center for Education and the Economy	Aspen Sectoral Boot Camp			
18 - Winona County	Porter				Regional Grow Grant/WI	

Attachment D - Certification Regarding Lobbying

Applicants must review the requirements for certification regarding lobbying included in the regulations cited below before completing this form. Applicants must sign this form to comply with the certification requirements under 34 CFR Part 82, "New Restrictions on Lobbying." This certification is a material representation of fact upon which the Department of Education relies when it makes a grant or enters into a cooperative agreement.

As required by Section 1352, Title 31 of the U.S. Code, and implemented at 34 CFR Part 82, for persons entering into a Federal contract, grant or cooperative agreement over \$100,000, as defined at 34 CFR Part 82, Sections 82.105 and 82.110, the applicant certifies that:

- (a) 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 any agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with the making of any Federal grant, the entering into of any cooperative agreement, and the extension, continuation, renewal, amendment, or modification of any Federal grant or cooperative agreement;
- (b) 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 grant or cooperative agreement, the undersigned shall complete and submit Standard Form - LLL, "Disclosure Form to Report Lobbying," in accordance with its instructions;
- (c) The undersigned shall require that the language of this certification be included in the award documents for all subawards at all tiers (including subgrants and contracts under grants and cooperative agreements) and that all subrecipients shall certify and disclose accordingly.

As the duly authorized representative of the applicant, I hereby certify that the applicant will comply with the above certification.

NAME OF APPLICANT	PR/AWARD NUMBER AND/OR PROJECT NAME
Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development – Vocational Rehabilitation/Rehabilitation Services – General	Title I
PRINTED NAME AND TITLE OF AUTHORIZED REPRESENTATIVE	
Dan McElroy, Commissioner	
SIGNATURE	DATE
Original Submitted to U.S. Department of Labor	Original Signed by Dan McElroy, April 23, 2007
ED 80-0013	06/04

Attachment E - Certification Regarding Lobbying

Applicants must review the requirements for certification regarding lobbying included in the regulations cited below before completing this form. Applicants must sign this form to comply with the certification requirements under 34 CFR Part 82, "New Restrictions on Lobbying." This certification is a material representation of fact upon which the Department of Education relies when it makes a grant or enters into a cooperative agreement.

As required by Section 1352, Title 31 of the U.S. Code, and implemented at 34 CFR Part 82, for persons entering into a Federal contract, grant or cooperative agreement over \$100,000, as defined at 34 CFR Part 82, Sections 82.105 and 82.110, the applicant certifies that:

- (a) 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 any agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with the making of any Federal grant, the entering into of any cooperative agreement, and the extension, continuation, renewal, amendment, or modification of any Federal grant or cooperative agreement;
- (b) 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 grant or cooperative agreement, the undersigned shall complete and submit Standard Form - LLL, "Disclosure Form to Report Lobbying," in accordance with its instructions;
- (c) The undersigned shall require that the language of this certification be included in the award documents for all subawards at all tiers (including subgrants and contracts under grants and cooperative agreements) and that all subrecipients shall certify and disclose accordingly.

As the duly authorized representative of the applicant, I hereby certify that the applicant will comply with the above certification.

NAME OF APPLICANT	PR/AWARD NUMBER AND/OR PROJECT NAME
Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development – Vocational Rehabilitation/Rehabilitation Services – General	Title VI-B
PRINTED NAME AND TITLE OF AUTHORIZED REPRESENTATIVE	
Dan McElroy, Commissioner	
SIGNATURE	DATE
Original Submitted to U.S. Department of Labor	Original Signed by Dan McElroy, April 23, 2007
ED 80-0013	06/04

Attachment F - Certification Regarding Lobbying

Applicants must review the requirements for certification regarding lobbying included in the regulations cited below before completing this form. Applicants must sign this form to comply with the certification requirements under 34 CFR Part 82, "New Restrictions on Lobbying." This certification is a material representation of fact upon which the Department of Education relies when it makes a grant or enters into a cooperative agreement.

As required by Section 1352, Title 31 of the U.S. Code, and implemented at 34 CFR Part 82, for persons entering into a Federal contract, grant or cooperative agreement over \$100,000, as defined at 34 CFR Part 82, Sections 82.105 and 82.110, the applicant certifies that:

- (a) 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 any agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with the making of any Federal grant, the entering into of any cooperative agreement, and the extension, continuation, renewal, amendment, or modification of any Federal grant or cooperative agreement;
- (b) 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 grant or cooperative agreement, the undersigned shall complete and submit Standard Form - LLL, "Disclosure Form to Report Lobbying," in accordance with its instructions;
- (c) The undersigned shall require that the language of this certification be included in the award documents for all subawards at all tiers (including subgrants and contracts under grants and cooperative agreements) and that all subrecipients shall certify and disclose accordingly.

As the duly authorized representative of the applicant, I hereby certify that the applicant will comply with the above certification.

NAME OF APPLICANT	PR/AWARD NUMBER AND/OR PROJECT NAME
Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development – Vocational Rehabilitation/Rehabilitation Services – Blind Agency	Title I
PRINTED NAME AND TITLE OF AUTHORIZED REPRESENTATIVE	
Dan McElroy, Commissioner	
SIGNATURE	DATE
Original Submitted to U.S. Department of Labor	Original Signed by Dan McElroy, April 23, 2007
ED 80-0013	06/04

Attachment G - Certification Regarding Lobbying

Applicants must review the requirements for certification regarding lobbying included in the regulations cited below before completing this form. Applicants must sign this form to comply with the certification requirements under 34 CFR Part 82, "New Restrictions on Lobbying." This certification is a material representation of fact upon which the Department of Education relies when it makes a grant or enters into a cooperative agreement.

As required by Section 1352, Title 31 of the U.S. Code, and implemented at 34 CFR Part 82, for persons entering into a Federal contract, grant or cooperative agreement over \$100,000, as defined at 34 CFR Part 82, Sections 82.105 and 82.110, the applicant certifies that:

- (a) 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 any agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with the making of any Federal grant, the entering into of any cooperative agreement, and the extension, continuation, renewal, amendment, or modification of any Federal grant or cooperative agreement;
- (b) 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 grant or cooperative agreement, the undersigned shall complete and submit Standard Form - LLL, "Disclosure Form to Report Lobbying," in accordance with its instructions;
- (c) The undersigned shall require that the language of this certification be included in the award documents for all subawards at all tiers (including subgrants and contracts under grants and cooperative agreements) and that all subrecipients shall certify and disclose accordingly.

As the duly authorized representative of the applicant, I hereby certify that the applicant will comply with the above certification.

NAME OF APPLICANT	PR/AWARD NUMBER AND/OR PROJECT NAME
Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development – Vocational Rehabilitation/Rehabilitation Services – Blind Agency	Title VI-B
PRINTED NAME AND TITLE OF AUTHORIZED REPRESENTATIVE	
Dan McElroy, Commissioner	
SIGNATURE	DATE
Original Submitted to U.S. Department of Labor	Original Signed by Dan McElroy, April 23, 2007
ED 80-0013	06/04

Attachment H - Certification Regarding Lobbying

Applicants must review the requirements for certification regarding lobbying included in the regulations cited below before completing this form. Applicants must sign this form to comply with the certification requirements under 34 CFR Part 82, "New Restrictions on Lobbying." This certification is a material representation of fact upon which the Department of Education relies when it makes a grant or enters into a cooperative agreement.

As required by Section 1352, Title 31 of the U.S. Code, and implemented at 34 CFR Part 82, for persons entering into a Federal contract, grant or cooperative agreement over \$100,000, as defined at 34 CFR Part 82, Sections 82.105 and 82.110, the applicant certifies that:

- (a) 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 any agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with the making of any Federal grant, the entering into of any cooperative agreement, and the extension, continuation, renewal, amendment, or modification of any Federal grant or cooperative agreement;
- (b) 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 grant or cooperative agreement, the undersigned shall complete and submit Standard Form - LLL, "Disclosure Form to Report Lobbying," in accordance with its instructions;
- (c) The undersigned shall require that the language of this certification be included in the award documents for all subawards at all tiers (including subgrants and contracts under grants and cooperative agreements) and that all subrecipients shall certify and disclose accordingly.

As the duly authorized representative of the applicant, I hereby certify that the applicant will comply with the above certification.

NAME OF APPLICANT	PR/AWARD NUMBER AND/OR PROJECT NAME
Minnesota Department of Education	Adult Education and Family Literacy (AEFLA)
PRINTED NAME AND TITLE OF AUTHORIZED REPRESENTATIVE	
Alice Seagren, Commissioner	
SIGNATURE	DATE
Original Submitted to U.S. Department of Labor	Original Signed by Alice Seagren, April 25, 2007
ED 80-0013	06/04

Attachment I - Tables

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Attachment K - Acronyms, Abbreviations, and Definitions

Acronym	Definition
24/7	Twenty-four hours a day/seven days a week
3R	Rigor, Relevance, and Results
AAS	Associate in Applied Science
ABAWD	Able-bodied Adults without Dependents
ABE	Adult Basic Education
ACSI	American Customer Satisfaction Index
ACT	Assertive Community Treatment
ADA	Americans with Disabilities Act
AEFLA	Adult Education and Family Literacy Act
aka	also known as
ASL	American Sign Language
ATB	Adjustment to Blindness
BCD	Business and Community Development
BEP	Business Enterprise Program
BLIND, Inc.	Blindness: Learning In New Dimensions, Inc.
BLN	Business Leadership Network
BLS	Bureau of Labor Statistics
BSF	Basic Sliding Fee
C3	Connecting Youth with Communities and Careers
CareerInfoNet	Career Information Network
CARF	Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities
CBO	Community-based Organization
CEP	Concentrated Employment Program
CFR	Code of Federal Regulations
CIL	Center for Independent Living
CJS	Creative Job Search
coopetition	cooperative competition
CoP	Communication of Practice
CRM	Customer Relationship Management
CRP	Community Rehabilitation Program
CRS	Customer Registration System
CSPD	Comprehensive System of Personnel Development
CSS	Customer Satisfaction Survey
CTIC	Community Transition Interagency Committee
CY	Calendar Year (January 1 through December 31)
DEED	Department of Employment and Economic Development (Minnesota Department of)

Acronym	Definition
DHS	Department of Human Services (Minnesota Department of)
DLI	Department of Labor and Industry
DOA	Department of Administration (Minnesota Department of)
DOER	Department of Employee Relations (Minnesota Department of)
DOL	Department of Labor
DRA	Deficit Reduction Act
DSA	Designated State Agency
DSU	Designated State Unit
DVM	Doctor of Veterinary Medicine
DVOP	Disabled Veterans Outreach Program
DW	Dislocated Worker
DWP	Diversionary Work Program
E & T	Employment and Training
e.g.	for example
EBP	Evidence Based Practice
ED	Economically Disadvantaged
EE	Extended Employment
ELT	English Language Training
EMC	Employee Management Committee
EN	Employment Network
EOO	Equal Opportunity Officer
ESL	English as a Second Language
ESP	Employer Services Partnership
ETA	Employment and Training Administration
FBCO	Faith-based and Community Organization
FBO	Faith-based Organization
FFY	Federal Fiscal Year (October 1 through September 30)
FPG	Federal Poverty Guidelines
FSET	Food Support Employment and Training
FTE	Full-time Equivalents
GATE	Growing America Through Entrepreneurship
GED	General Equivalency Degree
GROW	Growing Regional Opportunities in Wisconsin
GWDC	Governor's Workforce Development Council
i.e.	that is
ID	Identification
IDEA	Individuals with Disabilities Education Act
IEP	Individual Education Plan
IEP	Individual Employment Plan
IIIP	Individual Interagency Intervention Plan
IMT	Interagency Management Team
IPE	Individual Plans for Employment
ISEEK	Internet System for Education and Employment Knowledge

Acronym	Definition
ISS	Individual Service Strategy
ITA	Individual Training Accounts
JAWS	Job Access With Speech
JOBZ	Job Opportunity Building Zones
JTPA	Job Training Partnership Act (former)
K-12	Kindergarten through 12 th Grade
KSA	Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities
LEP	Limited English Proficient
LMI	Labor Market Information
LPN	Licensed Practical Nurse
LTN	Literacy Training Network
LVER	Local Veterans Employment Representative
LWIB	Local Workforce Investment Board
MDE	Minnesota Department of Education
MDH	Minnesota Department of Health
MEC	Minnesota Employment Center
MFIP	Minnesota Family Investment Program
MHFA	Minnesota Housing Finance Agency
MHRA	Minnesota Human Rights Act
Minn. Stat.	Minnesota Statute
MIS	Management Information System
MJB	Minnesota's Job Bank
MJSP	Minnesota Job Skills Partnership
MJSPB	Minnesota Job Skills Partnership Board
MLC	Minnesota Literacy Council
MLR	Migrant Labor Representative
MMD	Materials Management Division
MN	Minnesota
MNOSHA	Minnesota Occupational Safety and Health Administration
MnSCU	Minnesota State Colleges and Universities
MnSIC	Minnesota State Interagency Committee
MnTAP	Minnesota Transition Assistance Program
MOE	Maintenance of Effort
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
MS	Master's
MSFW	Migrant and Seasonal Farmworker
MSU-M	Minnesota State University–Mankato
MWCA	Minnesota Workforce Council Association
NAFTA	North American Free Trade Act
NALS	Section D
NET	National Employment Team
NGA	National Governor's Association
NRS	National Reporting System

Acronym	Definition
O*NET	Occupational Information Network
OAA	Older Americans Act
ODEO	Office of Diversity and Equal Opportunity
OJT	On-the-Job Training
P/T	Professional/Technical
P-12	Preschool through 12 th Grade
PACER	Parent Advocacy Coalition for Education Rights
PIC	Private Industry Council
PL	Public Law
PY	Program Year (July 1 - June 30)
RAAT	Resource Area Advisory Team
RCEP	Rehabilitation Continuing Education Program
RED	Regional Economic Development
RFP	Request for Proposal
RS	Rehabilitation Services
RSA	Rehabilitation Services Administration
SAAP	State Average Annual Pay
SBDC	Small Business Development Center
SCSEP	Senior Community Service Employment Program
SCSU	St. Cloud State University
SDA	Service Delivery Agency
SE	Supported Employment
SMI	Serious Mental Illness
SPARQ2-L	Senior Community Service Employment Program Performance and Results QPR System - version 2
SRC	State Rehabilitation Council
SRC-B	State Rehabilitation Council for the Blind
SSA	Senior Services of America, Inc.
SSA	Social Security Administration
SSB	State Services for the Blind
SSDI	Social Security Disability Insurance
SSI	Supplemental Security Income
STIW	Statewide Transition Interagency Workgroup
SWOC	Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Challenges
SYV	Shared Youth Vision
TAA	Trade Adjustment Assistance
TANF	Temporary Assistance for Needy Families
TAP	Transition Assistance Program
TBI	Traumatic Brain Injury
TEGL	Training and Employment Guidance Letter
TG	Targeted Group
TRA	Trade Readjustment Assistance
U of M	University of Minnesota

Acronym	Definition
U.S.	United States
UI	Unemployment Insurance
USDA	United States Department of Agriculture
VETS	Veterans Employment and Training Service
VR	Vocational Rehabilitation
WARN	Worker Adjustment and Retraining Notification
WC	Workers Compensation
WDD	Workforce Development Division
WDU	Workforce Development Unit
WF1	Workforce One
WFD	Workforce Development
WIA	Workforce Investment Act
WINS	Workforce Information System
WIRED	Workforce Investment in Regional Economic Development
Work-Flex	Workforce Flexibility
WOTC	Work Opportunity and Welfare-to-Work Tax Credit
WRIS	Wage Record Interchange System
WSA	Workforce Service Area
WSP	Work Search Plans
YMCA	Young Men's Christian Association
YWCA	Young Women's Christian Association

Attachment L - *Director's Insight*

In January of 2007, Bonnie Elsey, Director of the Workforce Development Division (WDD) within the Department of Employment and Economic Development, began sending the *Director's Insight* newsletter to all staff within the division. The newsletter is designed to keep all employees in WDD informed of new and evolving strategies and tactics within the division. She wants to make sure division employees are aware of the division's key initiatives and the impact they may have on their jobs.

All *Director's Insight* newsletters are available to employees through email and then are posted on the division's internal website.

Copies of the newsletters follow.

Volume 1, Issue 1

January 26, 2007 Volume 1, Issue 1

Workforce Development Division

"Improving Minnesota's global economic competitiveness by providing career information and employment and training services to businesses and workers"

Director's **Insight**

A newsletter for employees of the Workforce Development Division from Director Bonnie Elsey

This week, the final Demand-Driven Training for all field and HQ staff was held. I hope that this training has helped you understand some of the driving forces behind our strategic plan for WDD, and sparked some ideas on how we can implement and support a demand-driven workforce development system.

For those of you who could not take part in the training, I want to make sure that you understand the definition of the term "Demand-Driven." In the private sector, it's called "Market-Driven." In a nutshell, a "Demand-Driven" system means that the needs of businesses are driving the information and services we provide to job seekers.

In future emails, I will be informing you of specific initiatives that are underway to help us make the change to a demand-driven system. For this first edition, I would like to highlight one aspect of our plan, which is initiating "sector strategies" throughout the state. A "sector strategy" brings regional business, education, workforce, and economic development organizations together to support the workforce needs of a key industry. The goal is to identify common solutions for businesses in a specific industry with similar issues to assure we are not duplicating our efforts. Many times this can be accomplished by working with industry associations which represent industry specific issues or groups of businesses from the same industry. This does not preclude working with individual businesses.

Dan McElroy, Kathy Sweeney, and I along with other state agency leaders are engaged in dialogue with the National Governor's

Association Academy for Sectoral Development to create sector strategies in Minnesota. DEED and our Adult Basic Education and Carl Perkins partners have pooled our WIA Incentive resources with technical assistance from the Governor's Workforce Development Council to provide grants to regional leaders to plan and/or implement sector strategies. The National Center for Education and the Economy has selected three WorkForce Service Areas – WSA 5 Central MN, WSA 6 Southwest, WSA 17 Stearns-Benton – to plan together regional industry sector strategies.

What does this mean to you? If you work in a WorkForce Center, you may have access to more precise information on the workforce needs of a key industry sector so you can provide information to job seekers in a new way. Local Workforce Boards may chose to target program resources to specific industries. At the state office, planning guides and monitoring efforts could focus on industry sector approaches in addition to traditional programmatic approaches. Several WDD directors and managers will be engaged in sector strategies and will keep you informed of the impact they may have on your jobs, so stay tuned!

I can't end this first email newsletter without expressing my deep appreciation for all of the work that you do that is making a difference for people and businesses. As always, I am looking forward to working with you as we move forward!

Director's **Insight**

A newsletter for employees of the Workforce Development Division from Director Bonnie Elsey

New skills test to be piloted in WorkForce Centers

One of the most exciting initiatives that our Division is embarking on is a pilot project with the Minnesota Department of Education, Adult Basic Education (ABE). ABE is testing a new assessment tool developed by the U.S. Chamber of Commerce called the National Work Readiness Credential (NWRC).

Why is this important? Many entry-level workers lack basic employability skills. Businesses in Minnesota and across the country have been asking for a way to screen applicants for basic skills; specifically math, reading, problem solving, and communication skills. The U.S. Chamber of Commerce responded by creating the NWRC to assess these essential skills. Over the last couple of years, the Chamber worked with a few states to validate this tool, and recently offered opportunities to more states to help them roll out the NWRC. The St. Paul ABE Hubbs Center applied to become a part of this roll out.

As DEED has been working to align its resources across state departments, we learned of the pilot and decided to partner with ABE. ABE is working hard to provide more work based contextual learning in its classrooms. ABE centers are located across Minnesota and can add resources to the work that is done in WorkForce Centers to prepare entry-level workers for employment. DEED is assisting with the NWRC test by providing financial resources to ABE to develop curriculum to teach to these skills, and to provide training to DEED/Job Service staff to proctor the test.

Phase 1 has already started at the ABE Hubbs Center in St. Paul, where students are being assessed with the NWRC. Phase 2 will begin sometime in March, and will involve DEED and ABE management selecting WorkForce Center sites and additional ABE sites to pilot the NWRC. Job Service staff in these WorkForce Centers will be trained as "proctors" to administer the NWRC instrument to job seekers. By the time this is implemented, a cross-referral agreement will have been worked out between ABE and WorkForce Centers that will provide guidance on who should be referred to services between our two agencies.

There are numerous potential benefits to Minnesota's job seeker and business customers. If job seekers have the basic skills for entry level work, retention could increase which could save business millions in recruitment and training. WorkForce Centers could concentrate their limited resources on training for higher level skills that are in demand in the labor market.

We plan on operating this pilot for about six months, during which time we will evaluate the NWRC to see if businesses are satisfied with the skill levels of applicants who pass the credential. ABE will evaluate the curriculum to see if it is helping job seekers pass the NWRC. We will also explore the feasibility of adding the Work Keys assessments and training in order to allow our customers to "stack" credentials to assist them in finding proper employment and education. You will be hearing much more about this as it rolls out!

For more information about the NWRC, go to www.uschamber.com/icw/strategies/workreadinesscredential.htm.

Director's **Insight**

A newsletter for employees of the Workforce Development Division from Director Bonnie Elsey

LENS™ search engine will revolutionize MN Job Bank

The final development stages of the new Minnesota Job Bank (MJB) are underway, and it's time to get excited about the launch of this powerful new recruiting system. According to our current projections, testing of the new MJB will begin in mid April, and the system will go live in June.

For those of you who use MJB, the new MJB will be a real treat for you. We absolutely had to improve the match between job seekers and employers, and needed to utilize technology that can do this automatically. Today's technology allows us to make better matches on multiple criteria at one time. We also needed to make it easier for employers to post job orders and for job seekers to post resumes.

DEED had an ambitious list of improvements, and we selected a product called LENST™ to be the "match engine" for the new MJB. Developed by a California company called Burning Glass, LENST™ is a state-of-the-art tool for matching resumes and job orders.

LENST™ is an "intelligent" search engine that does more than match key words but searches in context with multiple criteria to find the best candidates. For example, when an employer views a list of matched resumes, LENST™ ranks the resumes in order of most to least qualified. It also uses its "intelligence" to automatically code job orders and resumes, saving staff time and increasing accuracy while allowing for better labor market information.

One of the most exciting features of LENST™ is its ability to identify alternative careers for job

seekers by "reading" the resume and suggesting other careers! Rather than looking only at skills, LENST™ analyzes complex behavioral patterns in resumes, and uses those patterns to build predictive models for employment. LENST can find job openings that require similar skills, job openings that resemble the candidate's most recent job, and job openings that others with similar career paths have successfully migrated to. This will be an outstanding tool for our job seeking customers.

In addition to these new features, the new MJB will be easier to use for employers and job seekers. The system is intuitive, and will offer help at the point of need. The process for entering and editing resumes and job orders has been shortened and simplified. Job orders and resumes can be easily uploaded into the system so less time is spent on manually entering data.

Get ready to launch! A training schedule is being set up for all DEED and WorkForce Center partner employees who use MJB. The training is scheduled to take place across the state in May. Announcements about training dates and locations will come from the DEED Regional Administrator for your area.

DEED's goal is to make MJB the primary recruiting service in Minnesota for employers and government and could increase employee retention by providing better candidates. Job seekers will be delighted to find job opportunities they may not have considered. What a premier tool for citizens of Minnesota! You don't have to wait much longer!

Director's **Insight**

A newsletter for employees of the Workforce Development Division from Director Bonnie Eisey

MN Job Bank report produces surprising results

Last week I wrote about the upcoming release of the new Minnesota Job Bank. This week, I would like to summarize a special project DEED commissioned to develop a plan to market our new job bank. The project was entitled "Positioning and Promoting Minnesota's Job Bank (MJB)" written by Carlson Brand Enterprise.

Carlson Brand Enterprise is a free consulting service from the University of Minnesota's Carlson School of Business where MBA students and faculty conduct brand research for companies and organizations.

The goal of this project was to provide strategic recommendations for increased usage of the new MJB. To accomplish this, the project conducted background research and benchmarked MJB against "competitors," surveyed and interviewed over 500 employers and job seekers, analyzed the market, and presented recommendations to DEED management on March 8.

The project's background research provided some fascinating results because they challenge some long held perceptions about MJB. For example, more employers were aware of MJB than job seekers. Among job seekers who were aware of MJB, 64% of them had never used it. Among employers who were aware of MJB, 50% of them did use MJB. Likewise, employers were much more satisfied with the service than job seekers.

Most jobseekers that do not use MJB cited their reason as their perception that MJB is for "low skill" candidates and jobs. Employers generally value MJB, but they also frequently demand better qualified candidates.

When comparing to "competitors" such as Monster and other state job banks, the study found the new MJB meets industry service standards, but struggles to meet industry business standards. In other words, the technology ranks with the best in the industry, but we need to address business practices to get resumes and job postings in our system.

This fits with an analysis Chris Raudenbush recently did on our current system. The analysis revealed disappointing statistics in which many job seekers register, but few submit viewable resumes.

The report concluded that the greatest opportunities for increased use of MJB among job seekers is the 18-34 year old demographic. For business, the opportunities are with medium-sized employers with 20-249 employees.

This is a new opportunity for us to change our business practices to assure we are getting the quality applicants and job orders for MJB. DEED employees at HQ and in the WorkForce Centers can be the "sales force" behind MJB.

I hope that you are looking forward to embracing this role and helping us make MJB Minnesota's number one recruiting service!

Director's **Insight**

A newsletter for employees of the Workforce Development Division from Director Bonnie Elsey

Minnesota hopes to get WIRED!

Is Minnesota about to get WIRED? I'm not talking about Caribou Coffee adding more franchises across the state. I'm talking about the Department of Labor's "Workforce Innovations in Regional Economic Development" grants.

WIRED is a new Department of Labor (DOL) initiative that focuses on the role of talent development in driving regional economic competitiveness. The WIRED framework promotes a closer connection between research and development, entrepreneurship and post-secondary education to train workers for jobs of the future.

WIRED regions are determined by industry clusters rather than state, county, Workforce Service Area (WSA) or municipal boundaries. WIRED can support multiple jurisdictions that cross traditional political boundaries.

Four regions in Minnesota submitted concept papers to DEED to be considered for WIRED grants. Two of them, northeast Minnesota and southeast Minnesota, outlined exciting strategies to transform their regional economies. DEED selected these two proposals to submit to the DOL for funding.

The northeast Minnesota proposal outlines a strategy where new skills will help the timber and iron ore industries transform into producing natural resource-based products for global markets. Their two-part strategy is to retain jobs in the traditional natural resources industries while growing advanced manufacturing jobs.

This proposal presents a fantastic analysis of industry clusters and demonstrates how all industries will benefit from an investment in these key areas.

Southwest Minnesota's "Agriculture Triangle" focuses on renewable energy and bio-science as a way to transform 36 counties in southwest, south central and west central Minnesota. The regional strategy positions "The Triangle" and Minnesota as a world leader in value-added agricultural products and renewable energy through talent development, entrepreneurship, and innovation.

I believe that Minnesota has an excellent chance of receiving a WIRED grant. Both concept papers build on existing partnerships between workforce development, economic development, education, foundations, and private industry.

Even if we are not selected for this round of grants, there is great value in modeling the framework of WIRED proposals. WIRED encourages regional leaders in workforce, economic development, education, and the private sector to align resources to transform their economies to compete globally.

A lot of time was spent on these concept papers by many partners, but I would like to especially commend the work that was put in by DEED employees Lisa Hughes, Connie Ireland, Cameron Macht, Jim Wroblewski, Matt Schoeppner, and DEED's communications office.

Director's **Insight**

A newsletter for employees of the Workforce Development Division from Director Bonnie Elsey

MJB, NWRC, Demand Driven, WIRED Updates

Check out the new look for the Minnesota Job Bank (MJB)! DEED has decided on a new logo (center of the page) to reflect the new features and technology in MJB. We believe that this logo has more appeal to the 18-to-34 year old demographic (see the March 1 issue of *Insight*), which is key to increasing the numbers of resumes available to employers. We are in the process of obtaining the new domain names MinnesotaWorks.net, MinnesotaWorks.com, and MinnesotaWorks.gov, but will also keep our current domain mnworks.org. If you have any comments or concerns about the new logo, send an email to Judson Person, MJB Project Manager at JPERSON@ngwmail.des.state.mn.us.



The MJB project continues to progress as planned, and the "train-the-trainer" sessions for regional MJB trainers are about to start.

Planning for the National Work Readiness Credential (NWRC) pilot is moving forward (see the February 2 issue of *Insight*). Six pilot sites have been selected and two test Proctors have been identified for each site. The sites are St. Paul, Dakota County North, Mankato, Winona, St. Cloud, and Hibbing. Adult Basic Education (ABE) programs in these areas have been notified.

A meeting of the pilot sites will be held in mid-May. The latest information on the NWRC testing and curriculum will be presented, and issues such as local

referral mechanisms, marketing to employers, who will be targeted, and how to evaluate progress will be discussed. There is still much to do, but we are moving forward!

Minnesota's WIRED grant proposals (see the April 4 issue of "Insight") were submitted on time thanks to a Herculean effort from state and local staff. I would like to personally thank the following DEED employees who went way beyond the call of duty and spent many hours writing, editing and submitting the WIRED proposals: Connie Ireland, Jim Wroblewski, Cameron Macht, Matt Schoepfner, Lisa Hughes, Betsy Harmon, Kathy Sweeney, Kyle Temme, Deanne White, Shelley Landgraf, Dave Niermann, Kyle Uphoff, Chris Raudenbush, and Cheryl Klein. You deserve a raise!

The WIRED proposals are posted at www.deed.state.mn.us/workforce/wired.

Demand-driven projects from around the state are being submitted to us (see the January 26 issue of *Insight*). I would like to thank all of you who are working on these projects and for your interest in improving services to customers. Project materials are being posted at <http://www.deed.state.mn.us/bestpractices/>. This website was created to disseminate "promising practices" in workforce development, starting with the demand-driven projects, so we can all learn from each other. Feel free to browse and use these creative strategies in your local areas.