

## MWCA Best Practices

WIB Name/WSA Workforce Development, Inc. Southeast Minnesota/WSA 8

Submitted by Randy Johnson, Executive Director

This Best Practice submission highlights the recent collaboration efforts and the results obtained by Workforce Development, Inc.:

- Working with area economic development, higher education, and K-12 school systems as well as local, county, state and national leadership, the SE MN WIB has identified a dynamic list of “Hot Jobs” of regional high growth industry sectors and positions. Using the “Hot Jobs” list, we utilize a scholarship process to target Workforce Investment Act (WIA) resources to support training for the “hot jobs”.
  - In 2004, the SE MN WIB, in partnership with the WIB of WSA 18 (Winona County), convened a workgroup of 27 individuals (including leaders from economic development, education, key business leaders and legislators), to identify and examine existing data about the region. The board convened these regional leaders, known as the Regional Employment and Economic Development (REED) group, to react to the data, develop vision statements and propose both stakeholder roles and actionable next steps. We were recently awarded a FIRST grant through DEED to update and further develop this information.
  - Aligning the Business Services Specialists (BSS’s) from the various WorkForce Centers with the SE MN WIB. At the direction of the WIB, the BSS’s have become members of the Industry Sector and Human Resource Taskforce Subcommittees. In addition, the BSS’s participated in the development of the REED report and are currently partnering with regional employers in developing on-the-job training programs for demand positions.
  - The SE MN WIB was instrumental in convening a collaborative of the many higher education institutions in the 20-county region to help coordinate training offerings and customized training opportunities.
  - Collaboration between Industry Sector Subcommittees, local employers and higher education has led to the development of several pre-vocational “academies” helping low-wage incumbent workers and disadvantaged populations prepare for entry into higher-skilled healthcare and manufacturing positions.
  - We were a part of DOL’s National Business Learning Partnership program, where we were paired in a mentor/mentee relationship with Lane County WIB in Oregon.
  - Our work within the National Network of Sectoral Partners has helped us clearly define our sectoral strategies and apply them within a variety of collaborations.
  - Recently, we have developed collaborations with a tri-state regional innovations group known as Seven Rivers; this group includes the 11 counties of Southeast Minnesota, nine counties of Western Wisconsin and eight counties in Northeast Iowa, working together for our mutual economic development.
- Jobseeker or employer impact (ie: benefits, outcomes for jobseekers)
    - By collaborating with our partners, we are able to better target our own resources to insure jobseekers are getting the skills necessary to compete for the “hot jobs” regional employers have difficulty filling.

- Community impact (ie: benefits, outcomes for non-jobseekers)
  - By interacting with local community members, our organization has gained visibility in those communities. Community leaders recognize the resources we have available and our role in being able to assist local communities remain competitive.
  - Our collaborations have led to new initiatives and partnerships with community colleges which helps us to leverage their resources to also forward our own mission.
  
- Identification of those involved, including collaborators
  - For “Hot Jobs”: economic developers, business partners, LMI resources
  - For FIRST/Regional Asset Mapping: WSA 18 Winona County WIB, Winona State University, rural community leaders, ABE consortium, Southern Minnesota Initiative Foundation, political leaders and legislators
  - Business Service Specialists in 6 regional WorkForce Centers.
  - Southeast MN Training Consortium: Four community colleges, Winona and Mankato State Universities.
  - Pre-vocational Academies: currently operating in partnership with the regional community colleges and numerous long-term care and manufacturing business partners in seven communities.
  - Our National Business Learning Partnership mentor WIB: Lane County Oregon Workforce Board
  - 7-Rivers tri-state regional innovations group with LaCrosse Wisconsin WIB, Northeast IA WIB and Winona County WIB.
  
- Leveraging/alignment of outside resources
  - We have leveraged our collaborations to obtain funding from DOL’s Community Based Job Training program, the Minnesota Legislature special pilot project to target manufacturing skills in four counties, Minnesota Job Skills Partnership, DOL’s Re-entry Program for youth offenders through Western Wisconsin, GWDC sectoral program in partnership with SW Private Industry Council’s Renewable Works! Project,
- Ideas for replication/lessons learned
  - We have successfully replicated the Pre-employment Healthcare Academy into several communities and are currently further replicating the model into Pre-employment Manufacturing Academies.

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