



TWIN CITIES GREATER METROPOLITAN WORKFORCE COUNCIL

Workforce RACE Summary Report and Action Agenda *September 2007 Update*

In September 2006, the Greater Metropolitan Workforce Council (GMWC) released its biennial assessment of the Twin Cities workforce and accompanying action agenda. **The Workforce Regional Analysis for a Competitive Economy (RACE) Report** provided a comprehensive analysis of the metropolitan economy, specifically as it relates to our ability to deliver

a skilled and available workforce for area employers. The RACE Report also identified an Action Agenda to engage a wide variety of stakeholders in strengthening the regional economy.

The Workforce RACE Action Agenda outlined three broad strategies and several action steps inside each of those strategies. During the past year, individual metro area Local Workforce Boards and other stakeholders have advanced these strategies through their own actions; and, collectively through the Greater Metropolitan Workforce Council. Below are the strategies, action steps, and selected highlights of accomplishment toward advancing the strategies.

STRATEGY I and ACTION STEPS: **Strengthen our education & workforce preparation pipeline** through: A) Increased investments in early childhood learning; B) Supporting / expanding efforts to strengthen K-12 completion rates specifically for low-income and lower-performing student groups including New Americans; C) Supporting / expanding school-age workforce-focused services, specifically summer jobs programs; D) Educating future workers about career assessment and planning; and, E) Supporting more affordable and accessible education for low-income/low-skilled workers.

PROGRESS HIGHLIGHTS:

- Dakota County significantly strengthened its approach to youth, delivering workforce services information online through an expanded "Youth Zone" which attracts thousands of young people seeking job, education, and career information.
- *The Minneapolis Promise* is a coordinated effort designed to eliminate barriers to post-secondary education and improve job readiness for Minneapolis youth. These efforts have created a ladder of opportunity for youth consisting of summer jobs for youth, career and college centers in every Minneapolis high school, and need-based college financial aid. This summer, more than 2007 Minneapolis youth worked in summer jobs as part of *The Minneapolis Promise*.
- Washington County built upon earlier successes with the BattleBots program -- helping identify engineering and related fields as a possible career path for hundreds of students through a highly successful extra curricular activity including competing nationally.

- Through the Hennepin County Employment Intervention Program, the WIB has supported a number of initiatives including support for the Minnesota Internship Charter School. This funding has resulted in the training and workforce preparation of mostly Somali immigrant youth to provide them with a variety of work readiness and basic skills preparedness.

STRATEGY II and ACTION STEPS: **Fulfill high-growth & high-demand occupations in key sectors including:** A) Manufacturing; B) Nursing/ Health Care; C) Transportation; D) IT Security; and others.

PROGRESS HIGHLIGHTS:

- Ramsey County, on behalf of the GMWC, received a grant from the Governor's Workforce Development Council to replicate the successful M-Powered training program in metalforming, providing training to meet business needs in Ramsey, Anoka, and Washington counties.
- Efforts to coordinate training and placement in the construction industry were explored by both the Ramsey County and Minneapolis Workforce Investment Boards. A metropolitan approach may be supported in the near future, pending financial support to do so.
- In support of the manufacturing sector, the Central Minnesota WIB completed a pre-apprentice "boot camp" in manufacturing, creating training and advancement opportunities that, together with other efforts, provide a strong base of future workers for the regional manufacturing sector.
- Facilitated in part by the GMWC, discussions continued among metro area educators, business leaders and others regarding ongoing healthcare sector needs. As funding opportunities become available, an ad hoc team of professionals remains ready to respond.

STRATEGY III and ACTION STEPS: **Build our regional advocacy voice on workforce issues** by: A) Promoting regular flow of information and analysis on regional economic trends; B) Promoting regular flow of information and analysis on regional disparities and inequities; and, C) Identifying legislative champions for workforce development concerns.

PROGRESS HIGHLIGHTS:

- The Mayors of Minneapolis and Saint Paul, together with leaders from the Greater Metropolitan Workforce Council (GMWC), presented an overview of the metropolitan economy in connection with GoodWill/Easter Seals "Power of Work" week. An audience of nearly 200 businesses, jobseekers, and service providers learned about the regional economy and how the workforce system is responding to meet labor market needs.
- With participation from the GMWC, Wilder Research is launching a new website to highlight key indicators of the health and vitality of the region. GMWC members have participated in shaping the "work and economy" section of the site, which is expected to launch in 2008.

The GMWC has issued an open invitation to strengthen the regional economy – RSVP today by contacting your Local Workforce Investment Board or learn more at: www.mncounties3.org/mwca/gmwc.htm.