



The Minnesota Workforce Council Association believes workforce development is the key economic development issue in our economy. Minnesota is competing nationally and internationally to maintain and further the exceptional quality of life that has defined the state. The availability of a highly skilled workforce is essential in this endeavor.

MWCA represents the cooperative efforts of the local workforce development system across the state. Each area's workforce board and local elected officials provide leadership and direction for local workforce development programs, which are tailored to meet the specific needs of their communities. The Association provides a central forum for the partners to discuss common interests, develop policy consensus, share successful strategies and maintain lines of communication with state and federal governments. MWCA also supports training and technical assistance for Association membership and line staff providing the direct services to customers.

## **MISSION**

It is the mission of the Minnesota Workforce Council Association to provide Minnesota with a skilled and competitive workforce through engaged and proactive local elected officials, workforce boards, and One-Stop partners.

## **GOVERNING PRINCIPLES**

The Minnesota Workforce Council Association:

- represents board chairs, board members and staff, local elected officials, Workforce Service Area directors, and local program providers in the state of Minnesota by working collaboratively, with the central focus being current and emerging workforce and business.
- supports actions that are in the best interest of local economies, including working across boundaries, to meet the needs of jobseekers and employers.
- acknowledges collective leadership in workforce development and encourages the leveraging of resources through local collaborations that include education, business, economic development, workforce development and other key community partners.
- values strong positive partnerships with the Governor's Workforce Development Council, the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development, the Department of Human Services, the Job Skills Partnership Board and other state-level entities and acknowledges our collective role in workforce development.
- promotes local decision making and accountability through processes that are value-added, cost effective, and provide a proven return on investment.
- will align work plans to be consistent with the direction set in the Governor's Workforce Development Council's Re-imagining Minnesota's Workforce Development System document, which provides a framework to promote strategic alignment between Minnesota's public, private and community resources to competitively position Minnesota's citizens and businesses for increased and sustained economic success.
- supports local Workforce Boards through effective association management sharing of best practices; and ongoing communication, training and policy development.

## PRIORITY INITIATIVES

***Promote Principle Business of Local Workforce Service Areas  
Support Workforce Board Members, Local Elected Officials, and Staff  
Encourage Strategic Planning Processes  
Strengthen Strategic Innovation***

### **Promote Principle Business of Local Workforce Service Areas**

The Minnesota Workforce Council Association provides a central forum for discussion and support to local leaders. The organization advocates for the system as a whole and seeks opportunities to promote acknowledgement of, and assistance for, workforce services that are the primary responsibility of our members. MWCA acknowledges primary services of local areas as: improving and expanding job search, assessment and career planning; solving employers' workforce needs; and facilitating training opportunities for job seekers.

#### *Provision of Quality Job Search, Assessment and Career Planning Services*

##### *Issue:*

The MWCA considers job search, vocational assessment and career guidance to be the principal functions of Workforce Service Areas. A steady reduction in federal Wagner-Peyser funds devoted to job seeker services and an overall reduction in WIA Adult funding have significantly reduced resources available to provide these core services to the universal customer. The continually changing employment market requires that strong job search, vocational assessment and career guidance are available to all youth and adults so that career planning and training matches employer demand.

In addition to working with the universal customer, local areas strive to closely align and integrate programs such as Minnesota Family Investment Program (MFIP) and services to other special populations (including senior citizens, individuals with disabilities, youth, ex-offenders and veterans) with the goal of providing high-level services to all who need assistance.

##### *Outcomes:*

- The WorkForce Center System is identified as an elite source for job search, career assessment and career guidance information and services.
- Job search assistance is available to all job seekers to ensure the best use of their talent.
- Career assessment is available so that job seekers understand their skills and abilities.
- Career guidance is available to ensure job seekers move quickly into appropriate career paths to meet employer demands.

#### *Concentrate Employer Services on Solving Employer's Workforce Needs*

##### *Issue:*

Helping employers solve their workforce needs is the primary focus of WorkForce Center and Business Service staff assigned to employer services. Staff should be concentrating their efforts on helping employers who are identified and targeted by local workforce boards. A premier state operated labor exchange system should be promoted. Employers should have convenient access to information and services which are designed to meet their workforce needs.

##### *Outcomes:*

- The Minnesota labor exchange system will be the premier job search system in Minnesota.

- Employers will identify the Workforce Center System as the primary source for solving their hiring and workforce needs.

### *Facilitate Training Opportunities for Job Seekers*

#### *Issue:*

WorkForce Centers play an integral role in ensuring the success of jobseekers by facilitating and funding training opportunities whenever available and appropriate. Local staff assists WorkForce Center clients by assessing opportunities, identifying training resources and assisting them in obtaining aid.

#### *Outcomes:*

- Training opportunities will be aligned strategically with business needs and will advance local and regional strategies outlined by Workforce Boards.
- Resources will be identified and leveraged to provide training opportunities which will elevate the competitiveness of jobseekers and their employers.

### **Support Workforce Board Members, Local Elected Officials and Staff**

#### *Issue:*

MWCA strives to increase visibility of the workforce boards at the local level and strengthen collaborative efforts at the State level. MWCA builds the capacity of the local workforce boards in Minnesota by providing opportunities for leadership development and sharing of best practices. Additionally, MWCA supports mechanisms for staff development to effectively deliver services.

#### *Outcomes:*

- Collaborative assessment of factors and trends influencing the workforce development system in Minnesota.
- Efficient, effective and prompt response to policy, legislative and workforce development issues.
- Enhanced working relationships and strategic alignment between federal, state and local partners in the workforce system.
- Stakeholders draw on best practices to explore and implement innovative strategic planning and service delivery and staff has needed skills to function at a high level. Internal evaluation assessments continue to yield increasingly positive results.

### **Strategic Planning Processes**

#### *Issue:*

Workforce boards lead in planning and establishing alliances with partners and determining what initiatives should be implemented regionally. MWCA facilitates and promotes planning processes that are demand-driven, founded on data and take into account local expertise and knowledge; and encourages our partners at the State level to ensure that reporting and planning requirements are structured in a way that supports these efforts.

#### *Outcomes:*

- Strengthened alignment between the state and local level in regard to strategies, systems, and networks
- Continued effectiveness in the leveraging of local and other resources
- Innovative collaboration on shared challenges and opportunities.
- Strengthened public and private investment in workforce development.
- Local authority and decision making leads to agile, unique and timely responses which positively impact local economic and community development.

- Increased return on investment.

## **Strategic Innovation**

### *Issue:*

MWCA will support a locally and data driven, sector based approach that is business-led, puts a common face toward employers by sector, and makes use of the local system and its rich history of regional collaborations to most effectively deliver innovative services based on physical proximity.

The local workforce system's governance, delivery infrastructure, and financial responsibilities are organized at the direction of local elected officials, with boards serving as the focal point for leadership and accountability. At the same time, entities work across geographic boundaries to address the needs of regional economies in an efficient, effective and timely manner.

This system is ideal for engaging in sector work, as it can be flexible and shift to proactively address the needs of various industries. We see excellent opportunity to continue serving employers while acknowledging incumbent workers and jobseekers as a primary constituency.

### *Outcomes:*

- Workers are redeployed more rapidly.
- The cost of hiring is decreased.
- Retention of employees is increased.
- Employer connections are streamlined.
- Resources are aligned more effectively.
- The size and quality of regional labor pools are expanded.
- Responsiveness and accountability of the system is enhanced.
- Unemployment Insurance premiums are lower.
- Regions are more competitive in relocating or expanding businesses.
- High wage jobs in growing occupations are increased.

<b>NEXT STEPS</b>
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~~Approval by MWCA Operations Committee~~ Approved 6/28/07

~~Approval by MWCA Executive Committee~~ Approved 6/29/07

~~Presentation to Full Association~~ Approved 8/02/07

Identify actionable items to achieve outcomes identified in strategic plan.