
Rural Minnesota CEP, Inc.
WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD MEETING
803 Roosevelt Avenue, Detroit Lakes, MN
Tuesday, May 25, 2021

Members present: Carol Anderson, Jerry Arneson, Terry Blake, Sue Boehland, Kathy Guess, Teresa Johnson, Rebekah Kent, Darrell Lende, Don Martodam, Lori Meader, Julie Sachs, Durant Thoen Sr., John Tormanen, and Sandy Voigt (Microsoft Teams)

Members excused: Amanda Hanson, Tammy Schatz, and Eric Wittbrodt

Members unexcused: Matthew Gordon and Eloise Graves-Jallen

Staff present: Dana Gulson, Tina Jaster, Vicki Leaderbrand and Dan Wenner

Minutes

Business Committee Meeting – Tina Jaster

Ms. Jaster reviewed the reports for the month ending April 30, 2021. This included the Program Progress, MFIP County Performance Standards, WIOA Performance Standards, and Ticket to Work reports.

Call to Order – Carol Anderson

Ms. Anderson called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m.
Added to agenda: V.C. RC3 Program Year 2020 Extension

April 30, 2021 Minutes – Ms. Anderson

Moved by Don Martodam and seconded by Rebekah Kent to approve the minutes from the April 30, 2021 meeting. Vote – Ms. Anderson - yes, Jerry Arneson - yes, Mr. Blake - yes, Sue Boehland - yes, Kathy Guess - yes, Rebekah Kent - yes, Darrell Lende - yes, Don Martodam - yes, Lori Meader - yes, Julie Sachs - yes, Durant Thoen Sr. - yes, and John Tormanen - yes **Motion carried.**

Youth Council Report – Ms. Boehland

- ✓ Reviewed anticipated enrollment for summer work
 - ✓ Changes in career advising across RMCEP
 - ✓ The focus of MYP funding
 - ✓ WIOA performance review
 - ✓ Youth Council recruitment
 - ✓ Member comments on local activities and conditions
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Planning – Ms. Jaster

Wage Increase

Proposed: Beginning June 7, 2021 the wage paid for all work experience positions is increased to \$12.25. This will provide an incredible boost to the marketability of this program and will give us the opportunity to build employability skills with participants as they are more likely to stay on a worksite that offers a comparable wage.

Moved by Ms. Boehland and seconded by Ms. Kent to approve the wage increase to \$12.25 for Work Experience clients effective June 7th, 2021. Vote – Ms. Anderson - yes, Mr. Arneson - yes, Mr. Blake - yes, Ms. Boehland - yes, Ms. Guess - yes, Ms. Johnson – yes, Ms. Kent - yes, Mr. Lende - yes, Mr. Martodam - yes, Ms. Meader - yes, Ms. Sachs - yes, Mr. Thoen Sr. - yes, Mr. Tormanen - yes, and Ms. Voigt - yes Motion carried.

MYP Funding

The impact of the Pandemic on participants, worksites, and staff continues to be a deterrent to meeting our program goals. As we move into less restrictions, we are hopeful that our participants numbers will increase, and worksites will be willing to employ and mentor youth. We are requesting that we continue to allow all MYP participants the opportunity to participate in work experience activities with a priority on youth with a disability throughout the school year through May 2022.

Moved by Ms. Kent and seconded by Ms. Voigt to approve the MYP Funding as recommended by the Youth Council. Vote – Ms. Anderson - yes, Mr. Arneson - yes, Mr. Blake - yes, Ms. Boehland - yes, Ms. Guess - yes, Ms. Johnson – yes, Ms. Kent - yes, Mr. Lende - yes, Mr. Martodam - yes, Ms. Meader - yes, Ms. Sachs - yes, Mr. Thoen Sr. - yes, Mr. Tormanen - yes, and Ms. Voigt - yes Motion carried.

Minnesota Rural Career Counseling Coordinator (RC3) Program Year 2020 Extension

Due to the COVID-19 Pandemic meeting and staff expenses were lower than anticipated. RMCEP is able to request an extension to this project. As the pandemic subsides, activity will increase and RMCEP will be able to utilize this funding by the end of the year.

In partnership and collaboration, the Workforce Development Boards of Rural Minnesota CEP, Inc. (RMCEP) will continue to provide services to WSA 1 (Northwest PIC) and WSA 2 (RMCEP) related to coordinating career counseling efforts in the West Central and Northwest regions of Minnesota. These two entities currently develop and oversee the Workforce Development strategies in 26 counties. As a partner in the Minnesota Workforce System and with vast experience in sector work and Career Advising, RMCEP is well-positioned to successfully carry out the goals of the Minnesota Rural Career Counseling Coordinator (RC3) initiative as fiscal host.

Moved by Mr. Martodam and seconded by Mr. Arneson to approve the RC3 Program Year 2020. Vote – Ms. Anderson - yes, Mr. Arneson - yes, Mr. Blake - yes, Ms. Boehland - yes, Ms. Guess - yes, Ms. Johnson – yes, Ms. Kent - yes, Mr. Lende - yes, Mr. Martodam - yes, Ms. Meader - yes, Ms. Sachs - yes, Mr. Thoen Sr. - yes, Mr. Tormanen - yes, and Ms. Voigt - yes Motion carried.

Regional Planning – Dan Wenner

Short-Term/Long Term Deliverables

Mr. Wenner reviewed the Short-Term and Long-Term Deliverables - CWIC in the categories of Business, Community, Service Design and Policy & System.

- ✓ CWIC met April 29th.
- ✓ Looked at progress of the deliverables.
- ✓ Fargo Human Relations Committee has reached out to the CWIC to present their work plan and bias assessment tool. They also want to coordinate community programming.
- ✓ Partnership for Health has reached out to 80 businesses to promote the I-WE. Chet Bodin will present the I-WE at the Partnership for Health meeting.
- ✓ Chet has I-WE applications from KLN and Lakes Service Coop.
- ✓ Six new members have been added to the CWIC in the last year.
- ✓ NDSCS is looking at non-traditional courses to bring people up to speed quickly.
- ✓ Career Solutions out of St. Cloud are signing an MOU with us to provide I-WE.

CWIC Action Plan

Mr. Wenner informed the group on the business plan for the CWIC.

- ✓ Business Sub-committee
- ✓ Community Sub-Committee
- ✓ Service Design Sub-Committee
- ✓ Policy & System Sub-Committee

RWA Meeting

- ✓ Kent Eken attended
- ✓ Approved I-WE application for Initiative Foundation from Little Falls
- ✓ Designing community strategies to recruit, welcome and retain residents
- ✓ Recognition of I-WE designees
- ✓ Regional Plan update
- ✓ Upcoming CareerForce monthly focus
- ✓ “Good Jobs Now” campaign
- ✓ Childcare initiatives
- ✓ CWIC updates
- ✓ CARES Act funding

Career Advising – Mr. Wenner

- ✓ Winding down Sourcewell Career Advising. We only have two Career Advisors and Amy Sjoblad left providing this service, serving Browerville, Menagha, Pillager, Verndale, Wadena, Brainerd, and Pequot Lakes. Amy will work on the year-end report.
- ✓ Finishing up HECAP projects. Fulfilled contracts, including commitments from last year.
- ✓ Working with Bernick’s Grant to help high school students explore apprenticeship in manufacturing and construction includes on-line learning, some classroom, and work based learning.
- ✓ Received a grant from Brainerd Lakes Area Community Foundation to purchase lumber for Mid-Minnesota Builder Association can sponsor four teams to compete building deer stands.
- ✓ Looking to applying for a Bremer Grant for a Career Advising effort in Parkers Prairie.
- ✓ Develop a proposal for Career Advising in Moorhead schools.
- ✓ Develop a concept for HECAP Plus in schools not served by Sourcewell.

- ✓ Environmental scan of Career Advising programs and services throughout the 26 county region.
- ✓ Clay County has committed funding for the Clay County Juvenile Justice Center and Area Learning Center through the end of the year.

Discussion on what training will be available at the Career Academy in Moorhead in the old Sam's Club building that should be open this fall.

Re-Opening – Ms. Leaderbrand

Ms. Leaderbrand announced that RMCEP will fully reopen to the public on June 1st with all staff working in the office (exception – doctor excused). Protocols will still need to be in place with sanitizing hands and workspace, hand washing, and barriers in place. Masks are always encouraged. If staff have been fully vaccinated, they will not be required to wear a mask. If they have not been vaccinated, they will be required to continue to wear your masks until the CDC lifts this requirement. Future meetings will be highbred.

American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 Fact Sheet – Ms. Leaderbrand

The U.S. Department of the Treasury announced the launch of the Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds, established by the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021, to provide \$350 billion in emergency funding for eligible state, local, territorial, and Tribal governments. Treasury also released details on how these funds can be used to respond to acute pandemic response needs, fill revenue shortfalls among these governments, and support the communities and populations hardest-hit by the COVID-19 crisis. With the launch of the Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds, eligible jurisdictions will be able to access this funding in the coming days to address these needs.

Local governments should expect to receive funds in two tranches, with 50% provided beginning in May 2021 and the balance delivered 12 months later. States that have experienced a net increase in the unemployment rate of more than 2 percentage points from February 2020 to the latest available data as of the date of certification will receive their full allocation of funds in a single payment; other states will receive funds in two equal tranches.

Ms. Meader stated that if we have an area that is lacking in broadband services, let her know to see if she can help. Ms. Anderson suggested to write letters to Counties Administrators for funds to help to help in broadband.

Director's Report – Ms. Leaderbrand

- ✓ We are required to post our minutes to our website, Ms. Leaderbrand asked if we can post in draft until we have signed minutes. By consensus, the Workforce Development Board agreed.
- ✓ The House and Senate reached an agreement but not all the details. State Dislocated Worker and Competitive Grants on hold until session is finished.
- ✓ Talked with Senator Eken again about HECAP funding – not in House Bill.

- ✓ One Stop Operator RFP is out and on NWPIC's website.
- ✓ Regional and Local Plans will be submitted by end of month. Have not received any comments.
- ✓ MAWB Summer Meeting is August 4th & 5th will be virtual. Let Ms. Leaderbrand know if you would like to attend.
- ✓ Incumbent Worker Trainings going very well. Strategy worked regarding DW funding.
- ✓ IFAs were submitted on time 4/29 under prejudice. Since: in process of obtaining required signatures through DocuSign via Sean Bibus. SSB is questioning one of the sites, even though they originally approved. Letter of protest has been written, signed by both Board Chairs and submitted to Commissioner Grove with a cc to Warfa, Tollefson, Chaffee, Majors, Baglio, Janatopoulos.
- ✓ Spring Job Fairs were well done and well received. Took the time to speak with employers attending Little Falls, Wadena, and Detroit Lakes. Employers excited to be attending, having difficulty finding employees. Some hired on the spot. Bemidji and Brainerd similar reports with Ms. Jaster attending. Brainerd had about 160 job seekers in attendance. Alexandria job fair tomorrow. Fergus Falls is having a Job Fair this fall and Moorhead this summer
- ✓ Attended Golden Shovel update meeting, made some change on the website.
- ✓ Classified new job: Assistant Team Leader. In process of hiring Program Manager West, Administrative Services Assistant, and a MFIP Job Counselor.
- ✓ 403(b) is in process

Policy & Issues Committee

- ✓ Ms. Leaderbrand opened the conversation with an update on the IFA process in Rural Minnesota CEP and expressed difficulty negotiating with a DEED partner. Rural Minnesota CEP's Board is writing a letter to Commissioner Grove to express that they do not think the process was fair and equitable.
- ✓ Lorrie Janatopoulos, CareerForce Director, said that if IFAs are at an impasse, the State Funding Mechanism is an option. She reiterated that no decisions have been made by DEED to exit brick-and-mortar locations.
- ✓ Jinny Rietmann, Executive Director of Workforce Development, Inc. mentioned that the State Funding Mechanism might be an option for their local area. Their contribution cannot get much higher and three of their locations are being vacated by Vocational Rehabilitation Services. None of their IFAs are signed.

Rural Directors Meeting

- ✓ Deputy Commissioner Hamse Warfa stated that DEED has no intention of getting out of all its leases. Due to the pandemic, DEED is reflecting on how to make services better, including virtual and in-person. He indicated that it would not be practical to make all services virtual. Agreements for virtual services and leases need to be discussed. An apology was made for the rumor regarding the Hutchinson center shutdown
- ✓ Another topic discussed was IFAs and the lack of good faith communication from some DEED units. When asked if DEED will be contributing to the IFAs, Hamse indicated that he had no information to add to the conversation but would relay the concerns to the DEED Operations Team.
- ✓ There have not been a lot of enrollments into the Dislocated Worker Program stemming from the Job Service UI call referrals. With Job Service staff making UI calls, there has been nothing to offer in-person clients. It was asked if it would be possible for the calls and services to be offered in conjunction with each other. Hamse agreed that he is not in favor of Job Service spending 100 percent of its time on Dislocated Workers and that they are an integral part of serving many other participants.

A farewell to Ms. Boehland on her retirement and thanked her for her service to RMCEP on the Workforce Development Board and Youth Council. Also, today is Dana Gulson's last Workforce Development meeting as Office Manager due to retirement. Ms. Anderson thanked her for all her help with the Board.

Business Committee Report – Ms. Jaster

Ms. Jaster provided a summary of the Business Committee's review of reports earlier this morning.

Celebrate Wins – Ms. Leaderbrand

Ms. Leaderbrand encouraged the Board members to review the articles on the Job Fairs and Good News that are in their packet.

Adjourn – Ms. Anderson

The meeting adjourned at 11:55 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,



**Terry Blake, Secretary
Workforce Development Board**