

2009

**Local Unified Plan
UPDATE**

For Minnesota's

**INTEGRATED LOCAL
WORKFORCE INVESTMENT SYSTEM**

Program Year 2009

**– Submitted by –
Workforce Investment Board**

Name: WSA 3 Northeast MN Office of Job Training

Instructions

In accordance with WIA Law §118, this document provides directions to Minnesota's Local Workforce Investment Boards (WIBs) for preparing the *PY-2009 Local Unified Plan (LUP) UPDATE for an Integrated Workforce Investment System*. The PY-2009 LUP UPDATE covers the time period of July 1, 2009 to June 30, 2010. WIBs are required to submit an annual LUP to the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED) in order for their Workforce Service Area (WSA) to receive funding under the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) and the State Dislocated Worker program.

The PY-2009 LUP UPDATE guidance is composed of three sections:

- **Section A: “Regional Strategies.”** DEED will use this section to benchmark the WIB's engagement in regional economic development strategies, as well as how the WIB conducts business beyond the narrow focus of WIA programs.
- **Section B: “Program Operations.”** This section collects information required by law in order for WIBs to receive their base funding.
- **Section C: “System Operations and Attachments.”** This section includes information needed to ensure that the local workforce delivery systems meets certain legal requirements as well as complies with agreements between DEED and Workforce Service Areas (WSAs). This section also asks for information needed to respond to requests from legislative leaders, local leaders, DEED's executive management, and other interested parties.

Please note: While a provision for 'no change from last year' was not provided as an option for responses, if there are truly no changes from last year for a particular response, feel free to 'cut and paste' your response from the PY-2008 LUP. Sections of your PY-2009 response may be used for other purposes and your local plans will be posted on the web as is, so any responses with 'no change from last year' may not provide appropriate information or confuse readers.

2009 LUP UPDATE Requirements

- **LUP UPDATE Due Date:** May 15, 2009 (1)

- **Deliverables:**

1. Electronically submit, via e-mail, LUP UPDATE Sections A, B, and C, including all attachments to: Kyle.Temme@state.mn.us and;
2. Mail one (1) hard copy of the Certification and Assurances which includes a signature page with original signatures to:

*Kyle Temme
Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development
Workforce Development Division – Location #036
1st National Bank Building
332 Minnesota Street – Suite E200
St. Paul, MN 55101-1351*

¹ If you cannot make the May 15, 2009 deadline, provide information on why an extension is needed and the duration of the requested extension to Peggie Hicks at Peggie.Hicks@state.mn.us or 651-259-7577. PY-2009 LUP UPDATE extension requests must be received by May 15, 2009 to be considered for approval.

Section A: Regional Strategies

One of the state's strategies for 2007-2010 is to invest in WIBs who perform at a strategic level and who are leading or participating in innovative approaches to a wide range of regional challenges and opportunities. This section will be used to describe the WIB's engagement in regional development strategies, as well as how the WIB conducts business beyond the narrow focus of employment programs. DEED will use this information for guidance on allocating special grants and discretionary and incentive funds.

The response to questions A.-1. thru A.-4. must be limited to no more than 9 pages, not including attachments.

1. How does the WIB identify and analyze regional economies?

Workforce Service Area 3 is unique in Minnesota in that its boundaries are identical to the corresponding economic planning area. Building on this existing synergy, the WIB considers the city of Duluth to be an important, though separate, component of the regional economy along with Northwest Wisconsin. This broad geography shares a number of common attributes and challenges which contribute to our inherent interdependencies and realization that we are a basic economic region reliant upon our natural resources, common workforce needs and skills, and a business and education infrastructure that builds and supports sustainable wealth. The region's distinctiveness includes a unique and innovative network of interdependent industry clusters traditionally centered on natural resource production that have continued to transform and accentuate the region's economic landscape for more than a century.

The region is tied together by more than its political geography. The region is defined by a historically-driven economic relationship between the Iron Range and the ports of Duluth and Superior. Economic and labor shed analysis show that this 17-county region functions as a larger region that is economically interdependent. For example, a recent labor shed analysis of Duluth shows that the city draws workers from all seven counties of Northeastern Minnesota plus nearly 5,000 workers from Wisconsin.

Economically, the transportation lines that spring from the Port of Duluth still drive significant economic interaction between the core cities of Duluth and Superior and the counties across the entire region and the Iron Range. Duluth and Superior in turn are reliant on the natural resources of the larger region in the form of mining, forest products and tourism for a significant part of its own economy. Part of this is seen in the federal government's decision in 2002 to include Carlton County in the Duluth/Superior Metropolitan Statistical Area that also includes all of St. Louis County in Minnesota and Douglas County in Wisconsin.

How is this information used to identify the key industries and demand occupations within your WSA?

The Northland Region's traditionally high concentration of employment in forestry and mining continues today, but the character of these industries along with the region's economic and demographic landscapes are transforming dramatically. Global competition in the region's industries continues to be the foremost challenge to economic prosperity along with a relative lack of economic diversity. Since its peak in the 1970s iron ore mining employment has steadily declined. The increase in recent years in demand for natural resources in China and India, however, has led to growing investment in research and development and escalating demand for high precision

engineers and technicians. Despite the current slow down, it is expected the iron ore industry will make a full recovery, especially once foreign markets rebound from the global recession. In addition, Minnesota Steel Industries, LLC, is still moving forward with building a steel making facility within the Iron Range and will be the only vertically integrated steelmaking operation in North America. The production of iron nuggets have for the first time made regional ore resources independent of blast furnace mills, a declining method of steel production.

Although these are exciting and significant developments, the WIB agrees that these larger, global companies have the least, or at least different, need for public workforce development resources compared to small businesses that don't offer nearly the compensation packages that these larger firms can. These are the highest paying jobs in the region which historically have no trouble being filled. However, these companies do have significant concern for their future replacement workforce a good portion of their current workforce nears retirement.

Therefore, as openings occur in the mines or when new developments come to fruition, the immediate need will be to focus on local businesses experiencing what the WIB has defined as 'secondary impact', or the loss of their workforce to higher paying opportunities with better benefits. However, consideration is needed to develop an effective pipeline to ensure that the ore production facilities and similar industrial firms have access to a trained, available workforce once theirs begin to retire en masse. Working hand in hand with local educational institutions from K-12 and beyond, the WIB aims to focus its effort on strategies that address the needs of these companies and their demand occupations.

In addition, through much thoughtful discussion, the WIB has reasoned that all industries operating in Northeast Minnesota are key to the economy in unique ways. Each industry brings something to the region either through sheer numbers of jobs, high wages, or their importance in supporting or augmenting other industries. Traditional analysis tends to overlook other important ways an industry can impact a region. For example, the Utilities industry is one that is routinely cited as a key industry in the region. No doubt it is, but consider its location at the bottom of the list of total employees as well as relatively near the bottom of the list in terms of total wages. The retail industry ranks higher in levels of employment and total wages, yet retail is consistently discounted as a key industry.

In fact, retail may be a prime example of an industry that will suffer significantly from the secondary impact of the need to fill other, better paying jobs available through retirements or development. If so, it presents the possibility of providing work opportunities for people with little to no work experience such as those on public assistance or youth, ultimately providing a stepping stone into the workforce and in turn, more lucrative opportunities.

To this end, the WIB does not wish to limit resources to a particular industry or set of key industries but rather focus on businesses or industries that will suffer from a workforce deficit due to worker migration. Moving forward, LMI data outlining demand or high-pay, high-growth occupations will certainly be used to inform career counseling at the job seeker level, but big-picture strategy will lend attention to the issue of this secondary impact in the years to come, no matter the industry.

How is this information incorporated into your service delivery strategies?

Key industries as identified by the WIB are promoted to clients at all levels who are

considering training or undergoing career assessment. Career counselors are updated on opportunities identified by the WIB and other sources such as Business Service Specialists and routinely review the occupations in demand list as generated by labor market analysis. Ultimately clients in WSA 3 are counseled to enter occupations that suit their personality, interests, and skills, but information on demand occupations and growing industries is used to guide career and training decisions.

Clients who seek employment and training services have varying objectives: some come in with a clear picture of their occupational goal and others come in requiring more intensive guidance. For those with defined goals, career counselors focus on examining whether the occupation presents viable local opportunities and what it takes to prepare for said occupation. In many cases, the information provided during counseling sessions causes clients to revise their goals and seek opportunities that better suit them. This critical information includes interest, skill, and ability assessment and labor market information, as well as the goals set by the WIB. For those that do not have a particular occupation in mind, the role of career counselors is even more critical. These resources are merely a starting point of determining the best direction for these clients to head.

Perhaps the most important component of service delivery is the incorporation of the knowledge counselors have of their own community. The process of career guidance is very counselor-intensive and so information about key industries and local economic factors is an integral part of the foundation on which decision-making is based. The vast majority of the time clients seek jobs close to home. Whether they have a clear picture of their goal or not, having knowledge of the way the local economy works is critical to making sound career decisions. Ultimately, the WIB is vital to defining the important aspects of the local economy that relate to career planning as well as learning from those in the field.

2. In a separate attachment, based on your analysis of regional economies, please provide a list of the key industries in your WSA.

3. Provide the following information for each regional development initiative that the WIB is involved in:

I. Regional Readiness Initiative:

a) Identify and define the mission or objective of the initiative, including the timeframe for implementing the initiative.

The Range Readiness Initiative (RRI) is a collaborative regional framework of public and private resources and leaders that have organized out of the need to respond to an array of opportunities and challenges associated with large scale development projects on the Iron Range. Key partnerships within the Arrowhead Growth Alliance and Northland Works Partnership saw the broader potential and envisioned the evolution of RRI into an ongoing regional readiness collaborative that can further strengthen relationships between business development, workforce development and education. The structure of this initiative includes four working teams, each with a specific focus: workforce issues, housing, community readiness, and economic opportunities. This collaborative is overseen by the broad Strategy Team that includes key players in regional organizations sit including representatives from the Northeast Minnesota WIB. This is an ongoing initiative, but has been funded in part by a FIRST grant.

b) Identify key players/partners and define their roles, including the role of the WIB.

The RRI membership is diverse, regionally focused, and represents over 100 public and private regional leaders, including representatives of major businesses that are positioned to contribute and drive the RRI strategy process in several capacities. Organizations that are represented on the Strategy Team which oversees the initiative include Iron Range Resources, Arrowhead Regional Development Commission (ARDC), The Northspan Group, Range Association of Municipalities and Schools (RAMS), Arrowhead Economic Opportunity Agency (AEOA), DEED, Iron Range Economic Alliance (IREA), Area Partnership for Economic Expansion (APEX), Northeast Higher Education District, Northeast Entrepreneur Fund, Minnesota Power, NE MN Office of Job Training, The NE MN Workforce Investment Board, UMD Center for Economic Development, Blandin Foundation, Northland Foundation, the Natural Resources Research Institute, Duluth Workforce Development, Duluth/Superior Seaport Authority, Great River Energy, several county development representatives, and the Development Association (Superior/Douglas County, WI). This team monitors and guides the work of the four working teams as well as identifies where additional resources are needed.

Responsible for identifying issues, challenges, strategies, and resources related to the labor force, the Workforce Team includes representation from the Workforce Investment Boards from Northeast Minnesota and Duluth as well as representation from the MnSCU, Organized Labor, APEX, AEOA, University of Minnesota Duluth, K-12, and the Northeast Minnesota Office of Job Training.

The Housing Team is responsible for strategies to accommodate residential growth in both the short and long term across the region. This team includes County Housing and Redevelopment Authorities, MN Housing Finance Agency, MN Housing Partnership, Greater MN Housing Fund, Kootasca, AEOA, Range Board of Realtors, Itasca Board of Realtors, Itasca Housing Coalition, and the Northern MN Builders Association.

The Community Resources & Readiness Team assesses how well communities will be able to address potential impacts related to large scale developments in their areas. They will assess and identify needs and funding to accommodate growth impacts both temporary and long-term. Members of this team include the ARDC, St. Louis, Itasca, Lake and Cook counties, Consulting Engineers, RAMS, DEED, IREA, Chambers of Commerce, Iron Range Resources, MnDOT, USDA, and the Public Facilities Authority.

The Opportunities Development Team is charged with maximizing local and regional business development and new regional wealth retention by evaluating potential large scale projects' major supplier needs, as well as spin-off and value-added business development opportunities. This information will then be communicated to existing businesses, entrepreneurs, investors, the education community, and local and regional development, recruitment, and financing professionals. Member of this team include Iron Range Resources, APEX, Northeast Entrepreneur Fund, UMD Center for Economic Development, Itasca Economic Development Corporation, the Northland Connection, Minnesota Power, DEED, NRRI, The Development Association, Minnesota Technology, Iron Mining Association, Mining Minnesota, and Itasca Technology Exchange.

A fifth overarching team is currently being organized to focus on how the issues and opportunities identified by each team are communicated to the region. All members agree how important it is to keep this initiative as transparent as possible as well as

keep community members apprised of the process and how they can access potential opportunities. The efforts of this team will result in a comprehensive communications plan including a website and materials for distribution via newspapers, television, and radio.

- c) Summarize the status of the initiative, including the WIB's level of involvement to date.

The Teams organized under this initiative meet on a regular basis, with the work teams meeting more often than the overseeing Strategy Team. The Strategy Team meets approximately every other month, at which time they receive reports from the working teams and determine how each fits together and whether a change of focus is needed. Working teams meet on differing schedules, but each is dedicated to tackling their respective issues in a timely, comprehensive manner. The WIB is closely involved at both the Strategy Team level and in the Workforce Team and has been an active participant in all meetings of both these teams since the inception of the initiative. This includes actively influencing the scope of the workforce team and the design of its priorities and goals.

II. The Northland Works

- a) Identify and define the mission or objective of the initiative, including the timeframe for implementing the initiative.

The Northland Works' public awareness campaign has focused on increasing community understanding of the pending labor force shortage facing area employers. The mission of The Northland Works is to educate the citizens of Northeast Minnesota and Northwest Wisconsin about the upcoming career opportunities available in our region as a result of the immense numbers of retirements, new developments, and business expansions. This is an ongoing initiative with various components of implementation.

- b) Identify key players/partners and define their roles, including the role of the WIB.

The Northland Works (TNW) is a collaborative project of The Duluth Workforce Council, the Northeast Minnesota Workforce Investment Board, and the Northwest Wisconsin Workforce Investment Board. The WIBs have been the lead on this project from its inception and have brought in other taskforce members including Duluth Business University, Northeast Higher Education District, Wisconsin Indianhead Technical College, Lake Superior College, Northeast Minnesota Office of Job Training, Duluth Workforce Development, NW Wisconsin CEP, K-12 representation from several area schools, the Area Partnership for Economic Expansion (APEX), Northstar Aerospace, and MN Power. Together this taskforce oversees the project including development of publication materials and speaking to relevant groups across the region like guidance counselors, students, and business groups.

- c) Summarize the status of the initiative, including the WIB's level of involvement to date.

This is an ongoing initiative. Representatives from each WIB host and attend project meetings that oversee each facet of the project from implementation of an innovative website to the more current development of a public awareness campaign based on regional high demand, high pay occupations. In fact, the website created by this initiative has become a model for similar locally-focused career websites throughout the state. The current campaign will include a coordinated, compelling message delivered through billboards, televised public service announcements, and radio spots. Each full WIB routinely receives updates on the status of the project and are solicited

for feedback and input.

III. Regional Innovation Grant

- a) Identify and define the mission or objective of the initiative, including the timeframe for implementing the initiative.

Funded by a grant from the DOL and using the conceptual framework of WIRED, The Northland Works Partnership Region (TNWP) will establish core strategies to workforce and economic development, not only with each other, but also to create a shared economic development vision between the many economic development organizations in the region. These strategies may include communicating the transformation of opportunities taking place in the region, strengthening and transforming the region through focused education programs that are aligned with the needs of emerging and established regional industries, and creating a new economy by investing in entrepreneurship, new product development and capital investments. The end result of this project as required by the grant is a regional strategic plan that will be completed this summer.

- b) Identify key players/partners and define their roles, including the role of the WIB.

Representatives from the three regional WIBs comprise part of the Regional Leadership Board along with economic development members from the Arrowhead Growth Alliance and key leaders in education. Thus, by participating on the Leadership Board, the WIBs will oversee the goals and activities of the complete project. WIB staff comprise the 'technical team' that works behind the scenes to develop materials and analysis upon which the regional strategy will be based and in turn, are the continual link between the project and the full WIBs between Leadership Team meetings, which take place on a milestone basis.

- c) Summarize the status of the initiative, including the WIB's level of involvement to date.

The Leadership Group, comprised of WIB members and economic development and education leaders, has met once to guide the information development portion of the project. The WIB's technical staff has been steadily working to compile an array of important and relevant information to help inform the discussion at the next Leadership Group meeting in May. It is anticipated that the Leadership Group will then meet on a continual and regular basis until the regional strategic plan is developed.

4. If applicable, Complete **Attachment C**, "Workforce Investment Board Subcommittee List". See attached

Section B: Program Operations

This section collects information required by “WIA Law, Section §118: Local Plan” in order for WIBs to receive their base funding.

WIA Law reference: (Section §118)

(a) IN GENERAL. – *Each local board shall develop and submit to the Governor a comprehensive 5-year local plan (referred to this title as the “local plan”), in partnership with the appropriate chief elected official. The plan shall be consistent with the State plan.*

(b) CONTENTS. – *The local plan shall include –*

(b)(1) *an identification of –*

(A) the workforce investment needs of businesses, job-seekers, and workers in the local area;

(B) the current and projected employment opportunities in the local area; and

(C) the job skills necessary to obtain such employment opportunities;

The response to questions B.-1. thru B.-3. must be limited to no more than 5 pages.

1. Keeping the changing economy in mind, describe the workforce investment needs of your local:

a) Businesses.

In terms of skills, businesses in Northeast Minnesota need technically skilled workers - both basic computer skills and more advanced, specialized technical skills. The vast majority of businesses in the region employ 50 or less people and are less likely to have dedicated human resource staff or specific training budgets. Therefore, one of the most valuable workforce investment needs of regional businesses is a funding resource and facilities for training current and future employees to increase technical skills. Manufacturing is a good example of this need as many regional firms are attempting to make the switch to more modern, computerized equipment that requires a very specialized skill set. In general, high-level technical skills in the areas of engineering and management are increasingly needed in a variety of industries.

However, Northeast Minnesota is not unique in witnessing a severe decline in technical training opportunities at the secondary level, despite the desperate need of local employers to have access to a technically skilled workforce. An amazing resource that has recently been developed to address this need is the Applied Learning Institute, a unique partnership between several (#?) K12 districts and the local MnSCU schools of the Northeast Higher Education District. The effort is overseen by a board of school superintendents and involves sharing hands-on technical equipment and curriculum between districts and colleges. The effort entails coordinated transportation of involved students to relevant class sites, either at a high school or college and is informed by the needs of local business and industry. WSA 3 is fortunate to have this legislatively-funded pilot as a means of demonstrating what can be accomplished through open and thoughtful partnership.

In addition to specific technical skills is a pervasive need for better soft skills for both existing and prospective workers. Businesses in the region consistently report the need for applicants to have better communication skills as well as sharper basic skills such as reading and math. Businesses will also require better basic employability skills such as work ethic and interpersonal skills as we attempt to get a larger

population into the workforce to meet the demands of a declining working age population.

Perhaps more pressing a need for our smaller businesses are strategies to combat the ‘secondary impact’ of losing workers to better paying opportunities with several large-scale developments on the horizon. As the local workforce becomes more thinly available, businesses will need to employ creativity to attract and retain good workers. These businesses will need to be in tune with effective retention strategies and develop plans to promote other appealing aspects of employment that aren’t wage related like flex time and atmosphere.

Regardless of the current recessionary atmosphere or other secondary impacts, the fact remains that local businesses will be losing thousands of workers due to retirements alone in the next 3 to 5 years. This indicates a very serious need for methods to capture the tacit knowledge these workplace veterans inevitably take with them when they leave. Knowledge transfer opportunities and comprehensive documentation of this deeply held understanding of a job will play a critical part in easing this large-scale transition.

b) Job-seekers.

One of the most crucial things job seekers in Northeast Minnesota need is information with which to make wise career decisions. With so many new, skilled opportunities on the horizon coupled with a declining working-age population, thorough and detailed career planning is more important than ever before. Job seekers need to remain informed and up-to-date on current and future opportunities in a variety of industries – from impending retirements in specific fields to business expansions and new developments. Modern workforce development for job seekers requires thoughtful, strategic planning rather than a reactionary approach where we scramble to teach new skills today to fill a job of yesterday.

Communication is ultimately the most critical factor in ensuring the potential workforce has the information needed to intelligently plan. Projects such as The Northland Works public awareness campaign and the Outreach to Schools effort are based on this very foundation – creative and comprehensive ways to reach a large cross section of the potential workforce. The message must be consistent across the board and go beyond simply telling people what jobs will be available. As a region, we need to clearly articulate what skills are involved in these demand occupations, how to identify transferable skills, and effective means of obtaining new skills. Developing strategies to broadcast these needs is a wise investment in the local workforce, ultimately benefiting job seekers beyond the traditional reactionary approach.

To this end, job seekers need relevant training, including the funds to pay for it and the time to attend class and study. Job seekers need access to local colleges and technical training that matches the needs of local business and industry. We are fortunate in the region to have a community and technical college system that is tuning in to the needs of business, but there is always room for improving connections between the educational system and the public workforce development system.

Job seekers also need opportunities to better capitalize on the ‘experience’ side of the hiring equation. In many cases, experience trumps education if the circumstances are right. Providing more resources for job seekers to access internships, formal and informal apprenticeships, job shadowing, and industry mentorship would help to supplement traditional job search methods and allow job seekers to gain valuable

skills and experience. Creating these opportunities for job seekers to network with business and industry would also address a common need among job seekers – knowing the right people to find the next job.

From the employers' perspective, job seekers need better soft skills that encompass both communication and work ethic. Many job seekers who have little or no work experience don't fully realize what employers expect of them. Traditionally the soft skills arena is left up to the secondary school system or parents to impart, with no one taking real responsibility to ensure those entering the workforce are aware of the behavioral aspects of employment. Job seekers who are not taught this information or do not figure it out for themselves are at a distinct disadvantage in the workplace. Devising a coordinated, comprehensive system of teaching these skills through a partnership of K12, ABE and the local workforce development system would be another wise strategy to meet the needs of job seekers and employers alike.

Transportation is also a significant issue due to the rural nature of the region. Consistently, especially with the under prepared MFIP population, transportation is the biggest barrier one has to joining the workforce. Outside of more populated cities where a dial-a-ride service exists, there are no transportation options whatsoever. A new ride share pilot program offers some hope for a solution, but the program relies heavily on volunteer drivers who are paid mileage through a special grant. Should this program discover success however, residents who historically battled with transportation may indeed find themselves with more ready access to the workplace.

c) Workers.

Workers in Northeast Minnesota need opportunities to keep their skills current to remain competitive in this ever-changing global economy. This means access to the appropriate courses, flexibility from their employer to attend training, and the means to pay for it. The vast majority of businesses in the region are small (over 95% according to the 2005 U. S. Census County Business Patterns), many without the resources to pay for employee training.

Workers also need access to health benefits, daycare and transportation. Health benefits largely depend on the resources of a particular company and as much of our economic base are small businesses, we have a large contingent of uninsured. In addition, opportunities for shift work present further needs for daycare outside of normal working hours. This includes the need for daycare resources for workers who wish to enter training in the evenings in order to upgrade skills, especially for single working mothers.

All workers need the opportunity to learn new skills to access advancement opportunities. Career laddering will become more important than ever as people migrate to new, more challenging opportunities leaving behind jobs that could be filled by those moving into the workplace. Clearly articulating what the opportunities are along each rung of the career ladder is quite an undertaking, but one that could benefit workers, job seekers, and businesses alike

2. Describe the current and projected employment opportunities in your local area.

Times have changed significantly since baby boomers first entered the workforce. Back then a job in the mines meant dirty, back-breaking work and a job in manufacturing was tedious, low-wage and unskilled. The perception that our region has nothing to offer but low-wage, low-skilled jobs is a myth. Northeast Minnesota is

home to some very technical occupations that will soon require a large, significantly skilled local workforce. Mining, Utilities, and Paper Manufacturing are among the top five industries in the state with the highest proportion of workers aged 45+. Many of our largest employers like UPM-Kymmene/ Blandin Paper now require a two-year degree for entry level employment. Mining companies are increasingly reliant on sophisticated technology and seek employees with solid computer skills and a wide knowledge base. Manufacturing has evolved from manual machines to high-tech, computerized equipment. Jobs within these industries are some of the best paying in the region, too.

Of the top 50 in demand jobs in Northeast Minnesota, 32 offer a wage that's higher than the regional average wage of \$15.16 per hour. Almost half of these high-paying jobs require an Associate's degree or less and are projected to have above average growth, including Registered Nurses, Mechanics Supervisors, Compliance Officers, Licensed Practical Nurses, Construction Managers, Surgical Technologists, Medical Lab Technicians, Fire Fighters, Metal Fabricators, Radiological Technicians, Medical Equipment Repair, Water Treatment Plant Operators, Dental Hygienists, and Heavy Equipment Mechanics. These are precisely the kinds of jobs that will be promoted through the Workforce Center system as viable applications of Workforce Investment Act funds.

However, according to The Northland Works public awareness campaign, there will be more than 75,000 open jobs in our region within the next decade due to retirements. This number does not include jobs created by business expansion or large-scale projects on the horizon. These projects represent the biggest concentration of large-scale projects since the major taconite plants were built. Although the current recession may slow down the rate of attrition, the region is still facing a higher than average retirement rate. This indicates a dire need for skilled workers from engineers and management to equipment operators and technicians.

Estimates of labor force needs surrounding these projects include more than 4,000 construction workers over the next four years. This is a staggering statistic considering there are just over 7,000 construction workers total in our region, including Duluth. Permanent opportunities are also impressive, with estimates around 1500 new jobs between four major developments alone. These estimates do not include expansions of local suppliers or spin-off businesses. In fact, job opportunities created by these auxiliary and support businesses may far outpace the number of jobs created by the developments themselves.

The task is laid before us in establishing what exactly these jobs will be or with which companies. This largely can only be determined as needs occur, but in light of current economic conditions, it's even more difficult to make predictions. Therefore, the Workforce Investment Board intends to develop a strategy to monitor and address the impact caused by shifts in the workforce, new developments, and retirements.

3. Describe the job skills necessary to obtain such employment opportunities.

Generally speaking, Northeast Minnesota has an increasing need for more technical skills that encompass both basic and intermediate computer skills and skills specific to a particular job or industry. In many cases these needs exist in industries one would not typically assume have pressing needs for specialized technical skills such as manufacturing and forestry.

Manufacturing is becoming far more modernized with the introduction of robotics and

automation. Although automation might imply a decreased need for human skill, there is still an important deficit of people with the skills to monitor and run CNC machines and other high-tech equipment. The same can be seen in the forestry and logging industry where the introduction of highly sophisticated logging equipment requires equally sophisticated (and currently rare) technical skills on the part of the operator. Regardless of the technological progress in these industries, local firms will not be able to take advantage of these advances if they do not have access to a workforce with the required expertise and training opportunities.

Of the jobs included in the current and future in-demand occupations that offer a higher than average wage and require a two-year degree or less, many of them are in the healthcare industry. These occupations require specialized skills that can only be obtained through training like registered nursing, medical lab technicians, and dental hygienists. Skills common to these occupations include effective communication, ability to analyze needs to determine treatments, and using reason to problem solve. Of course these skills are common to most any occupation, but the skill to diagnose and work effectively with others is particularly critical in the healthcare industry.

The more industrial careers also require strong skills in critical thinking and problem solving, such as heavy equipment mechanics and water treatment plant operators. These occupations also require the skill to accurately read gauges and dials to monitor equipment, mechanical skills, accurate spatial relation perception, and the ability to communicate effectively with others. It is hoped that the Applied Learning Institute will help to bolster the current lack of these technical skills in graduating youth.

Most in-demand occupations require a certain amount of specialized skills and training as mentioned above, but they all require ‘soft skills’ such as dependability, accountability, problem solving, and critical thinking. Local employers indicate a common need for these basic skills, citing the apparent lack of them particularly in younger generations. As we face an aging workforce and, hopefully, the inclusion of younger people in the workplace, generational expectations for soft skills warrant analysis and widespread education of employers.

Law reference:

(b)(2) a description of the one-stop delivery system to be established or designated in the local area, including –

(A) a description of how the local board will ensure the continuous improvement of eligible providers of services through the system and ensure that such providers meet the employment needs of local employers and participants;

(B) a copy of each memorandum of understanding described in section 121(c) (between the local board and each of the one-stop partners) concerning the operation of the one-stop delivery system in the local area;

The response to questions B.-4. thru B.-7. must be limited to no more than 1 page per question.

4. How does the WIB ensure the continuous improvement of its providers of WIA Title I-B?

In northeastern Minnesota, continuous improvement activities are coordinated and reported back to the WIB through the One Stop Committee. The primary goal of the committee is to represent the WIB in fulfilling the responsibility of supervising Workforce Center operations, performance, planning and policies and responding to

operational issues and concerns. The committee maintains a high level of feedback to the full board. Committee meetings occur from a minimum of three times a year up to every other month. Minutes are taken at each meeting and shared with the full board.

Continuous improvement activities in which Workforce Center staff participate will be related to this committee as they occur by the Partner Group. The Partner Group is responsible for ensuring continuous improvement on a more regular basis than the meeting schedule of the One Stop Committee allows, so the Partner Group reports to the One Stop Committee which in turn reports to the full board.

The hierarchy of sharing information goes one step further with the Operations Committees in each local Workforce Center. The Operations Committee meets monthly in each Workforce Center and consists of one representative from each partner agency, including state staff where they exist. Workforce Center operations are discussed from a front-line staff perspective and meeting minutes are forwarded to the Partner Group for review and discussion. Each Partner Group meeting includes discussion of specific questions, issues, or requests as identified by the Operations Committee from ordering supplies to continuous improvement activities or requests. Pertinent issues that stem from this process are reported to the One Stop Committee and in turn, the full board where appropriate.

While at first glance this arrangement may seem complicated, it in fact engages staff at every level and is an effective way of sharing information across the region. It is no mean feat to track the happenings in four Workforce Centers that are geographically distant. This formal system of staying in touch with center operations, including continuous improvement opportunities, has worked well.

5. List the continuous improvement activities in which your local providers participated in PY 2007-2008. (i.e., Demand Driven Training, Microeconomics of Competitiveness Training, Sector Academies, Resource Area Advisory Team, etc.)

The following continuous improvement activities were participated by the local providers 2008-2009 in northeast Minnesota:

- Resource Area Advisory Team
- Annual MFDIP/DWP Conference
- “Respect in the Workplace” staff training
- Dislocated Worker Round Table Conference
- St Louis County Health and Human Services Conference
- LMI Demand Occupations Training
- Working with Customers with Disabilities Training
- Marketing, What Works
- Beyond Black and Blue—Domestic Violence
- Kids Plus Youth Services
- Veterans training, Returning Veterans
- Improving staff skills to work with difficult clients
- Microeconomics of Competitiveness Training
- Case Management for Hard to Serve Clients

6. Provide a list of planned continuous improvement activities for PY 2009 in which your local providers will participate.

Often opportunities for continuous improvement are relatively spontaneous as we become aware of activities, seminars, and training that occur throughout the year. WSA staff are encouraged to participate in any training that further hones their

customer service and service delivery skills. It is anticipated that in addition to those activities listed below, many more will be added to the list as the year progresses.

Planned continuous improvement for PY 2009 include:

- LMI Training and Demand occupations
- Providing comprehensive resume assistance in Resource Room
- Annual MFIP/DWP Conference
- Round Table Adult/ Dislocated Worker Conference
- Further “Respect in the Workplace” training
- St. Louis County Health and Human Services Conference
- Resource Area Advisory Team meetings
- Diversity Training
- Compassionate Communications
- Equal Employment Opportunity training
- SSI/SSDI training

7. How has the WIB’s role changed to ensure that the local workforce system meets the needs of employers and participants?

The Northeast Minnesota Workforce Investment Board brings community leadership together with the common goal of ensuring that all customers are provided with a comprehensive array of services to enable them to become successful in the workforce. In northeastern Minnesota, collaborative efforts have created service strategies that can effectively meet the needs of the area’s employers and participants. These workforce investment activities and strategies are closely linked to the local labor market needs as well as assessment of employer needs.

An important way the WIB ensures the local workforce system meets the needs of employers is by regular dialogue with and reports from Business Services Staff at each meeting. As this is the local staff that spends the most time in the business community, it is important that what they learn through the course of their duties is shared with the board. Often, the board has learned about industry trends and local business opinion through these discussions with BSS of which they otherwise might not be aware.

In addition to these regular BSS reports at WIB meetings, the board has requested that BSS staff meet regularly with front-line partner staff to educate all staff on what’s happening in the business community as well as make connections for referrals. BSS staff meet monthly with representatives from each partner agency which has resulted in several placements that staff have recently been asked to document on an ongoing basis. This process is monitored by the Partner Group (management of each partner agency that also meets monthly) and reported to the WIB through the One Stop Committee.

To gauge how well the local workforce system meets the needs of employers and participants, a ‘Report Card’ customer satisfaction survey is used. A random sample of clients are surveyed and asked to candidly rank the services they received through WIA programs. This is a locally-initiated biannual customer satisfaction survey, the results of which are shared with the WIB where recommendations for improvement are made if necessary. The WIB also receives the results from DEED’s customer satisfaction survey to further monitor how well the system is meeting the needs of job seekers on a regional scale.

As the Northeast Minnesota Workforce Investment Board continues to develop, other strategies to ensure employer and participant needs are being met may be devised.

Along with the desire to better promote themselves and the system they represent, the WIB is interested in other tools to measure that needs are being met. In addition, as the workforce needs of the region change due to retirements and expansions, the Board must give thought to how it will ensure the local workforce development system is at the forefront of that change. We must have flexibility to adapt programs and service delivery to reflect local circumstances that should prove more worker- and employer-centric rather than a strict focus on the job seeker.

8. Refer to *Section C* of this document for MOU requirement.

Law reference:

(b)(3) a description of the local levels of performance negotiated with the Governor and chief elected official pursuant to section 136(c), to be used to measure the performance of the local area and to be used by the local board for measuring the performance of the local fiscal agent (where appropriate), eligible providers, and the one-stop delivery system, in the local area;

9. **(PENDING – TBD)** Refer to **Attachment A**, “Performance Standards” for state and local figures.

10. What percentage of the participants will be in training (not pre-vocational services) programs that lead to targeted high-growth and high-wage industries, demand driven occupations, and/or career laddering occupations as identified in Section A? (Note: There is a recommended state benchmark level of 60 percent.)

60%, but this should be lowered due to economic conditions of NE MN

Law reference:

(b)(4) a description and assessment of the type and availability of adult and dislocated worker employment and training activities in the local area;

11. No response will be needed at this time. Forms required for Budget, Participant Information, and Activity Summaries for WIA Title I-B Adult and Dislocated Worker, and State Dislocated Worker programs will be forwarded when the final allocations are released. The applicable approved grant application and budgets will be attached to the Notice of Funds Available (NFA), which then becomes part of the Master Agreement with DEED.

Law reference:

(b)(5) a description of how the local board will coordinate workforce investment activities carried out in the local area with statewide rapid response activities, as appropriate;

The response to questions B.-12. thru B.-14. must be limited to no more than 2 pages.

12. How does the WIB coordinate its workforce investment activities with the state’s Rapid Response office?

When a closure of an area business is recognized either through state notification or by staff, the Rapid Response Team is an integral partner of the workforce investment activities and services provided to local dislocated workers. The Northeast Minnesota Office of Job Training has always worked very closely with the state’s Rapid Response Team on all Dislocated Worker projects. Historically, the Rapid Response Team is considered one of the primary modes of gathering pertinent information about the needs and wishes of the affected workforce. The survey that is administered by

the Rapid Response Team is essential to the development of the dislocated worker proposal and to the provision of services to the affected dislocated workers.

Rapid Response team members can be relied upon to conduct joint orientation meetings with WSA staff where they present their information followed by Agency representatives describing local dislocated worker services. In many cases, Agency staff members are able to begin the enrollment process at this initial meeting, gathering paperwork and making individual appointments with workers. In addition to describing services and initiating enrollment, worker needs are also more fully evaluated. If it is not possible to begin recruitment at a Rapid Response meeting, once the agency is selected as the provider of dislocated worker services all workforce investment activities and services begins in earnest.

The State's Rapid Response Team has been crucial to the overall development of Northeast Minnesota's workforce by being a responsive and flexible partner of the Workforce Center system. The recent training of local BSS staff to assist in Rapid Response activities is also considered highly valuable as often these staff have ties to the local business community that someone from outside the area may not have. This brings a new level of localized service to the coordinated efforts between the Dislocated Worker program team and Rapid Response. The continued coordination with the WIB, the Northeast Minnesota Office of Job Training, and the state's Rapid Response team is seen as integral to the future success of the Workforce Center system and the provision services to the dislocated workers.

13. (New Question) How will your local area work with DEED in calling in and conducting orientation sessions to people who are permanently unemployed?

In northeastern Minnesota, collaborative efforts have created service strategies that can effectively meet the needs of the area's people who are permanently unemployed. A DEED staff person develops referrals, which are taken from the Workforce One website, and compiles the list by the date customers file their UI claim.

The customers are invited, but not required to attend an orientation session. Orientations are held on a weekly basis and all of the resources available through the WFC are discussed and handouts provided. The customer registers on CRS and also fills out a Referral to Resources form for what information or programs the customer may be interested in learning more about. These include: Workshops, Deaf and Hearing Impaired Services, Dislocated Worker Counselors, Rehabilitation Services, Rural Rides, Services for the Blind and Visually Impaired and Veteran Services.

Referral forms are copied and distributed to the appropriate WFC partner. The partner's staff contact the customers to explain the available programs and determine if the customers are eligible for services. The workforce strategies developed for the customers are closely linked to the local labor market needs and the overall assessment of the needs of employers. Northeast Minnesota WSC staff will provide individualized services to the customers who permanently unemployed and eligible for program services.

However, local partners are concerned with the seemingly rigid duties of these new staff. Prior to integrating these new DEED staff members, the understanding was there would be local flexibility to determine how best to utilize these highly valuable staff to best meet the needs of local customers to best serve the UI population. Recent dictation of how these staff are now to conduct their orientation and workshops prohibit customizing the work of these staff to best suit local needs and may even

serve to alienate customers who otherwise may become frequent users of local Workforce Centers.

14. Who is the WIB's rapid response liaison for mass layoffs?

Name: Ray Garmaker
Title: Operations Director
Phone: 218-748-2271
TTY: 218-748-2222
E-mail: ray.garmaker@state.mn.us
Reports To: Michelle Ufford

Law reference:

(b)(6) a description and assessment of the type and availability of youth activities in the local area, including an identification of successful providers of such activities;

15. Youth planning is a separate process and is not required with this submittal process.

Law reference:

(b)(7) a description of the process used by the local board, consistent with subsection (c), to provide an opportunity for public comment, including comment by representatives of businesses and comment by representatives of labor organizations, and input into the development of the local plan, prior to submission of the plan;

The response to question B.-16. must be limited to no more than 1 page.

16. Provide a description of the process used by the local board to provide an opportunity for public comment, including comment/input by representatives of business and labor organizations, prior to submission of the plan.

The 2009 Local Unified Plan will be made available throughout the region for public viewing and comments utilizing the internet. The plan will be posted on the Northeast Minnesota Office of Job Training's website and the website address will also be available at each regional Workforce Center location. An informational handout will be developed and distributed to the WFC's describing the workforce development system including data designed to create awareness of and interest in local workforce issues.

Subsequent effort to create public awareness of this plan will be accomplished through a WIB committee developed to devise outreach strategies to promote the work of the Workforce system as well as the Board itself. This committee will include both private and public sector members of the board as well as the local labor market analyst and DEED regional administrator. This group will convene upon approval of the plan to develop compelling methods of advertising this plan and inviting further public involvement and input in subsequent activities. It is largely agreed that the local WIB must improve its presence in local consciousness, especially given the unique workforce issues facing our region. It will be the mission of this outreach committee to better promote the expertise of our system and the WIB as the foremost authority on workforce issues and resources.

Law reference:

(b)(8) an identification of the entity responsible for the disbursement of grant funds described in section

117(d)(3)(B)(i)(III), as determined by the chief elected official or the Governor under section 117(d)(3)(B)(9);

17. Who is the entity responsible for the disbursement of grant funds?

Name: Northeast Minnesota Office of Job Training
 Address: 820 N 9th St, Suite 240, PO Box 1028, Virginia, MN 55792
 Phone: 218-748-2243
 TTY: 218-748-2222

18. Within the entity, who has authority to sign local plans, and who has authority to sign WIA Master Agreements?

Name: Michelle Ufford
 Title: Executive Director
 Phone: 218-748-2243
 TTY: 218-748-2222
 E-mail: michelle.ufford@state.mn.us

Law reference:

(b)(9) a description of the competitive process to be used to award the grants and contracts in the local area for activities carried out under this subtitle;

The response to question B.-19. must be limited to no more than 2 pages.

19. Describe the competitive process to be used for awarding the grants and contracts in your local area for WIA activities.

The Northeast MN Office of Job Training adheres to requirements pertaining to the procurement for State and local governmental grantees and sub grantees of goods and services both competitive and non-competitive listed in 29 CFR 97.36. The WIB shall make recommendations to the Northeast MN LEO Board upon the most effective designation of administrative entities, grant recipients and program operators for the region with the exception of the State of MN Job Service, as the administrative entity and grant for Wagner-Peyser, Veterans Title 38 programs and Unemployment Insurance.

Should the WIB wish to identify a new service provider, a competitive Request for Proposals process would be instituted. The RFP process includes solicitation for bids that request comprehensive information addressing the following elements: knowledge of identified need, experience of administration and staff, services to be provided, performance outcomes, commitment to partnership and collaboration, budget and costs, and operational capability. Each one of these criteria is assigned a point value and ranked for a total score. The solicitation contains a description of program requirements and basic design elements to which bidders respond. Eligibility for bidding includes organizations which have adequate administrative controls and personnel to achieve the goals and objectives of the program. This includes but is not limited to governmental units, public or private non-profit corporations, educational institutions, a tax supported organization or a private or for-profit entity

Section C: System Operations and Attachments

Law reference:

(b)(10) such other information as the Governor may require.

In this section, WIBs must provide information needed to ensure that the local workforce delivery system meets certain legal requirements as well as complies with agreements between DEED and WSAs. This section also asks for information needed to respond to requests from legislative leaders, local leaders, DEED’s executive management, and other interested parties.

1. List contact information for the designated Workforce Center Site Manager(s) in each of your WorkForce Center (WFC) locations. (For Site Manager Position Description, please refer to: <http://www.deed.state.mn.us/wia/policy/title-one/sitemanager.htm>)
(Highlight, copy and paste additional contact information fields as needed for each WFC.)

WFC Location: Grand Rapids WFC
Name: John Peterson
Title: Supervisor
Phone: 218-327-6751
TTY: 218-327-4480
E-mail: john.peterson@state.mn.us

WFC Location: Hibbing WFC
Name: Roland Root
Title: Rehabilitation Services Area Manager
Phone: 218-723-4720
TTY: 218-723-4725
E-mail: roland.root@state.mn.us

WFC Location: Virginia WFC
Name: Ray Garmaker
Title: Operations Director
Phone: 218-748-2271
TTY: 218-748-2222
E-mail: ray.garmaker@state.mn.us

WFC Location: Cloquet WFC
Name: Darrell Johnson
Title: Placement Coordinator
Phone: 218-878-4414
TTY: 218-878-4414
E-mail: darrell.johnson@state.mn.us

WFC Location: Int. Falls WFC
Name: Sheila Demenge
Title: Workforce Development Rep

Phone: 218-283-9427
 TTY: 218-283-3436
 E-mail: shelia.demenge@state.mn.us

2. List contact information for one Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) coordinator for all partner programs in your local area.

Name: Renee Marconett
 Title: Executive Assistant
 Phone: 218-748-2281
 TTY: 218-748-2222
 E-mail: renee.marconett@state.mn.us
 Reports To: Michelle Ufford

3. List contact information for the local Equal Opportunity Officer.

Name: Renee Marconett
 Title: Executive Assistant
 Phone: 218-748-2281
 TTY: 218-748-2222
 E-mail: renee.marconett@state.mn.us
 Reports To: Michelle Ufford

4. List contact information for one English as a Second Language (ESL) coordinator for all partner programs in the local area.

Name: Renee Marconett
 Title: Executive Assistant
 Phone: 218-748-2281
 TTY: 218-748-2222
 E-mail: renee.marconett@state.mn.us
 Reports To: Michelle Ufford

5. List contact information for the local program complaint officer.

Name: Renee Marconett
 Title: Executive Assistant
 Phone: 218-748-2281
 TTY: 218-748-2222
 E-mail: renee.marconett@state.mn.us
 Reports To: Michelle Ufford

Please list the programs this individual is responsible for taking complaints:

WIA Adult, WIA Youth Programs, MYP, State and Federal Dislocated Worker, MFIP and DWP

If the individual is NOT the complaint officer for any of the core partner programs, please list the contact information for the complaint officer for each of the other programs.
(Highlight, copy and paste additional contact information fields as needed.)

Program(s): Rehabilitation Services

Name: Roland Root
Title: Rehabilitation Services Area Manager
Phone: 218-723-4720
TTY: 218-723-4725
E-mail: roland.root@state.mn.us
Reports To: DEED

6. List contact information for the local WFC data practices coordinator.

Name: Ray Garmaker
Title: Operations Director
Phone: 218-748-2271
TTY: 218-748-2222
E-mail: ray.garmaker@state.mn.us
Reports To: Michelle Ufford

7. **(New Question)** Complete **Attachment D**, “Workforce Service Area Sub-Grantee List” and provide a current listing for each of the WSA Sub-Grantee names, services provided, funding source, city and state of Sub-Grantee, and whether the Sub-Grantee/Provider is located in a WorkForce Center (WFC).

8. Complete **Attachment B**, “Workforce Investment Board/ Council Membership List” and provide current contact information for the members of the local workforce investment board, **including any vacancies**, and the organizations that are represented on the board. Please indicate whether the business representatives come from “targeted high-growth / high wage” industries, and/or provide demand driven occupations, and/or provide career laddering occupations. (See either Minnesota Statute. §116L.666, Subdivision 3 or the Workforce Investment Act, Section §117 for required composition.)

9. Is there a revised joint powers agreement since last year’s plan submittal? If yes, please submit it, along with signature pages, with this plan.

Yes _____ No X Not Applicable _____

10. Is there a revised Memoranda of Understanding, as described in the Workforce Investment Act, since last year’s plan submittal? If yes, please submit it, along with signature pages, with this plan.(2)

Yes _____ No X Not Applicable _____

According to DOL Training and Employment Guidance Letter (TEGL) 5-03 (<http://wdr.doleta.gov/directives/attach/TEGL5-03.html>) program operators/service providers are required to provide Veterans Priority of Service in twenty (20) DOL-funded programs. These programs include WIA Adult and Dislocated Worker formula funded programs, Wagner-Peyser Employment services, Trade Act programs, National Emergency Grants, Senior Community Service Employment Programs (SCSEP), Migrant/Seasonal Farmworker Programs, H-1B Technical Skills Training Grants, Job Corps, WIA Demonstration Projects, Youth Opportunity Grants, WIA Youth Formula Grants, pilots, and Research and Development.

Additional reference: Final rules (dated December 19, 2008) for Veterans Priority of Service as it relates to DOL programs: (<http://www.thefederalregister.com/d.p/2008-12-19-E8-30166>)

(2) For more information on Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs), including a MOU template, see: www.deed.state.mn.us/wia/mou.htm .

In addition, Governor Pawlenty's Executive Order 06-02 (<http://www.governor.state.mn.us/priorities/governorsorders/executiveorders/2006/february/PROD005612.html>) requires state agencies and institutions of higher education to seek out and correct barriers to the employment and training of Veterans. Programs covered by this Executive Order include state-funded Dislocated Worker programs.

Considering the Public Law and Executive Order cited here, please answer the following questions pertaining to your local process and procedures that ensure that Veterans receive priority for service.

The response to questions C.-11. thru C.-13. must be limited to no more than 3 pages.

11. What is the process you use to identify Veterans coming into your WorkForce Center (WFC)?

In accordance with Executive Order 06-02, veterans receive priority service from all staff in the Northeast Minnesota WSA. All staff in the Workforce Centers have knowledge of the Executive Order that veterans are to receive priority. In this region all staff share in the responsibility to give preference and priority service to veterans although veterans are specifically served by dedicated staff funded by the Veterans Employment and Training Service. While all Workforce Center staff in the region honor the responsibility to identify, give preference and priority service to veterans, the State's Senior Employment Representative, Veterans' Employment Representatives, and Disabled Veterans Outreach Program Representatives are exclusively dedicated to veterans' activities.

WSA Career Counselors work closely with Veteran's Employment Representatives on a daily basis to identify veterans and facilitate the exchange of program information. It is common practice to automatically refer veterans identified during another program's intake process to local Veterans Employment Representative staff for Vet-specific services. The process also works in reverse: when a Veterans Employment Representative works with a client seeking training or another service available through WIA programs, he refers that client to an appropriate career counselor in a partner agency.

Veterans are also identified during regular presentations made to groups of potential clients such as dislocated workers in Creative Job Search and MFIP recipients undergoing orientation. Veteran Employment Representatives regularly present their resources at these events and encourage veterans to participate in employment and training activities. Each local Workforce Center also has posted information specific to veterans in resource areas. Should a customer service representative note someone showing interest in this information, they are to approach the individual and inquire if they are a veteran. If so, they are then encouraged to meet with the Veterans Employment Representative.

Local job fairs have become large-scale events hosting many of the region's top employers. The planning committees for these job fairs includes a Veterans Employment Representative and each fair features a booth with resources specific to veterans seeking to enter the workforce. This booth is staffed by a Veterans Employment Representative apart from the Workforce Center booth as a means of specifically targeting veterans and disseminating information that pertains to that audience.

12. What is the process you use to assess the needs of Veterans seeking service in your WFC, and how do you identify Veterans with a barrier to employment?

Comprehensive assessment and other intensive services are essential to identifying and meeting the needs of the veterans. Individualized counseling, job development, coordination with other required and optional partners, and customized referral and placement services are all used in meeting the veteran's needs. Strategies to assess the needs of the veterans include, but are not limited to, literacy and basic skills assessment, occupational skills assessment, and assistance in determining job accommodation requirements. Should a serious barrier to employment be discovered, a veteran is usually referred to a local Veteran's Employment Representative for additional assessment and assistance.

Case management is an ongoing means of assessment for veterans including referral to other community-based agencies with the resources to assist veterans with any needs or accommodations they might require. As a veteran progresses through the job search process, the counselor pays attention to any barriers, issues, or special concerns that arise and assesses what services may be required to remedy the problem. Throughout the region, very strong relationships exist between WSA staff and Veterans Employment Representatives that have lead to collaborative strategies for assessment as well as the best possible combination of services for veterans

13. What is your process for referral to appropriate program staff, or in the case of a Veteran with an employment barrier, to the local Veterans Employment Representative?

The Northeast Minnesota Partnership Group and other service providers work closely together to develop policies and procedures that will assist in avoiding duplication of services and to leverage funds. Knowledgeable and competent staff have been provided training that ensures they will be responsive to the needs of the veterans and will be available to the extent needed by each customer at each WorkForce Center in the region.

The nature of needed assistance is determined at the local level as this varies depending on the labor market, competition for jobs, and local hiring practices. In all cases when a counselor discovers a new enrollee is a veteran, a referral is made to a local Veteran's Employment Representative and strongly encouraged to make the connection. Throughout the region, a mutual referral system is in place in order to make sure that all eligible veterans that apply for services are granted preference and are able to access the entire array of employment and training services.

The overall philosophy of the State with regard to veterans' services is to assure that eligible veterans get maximum exposure and referral to suitable jobs and that they receive priority assistance in preparing to compete for those jobs. Another avenue of referring and prioritizing veterans includes the State's computerized matching system, as veterans appear first on lists of matched job seekers and are clearly identified as veterans.

Senior Veteran Employment Representatives and Veteran Employment Representatives oversee referrals and the provision of services, as well as provide services directly to veterans and other eligible persons throughout the Northeast Minnesota. In the Disabled Veterans Outreach Program, staff engage in outreach and provide individual case management services to special needs veteran populations. Each WorkForce Center within Northeast Minnesota WSA has veteran staff assigned to deliver employment and training services. Senior Veterans Employment Representatives/Veterans Employment Representative staff are required to monitor, report on, and ensure that performance standards are met or exceeded as specified in the Veterans Employment and Training Service grant.

Where veteran staff availability prevents full-time onsite participation at a WorkForce Center, waivers have been requested in the local Workforce Investment Act plan including itinerant services of at least one half-day each week. The waiver also addresses the requirement that at least one non veteran staff trained by a Senior Veterans Employment Representative be available to perform the above-mentioned services for veterans in lieu of a Vets-funded staff person. This provision also supplements the effort to prioritize services to veterans and spouses of certain veterans.

Staffing

Workforce Service Area: _____

A. Please provide the **TOTAL** number staff for each WFC. Each partner is to complete the information. Please indicate your full-time and part-time equivalents* as of April 1, 2009. Do not include vacancies.

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M
WorkForce Center	WSA Suprvsr	WSA Staff	WP Suprvsr	WP Staff	RS Suprvsr	RS Staff	SSB Staff	LVER and/or DVOP	Non-Profit Staff	(Non-Profit) Name of Agency	Other Staff	(Other) Name of Agency
Hibbing		4		2	.45	3	2	1	7	AEOA	1	manpower
Virginia	1	11		1	.15	.15	3		7	AEOA	1.5	DHS
Grand Rapids		4.5		1					4	AEOA	1	Our Gang Staffing
Int. Falls		2		1	.05	1			1.6	AEOA		
Cloquet		3			.25	3			2	AEOA	1	MCT

*Full-time equivalent is a staff person who works more than 32 hours a week, receives benefits, etc. To separate out part-time from full-time, use the respective fraction of full-time. For instance, if one staff person works 40 hours a week and another works 20 hours a week part-time, the total would be 1.5 FTEs.

Column headings A – M corresponding definitions on the following page.

Column A – WorkForce Center: List each WFC in your WIB's local WSA.

Column B – WSA Supervisors: Please identify the number of WSA managers located in each WFC. Do not include vacancies. Identify how the manager splits their time between WFCs (i.e., if the majority of a manager's time is split between two WorkForce Centers, the table would indicate .50 for each of the two sites).

Column C – WSA Staff: Indicate number of WSA staff in the WFC. Do not include vacancies. If staff split their time between several sites, please indicate that in the table (i.e., .33 for each of three WFCs, etc). If staff are part-time, please indicate that also (i.e., .50, etc).

Column D – Wagner-Peyser Supervisor: Indicate the number of Wagner-Peyser manager(s) located in each WFC. Identify how the manager splits their time between WFCs (i.e., if the majority of a manager's time is split between two WFCs, the tables would indicate .50 for each WFC).

Column E – Wagner-Peyser Staff: Indicate number of Wagner-Peyser staff in the WFC. If staff split their time between several sites, please indicate that in the table (i.e., .33 for each of three WFCs, etc). If staff are part-time, please indicate that also (i.e., .50, etc).

Column F – Rehabilitation Services Supervisor: Indicate the number of Rehabilitation Services manager(s) located in each WFC. Identify how the manager splits their time between WFCs (i.e., if the majority of a manager's time is split between two WFCs, the tables would indicate .50 for each WFC).

Column G – Rehabilitation Services Staff: Indicate number of Rehabilitation Services staff in the WFC. If staff split their time between several sites, please indicate that in the table (i.e., .33 for each of three WFCs, etc). If staff are part-time, please indicate that also (i.e., .50, etc).

Column H – State Services for the Blind Staff: Indicate number of State Services for the Blind staff in the WFC. If staff split their time between several sites, please indicate that in the table (i.e., .33 for each of three WFCs, etc). If staff are part-time, please indicate that also (i.e., .50, etc).

Columns I – Veterans (LVERs and/or DVOPs): Indicate the number of LVERs and/or DVOPs located in each WFC. Identify how the LVER and/or DVOP splits their time between WFCs (i.e., if the majority of the manager's time is split between two WFCs, the tables would indicate .50 for each WFC).

Columns J and K – Non-Profit Staff and Agency Name: Identify the number of non-profit staff (who are not WSA staff) in the WFC. Include the name of their agency in Column J.

Columns L and M – Other Staff and Agency Name: Identify the number of full-time or part-time staff who are Field Audit, BCD Reps, non DEED, or non WSA in your WFC. List their agency in Column L.

Certifications and Assurances

By signing and submitting this plan, the local workforce investment board is certifying on behalf of itself and the grant recipient, where applicable:

- A. That this *Program Year 2009 Local Unified Plan (LUP) UPDATE for an Integrated Workforce Investment System* was prepared and is in accordance with all applicable titles of the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 (WIA), Title V of the Older Americans Act, applicable Minnesota state statutes and that it is consistent with the Minnesota Unified State Plan;(3)
- B. that members of the local board and the public including representatives of business and labor organizations have been allowed at least a thirty day period for comment and that any comments representing disagreement with the plan are included with the local plan forwarded to DEED (as the Governor's representative) by the local board and that available copies of a proposed local plan are made available to the public through such means as public hearings and local news media; (WIA, Section §118 (c))
- C. that the public (including individuals with disabilities) have access to all of the workforce investment board's and its components' meetings and information regarding the board's and its components' activities;
- D. that fiscal control and fund accounting procedures necessary to ensure the proper disbursement of, and accounting for, funds paid through the allotments funded through the master agreement issued by DEED have been established;
- E. that veterans will be afforded employment and training activities authorized in WIA, Section §134, and the activities authorized in Chapters 41 and 42 of Title 38 US code, and in compliance with the veterans' priority established in the Jobs for Veterans Act. (38 USC 4215.), U.S. Department of Labor, Training and Employment Guidance Letter 5-03, and Governor Tim Pawlenty's Executive Order 6-02;
- F. that it is, and will maintain a certifiable local Workforce Investment Board (WIB) and it will maintain a certifiable local Youth Council;
- G. that it will comply with the confidentiality requirements of WIA, Section §136 (f)(3);
- H. that the master agreement and all assurances will be followed;
- I. that it will ensure that no funds covered under the master agreement are used to assist, promote, or deter union organizing;
- J. that collection and maintenance of data necessary to show compliance with the nondiscrimination provisions of WIA, Section §188, as provided in the regulations implementing that section, will be completed;
- K. that this plan was developed in consultation with local elected officials, the local business community, labor organizations and appropriate other agencies;
- L. that it acknowledges the specific performance standards for each of its programs and will strive to meet them;

(3) The State Unified Plan is available on the DEED website <http://www.deed.state.mn.us/wia/unifiedplan/>.

Certifications and Assurances

- M. that there will be compliance with the Architectural Barriers Act of 1968, Sections §503 and §504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990;(4)
- N. that WIB members will not act in a manner that would create a conflict of interest as identified in Regulations 20 CFR, Section §667.200(a)(4), including voting on any matter regarding the provision of service by that member or the entity that s/he represents and any matter that would provide a financial benefit to that member or to his or her immediate family;
- O. that Memoranda of Understanding and Cost Allocation Plans are in place and available upon request for each WorkForce Center within the WIB's local workforce service area;
- P. that the required voter registration procedures described in Minnesota Statutes §201.162 are enacted without the use of federal funds;
- Q. that insurance coverage be provided for injuries suffered by participants in work-related activities where Minnesota's workers' compensation law is not applicable as required under Regulations 20 CFR, Section §667.274;
- R. that the local policies on fraud and abuse adheres to DEED's Chapter 2.9 of WIA Title I-B and Related Activities Manual as required under Regulations 20 CFR, Section §667.630 (The local policy is to be in accordance with State requirements;(5))
- S. that it has provided an opportunity for public comment and input into the development of plan by persons with disabilities and has provided information regarding the plan and the planning process, including the plan and supporting documentation, in alternative formats when requested;
- T. that core services are integrated such that all WorkForce Center partners provide the same high level and quality of core services to job seeking customers;
- U. that all staff are provided the opportunity to participate in appropriate staff training;
- V. that an acceptable WIA program complaint procedure will be established and will be maintained;
- W. that an acceptable WIA discrimination complaint procedure will be established and will be maintained;
- X. that there is an agreement between the WIB and the 'unit of local government' (that represents the local elected official/s) that outlines what powers the unit of local government agrees to give the WIB on their behalf and how they are going to work together;

(4) See WIA Title I-B Related Activities Manual at Chapter 5: Complaints and Grievances, Section 5.3: Discrimination Complaint Handling Procedures, http://www.deed.state.mn.us/wpd/policy/titleIB/5.0_complaints/complaints5.3.htm

(5) See Chapter 2.9 of WIA Title I-B Related Activities Manual at: http://www.deed.state.mn.us/wpd/policy/titleIB/2.0_fiscal_mngmnt/fiscal_mngmnt2.9.htm

Certifications and Assurances

- Y. that (if applicable) if there is a joint powers board, that there is a joint powers agreement which outlines who is on the joint powers board and how the local units represented on it are going to work together;
- Z. that it will comply with the nondiscrimination provisions of WIA, Section §188 and it's implementing Regulations at 29 CFR, Part 37. Each grant applicant for financial assistance as defined in Regulations 29 CFR, Part 37.4 must include in the grant application the exact language as is in the following (29 CFR, Part 37.20):

ASSURANCES

As a condition to the award of financial assistance from the Department of Labor under Title I of the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 (WIA), the grant applicant assures that it will comply fully with the nondiscrimination and equal opportunity provisions of the following laws:

- *WIA, Section §188, 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;*
- *Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended, which prohibits discrimination on the bases of race, color, and national origin;*
- *Section §504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, which prohibits discrimination against qualified individuals with disabilities;*
- *The Age Discrimination Act of 1975, as amended, which prohibits discrimination on the basis of age; and*
- *Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, as amended, which prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex in educational programs;*
- *The Minnesota Human Rights Act of 1973, Minnesota Statutes, Chapter 363A, which prohibits discrimination on the bases of race, color, creed, religion, natural origin, sex, marital status, disability, status with regard to public assistance, sexual orientation, citizenship, or age;*
- *The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (42 USC 12101), as amended, which prohibits discrimination on the basis of physical sensory, or mental disability or impartment;*
- *Each grant applicant and each training provider seeking eligibility must also ensure that they will provide programmatic and architectural accessibility for individuals with disabilities.*

The grant applicant also assures that it will comply with Regulations 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.

Certifications and Assurances

Signature Page

Program Year 2009
Local Unified Plan UPDATE for an Integrated Local Workforce Investment System

Workforce Service Area Name: Northeast Minnesota Office of Job Training

Workforce Investment Board Name: Northeast Minnesota workforce Investment Board

Name and Contact Information for the WIB:

Terri Nystrom 218-748-2052

Name and Contact Information for the Local Elected Official(s):

Gordon Aanerud 218-384-4697

We, the undersigned, attest that this submittal is the Program Year 2009 Local Unified Plan UPDATE for our WIB / WSA and hereby certify that this LUP UPDATE has been prepared as required, and is in accordance with all applicable state and federal laws, rules, and regulations.

For the Workforce Investment Board

For the Local Elected Officials

Name: Terri Nystrom

Name: Gordon Aanerud

Title: Chair

Title: Chairperson

Signature: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Date: _____