

Preview version for 6/30/04 Executive Committee meeting

GOVERNOR'S WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL

Chair's Report

July 16, 2004

Highlights from April through June 2004

Activity in support of developing vision and policy direction for Minnesota's workforce system

1. Led by the GWDC Executive Committee, the GWDC's committees have pulled together recommendations addressing a wide range of issues in Minnesota's workforce development system. This "Investment Advisory" is expected to be completed in July 2004 and available to shape both the 2005-07 state budget process as well as Minnesota's next WIA five-year plan.
2. GWDC staff have been engaged in several sectoral initiatives, most of which are highlighted in the "Investment Advisory" to the Governor, designed to bring focus and more resources to Minnesota's critical workforce shortage areas. Recent activity on these has included:
 - a. A series of meetings to further support training and education efforts focused on the manufacturing sector following the April 5th Manufacturing Tomorrow event held in Minneapolis.
 - b. Continued support for health care sector workforce training efforts including exploration of an alliance with a national training and adult education intermediary (Council on Adult and Experiential Learning) in furtherance of Minnesota's existing efforts.
3. Following discussion and review at the April 2004 GWDC meeting, the GWDC led the completion of a proposal from DEED, MN Department of Education, MnSCU and community stakeholders to strengthen and expand workplace training and English language learning for incumbent workers through the \$750,000 Workforce Investment Act (WIA) Incentive Grant awarded to Minnesota.
4. GWDC staff were invited to present Minnesota's "Preeminence Minnesota" framework at a statewide gathering of business, workforce, and economic development leaders in Wyoming. Participation in this meeting highlighted Minnesota as a leader among states and created future opportunities for Minnesota's participation in valuable national and multi-state initiatives.

Strengthen Local Workforce Councils and other Stakeholders as Strategic Community Leaders

5. The GWDC Executive Committee approved \$29,000 in grants to three Local Workforce Councils in support of locally-initiated activities including: a regional workforce development marketing campaign in Duluth/Superior; participation for Ramsey County Workforce Investment Board staff in a national peer learning network; and, support for a regional workforce/economic development planning conference led by Stearns-Benton Employment and Training Council.
6. The ad hoc committee charged with continuing the work begun by the GWDC Creating System Excellence Committee in the Workforce Service Area Study completed its work. In May 2004, GWDC staff held three focus groups with Local Workforce Council members that significantly influenced the outcome of the committee's work. The ad hoc committee developed a framework for reviewing the Workforce Service Area boundaries and made recommendations to the Governor on the Workforce Service Areas (WSAs). The significant boundary change recommended is a merger of Winona and Southeast Workforce Service Areas. These recommendations are included in the GWDC's "Investment Advisory" for Governor Pawlenty and will be advanced by the GWDC in Minnesota's next 5-year Workforce Investment Act Plan.
7. GWDC staff assisted three Local Workforce Councils in completing a joint submission to the National Association of Workforce Boards (NAWB) and the National Association of State Workforce Agencies (NASWA) that pave the way for future "High Growth Job Training Initiative" awards from the US

Department of Labor (USDOL). The three areas and projects include: Southwest Private Industry Council for continued work in health care training; Stearns-Benton Employment and Training Council for training in the print industry; and Twin Cities metro area Councils, led by the Hennepin-Scott-Carver Workforce Investment Board for healthcare and information technology skills training.

8. The GWDC hosted one Families Forward convening for McKnight-funded grantees and pursued several individual consultations with Families Forward program partners. The convening focused on career exploration and resiliency as part of effective skill training services. In addition, specific learning from the Families Forward initiative is being documented jointly by GWDC staff and Families Forward partners (including several Local Workforce Council staff). These learnings will be made available through a web-based presentation expected to be completed by Fall 2004. The GWDC continues to serve as the “convener” for Families Forward with McKnight support through December 2004.
9. A kick-off session was held on April 26 for seven Local Workforce Councils who are voluntarily participating in three regional planning processes (Duluth/Northeast; Southeast/Winona; and Stearns-Benton/Southwest/Central). Each area will be supported with a \$5,000 federal grant and additional federal technical assistance and training funds are forthcoming. The kick-off highlighted the regional labor market pilots started two years ago by the GWDC in the St. Cloud and Twin Cities regions.
10. The Focus on Ability project, aimed at training local staff and leaders in the WorkForce Center system to strengthen awareness about serving customers with disabilities, completed an intensive training effort for local WorkForce Center staff and partners. The complete product is now available electronically and in use by many in the workforce development system. To use/view the material, visit: www.focusonability.net.
11. GWDC staff responded to an invitation to meet with the Northwest Private Industry Council to discuss their strategic planning process and how it fits with priorities and direction being outlined by the GWDC.