

# *Getting To Pre-Eminence*

pre•em•i•nent, *adj.*

Superior to or notable above  
all others; outstanding

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**Vision, challenges, goals and strategies  
for Minnesota's workforce and economy  
July 2001 - June 2003**

**THE STATE WITH  
THE BEST  
WORKFORCE WINS!**

Prepared by the Governor's Workforce Development Council  
in consultation with Local Workforce Councils and others

revised: 4/13/01

To Governor Jesse Ventura and Members of the Legislature:

We are pleased to forward *Getting to Pre-Eminence: Minnesota's Strategic Vision for Workforce Development* to you for your consideration.

This document sets forth a plan to support Governor Ventura's two long-term goals for Minnesota's workforce and economic development system:

- 1) Keep Minnesota businesses competitive by supporting a flexible, skilled workforce.
- 2) Support efforts to increase personal income.

We have identified three challenges that require our attention if we are to meet our goals.

❖ **Challenge One: The Skills Shortage**

Enable Minnesota employers to succeed in this dynamic global economy by closing the gap between employers' needs for skilled workers and the supply of Minnesotans prepared to meet those needs.

❖ **Challenge Two: Income and Career Progression**

Ensure Minnesota workers have opportunities to improve earning potential by advancing and transferring their skills.

❖ **Challenge Three: System Building**

Facilitate the integration of workforce, education, and economic development in Minnesota to maximize the return on our investment.

This document is a product of the Governor's Workforce Development Council (GWDC) and its Systems Excellence Committee, consultation and discussion among Local Workforce Councils, and other stakeholders in Minnesota's workforce and economic development arenas.

Commentary

*This column contains annotation reflecting discussions thus far among GWDC members and others about content and how this document was developed.*

These are the two goals Gov. Ventura articulated in the "workforce development framework" (9-99)

These challenges were intended to address employers needs, workers needs, and our system view, respectively.

The challenges and accompanying objectives are intended to be reviewed and changed regularly (every biennium?).

## THE GAME PLAN

### *Goals, Objectives and Strategies for Minnesota's Education, Economic and Workforce Development Systems*

#### **Challenge One: The Skills Shortage**

**Goal 1** ▶ Enable Minnesota employers to succeed in this dynamic global economy by closing the gap between employers' needs for skilled workers and the supply of Minnesotans prepared to meet those needs.

**OBJECTIVE 1.1** ▶ *Utilize business leadership to guide resources that enable individuals to move up job and career ladders throughout their lives and thereby meet business needs.*

#### Strategies

Strengthen public-private partnerships working within or across industries to assess skill needs and develop training programs.

Provide high-quality labor market information.

Develop modular curricula, career guidance, and technology applications linked to industry skills standards.

Strengthen collaboration between labor and management in education and training efforts.

**OBJECTIVE 1.2** ▶ *Improve relevant information tools and preparation activities for youth and families to make successful transitions to work and lifelong learning.*

#### Strategies

Enhance career guidance

Increase the number of people who understand and act on career opportunities available through vocational-technical education and training programs

Increase mentor and work-based learning opportunities.

Create state education policies that support work-related education.

The format and some of the language for this document was modeled on Washington State's strategic plan and subsequent progress report. For more detail, go to their web site at [www.wa.gov/wtb](http://www.wa.gov/wtb).

There was discussion about how to acknowledge both a skills gap and, potentially, a true "labor shortage," e.g., demographics of just not having enough people down the road...

Members felt that "public-private partnerships" made clear that our interest is in both the publicly-funded system as well as efforts in the private for-profit and non-profit sectors.

Acknowledgment that there are often industry standards that must be met if training is to be valued.

This objective was revised to allow for improvement/increase in the number of people with marketable skills regardless of sector. Strategies then address several tools/paths toward doing so and supporting broad choices for individuals.

**OBJECTIVE 1.3** ▶ *Increase the capacity of high schools, community and technical college, apprenticeship, and other education and training programs to provide high quality workforce education and training experiences.*

Strategies

Partner with industries to provide facilities, faculty, and equipment in high-wage, high-demand fields.

Expand apprenticeship training and apprenticeship preparation programs.

Establish incentives and preparation programs for teaching in high-wage, high-demand fields.

Expand and improve access to education and training in K-14, post-secondary, and alternative systems (e.g., through distance learning )

**OBJECTIVE 1.4** ▶ *Encourage Minnesotans with disabilities, recent immigrants, and other “untapped labor pools” who are unemployed or underemployed to enter and advance in the labor force.*

Strategies

Make Minnesota WorkForce Centers and other points of entry for potential workers more accessible and welcoming, e.g., further simplify language and approach.

Research populations who have poor wage/career progression to identify what steps can be taken to facilitate their entry and progression in the labor market.

Strengthen “occupational literacy” training and support adaptive work environments and other efforts to reduce workplace barriers.

Committee members have discussed the need for stronger linkages between K-14, MnSCU, U of M, and other providers to deliver training.

Discussion about the need to produce and support people willing to teach in general, and in particular fields that have a significant impact on Minnesota’s economy.

Strong support for expanding the opportunities and support we provide populations who are consistently underemployed or unemployed.

## Challenge Two: Income and Career Progression

### Goal 2 ▸ Ensure Minnesota workers have opportunities to improve earning potential by advancing and transferring their skills.

OBJECTIVE 2.1 ▸ *Improve access to information about career and training opportunities, financial assistance, and related support services.*

#### Strategies

Expand and strengthen Web access through ISEEK and other electronic portals.

Continue to strengthen statewide and local/regional marketing efforts about workforce development options to workers, students, employers, and others.

OBJECTIVE 2.2 ▸ *Assist unemployed individuals to gain and retain competitive employment quickly.*

#### Strategies

Promote workplace practices that enhance workers' competitiveness and flexibility for their future transitions.

Encourage financial and other supports to pursue training and education, particularly for high-demand fields in the context of a regional economy.

## Challenge Three: System Building and Integration

Goal 3 ▸ Facilitate the integration of workforce, education, and economic development in Minnesota to maximize the return on our investment.

OBJECTIVE 3.1 ▸ *Clarify roles of institutions within the workforce system to strengthen effective use of existing resources.*

#### Strategies

Recognize and link "first chance" (K-14 education and other traditional paths to employment) strengths and direction with "second-chance" programs, e.g., training and support services.

Improve and support the strategic use of nonprofit, union-based, and other service providers through affiliate relationships Minnesota WorkForce Center system and other programmatic opportunities.

Strong sentiments about the need to improve coordination of information products and dissemination.

Also strong support for consistent and systematic training of front line staff in WorkForce Centers, schools, and other venues where workers seek information.

There was much discussion about the value of helping people return to work quickly, while still acknowledging need for choice. We need to balance the desire to promote career exploration with the desire to ensure steady employment in the context of a regional economy.

Systems Excellence committee discussed value of using return on investment at the system level but not necessarily at the program level.

There was discussion about how best to engage and make use of the many resources of nonprofit and other service providers in partnership or at least complementary to workforce centers.

OBJECTIVE 3.2 ▸ *Define system-level measures and methodologies to assess statewide progress toward workforce outcomes.*

Strategies

Develop a continuous improvement process to reevaluate goals and outcomes.

Build support for a common performance management and accountability system that produces a “report card” on Minnesota’s progress

Create incentives for Local Workforce Councils, state agencies, schools, post-secondary education institutions and others to share data and measure progress.

These goals and objectives would be used, together with goals in other education, economic development, and human service goals set elsewhere in state government to measure progress against broad outcomes that cross program and agency lines.

**ARE WE WINNING?**

**OUTCOME AREAS**

Our progress toward these goals and objectives (our game plan) is measured against seven broad outcome areas that serve as the framing categories for our specific performance measures (our scorecard). These are not measures themselves nor specific performance thresholds, but rather areas in which we will assess progress with a goal toward seeing long-term, positive trend lines.

The end result is a statewide common performance management system that, as implemented by other states, allows citizens, legislators, and others to review progress as a state toward established goals.

1. **Competencies:** Minnesota’s workforce possesses the skills and abilities required in the workplace.
2. **Economic Vitality:** Minnesota’s employers and workers achieve optimal match.
3. **Earnings:** Minnesota’s workforce achieves a family-wage standard of living from earned income.
4. **Productivity:** Minnesota’s economy is productive.
5. **Reduced Poverty:** Minnesota’s workforce lives above poverty.
6. **Customer Satisfaction:** Workforce development customers (individuals and employers) are satisfied with workforce development services and results.
7. **Return on Investment:** Workforce development programs provide return that exceed program costs.

Tracking the trends across these outcome areas is the tangible evidence of “pre-eminence”. If we are seeing positive trend lines in each of these areas, we are pre-eminent.

These outcome areas are slightly modified from those developed by Washington State. They are presented here as a beginning point of discussion.

Staff noted in editing this list that none of these outcome areas explicitly addresses the “system integration” challenge. Do we need to add one?

Aligned with these outcome areas, the GWDC, Local Workforce Councils, and state agencies will develop specific measures. As an example, a measure might be to track earnings during 24 months after program completion to chart progress and benchmark against a self-sufficiency standard.

The development of specific measures will be a consultative and collaborative process in which certain measures may be used at the state level to track progress through a common performance management system while others may be adopted locally for use by a Local Workforce Council, Economic Development Authority or County Board.

The measures would be reviewed regularly and data collection efforts adjusted accordingly.

## CONCLUSION

In order for Minnesota to get to pre-eminence and, as our Governor suggests, “win” in the workforce arena, we need a game plan and we need to learn how to keep score. This framework is a beginning step toward meeting those needs.

Through a common vision, direction, and scorecard for our work, we can (and will) become, as the definition of pre-eminence suggests, superior and outstanding. We have a strong foundation on which to build. Now, we need to take the next several steps together.

The GWDC seeks comment, discussion and reaction to this document. If you have ideas to share, suggested changes, or concerns, please visit our web site at [www.gwdc.org](http://www.gwdc.org) and post comments via the home page mail function.

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