

City of Duluth Workforce Development Board
June 17, 2024

Attendance at this meeting did not reach a quorum. Action items will be postponed until the next meeting.

There were two highlights of the meeting in terms of discussion and information-sharing.

(1) Equity Lens: New Americans

There was a discussion of how best to foster a welcoming Duluth for New Americans. Many new Americans arrive in Duluth for promising job opportunities but then do not settle long-term because of the lack of community to support them. The group acknowledged that this is a current short-coming and there was consensus that with an intentional and ongoing commitment from stakeholders this gap could be addressed. Some of the barriers faced by New Americans include, but not limited to, (1) isolation; (2) lack of preparedness or gear for the new harsh weather conditions they face; (3) lack of access to necessary food stuffs and ingredients; and (4) lack of access to transportation to the Twin Cities where they may have interact with other communities of New Americans.

(2) Adult/Displaced Worker Program Presentation

There was an informative presentation on the outcomes of the Adult/Displaced Worker Program

More information on Adult Career Services, click [here](#)

More information on the Displaced Worker Program, click [here](#)

The main take-away is that these programs are meeting (and sometimes exceeding) their metrics for success. The main ask is to follow them on social media and share information.

[Facebook](#)

[Instagram](#)

Submitted by Mary Faulkner

City of Duluth Workforce Development Board
May 20, 2024

No Public Comment.

Updates and Announcements:

1. Recipient of [Drive for 5 Initiative Competitive Grant](#) to promote training for populations facing barriers to employment (people of color, people with disabilities, and those facing systemic barriers) in-demand industries: technology, trades, caring professional, manufacturing, and education.
2. Recipient of [Youthprise Grant](#) to pilot a monthly income program for homeless youth 16-24 with wrap-around services partnering with Lifehouse and Lutheran Social Services to provide financial literacy, mental health supports, housing assistance, and other life skills. The program will target 40-45 youth. The program is structured as a study with participants receiving the income and a control group with no income provided.
3. Duluth MN selected for the [Great Jobs, Great City](#) Academy with a focus on apprenticeships.
4. The Emerging Workforce Committee submitted its Annual Youth Plan and it was approved.
5. ISD709 School Board Future Forward Referendum did not gain approval.

The Legislative Session ended without a bonding bill.

Vote passed to approve submission of Local/Regional 2024-2027 Strategic Plan to DEED, incorporation of edits requested by DEED, and submission of final plan by the August 21st deadline. [View the 2021-2024 Strategic Plan](#).

Submitted by Mary Faulkner

Workforce Development Board

January 29, 2024

I. Call to Order and Welcome to New Members

II. Public Comment: No public comments

III. Action Items

A. Board voted to approve November 18, 2023, Meeting Minutes

B. Board voted to approve continued advocacy by Director Elena Foshay on concerns related to the bipartisan Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) re-authorization proposal Stronger Workforce for America Act.

Prior to vote, Foshay highlighted three concerns as outlined in a letter to Representative Stauber: (1) mandate to allocate 50% of their funding for training; (2) increased Governor's Set-aside for "Critical Industries Fund"; and (3) Re-designation of Local Workforce Development Areas.

Foshay advised that these provisions will reduce funds resources available locally, duplicate services already delivered at the local level, and reduce local control and accountability.

C. Board voted to approve slate of officers:

Chair: Kayla Dietzmann, Director of HR & Marketing, SCS Interiors

Vice Chair: Calire Farmer-Lies, Marketing & Communication Specialist, Residential Services, Inc.

Secretary: Monica Haynes, Director, UMD Bureau of Business & Economic Research

IV. Updates & Announcements

A. Elected Officials Open House is scheduled for Feb. 28th at 5PM with the goal of explaining the role of the Workforce Development Board and sharing upcoming opportunities and current challenges.

B. MOU/IFA Negotiations are not done yet. Drafts are being reviewed.

C. City Bonding Priorities as approved by the City Council does not include the proposed library redevelopment to include CareerForce. This project is "off the table" in favor of exploring a public/private option.

The approved City Bonding Priorities includes a Spirit Valley Wellness Center project which may include satellite workforce offices along with a focus on serving youth with indoor recreation, meeting spaces, playground, and in coordination with community services provided by Laura MacArthur Elementary School.

D. NOAA Grant Application will be submitted to fund a five-year project to assess the Maritime Workforce and identify necessary training in light of the effects of climate change.

V. Strategic Planning Discussion

A. Board voted to revise and approve Mission and Goals.

Mission: The Duluth Workforce Development Board (Duluth WDB) convenes and collaborates with partners to assess workforce demand, support employers in accessing the workforce they need to fill available jobs and ensure that people of all backgrounds can achieve meaningful employment and a family-sustaining wage.

B. Presentation by Carson Gorecki, Northeast Regional Labor Market Analyst, DEED
Gorecki shared the following trends related to the Duluth-Superior MSA (2019-2023)

About 4,700 Northeastern Minnesotans are out of the labor force but want jobs

Key barriers include: (1) discouraged about job prospects; (2) lack of reliable childcare and transportation; (3) in school and/or training; (4) other familial responsibilities.

The regional population (particularly surrounding Duluth) is growing slowly and aging. Labor force recovery has stalled.

C. Visit by Mayor Reinert

Reinert shared his professional background and history of service. He expressed his interest in and appreciation for the work of the Board.

D. Small Group Discussion including following questions:

How can we ensure we are creating a workforce system that is responsive to local workforce needs?

How can we better ensure we are meeting the needs of businesses in the areas of recruiting, hiring, and retention?

Key themes from discussion: (1) increase communication between key stakeholders; (2) promote and share existing tools and resources related to retention; (3) calculate costs related to attrition to promote retention practices.

E. Identification of current best practices and areas of strength:

Youth representation on the Board

[DEI Toolkit](#) – planned post-COVID updates

[Employer Champions](#) Lunch n Learn Series

Equity Dashboard

Participation in [Good Jobs, Great Cities](#) Initiative

Involvement of Tribal Employment Rights Offices (TEROs)

No Wrong Door approach for job seekers

Collaboration with Northspan for [Workforce Solutions Series](#)

High-functioning Board with up-to-date bylaws, annual assessment, mentorship program, robust document repository, and high committee engagement.

Meeting adjourned at 3:50PM.

Submitted by Mary Faulkner