OVERVIEW

FINDING ALL THE PIECES TO THE WORKFORCE PUZZLE

For the past eight years we have watched the unemployment rate in southeastern Minnesota tumble to near record lows. We are now at a point where there are more job openings than applicants in some industries. In fact, the economy may be at a point where it could stall if we cannot find or develop the talent we need. Yet pockets of unemployment remain and we have populations with unacceptably high levels of under-employment. Clearly, without intentional stimulation of awareness of the opportunities that exist for employers and the workforce, the two may be like ships passing in the night.

Fortunately, there is a trend emerging that holds promise in connecting people with living wage jobs. By focusing outreach efforts to targeted populations and supporting their educational efforts with a personal navigator, the employment outcomes have been far more successful than traditional approaches. When combined with community and educational partnerships that connect with employers, all parties have their needs met. This process is known as a “Career Pathways” approach.

One thing is evident, however – a cookie-cutter approach to Career Pathways for the various industries and targeted populations will not work. All industries and individuals are different. If we are to solve any problem, we must first identify what it is, and then strategize solutions.

This Regional Playbook, then, is envisioned as the go-to guide that will lay out the unique needs of industries, the demographic trends of the labor supply, and the interventions that hold the most promise to make a real difference. If we all have a common view of what the challenges are, we have the best chance of success. As the wise saying goes, we all do better when we all do better.

The Workforce Development Boards of Southeast MN are looking forward to growing this Regional Playbook and building upon strategies every year with your help.

Sincerely,

Randy R. Johnson
Workforce Development, Inc.

RETURN ON INVESTMENT

This formula demonstrates the economic return of our investment on workforce training and development. WDI consistently posts a Return On Investment of 500% or more.

\[
\text{Taxes + Welfare Savings} - \text{WDI Expenditures} = \text{Return On Investment}
\]

For every dollar we invest in our clients over the course of a year, they returned five dollars back to their community in taxes paid and welfare savings generated.
Our mission is to develop and advance the workforce of Southeast Minnesota.

Our vision is to develop and advance the workforce of Southeast Minnesota by acting as:
- The Champion for workforce development customers, achievements and issues;
- The Convening Agent to bring workforce partners together to resolve workforce issues;
- The Change Agent to promote innovative and creative workforce system solutions;
- The Accountability Agent to measure and manage the area’s workforce development system.

Workforce Development, Inc. services are focused on low-income and disadvantaged populations dealing with multiple barriers to achieving meaningful employment. On an annual basis, Workforce Development, Inc. serves thousands of people through career planning and pre-vocational skill training.

Four major focus areas form the operational basis for Workforce Development, Inc.:
- Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act programs (Adult and Youth)
- Dislocated Workers
- Welfare Reform
- Youth Programming

Workforce Development, Inc. delivers its services through ten area offices located throughout Southeast Minnesota. Five of these locations are designated as Minnesota WorkForce Centers, in which multiple agencies deliver related services for job seekers and employers.

Workforce Development, Inc. is designated by a 10-county “Joint Powers Agreement” as the local Workforce Development Board, as required by federal law under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA). Workforce Development, Inc. delivers services on behalf of the state of Minnesota and local counties. In addition, Workforce Development, Inc. manages special projects for the federal government and private foundations.
SE MINNESOTA HEALTHCARE

When someone mentions healthcare in Southeast MN, most likely the first thing that comes to mind is Mayo Health Systems. While Mayo encompasses a large portion of the healthcare-related employment, such as doctors, nurses, nurse practitioners, surgeons, etc, there are many options to consider when thinking of healthcare in Southeast MN.

With a rapidly aging population, the need for skilled CNAs and PCAs in assisted living facilities and personal home care services is also increasing. A person does not need a great deal of education or training to start working in the Health Care field, and there is much room for advancement up the career ladder.

SKILLS NEEDED

- Good at teaching, counseling, nursing or giving information.
- Good communication and teaching skills
- Good hands-on and problem solving skills
- Providing service to others
- Attention to detail
- Empathy and excellent bedside manner
- Communication skills
- Problem solving skills
- Significant medical knowledge
- Strong ethics

TRENDS

- There is great projected growth in many Health Care occupations. Some of the greatest growth is in job titles that require minimal education like positions in assisted living and long-term care facilities.
- Overall sector jobs: Faster than average growth (2016-2026) 10%-14%
Healthcare: an aggregation and integration of sectors within the economic system that provides goods and services to treat patients with curative, preventive, rehabilitative, and palliative care.

SUCCESS STORY

Jane, a newly single mother of a toddler, was working part-time as a housekeeper and receiving cash and food assistance, but she had dreams of providing for her family while working in the healthcare field.

She enrolled in Riverland’s Phlebotomy program, and received her certification after a semester. She enjoyed learning about the medical field so much that she decided to continue her education for an additional semester in the Medical Assistant diploma program. Jane successfully completed her classes and graduated with honors from Riverland’s Austin campus.

After a summer semester of supervised internship in a hospital setting, she passed her board exams, and was immediately hired by Olmsted Medical Center. Today she is working as a full-time Medical Assistant out of the Byron clinic and is making nearly $16/hour, with benefits included, along with opportunities for advancement and regular wage increases.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupations Identified for Region 6</th>
<th>Median Wage</th>
<th>Career Pathway Options</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Registered Nurse</td>
<td>$25.96</td>
<td>Associate’s Degree or Bachelor’s Degree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Licensed Practical Nurse</td>
<td>$21.38</td>
<td>Post-secondary diploma</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Radiologic Technologist</td>
<td>$33.03</td>
<td>Associate’s Degree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emergency Medical Technician and Paramedic</td>
<td>$18.35</td>
<td>Post-secondary non-degree award</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pharmacy Technician</td>
<td>$16.41</td>
<td>High School Diploma or Equivalent-Moderate-term on the job training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medical/Clinical Laboratory Technologist</td>
<td>$33.01</td>
<td>Bachelor’s Degree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phlebotomists</td>
<td>$19.15</td>
<td>High School Diploma or Equivalent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medical Assistant</td>
<td>$19.23</td>
<td>High School Diploma or Equivalent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nursing Assistant</td>
<td>$13.71</td>
<td>Post-secondary non-degree award</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Home Health Aid</td>
<td>$11.69</td>
<td>Less than High School- short-term on the job training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Surgical Technologist</td>
<td>$25.39</td>
<td>Associate’s Degree</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
MANUFACTURING

MANUFACTURING

- First Line Supervisors of Production/Operations
- Helpers-Production Workers
- Industrial Engineers
- Laborers-Freight/Stock/Materials
- Maintenance/Repair Workers/General
- Industrial Engineering Techs
- Accountants/Auditors
- Team Assemblers
- Machinists
- Welders/Cutters/Solderers/Brazers
- Other/Miscellaneous

SOUTHEAST MINNESOTA MANUFACTURING

The 656 Southeast MN manufacturing establishments make up 12% of total manufacturing employment in the state. It is also the second largest industry in the region, behind healthcare and social assistance.

Average weekly wages in the manufacturing sector in late 2016 were reported at $1,069.

Source: www.mn.gov/deed/data
Source: DEED Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (QCEW) program
Manufacturing: The process of converting raw materials, components, or parts into finished goods that meet a customer’s expectations or specifications. Manufacturing commonly employs a man-machine setup with division of labor in a large scale production.

INDUSTRIES

Manufacturing is a broad industry with 17 industries listed in the NAICS code 31. Food manufacturing is the largest with 10,930 jobs. The region also encompasses almost one-fourth of the statewide employment in Food Manufacturing. This includes: Animal Slaughtering & Processing, Fruit and Vegetable Preserving and Specialty Food Manufacturing, Grain and Oil seed Milling and Dairy Product Manufacturing.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Industry</th>
<th>Average Weekly Wage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Food</td>
<td>$1069.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Computer &amp; Electronic Products</td>
<td>$959.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fabricated Metal Product</td>
<td>$1718.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Machinery</td>
<td>$958.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-metallic Mineral Product</td>
<td>$1100.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miscellaneous</td>
<td>$1104.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Printing and Related Support Activities</td>
<td>$809.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Furniture and Related Product</td>
<td>$891.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chemical Manufacturing</td>
<td>$926.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plastics &amp; Rubber Products</td>
<td>$1181.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transportation Equipment</td>
<td>$881.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Electrical Equipment, Appliance and Components</td>
<td>$899.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Textile Products</td>
<td>$1096.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wood Product</td>
<td>$718.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paper</td>
<td>$1122.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary Metal</td>
<td>$954.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beverage &amp; Tobacco Product</td>
<td>$629.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

TRENDS

- According to the Southeast MN Manufacturing Profile from DEED LMI, manufacturers in Southeast MN cut around 8,000 in 2001, held relatively steady from 2003-2008 and lost jobs again in 2008. There has been a slow, steady recovery through 2016.
- The workforce shortage - for skilled and unskilled employees - looms large as a likely impediment to future growth of manufacturers across the board.
CUSTOMER SERVICE

Job openings in Southeast Minnesota Region for Customer Service Positions

2,943

Career Pathways

- Management Occupations
- Food Preparation and Service Related
- Sales and Related Occupations
- Office and Administrative Support

Business Services

Nationally, retail is the largest sector employer. Retail is the sale of product or service. Transactions can occur in several different ways, such as online, at a business, through direct sales, or direct mail. There are several types of retail establishments. The most common types of retail stores are department stores, big box stores, discount stores, small business stores and online retailers. The retail process consists of four levels of sales: manufacturers that produce the goods, wholesalers that buy products from the manufacturers and resell to retailers, and retailers that buy from the wholesalers and then sell to consumers. At each transaction there is profit margin built into the purchase.

Customer Service

Customer Service is communicating with the customer in a wide range of ways. Communication can be e-mail, in person, or social media. Good customer service includes greeting others warmly and giving suggestions for sales. Retail customer service includes selling products and services in a way that keeps customers returning and interested after they leave. It includes tasks as using technology and positive social skills to interact with others working in the same filed and people seeking the goods and services.

Retail Leadership

Retail leadership is having the initiative to create a vision for a business, sharing that vision with other individuals (employees), and offering the support/tools/guidance to turn that vision into a reality. Within every business there's a group of leaders that are responsible for ensuring that the business is reaching its highest potential in the service they are providing. It is those who have higher positions of responsibility who ensure all employees are educated with the correct training or provided with required support in order to help the business reach its highest goal.
SUCCESS STORY

A success in this sector pertains to a young person without a GED or Diploma. She was encouraged to apply, by a company recruiter, at a cable company. She had great previous customer service in retail and that showed through in her interview. She was hired even though she did not have her GED and was given six months to obtain her GED. She accomplished this goal and was promoted to the business/leadership sector of this business. She has maintained this position for six months and is no longer receiving or in need of public assistance from the State.

REGIONAL DEMAND

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Career Pathway</th>
<th>Job Vacancies</th>
<th>Median Wage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Management Occupations</td>
<td>216</td>
<td>$34.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food Preparation and Service Related</td>
<td>1162</td>
<td>$10.95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sales and Related Occupations</td>
<td>698</td>
<td>$12.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Office and Administrative Support Occupations</td>
<td>867</td>
<td>$13.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

DID YOU KNOW?

According to MN DEED, Retail Salesperson ranks as #1 for jobs in demand for the state of Minnesota. Customer Service Representatives rank #12 on the list.
BUSINESS SERVICES

Career Pathways

- Administrative Support
- Business Information Management
- General Management
- Operations Management
- Human Resource Management

Source: https://careerwise.minnstate.edu/

SKILLS NEEDED

- Computer - ability to effectively operate relevant software and technology
- Communication - ability relay important information to customers and coworkers orally or in written form.
- Customer Service - effective skills in working with coworkers and the public on a daily basis.
- Critical Thinking - ability to generate new ideas and identify and solve problems that occur on the job.
- Leadership - willingness to perform additional tasks as needed and make timely decisions.
- Cooperation - ability to work on projects with coworkers.
- Time Management - ability to coordinate all necessary elements of a project.


Information Technology

- Network Systems
- Information Support and Services
- Programming and Software Development
- Web and Digital Communication

$16.45-$72.13 WAGE RANGE

Source: https://apps.deed.state.mn.us/lmi/cpt/home
https://www.onetonline.org/

Southeast MN Total Projected Jobs for 2014-2024

3,830

MN Projected Annual Job Openings

4,830

Source: https://careerwise.minnstate.edu/
**SKILLS NEEDED**

- **Mathematics** - ability to calculate all financial transactions for individuals and businesses.
- **Communication and Speaking Skills** - ability to effectively explain options and regulations to clients.
- **Computer Skills** - ability to operate financial software, standard office programs, and develop spreadsheets.
- **Analytical** - ability to review information and provide advice to others regarding financial decisions.
- **Accuracy** - skilled and detailed in dealing with numbers and money without errors.
- **Instructional** - ability to adequately advise people about investment opportunities.
- **Discretion** - ability to maintain confidentiality; protecting customers’ personal information.


---

**TRENDS**

- Technology is advancing at a faster rate than businesses are able to keep up with. This creates challenges in the delivery of services as well as in competitiveness amongst businesses.
- Augmented Intelligence (AI) (Man plus Machine Services) is present in a variety of industries today eliminating some positions in the industries. Practices of Artificial Intelligence (AI), Digital Centralization, 5G preparation, and data overload are also emerging.
- The Banking Industry faces multiple challenges in meeting regulations and legacy systems. New competitors, digital only banking, and safe guarding customer’s information from cyber risks also poses challenges for the Banking Industry.
- Investment Management Firms are restructuring portfolios, streamlining operations, and developing technology designed for the digital area that is desirable to the forthcoming Millennials.

**Source:** https://apps.deed.state.mn.us/lmi/cpt/home
https://www.onetonline.org/
SERVICES AND TRADES

1. **Plumbing** - Plumbers install, repair, and maintain pipes in residential, commercial and/or industrial buildings. Their job includes welding and connecting pipes, opening walls and floors to reach or install pipes, and testing pipes for leaks.

2. **Electrical** - Electricians cut, bend and install metal conduits and wiring. They hook up electrical appliances, install electrical switches and lighting fixtures and wire door bells and fire alarms. Electricians can repair power cords and plugs and they often use equipment to test circuitry. They follow relevant codes to ensure work is done correctly.

3. **Masonry** - This is one of the oldest and most respected trades in the construction industry. Masonry construction uses brick, stone, marble, granite, travertine, limestone, cast stone, concrete block, glass block, stucco, and tile. Qualified masons are always in demand to place foundations, patios, sidewalks and curbs.

4. **Painting** - Whether it’s building a home or business, there is a large amount of interior and exterior surface that needs to be painted. Painting protects surfaces from damage. There is always a great demand for experienced painters.

5. **Carpentry** - Carpenters are needed in all areas of construction and are often employed through the entire process. Carpenters do anything from framing floors, walls and roofs to building and setting counter tops and cabinets.

6. **HVAC** - Heating, ventilation, air conditioning and refrigeration mechanics and installers. Install or repair heating, ventilation, and central air conditioning or refrigeration systems including oil burners, hot-air furnaces and heating stoves.

7. **Sheet Metal** - Sheet metal workers fabricate or install products that are made from thin metal sheets, such as ducts used in heating and air conditioning systems.

---

**Table 1: Career Earning Potential and National Growth**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Career</th>
<th>Earning Potential</th>
<th>National Growth</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Electrical</td>
<td>$84380.00</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plumbing</td>
<td>$68440.00</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Electrical</td>
<td>$84380.00</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HVAC</td>
<td>$53130.00</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Masonry</td>
<td>$50360.00</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carpentry</td>
<td>$49350.00</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sheet Metal</td>
<td>$47990.00</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Painting</td>
<td>$44310.00</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: BAYC / Housing First Minnesota / HBI Building Careers

Services and Trades: Skilled trades careers are those labor jobs which require specific training, such as a carpenter, a tile setter or an electrician. Much of the labor involved with skilled trades jobs is manual work and can be physically demanding.

**CAREER OUTLOOK**

6.9 MILLION
Construction National Employment

13% GROWTH
Estimated National Growth 2014-2024

46
Average National Age of Construction Equipment Operators

150,000
Unfilled Construction Jobs Across the Country

**EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES**

**Plumbing**
- Plumbing contractors
- Remodelers
- High-rise and apartment complexes
- Sub-contractors

**Electrical**
- Apprenticeship program
- Electrical contractors
- Sub-contractors
- Maintenance company

**Masonry**
- Apprenticeship programs
- Masonry contracting
- Sub-contractors
- General contractors

**Painting**
- Drywall contractors
- Painting contractors
- Sub-contractors
- Residential contractors

**Carpentry**
- Apprenticeship programs
- Remodelers
- Home builders
- Commercial builders
- Sub-contractors
- General contractors

**HVAC**
- Commercial service technician
- Heating system installer
- Heating, Air conditioning, and plumbing contractors
- HVAC mechanic
- Maintain and repair climate control for businesses, schools and hospitals

**Sheet Metal**
- Construction sheet metal worker
- Manufacturing sheet metal worker

**Construction Industry Pay**
- In 2016, annual pay of all employees in the construction industry in the United States averaged $58,600, 10% more than the average for all private sector employees.
- Construction workers’ pay in Minnesota averaged $63,300, 16% more than all private sector employees in the state.
**Project SEARCH**

The 6th Project SEARCH site started September 2015 in Rochester at the Mayo Clinic. Project SEARCH is an internationally recognized employer-driven model that was developed at Cincinnati Children’s Hospital Medical Center (CCHMC) in 1996. The Project SEARCH High School Transition model is for students with developmental cognitive disabilities in their last year of high school eligibility. The Mayo Clinic Project SEARCH site is a partnership between the Rochester Public Schools, Mayo Clinic, Vocational Rehabilitation Services, Olmsted County Disability Services, and Opportunity Services with supports from the Project SEARCH State Leadership Team. The outcome of Project SEARCH is competitive, integrated employment for each student intern.

Mayo Clinic Rochester graduated its first class of five Project SEARCH interns on June 6, 2016. 100% of the interns secured competitive employment at the conclusion of Project SEARCH. 80% of the interns were employed at Mayo Clinic after graduation.

Mayo Clinic Rochester graduated its second class of eight Project SEARCH interns on June 5, 2017. 100% of the interns secured competitive employment at the conclusion of Project SEARCH. 38% are employed in Food Services position with Morrison Healthcare at Mayo Clinic, Rochester.

Project SEARCH was an overwhelming success, and is an excellent example of how organizations can participate in outreach programs as a way to support their community. In addition, the program enhanced the local workforce by building a pipeline of capable talent. Increased camaraderie in the workplace was an observable benefit.

---

**Albert Lea Select Foods, Inc. reached into a Twin Cities community to solve workforce challenges**

Faced with challenges like retirements of valuable long-time baby boomer employees alongside the shrinking pool of skilled workers that might replace them and the almost surreally deficient work habits of the newest generation of employees Select Foods had to think outside the box.

New union contract agreements helped a lot, but the roots of optimism lay in Select’s newfound relationship with a Minnesota-based community of Karen refugees who now comprise about half of his company’s 470 employees.

The Karen are an ethnic group from Southeast Asia that make up the second largest ethnic group in Myanmar, the country once called Burma. The Karen were brutalized and starved for years by a harsh Myanmar dictatorship, forcing hundreds of thousands into refugee camps along the Thai border, and ultimately into countries like the United States and Canada. Today more than 14,000 Karen people live in Minnesota, making it the largest Karen community in the country.

HR Director Charles Newton first considered the Karen as potential employees when an associate casually described them during a golf game. Newton was more than interested in tapping a new source of labor. “Albert Lea has a lot of industrial businesses, and we were all vying for the same person,” he says. “Albert Lea is a small farming-based community. We have some intelligent people here, but a lot of people who grow up in Albert Lea leave Albert Lea.”

After a discussion with the St. Paul-based Karen Organization of Minnesota, he recruited two groups of 30 employees to start working in the plant.

Source: Enterprise Minnesota
Employer Profile: United Prairie Bank

The career pathway for entering banking is have experience in sales, analytics, and knowledge of lending. It's very common to see bankers advance through entry level or junior-level positions in banking to eventually reach a leadership role, like a Market President. This level can be achieved through years of commitment and growth.

Market Presidents are responsible for leading their branch offices. They coach team members on their activities to achieve business growth goals for the organization, as well as their own individual goals. This is a vital leadership position in a company. A Market President looks for candidates who have acquired a four-year degree and have been in banking industry for at least 10 years.

This position is responsible for managing one of our biggest assets....people. Having leadership experience is a plus to help employees be successful in their careers.

Employment trends can vary between banks. Technology advancements in banking have affected employment models in recent times. As this trend continues, banks put more effort into training staff members to connect with customers as a financial expert as opposed to a transactional level. This trend means that banks are seeking employees that enjoy and thrive on customer interaction.

United Prairie is a family-owned company. The employees are invested in creating a great experience for out customers. United Prairie is invested in the innovation of products and services to help our clients make sound financial decisions.

Workforce Development Client Success Story

My life would be considerably different without the assistance I received (at Workforce Development). I had so much great and friendly help when it came to graduating nursing school and passing my boards so I could reach my first goal of becoming a Licensed Practical Nurse.

I would not have been able to pay the amount of money and pass my boards in a timely manner if I had not had the help I needed which would have ultimately made my financial situation worse. I was able to pass boards and start working right away; therefore, my life has changed dramatically.

I am currently able to support myself and my two boys without any help from the state. It brightens my day every time my boys cheer me on for being a nurse.

-Brandy, Workforce Development, Inc. Client
UNIQUE STAFFING SOLUTIONS

By: Dee Slinde

Barrier: Childcare
Miken Sports, Caledonia MN & Harmony Industries, Harmony MN

In working closely with employers in rural Minnesota, we have jointly identified one of the major barriers to sustained employment as being the desperate need for childcare for potential employees. WDI and Miken Sports have been in discussions as to how we can help to alleviate some of the problems workers face in finding adequate childcare that will allow more workers to potentially be available to Miken. These discussions have resulted in flexibility for the Miken employees to work part time in reflection of school hours, possible stipends for employees to receive discounts at the nearby Kids Corner Childcare Center, and even the potential of adding a daycare center right to the manufacturing plant itself! While we are a long way from accomplishing a Miken Childcare Center, they are very much open and interested in finding solutions to the childcare dilemma in rural Minnesota. We plan to have similar discussions with other businesses in the area. We hope to use this model to encourage other staff starved businesses in Houston County find additional employees.

We have assisted one of our clients in working toward training and certifications needed to open a home daycare, killing two birds with one stone, so to speak! We also connected the client with the local SBA, the Houston County EDA, and a local business friendly bank to assist in the process. The client’s daycare opens on August 1st in Houston, MN.

Harmony Industries has taken it a step further, having a daycare center right on their property. The owner says adding the daycare has had a significant effect on employee attainment and retention, as they offer fee discounts to employees that have children in the daycare. They were recently recognized with an Innovation in Business Award from the Governor for this, and serve as a model for others.

Barrier: Transportation
Valley View Healthcare & Rehab

Another significant barrier for rural clients is the lack of public transportation in the clients’ home community, from one town to another to get to work, a lack of affordable vehicles for purchase, and/or loss of driving privileges through unpaid fines. WDI has begun to develop strong enough relationships with area employers, vendors, and other programs in the area to begin addressing some of the issues.

For example, one WDI client was a perfect fit for a position at Valley View Healthcare & Rehab, however, he did not have a working car to be able to travel the 12 miles from his home town to where the job was located. WDI staff reached out to the employer to ask if they had anyone already working there that might be willing to carpool with our client until he had enough money to be able to fix his car. We provided gas vouchers to the client for use in the carpool driver’s vehicle. We also arranged for him to connect with a trusted local repair shop that allowed him to get the car fixed reasonably inexpensively. He now has a working car, has been employed for 8 months, and the employer reports, “They would like five more just like him.”

It has become critical to develop close partnerships with employers throughout our area, to learn what their specific needs are, and to help them to understand the barriers potential employees face in obtaining/maintaining employment with them. Through building strong relationships with employers, unique solutions can be found that ultimately help them to tap into potential employees they may not have attracted previously, while helping to lift our clients out of poverty and into employment solutions that will actually work in their lives.
Tanner came to WDI in April, 2014 after hearing about the youth program. Tanner was in 10th grade and was finding school difficult. His WDI counselor felt Tanner would benefit from the WDI programming in work readiness skills, learning self-advocacy, and exploring a work experience. His counselor was able to provide him with an iPad through an assistive technology grant. The iPad became a valuable and treasured item for Tanner who used it to take notes in class and complete homework. Due to his hard work, Tanner was able to take additional classes. Throughout his 10th grade year, Tanner worked with his WDI counselor to complete the Blueprint for Success work readiness curriculum, create a resume, and explore his interests. In June, 2015 Tanner started a work experience through the Mantorville Theatre Company where he has been able to use his talent in art to design and paint sets for their theatre productions.

With his work experience, Tanner has also been an instrumental part of restoring a turn of the century carriage house that was originally used as a “model” when first built. Tanner has learned how to use power tools, various hand tools, and work as a team, as well as, independently on different projects. He had been very flexible with schedules and even worked weekends, helping put sets together and maintaining the opera house. Today, Tanner is working two jobs, which he secured on his own and has maintained long term employment with both. Recently, Tanner completed his high school experience and obtained his diploma. He continues to study for his driver’s exam to obtain his license and hopes to pick out his first car soon.

Kendra came to the Red Wing Workforce Development, Inc. office looking to gain work readiness skills and to obtain employment. Kendra was able to work hands on and participated in two different work experience work sites. Workforce Development, Inc. helped Kendra obtain her ParaPro license, to help with Kendra’s goal of working with the Red Wing School District as a paraprofessional. Kendra was hired for the 2017-2018 school year by the same elementary school where Kendra participated in her work experience with WDI. As the school year comes to an end Kendra has stated that “Work is great! I love my job and everything!! Thank you for your support.”
Go Where They Are

A hotel had a tough time recruiting house cleaning help. Knowing that many in that particular talent pool ride city buses, they went to the bus stops and rode the buses to recruit. They marketed at the bus stops and even approached people on the bus and asked them if they were happy in their jobs.

A bank wanted outgoing personalities for Customer Service Representatives. To find those outgoing personalities, the bank sent recruiters into bars and restaurants and recruited bartenders and waitresses to come over into banking. The hours were better, the work was more stable and they could get benefits. In the better restaurants, there are a good number of talented workers who just have never been approached to do something else.

Crazy Idea

One company in Florida set up a table at a busy gas station and would contribute $5.00 of gas to anyone who would fill out an application. Everyone goes to a gas station to fill up, even the ones who hate their jobs. Perfect opportunity to talk to them. It was a rather desperate move, but when you are desperate, you do desperate things. I know it had quite a few people talking. It also got some news coverage.

Just remember through all of this, if a company’s culture is not where it needs to be, none of this will help. Talent has choices, and they don’t have to choose an average employer.

Create Your Own Pipeline

Construction workers are hard to find. Local Carpentry and Laborer’s Unions are working with Workforce Development, Inc. to provide short-term training programs that lead into union apprenticeships/employment. The training programs focus on Essential Skills as well as union-specific training.

Workforce Development, Inc. also offers a Youthbuild program through the Rochester Alternative Learning Center. This program gives ALC students an opportunity to learn construction basics along with safety and essential workplace skills. Students in the Youthbuild class can earn a stipend for the construction projects they complete throughout the semester. WDI Youth Career Planners build on the interest these students develop in the construction industry and help them connect with construction employers when they graduate.

Another approach to creating a pipeline of workers is to engage with high-school and entry-level college students. One pharmacy would introduce themselves to entry-level pharmacy students while still in their first years of college and host a number of events throughout their educational years. They kept files on each of the students, followed their progress and kept in contact throughout their college years. By the time the students graduated, they had a relationship with an area employer.

A unique strategy is basically start forming a farm team for future positions. That farm team could be working for another employer and just waiting their turn to be called up, or may still be in school. It is also possible your farm team is working for you and in training preparing for the next position. We may get to a point where employers are like sport teams with people on the bench waiting to get into the game.

Source: Gerry Hoeffner Personnel Dynamics Consulting
Every organization has a culture. It’s what you do about it that matters. You can let it develop on its own — or you can get intentional about it. Culture is a key differentiator and it’s beneficial to use it as a competitive advantage.

GET INVOLVED TODAY!

• See the back page of this book for all of our locations and contact information.
• Visit our website, www.workforcedevelopmentinc.org, for more resources for both job seekers and employers.
• All services by professional WDI staff members are free. They include assessment, career counseling, skills training, job search guidance, resources and preparation for further training and education. Customers with hearing or speech disabilities may contact us via their preferred Telecommunications Relay Service.
WorkForce Center Locations

Albert Lea
2200 Riverland Drive
Albert Lea, MN 56007
507.369.1488 or 888.438.5627

Red Wing
1606 West Third Street
Red Wing, MN 55066
651.385.6402 or 800.584.6753

Austin
1600 Eighth Avenue NW
Austin, MN 55912
507.433.0555 or 888.438.5627

Rochester
2070 College View Road East
Rochester, MN 55904
507.292.5152 or 800.543.5627

Faribault
201 South Lyndale Avenue, Ste #1
Faribault, MN 55021
507.333.2088 or 888.234.5711

Caledonia
110 East Grove Street, P.O. Box 410
Caledonia, MN 55921
507.724.5231 or 800.657.4629

Kasson
504 South Mantorville Avenue, Suite #4
Kasson, MN 55944
507.634.7380 or 877.778.2227

Preston
100 South Main Street, P.O. Box 395
Preston, MN 55965
507.765.2476 or 800.584.6770

Rochester Administrative
Office Administration
2070 College View Road East
Rochester, MN 55904
507.292.5180

Owatonna
965 Alexander Drive SW
Owatonna, MN 55060
507.333.2088 or 888.234.5711

Wabasha
222 West Main Street
Wabasha, MN 55981
651.565.2635 or 800.657.5105

Workforce Development, Inc. Locations

Workforce Development, Inc.
The Workforce Development Board of Southeast Minnesota