



Chapter 65 Collaborative Local Project Plans

Report to the Legislature

as required by Minnesota Laws 2009 Chapter 65, Sec. 2, Subd. 3

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Chapter 65 Collaborative Local Project Plans

This report to the Legislature from the Governor's Workforce Development Council (GWDC) is required by Minnesota Laws 2009 Chapter 65, Sec. 2, Subd. 3.

The report includes:

- (1) executive summary, page 2;
- (2) a timeline of GWDC activity, pages 3-4;
- (3) a summary of each of the four collaborative local projects, their actions and goals, pages 4-10;
- (4) recommendations on state agency, higher education programs, and services that should be integrated into local plans, pages 10-12;
- (5) appendix: Local project work plans, starting on page 13.

1. Executive Summary

On June 23, 2009, the Governor's Workforce Development Council (GWDC), on behalf of the Department of Employment and Economic Development, Department of Human Services, Department of Education, Adult Basic Education, University of Minnesota, and Minnesota State Colleges and Universities, issued a Request for Proposals (RFP) for Collaborative Local Projects Grants as specified in Minnesota Laws 2009 Chapter 65, Sec. 2. Grants for collaborative local projects are a way for regions of the State to build on and improve successful programs and collaborations in order to meet the extraordinary needs of workers in today's economy.

The review committee selected four collaborative local projects as grant recipients:

1. **Ramsey County Workforce Investment Board's Healthcare Initiative**
Fulfills urban area requirement as specified in MN Laws Chapter 65
2. **Stearns-Benton Employment and Training Council's Training and Employment Skills Team (TEST)**
Fulfills regional center and co-location of WorkForce Center and Minnesota State Colleges and Universities (MnSCU) campus requirements
3. **Workforce Development, Inc.'s Stackable Credential System**
Fulfills rural area requirement

4. Greater Metropolitan Workforce Council's Working Learners Collaborative Initiative

As required by law, each collaborative local project must implement its collaborative local project plan by July 1, 2010 for at least one year. As determined by the review committee, each award recipient will receive \$25,000 from Minnesota's 2009 Workforce Investment Act (WIA) Incentive Grant, and is supported in part by staff funded by the WIA Incentive Grant. Judy Mortrude, DEED State Program Administrator, is the primary grant contact for collaborative local projects.

Grant recipients were required to submit their collaborative local project plans to the GWDC no later than February 15, 2010, and summaries of their plans are listed below.

Also included in this report are GWDC recommendations on how state agency, higher education programs, and services should be integrated into local plans. For example, some of the plans summarized below could, with prompting from the Legislature, do a better job of achieving the goals list in Chapter 65, Sec. 2, Subd. 2.

2. Collaborative Local Project Timeline

May 12, 2009	Chapter 65 signed by Governor Pawlenty
June 11, 2009	GWDC convenes a meeting of partners listed in Chapter 65, Sec. 2, Subd. 1 <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Department of Employment and Economic Development2. Department of Human Services3. Department of Education with respect to K-12 institutions and adult basic education4. University of Minnesota5. Minnesota State Colleges and Universities
June 17, 2009	GWDC sends out Request for Proposals (RFP) draft to partners for review
June 19, 2009	Deadline for partners to provide feedback to GWDC on RFP draft
June 23, 2009	GWDC sends out RFPs to Workforce Service Areas (WSAs)
July 10, 2009	Deadline for WSAs to submit proposals to the GWDC
July 13, 2009	GWDC sends our proposals to partners for review
July 24, 2009	GWDC reconvenes partners to select four local projects
July 30, 2009	GWDC announces selection of four local projects

1. **Ramsey County Workforce Investment Board’s Healthcare Initiative**

Fulfills urban area requirement as specified in MN Laws Chapter 65

2. **Stearns-Benton Employment and Training Council’s Training and Employment Skills Team (TEST)**

Fulfills regional center and co-location of WorkForce Center and Minnesota State Colleges and Universities (MnSCU) campus requirements

3. **Workforce Development, Inc.’s Stackable Credential System**

Fulfills rural area requirement

4. **Greater Metropolitan Workforce Council’s Working Learners Collaborative Initiative**

September 17, 2009	GWDC requests work plans and charters from local projects
January 28, 2010	GWDC convenes technical assistance meeting for local projects. Representatives from the four collaborative projects shared working drafts of their plans and received guidance on both completing the first plan and also moving forward with the work toward the final report.
February 24, 2010	GWDC convenes conference call with partners and local projects. A panel of selection team partners participated in a conference call with representatives from the four collaborative projects to review the finalized plan and provide feedback and guidance for the work ahead.

3. Summary of Local Projects

Collaborative Project #1

Ramsey County Workforce Investment Board Healthcare Initiative

Agency

Ramsey County Workforce Investment Board

Partners

Community Action Partnership of Ramsey and Washington Counties: Pamela McGowan

Department of Employment and Economic Development: Laura Nedved

Goodwill EasterSeals: Mohamud Hashi

Greater Metropolitan Workforce Council: Luke Weisberg

HealthPartners: Mary Russell

Lifetrack Resources: Trixie Golberg

Presbyterian Homes: Dan Strittmater

Quality Career Services: Joe Crowe

Ramsey County Workforce Investment Board (RCWIB): Mary Jo Gardner

Ramsey County Workforce Solutions: Karyn Berg

Saint Paul Community Literacy Consortium: Tom Cytron-Hysom

Saint Paul College: Dave Manthey

Saint Paul Public Housing Agency: Connie Toavs

Saint Paul Public Schools Adult Basic Education (ABE): Karen Gerdin

Saint Paul Public Schools K-12: Kathy Kittel

Plan

Goal: Build a collaborative model utilizing the talents and resources of the WorkForce Center System, MnSCU, ABE and community based organizations that can be reproduced for other training opportunities in healthcare and beyond, as the labor market evolves.

Activities: The RCWIB Healthcare Initiative began in 2008 with the environmental scan of the business community to identify growth industries and the needed labor supply. The assessment was led by the RCWIB and conducted in partnership with Ramsey County Workforce Solutions and the Greater Metropolitan Workforce Council. Discussions were held with human resource and business leaders from HealthEast, HealthPartners, Fairview and Presbyterian Homes to determine their workforce needs.

The information gathered, coupled with labor market data from the Department of Employment and Economic Development, allowed the partners to determine the project scope. Identifying the specific healthcare job,

based on the employer interviews, the group explored how they could best address the need to train adult learners for placement as medical billers and coders and developed a collaborative training model.

Saint Paul College, the Saint Paul Community Literacy Consortium and Saint Paul Public Schools' Adult Basic Education worked with the healthcare employers to develop the curriculum. As the class is delivered, concerns are identified with the intent that the curriculum will evolve so that each time it is delivered, it best meets the current needs of the employers and students.

Collaborative Local Project #2

Training & Employment Skills Team (TEST)

Agency

Stearns-Benton Employment and Training Council (SBETC)

Partners

DEED Job Service: Linda Yozamp

DEED Workforce Development Division: Joan Danielson

HRA: Louise Reis

Saint Cloud Area Public Schools: Jayne Greeney Schill, Scott Wallner

Saint Cloud State University: Bernie Omann

Saint Cloud Technical College: Joyce Helens, Sandy Fabian

Stearns County HRA: Bob Swanberg

Stearns County Human Services: Janet Gologowski

Stearns-Benton Employment and Training Council (SBETC): Kathy Zavala

Tri-CAP: Angie Theise

Plan

Goals: TEST wanted a credential that could be used on job seekers' resumes, verifiable by employers, recognized by the many systems represented in the partnership and meeting an area of need for both job seekers and employers. TEST feels it has found that in the National Career Readiness Certificate (NCRC) provided by the American College Testing (ACT) Program.

1. Find the financial support needed to assist each interested partner in getting the project established for their customers.
2. Compile data from all partners to report how many individuals took the NCRC testing, how many passed successfully and at what level.
3. Track how many individuals take the tests a second time and improve their scores by increasing to a higher level.
4. Market the product to local employers so they are aware of how it can positively impact their business.

Activities:

1. Apply for financial support needed through foundations, state offices and other sources. We propose to get eight (8) sites operational we need \$50,000, plus we have a desire to raise an additional \$50,000 to have coordination of the project and a pool of funds for those not able to cover the \$20 charge per person for the three tests and the copy of the certificate. We will implement sites as funding is secured.
2. All partners have agreed to compile the data from their sites and report back how many individuals took the NCRC testing, how many passed successfully and at what level. This will be compiled on a quarterly basis and submitted to the project coordinator.
3. All partners have agreed to allow individuals to take the tests a second time if it appears likely they will be able to increase the level of their certificate. Partners will report quarterly to the project coordinator.
4. Marketing will be done through local chambers of commerce, local papers, local magazine articles, information packets and by having some employers consider having their current workforce take the tests to set benchmarks for their future hiring. Reporting will be done on marketing efforts.
5. Establish a project coordinator to compile information and redistribute data as needed.

Collaborative Local Plan #3

Stackable Credential System

Agency

Workforce Development, Inc.

Partners

Albert Lea ABE: Diane Hill

Austin ABE: Janie Mino

Caledonia ABE: Nancy Runnigen

Faribault ABE: Pat Wieseler

Owatonna ABE: Deb McDermott-Johnson

Red Wing/Wabasha ABE: Theresa Luther-Dolan

Riverland Community College: Jeff Miller

Rochester ABE: Julie Nigon

Southeast Technical College: Barbara Breza

Workforce Development, Inc.: Becky Thofso

Plan

Goals:

1. Expand employer awareness of the Career Readiness Credential (CRC) and how it can positively impact their business.
2. Better prepare CRC recipients to explain and “sell” their credential and skills to their current and potential employers.
3. Develop a communication plan and marketing activities to highlight the benefits and successes of a regional and/or statewide workforce credential system.
4. Expand the project partnerships to include more local and regional community members.

Activities:

1. Expand employer roundtables for input and to discuss the advantages of the Career Readiness Credential
2. Develop marketing mechanism to highlight employer success stories with the credential.
3. Develop PowerPoint presentation highlighting the advantages of the CRC for use with local groups.
4. Present Workforce Credential System materials throughout the region.
5. Target industry specific skill development classes for ABE students.
6. Hold pre-college orientation events at two colleges.

Collaborative Local Plan #4

Working Learners Collaborative Initiative

Agency

Twin Cities Greater Metropolitan Workforce Council

Partners

Anoka County Job Training Center: Jerry Vitzthum

Community Action Partnerships: Anoka, Ramsey/Washington, and Minneapolis

Industry partners: representatives from healthcare and IT

Metropolitan Workforce Council: Luke Weisberg, Cathy Weik, Carolyn Roby

Minneapolis Public Schools Adult Basic Education: Caryle Peterson

Minneapolis WFC: Kathy Carney

Minnesota Community Action

Minnesota State Colleges and Universities: Linda Lade

Ramsey County Workforce Solutions: Jim Zettner

Plan

Goals:

1. Strengthen and build new relationships among practitioners and stakeholders across arenas in pursuit of more comprehensive service delivery
2. Advance collaborative initiatives that bring ABE, Workforce, Higher Education, and other partners together in service to “working learners” particularly to serve populations in need.
3. Provide individual Workforce Investment Boards with program models, financial support, and leadership to strengthen partnerships within their own geographic areas.
4. Make recommendations via the FWDC to MN State Legislature and state agencies on policy or funding changes that would allow businesses and individuals to be better served.

Four Actions/Initiatives:

1. Support National Career Readiness Certificate demonstration projects in the metro. Connect the work to statewide plans.
2. Strengthen professional development for career counselors.
3. Explore viability of “Skills Panels” for industries and occupations that serve programs across arenas.
4. Explore more and better ways to share information among partners.

4. Recommendations

Chapter 65, Sec. 2, Subd. 3 requests recommendations on how state agency, higher education programs, and services should be integrated into local plans. The following section provides three recommendations that should help achieve the goals listed in Chapter 65, Sec. 2, Subd. 2.

A. Collaborative local projects should focus on increasing skills of low-skill workers

After reviewing the goals of Chapter 65 and comparing them to the work plans summarized above, the GWDC believes that some of the plans could, with prompting from the Legislature, do a better job of achieving the goals list in Chapter 65, Sec. 2, Subd. 2.

While Chapter 65 clearly outlines goals of increasing skill levels of low-skilled workers and providing skill training, several of the collaborative local projects do not focus on skill attainment. Assessments that provide a credential but do not increase skill levels may help workers and employers, but these assessments alone will not meet the goals of Chapter 65. To address this point, the GWDC recommends that the Legislature encourage collaborative local projects to focus on increasing skill levels and providing occupational skills training. If necessary, work plans should be modified to ensure that these issues are addressed.

B. Integrate collaborative local projects with the FastTRAC Initiative

Two of the four collaborative local projects are current FastTRAC projects, and all four of the agencies involved in the collaboratives are using partnerships formed during FastTRAC work to continue delivering service to the working learner.

FastTRAC (Training, Resources, and Credentials) is an initiative that aligns workforce development, adult basic education, and community and technical college systems in order to produce better results for the educationally underprepared working learner. The lead entities for the FastTRAC initiative include Minnesota State Colleges and Universities (MnSCU), the Minnesota Department of Education

ABE Office, and the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED). Other state-level collaborators include the Minnesota Departments of Human Services (DHS) and Labor and Industry (DLI), the Minnesota Office of Higher Education (OHE), and the Governor's Workforce Development Council (GWDC).

Given the existing connections between the collaborative local projects and FastTRAC, in addition to the the support and involvement FastTRAC has from state agencies and higher education, the Governor's Workforce Development Council recommends integrating collaborative local projects with FastTRAC and providing additional support to FastTRAC initiatives to accomplish all of the goals set forth in Chapter 65, Sec. 2, Subd. 2:

- i. Engaging low-skilled workers in increasing their skill levels;
- ii. Providing skill training while upgrading basic skill levels;
- iii. Improving the provision of skill training to individuals currently working;
- iv. Integrating employer contact efforts to improve responsiveness to employer's needs;
- v. Strengthening employer input with training to individuals currently working;
- vi. Improving access to service and training to public assistance recipients;
- vii. Integrating career planning and job placement efforts among institutions;
- viii. Maximizing coordination and reducing duplication among providers;
- ix. Systematically evaluating industry training needs; and
- x. Providing noncredit remediation at no cost to students.

C. *Support FastTRAC's policy agenda*

One additional way that the Legislature could support the goals set forth in Chapter 65, Sec. 2, Subd. 2, is to engage in FastTRAC's policy agenda, which outlines a set of key policies and actions that will lead to a sustainable FastTRAC delivery system.

FastTRAC is currently building a statewide "stackable credentials" framework for delivering education, training, and employment services. This framework refers to highly coordinated programming and policy alignment across Adult Basic Education, the WorkForce Center System, the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities System, and community based organizations that provide training and employment services.

The FastTRAC Policy Agenda includes:

- i. Policy Objective I: Institutionalize FastTRAC programming. Ensure that FastTRAC programs become standard options offered through state education and training systems by eliminating or mitigating policy and other barriers to FastTRAC program approval and delivery.
- ii. Policy Objective II: Align, develop and deploy financial resources to reward the state's education and training systems for FastTRAC program development, delivery and student completion. Dedicate existing funding streams to the development of FastTRAC programs and to student completion of FastTRAC programs.
- iii. Policy Objective III: Strengthen cross-agency leadership, goal-setting and accountability capabilities. Realign state systems, state leadership must forge a shared vision of the state's economic future and the role of ABE, MnSCU, WorkForce Centers, DHS, DOLI, CBOs, employers and employees/students in achieving it.

5. Appendix – Local project work plans

Work plans submitted by collaborative local projects can be found in the following order:

- A. **Ramsey County Workforce Investment Board’s Healthcare Initiative**, page 14-18
Fulfills urban area requirement as specified in MN Laws Chapter 65
- B. **Stearns-Benton Employment and Training Council’s Training and Employment Skills Team (TEST)**,
page 19-24
Fulfills regional center and co-location of WorkForce Center and Minnesota State Colleges and Universities (MnSCU) campus requirements
- C. **Greater Metropolitan Workforce Council’s Working Learners Collaborative Initiative**, page 25-33
- D. **Workforce Development, Inc.’s Stackable Credential System**, page 34-41
Fulfills rural area requirement

Ramsey County Workforce Investment Board
Healthcare Initiative

February 17, 2010

Ramsey County Workforce Investment Board Healthcare Initiative Partners:

Community Action Partnership of Ramsey and Washington Counties	Pamela McGowan	pmcgowan@caprw.org
Department of Employment and Economic Development	Laura Nedved	Laura.Nedved@state.mn.us
Goodwill EasterSeals	Mohamud Hashi	MHashi@GoodwillEasterSeals.org
Greater Metropolitan Workforce Council	Luke Weisberg	lukeweisberg@gmail.com
HealthPartners	Mary Russell	Mary.M.Russell@HealthPartners.com
Lifetrack Resources	Trixie Golberg	Trixieg@lifetrackresources.org
Presbyterian Homes	Dan Strittmater	dstrittmater@preshomes.org
Quality Careers Services	Joe Crowe	directorqcs@qualitycareerservices.org
Ramsey County Workforce Investment Board (RCWIB)	Mary Jo Gardner	mgardner@rcwib.org
Ramsey County Workforce Solutions	Karyn Berg	karyn.berg@CO.RAMSEY.MN.US
Saint Paul Community Literacy Consortium	Tom Cytron-Hysom	thysom@real-time.com
Saint Paul College	Dave Manthey	David.Manthey@saintpaul.edu
Saint Paul Public Housing Agency	Connie Toavs	connie.toavs@stpha.org
Saint Paul Public Schools Adult Basic Education (ABE)	Karen Gerdin	karen.gerdin@spps.org
Saint Paul Public Schools K-12	Kathy Kittel	kathy.kittel@spps.org

Interpretation of the intent of the Chapter 65 legislation by the Ramsey County Workforce Investment

Board:

The Ramsey County Workforce Investment Board's (RCWIB) receipt of a Collaborative Local Projects Grant provides the board with an opportunity to further build community partnerships to address a defined workforce issue. Building these partnerships leverages the existing wealth of knowledge and resources within our community to serve local jobseekers and businesses.

To fulfill the intent of the legislation, the RCWIB brings public, private, and non-profit partners together to address employment, training, and education needs of low- and limited-skill workers within the context of employer needs. The "cross-silo" approach used in this work draws on the strengths and knowledge of each partner, in the broader context of community need. The process includes identification of institutional and legislative changes that could better facilitate such workforce development and education needs in the future.

Problem identified in Ramsey County that led to the creation of the RCWIB Healthcare Initiative:

The RCWIB, responding to data predicting a dramatic shortage in healthcare workers, examined how it could best address workforce needs in the healthcare industry. A healthcare environmental scan and needs analysis done by the RCWIB, Workforce Solutions, and the Greater Metropolitan Workforce Council identified a need to train Medical Billers and Coders. Medical Billing and Coding positions may also serve as significant entry-level jobs in the healthcare field, potentially broadening and deepening the pool of healthcare workers who may be trained to fill other relevant jobs that are in demand and, which pay higher wages.

The RCWIB's Healthcare Initiative is a partnership with HealthPartners, Presbyterian Homes, Saint Paul College, Saint Paul Public Schools Adult Basic Education, Saint Paul Community Literacy Consortium, Ramsey County Workforce Solutions, the Greater Metropolitan Workforce Council, Saint Paul Public Schools K-12, Saint Paul Public Housing Agency, and Community Action Partnership of Ramsey and Washington Counties, DEED, Quality Careers Services, Goodwill/Easter Seals and Lifetrack Resources.

Goals of the RCWIB Healthcare Initiative:

The RCWIB is interested in building a collaborative model utilizing the talents and resources of the WorkForce Center System, MnSCU, ABE and community based organizations that can be reproduced for other training opportunities in healthcare and beyond, as the labor market evolves. Current efforts indicate that the partners are receptive to ongoing collaboration.

Funding from the GWDC, augmented by support from DEED through the FastTRAC grant, is being used to develop and implement a Medical Billing and Coding class that will lead to certification for the participants. Quality Career Services and Goodwill/Easter Seals have provided funding to help cover the cost of tuition for the students. Funding is also supporting the development of a detailed collaborative plan and to acquire training materials and coding software, ensuring that students benefit from the most current educational curricula and support mechanisms available. Grant funds are covering costs related to organizing and convening the partners of the initiative and reporting of grant activities.

The healthcare initiative is an excellent opportunity to build on the partners' strengths to address critical workforce needs. Business, workforce, and education leaders have convened to identify a demand-driven solution for a need in a key industry sector. The experiences, skills, and perspectives of the partners, coupled with experience gained while developing this workforce program, will inform future reports to the Minnesota legislature, including "recommendations on funding, system design, and statutory changes that are reasonable and necessary."

Plan to Accomplish the RCWIB Healthcare Initiative Goals:

The RCWIB Healthcare Initiative began in 2008 with the environmental scan of the business community to identify growth industries and the needed labor supply. The assessment was led by the RCWIB and conducted in partnership with Ramsey County Workforce Solutions and the Greater Metropolitan Workforce Council. Discussions were held with human resource and business leaders from HealthEast, HealthPartners, Fairview and Presbyterian Homes to determine their workforce needs.

The information gathered, coupled with labor market data from the Department of Employment and Economic Development, allowed the partners to determine the project scope. Identifying the specific healthcare job, based on the employer interviews, the group moved forward exploring how they could best address the need to train and place Medical Billers and Coders.

Outcomes and measures were identified by the RCWIB Healthcare Initiative partners that address the process (environmental scan, convening of stakeholders, development of a workforce strategy, funding, collaboration, etc.), program outcomes (number accepted, trained and passing certification, placement rates, job retention, demographics, etc.), as well as employer and student satisfaction. The partners review and discuss measures and progress toward outcomes on an ongoing basis.

Saint Paul College, the Saint Paul Community Literacy Consortium and Saint Paul Public Schools' ABE worked with the healthcare employers to develop the curriculum. As the class is delivered, concerns are identified with the intent that the curriculum will evolve so that each time it is delivered, it best meets the current needs of the employers and students.

Classes started on November 2, 2009 with 19 individuals enrolled. Seventeen of the students successfully completed the first section (passing the Medical Terminology final exam) with two students discontinuing enrollment. The second section of the class started on January 4th.

Updates on the Healthcare Initiative are provided to the RCWIB at committee meetings and to Ramsey County and the City of Saint Paul through update meetings.

Training & Employment Skills Team (TEST)

Presented by:

Stearns-Benton Employment & Training Council (SBETC)

1542 Northway Drive

St. Cloud, MN 56303

www.sbetc.org

320.308.5320

Contact Information:

Kathy Zavala, Executive Director

Stearns-Benton Employment & Training Council

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Name of Project: Training & Employment Skills Team (TEST)

List of all partners and their contact information:

Name	Title	E-mail	Phone #	Address	City, State Zip Code
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Janet Goligowski	Division Director Gateway Services, Stearns Cty Human Serv	Janet.goligowski@co.stearns.mn.us	320-656-6202	Stearns County Human Services, 705 Courthouse Sq	St Cloud MN 56303
Jayne Greeney Schill	CTE/NPG/BEP/CBP Counselor Coordinator	Jayne.Greeney@isd742.net	320-202-6892 ext. 1271	St. Cloud Area School District 742, 1000 44 th Ave N Ste 100	St Cloud MN 56303
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Name	Title	E-mail	Phone #	Address	City, State Zip Code
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Scott Wallner	Local ABE Supervisor -Program Mgr	Scott.Wallner@isd742.org	320-529-6500 ext. 6212	Central MN ABE 216 8 th Ave N	Waite Park MN 56387
Contacts:					
Karen Hiemenz	Admin Asst to the President	KHiemenz@sctc.edu	320-308-5017	SCTC, 1540 Northway Dr.	St. Cloud MN 56303
Pam Marteness	Admin Assist to the Executive Director	PMarteness@sbetc.org	320-308-5721	SBETC, 1542 Northway Dr.	St. Cloud MN 56303

Interpretation of the intent of the Chapter 65 legislation at the local and state level:

The Transition & Employment Skills Team (TEST) views the intent of the Chapter 65 legislation as an opportunity to mobilize job seekers and provide employment assistance along with working with employers to be sure our focus meets their needs. The legislation also provides an opportunity to enhance current collaboration between Adult Basic Education (ABE), local colleges, the Minnesota WorkForce Center and other agencies such as the local Housing & Redevelopment Authority (HRA) agencies and the Community Action Program (CAP) agency.

Using that interpretation, TEST explored a number of ways to begin to achieve this intent. It is apparent that we have a large number of unemployed people locally who could benefit from any skills building or additional education we can provide. One large gap between the need of employers and the skills of the unemployed is in the area of math and science skills. Another identified gap is the ability of the job seeker to be adaptable and flexible in their new position as jobs are changing rapidly to meet demand. Some of the partners are already providing services and classes that address some of these gaps. TEST looked beyond current services to identify a project that meets both the legislative intent and is beneficial to our local job seekers and employers.

Stearns-Benton Employment & Training Council (SBETC) operates using a Workforce “U” model which is currently in its third year of a 3-year pilot funded by the Legislature through **Minnesota** Family Investment Program (**MFIP**) under the Minnesota Statute 147, Art. 2, Sec. 52). This model is designed to meet the workforce needs of businesses and job seekers, building prosperity by acquiring, advancing and transferring skills in strategic industries. The project selected by TEST builds on this model and expands the concept throughout our partners.

Problem identified in your region that led to the project creation:

The partners in TEST were each individually interviewed to identify areas where they had identified needs and gaps. Once the list was developed, the full TEST members looked at what could be used across the partners that would be beneficial to both job seekers and employers. Particular emphasis for the final selection was placed on being able to provide a stackable credential that would enhance the capacity of the region and was both recognizable and transferrable, preferably across the state and nation.

Among the TEST members, there is little or no current assessment or testing that is common among them. TEST wanted a credential that could be used on job seekers’ resumes, verifiable by employers, recognized by the many systems represented in the partnership and meeting an area of need for both job seekers and employers. TEST feels it has found that in the National Career Readiness Certificate (NCRC) provided by the American College Testing (ACT) Program.

Currently, the only partner offering the NCRC locally is the Minnesota Job Service office located in the Minnesota WorkForce Centers (WFC). They offer it to their universal customer but would not be able to accept referrals from all partners, both within the Workforce Center and outside it. SBETC is currently involved in a grant application to the Initiative Foundation that, if funded, would provide the opportunity for SBETC, Rural Minnesota Concentrated Employment Program (CEP) in Brainerd and Central Minnesota Jobs and Training Services (CMJTS) in Monticello to potentially provide the NCRC in those three locations. The grant would cover the start up expenses and provide a small pool of funds for covering the cost of the testing for those who cannot afford to pay for it out of pocket.

The desire of TEST is to expand this well beyond Jobs Service & SBETC. The local Central Minnesota Adult Basic Education Consortium covers sixteen (16) school districts across six counties. They would like to use the NCRC for all persons receiving their General Education Development (GED) or high school diploma and for those English Language Learner (ELL) and English as a Second Language (ESL) at an appropriate level to take the tests. Tri-County Action Program, Inc. (Tri-CAP) administers the Displaced Homemaker Program in eight (8) counties in Central Minnesota and could provide the certificate to their program participants once they are ready to

develop their resume and apply for jobs. Several other similar types of partnerships are also being explored. The local Tech Prep Consortium has expressed an interest in having all high school students who are not going on to college take the NCRC at the same time other students are taking the college entry tests.

There is a financial aspect to this project that will need to be addressed. Job Service and SBETC will have the funds to either get this up and running and/or maintain it the first year for eligible customers. Most of the other partners will need financial assistance in getting NCRC implemented. Besides the actual cost through ACT, which is only \$600, it is important that each entity also have access to KeyTrain so job seekers are able to be prepared for the actual tests. KeyTrain™ is a comprehensive, yet easy-to-use system for improving the basic skills measured by the WorkKeys® Assessment System. Using KeyTrain, our customers can assess their potential WorkKeys score, review topics in each WorkKeys skill area, and practice problems similar to those on an actual WorkKeys assessment. KeyTrain will cost \$4,500 for the first year and \$2,500 for each year beyond that.

In conclusion, TEST will need funds to assist all interested partners to get NCRC along with KeyTrain up and running.

Goals of the Project:

1. Find the financial support needed to assist each interested partner in getting the project established for their customers.
2. Compile data from all partners to report how many individuals took the NCRC testing, how many passed successfully and at what level.
3. Track how many individuals take the tests a second time and improve their scores by increasing to a higher level (Bronze, Silver, Gold or Platinum).
4. Market the product to local employers so they are aware of how it can positively impact their business. (ACT already has and is seeking state & national endorsements for the NCRC.)

Plan to accomplish the goals:

1. Apply for financial support needed through foundations, state offices and other sources. We propose to get eight (8) sites operational we need \$50,000, plus we have a desire to raise an additional \$50,000 to have coordination of the project and a pool of funds for those not able to cover the \$20 charge per person for the three tests and the copy of the certificate. We will implement sites as funding is secured.
2. All partners have agreed to compile the data from their sites and report back how many individuals took the NCRC testing, how many passed successfully and at what level. This will be compiled on a quarterly basis and submitted to the project coordinator.
3. All partners have agreed to allow individuals to take the tests a second time if it appears likely they will be able to increase the level of their certificate. Partners will report quarterly to the project coordinator.
4. Marketing will be done through local chambers of commerce, local papers, local magazine articles, information packets and by having some employers consider having their current workforce take the tests to set benchmarks for their future hiring. Reporting will be done on marketing efforts.
5. Establish a project coordinator to compile information and redistribute data as needed.

**Twin Cities Greater Metropolitan Workforce
Council**

**WORKING LEARNERS COLLABORATIVE
INITIATIVE**

Proposed Workplan January 2010 through March 2011

I. GOALS FOR THIS GRANT:

- A) Strengthen and build new relationships among practitioners and stakeholders across arenas in pursuit of more comprehensive service delivery.)
- B) Advance collaborative initiatives that bring ABE, Workforce, Higher Education, and other partners together in service to “working learners”, particularly to serve populations in need.
- C) Provide individual Workforce Investment Boards with program models, financial support, and leadership to strengthen partnerships within their own geographic areas.
- D) Make recommendations via the GWDC to MN State Legislature and state agencies on policy or funding changes that would allow businesses and individuals to be better served.

II. EXPECTED PROCESS AND TIMELINE

- A) Large convening among all metro partners to identify a) current points of collaboration (identifying both on what, and with whom); b) opportunity to strengthen or build collaboration; c) specific barriers/issues that may be standing in the way of stronger collaboration; and, d) to identify what would be needed to move relationships from informal/personal to more institutional and supported. (January 28, 2010)
- B) Development of a workplan that includes individual WSA-level actions, specific cross-boundary initiatives (both program and geographic boundaries), and some measures of system change across the metropolitan region. (Draft plan completed by 2/12/10)
- C) Consideration and amendment of the workplan by individual Workforce Investment Boards, service partners, and others (balance of February & March 2010)
- D) Final workplan, as amended by stakeholders and partners, circulated back to stakeholders and partners (April 2010)
- E) Meeting among stakeholders and partners to approve final plan (May 2010)
- F) Implementation of plan begins (July 2010)
- G) Check-in with large stakeholder meeting to assess progress and address issues (September 2010 and January 2011)
- H) Completion of plan and report to GWDC (February 2011)

III. STRENGTHS ON WHICH TO BUILD

In a “kick-off” meeting on 1/28/10, small groups organized by Workforce Service Area, identified existing collaborative relationships and activities which will serve as foundations on which to continue to build stronger metro-wide collaboration.

Stakeholders specifically mentioned:

- Several sector-specific projects funded through MJSP, FastTrac, and other sources. In most cases, these projects are already jointly managed and delivered by workforce investment board, Adult Basic Education, and MnSCU partners, with leadership from business partners.
- Previous, and in some cases continuing, venues for partner meetings within WSAs (Employer Service Partnerships, etc.)
- Good delivery models, like STEP in Anoka County, that already blend learners, workers, and funding streams at different levels.

IV. INITIATIVES TO BE ADVANCED

The GMWC will reach the goals identified above through a combination of regionwide activities as well as some work being done entirely within individual workforce service areas.

During the grant period, the GMWC will work in three broad categories:

- 1) Advancing specific efforts intended to streamline and/or strengthen services to jobseekers and businesses between workforce, ABE, and higher education providers;
- 2) Support local Workforce Investment Boards’ efforts among partners within a single workforce service area to streamline and/or strengthen services to jobseekers and businesses; and,
- 3) Advocate, through the GWDC, state agencies, and other venues, for policy and funding changes that could lead to a more effective and prosperous Twin Cities metropolitan labor market.

The attached table offers a more detailed description of initiatives in these categories and outlines how GWDC grant funds might be used in support of each activity.

V. MEASURING OUR PROGRESS

Progress toward the goals above will be measured on multiple levels. While we have identified longer-term expected outcomes in the attached table, measures of progress during the grant period will likely be limited to outputs, with indicators of longer-term improvements to come.

Individual projects/initiatives will measure their own outputs including:

- numbers served
- Measurable educational/employment advancement?
- Strength of relationships/collaboration?
- New partners engaged?

Overall progress will be assessed by:

- Strength of relationships/collaboration
- Reach and number of partners engaged in work projects

Using tools like the Wilder Research Collaborations Factors Inventory, we'll complete a baseline survey early in the grant period, followed by a second survey toward the end of the grant period. Resources permitting, we may also conduct more in-depth analysis inside one or more of the specific projects supported through grant funds.

VI. BUDGET AND OVERSIGHT

This workplan will continue to be developed by partners including Workforce Investment Board staff and leaders, Adult Basic Education providers, higher education leaders, and practitioners from community-based organizations. Oversight for implementation of this plan will be handled by the Twin Cities Greater Metropolitan Workforce Council (GMWC), specifically, through its shared staff consultant, LukeWorks, LLC and the Council Chair, Cathy Weik.

The \$25,000 grant from the GWDC will be expended as follows:

Meeting expenses (kick-off meeting and follow-up gatherings)	\$7500
Contracted staff time	\$5000
Collaboration evaluation	\$2500
Project/Initiative costs (see attached)	\$10,000

Note that this is a draft budget. The GMWC may see other opportunities during the course of the grant period which cannot be anticipated now, to support specific initiatives that strengthen our metrowide collaborative efforts.

TWIN CITIES GREATER METROPOLITAN WORKFORCE COUNCIL
WORKING LEARNERS COLLABORATIVE INITIATIVE DETAIL 1/10 - 3/11

ACTION / INITIATIVE	TIMEFRAME	LEADERSHIP & PRIMARY PARTNERS	SCOPE	EXPECTED OUTCOMES	GRANT- FUNDED BUDGET	NOTES
<p>A) Demonstration of shared assessment “toolkit” among workforce, ABE, and MnSCU partners. Steps include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Supporting existing plans to assess learners with CRC in 2010 2. Establishing a metrowide budget for bringing this to scale, and finding resources to support activity at scale 3. Ensuring metro solutions fit with statewide plans 	<p>Begun in late 2009, continuing through 2010</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kathy Carney • Carlye Peterson • Jim Zentner • Linda Lade • FastTrac staff 	<p>Initially, Minneapolis and Saint Paul, with possible extension to wider metro</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Piloting of ACT-CRC in Minneapolis and Saint Paul • Beginning of metrowide policy/protocol regarding assessment tools among partners 	<p>\$2500</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This will be done in tandem with FastTrac assessment committee work • GMWC leaders want to ensure that MnSCU's use of Accuplacer be connected to this.
<p>B) Strengthening professional development for career counselors. Steps include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Identifying professional development needs of counselors in all arenas 2. Identifying sources of information 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify partners and needs by 5/10 • Plan for Fall 2010 training for school- 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GMWC leaders • Metro area school district reps • School 	<p>Perhaps implement within WSAs, but metrowide in scope</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Broader knowledge base and relationships for counselors • Potential structural improvements to do training for counselors across arenas over time 	<p>\$2500</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider an incentive structure for professional development among

ACTION / INITIATIVE	TIMEFRAME	LEADERSHIP & PRIMARY PARTNERS	SCOPE	EXPECTED OUTCOMES	GRANT- FUNDED BUDGET	NOTES
<p>among businesses to be shared with career counselors</p> <p>3. Developing an ongoing mechanism to ensure timely training for counselors in all arenas</p>	<p>based counselors</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shape ongoing plan by 12/10. 	<p>counselor reps</p>				<p>counselors?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> We think there is value in workforce & ABE partners championing together PD for K-12 staff
<p>C) Explore viability of Skills Panels for industries & occupations that serve programs across arenas. Steps include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Negotiating with industry partners to test in three fields Convening industry panels and ensuring information flow to practitioners Sustainability planning 	<p>Complete negotiation within pilot fields to test by 9/10.</p> <p>Implement beginning 10/10.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Jerry Vitzthum and industry partners for IT Luke Weisberg and industry partners for mfg. HealthForce staff and other partners for healthcare 	<p>metrowide</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> More efficient way to tap industry expertise. More organized approach by schools, workforce partners, and others to reaching industry expertise. More timely and higher quality information delivered to learners and workers. 	<p>\$2500</p>	
<p>D) Explore more and better way to share information among partners and across</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cathy Weik, Carolyn Roby, 	<p>metrowide</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> More and better ways of sharing information about 	<p>\$2500</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Make broader use of Ramsey

ACTION / INITIATIVE	TIMEFRAME	LEADERSHIP & PRIMARY PARTNERS	SCOPE	EXPECTED OUTCOMES	GRANT- FUNDED BUDGET	NOTES
<p>arenas. Steps may include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Strengthening of electronic information sharing tools 2. Arranging for “in-service” learning between ABE, higher ed, and workforce staff by geography or sector specialty. 3. Arranging for face-to-face meetings between city economic development staff and county-based workforce service staff. 		Anne Olson, and Luke Weisberg		initiatives, funding, opportunities.		JobConnect, United Way, GMWC site, etc.??
<p>E) Advocacy for ideas and on issues of concern for metro stakeholders. Key issues:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transfer of credit for learners from customized training to degree programs • Program needs for people with physical, cognitive, and other disabilities as well as resources to support other populations with 	Ongoing, with key points at GWDC reporting to Legislature	Cathy Weik and GMWC leaders	metrowide	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Legislative and administrative changes that positively affect the issues identified • More and/or different financial resources to address identified issues. 	N/A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In conjunction with MWCA statewide efforts

ACTION / INITIATIVE	TIMEFRAME	LEADERSHIP & PRIMARY PARTNERS	SCOPE	EXPECTED OUTCOMES	GRANT- FUNDED BUDGET	NOTES
<p>multiple barriers to employment.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Better organization of business outreach efforts among DEED, local WIB, and other partners • Lack of capacity for publicly-funded four-year degree-granting programs in the metro region. 						

COLLABORATIVE LOCAL PROJECTS REPORT

STACKABLE CREDENTIAL SYSTEM

Presented by:

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Name of project: Workforce Credential System

List of all project partners and their contact information:

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Interpretation of the intent of the Chapter 65 legislation at the local and state level:

Chapter 65 legislation is focused on raising the skills of our workforce at both the local and state level to enhance the competitiveness of Minnesota businesses. There are several indicators pointing to strong economic recovery by Minnesota businesses, but this recovery will be based on workforce skill requirements that are higher than

traditional employment. As we move from an agriculture economy (i.e. traditional agriculture and Food Processing) to more advanced manufacturing (i.e. bio-business manufacturers and high-tech medical companies), our workforce will be challenged to raise their skill levels in order to compete for the emerging high paying, high demand jobs.

At the same time, we recognize our region and the state is facing a labor shortage that is being masked by the current economic conditions. As we emerge from the current recession, it will be imperative for every Minnesotan to raise their skill level to meet the workforce needs of our business community. Ensuring every citizen is employed and supporting their life-long skill development will be imperative as we compete for economic prosperity and work to maintain our quality of life.

The Chapter 65 legislation is being implemented to demonstrate incremental skill attainment beyond high school, but short of college diplomas and degrees. This incremental achievement must be documented for both employers and their workforce to identify not only skill *attainment* but also skill *progression*.

To successfully document this skill progression, a nationally-recognized, common assessment tool and credential is necessary.

Problem identified in your region that led to the project creation:

As noted in our application, raising the awareness of the need for regional competitiveness has been the focus of many of the existing partnerships. Current partners believe in and support the vital importance of competing on a regional basis, replicating and expanding best practices, sharing curriculum and making the most efficient use of resources. The timeliness of this opportunity, coupled with the action plans developed from recent planning projects, will allow us to build upon existing partnerships and expand our current network.

We recognize the *Workforce Credential System* model must expand the current network to include stronger representation from local school districts, community action agencies, public housing representatives, and other local stakeholders. As part of this project, we will strengthen our collaborative by better engaging local leaders.

The *Workforce Credential System* model utilizes a common assessment framework to coordinate employment, training and education services to develop positive outcomes for job seekers, education providers, employers and incumbent workers. This model facilitates collaboration while helping employers measure real world skills. The outcome of this project will be to put a standardized stackable credential into practice throughout our region.

A credentialed workforce is a system change not only for workers, but for the companies who employ them. While this magnitude of change is vital, it will take persistence and patience to implement.

Goal(s) of the project:

1. Expand employer awareness of the Career Readiness Credential (CRC) and how it can positively impact their business
2. Better prepare CRC recipients to explain and “sell” their credential and skills to their current and potential employers
3. Develop a communication plan and marketing activities to highlight the benefits and successes of a regional and/or statewide workforce credential system
4. Expand the project partnerships to include more local and regional community members

Plan to accomplish these goals:

Goal 1: Expand employer awareness of the Career Readiness Credential and how it can impact their business.

Activity	Timeline	Responsibility	Measurement
Employer roundtables for input and to discuss the advantages of the Career Readiness Credential	Summer, 2010	WDI	# of events and attendance sign-in sheet
Develop marketing mechanism to highlight employer success stories with the credential	Summer, 2010	WDI	# of employers highlighted, articles published, hits on website, etc.
Develop PowerPoint presentation highlighting the advantages of the CRC for use with local groups	Spring, 2010	WDI	Availability and distribution of presentation materials
Present Workforce Credential System materials throughout the region	Fall, Winter 2010, Spring, 2011	All Partners	# of presentations given and attendance at events
Target industry specific skill development classes for ABE students	Fall, 2010	ABE partners	Attendance at classes
Hold pre-college orientation events at two colleges	Fall, 2010	All partners	Attendance at events

Goal 2: Better prepare CRC recipients to explain and “sell” their credential and skills to their current and potential employers.

Activity	Timeline	Responsibility	Measurement
Prepare, publish and distribute handouts to all CRC recipients that clearly explain what their level of achievement means for their employer	Summer, 2010	WDI	Availability of materials
Provide training to WFC job counselors on the CRC materials and how to instruct their CRC recipients in their use	Summer, 2010	WDI	# of counselors trained
Develop marketing presentation and materials for Job Club and other group curricula	Spring, 2010	WDI	Availability of materials
Distribute handouts, presentation materials, training materials to all partners within the project for dissemination to their clients.	Fall, Winter 2010, Spring 2011	All Partners	# of presentations given, handouts, etc.

Goal 3: Develop a communication plan and marketing activities to highlight the benefits and successes of a regional and/or statewide workforce credential system.

Activity	Timeline	Responsibility	Measurement
Develop communication and marketing strategy to highlight successes throughout the region	Summer, 2010	WDI	Communication Plan developed
Distribute plan and encourage input from all project partners	Summer, 2010	WDI, All partners	# of partners who know the process to provide input into communicating project success
Highlight benefits and successes of using a Workforce Credential System	Beginning Spring, 2010	WDI, All Partners	# presentations given, articles published,
Continued efforts with refined messaging as the project progresses	Fall, Winter 2010, Spring, 2011	All Partners	# of presentations given, handouts, etc.
Widely market ABE classes and pre-college events throughout the area	Fall, 2010	All partners	# press releases published, media announcements made, contacts made, interviews, presentations, website hits, etc.

Goal 4: Expand the project partnerships to include more local and regional community members

Activity	Timeline	Responsibility	Measurement
Develop structure for regional Workforce Credential Committee	Summer, 2010	WDI	Committee in place with MOU or commitment to contribute to the committee among partners
Workforce Credential Committee meets regularly to review marketing efforts and Credential impact within business	Summer, 2010	All partners	# of partners who participate on a regular basis for the meetings