



Hennepin-Carver

Workforce Development Board

MINUTES

January 21, 2026

CareerForce Bloomington

Attendees: Rebecca Stearns, Kim Schrupp, Derrick Givens, Doug Muller, Elise Durbin, Tim Mayer, Cindy Larson, Amanda Ruch, Sarah Gutzman, Emily Watts, Garfield Clark, Kate Black, Julio Vargas-Essex

Absent: Christa Seaberg,

Excused Absent: Jennifer Kielas, Nicole Mattson

Staff: Erik Aamoth, Bri Zaiss, Shannon Quigley, Virginia Rose Kane

Guests: Sam Peterson-Emem

Online: Nola Slagter-Johnson, Sarah Lofquist Garbis, Lisa Cain, Warsan Artan, Ema Mailhot, Leah McNamee, Jess Niebuhr, Richard Grigsby, Tim Wison

1. Approval of Agenda

MOTION: Doug Muller

SECOND: Kim Schrupp

MOTION PASSED: 13 Yeas, 0 Nays

2. Approval of Meeting Minutes (November 2025)

MOTION: Sarah Gutzman

SECOND: Elise Durbin

MOTION PASSED: 13 Yeas, 0 Nays

3. Success Story (attached with board materials)

4. Board Member Introductions & Engagement Exercise (Garfield Clark, Kate Black, Julio Vargas-Essex, and absent Board Members to give introductions at the next board meeting.)

- a) Rebecca Stearns, Recruiter, Polar Semiconductor. Runs apprenticeship programs; works with Hired for pre-apprenticeships; internal and external internship programs for upskilling and in school young adults; liaison for Scale and diversity in manufacturing initiatives to build brand awareness; Bloomington economic partnerships member. Networking resources: Normandale, Hennepin Technical College, University of Minnesota, veterans' employment groups. Strategic Talent Pathways work group member.
- b) Kim Schrupp, Contractor and workforce relations, LiUNA 563. Works with new contractors interested in being signatories to the union; apprenticeship coordinator experience, Construct Tomorrow 10 annual events around MN to introduce youth to construction trades in open format with hands on activities. Networking resources: local union involvement and associated connections. Building Strong Communities: BIPOC geared effort for people switching careers in partnership with Hennepin College evening classes. Chair, Program Design & Development work group.
- c) Derrick Givens, Business representative, IBEW 292 electrical workers, representing various skills and trades, operations experience with international corporations; trustee and general board member of AFLCIO working on outreach, minority caucus affinity group treasurer working on community outreach in parks geared for youth; provides information on how to enter group and trades in general. Provided gift cards and meals in response to government shutdown; second black person to hold position in organization in 125 years and prides himself on protecting minorities of all kinds. Apprenticeships typically are adults shifting careers versus high school students.

- d) Doug Muller, Sr. Recruiter, Entegris. 10K employees worldwide parts manufacturer. Tied to hiring veterans and organizations geared to veterans. Interest in hiring trends and engaging in community outreach for Entegris. Hosts a job club for any job seekers to help advocate and navigate job searches. Entegris hiring is picking back up, using primarily Indeed and LinkedIn for applicants. Works with high schools in Chaska and on Hennepin Tech board of directors.
- e) Elise Durbin, Assistant City Administrator for Chaska. Community and economic development experience works with small and large employers on expansion and general business development. Bemidji State University alumni association and foundation, Northwest Technical College connection. Serves as mentor for Minnetonka High School Vantage Program offering students the opportunity to connect with environmental studies professionals, as well as manufacturing professionals. Chaska maintains its own power company, so it is a draw for technology companies, data centers.
- f) Tim Mayer, talent acquisition for Kraus Anderson. Construction and property big box anchor retail strip and housing. Talent acquisition for office side. Focused on more representation of construction on their Workforce Shortage Committee. Involved in career fairs and looking to involve underrepresented populations such as veterans and justice involved. Partners with ACE mentorship program in high schools, Construct Tomorrow, Summit Academies, Achievement Cities. Advisory board member for Dakota County Technical College, involved in Construction Careers Foundation. High school engagement involves relationship and awareness building leading to future opportunities and planting seeds, generating interest.
- g) Cindy Larson, Workforce Development supervisor for DEED, Wagner-Peyser board representative. Job service staff provided between 600 - 800 Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment (RESEA) job seeker referral calls in November and December, including follow-up connections; they provide 1:1 appointments, workshops and job search guidance; review DW and VRS services for qualifying criteria and review of potential barriers. Partners with Lisa Cain on job fairs and OSO coordination assistance.
- h) Amanda Ruch, HR generalist with Thought Logic Consulting. Management development and change management. Experience with Cristo Rey, Step Up, and other organizations leading to interest in workforce development.
- i) Sarah Gutzman, Rehab area manager, DEED Vocational Rehabilitation Services. Serves all school districts in Minnesota for individuals from 14 to 80 years of age who have a diagnosis that may impact their ability to find, get, and keep employment. Work with businesses and helping them understand disabilities, accommodations, waiver services, and career focused information. Interested in working on getting youth into unions and overcoming challenges associated with life barriers as well as union requirements. 80% federally funded with 20% state match.
- j) Emily Watts, Title II representative on the board representing seven ABE consortia (Osseo, Adult Options in Education, Robbinsdale, West ABE, Metro North Brooklyn Center, Metro South and Southwest Metro). Collectively serve 5K students per year, all seeking to build skills in English and/or obtain high school credentials or gain training to enter careers in high demand. Grant funded, participants predominantly born outside the US bring valuable skills and experience to the workplace. Currently offers training in healthcare, construction, food service/hospitality, and manufacturing in partnership with local employers.

5. Carver County Presentation

- a) Due to time constraints, a larger update will be provided during the March Board meeting.
- b) Staffing challenges, piloting self-service hours and collecting data on whether to adjust model.
- c) Typical January spike in referrals. Veterans services, libraries, and child support units coordinate program referrals.
- d) Two skills-based hiring events in 2025 well attended; served 523 job seekers across programs.
- e) CDL trainings, tiny cabin project still in progress with target of 2026 completion.

6. Board Updates

a) Directors Report

- a. WLC virtual event on February 23 from 1:30 – 3:30pm; invites forthcoming.
- b. MOU and IFA – There has been updates on new service providers for the SCSEP program, which the team is working on addressing. Target completion at the end of March.
- c. Four board members leaving with new application season forthcoming; onboarding and introducing a new board member in March.

b) Program Updates

1. Wagner-Peyser

- i. Job service staff provided between 600 - 800 Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment (RESEA) job seeker referral calls in November and December, including follow-up connections; they provide 1:1 appointments, workshops and job search guidance; review DW and VRS services for qualifying criteria and review of potential barriers.
- ii. Partnered with Lisa Cain on job fairs and OSO coordination assistance.

2. Adult/Dislocated Worker (included in written board materials)

3. Youth (included in written board materials)

4. VR (no report)

5. ABE (see above)

- i. All 8 ABE providers in the WDA collectively serve 5K students per year, all seeking to build skills in English and/or obtain high school credentials or gain training to enter careers in high demand.
- ii. Grant funded, participants predominantly born outside the US bring valuable skills and experience to the workplace.
- iii. Currently offers training in healthcare, construction, food service/hospitality, and manufacturing in partnership with local employers.

6. One-Stop Operator (OSO):

- i. Hosted Airtable cross training;
- ii. All are welcome to join Disco to view recordings;
- iii. Developing working group to establish processes for customer satisfaction survey.

c) Carver County (see above)

d) Hennepin County

- a. Staying close to MN and working with DCYF in terms of food, cash, health care, to ensure proper and accurate messaging.
- b. Proceeding as normal on the Employment and Training side of the county despite lack of guidance; do not anticipate a pause in services so staying true to course of disparity elimination.

8. Adjourn

Mission Statement

The Hennepin-Carver Workforce Development Board fosters individual and family economic well-being through the development of meaningful career pathways and employment opportunities, provides a skilled talent pipeline to our employer partners through the strategic investment of workforce development resources and the building of collaborative partnerships, and works alongside community organizations to identify and recruit community members to participate in workforce development services based on the workplace requirements expressed by our employer partners as well as the needs and interests of the community.

Vision Statement

The board works in partnership with all community members and employers to support and enhance an effective, efficient, and inclusive workforce development system which assures alignment between available talent and employer needs resulting in economic prosperity for all.

The Hennepin-Carver Workforce Development Board is a Proud Partner of the American Job Center Network and Minnesota CareerForce.

