



HCWDB Meeting

March 18th, 2026

Carver County, Title I – IV Program Updates and Director’s Report

Carver County Updates:

Contact: Jen Kielas, jkielas@carvercountymn.gov

Carver County is progressing across several key workforce initiatives and continues to experience strong demand for services at the CareerForce Center.

- **Staffing Updates**
 - Recruitment is underway for the Resource Specialist position. This role will support both the CareerForce Center and the Family Resource Center, splitting time evenly between the two locations.
 - We are also hiring an additional Employment Counselor who will focus on serving participants with work requirements tied to SNAP and Medicaid.
- **CareerForce Center Activity**
 - We continue to pilot self-serve hours; however, initial participant feedback indicates that individuals visiting the center generally require more hands-on assistance, particularly with resume development. We will continue the pilot through the end of April.
 - Daily traffic remains high with job seekers facing multiple barriers.
 - MFIP caseloads are increasing, reflecting growing needs among families seeking employment support and stabilization services.
- **Programs and Initiatives**
 - Recruitment is beginning for the Youth Summer Work Experience program, and we anticipate strong interest again this year.
 - Demand for the Dislocated Worker Program remains elevated, and we continue to maintain a waitlist.
 - The Trades360 project continues to move forward, giving youth an opportunity to learn construction skills.

Youth Program Updates:

Contact: Bri Zaiss, Brianna.Zaiss@hennepin.us

- WIOA Young Adult (WIOA Youth)
 - WIOA Youth PY24 funds must be expended by 3/31/2026. All providers are on track to fully expend their PY24 funds by the end of the grant term.
 - PY24 Local Monitoring complete with all providers. PY25 Monitoring will be conducted on a rolling schedule (1 or 2 providers every other month) starting in April 2026.
 - DEED Data Validation will be starting in April 2026.
- Minnesota Youth Program (MYP)
 - The SFY25 MYP report has been published by DEED and is available here: [Minnesota Youth Program SFY2025 Annual Report](#). Carver County’s section can be found starting on pg. 20 and Hennepin County’s section can be found starting on pg. 22.
 - Hennepin County has again retained Outreach to Schools funds from the SFY26 MYP grant to support Hennepin GO Career Expos and other career exploration opportunities with the County. Upcoming events in the works include:
 - Spring 2026 GO Expo – April 29 at the 625 building downtown Minneapolis
 - Career Exploration Event in partnership with Hennepin County Libraries - May 4th (tentatively) at North Regional Library



Hennepin-Carver Workforce Development Board

- SFY25 Local Monitoring complete with all providers. SFY26 Monitoring will be conducted on a rolling schedule (1 or 2 providers every other month) starting in April 2026.
- Youth at Work Competitive Grant
 - Hennepin County was awarded \$300,000.00 in Youth at Work Competitive grant funds to support youth career readiness and work experience activities during State Fiscal Year (SFY) 2026 and 2027.
 - Hennepin County is partnering with Brooklynk to host two Career Academies in February, one for younger youth (14-17), and one for older youth (18-24).
 - These Career Academies will be focused on key work readiness skill development using Brooklynk's Get Ready! Curriculum. Youth will earn a \$100 stipend for completing the Career Academy.
 - Due to the effects of Operation Metro Surge on our community, the Career Academies have been **rescheduled for May 2026. Updated dates included below:**

Career Academy for Younger Youth (14-17)
When: May 6th, 5:30 – 7:30 PM
Where: Brooklyn Park City Hall

Career Academy for Older Youth (18-24)
When: May 5th 2:00 – 4:00 PM
Where: Brooklyn Park City Hall
 - Hennepin County is also partnering with Brooklynk to provide summer work experiences for 5 youth this summer.
- TANF Youth Innovation Project
 - Hennepin County's 2026 TANF Youth Innovation Project allocation was reduced from \$50,000 in 2025 to \$35,000 in 2026.
 - 2026 TANF Youth planning documents were submitted to DEED on 1/9/26. We are still waiting for funds to be allocated.

Adult and Dislocated Worker Program Updates

Contact: Nicki Hanson, Nicolette.hanson@hennepin.us

- Subgrantee monitoring for PY23 and PY24 is wrapping up.
- DEED's monitoring report for our PY23-24 grants was received.
- DEED Data Validation will be starting in April 2026.
- DWD and Data Analytics teams continue to work to develop a WIOA/DW PowerBI dashboard to aid in program monitoring and invoice review
- Received PY25 WIOA second allocations and are finalizing modifications that include the additional funds and all provider requested changes.

Title II Adult Basic Education Program Updates

Contact: Emily Watts, wattse@district279.org

- Adult Basic Education programs across the Twin Cities have experienced a challenging few months with current events in the community creating fear and anxiety for many of the students, volunteers and staff in our programs.
 - Statewide attendance in ABE programming dropped 17% in January 2026 from the same period in 2025. Programs who were able to offer an online learning option certainly saw fewer decreases in



Hennepin-Carver Workforce Development Board

attendance, although nearly 100% of students were joining from a remote location, most often their homes.

- By the first week of March, in-person attendance was starting to recover, but programs are still reporting that only about 20% of students are attending in-person classes.
- There are a number of career pathway training programs running across our region in partnership with ABE programs including a new Food and Nutrition Services project in Osseo, a Community Interpreter training program in Bloomington, and a healthcare career pathways program in Bloomington.
- ABE programs are always seeking employer partners. ABE can offer customized training for employees or create employee pipelines in partnership with local employers.
 - If you are a local business looking for foundational job skill training programs for your team, please contact Emily Watts.

Title III Wagner-Peyser Program Updates

Contact: Cindy Larson, cynthia.larson@state.mn.us

- No updates.

Title IV Vocational Rehabilitation Program Updates

Contact: Sarah Gutzman, sarah.gutzman@state.mn.us

- No updates.

HCWDB Director's Report

Contact: Erik Aamoth, erik.aamoth@hennepin.us

- **MOU and IFAs**
MOUS and IFAs are nearly completed! We are just adding the final numbers for the Bloomington IFA. Next step will be signatures, approval by the counties and approval by DEED.
- **Regional Funds**- the Metro Workforce Board Directors submitted a plan to spend our regional fund dollars to DEED for 2026-2027. The plan continues our work supporting Skills Based Hiring workshops and doing another counselor conference this fall.

- **State Updates**

The 2026 Legislative Session is in full swing, after starting on February 17 this year. I've included a copy of our Priority and Platform document for this year. We will be working hard to share the impacts of the State Dislocated Worker Program.

- Legislative Task Force on Workforce Development System Reform- Task Force Overview & Materials: [Task Force Website](#)

Created by the Legislature during the 2025 session, the Task Force has been meeting since last August. The Task Force has been working on doing a scan of workforce programs and funding. The Scope of the Task Force includes:

- Reviewing existing workforce development programs in Minnesota, including those funded by the federal and state government;
- Studying the current system for funding workforce development efforts.
- Investigating potential metrics for evaluating workforce development program outcomes;



Hennepin-Carver Workforce Development Board

- Making recommendations for changes to practices, programs, funding, and laws related to state workforce development efforts;
- **Board Membership**
We have two open Private Sector board seats and one open Community Based Organization board seat. Applications are open until April 4.
 - See attachment detailing instructions for Board applications. Please share with any individuals interested in applying for the Board.
- **State and Local Plan**
 - The State Plan is currently open for public comment: [Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act \(WIOA\) / Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development](#)
 - We have received limited guidance on Local Plan development. More information to come.