



Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, July 15, 2026

CareerForce Bloomington

Attendees: Andrea Erickson (chair), Kate Black, Garfield Clark, Elise Durbin, Sarah Gutzman, Cindy Larson, Tim Mayer, Nicole Mattson, Mary Niedermeyer, Amanda Ruch, Kim Schrupp, Becca Stearns, Julio Vargas-Essex, Emily Watts

Absent: Derrick Givens, Doug Muller, Kelsey Rogness, Christa Seaberg, Malissa Winge

Staff: Bri Zaiss, Jen Kielas, Shannon Quigley, Virginia Rose Kane

Guests: May Xiong, Sarah Garbis, Sam Peterson-Etem, Becca Lopez

Online: Richard Grigsby, Christine Wytaske, Jerome Balsimo, Warsan Artan, Jess Niebuhr, Tanika Reese, Scott Kosloski, Leah McNamee

1. Approval of July 2026 Agenda

MOTION: Emily Watts

SECOND: Becca Stearns

MOTION PASSED: 14 Yeas, 0 Nays

2. Approval of May 2026 Meeting Minutes

MOTION: Nicole Mattson

SECOND: Kim Schrupp

MOTION PASSED: 14 Yeas, 0 Nays

3. Board Business

A. Board Action Request – Comprehensive CareerForce Site Designation (HCWDB Action Request 2026-7)

MOTION: Julio Vargas-Essex

SECOND: Emily Watts

MOTION PASSED: 14 Yeas, 0 Nays

4. Success Story – Carver County

A. Success Story was included in written meeting materials.

5. Board Member Engagement Discussion: Bri led a discussion with the board members about the current industry representation on the board, identifying gaps in sectors such as technology, hospitality, and healthcare, and considering strategies for recruiting new members to address these gaps, including leveraging existing networks and upcoming private sector openings.

- A. The group considered leveraging their connections to recruit new representatives, especially in tech and hospitality, and discussed the upcoming private sector opening in November as an opportunity to address these gaps.
 - 1. Additionally, Board members expressed the need to meet the representation needs for immigrant and refugee communities, as well as small business owners.
- B. The group explored the importance of HR representation, noting that many industries share common skill sets and that hiring needs could be aggregated across sectors, with a focus on recruiting board members with HR expertise.
- C. The group examined the challenges of attracting and retaining employer participation, discussing the return on investment for board involvement, strategies to communicate the value proposition, and ways to leverage personal and organizational networks for greater engagement.
 - 1. There is opportunity moving forward to further explore and define the Return on Investment, specifically for private business board members. Members desire to work together with staff to connect the outcomes to their role on the board.
 - 2. This will assist Board Members in effectively leveraging their networks, communicating the benefits of Board membership, and recruiting for future open seats.
- D. The group agreed on the importance of being connectors and advocates, using their influence within unions, policy boards, and community organizations to advance board initiatives and involve underserved communities.

1. There is a desire for greater “Community Voice” representation on the Board. Bri explained that WIOA has very specific regulations for who may serve as official Board Members, but suggested that the Board Work Groups may be an optimal space to bring in more community voice.
- E. Bri summarized the ongoing exercise of mapping board members' associations and involvement, noting the diversity of connections and the need to assess where representation is lacking; the purpose of the network mapping is to identify resources and relationships that can be leveraged for events and initiatives, such as match-up events connecting employers and training providers.
- F. Bri will assemble board member bios into one document and circulate.

6. Work Group Reports

- A. Employer Relations: Tim Mayer noted the development of employer survey to be sent to board for distribution to their networks.
- B. Program Design: Kim Schrupp noted the challenges with co-enrollment across partner organizations, policy reviews for youth and adult programming, and performance and funding updates; and shared updates on program allocations, state and local funding pending contract materials, highlighting ongoing efforts to align resources and improve program efficacy.
- C. Strategic Talent Pathways: Emily Watts announced the launch of the 'MatchUp' signature event series, designed to connect employers with training providers and candidates, with the first event scheduled for the afternoon of October 21 and plans to leverage board members' networks for industry-specific participation.
- D. Internal Operations: Nicole Mattson noted the group has been supporting staff with finalization of the MOU/IFA, regional plan updates, and planning for future board openings, referencing the Director's report.

7. Board Updates (attached)

- A. Director's Report
 1. Bri reviewed the 2027-2030 WDA 09 Local Plan timeline including September 15, 2026, HCWDB BAR (Public Hearing and Approval of Local Plan draft); September board quorum required.
- B. WIOA Title Program Updates (Written updates were included with meeting materials)
 1. Title I: Youth and Adult/Dislocated Worker
 2. Title II: Adult Basic Education
 3. Title III: Wagner-Peyser
 1. Cynthia Larson announced her July 28 transition from DEED to DLI and resignation from the HCWDB.
 4. Title IV: Vocational Rehabilitation
- C. Carver County
- D. Hennepin County
- E. Other

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.

