Hennepin-Carver
Workforce Development Board

HCWDB Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, September 15th, 2026
CareerForce Bloomington

Attendees: Andrea Erickson, Nicole Mattson, Elise Durbin, Liz Jennings, Amanda Ruch, Garfield Clark, Emily Watts, Tim Mayer, Malissa Winge, Kate Black, Julio Vargas-Essex, Doug Muller, Sarah Gutzman, Kim Schrupp, Mary Niedermeyer
Staff: Erik Aamoth, Jen Kielas, Bri Zaiss, Virginia Rose Kane
Absent: Becca Stearns, Christa Seaberg
Guests: Ema Mailhot-Beutel, Becca Lopez, Jared Scharpen, Leah McNamee
Online: Warsan Artan, Debby Ferry, Germania Solorzano, Betsy Helmeke, Marci Jasper, Armah Lansanah, Mandy Kaur Cuautle, Mark Mann, Jess Niebuhr, Tim O'Neill, Sarah Garbis, Shannon Seaver, Tanika Reese, Dawn Trimarco

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Introduction of New board member: Liz Jennings started on August 25 as Job Service Supervisor at the CareerForce Bloomington, Brooklyn Center and Woodbury offices. Working at DEED since 2018, she has extensive experience as Workforce Strategy Consultant for the metro, Employer Engagement Specialist and Supervisor for CareerForce statewide, and most recently as Program Monitor in the Employment and Training Programs Compliance team monitoring Federal Adult and Dislocated Worker, SCSEP, and Adult Career Pathways programs. Liz will be dividing her time between all three offices each week.

1. **Approval of September 2026 Agenda**
   MOTION: Julio Vargas-Essex
   SECOND: Emily Watts
   MOTION PASSED: 15 Yeas, 0 Nays
2. **Approval of July 2026 Meeting Minutes**
   MOTION: Nicole Mattson
   SECOND: Elise Durbin
   MOTION PASSED: 15 Yeas, 0 Nays
3. **Success Story** – Hired, WIOA Adult Program (included in the written meeting materials)
4. **One-Stop Operator (OSO) Introduction and Update - Ema Mailhot-Beutel, ScaleLit:**
   A. Ema noted she has been OSO in Chicago (Cook County) since 2020 and has been working in this field for nine years.
   B. Ema's LWDA 09 OSO presentation included information on OSO role, work recap (June 2025 to present), service integration through referrals, and next steps. Ema noted she operates across LWDA 09, and the next phase of work will involve community partners.
      a. The referral platform (Airtable) pilot began with Adult/DW partners as an iterative rollout and is ever-expanding.
      b. The goal is to expand access to Airtable for direct referrals.
      c. The 5-year vision is a 'no wrong door' approach to diving into the referral system.
   C. OSO overview ppt to be sent to board members and posted on SharePoint.
5. **Board Business:** Board Action Request - Approval of WIOA Local & Regional Plans (HCWDB Action Request 2026-8)
   MOTION to Amend: Emily Watts
   SECOND: Nicole Mattson

MOTION PASSED: 15 Yeas, 0 Nays

MOTION to Approve: Malissa Winge
SECOND: Julio Vargas-Essex
MOTION PASSED: 15 Yeas, 0 Nays

6. Work Group Reports

A. Internal Operations:
   - **i.** Nicole Mattson reported that Erik will coordinate with MAWB whether a Legislative Day at the Capitol is possible;
   - **ii.** MOU and IFA has been signed.
   - **iii.** Erik recapped the approval of the Local and Regional Plan.

B. Program Design & Development:
   - **i.** Program Design work group did not meet last month as a lot of group members were unable to attend.
     1. Important work group updates were sent out via e-mail.
   - **ii.** The work group has been staying up to date Program performance negotiations and funding updates.
   - **iii.** Looking ahead, the Program Design work group will be focusing on:
     1. Understanding the MOU/IFA as a framework for program collaboration and coordination
     2. Developing expectations around the system-wide referral process and working together to develop policies and procedures that clarify those expectations for partners.

C. Employer Relations & Strategic Talent Pathways:
   - **i.** Emily Watts reported on the joint meeting regarding the MATCHUP event on October 21 at 8:00am at MN Masonic Home
   - **ii.** Goal is to engage and build bridges between 10-15 training providers and 10-15 employers focused on health care, specifically senior living;
   - **iii.** Nicole Mattson will be keynote speaker.

7. Board and Program Updates

A. Directors Report *(written report included in meeting materials)*

B. WIOA Program Updates
   1. Title I: Youth and Adult/Dislocated Worker *(written report included in meeting materials)*
   2. Title II: Adult Basic Education: no written report.
   3. Title III: Wagner-Peyser *(written report included in meeting materials)*
   4. Title IV: Vocational Rehabilitation *(written report included in meeting materials)*

C. Carver County: *(written report included in meeting materials)*

D. Hennepin County: no report.

E. Other:
   - a. Jen Kielas announced a Skills Accelerator Workshop on September 23 from 9:00am – 12:00pm, call Jen for details.
   - b. Doug Muller encouraged board members to contact their representatives to voice opposition to movements to cancel Ethiopian and Somali refugee status that will impact workers.
   - c. Mary Niedermeyer announced the new expansion and reopening of CAPI Offices in Brooklyn Center in September with community celebration on October 9.

d. Sarah Gutzman noted labor market information indicating a depleting across industries except for human services and how the board should address the issue as well as AI.
    i. Jess Niebuhr recommended Luke Greiner (DEED) presentation on careers impacted by AI.
e. Kim Schrupp announced the Beyond the Yellow Ribbon RibFest on September 19 and encouraged board members to attend.

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.