

ANOKA COUNTY WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD

THURSDAY, January 8, 2026

7:30 A.M.

BLAINE HUMAN SERVICE CENTER
1201 89TH AVENUE NE, ROOM 2402
BLAINE, MN 55434

* * * A G E N D A * * *

- I. ROLL CALL

- II. APPROVE ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

- III. APPROVE November 6, 2025 MEETING MINUTES (Attached)

- IV. SHARED WORK PROGRAM – DEPARTMENT OF EMPLOYMENT and ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT (DEED) – UNEMPLOYMENT OFFICE – Jim Hegman, Director and Michael Vaughn – Special Programs Director

- V. ANOKA COUNTY DATA HIGHLIGHTS DASHBOARD 2024 - Tim O'Neill, Labor Market Analyst – Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED)

- VI. OTHER BUSINESS
 - Director Update
 - 2026 MAWB STATE PLATFORM and PRIORITIES (Attached)
 - Recredentialing Pathways for Internationally Trained Professionals – Pilot Project – DEED (Attached)
 - Director Transition Planning – Kate Heffernan – Chief Officer, Anoka County Human Services Division

INFORMATIONAL ITEMS:

- Local Adjusted Unemployment Statistics (LAUS) – September 2025 (Attached)

ANOKA COUNTY WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD

Minutes

Thursday, November 6, 2025

7:30 A.M.

Both Chair, Paul Johnson and Vice Chair, Debby Boyd are unable to attend today's meeting. According to the By-Laws Section 4.6 the Board can appoint a Chair Pro Tem. MOTION by Jennifer Mudge to appoint Patrick McFarland as Chair Pro Tem. Seconded by Jessica Lipa. MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY

The Anoka County Workforce Development Board Meeting was called to order by Patrick McFarland, Chair Pro Tem, at 7:30 a.m.

I. ROLL CALL

MEMBERS PRESENT: Greg Frahm-Gilles, Sara Garbe, Lori Higgins, Molly Liberto, Jessica Lipa, Patrick McFarland, Lisa Mehling, Jennifer Mudge, Jay Nelson, Michael Scholl, Sara Thompson, Alison Vogtlin

NON-MEMBERS PRESENT: Commissioner Schulte, Commissioner Meisner, Cameron Macht, Justin McNeal, Jo Haugen (Alight), Jessica Leth, Tim O'Neill, Maureen McCarthy, Nicole Swanson, Krista Peterson

II. APPROVE ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

MOTION by Michael Scholl to adopt the agenda. Seconded by Jay Nelson. MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

III. APPROVE October 2, 2025 MEETING MINUTES

MOTION by Jennifer Mudge to approve the October 2, 2025 Meeting Minutes as presented. Seconded by Sarah Thompson. MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

IV. OPIOID EPIDEMIC and the EFFECTS ON WORKFORCE – Justin McNeal, Executive Director – Begin Anew

- Overdose of opioid's is the leading cause of death in 19–44-year-olds.
- MN has the worst racial disparity rates due to lack of culturally responsive services and distrust of emergency services. In 2023, 5,178 persons were saved in MN due to hospital emergency services.
- Naloxone training is available, and Naloxone can be purchased at any local pharmacy. Training for use of these kits is available online or in-person training.

V. THE STATE OF MINNESOTA'S ECONOMY and LABOR FORCE – Cameron Macht, Regional Analysis & Outreach Manager, Department of Employment and Economic Development

- MN economy is growing. 3,067,091 jobs in August 2025 and MN ranked 13th fastest growing state in the U.S.
- MN is gaining workers every month and surpassed the pre-pandemic level last summer.
- 77.2% of MN labor force is white, which is down from 88.7% in 2012. Labor force participation rates were higher in every race group except American Indians. Black or

African American labor force increased by 68,800 workers (49.5%) from 2013-2023. Hispanic/Latino grew by 67,000 workers (52.1%) and Asian grew by 52,950 workers (43.1%).

- MN Foreign-born population has grown significantly over the last decade reaching 523,500 residents in 2024 and comprising 9.0% of the state's population. Foreign-born workers is also up 27.6% since 2013.
- Artificial Intelligence (AI) is rapidly improving technology that will impact businesses and workers in MN, enhancing some jobs, disrupting others and creating new ones. More than 1.6 million jobs in occupations are highly exposed to AI, MN has a high concentration of employment that will be impacted.

VI. OTHER BUSINESS

- Director's Update – Nicole Swanson
 - In October JTC received \$450,000 in dislocated worker funding from the MJSP Board. This will help for PY2025 but there is still a shortfall for PY2026.
 - JTC received two grants – Youth Build – working with Anoka-Hennepin STEP in construction classes, received \$150,000 over two years. Growing Careers – training for Class B CDL and Hazardous Material Certification, received \$250,000.
 - Federal Shutdown – Added two hiring events on November 12 and November 25.
 - November is Apprenticeship Month, and the Department of Labor and Industry will be featured at Employer of the Day panel and hiring event to educate the community about apprenticeship in Anoka County and in the State.
 - Construct Tomorrow event will be on February 24. Goal is 800 students.
 - December 4th Board Meeting cancelled - please register to attend the December Metro Region Gathering & Workshop "The Future of Work in an AI-Powered Era. See flyer to register.
 - Service to Success Military and Veteran Job & Resource Fair. Arden Hills on December 11th from 1-4pm.
 - Cindy Cesare, Chief Officer, Human Services Division retired the end of October and Kate Heffernan is the new appointed Chief Officer.
- Partner Updates and Sharing
 - ACCAP Energy Assistance is on hold during the Federal Shutdown.
 - Crestview sold their Columbia Heights care center, effective December 1st. Staff will maintain their employment.

ADJOURN

Meeting adjourned at 9:06 a.m.



**MINNESOTA ASSOCIATION
OF WORKFORCE BOARDS**

2026 STATE LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES AND PLATFORM

IT IS THE MISSION OF THE MINNESOTA ASSOCIATION OF WORKFORCE BOARDS (MAWB) TO PROVIDE MINNESOTA WITH A SKILLED AND COMPETITIVE WORKFORCE THROUGH ENGAGED AND PROACTIVE LOCAL ELECTED OFFICIALS, WORKFORCE BOARDS, AND STAFF.

Minnesota's workforce development system continues to be a national model for excellence and innovation in employment and training programs. The sixteen local, employer-led Local Workforce Development Boards (LWDBs), in conjunction with local elected officials, are responsible for:

- Setting workforce development policy and priorities in their communities;
- Engaging employers to determine strategies and organizing the efforts of the broader workforce system to address employer needs; and
- Serving as the accountability agents for local employment and training programs.

Local boards have a long-standing and demonstrated track record of developing cutting-edge new programs and strategies while continuously improving services offered through Minnesota's CareerForce system and achieving outstanding performance results.

Key Legislative Priority in 2026

1. MAWB advocates for ensuring the Workforce Development Fund remains focused on prioritizing support for the State Dislocated Worker Program to ensure consistent service delivery.

The State's Dislocated Worker Program provides crucial services and resources for Minnesotans facing layoffs and supports Minnesota employers with worker retention through training. This program is funded by the remaining balance of Workforce Development Fund receipts after appropriations. This funding is key to our ability to serve residents in our communities – and, over time, the portion of the fund's receipts allocated to the Dislocated Worker program has been eroding. In 2025, the State DW allocation for local boards decreased by 53% based on appropriations out of the fund. This safety net program provides services for Minnesotans in every part of the state – ensuring that when Minnesotans are laid

off, they have access to support. MAWB advocates for sustaining funding for these foundational programs, retaining the core purpose of the fund and ensuring more Minnesotans will benefit from services.

2026 MAWB State Legislative Platform

WORKFORCE POLICY ISSUES

Local workforce development boards provide leadership and facilitate employer engagement, ensuring public funds go toward meeting locally-defined workforce needs and priorities. Local boards also serve a critically important role deploying state and federal resources to deliver programs and services on the ground, and providing oversight to ensure quality, coordinated service delivery.

- **MAWB advocates for changes to policy that increase local areas' ability to provide uninterrupted, high-quality service delivery through grant funding while maintaining accountability.** Grant programs are a crucial component of how local workforce boards deliver services to residents through their service providers. Local boards compete for grants alongside other service providers. MAWB supports changes in policy that extend grant timelines and maintain program controls while facilitating faster review and awards processes. These changes would prevent stops and starts that ultimately diminish the quality of service delivery and create inefficiencies within program operations.
- MAWB advocates that any and all funds directed to organizations and other entities for **workforce development or training efforts be coordinated by and through Workforce Development Boards**, and aligned with local and regional plans, to swiftly and strategically meet the unique needs of businesses in each of the local labor sheds.
- MAWB encourages allowing maximum flexibility in the use of state funds to encourage innovation and **allow local boards to design programs that meet the needs of employers and jobseekers in their areas.** This includes clarification of eligibility expansion and performance measurement for the State Dislocated Worker Program.
- MAWB encourages the Legislature to **align investments and eliminate silos across the workforce development system**, regardless of funding committee or state agency structures. The workforce system, unified under the brand CareerForce, must be fully aligned to meet the needs of career seekers and employers who benefit from a coordinated approach to service delivery.
- MAWB recognizes the need to reduce disparities in our state as paramount. MAWB supports initiatives that directly and successfully address this issue and increases equity in employment.

- MAWB supports legislative and policy measures that further empower and streamline the Governor's Workforce Development Board.
- MAWB advocates for allowing the provision of training stipends and/or incentives for participants enrolled in training programs to support successful program completion.

WORKFORCE FUNDING ISSUES

Our state faces significant workforce challenges from changing demographics to significant equity gaps. The simple reality is that federal funding for our workforce system continues to decrease, with cuts amounting to a nearly 40% decrease over the last two decades. Compared to PY2021, there are \$8 million fewer dollars for WIOA programs. Current proposals at the federal level include cuts as deep as 35% for WIOA programs. Current investments must be targeted and sustained in a way that will make a real impact for Minnesota's jobseekers and employers.

- MAWB advocates for formula funding for local workforce development boards to address local workforce challenges, including serving youth and adults with high barriers to employment and providing intensive services to employers in need of talent attraction and retention assistance.
- MAWB recognizes that in today's economy, employers need our assistance like never before to ensure they can attract, hire, and retain qualified talent. Funding to expand our services to employers, such as skills-based hiring, sector partnerships, incumbent worker training, and talent attraction and retention strategies is needed to expand this work.
- MAWB encourages legislative leadership to provide the Jobs and Economic Development finance divisions with funding targets that allow for substantial general fund investments in employment and training programs.
- MAWB also advocates to maintain full funding for Minnesota's proven workforce investments, including the Minnesota Youth Program, Pathways to Prosperity, Rural Career Counseling Coordinator Program, and Youthbuild. MAWB further advocates for support for programs that serve youth and adults across all parts of Minnesota through work experience, career exploration, and connection to training and employment. These programs are key to retention of Minnesota's youth and working-age adults in our communities.
- MAWB supports state investments in the Minnesota Family Investment Program, SNAP, and other safety-net programs, particularly those that maximize federal match opportunities.

OTHER ISSUES OF ASSOCIATION INTEREST

- MAWB is supportive of initiatives which ensure working low- and moderate- income people have access to stable and affordable housing, particularly near areas of employment growth.
- MAWB supports the availability of a wide range of secondary and post-secondary options, including investments in Career and Technical Education programs, work-based learning, and integration with partners like Adult Basic Education, with a priority on assistance for those pursuing high skilled occupations in demand.
- MAWB supports further development of apprenticeship opportunities and encourages the use of WDBs as the intermediary for apprenticeship programs across the state.
- MAWB is supportive of full funding for childcare programs and policies that assist families in accessing care so they can remain employed, support childcare workers, and offer solutions to address the childcare shortage crisis.
- MAWB supports efforts to fully invest in Minnesota's critical pre-K, K-12, and post-secondary education programs that encourage completion and that prepare youth and adults for competitive employment and life-long learning. More robust career pathway opportunities and career readiness state learning standards and investments for all grades should be considered. MAWB also supports increased funding for career counseling in the K-12 system as well as continuing to support improvements to CareerForceMN.gov as a career counseling tool.
- MAWB advocates for effective solutions to help young people and adults obtain or regain their driver's license – a critical need for accessing many high-demand jobs.
- MAWB advocates to exempt short-term work experience programs from the Paid Family Medical Leave Program.
- MAWB is supportive of any investments to improve our infrastructure, including transportation and clean energy, which have a strong workforce development component built in. MAWB also supports expanded broadband initiatives and other digital equity initiatives to close the digital divide in all parts of the state. To remain competitive, Minnesota must be forward thinking in these areas.



RECREREDENTIALING PATHWAYS for Internationally Trained Professionals (RCP)



Are you an internationally trained professional?

Were you trained in one of the following four career fields?

Education, Engineering, Health Care or Information Technology

If you, or someone you know, would like to reconnect to a career here in Minnesota, the Office of New Americans and its partners want to help.

We can connect New Americans to a career pathway that builds on their past education and work experience.

Find out more and apply today!

Potential applicants and service providers are invited to contact CareerForce Information Assistance Line staff to find out if this opportunity is right for you or your customers, please email:

CareerForce@state.mn.us

Please include this information in your email to the CareerForce Information and Assistance Line staff:

- What is your first name? (First name only please.)
- What is your phone number?
- Will you need language assistance?
 - If so, what is your preferred language?
- Are you an employment career support counselor or other service provider?

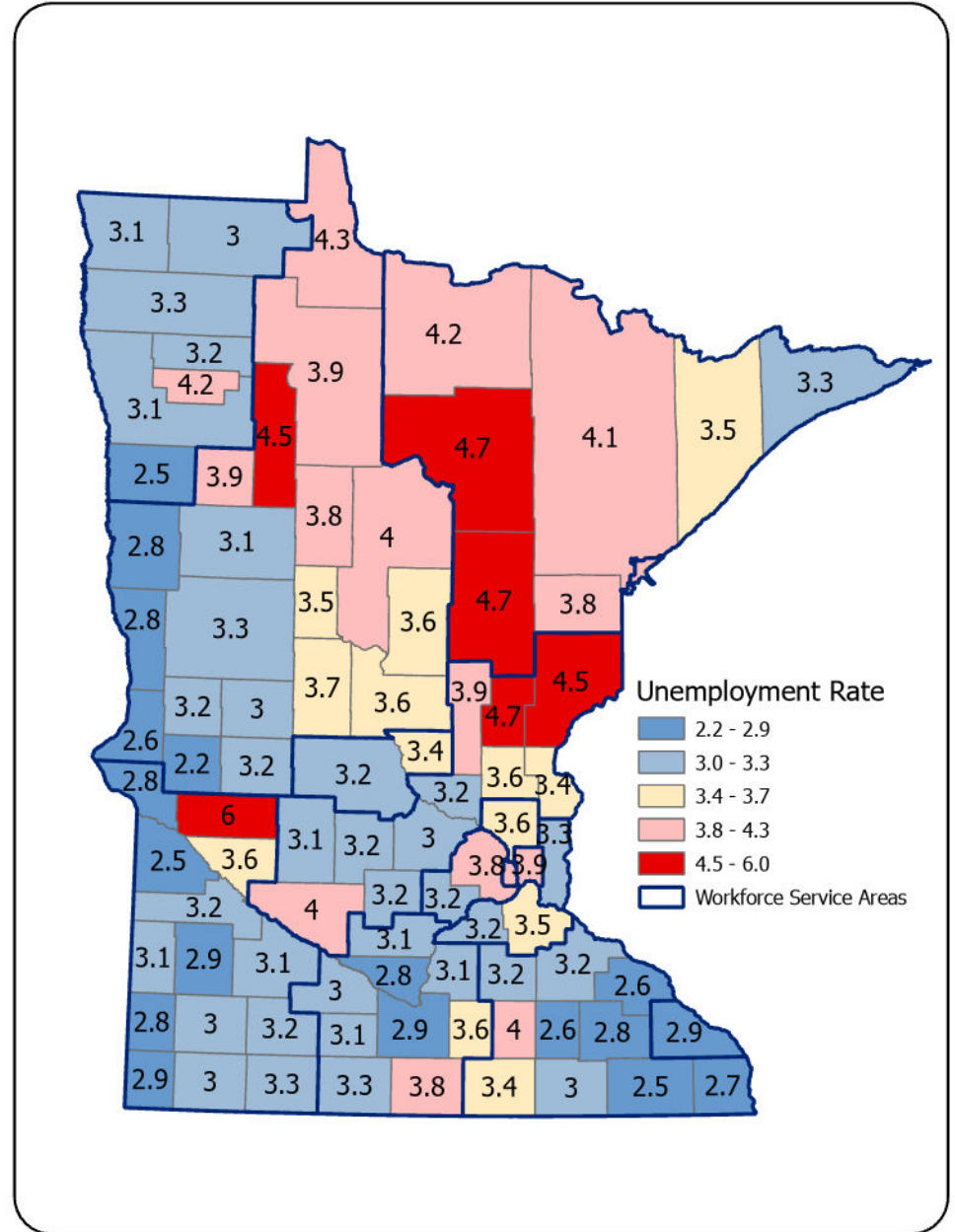
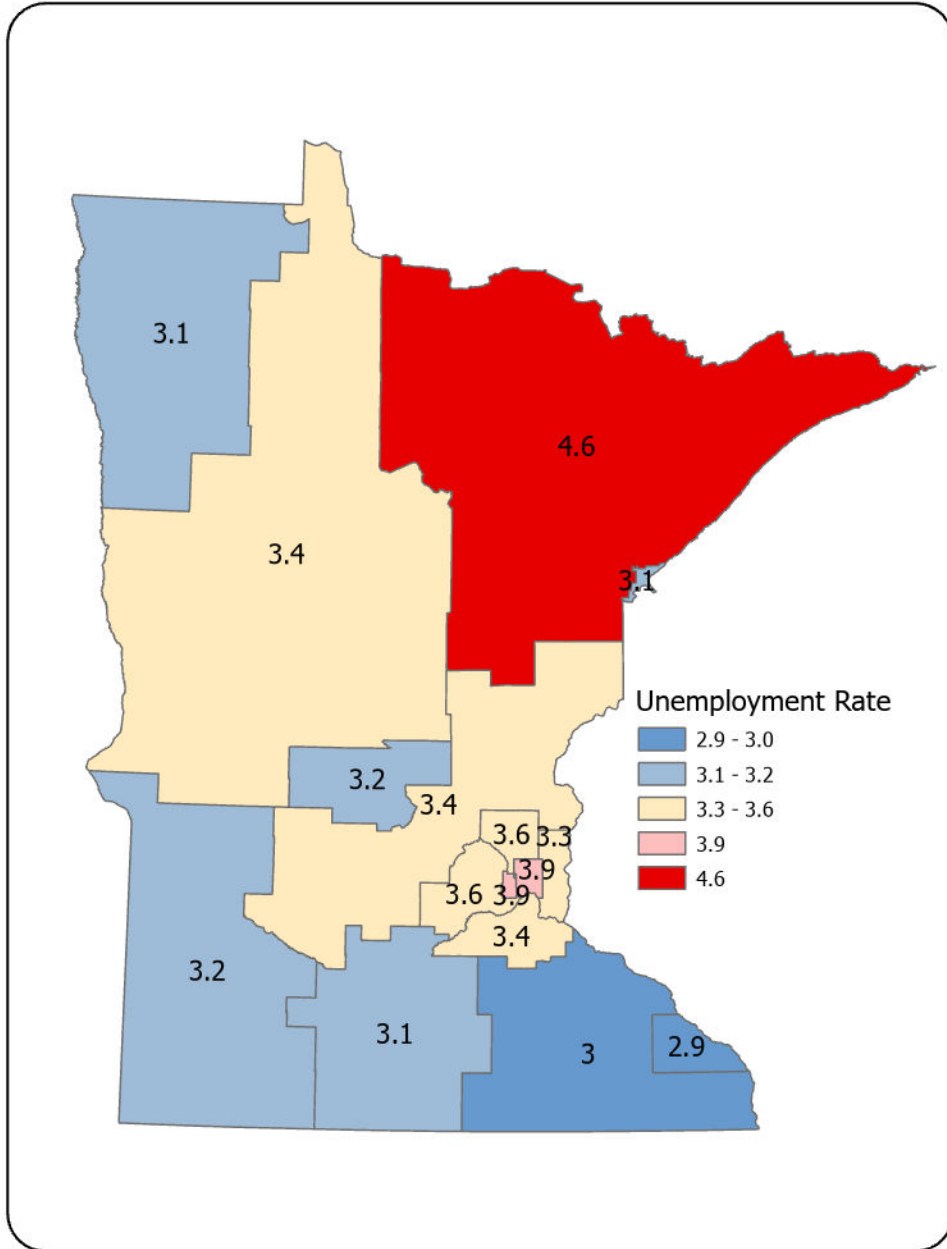
Find out more:

mn.gov/deed/programs-services/new-americans/pathways



Unemployment Rates in Workforce Service Areas and Counties, September 2025

State of Minnesota = 3.5% (not seasonally adjusted)



Source: MN DEED, LAUS
 Prepared by DEED (CAG)
 December, 17, 2025