Help us design

THE BLUEPRINT

For Minnesota's Career Pathways COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE

COMMIT TO EQUITY AND INCLUSION

ALIGN TO LABOR MARKET NEED

IMPROVED OUTCOMES

CONNECT PARTICIPANTS TO CAREERS

STRONGER COMMUNITY

SUPPORT PARTICIPANTS COMPREHENSIVELY

ALIGN AND LEVERAGE RESOURCES

IMPROVE OVER TIME
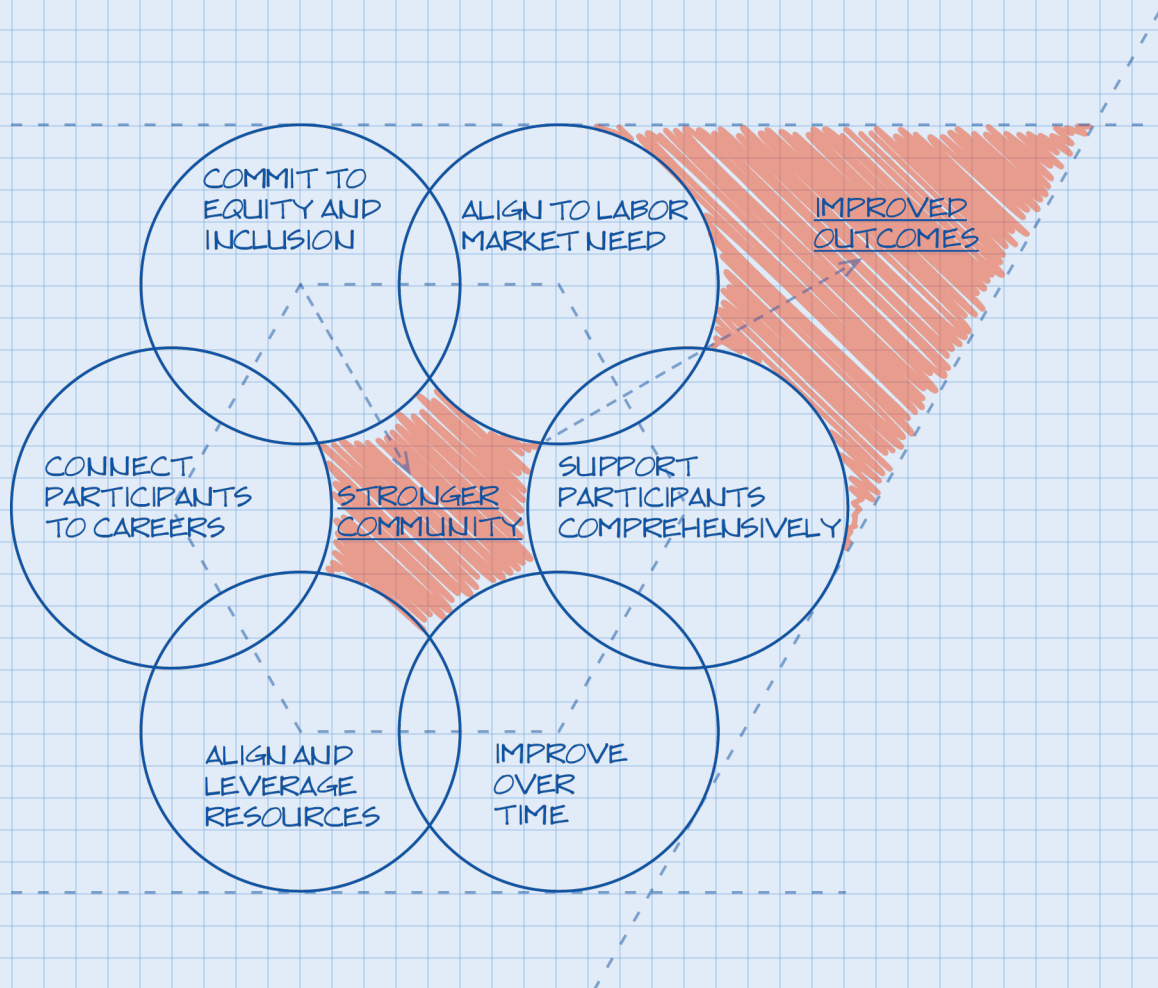
We need your help shaping a Career Pathways **COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE** that supports and strengthens high-quality workforce services and programs of all kinds—and for all communities. We've created a draft blueprint to help us share and build on our best work. It starts with:

» Identifying and coming together around **EFFECTIVE PRACTICES**
» Measuring **SHARED OUTCOMES** for the sake of improvement and transparency

Help us build on this draft blueprint to ensure we can help **ALL INDIVIDUALS** succeed.

MSPWin
MINNEAPOLIS SAINT PAUL REGIONAL WORKFORCE INNOVATION NETWORK

THE BLUEPRINT

for Minnesota's Career Pathways COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE

*We believe building skills and career opportunities—particularly for people of color—contributes greatly toward the goal of a more **equitable and prosperous** region. Those of us dedicated to workforce education and training have been busy working toward that shared goal, and along the way we've each gained insights into what works for our communities.*

But to ultimately achieve our goal, we must come together. We've got to get intentional about how we hone our craft, how we define success, and how we each fit into a broader community of practice. We have much to contribute, and even more to gain from working together.

In the end, it's all about achieving the best outcomes for the people in our community—no matter what they are up against. By building off the best work we each do, we can ensure all individuals have an on-ramp to a career pathway and real economic opportunity.

IT STARTS WITH YOU

This document is a working blueprint meant to be debated, revised, and improved over time. We are eager to gather your best thinking on what works and we can move forward together. So, mark this document up. Note your ideas and questions. And get in touch. Let's get the conversation started.

TWO KEY BUILDING BLOCKS

When doing work as important as this, it's important to know what success looks like and identify the best tools to get there. It's also crucial to measure progress, learn from feedback, and share insights with others in the field. To that end, we are focused on two major building blocks of a community of practice:

SECTION I:
EFFECTIVE PRACTICES LEADING TO HIGH-QUALITY OUTCOMES

With input from providers and experts—including you—we are identifying the most effective practices for helping all communities enter into employment and succeed in careers. We have started to compile a list (on the following pages) of practices shown to be effective; we would love your ideas.

We believe that cataloging, sharing, and implementing the most effective practices from across the field can:
- » Lead to stronger outcomes, particularly for those with the greatest barriers
- » Foster an intentional conversation that improves the work we do and builds a community of practice for continuous learning about what works

SECTION II:
SHARED OUTCOMES THAT ALL PROGRAMS SHOULD REPORT

Much work has been done over the past two years to align how we define and measure the outcomes we care about. This progress culminated with new state legislation requiring standardized outcome reporting across programs supported by Minnesota's Workforce Development Fund.

Developing shared measures is a big step forward for the field, helping us to:
- » Clarify what success looks like and measure our progress toward it
- » Inform our work, driving toward the shared goal of eliminating disparities
- » Demonstrate our achievements and streamline the data reporting process

Together, we believe these two building blocks can take our shared workforce development efforts to the next level—to help put an end to employment disparities and ensure opportunity for all. **By putting an intentional focus—as a community—on what works and how we measure success, we can build a community of practice that continually builds on its best work.**

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WE NEED YOUR HELP

FEEDBACK ON THE BLUEPRINT
How did we do? What needs work? Where did we miss the mark?

First—go through the document and place a star next to the things that were "on the mark." These items made clear sense, are agreeable with your experience, and are core components needed for success with low-income job seekers.

Second—mark those things that were "on the right track" but need some work (close, but could have been better). Please make note of how these could be enhanced or improved from your experience. Feel free to add to the NOTES section below.

Next—mark those items that simply aren't true in your experience (missed the mark completely). These are items that you would recommend we remove from the document all together. Please be candid – we could tighten this up a bit!

Finally—what did we miss? Were there things we simply didn't capture that are critical to success in producing good outcomes with low-income job seekers? DEFINITELY MAKE NOTE OF THESE ITEMS—we want to capture your insight.

EXTRA CREDIT!

» How would you like to see this framework used? Would YOU use such a tool? If yes—how? If not—why not?

» Go through the document and record EXAMPLES of EVIDENCE specific to your program. We'd like to highlight some of the great work of nonprofits in the Twin Cities and bring this document to life!

SECTION I. EVIDENCE-BASED PRACTICES

We seek to identify the most effective practices for engaging, supporting, ensuring the career success of all individuals. We are particularly focused on racial disparities and how we can build on-ramps for all communities—especially those with the greatest barriers to employment. Cataloging, sharing, and implementing the most effective practices will lead to stronger outcomes and foster a conversation that improves the work we do.

Below is an initial list of effective career pathway practices. We are eager to know what you think.
Mark this document up. Put a star by what you like. Cross out what you don't. Note your ideas, questions, and concrete examples.

Practice	Description	Evidence	Examples
Support Participants Comprehensively **What does this mean?** Access to education and training only goes so far. Participants must also have the personal, emotional and social support needed to focus on gaining skills, getting and keeping employment. **Why does this matter?** When comprehensive supports are missing, change is limited and often short lived. Participants may make gains, but can't retain/build on these achievements longer-term.	1) Assess and incorporate participant strengths, needs and barriers to training and employment	a) Formal assessment and linkage to community supports to ensure participant basic needs are met b) Assess for and provide support services from "start to finish" (upon intake, during training, and through transition into stable employment) c) Structure support services to meet unique needs/conditions of participants and the community	*Share your ideas…*
	2) Provide comprehensive, "wrap-around" support to maximize participant success	a) Provide access to supports needed to minimize social/emotional/behavioral barriers to program participation and employment b) Build capacity of staff to provide effective counseling and navigation (professional development, certification of staff) c) Incorporate a continuum of appropriate social supports from enrollment through employment retention	
	3) Provide coordinated and concurrent support services, education and training services	a) Coordinated services that simultaneously provide social services, remedial education, and occupational training b) Offer contextualized "bridge" programming with workforce preparation/ training (i.e. career pathway "on-ramps") c) Provide concurrent, integrated foundational/basic skills instruction with workforce training that leads to industry-recognized credentials	

Related Research… *we're not making this stuff up*
Karp (2011) highlights the non-academic supports that yield better participant results including (1) creating social relationships, (2) clarifying aspirations and enhancing commitments, (3) developing know-how, (4) addressing conflicting demands of work, family and college; Miles (2013) demonstrates community based training programs with longer pre-employment services tended to place participants in higher-quality jobs; Bettinger and Baker (2011) demonstrate the importance of integrating career coaching for student success, while Jenkins, Zeidenberg, Kienzl (2009) document the effectiveness of integrating basic education with skills training in Washington State.

SECTION I. **EVIDENCE-BASED PRACTICES,** continued

Below is an initial list of effective career pathway practices. We are eager to know what you think.
Mark this document up. Put a star by what you like. Cross out what you don't. Note your ideas, questions, and concrete examples.

Practice	Description	Evidence	Examples
Connect Participants to Careers	1) Comprehensive career assessment that guides employment planning	a) Comprehensive, cumulative assessment includes aptitude, experience, interests, goals, internal/external resources b) Formal, written employment/career plan based on initial and ongoing assessment of participant needs c) Assessment used is based on common needs of participants, employers/industry, and "next step" on the career path	*Share your ideas…*
	2) Maximize participants' ability to build careers and pursue the "next step"	a) Engage participants in using tools for career pathway planning including knowledge of local labor market b) Enable participants to identify the "next step" in the career path, including how to access support needed to pursue c) Provide seamless support to allow pathway progression with minimal disruption/need for "re-work" (i.e. – provide stackable credentials/work experiences that clearly articulate to the next step, limiting unnecessary repetition of training)	
What does this mean? Successful journeys start with one step, but have a long-term destination in mind. Work now should build on future career goals and interests and be intentional about connecting to the next step. **Why does this matter?** Participants enter workforce programs at all levels; from landing their first job to advancing into career employment. Effective programs consider and connect to this continuum of opportunities.	3) Effectively and seamlessly link participant outcomes to the next step in education, training, and/or employment	a) Build capacity of participants to be successful post program: competencies achieved; awareness of options and resources; ability to make informed choices b) Establish formal "partnerships" to ensure continuity of service for participants c) Use integrated approaches that actively incorporate "next step" and ease transition points (e.g., dual enrollment, on-the-job training, internships, apprenticeships)	

Related Research… *we're not making this stuff up!*
OECD research (2010) indicates personalized learning agreements lead to increased training and employment outcomes; Stevens (2015) reveals the need for student awareness of likely return on investment for education and training; Complete College (2010) research verifies that high-quality certificate programs of 1+ year consistently lead to higher academic and career success; Carnevale (2012) further expands on the value of certificates to gainful employment and college degrees.

SECTION I. **EVIDENCE-BASED PRACTICES,** continued

Below is an initial list of effective career pathway practices. We are eager to know what you think.
Mark this document up. Put a star by what you like. Cross out what you don't. Note your ideas, questions, and concrete examples.

Practice	Description	Evidence	Examples
Commit to Equity and Inclusion	1) Leadership demonstrates a commitment to promoting equity and inclusion	a) Leadership has defined equity and clearly understands its importance in working with participants, employers, and the larger workforce "system" b) Leadership and governance are representative of the community served and has an understanding of the dynamics that affect disparities in employment c) Engage in larger community efforts and advocacy related to equity, inclusion and disparities in employment	*Share your ideas…*
What does this mean? Communities of color are disproportionately impacted by poverty, unemployment and underemployment. Fairness is achieved through systematically assessing and addressing disparities in opportunities and outcomes.	2) Deliver services in culturally relevant and responsive way	a) Organization and program culture are reflective of the community served (norms, rituals, holidays, key cultural beliefs) b) Equity and inclusion are incorporated into all aspects of programming (assessment, employment planning, occupational training, employer engagement, et cetera) c) Training for staff (including leadership) to broaden personal awareness, understanding of equity/inclusion, and the issues related to equity in employment	
Why does this matter? Minnesota has the worst racial disparities in employment in the nation. Effective workforce programs have a role in closing the employment and earnings gap, but need to be intentional in program design and community involvement.	3) Organization has established explicit equity outcomes and accountability for achieving them	a) Ability to measure and understand outcomes in relation to equity and inclusion b) Capacity to disaggregate data by race, ethnicity, income level, disability status, gender, and other participant demographics (see shared outcomes section) c) Use disaggregated data to understand outcomes and adjust strategies and services accordingly	

Related Research… *we're not making this stuff up!*
Tomasetto & Appoloni (2013) demonstrates positive results from leadership's explicit efforts to counter 'stereotype threat' through education; HHS Action Plan (2012) illustrates rationale for collecting disaggregated data to reduce health disparities. Annie E Casey "Organizational Self-Assessment" (2006) and the City of Seattle's "Racial Equity Toolkit" offer multiple organizational best practices to promote equitable and inclusive approaches to service delivery and policy. Urban Strategies Council (2015) highlights eight effective practices in "A Model for Intervention" including clear definition for equity, it's importance to achieving outcomes in a given context, data systems and effective use of data, explicit equity outcomes and accountability for achieving them, and holding systems and individuals accountable to equity goals.

SECTION I. **EVIDENCE-BASED PRACTICES,** continued

Below is an initial list of effective career pathway practices. We are eager to know what you think.
Mark this document up. Put a star by what you like. Cross out what you don't. Note your ideas, questions, and concrete examples.

Practice	Description	Evidence	Examples
Align to Labor Market Need	1) Use Labor Market Information (LMI) to shape occupationally based programming	a) Use LMI to inform program design, content, frequency and continued existence b) Build relationships with employers, industry associations, training programs, local sector initiatives c) Build participant capacity to access and use LMI to inform future work opportunities and independent career planning	*Share your ideas…*
	2) Engage industry, employers and/or sectors in program design, planning and implementation	a) Employers/industry helps to develop and inform program curriculum b) Employers support program: financial or in-kind resources, deliver program components, recruit other employers c) Employers provide employment pathway: work experience, hiring participants	
	3) Embed work experiences and expect work behaviors	a) Organize program with work-like experience and work behaviors b) Use structured paid or unpaid work experiences with local employers c) Develop pre-apprenticeship and apprenticeship opportunities	

What does this mean?
Employer engagement and labor market information ensures that training is aligned with real needs of the workforce. Success hinges on knowing what employers need or value in the workplace.

Why does this matter?
The labor market is dynamic and training programs must be able to adjust to a changing market. Participants rely on programs to be informed and that training will actually lead to employment.

Related Research… *we're not making this stuff up!*
Maguire (2010) found participants in sector based training worked and earned more in better quality jobs than those in a control group who participated in non-sector based services; Henderson (2010) replicated these benefits in a transportation sector training in NYC; Roder (2011) reveals that programs offering work experiences opportunities such as internships, transitional jobs, and on-the-job training show better job retention rates.

Below is an initial list of effective career pathway practices. We are eager to know what you think.
Mark this document up. Put a star by what you like. Cross out what you don't. Note your ideas, questions, and concrete examples.

Practice	Description	Evidence	Examples
Align and Leverage Resources	1) Connect to community needs and assets	a) Services are responsive to stakeholder strengths, needs, and values to maximize participation and motivation b) Community is aware of your program/ visible to those who may benefit from your services c) Leaders regularly confirm relevance of program to the community, ensuring services are complementary/non-duplicative	*Share your ideas…*
	2) Establish formal partnerships to provide a variety of services	a) Define focus of service, shared vision of established partnerships, and how agency coordinates with other providers b) Leverage diverse resources to ensure continuity and efficiency, within agency and larger community c) Provide seamless services to participants through formal partnerships with other community providers and resources	
	3) Coordinate services and funding sources	a) Solicit and manage funds from a variety of sources b) Use multiple funding streams to sustain variety of service within the program c) Demonstrate flexible and innovative use of funds to support individuals' needs	

What does this mean?
Effective programs connect with existing resources and expertise of others to meet participant needs. No one agency has enough time, money or talent to meet all needs.

Why does this matter?
Programs that act in isolation of existing community supports are less efficient and harder to sustain. Formalized partnerships ensure continuity and effective, seamless services.

Related Research… *we're not making this stuff up!*
Hodge (2005) demonstrates the power of engagement with community members to better address community needs and promote financial stability; Guo (2012) reveals characteristics of highly collaborative community based organizations, including maturity, larger budget size, willingness to partner with government; Renz (2010) identifies the power of strategic alliances and collaborations: acquiring resources, reducing financial uncertainty, improving ability to serve community.

SECTION I. **EVIDENCE-BASED PRACTICES,** continued

Below is an initial list of effective career pathway practices. We are eager to know what you think.
Mark this document up. Put a star by what you like. Cross out what you don't. Note your ideas, questions, and concrete examples.

Practice	Description	Evidence	Examples
Improve Over Time **What does this mean?** Effective organizations systematically and intentionally evaluate their practices, using data and information to inform opportunities for improvement. **Why does this matter?** Participants deserve our best work. Needs of participants, employers and the community are always changing as are "best practices" in service delivery. Systematic methods for improvement capture opportunities to do better work.	1) Conduct real-time evaluation for continuous improvement	a) Capacity and infrastructure for data collection to use for required accountability data and program evaluation b) Use shared measures for enhanced program evaluation c) Regularly measure and incorporate customer feedback from participants, employers and other key stakeholders	*Share your ideas…*
	2) Understand analysis and data to build insight	a) Understand what data to track and why it is important (i.e., data for accountability vs. data for evaluation and continuous improvement) b) Analyze and disaggregate outcomes for populations served c) Communicate to explain the analysis and outcomes to internal and external stakeholders	
	3) Respond to evaluation with changed (improved) practice	a) Modify program practice/intervention based on data and evaluation b) Modify program offerings or identify alternate options to better accommodate needs (of participants or employers) c) Modify organization (e.g., establish new partnerships, build infrastructure, or change offerings)	

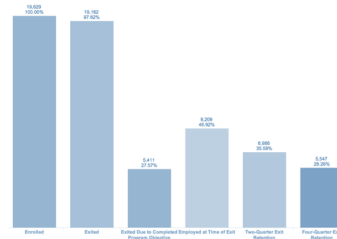**Related Research… *we're not making this stuff up!***
*Torres (1996) promotes specific strategies for continuous improvement including conducting meetings with adult learning and staff development goals; engaging with learning material to accomplish something with its content; integrating new knowledge with prior knowledge; Madsen's **Standards for Excellence** establishes best practices for improving nonprofit performance and increasing public trust in them to include data analysis and responding with changed practice.*

SECTION II. **SHARED OUTCOMES AND REPORTING**

Over the past two years, much has been done to align how we define and measure outcomes. Recent state legislation requires the following standardized measures to be reported for all programs supported by the Workforce Development Fund. Shared measures help us clarify our goals, measure our progress, inform our work, and demonstrate our achievements. By streamlining our data and reporting efforts, we can spend more time using data to understand and address racial disparities and other challenges.
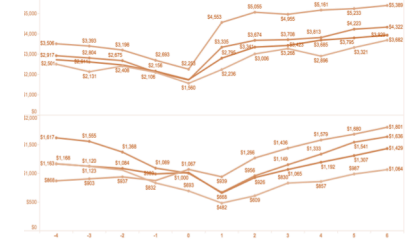
PARTICIPANT PROGRESSION MEASURES

Helps us understand how participants progress through programs and services and into employment.

MEASURE	DEFINITION As captured by providers data (PD) or administrative data (AD)	WHY IT'S IMPORTANT
Number Enrolled **[ENROLLEES]**	Number of persons enrolled in any employment-related service (PD)	Demonstrates total number served (EFFORT) and provides basis to understand total outcomes as a percentage (EFFECTIVENESS)
Received Employment Training **[TRAINEES]**	Number of persons enrolled in an employment-related education or training service (PD)	Demonstrates how many/what percentage received education/training related services
Completed Employment Training **[COMPLETERS]**	Number of persons who complete employment-related education or training services (PD)	Demonstrates the number/percentage who successfully completed training
Attained a Credential **[CREDENTIALS]**	Number of persons completing education or training toward a credential who attain corresponding credential (PD)	Demonstrates the number/percentage who successfully secure a credential (a marketable, measurable skill gain).
Started a Job **[JOB STARTS]**	Number of persons starting unsubsidized employment or new employment after education or training (PD) Date of Job Start Recorded for Administrative Data (AD)	Demonstrates the number/percentage who successfully secure a new or better job.

EMPLOYMENT AND EARNINGS MEASURES

Helps us understand the outcomes of participants

MEASURE	DEFINITION As captured by providers data (PD) or administrative data (AD)	WHY IT'S IMPORTANT
Retained Work for Six Months **[SIX-MONTH RETENTION]**	Number of persons starting employment still working 6 months after Job Start or New Job Start (PD) Number of persons working in unsubsidized employment in the 2nd quarter after Job Start or New Job Start (AD)	Demonstrates the number/percentage who maintain continuous employment 6 months beyond job start and the percentage that lose work in the short-term.
Retained Work for 12 Months **[12-MONTH RETENTION]**	Number of persons starting employment still working 6 months after Job Start or New Job Start (PD) Number of persons also working in the 4th quarter after Job Start or New Job Start (AD)	Demonstrates the number/percentage who maintain continuous employment 12 months beyond job start.
Retained Work for 24 Months **[24-MONTH RETENTION]**	Number of persons also working in the 8th quarter after Job Start or New Job Start (AD)	Demonstrates the number/percentage who maintain continuous employment long-term/lasting change.
Earnings Change (Mid-Term)	Median mid-term earnings change: from 2nd-5th quarters pre-enrollment to 2nd-4th quarters after Job Start or New Job Start (AD)	Demonstrates total wage change from one year pre-program to one year post-program.
Earnings Change (Long-Term)	Median mid-term earnings change: from 2nd-5th quarters pre-enrollment to 6th-8th quarters after Job Start or New Job Start (AD)	Demonstrates long term wage change, comparing one year pre-program to year two post job placement.

OPTIONAL SHARED MEASURES

| MEASURE	DEFINITION As captured by providers data (PD) or administrative data (AD)	WHY IT'S IMPORTANT
Educational Gains	Number of ABE/Bridge/ESL enrollees who gain one or more educational functioning levels (PD)	Demonstrates progress in education that may not have yet lead to a credential (i.e. a GED).
Enroll in Post-Secondary Training	Number of completers of employment related education or training services who enroll in further post-secondary education within one year of completion (PD).	Demonstrates continued progress into post-secondary education and this as continued success (and why earnings gains may be limited).
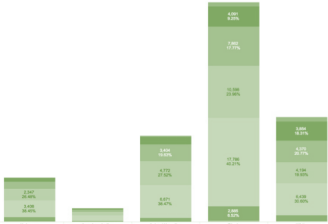
UNDERSTANDING WHO WE IMPACT

PROGRAMS CAN PROVIDE IMPORTANT CONTEXT

Workforce programs serve a variety of communities. Understanding these populations and their outcomes is crucial to addressing disparities and appreciating the broader context in which programs operate.

Most workforce programs capture standard information on the people they serve. This information could be used to better understand outcomes within different participant groups. It adds dimension to the standard outcomes and measures listed above, revealing further insight to understand **with whom** these outcomes are being achieved.

It is our assumption that programs/providers already collect the following information on population characteristics during the intake/enrollment process, and that this information could be used to disaggregate each of the standard measures listed above:

- » Race/ethnicity
- » Age
- » Gender
- » Geography
- » Education level completed
- » Employment status at enrollment

Other desirable characteristics to capture during enrollment process (possibly through administrative data) include:

- » Felony conviction status
- » MFIP status
- » SNAP status
- » Disability status
- » Homelessness status
- » Other public benefit status
- » Veteran status
- » Immigrant or refugee status

WHO WE ARE

BACKGROUND AND HISTORY OF THIS EFFORT

In January 2014, MSPWin and Greater Twin Cities United Way launched a Shared Measures Task Force to align workforce outcome measures and definitions across public and private funders. Task force goals included reducing the amount of duplicative data entry required of providers; compiling consistent information about how the regional workforce system is performing across public and private funding streams; and to allow for deeper understanding of how specific strategies are working for specific populations.

At the same time, MSPWin secured Minnesota state legislation requiring standardized outcome reporting—our shared measures—and regular net impact evaluation. Programs operating with state workforce development fund dollars are analyzed based on these metrics.

As this work has progressed, it became clear the newly required standardized reporting could only get us so far. To make sure that workforce outcomes improve over time, a system-wide understanding of what really works was needed. Minnesota's workforce practitioners do not have a consistent set of effective practice standards, and in fact, must often develop their own, creating inconsistency, a lack of transparency on how funding is allocated, and a lack of clarity on how to achieve good outcomes.

In 2015, the Shared Measures/Effective Practice Task Force engaged in a second phase of work, funded by the Pohlad Foundation, to develop effective practices standards through an extensive research review and a highly participatory process involving the following workforce development practitioners, funders and workforce advocates. We would like to thank the following organizations for their participation and look forward to adding more partners to this list:

Minnesota State College and Universities System (MNSCU)	Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development
Minnesota Department of Education	Minnesota Department of Human Services
Hennepin County Human Services	City of Minneapolis Employment and Training Program
Greater Twin Cities United Way	Jay and Rose Phillips Family Foundation of Minnesota
The Pohlad Family Foundation	Twin Cities Local Initiative Support Corporation (LISC)
RESOURCE, Inc	Project for Pride in Living
Minnesota Employment Services Consortium (MESC)	The Governor's Workforce Development Council

MSPWin

MINNEAPOLIS SAINT PAUL REGIONAL WORKFORCE INNOVATION NETWORK

ABOUT MSPWIN

We are a philanthropic collaborative committed to strengthening the workforce in the seven-county Minneapolis-Saint Paul region through 2020.