



CENTRAL MINNESOTA Workforce Development Board

Community & Government Relations Committee

Mission: To develop and foster community and government relations while promoting the Workforce Development Board's interests and policies.

AGENDA

October 9, 2026

9:00 am–9:50 am

Please go to the board meeting page for all meeting materials:

<https://www.cmjts.org/cmjts-joint-powers-board-workforce-development-board-and-committee-meetings>

MEMBERS:

- | | |
|--|--|
| ☐ Lisa Zwart, Chair | ☐ Commissioner Dan Whitcomb, Vice-Chair |
| ☐ Commissioner Duane Anderson | ☐ Denise Stewart |
| ☐ Dr. Brent Thompson | ☐ Deb Meyer |
| ☐ Gary Foster | ☐ Bob Dockendorf |

STAFF:

- | | |
|---|--|
| ☐ Michelle Johnson (CMJTS) | ☐ Dina Wuornos (CMJTS - rotation) |
| ☐ Lori Kampa (CMJTS) | |

1. Call to order

2. Approval of the Consent Agenda

(A single motion and vote are taken on all items listed under the consent agenda.

Items may be added or deleted at the request of committee chairs, staff, or partners.)

- a. Meeting Agenda*
- b. Previous Committee Meeting Minutes*

3. Old Business

- a. Board recruitment
 - i. Renville County – manufacturing representation
 - ii. Mille Lacs County – Wuornos

4. New Business

- a. Partnering with Big Lake Chamber of Commerce - Dockendorf
- b. Central Minnesota Workforce Development Board Open House Series
 - i. Training/Talking points

5. Future Agenda Items

- a.

6. January Agenda Items

- a. WIOA Title I funding

7. Adjournment

*Attachments

Upon request, this material can be made available in alternate formats.

Auxiliary aids and services are available upon request to individuals with disabilities by contacting 763.271.3700 or info@cmjts.org

Previous meeting minutes
Roll Call Record Sheet

NEXT MEETING SCHEDULE

NO MEETING IN NOVEMBER

December 11, 2026 – In-person attendance expected

8:00 am – 8:50 pm	CMJTS Operations Committee
9:00 am – 9:50 am	Community & Government Relations Committee
9:00 am – 9:50 am	Workforce Development Committee
9:00 am – 9:50 am	Youth Committee
10:00 am – 10:50 pm	Workforce Development Board
11:00 am – 11:30 am	LMI Presentation
11:40 am – 12:30 pm	Audit Presentation
12:40 am – 1:30 pm	Joint Powers Board

All Meeting information and attachment information can be found at:

CMJTS Joint Powers Board, Workforce Development Board, and
Committee Meetings Page:

<https://www.cmjts.org/cmjts-joint-powers-board-workforce-development-board-and-committee-meetings/>



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.

WIOA REAUTHORIZATION

A Message from Your Local Workforce Development Board

Central Minnesota Jobs and Training Services, Inc. (CMJTS) | Local Workforce Development Area 5 | June 2026

WHO WE ARE

CMJTS is the designated workforce development entity for Local Workforce Development Area 5 (LWDA 5), serving Benton, Isanti, Kanabec, Mille Lacs, Morrison, Pine, and Sherburne counties in Central Minnesota. We administer federally funded workforce programs under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), connecting residents to jobs and helping employers build a skilled workforce. In 2024–2025, we served **hundreds of adults, dislocated workers, and at-risk youth** across our seven-county region.

THE ISSUE: WIOA REAUTHORIZATION IS AT A CROSSROADS

WIOA has been overdue for reauthorization since 2020. The **A Stronger Workforce for America Act (ASWA 2026, H.R. 8210)** passed the House Education and Workforce Committee in April 2026 along party lines (19–14). While we welcome renewed attention to reauthorization, several provisions in the current bill would **directly harm local workforce systems like ours**.

PROVISIONS OF CONCERN IN ASWA 2026

Provision	Why It Matters to LWDA 5
State set-aside increase	Allows governors to redirect an additional 10% of Title I formula funds to state use, reducing the local share from 85% to as low as 75%. Less money reaches the communities who need it most.
WDA redesignation	Allows single-area designations in more than half of all states, potentially collapsing local WDBs into one statewide board. Rural regions like Central Minnesota would lose a voice in their own workforce priorities.
Block grant expansion	Expands the MASA pilot from 5 to 10 states, allowing states to consolidate workforce funding with reduced federal accountability and local oversight.
Youth program mandates	Imposes one-size-fits-all federal training and work-experience requirements that constrain local flexibility — the very flexibility needed to serve rural youth labor markets effectively.
Adult ed transfer to DOL	Moves adult education (ABE/ESL) from the Dept. of Education to DOL, disrupting established local program infrastructure and partnerships.
Reduced authorizations	Lowers authorized funding levels for adult, youth, and dislocated worker programs and freezes them through 2032, removing built-in growth.

OUR ASKS OF CONGRESS

- 1. Pass a bipartisan WIOA reauthorization.**
A bill that can earn 60 Senate votes and provide long-term stability for local workforce systems — not a partisan measure that stalls in the Senate.
- 2. Reject the increased state set-aside.**
Preserve the 85/15 local-to-state funding split. Redirecting an additional 10% to governors strips resources from communities without local accountability.
- 3. Protect local WDB authority and area designations.**
Reject single-area WDA redesignation and block grant provisions that shift control away from locally governed boards and eliminate regional responsiveness.

4. Preserve local flexibility for youth programming.

Remove prescriptive federal mandates that prevent local boards from designing programs that reflect their communities' unique needs and labor markets.

5. Maintain adult education's current structure.

Oppose transfers that disrupt existing ABE/ESL program infrastructure and the local partnerships built around them.

6. Grow — don't freeze — authorized funding levels.

The workforce system is underfunded relative to need. The next reauthorization should increase investment, not lock in reduced levels through 2032.

7. Support Workforce Pell and training modernization.

Short-term Pell (launching July 1, 2026) and digital/AI literacy as allowable uses are bipartisan wins. We support their inclusion in any final bill.

Central Minnesota Jobs and Training Services, Inc. (CMJTS)

Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act • Local Workforce Development Area 5 • Central Minnesota

For more information, contact CMJTS at cmjts.com

Key messaging for legislators

Primary Goal

Help legislators and public champions see workforce boards as critical infrastructure for economic resilience and equity, worthy of sustained investment, visibility, and legislative support.

Key content for this audience

Workforce Boards Deliver Local Results for Minnesota's Workers, Communities, and Economy

Minnesota's 16 local workforce boards connect jobseekers, employers, and youth with the tools they need to succeed. They provide targeted, data-informed services that strengthen local economies and help Minnesotans build better futures.

What workforce boards do

Train and Support Jobseekers: Help Minnesotans of all backgrounds find stable, good-paying jobs, including individuals navigating layoffs, reentry, or life transitions.

Prepare the Next Generation of Workers: Offer paid work experience, career exploration, and mentorship to thousands of young people ages 14 to 24 every year.

Help Employers Hire and Grow: Partner with local businesses to fill open positions, access training support, and build long-term talent pipelines.

Build Community Partnerships: Coordinate with schools, colleges, nonprofits, and state agencies to ensure programs are accessible, efficient, and rooted in community needs.

Strengthen Local Economies: Every region is different. Workforce boards design local, responsive solutions that meet the needs of employers, workers, and communities.

Why it matters

In **[region + year]**, our workforce board:

- Served over **[#]** jobseekers
- Supported **[#]** youth in paid work experiences
- Helped **[percentage]** of participants gain employment or increase earnings
- Partnered with **[#]** businesses across key industries

These results were achieved through collaboration with DEED, local governments, and trusted community providers.

What Legislators Can Do

- Visit a local CareerForce location to see services in action
- Support funding for programs like the Minnesota Youth Program and the Dislocated Worker Program
- Advocate for investments that strengthen Minnesota's talent pipeline
- Stay connected with your district's workforce board(s) to understand local needs and impact

Contact Your Local Workforce Board

[Your Board Name] [Phone Number] [Email Address]
[Website URL] [@socialmedia] [insert logo - optional]

We're ready to work with you. When Minnesotans thrive, our state thrives.

Core messages

Message	Voice Blend	Purpose
"Workforce boards are a proven, high-return investment in Minnesota's economy and people."	Sage	Legislative briefings, one-pagers
"We help Minnesotans get hired and help employers stay competitive."	Creator + Sage	Presentations, hearings
"Every public dollar invested in workforce services returns real results: jobs, wages, and local economic impact."	Sage	Funding advocacy
"From rural communities to metro areas, we meet people where they are and connect them to careers."	Caregiver + Sage	Equity-focused discussions
"Our programs aren't theoretical. They're local, effective, and succeeding right now."	Sage	Outcomes-focused rebuttals
"We serve jobseekers, youth, and employers across every legislative district in Minnesota."	Sage	District-level communications
"When Minnesotans have the tools to succeed, our communities and their economies get stronger."	Caregiver + Sage	Closing statements, op-eds

Voice strategy for legislator messaging

For legislators, we lead with the Sage archetype, grounded in wisdom, results, and real-world expertise. Lawmakers are busy, data-driven, and held accountable by constituents. Our goal is to earn their attention and trust through clarity, credibility, and confident storytelling. We pair the Sage’s logic with a touch of the Caregiver when reminding legislators that these aren’t just statistics—they’re about people, equity, and economic resilience across the state.

What this sounds like

Tone Element	Examples in Action
Authoritative (but not arrogant)	“We are Minnesota’s proven workforce infrastructure.”
Clear and outcome-driven	“Last year, we helped 12,000 Minnesotans get hired.”
Economically grounded	“Every public dollar invested returns jobs, wages, and growth.”
Equity-conscious	“From small towns to the Twin Cities, we meet people where they are.”
Nonpartisan and constructive	“We welcome continued collaboration to strengthen our state’s workforce.”

Sample legislator communications

Template: Legislator Flyer or Poster

Supporting Minnesota’s Workforce, One Career at a Time

Blurb

[Workforce board name] is your local connection to workforce readiness. We deliver high-impact, no-cost services that help:

- Jobseekers get hired
- Employers fill open positions
- Youth access real-world experience

[Insert key local stats or ROI figures here]. We serve constituents in [list counties/cities] and are proud to be part of Minnesota’s workforce system.

Template: Legislator Outreach or Briefing Request Email

Subject line Supporting [district] with proven workforce solutions

Body Dear [Title / last name],

I'm reaching out from [board name] to share how we're supporting economic opportunity in [district or region].

Our workforce board has helped jobseekers and employers thrive by offering free career coaching, skills training, youth programs, and hiring support for [#] years in [region]. These programs are funded in part by state resources—and they work. In the past year alone, we:

- Served [#] jobseekers across [district/region]
- Placed [#] residents into paid employment
- Partnered with [#] employers to strengthen local hiring
- Provided career-building experience to [#] youth

As you consider [insert relevant legislation, e.g., "investments in MYP/DWP" or "the future of WIOA"], I'd welcome the chance to brief you or your staff on the tangible impact we're creating in your district.

Thank you for your continued support of Minnesota's workforce.

Sincerely,
[Staff Name], [Title], [Contact Info]

Template: Social Media Post (General Legislator Outreach)

Caption Minnesota's workforce boards = Real impact in every district.

[#] jobseekers served
[#] youth engaged
[#] employers supported

Local, proven, high-impact. Let's keep Minnesota working.

Legislator Messaging Customization Checklist

This checklist helps you identify the data, services, and success stories needed to tailor outreach emails, social media posts, flyers, and presentations to employers in your region.

1. Board & Region Information

- Full name of workforce board
- Legislative districts covered
- Counties/cities served
- Website and contact info

2. Local and State-Level Data

- Number of jobseekers served (district- or region-level)
- Youth served (MYP, WIOA Youth, Youth at Work)
- Adults/Dislocated Workers served (DWP, WIOA Adult/DW)
- Employers supported
- Jobs secured/placements made
- Estimated return on investment (ROI) or economic value
- Starting wages or success rates (if available)

3. Legislative Priorities (Current Session)

- Relevant state funding requests (DWP, MYP, Youth at Work)
- Policy changes or appropriations needed
- Bills supported or opposed (e.g., SF2342)
- Local impact statements tied to legislation

4. District-Specific Stories

- Success story involving a constituent
- Quote from a local employer or jobseeker
- Photos (with permission) or names/logos of local partners

MAWB Legislative Interim Outreach Talking Points

Background - Interim Outreach

The interim (time between legislative sessions) is an ideal time to build relationships with legislators and increase awareness of the impact of workforce development in their communities. Site visits, employer roundtables, graduations, board meetings, and community events allow legislators to see firsthand how local workforce boards' work helps individuals, employers, and regional economies succeed. These conversations help:

- build relationships that may be helpful later on,
- position local workforce boards as trusted, community-embedded partners and valuable resources on workforce issues.

How to start

- Do you have an upcoming event where you could invite them to attend and see the great work you're doing in their district?
- If not, could you invite them to a site visit (where they could see good work happening, or to one of your board members' businesses, etc.) and include some key people (those you've served, board members with good connections)? Then, have a sit down conversation.

What works best

- Starting with gratitude and curiosity.
- Connecting them with participants and others who can speak to the depth of impact.
- Telling stories, especially those that are specific to their district/area.
- Share your strengths through numbers if possible – share the size of the impact you make.
- Offer yourself as a resource to them.

General Talking Points

Start by Asking – Natural conversation based on their interests is the best path!

- So glad to get to connect with you today.
- Thank you for sharing your time with us!
- What are you most concerned about regarding workforce issues in your district?
 - Express your concerns about that too, if true.
 - If natural, share how you're working on that problem.
- What priorities are you considering for the upcoming session?
- Can we be helpful with anything you're working on?

FOR INTERNAL USE ONLY

Invest in Workforce Development Services through the System

- We just want to start by zooming out to say – thank you for all the investments from the legislature in workforce development.
- Workforce development is key to stabilizing families, supporting Minnesotan businesses, and increasing our state’s competitiveness. We need this more than ever.

Educating about the system and its benefits

- We would make the case that making investments through the statewide workforce development system will help leverage and expand the impact of those funds.
- The workforce development system is the network of local workforce boards and providers, public agencies, educational and training institutions, and community partners that helps people prepare for, find, retain, and advance in employment and helps employers identify well trained talent.
- This system is established and trustworthy, provides quality services, and is ready to be leveraged to get at the big workforce challenges facing our state.

Local workforce boards are your established, strategic partner

- Local workforce boards and providers are best positioned to identify and respond to the reality of how those challenges look on the ground.
 - Local boards are statewide – every part of the state is covered.
 - Data driven AND local knowledge driven so investments are responsive to needs.
 - Maximize resources through partnerships.
 - Accountable with significant monitoring and reporting requirements.

Link our work to being a solution for affordability issues

- It’s become very hard to navigate cost of living and build a good life for your family.
- **Workforce investments through local boards help businesses thrive when they can find well-trained talent, connect Minnesotans to family-sustaining jobs, and ultimately help communities to thrive.**

Support the Dislocated Worker Program, Keep Minnesota Stable

- The Dislocated Worker Program helps individuals quickly reconnect to employment following layoffs, closures, or economic disruptions.
- Helps employers know their people are taken care of and helps workers access training to pivot and fill state workforce needs.
- Stabilizes families, communities, and the state’s economy.
 - It is a core service that helps us avoid need for deeper, costlier intervention through the social service system.

FOR INTERNAL USE ONLY

- Continued investment ensures communities can respond effectively during periods of workforce change. We see potential for significant AI disruptions and other shifts to state workforce needs.
 - *Speak to what you're seeing for layoffs in your area.*
- **We have seen that funding has not always been tracking with need as layoffs increase. Please help us share the need for this core program and prioritize funding it during session.**

Minnesota Youth Program is an Investment in our Present and Future

- The Minnesota Youth Program is one of our state's core workforce programs.
- It serves at-risk, low income youth ages 14-24 *in every part of the state* who need support with academic and applied skills needed for the workplace.
- *Youth earn a wage* through work experience placements and access career exploration and advising through Outreach-to-Schools programming.
- Communities and local employers benefit when young people graduate with work readiness skills and career exploration, and have connections to employers right there in their area.

Closing Message

- Local workforce boards and providers are ready and able to help the legislature get at their policy goals for workforce development.
- How can we work with you on your goals to help move the needle on workforce challenges we're facing across the state?

Community Ambassador Cheat Sheet

Quick-reference talking points for board members promoting the WDB in the community



PITCHING TO BUSINESSES: THE TALENT & GROWTH ANGLE

CORE MESSAGE:

We are your no-cost, federally funded workforce support system, helping employers recruit, train, and retain talent. Through our Business Service Division, we build and support pipelines of capable workers - so you can save money, scale your operations, and stay competitive in an ever-changing economic climate.

Services to Highlight

- **No-Cost Recruiting Events:** On-the-spot interviews, monthly hiring events, regional job fairs, plus free advertising for your own hiring events.
- **Free Job Posting & Candidate Pipeline:** Direct access to jobseekers via CareerForce.mn.gov and local coordinators, including veterans, New Americans, dislocated workers, and candidates with disabilities.
- **Financial Training Subsidies:** OJT reimburses ~50% of a new hire's wage during training; Incumbent Worker Training funds upskilling current staff, and Registered Apprenticeships.
- **Employer Networking Groups:** HR, manufacturing, SHRM, and professional networking groups for peer best practices and talent pipelines.
- **Labor Market Intelligence:** Regional data on competitive wages, hiring trends, and skill shortages to guide business planning.
- **Planning & Advertising Tools:** Free wage-comparison data and a guided job description builder.



30-Second Elevator Pitch - Businesses

"We are your complimentary, federally funded talent partner. Finding and keeping qualified workers is your biggest headache, we solve that by sourcing candidates through job fairs and hiring events, connecting you to job-ready workers, and covering roughly 50% of a new hire's training costs through On-the-Job Training grants. We even help you upskill your current team. We take the risk out of hiring so your business can grow."



PITCHING TO COMMUNITY MEMBERS & NONPROFITS: THE OPPORTUNITY ANGLE

CORE MESSAGE:

We help people find their way to financial independence not by treating them like paperwork, but like the individuals they are. That means tackling the systemic barriers standing between them and a stable, well-paying career.

Services to Highlight

- **Tuition Assistance & Credentials:** Funding for adult learners, dislocated workers, and youth to earn industry-recognized, stackable certifications at local colleges and other training institutions.
- **Career Navigation:** One-on-one career counseling, resume writing labs, and mock interview prep at local CareerForce Centers (CFC).

- **Supportive Wrap-Around Services:** Childcare stipends, transportation supports, and other support services tailored to your individual needs and circumstances so that challenges don't derail employment goals.
- **Specialized Placement Programs:** Focused initiatives for veterans, youth, individuals with disabilities, and justice-involved citizens.

30-Second Elevator Pitch — Community Members

"Whether you are looking to change careers, re-enter the workforce, or gain a new certification, our board funds the resources to get you there. Through our local CareerForce Centers, we provide free career coaching, resume building, and financial aid for technical training. We even help cover costs like childcare resources or transit while you learn, ensuring you have what you need to build a stable, prosperous career."

THE MACRO STORY: BENEFITING THE LOCAL ECONOMY

For elected officials, chambers of commerce, and rotary clubs - position the WDB as an economic engine.

► Reduces Public Assistance Dependency

Moving residents from unemployment or underemployment into living-wage careers expands the local tax base and reduces reliance on social safety nets.

► Prevents "Brain Drain"

By aligning local education and training programs directly with regional employer needs, we keep our brightest talent right here in the community.

► Attracts New Industry

Businesses do not relocate to areas lacking talent. By maintaining a robust, highly skilled workforce pipeline, we make our region a magnet for corporate investment and economic expansion.

TIP: Match the pitch to the room; lead with talent & savings for businesses, opportunity & support for jobseekers, and economic impact for civic leaders.

QUICK VOCABULARY GUIDE: SIMPLIFY THE JARGON

Board members often rely too heavily on federal acronyms. Use this quick translation guide to keep conversations engaging and easy to understand:

<i>Instead of saying...</i>	<i>Say this instead...</i>
"WIOA Title I Funding"	"Federally backed grants dedicated to local workforce training."
"Incumbent Worker Training"	"Funding to upgrade the skills of your current employees."
"CareerForce Center / CFC"	"Our local career lab is open to all community members."
"Labor Market Information (LMI)"	"Local hiring data, competitive wage trends, and skill gap analysis."
"Eligible Training Provider List"	"Our vetted network of approved local colleges and trade schools."

Information on Legislators

Who serves on Workforce/Jobs Committees?

These are legislators who it would be particularly helpful to connect with!!

- [Senate Jobs Committee](#)
 - Chair Bobby Joe Champion (Deb)
 - Vice Chair Zaynab Mohamed (Deb)
 - *Ranking Minority Member Rich Draheim (Heather, Jinny) – Retiring, so not returning.*
 - Sen Heather Gustafson (Catrice, Lisa)
 - Sen Founj Hawj (Catrice)
 - Sen Karin Housley (Ryan)
 - *Sen Carla Nelson (Jinny) – Retiring, so not returning*
 - Sen Susan Pha (Erik)
 - *Sen Eric Pratt (Mark) – Running for Congress, so not returning*

- [House Workforce, Labor, and Economic Development Committee](#)
 - Co-Chair Dave Baker (Dina)
 - Co-Chair Dave Pinto (Catrice)
 - Co-Vice-Chair Emma Greenman (Deb)
 - Co-Vice-Chair Shane Mekeland (Dina)
 - Rep Ben Bakeberg (Mark)
 - *Rep Kaela Berg (Mark) – Ran for Congress, so not returning*
 - *Rep Cedrick Frazier (Erik) – Running for Henn County Atty, so not returning.*
 - Rep Samakab Hussein (Catrice)
 - Rep Pete Johnson (Elena)
 - Rep Wayne Johnson (Ryan)
 - Rep Liish Kozlowski (Elena)
 - Rep Patricia Mueller (Jinny)
 - Rep Isaac Schulz (Tina)
 - Rep Natalie Zeleznikar (Marie, Elena)

Who are my legislators?

To find your current legislators, click here: <https://gis.lcc.mn.gov/iMaps/districts/>

Chisago County

- **MN House:** Nathan Nelson — HD 11B; James Gordon — HD 28A; Max Rymer — HD 28B
- **MN Senate:** Jason Rarick — SD 11; Mark Koran — SD 28
- **U.S. House:** Pete Stauber — CD 8
- **U.S. Senate:** Amy Klobuchar; Tina Smith

Isanti County

- **MN House:** Isaac Schultz — HD 10B; Bryan Lawrence — HD 27B; James Gordon — HD 28A; Peggy Scott — HD 31B
- **MN Senate:** Nathan Wesenberg — SD 10; Andrew Mathews — SD 27; Mark Koran — SD 28; Cal Bahr — SD 31
- **U.S. House:** Pete Stauber — CD 8
- **U.S. Senate:** Amy Klobuchar; Tina Smith

Kanabec County

- **MN House:** Ron Kresha — HD 10A; Isaac Schultz — HD 10B; Nathan Nelson — HD 11B
- **MN Senate:** Nathan Wesenberg — SD 10; Jason Rarick — SD 11
- **U.S. House:** Pete Stauber — CD 8
- **U.S. Senate:** Amy Klobuchar; Tina Smith

Kandiyohi County

- **MN House:** Scott Van Binsbergen — HD 16A; **Dave Baker — HD 16B**
- **MN Senate:** Andrew Lang — SD 16
- **U.S. House:** Michelle Fischbach — CD 7
- **U.S. Senate:** Amy Klobuchar; Tina Smith

McLeod County

- **MN House:** Dawn Gillman — HD 17A; Bobbie V. Harder — HD 17B
- **MN Senate:** Glenn Gruenhagen — SD 17
- **U.S. House:** Michelle Fischbach — CD 7
- **U.S. Senate:** Amy Klobuchar; Tina Smith

Meeker County

- **MN House:** Scott Van Binsbergen — HD 16A; Dawn Gillman — HD 17A; Joseph McDonald — HD 29A

- **MN Senate:** Andrew Lang — SD 16; Glenn Gruenhagen — SD 17; Michael Holmstrom Jr. — SD 29
- **U.S. House:** Michelle Fischbach — CD 7
- **U.S. Senate:** Amy Klobuchar; Tina Smith

Mille Lacs County

- **MN House:** Ron Kresha — HD 10A; Isaac Schultz — HD 10B; Bryan Lawrence — HD 27B
- **MN Senate:** Nathan Wesenberg — SD 10; Andrew Mathews — SD 27
- **U.S. House:** Pete Stauber — CD 8
- **U.S. Senate:** Amy Klobuchar; Tina Smith

Pine County

- **MN House:** Jeff Dotseth — HD 11A; Nathan Nelson — HD 11B
- **MN Senate:** Jason Rarick — SD 11
- **U.S. House:** Pete Stauber — CD 8
- **U.S. Senate:** Amy Klobuchar; Tina Smith

Renville County

- **MN House:** Scott Van Binsbergen — HD 16A
- **MN Senate:** Andrew Lang — SD 16
- **U.S. House:** Michelle Fischbach — CD 7
- **U.S. Senate:** Amy Klobuchar; Tina Smith

Sherburne County

- **MN House:** Dan Wolgamott — HD 14B; **Shane Mekeland — HD 27A**; Bryan Lawrence — HD 27B; Paul Novotny — HD 30B
- **MN Senate:** Aric Putnam — SD 14; Andrew Mathews — SD 27; Eric Lucero — SD 30
- **U.S. House:** Tom Emmer — CD 6
- **U.S. Senate:** Amy Klobuchar; Tina Smith

Wright County

- **MN House:** Dawn Gillman — HD 17A; Joseph McDonald — HD 29A; Marion Rarick — HD 29B; Walter Hudson — HD 30A; Paul Novotny — HD 30B; Danny Nadeau — HD 34A
- **MN Senate:** Glenn Gruenhagen — SD 17; Michael Holmstrom Jr. — SD 29; Eric Lucero — SD 30; John Hoffman — SD 34
- **U.S. House:** Tom Emmer — CD 6
- **U.S. Senate:** Amy Klobuchar; Tina Smith

Federal legislators for all 11 counties

There are only **three U.S. House members** involved across these counties:

Congressional District	Representative	Counties in your list
CD 6	Tom Emmer (R)	Sherburne, Wright
CD 7	Michelle Fischbach (R)	McLeod, Meeker, Kandiyohi, Renville
CD 8	Pete Stauber (R)	Chisago, Isanti, Mille Lacs, Kanabec, Pine

The two current U.S. Senators are:

- **Amy Klobuchar (DFL)**
- **Tina Smith (DFL)**

2026 Candidate Finder

U.S. Senate — statewide

Every voter in these counties will see the same U.S. Senate race:

- **Michele Tafoya — Republican**
- **Peggy Flanagan — Democratic-Farmer-Labor**
- **Marisa Simonetti — Independent**
- **Rebecca Whiting — Libertarian**

U.S. House

Counties	District	November 3 candidates
Sherburne, Wright	CD 6	Tom Emmer — Republican; Doug Chapin — DFL
McLeod, Meeker, Kandiyohi, Renville	CD 7	Michelle Fischbach — Republican; Erik Osberg — DFL
Chisago, Isanti, Mille Lacs, Kanabec, Pine	CD 8	Pete Stauber — Republican; Trina Swanson — DFL

Minnesota State Legislature

Chisago County

Senate

- SD 11: **Jason Rarick — Republican; Mary Carlson — DFL; Monique Doward — Forward Independence**
- SD 28: **Mark Koran — Republican; Max Glenna — DFL**

House

- HD 11B: **Nathan Nelson — Republican; Jack L'Heureux — DFL**
- HD 28A: **James "Jimmy" Gordon — Republican; Tim Dummer — DFL**
- HD 28B: **Max Rymer — Republican; Daniel Colten Schmidt — DFL**

Isanti County

Senate

- SD 27: **Andrew Mathews — Republican; Brandon Van Dover — DFL**
- SD 28: **Mark Koran — Republican; Max Glenna — DFL**

House

- HD 27B: **Bryan Lawrence** — Republican; **Charles A. McConaughay** — DFL
- HD 28A: **James "Jimmy" Gordon** — Republican; **Tim Dummer** — DFL

McLeod County

Senate

- SD 17: **Glenn H. Gruenhagen** — Republican; **Julie Kelzer** — DFL

House

- HD 17A: **Dawn Gillman** — Republican; **Mali Anderson** — DFL
- HD 17B: **Bobbie Harder** — Republican; **Ben Wieman** — DFL

Meeker County

Senate

- SD 16: **Andrew R. Lang** — Republican; **Kathy Jorgenson** — DFL
- SD 17: **Glenn H. Gruenhagen** — Republican; **Julie Kelzer** — DFL
- SD 29: **Michael Holmstrom Jr.** — Republican; **Louis McNutt** — DFL

House

- HD 16A: **Scott Van Binsbergen** — Republican; **David J. Torgelson** — DFL
- HD 17A: **Dawn Gillman** — Republican; **Mali Anderson** — DFL
- HD 29A: **Joe McDonald** — Republican; **Emily Dahlgren** — DFL

Mille Lacs County

Senate

- SD 10: **Nathan Wesenberg** — Republican; **Tara Killen** — DFL
- SD 27: **Andrew Mathews** — Republican; **Brandon Van Dover** — DFL

House

- HD 10A: **Mark Striemer** — Republican; **Melissa Maertens** — DFL
- HD 10B: **Isaac Schultz** — Republican; **Jeff Larson** — DFL
- HD 27B: **Bryan Lawrence** — Republican; **Charles A. McConaughay** — DFL

Kanabec County

Senate

- SD 11: **Jason Rarick — Republican; Mary Carlson — DFL; Monique Doward — Forward Independence**

House

- HD 11B: **Nathan Nelson — Republican; Jack L'Heureux — DFL**

Kandiyohi County

Senate

- SD 16: **Andrew R. Lang — Republican; Kathy Jorgenson — DFL**

House

- HD 16A: **Scott Van Binsbergen — Republican; David J. Torgelson — DFL**
- HD 16B: **Dave Baker — Republican; Julie Henslin — DFL**

Pine County

Senate

- SD 11: **Jason Rarick — Republican; Mary Carlson — DFL; Monique Doward — Forward Independence**

House

- HD 11A: **Jeff Dotseth — Republican; Chris Swanson — DFL**
- HD 11B: **Nathan Nelson — Republican; Jack L'Heureux — DFL**

Renville County

Senate

- SD 16: **Andrew R. Lang — Republican; Kathy Jorgenson — DFL**

House

- HD 16A: **Scott Van Binsbergen — Republican; David J. Torgelson — DFL**

Sherburne County

Senate

- SD 14: **Bernie Perryman** — Republican; **Aric Putnam** — DFL
- SD 27: **Andrew Mathews** — Republican; **Brandon Van Dover** — DFL
- SD 30: **Eric Lucero** — Republican; **Leah Temple** — DFL

House

- HD 14B: **Sue Ek** — Republican; **Zachary "Zach" Dorholt** — DFL
- HD 27A: **Shane Mekeland** — Republican; **Vanessa Davenport** — DFL
- HD 27B: **Bryan Lawrence** — Republican; **Charles A. McConaughay** — DFL
- HD 30B: **Chad Westberg** — Republican; **Keenan Gentry** — DFL

Wright County

Senate

- SD 17: **Glenn H. Gruenhagen** — Republican; **Julie Kelzer** — DFL
- SD 29: **Michael Holmstrom Jr.** — Republican; **Louis McNutt** — DFL
- SD 30: **Eric Lucero** — Republican; **Leah Temple** — DFL
- SD 34: **Karen Attia** — Republican; **John Hoffman** — DFL

House

- HD 17A: **Dawn Gillman** — Republican; **Mali Anderson** — DFL
- HD 29A: **Joe McDonald** — Republican; **Emily Dahlgren** — DFL
- HD 29B: **Marion (O'Neill) Rarick** — Republican; **Colton Kratky** — DFL
- HD 30A: **Walter Hudson** — Republican; **Joey Smyth** — DFL
- HD 30B: **Chad Westberg** — Republican; **Keenan Gentry** — DFL
- HD 34A: **Danny Nadeau** — Republican; **Jason Heaser** — DFL

**COMMUNITY & GOVERNMENT RELATIONS (CGR) COMMITTEE
MINUTES**

September 11, 2026
Hybrid Meeting

MEMBERS PRESENT: Lisa Zwart (chair), Commissioner Duane Anderson, Commissioner Dan Whitcomb (vice-chair), Brent Thompson, Denise Stewart, Gary Foster

MEMBERS ABSENT: Bob Dockendorf, Deb Meyer

STAFF PRESENT: Dina Wuornos, Lori Kampa

The meeting was called to order at 9:40 am.

WELCOME/INTRODUCTION

CONSENT AGENDA

Motion: Thompson moved to approve the consent agenda. Seconded by: Whitcomb. Motion carried.

OLD BUSINESS

Board Recruitment.

- Need to focus on Renville County (preferably manufacturing)
 - Need business representation
 - Foster has contact in Renville at Beet Sugar company
- Application out for Tony Buttacavoli – director for Family Pathways in North Branch. Social Enterprise and Business Representative with 200 employees. Nonprofit. Chisago County. Wuornos will follow up.
- Stewart has potential referral for business representation in Mille Lacs County
- Whitcomb referred Doug Hanson to Wuornos.

Golf Tournament

- Joe Sharpe and Dockendorf attended the Big Lake Chamber of Commerce Golf Tournament representing the Workforce Development Board. There were eight people interested in more information about the board.

NEW BUSINESS

Cate Duin – MAWB platform

- Duin was not able to attend but Wuornos prepared several handouts (attached) for discussion
- Wuornos informed the committee legislators from the House have been dismissed. There was discussion on hosting open houses throughout our regions to have an opportunity to share our message with our legislators. WIOA reauthorization will continue to be a priority. The following open houses were scheduled:
 - Tuesday, Oct. 13, Cambridge, 10:00 am – 1:00 pm
 - Thursday, Oct. 15, Monticello, 10:00 am – 1:00 pm
 - Friday, Oct. 16, Willmar, 10:00 am -1:00 pm
 - Wednesday, Oct. 21, Mora, 10:00 am – 1:00 pm

The title will be Central Minnesota Workforce Development Board Open House Series. All dates and locations will be listed on the same invitation. Wuornos will create an invitation and will send it to the committee for feedback.

- Prior to the Willmar open house, Wuornos will look for a manufacturing tour through CMMA and invite Foster, Anderson, and Representative Dave Baker.
- If board members have a personal connection with any of the legislators, they are asked to make a personal follow up.

NEXT AGENDA ITEMS

ITEMS FOR FUTURE MEETING AGENDAS:

- Cate Duin will attend to assist with platform for CGR

OCTOBER AGENDA ITEMS

ITEMS FOR JANUARY MEETING AGENDA:

- WIOA Title I funding

ADJOURN

Motion: Thompson adjourned the meeting at 10:50 am.