



# 2024-2027 Strategic Workforce Plan

Region 2: Northeast Minnesota  
Local Workforce Development Area 4: Duluth



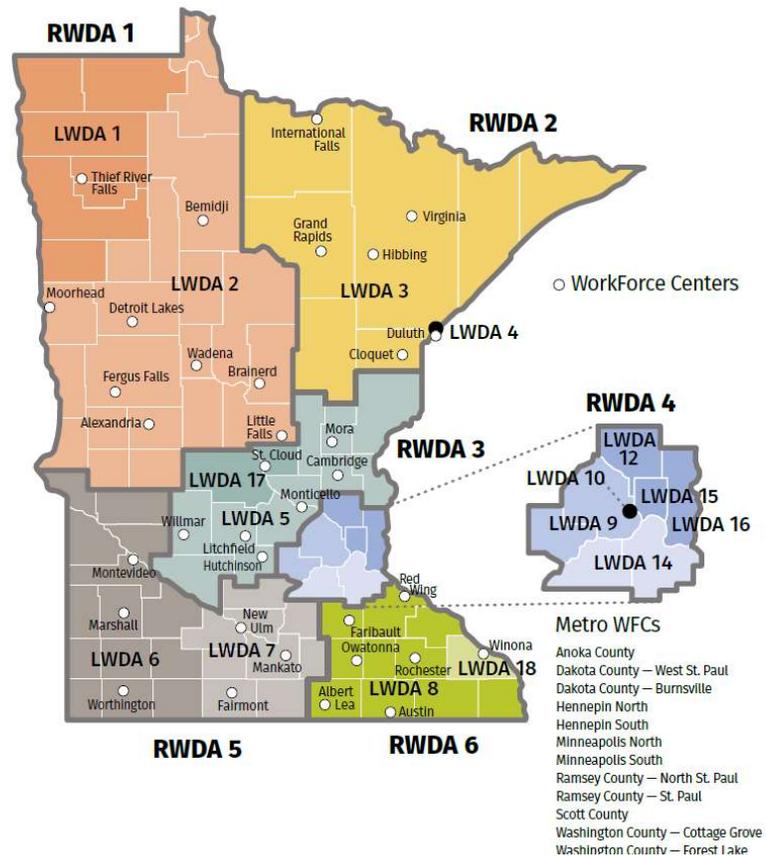
# Background

As required by the Workforce Investment Opportunity Act (WIOA), the [Governor's Workforce Development Board](#) updates the [state strategic plan](#) every four years. This plan sets goals and strategies to guide investments and implementation of Minnesota's workforce system.

Local Workforce Development Boards then develop their own local and regional strategic plans in alignment with the state plan. The plan uses labor market data and stakeholder engagement to set a unified vision, goals, and workforce strategies for the local area.



# Minnesota Workforce System Map



# Minnesota Workforce System Services

## Virtual Services:

- Assessment of skills, strengths, interests
- Labor Market Information
- Career exploration
- Skill-building workshops

## In-Person Services:

- On-on-one appointments with a job counselor
- Resume help
- Assistance with job applications
- Interview prep

## Program Services:

- Assessment of academic skills, work history, interests, motivation, barriers
- Individualized career planning
- Intensive job search assistance
- Support for completing a GED
- Work readiness training
- Training for high-wage, high-demand careers
- Internships, subsidized employment, and paid work experience
- Support services to address employment-related needs



# Employer Services

## Recruiting Assistance

- Strategy development
- Post jobs on Minnesotaworks.net
- Host hiring events
- Engage with training classes

## Retention Services

- Talent Development Program
- Career pathway mapping
- Connection to state resources

## Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

- Employer Action Guide
- Employer Champions Initiative
- Community Benefits Program



# Who Developed the Plan?

- The [Duluth Workforce Development Board](#)'s 27 employer, education, and community stakeholder members
- The Northeast Regional Leadership Team, which includes CareerForce leaders and members of the Duluth and Northeast Workforce Boards
- DEED Regional Labor Market Analyst
- 100+ employers, unions, education representatives, and community stakeholders who participate in workforce board committees
- CareerForce Duluth and Northeast staff
- Community member surveys and focus groups



# Timeline

- September 20, 2023: “Ideas to Action” sessions at state Workforce Summit
- Mid-September 2023: Guidance issued for State, Regional and Local Plans
- Fall 2023:
  - Construction Working Group strategic planning
  - Healthcare Working Group strategic planning
  - Manufacturing Working Group strategic planning
- November 13, 2023: Review guidance at Duluth Workforce Board meeting, discuss plan for any community/employer input
- January 2024:
  - Equity Committee strategic planning
  - Emerging Workforce strategic planning
  - Focus on local/regional strategic plan at 1/29 Board meeting
- January 15, 2024: State Plan submitted for Governor’s Review and posted for 30-Day Public Comment
- February 1, 2024: Regional Leadership Team meeting
- March 20, 2024: GWDB Meeting to Approve State Plan
- March 25, 2024: Draft plan sent to Duluth Workforce Development Board for review and edits
- April 8, 2024: Local plan final draft posted for 30-day public comment
- April 5, 2024: WIOA 2024-2027 State Plan submitted to US DOL
- April 30-May 9, 2024: Public comment period ends, final plan edits
- May 10, 2024: Final plan draft to Duluth workforce board for final review
- May 20, 2024: Plan overview presentation and Board approval to submit plan to DEED
- May 31 – August 30: GWDB Special Committee review and provide feedback or suggested modifications
- August 30, 2024: Final local/regional plan submission to DEED



# Northeast Minnesota - Vision



Northeast Minnesota's vision for a skilled workforce is to convene and collaborate with partners and key stakeholders to build on our region's strengths and leverage opportunities that will support local businesses, attract workers, and connect job seekers to employment that offers family-sustaining wages and connection to career advancement.



# Northeast Minnesota – Best Practices

- **Talent Development Program** to support incumbent worker training
- **Diversity & Inclusion Employer Action Guide** – tools and best practices for recruiting, hiring, onboarding, and retention
- **Employer Champions Initiative** – Ongoing training and technical support for workplace DEI efforts
- **218 Trades** – Marketing & education campaign focused on the construction trades
- **Discover Healthcare** – Hands-on event to explore healthcare careers



# Regional Goals & Strengths

## Regional Goals:

- Explore ways to support entrepreneurs and small business development
- Continue to research and track clean energy job opportunities in the region
- Expand regional efforts focused on talent attraction
- Identify ways to support hospitality & tourism industry businesses

## Regional Strengths:

- Partnerships and collaboration
- Industry-led sector strategy partnerships
- Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion as a priority
- Education institutions – K-12 and post-secondary



# Targeted Industry Sectors

- Healthcare & Social Assistance
- Construction
- Manufacturing
- Business/Professional Services (Emphasis on IT)
- Transportation & Logistics
- Educational Services

\*Leisure & Hospitality also noted as critical to the regional economy



# How the NE Region Is Working to Advance Equity

- Supporting and engaging employers in Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion initiatives
- Supporting continuous learning among staff around Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion and Trauma Informed Care
- Implementing training programs aimed at women in non-traditional careers, BIPOC individuals, and adults with barriers to employment
- Relationship building with tribal representatives and Tribal Employment Relations Officers (TEROs)
- Supporting local efforts to create welcoming and inclusive communities
- Helping build regional capacity to attract and assist immigrants and refugees
- Active partnership with high schools to serve students with disabilities through youth workforce programs
- Helping develop local/regional solutions for housing/homelessness, transportation, child care, and older worker employment



# Duluth Workforce Development Board Vision

The Duluth Workforce Development Board (Duluth WDB) convenes and collaborates with partners to assess workforce demand, support employers in accessing the workforce they need to fill available jobs, and ensure that people of all backgrounds can achieve meaningful employment and a family-sustaining wage.



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# DWDB Goal 1

**Engage employers from high-growth, high-demand industries to identify and design strategies to meet workforce needs, adapt to the changing nature of work, and close gaps in participation based on race and other factors**

## **Strategic Priorities:**

- Convene sector strategy working groups focused on Construction, Healthcare, and Manufacturing to develop and implement workforce strategies;
- Support efforts to connect local college graduates to employers and job opportunities in the region;
- Support and engage employers in talent attraction efforts to grow the available workforce in our community and region;
- Continue offering high-demand industry sector career pathway training classes aimed at underrepresented populations and individuals with barriers to employment;
- Engage employers in supporting and advocating for child care and housing as critical workforce attraction and retention needs.



## DWDB Goal 2

**Expand employer and workforce system partner engagement with K-12, Adult, and Post-Secondary Education to support career exploration, work readiness, and exposure to career and training pathways**

### **Strategic Priorities:**

- Expand employer support for paid internships/work experience placements for high school and college students;
- Engage employers in helping to sponsor/host career exposure events such as Construct Tomorrow, Discover Healthcare, and the Manufacturing Expo;
- Increase employer engagement with colleges and high schools, and with youth and adult career pathway training classes.



## DWDB Goal 3

**Develop and strengthen relationships with workforce and community service providers to deliver coordinated, individualized, and client-centered services**

### **Strategic Priorities:**

- Support and advocate for in-person job seeker services offered on-site at CareerForce and through off-site locations;
- Refine vision for an individualized, accessible, and client-centered service model, and unite CareerForce partners behind that vision;
- Build a connected system of workforce partners offering customers “no wrong door” access to a network of services;
- Expand awareness of CareerForce services among the Duluth community;
- Build our community’s capacity to serve and support immigrants, refugees, and New Americans.



## DWDB Goal 4

**Lead initiatives to reduce educational, skills training, and employment disparities based on race, ethnicity, disability, gender identity, veteran status, age, and criminal background**

### **Strategic Priorities:**

- Lead DEI training, resources, and support for employers;
- Integrate Good Jobs Principles as a recruiting and retention strategy;
- Provide focused programming aimed at decreasing disparities among BIPOC community members;
- Build and strengthen partnerships and connections with tribal representatives and BIPOC-led organizations;
- Provide focused programming for inclusion of people with disabilities, gender diverse, and older adults;
- Roll out Equity Dashboard as a tool to track the impact of DWDB's equity work.



# LWDA 4 - Duluth Strengths & Best Practices

## Strengths

- Skilled, kind, supportive staff
- Partnership
- Engaged board and committees
- Duluth Adult Education
- Equity-focused service delivery
- Culture of innovation and teamwork

## Best Practices

- Youth seat on workforce board
- Industry-led sector strategy working groups
- Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion leadership
- Good Jobs, Great Cities
- Construct Tomorrow
- YES Duluth partnerships
- Community Liaisons
- Employer Navigators
- Workforce Solutions Series



## Duluth Area Workforce System Map

### Economic Development

APEX  
 UMD Bureau of Business and Econ. Research  
 City of Duluth  
 Northspan  
 Minnesota Power  
 ARDC  
 LISC  
 DEED

### Business/Industry Organizations

Duluth Chamber  
 Northland Human Resources Assoc.  
 Assoc. for Talent Development  
 Arrowhead Manufacturers & Fabricators  
 Duluth Building & Construction Trades

### Community Organizations

SOAR Career Solutions  
 Community Action Duluth  
 Goodwill  
 Life House  
 Family Freedom Center  
 Choice Unlimited  
 UDAC  
 HDC  
 Lutheran Social Services

### Small Business/Entrepreneurship

Northland SBDC  
 Family Rise Together  
 Entrepreneur Fund  
 1200 Fund  
 DAWN

### CareerForce

DWD  
 AEOA  
 DEED (VRS, Job Service, SSB, LMI, Veterans)  
 JET

### Other Partners

Work Experience Host Sites  
 Supported Employment Programs  
 DWDB/Committee Members  
 Labor Unions  
 MNDoT

### Education/Training

ISD709 – Duluth Public Schools  
 Harbor City International School  
 Lake Superior College  
 University of MN – Duluth  
 College of St Scholastica  
 Fond du Lac College  
 University of WI – Superior  
 Northwoods Technical College  
 Proctor, Hermantown School Districts  
 Northern Lights Cooperative  
 Duluth Adult Education  
 Enterprise Minnesota  
 Apprenticeship Programs



# CareerForce Partners - Duluth

- **City of Duluth Workforce Development**

- Youth Employment Services (YES) Duluth
- Older Worker Program
- WIOA Adult and Dislocated Worker
- Career Pathway Training
- MFIP, DWP, SNAP Employment Services

- **Arrowhead Economic Opportunity Agency (AEOA)**

- SNAP Employment Services
- State Dislocated Worker

- **Northeast MN Office of Job Training (JET)**

- Youth Services
- WIOA Adult and Dislocated Worker
- MFIP, DWP Employment Services

- **Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED)**

- Job Service
- State Services for the Blind
- Vocational Rehabilitation Services
- Labor Market Information
- Workforce Strategy Consultant

- **Duluth Adult Education**



# CareerForce Job Seeker Services

- Outreach and eligibility determination
- Intake and program orientation
- Skill, Interest, and Service Needs Assessments
- Individual Employment Plans
- Job search and placement assistance
- Supportive services and referrals
- Labor market information
- Training and education support
- Assistance filing Unemployment Insurance claims
- Information and assistance with FAFSA
- Individual counseling and career planning
- Resume and interview prep
- Paid internships and work experience



# Service Accessibility

- Computer lab staffed by Digital Navigators
- On-campus office hours at Lake Superior College, University of MN – Duluth, and College of St. Scholastica
- YES Duluth staff work on-site at Duluth high schools, and at community partner organizations
- Library office hours
- Social media messaging
- Staff have texting capability
- Online program applications
- Virtual service delivery



# Employer Services

- **Recruiting**

- Minnesota Works
- Job fairs and hiring events
- Assisting job seekers with applications

- **Hiring**

- On-site interviews
- Support for virtual interviews
- Subsidies like OJT and WOTC
- Paid internships/work experience

- **Strategic Workforce Development**

- Talent Development Program
- Connection to MJSP, JTIP, and other state resources
- Development of workforce training strategies
- Engagement with regional efforts
- Engagement on key issues: Housing, child care, broadband access



# How We Measure Success

## Youth/Adult Programs:

- Measurable Skills Gain
- Credential Attainment
- Employment Placement
  - Entry into employment aligned with training
- Employment Retention
- Average Wage
- Entry into further education

## MFIP/DWP:

- Work Participation Rate
- Self-Sufficiency Index
- Placement into employment
- Credential Attainment



# Labor Market Information

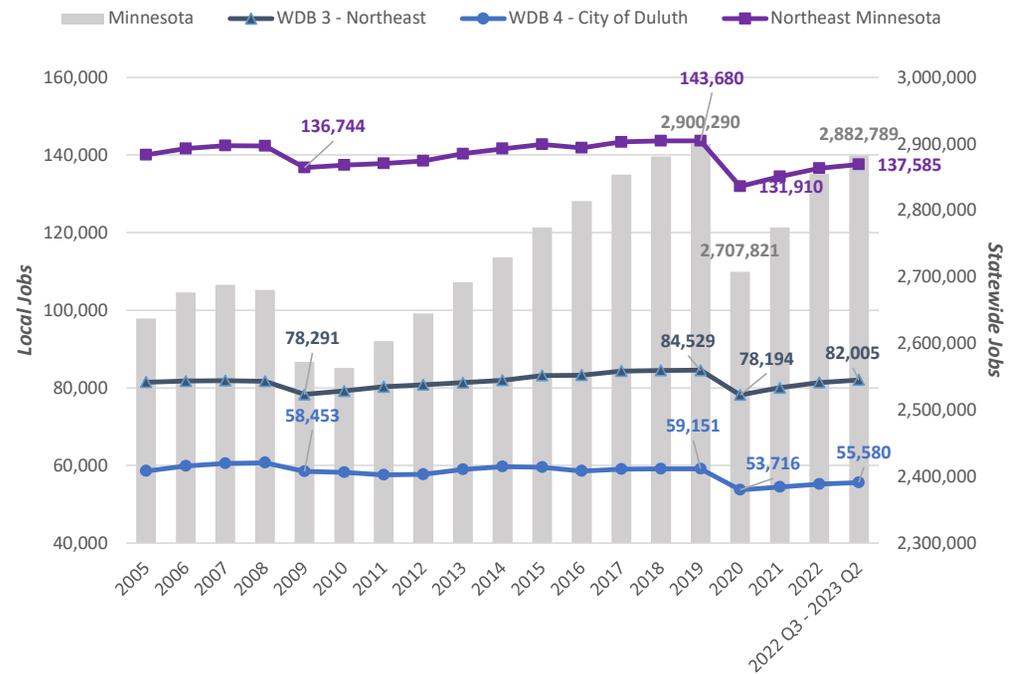
Summary of data used to inform development of the strategic workforce plan. More detailed information can be found in the plan document.



# Regional Employment

- 137,585 jobs across 9,234 firms in NE Minnesota
  - 6,100 fewer jobs compared to 2019
- Average annual wage of \$55,717
  - 12.6% increase from 2020
  - 22% below state average wage
- Largest Industries:
  - Healthcare and Social Assistance
  - Retail Trade
  - Accommodation and Food Services
  - Educational Services
  - Public Administration
- Fastest Growing Industries
  - Construction
  - Manufacturing
  - Utilities
  - Professional, Scientific, & Technical Services

Industry Employment Statistics, Northeast Minnesota, 2005 - Q2 2023



Source: DEED QCEW

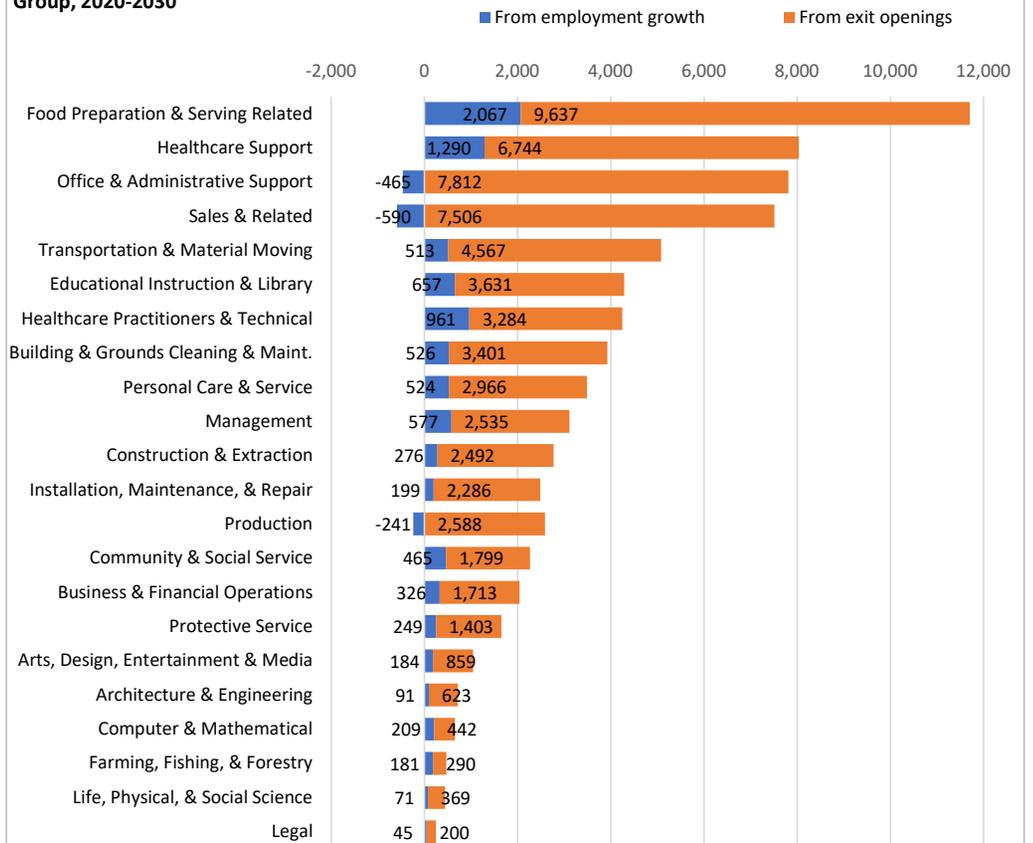


# Occupations In Demand

- Healthcare
  - Registered Nurses
  - Licensed Practical Nurses
  - Nursing Assistants
  - Substance abuse & mental health counselors
  - Home health aides
  - Clinical Lab Technicians
  - Medical Assistants
  - Dental Hygienists
  - Radiologic Technicians
- Social & Community Service Managers
- Police Officers
- Industrial Machinery Mechanics
- General & Operations Managers
- Automotive Service Technicians/Mechanics
- K-12 Teachers
- Retail Salespersons and Cashiers



Figure 2. Northeast Minnesota Regional Employment Projections by Occupational Group, 2020-2030

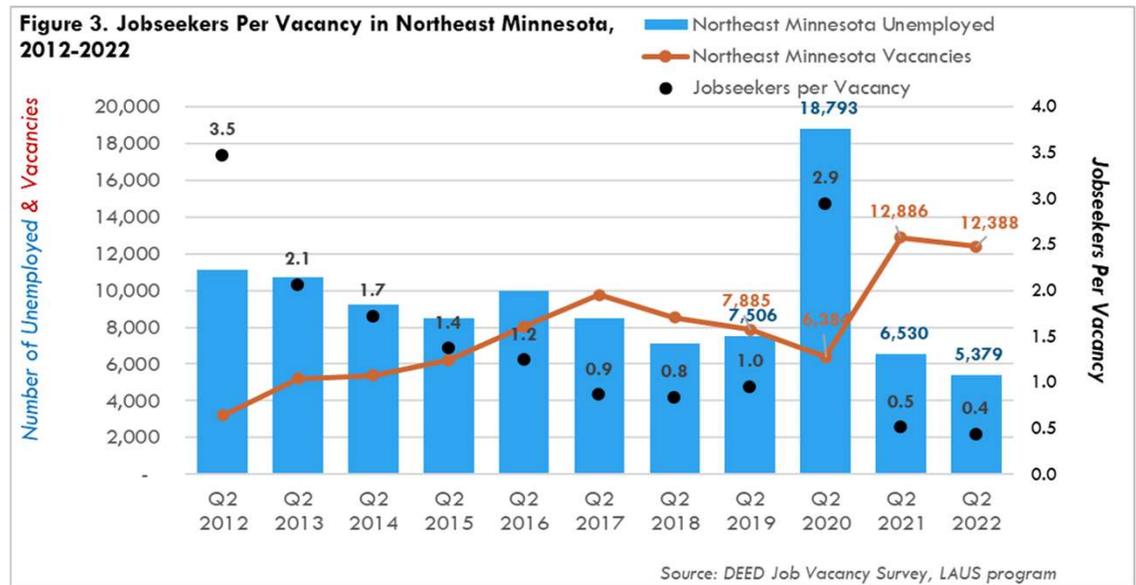


Source: DEED 2020-2030 Employment Outlook



# Workforce Characteristics

- 160,415 in labor force across the region
  - 47,565 in Duluth
- Workforce shortage persists
  - More than two jobs for every jobseeker
- Aging workforce
  - 25% of workers are over 55
- 8% of labor force is BIPOC in NE Region
  - 11% is BIPOC in Duluth
- 8% of labor force has a disability
- 25% have a high school diploma or less, 34% have a Bachelor's degree or higher
  - Significant educational disparities by race
- Significant gender disparities in all targeted industries



# For Additional Information

Full plan document available here: [\(link to plan\)](#)

City of Duluth Workforce Development

[www.duluthmn.gov/workforce-development](http://www.duluthmn.gov/workforce-development)

Labor Market Information

[www.mn.gov/deed/data](http://www.mn.gov/deed/data)

