

Workforce Development Services

Update to 2005 Evaluation Report

Problems Identified

- **Unclear Authority.** Authority to set policy and make spending decisions for workforce development services in Minnesota was unclear and diffuse.
- **Inadequate Coordination.** No single agency had full funding authority for workforce development spending, and no agency had complete information on, or accountability for, overall spending. The Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED), the Department of Education, and Minnesota State Colleges and Universities (MnSCU) all had programs in local workforce centers but did not fully exchange funding information. Coordination with economic development strategies was insufficient.
- **Lack of Measures to Gauge Effectiveness.** The effectiveness of some of the major workforce development programs could not be determined because performance measures were absent or inadequate.

Changes Implemented

- **Minimum Standards Set.** DEED helped clarify authority by publishing minimum standards for workforce centers. Since 2005, staff conducted 33 site visits to certify that centers met certification requirements.
- **Coordination Improved.** DEED and MnSCU hired regional administrators to oversee coordination between the two entities. DEED shares budget information with local workforce service areas and local offices of MnSCU and Adult Basic Education (ABE). DEED offered incentives for increased collaborations between workforce councils and local economic development authorities; it also provided training on economic development to local and state workforce center staff.
- **Effectiveness Measured.** To better track customers, in 2006 DEED began a new way of registering job seekers who use workforce centers' resource rooms. DEED also started evaluating the impact of the Minnesota Job Bank on job seekers' ability to find work.

Action Needed

- **Require Additional Coordination.** The Legislature should direct state and local entities involved in workforce services to more fully exchange funding information so that budget decisions can be made with knowledge about all resources available. DEED should encourage additional coordination among workforce centers, MnSCU, and ABE.
- **Evaluate Outcomes from Using Resource Rooms.** DEED should evaluate how well workforce centers' resource rooms helped their users find jobs.