



**TO:** Commissioner Toni Carter and Commissioner Stan Karwoski, GMWC Co-Chairs  
Ann Mulholland and Aretha Green, MSPWIN Co-Chairs

**FROM:** Jeannine LaPrad (Corporation for a Skilled Workforce) and Luke Weisberg (CEI Consultant)

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**RE:** GMWC Sector Skills Academy Final Report

We thought it would be helpful to share a final report for the GMWC Sector Skills Academy and note what we think was accomplished through the Academy. The table on the following page highlights the expected outcomes and what progress was made in each of the areas.

In addition to the table that follows, we wanted to share a few observations about our work together:

- **Curriculum** – As noted previously, we did a great deal of adaptation from the original CSW/Aspen curriculum and approach. The participant mix in the Twin Cities Academy was a dynamic group of expert practitioners in sector work and several others who are leaders in their organizations, some with limited exposure to sector work. And, through the GMWC, there was already significant movement in several sectors prior to the start of the Academy (like the government sector, healthcare, and IT). This led us to shift more Academy time toward helping sector teams do their work together (rather than individual learning about regional and national promising practice). The schedule through the end of June shifted to accommodate more time for working with each team individually and to support more targeted learning from others nationally who are working within a specific sector. **A curriculum recap and links to the materials can be found [here](#).**
- **Relationship building** – With the mix of practitioners we were able to bring together, based on the mid-point and closing feedback we received the Academy was successful in connecting individuals to each other who otherwise might not have been connected, to raise awareness about the good work already underway in the region, and to lay the foundation for trust that's critical for regional coordination and collaboration.
- **Racial equity** – Throughout the academy we emphasized the importance of regional sector strategy and partnership building work to address two primary goals: 1) Close labor shortages and skill gaps within specific sectors and occupations regionally AND 2) Increase racial equity in education and training program outcomes, employment, and advancement. While a few teams had been looking closely at data related to disparities, racial equity had not been a direct focus in much of the sector strategy development to date. We tried to weave this commitment and focus into every session and organized a couple of sessions to do a deeper dive around these topics:
  - Sector Strategies as a Driver Toward Greater Racial Equity in Employment;
  - Putting Race First and Identifying and Addressing Race Bias in our Work; and
  - Cultural Competency, Coordination, and Collaboration: Shaping a racially equitable approach to the "supply side" of our work.

Consistently, we saw that maintaining a focus on racial equity is a challenge. More training/awareness-building, and new tools are needed to both help individual leaders be strong advocates for racial equity and keep the sector strategy work focused on producing outcomes for people and communities of color (pursuing training, placement, and advancement in the sector). Our experience did, however, help us see the value of training/supporting individual leaders who will bring a sustained focus on racial awareness to the work going forward.

- **Public policy and systems change** – We tried to touch on policy improvements throughout the academy to help advance and support sector work in the region. Many individuals had a view of how changes in policy and funding could support their work but there was little organized or coordinated voice *on behalf of several sector partners* that would yield a strong set of policy changes. We took a deeper dive into the following topics during the final session:
  - Potential policy change and advocacy opportunities
  - MN State explorations related to assessments and accelerated pathways
  - State and federal aid (e.g., Pell Grant) opportunities
  - Consideration of sector-focused loan pooling to finance training

And, we also provided support to GMWC when they launched their policy committee of state and local leaders, in organizing a discussion with staff from the National Skills Coalition and Washington State to learn more about federal and state policies tied to Pell grant funding. This is an area that still seems ripe for creating more shared understanding of the issues and opportunities for action at a regional and state level in Minnesota.

- **Regional infrastructure for sustaining the work** – An overarching assumption for successful regional sector strategy work is to build upon and scale up existing employer partnerships, career pathway programs, and promising practices for engaging economically disadvantaged communities and people. As noted previously, there is plenty of knowledge and practitioner experience in the development of sector-focused career pathway programs. Among Academy participants, there was an abundance of “program planning and implementation” expertise. However, we continued to see gaps in communication and understanding between community-based providers, public sector leaders (workforce boards and state partners), and employers. At the time we completed the SSA, there were strong relationships, but little organized (or financially-supported) infrastructure to ensure that partners could work cooperatively on an ongoing basis.

Since that time, the Greater Metropolitan Workforce and RealTime Talent have dedicated resources to facilitating the expansion of the Public-Sector Partnership with eight government entities, launched an Older Adult Services Sector Effort with nine employers, and are readying for a launch of a West Hennepin Anchor Partnership (healthcare). In addition, the Greater Metropolitan Workforce Council in partnership with the Center for Economic Inclusion has been convening city and county leaders in Minneapolis, St. Paul, Hennepin and Ramsey, along with Greater MSP and Minnesota High Tech Association, to facilitate the design and submission of a \$5M JP Morgan Chase proposal focused on addressing talent shortages in the tech sector by increasing the number of indigenous people and people of color in high demand, high-wage tech careers, and equipping them with the financial tools and skills to effectively build lasting family wealth assets. The Center for Economic Inclusion is also launching work with employers on racial inclusivity in 2020 that will be a key asset in the region.



There are other regions facing some of the same challenges as MSP and we recently learned of some work happening in Atlanta through the regional funders collaborative and the workforce boards that might be of interest to regional partners in MSP,

[http://www.atlantacareerrise.org/documents/2019\\_apm\\_maip\\_executive\\_summary.pdf](http://www.atlantacareerrise.org/documents/2019_apm_maip_executive_summary.pdf) and

[http://www.atlantacareerrise.org/documents/2019\\_apm\\_maip\\_roadmap.pdf](http://www.atlantacareerrise.org/documents/2019_apm_maip_roadmap.pdf).

We have been very pleased to have the opportunity to work on this effort; and, are confident that this initiative helped move the sector strategy work forward for the region.

The [“looking forward” feedback](#) we received from several participants provides some great examples of what people learned and gained through this experience and how they plan to continue to grow and contribute to this work regionally.

Finally, we have developed this [participant resource guide](#) which outlines some of the key resources that were shared during the eight sessions.

This report and other materials shared within it can also be found in the [final report and resources folder](#) in the shared [Academy Dropbox](#).

Key Outcomes	Measures of Success	Progress to Date (as of June 2019)	Further Work to Do
<b>Build the capacity of new or existing local sector efforts to become high-performing regional sector partnership teams</b>	<p>A team of skilled experts for each sector.</p> <p>Designated staff for each sector has the skills and resources necessary to operate and sustain region-wide sector partnerships.</p> <p>(See Operational Characteristics from <i>Successful Partnerships Framework</i>)</p>	<p>We had 4-6 people from each sector team consistently engaging in the academy sessions.</p> <p>We also had a person who was designated as the sector lead ambassador who has been helping each team form and develop its strategy.</p>	<p>Additional resources were provided to 3 of the sector partnerships: government, healthcare, and business and finance. Each of those teams has a plan to continue meeting and deepening and/or expanding their work in different ways.</p>
<b>Develop region-wide sector plans with specific goals, activities and resources available</b>	<p>At least one region-wide sector plan that outlines the work to be done and resources available over the next 24 months.</p> <p>Each plan has a clear strategy and work plan for meeting this primary objective:</p> <p><i>Employers have the skilled workers they need, and workers have the necessary training to secure jobs in demand sectors.</i></p> <p>(See <a href="#">Successful Partnerships Framework</a>)</p>	<p>Academy sessions have been focused on helping each team begin to develop a more concrete and specific set of goals and activities.</p> <p>Six sector decks have been developed that include elements of a regional strategy.</p>	<p>The sector decks were reviewed against the <a href="#">Successful Partnerships Framework</a> and more specific goals, activities, and resources needed were developed.</p> <p>The final presentations from these teams are <a href="#">here</a>.</p>
<b>Increase understanding of existing sector workforce initiatives and how they align toward shared outcomes</b>	<p>Each region has at least one actively engaged collaboration of a regional group of employers who convene regularly with the assistance of a workforce intermediary.</p> <p>Sector partnerships coordinate with economic development professionals. Each sector partnership delineates its connection to economic development efforts in their sector in the region.</p>	<p>We organized each academy session to do a “deep dive” into the employer engagement work currently underway in each sector. We also identified ways in which there might be better communication, coordination, and collaboration amongst the organizations that work directly with employers.</p>	<p>Each sector team had developed a plan for increasing the number of employers involved regionally and knows how to support them in taking the lead on different aspects of the work.</p> <p>GMWC, RealTime Talent, and CEI have plans to continue to develop the regional infrastructure needed to coordinate and sustain the employer engagement work across the sectors.</p>

Key Outcomes	Measures of Success	Progress to Date (as of June 2019)	Further Work to Do
<p><b>Formalize agreements among stakeholder organizations to support the sector partnerships</b></p>	<p>A formal partnership between stakeholder organizations to support the sector partnership.</p> <p>Sector partnerships have commitment and participation from a range of stakeholder organizations, including workforce boards, industry, chambers of commerce, and training providers.</p> <p>Adoption of each strategic plan by employers and training providers in the respective sector.</p> <p>Adoption/implementation by the local and regional workforce development boards.</p>	<p>We spent time during the academy focusing on employer engagement, and to a lesser extent on the engagement of other stakeholders.</p> <p>The local workforce development boards were included in communication related to the academy and we had staff associated with a few different boards participating.</p> <p>The sector teams identified what they needed from different stakeholder groups as part of implementing their regional sector strategy. In a few cases there were plans to continue to coordinate and communicate with these groups across the region.</p>	<p>GMWC is in a good place to continue to work with the workforce boards and other stakeholders regionally to help develop and advance these sector efforts.</p> <p>This <a href="#">review of the regional workforce plan</a> includes a few suggestions for areas where there might be greater alignment, coordination, and collaboration.</p> <p>There have been a few attempts to build broader regional stakeholder infrastructure that are largely driven by philanthropic funding opportunities. A steady source of financial support that is shared among stakeholders would promote consistent communication and stronger functional partnerships.</p>