

Workforce

DEVELOPMENT, INC.

The Workforce Development Board
of Southeast Minnesota

STEELE COUNTY



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www.workforcedevelopmentinc.org

160+

Universal adult customers
served in Steele county.

200+

Employer outreach contacts in
Steele county.

90+

Universal youth customers
served in Steele county.

40+

Adults enrolled in WDI
programming.

SERVICES AVAILABLE TO JOB SEEKERS

Dislocated Worker

Losing a job, especially through no fault of one's own, is one of the most frustrating and stressful events someone can live through. WDI is here to help anyone across Southeast Minnesota who wants assistance. Job seekers can take advantage of our completely free, individualized services and resources so that they can get back to meaningful, living-wage employment.

General Adult

Many of our job seekers would like to explore the possibility of new, more satisfying work. Landing their dream job may take some specialized training, job search assistance, interview practice, or career preparation. WDI can help job seekers with any of these services and so much more. Job seekers are able to set up a totally free, one-on-one meeting with a Career Planner to figure out their goals and the steps they need to take to reach them. Our offices all across Southeast Minnesota make it easy to find help nearby.

Career Pathways

Career Pathways are WDI programs geared to help job seekers launch a new career in one of many industries in Southeast Minnesota. Different Career Pathway programming is available within industries like healthcare, manufacturing, customer service, business services, and services and trades. Job seekers can begin a Career Pathway conversation with one of our Career Navigators to receive individualized support along the way to sustainable, living-wage work.

Youth & Young Adult (ages 14-24)

Making it through school, building a work history, and moving towards a career is stressful for anyone. However, job seekers can count on WDI for reliable support and guidance through all these stages. They can chat one-on-one with a Career Planner to help figure out their goals, and take advantage of our many individualized and completely free services to help them get to where they want to go.

Meet Your Personal Career Planner Today!

Our professional Career Planners are ready to help job seekers on their employment path with support, training, and special programs that are all designed to ensure success. Every WDI location is staffed by experienced professionals who care deeply about the people and communities in which they live and serve.

Success Story

Tracy Bjerke of Owatonna had been working as a registered dietician at Hy-Vee when she was laid off in early 2020 at the beginning of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Tracy decided that she would dive head-first into starting her own intuitive eating and nutrition counseling business. Her goal would be to help individuals cultivate a healthy relationship with food, mind, and body and help clients heal their relationships with food. Tracy learned about Workforce Development and how they could help individuals who had recently been laid off from their job. Tracy was connected with a Career Planner who introduced her to the Converting Layoffs Into Minnesota Businesses (CLIMB) program designed to help entrepreneurs in Minnesota start their own business.

Now, almost one year after enrolling in the CLIMB program through Workforce Development, Tracy has launched her own private practice, Bjerke Nutrition and Wellness, LLC. Tracy hit the ground running – networking in her local community, presenting to local Rotary chapters, attending Owatonna Business Women's presentations, and even starting a monthly segment on KOWZ radio to spread the word about her services. Her success quickly became recognized in the community and Tracy's story was featured on an ABC 6 News story about finding career success amid the pandemic.

"Workforce Development has been a valuable resource for me as I have navigated starting my private practice," Bjerke told her Career Planner at Workforce Development. While starting a business in the middle of a pandemic is no easy feat, Tracy is optimistic about the opportunities coming her way: "I am really hopeful about the future of my business but know it will take time. I am saying yes to every opportunity I can afford!"

STEELECOWORKS

Workforce Development, Inc. partners with United Way of Steele County and Owatonna Area Chamber of Commerce and Tourism to fund a youth career planner located inside the Owatonna High School and serving all Steele County high schools. This position meets with students and provides career, training and educational guidance to students. The students also have the opportunity to enroll in WDI programs that provide support and training to students and eliminate barriers to a career path. SteeleCoWorks organizes Made in Owatonna Days, providing a unique opportunity for students to explore careers in manufacturing, human services and business by touring various businesses and organizations and getting a chance to engage with professionals in the industry. Over 200 students from four different high schools have attended the event.

ON-RAMP P2P GRANT

This program provides participants with the skills, knowledge and resources to attend college or enter the workforce. Participants have the opportunity to explore careers in healthcare, manufacturing and technology to decide which path is best for them.

Success Story:

Our first cohort made a big impact on a young mom working as a home health aide and wanting to pursue a career as a nurse. She attended the P2P on-ramp class and received excellent marks. Upon completion, she entered WDI's Bridges to Healthcare program where she received her CNA certificate from Riverland with outstanding grades. She is planning on continuing her degree in nursing.

DISLOCATED WORKER

The dislocated worker program provides support and resources to individuals who have lost their job at no fault of their own.

Success Story:

An individual who lost her job by no fault of her own was looking for assistance with her employment transition and job search. The planner worked with her to make sure her resume was relevant to the positions she would be applying for. They also discussed the possibility of training and other resources, but she decided not to pursue. The planner focused on assisting with the job search by sending weekly job referrals. Less than six months after being dislocated, the individual accepted a hybrid position as a general accountant.

ADVANCED MANUFACTURING TRAINING PROGRAM

This program allows residents of Steele County to attend school or training programs in the manufacturing field at little to no cost to the participant. The goal is for these individuals to begin a career in advanced manufacturing in Steele County. Fourteen participants have been enrolled in our advanced manufacturing training program in the last nine months. The participants are/were enrolled in welding, mechatronics, industrial maintenance, CDL, and mechanics.

BRIDGES TO HEALTHCARE PROGRAM EXPANSION

This program is a collaborative effort between Adult Basic Education, Riverland Community College and area employers. The B2HC Expansion project supports individuals with limited educational and English language backgrounds in gaining healthcare skills that provide them with successful foundations to enter into CNA, Advanced CNA, LPN and RN training and employment.

EMPLOYER OUTREACH

We are continuing to make connections with various employers in the community by partnering on initiatives such as Made in Owatonna Day and being active Chamber members. Through our community outreach we have made over 200 connections in Steele County and this number continues to grow. We utilize our partners to help us identify their employees' needs so we can provide the most relevant training and educational opportunities to our participants.