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Fact Sheet: Displaced Workers Minnesota State Colleges and Universities

Overview

Responding to the changing economic landscape is an important part of the mission of Minnesota State Colleges and Universities system. One of the most pressing needs around the state has been helping large numbers of dislocated workers shift to new careers in promising industries. The system, an important part of the safety net, provides about 95 percent of all dislocated worker training in Minnesota.

By analyzing market trends and tapping industry connections, the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities design special programs that help individuals quickly translate their current skills into new careers in emerging or growing industries. Training is primarily delivered by the system's two-year colleges, which have close ties to state workforce centers. Typically, training and education for dislocated workers takes less than one year.

Through this flexible, specialized training, thousands of workers get their lives and their careers back on track.

System establishes Fulfillment Center

Since 2001, about 4,500 airline workers have been laid off in Minnesota. In 2002, about 2,670 employees were laid off from Fingerhut. Most are looking for new careers or jobs that capitalize on their current skills. By December, 2001, the State of Minnesota secured the first of three National Emergency Grants. Eventually, the three grants from the U.S. Department of Labor totaled \$17 million and funded a project called the Airline Industry Dislocation Program of Minnesota or AID MINN. The grant led the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development and Hennepin County (the grant administrator) to contract with the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities to form the Training Fulfillment Center.

The Training Fulfillment Center matched dislocated workers with training programs. In some cases, the center helped design new programs to meet the specific needs of employers and groups of dislocated workers. This innovative clearinghouse communicated with more than 500 providers of dislocated worker services. Previously, counselors and workers had to navigate educational institutions by themselves.

Helping Translate Skills

In 2001, various colleges within the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities system responded quickly with very appealing programs to the displaced workers. As a result, most of the 24 customized training programs developed with education, industry, social services agencies, workforce centers and labor groups were offered at one of the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities. One particular focus was providing training for careers in such high-growth industries as health care and transportation. These training programs built on the laid-off workers' skills and knowledge. Special training was designed for aviation mechanics, customer service workers, aircraft cleaners, flight attendants and pilots.

Results

The State of Minnesota has the complete outcome information for wage replacement. For the first grant, enrollment exceeded expectations with 3,189 individuals in 2,869 slots. The average placement wage for 1,318 workers was \$20.72. That represents 75.2 percent of the previous average wage of \$26.42. Wages for one group of 293 former Fingerhut employees averaged \$19.96, or 92



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percent of the previous wage of \$21.75. In addition, participants re-trained in fields that offer more employment stability.

Minnesota State Colleges and Universities system training programs for dislocated workers

- Biomedical Device Technician Certification at Anoka Ramsey Community College
- Driveability Technician, a special diagnostics program for auto repair) at Anoka Technical College
- Orthotics and Prosthetics at Century College
- Programmable Logic Controller at Dakota County Technical College.
- Biomedical Equipment Repair Technology at Dakota County Technical College. One class was set up for technicians who had avionics (electronics) certification; a second class was set up for the other aircraft mechanic technicians.
- Maintenance Technology at Dakota County Technical College.
- Boiler's License at Dakota County Technical College.
- Gas Utility Technician at Inver Hills Community College.
- Refinery Technician at Inver Hills Community College.
- Heating, Ventilating and Air Conditioning at Minneapolis Community and Technical College.
- Non-destructive Testing Program at Ridgewater College.
- Diesel Truck and Bus Mechanic Program at South Central Technical College/Faribault Campus.
- Watch, Clock and Jewelry Repair Program at St. Paul College.
- Medical Coding at Anoka Technical College
- Licensed Practical Nurse (a separate class was added to the program)
- Sterile Instrument Processing
- Phlebotomy Technician at Century College
- Health Unit Coordinator at Century College and St. Paul College
- Small Business Development at Inver Hills College
- Medical Billing Program at Inver Hills Community College
- Computer Training Program at Minneapolis Community and Technical College

Resources

- Sharon Slettehaugh, executive director of the Metro Consortium for Customized Training, Minnesota State Colleges and Universities, (651) 297-3361
- Richard Tvedten, system director for Continuing Education and Customized Training, Minnesota State Colleges and Universities, (contact Melinda Voss, (651) 296-9443)
- Kay Franey, Hennepin County Department of Training and Employee Assistance, (612) 348-5085
- Jo Peterson, dean, Continuing Education & Training, Minneapolis Community and Technical College (612) 659-6501
- Jamie Fitzpatrick, Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development, (651) 297-4573



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About Minnesota State Colleges and Universities

The Minnesota State Colleges and Universities system comprises 32 state universities and community and technical colleges serving the higher education needs of Minnesota. The system serves about 240,000 students per year in credit-based courses and an additional 130,000 students in non-credit courses.

For more information or to arrange media interviews, please contact Melinda Voss, public relations director, Minnesota State Colleges and Universities, at 651.296.9443 or at melinda.voss@so.mnscu.edu.