



Highlights of *The Final Report on the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development's Workforce Innovation Fund Project*

Project Overview

- **Grantee:** Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development
- **Intervention Focus Area:** MIS Systems Changes and Technological Innovation
- **Target Population:** Career Seekers; Employers; Workforce System Staff and Partners
- **Area Served:** Minnesota
- **Congressional District:** MN 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 5th, 6th, & 7th
- **Grant Round:** Round 3

Evaluation Overview

- **Evaluation Types:** Outcomes Study – Type A
- **Evaluator Organization:** IMPAQ International, LLC
- **Date of Final Report:** September 2019
- **Title:** *Evaluation of the Minnesota DEED Workforce Innovation Grant: Final Report*

Evaluation Period

- May 2017 – April 2019

This brief, one of a series highlighting findings from final Workforce Innovation Fund (WIF) evaluation reports, ¹ summarizes information from the study conducted by the IMPAQ International, LLC on the Minnesota DEED WIF project.

The Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED) used its WIF grant (a Type A project for new and untested ideas) to design, implement, and evaluate an online platform. The new platform was designed to be a one-stop-shop for labor market tools and information for both career seekers and employers in Minnesota. Three main design components of the new platform were: integration of workforce system tools and resources (e.g., job postings, workshop listings, and career planning resources); use of a modern interface with customized content; and support for collaboration and communication among workforce system staff, partner organizations, career seeker, and employers. In 2017, the new platform was integrated into the CareerForce branding initiative; thus, adopting the name CareerForceMN.com. The evaluation consisted of an implementation study, outcomes study, and cost study. Data sources included program documents, interviews with project stakeholders, administrative data, and surveys of career seekers, employers, and workforce system staff. Findings included the following:

- Engagement of and support from key stakeholders throughout all phases of the project was a critical part of the WIF project's success. Early advocates for the WIF project included staff from partners and DEED Divisional Leadership. During the build phase, the WIF project team engaged 130 DEED staff and other stakeholders through discovery sessions and workgroups.
- Using an agile design approach, the platform vendor completed a series of two-week sprints to develop and deploy CareerForceMN.com functionality.
- A higher percentage of employers reported "some interaction" with the workforce system after the platform launch. However, the portion of employers who reported being "not at all satisfied" also increased.
- A total of 101,674 visitors accessed the platform between November 2018 and May 2019. On average, visitors accessed 4.62 pages per session.
- A total of 6,362 users created an account on CareerForceMN.com between November 2018 and April 2019. On average, approximately 1,000 new accounts were created each month.

The evaluator offered several recommendations for implementing similar projects in the future. These included: 1) develop a system for continuous feedback to gather input from diverse user groups; 2) prioritize the development of a single-on system to facilitate integration of the platform with related workforce portals and partner websites; and 3) maintain robust training and outreach to workforce staff and partners.

¹ Under the Workforce Innovation Fund (WIF), the Employment and Training Administration (ETA) provided 43 competitive grants to States, regions, Tribal entities and localities to design and evaluate new approaches in the public workforce system. Using a "tiered evidence" model (which builds on past research), WIF projects tested a variety of new service combinations, technological innovations, and systems changes (with a focus on program coordination and integration). ETA required grantees to procure independent third-party evaluations to document project implementation, costs, and results, all in order to inform future experimentation and to promote continuous improvement in operations and performance in the public workforce system.