



# Dept. of Employment and Economic Development

Programs Serving Immigrants and Refugees

9/28/2010

# DEED Mission

- The Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED) is the state's principal economic development agency, with programs promoting business recruitment, expansion and retention; workforce development; international trade; and community development.
- The agency's mission is to support the economic success of individuals, businesses, and communities by improving opportunities for growth.
- While DEED's workforce development and economic development programs do serve immigrants and refugees who are eligible to work in the U.S. along with all other populations, only a few of our programs specifically target these populations.

# Programs Serving Immigrants

- Migrant and Seasonal Farmworker Program
  - Provides bilingual-staff outreach services to farm workers, including disseminating information on WFC services, jobs and local community resources.
  - There has been a recent decrease in farm worker activity in the state due to mechanical technology, the economy the cost of travel and affordable housing.
  - A recent estimate, during peak of season in MN, is between 5,000 to 10,000 farm workers.

# Programs Serving Immigrants

- Vocational Rehabilitation New Americans Project
  - Designed to meet the cultural needs of new Americans with disabilities in Metro area.
  - 3 staff housed at the St. Paul Fairview WorkForce Center.
  - Assist eligible clients with referrals to educational, immigrant and entrepreneurial programs; creative job search and workplace skills.
  - Outreach to local communities to educate on available services.
  - Majority of enrolled clients from East Africa. There are also clients from Asia and very small number of clients from Pakistan, Trinidad, Jamaica, Iraq, and other African countries such as Congo and Cameroon.

# Partnerships Serving Immigrants

- At-Risk Youth Programs
  - DEED partners with several programs in Minneapolis that develop work readiness in youth through a combination of work placements and training in life skills such as behavior management, teamwork, and communication. They also provide mentoring opportunities.
    - Confederation of Somali Community in Minnesota (CSCM)- 10 youth
    - African Community Services- 80 youth
    - Hmong American Mutual Assistance Association (HAMAA)- 20 youth
  - Summer Readers Program: 5-6 youth in Southeast Minnesota, working as summer school teachers.
  - Math Camp: 40 youth in Southeast Minnesota. Improves math skills and enhances work readiness skills for ESL learners.

# Partnerships Serving Immigrants

- Adult Basic Education (ABE)
  - Provides adults with educational opportunities to acquire and improve their literacy skills necessary to become self-sufficient and to participate effectively as productive workers, family members, and citizens.
  - Programs in collaboration with DEED include:
    - Transition to Employment and Workforce Education: provides basic skills necessary for work. Located at ABE sites, some MN WorkForce Centers, and local employer sites. (Partnership with DEED.)
    - Transition to Post-Secondary Education and Training: provides career pathway programming, basic skills instruction and other services to prepare students for post-secondary success. (Collaboration with MnSCU, DEED, and nonprofit partners.)

# Partnerships Serving Immigrants

- FastTRAC
  - Partners with the state and local systems of ABE, workforce development, human services and higher education.
  - Focuses on moving Minnesota's population of ABE and English Language Learners (ELL) learners along the skills training continuum, integrating ABE and ELL education with postsecondary occupational training leading to the attainment of an industry-recognized credential.

# How DEED Helps Non-English Speakers

- Urban Initiative Program
  - Primarily assists minority-owned and -operated businesses and others that will create jobs in low-income areas of the Twin Cities.
  - About 85% of the businesses receiving loans are owned by racial and/or ethnic minorities.
  - Partners provide substantial technical assistance to new business owners to help them overcome barriers, including language issues and differing cultural business practices.
  - Urban Initiative Partners include:
    - African Development Center
    - Central Minnesota Development Company
    - Metropolitan Economic Development Association
    - Milestone Growth Fund
    - Metropolitan Consortium of Community Developers
    - Neighborhood Development Center
    - Riverview Economic Development Association
    - Saint Paul Area Resource Council
    - WomenVenture



# How DEED Helps Non-English Speakers

- Programs providing publications and resources in multiple languages
  - Dislocated Worker Program
  - Unemployment Insurance
  - WorkForce Centers
  - Up to 17 languages are used
- Many other programs provide translation services upon request

# Pass-Throughs Serving Immigrants

- Lifetrack Resources
  - Immigrant and refugee collaborative program including job-seeking skills and workplace orientation, intensive job development, functional work English, and on-site coaching.
- Metropolitan Economic Development Association (MEDA)
  - Provides assistance to businesses owned and managed by entrepreneurs of color, including immigrants. Services are directed toward new and existing businesses whose owners are committed to making an impact through job creation, their firms' growth and profitability, and community involvement.

# Improvements and Initiatives

- DEED consistently works to improve its outreach to immigrant groups.
- DEED and Higher Education Listening Group
  - Recent Listening Session with some refugee and immigrant stakeholders.
  - The theme was Policy, Program and Practice, with a challenge to identify barriers to state departments serving immigrants.
  - The group expressed a need for access, awareness and mentoring.
  - The state has a keen interest in embracing the skill, talents and knowledge of refugees and immigrants.
  - The group plans on meeting again in a month.
- Small Business Development Centers (SBDC) and Chicano/ Latino Affairs Council
  - The SBDC recently assigned the Chicano/ Latino Affairs council the publication rights to a Spanish-language publication for those looking to start new businesses. The intent is for the Chicano/Latino Affairs council to expand the publication.

