Workforce Innovation Board of Ramsey County
Technology Committee Meeting Minutes
Thursday, March 13, 2025, 1:00pm–2:00pm
Via Zoom Video Conference

Present:	**Absent**:	**Staff/Guests**:
Ismail Ali	Len Cacioppo-EA	Mariann Macalus, Workforce Solutions
Ama Asantewaa		Rebecca Milbrandt, Workforce Solutions
Annie Byrne		Catrice O'Neal, Workforce Solutions
Sam Drong		Greg Weaver, IT CareerLab
Caroline Karanja		
Tony Lusiba		
Abdi Mohamed		
Koami Pedado		
Sabina Saksena		
Jenni Severson		
Jaime Wascalus		

Call to Order & Land Acknowledgement
Lusiba called the meeting to order at 1:02pm. Byrne read the Land Acknowledgement aloud.

Approve January Minutes
Motion (Lusiba/Drong) to approve the January 9, 2025, Tech Committee meeting minutes as presented. Motion carried unanimously by voice/chat vote.

Committee Work Plan/Project Updates
Full Stack Saint Paul: Wascalus provided an update reiterating that Full Stack's Vision Traction Organizer goals for 2025 are focused on tech training and placement, employer relationships and ecosystem alignment. Times are challenging with Prime Digital Academy leaving the industry and some employers have indicated they are focusing more on internal employee development. Research is being done with the University of Minnesota to local employers about their desire to hire people who come from boot camps and other short term trainings with no four-year degree. This data will help add to the ongoing conversation in drafting up what a good employer relationship looks like.

Tech Month 2025: Milbrandt shared a draft plan of some events for this year's Tech Month based on some of last year's events. There was discussion on what this committee wants to consider leading that would make the most impact in the tech industry during this time of change. Wascalus is interested in volunteering to promote the talent here in Ramsey County, showcasing some of the technologists who have gone through boot camps and/or an event that will attract the small, medium and large businesses. Further discussion to be had on how the WIB could support such an event. Saksena suggested a Tech Crawl around the county at libraries, community centers, etc. This would be a good partnership with the library but would need coordination and some funding. Byrne and Saksena will develop a plan. Location for events could be the mall as that gives folks something else to do. Milbrandt suggested exploring an additive to the May 3 Job & Resource Fair for youth. A suggestion as for people in bootcamps is a tech experience tours at an employer site. Karanja, Ali and Mohamed will organize this. Another suggestion would be to have an event that would cater to the intermediate audience. Committee members should highlight tech month in their newsletters. A lot of events are being sponsored by other organizations happening throughout the month of May which will be included on the landing page on the county's website. Anyone is interested in being part of small event planning team, put your name in the chat and Milbrandt will set up a meeting to get planning underway.

Tech Trainer Project: Byrne provided an update on the progress of the workgroup. The first couple meetings resulted in redefining goals for doing a scan of the environment during these changing times. Employers are looking at hiring differently, especially for entry-level talent. There is a need for greater employer engagement to better understand these changing needs. RealTime Talent has access to job posting data and

will provide a summary for the group. The work group is collecting tech trainer feedback by conducting interviews, possible focus groups and surveys. The topics include the intake process, supports provided, employer engagement, practical experience offered to students, outcomes and program cost and funding. The upcoming meetings of the groups will help develop questions, determine methods and how information will drive future action. A suggestion was to include a section on referrals.

MSP Tech Hire 2025

Byrne provided an update confirming Tech Hire's partnership and the ongoing partnership with Workforce Solutions. Rather than have training providers submit an application, this year an RFP will be done which will be open to all IT training programs with internship or another on-the-job component, with the budget for two cohorts.

Staff Updates

Legislative Ask – Tech Squads: O'Neal provided an update on the county and Workforce Solutions' legislative priorities. There are significant state budget cuts anticipated for the upcoming biennium. Workforce Solutions' priority is for an extension of the direct appropriation received for the delivery of Tech Squad through June 2028. Representative Jay Xiong and Ramsey County Commissioner Xiong will be visiting with local legislators to give them an opportunity to speak with the Tech Squad participants.

CareerForce Relocation: Milbrandt provided an update on the opening of the new CareerForce location in Metro Square. There was an open house for partners. A grand opening for the WIB, county leaders and the community is being planned for when the new expanded Ramsey County Service Center opens. A suggestion for Tech Month is to offer the opportunity for people to visit the new CareerForce to learn about the tech resources available there.

Upcoming Events: Milbrandt briefly shared information about the following upcoming events. She asked that committee to promote them.

- Green Ramsey Expo & Career Fair: March 19 at Minnehaha Rec Center 10am to 1pm.
- Level Up Young Adult Career Resource Fair: April 24 at YMCA – Saint Paul Eastside, 9am to 1:30pm.
- Youth Job and Resource Fair: May 3 at Maplewood Mall 10am to Noon.
- Tech Month: Planning underway to host 1-2 events and share other local events.

Committee Member Updates and Other

- Registration for the Tech Connect conference is open and expecting 600 people. Ali invited all committee members to attend and offered to provide complimentary tickets.
- Mohamed announced that IT MetroHub has opened their second center in Osborn370. He invited the group to stop when in the building.

Adjourn

Upon completion of the agenda, meeting was adjourned at 2pm.

Next Meeting: Thursday, May 8, 2025, 1-2pm