

**Minnesota FastTRAC Incubator**  
**Interim Report – Supplemental Questions**  
Due March 16, 2009; email to [mary.schmidt@state.mn.us](mailto:mary.schmidt@state.mn.us)  
Questions? Call Mary at 651 259-7571

1. **Workplan.** Explain your progress toward fulfilling your workplan through end of February 2009. Explain any discrepancies between your workplan and activities/progress. Whenever possible, include qualitative information, e.g. number of courses delivered, number of enrollees in a program.

We are on track for meeting all the proposed strategies and activities in our workplan.

**Strategy 1:** During this time period we conducted 16 information sessions with intake appointments scheduled with a career specialist to administer the “Employability Measure” assessment. We conducted thorough intake assessments with 94 individuals using the “Employability Measure” to identify employment and training barriers. 10 individuals who scored below a 3 in one or more of five domains (dependent care, health, housing, safe living environment and transportation) were enrolled in case management to overcome identified barriers.

**Strategy 2:** We have enrolled 39 students in a cognitive change workshop and 38 in a career development workshop prior to enrollment in job skills training. Clients complete a career path to identify that the identified training will assist them in reaching their goal.

**Strategy 3:** We have enrolled 34 new students in training at Lake Superior College. 23 have graduated from their training, 9 are still actively enrolled, and 2 dropped out. We provide students with supportive services to adequately address barriers to completing training. We have provided the first two days of each industry focused course at Lake Superior College; meet with students weekly during training; provide study sessions and provide participant support dollars as needed.

**Strategy 4:** We have assisted 15 graduates to obtain and retain employment. Four graduates have enrolled in additional training. We provided career development and individual job seeking services at SOAR Career Solutions; job placement services including outreach and development with employers about incentives, opportunities, support, and retention; and meetings at SOAR for networking, support and job leads.

**2. Partnership.**

a. Explain any developments in your partnership roles since the start of your grant, e.g. new partners, expanded roles.

We have worked more closely than ever with the Workforce Center, and the Adult WIA staff in particular, to secure on the job training and work experience opportunities for our participants, as well as training resources to allow them to enroll in degree programs to continue their training.

b. Explain how the MN FastTRAC initiative has strengthened your partnership and the capacity/commitment of various partners to your stackable credential model.

We have been approached by NTAR and the Pathways to Employment Leadership Committee to enhance our project to better serve participants with disabilities. We are creating a plan to do so now.

c. Which partner(s), if any, are not at the table that you want to engage (or engage more) to strengthen or expand your stackable credential model?

We are working on building a stronger partnership with the Adult Learning Center and their Adult Basic Education programming.

3. Please share one important lesson you and your partners have learned around each of the following topics that are critical for a **stackable credential model** to work in Minnesota.

a. Availability of student support services so that adults persist and complete training/education endeavors:

Adequate screening and readiness assessment is key to the success of the model. Since implementing initial case management to overcome immediate employment barriers our workshop completion rate has improved.

b. Attracting and keeping employers engaged in your stackable credential model:

This has been particularly difficult in this economy. Northstar Aerospace is one employer who was an identified partner for job placement plans. Since the beginning of this grant they have laid off 75% of their workforce, with a few call-backs, and are therefore not hiring our clients either. On-the-job-training funds and work-experience funds were instrumental in placing the two graduates who did secure employment in their field of training.

c. Integrating basic skills, soft skills and occupation skills into training/education content:

Our STEPS and Career Development workshops are resulting in a higher graduation rate than in previous MJSP Low Income Worker grant funded projects. We have less than a 10% dropout rate in this project compared with nearly 50% in a previous MSJP Low Income Worker Grant that did not include the pre-requisite screening and readiness training.

4. Describe one key **policy change** that you consider most critical at the state system level (e.g. agency practice or regulatory change at ABE, MnSCU, Workforce Center/WIA, MFIP, etc) for your model to expand or replicate.

Add supportive services as an eligible expense to the Low Income Worker grants so that we don't need to go after foundation support or cobble together the resources to help clients succeed. Allow WIA training funds to be spent on a broader spectrum of topics, e.g. tuition or certification in non-identified industries on an as needed basis if the client has a workable plan for a job in that field.

5. Attach a **financial report** that indicates budgeted and actual expenses through Feb. 28, 2009, of MN FastTRAC grant resources. Explain any discrepancies, modifications below.

See attached financial report.

**Budget Narrative:**

We are right on target to fully spend this grant by 5/31/09, with the possible exception of travel allowance.

Travel: A couple of our trips to the Cities occurred before this contract went into effect on 11/18/09, therefore were not paid from our original travel budget. However, we may have extra trips to Cities before this grant ends, so we'll be close.

Purchased Services: We have expended money for database updates needed to track program participants and their outcomes. We will not hire the outside consultant to evaluate the project until the end of the project.

Administrative and overhead: Costs are strictly limited to 5% of Associate Director's time for financial management and 10% for other indirect costs such as Executive Director's time, rent, telephone, utilities, postage, etc.

Other: We spent the small amount budgeted for Program Materials needed for participants in our STEPS and Career Development workshops.