



# Ramsey County Workforce Investment Board

## Ramsey County Workforce Investment Board Issues Brief 2011 Key Industry Sectors: Healthcare and Manufacturing February 2011

*The mission of the Ramsey County Workforce Investment Board is to be the catalyst for comprehensive workforce development strategies that address both the employers and jobseeker needs.*

### KEY WORKFORCE ISSUE

The healthcare and manufacturing industries are shown to be significant to current and long-term job stability and growth in Ramsey County.

### BACKGROUND ON ISSUE

The Ramsey County Workforce Investment Board (RCWIB) regularly reviews and considers labor, industry and economic data to select

industry sectors that effectively focus resources within Ramsey County's diverse and complex business and workforce development efforts. To determine key industry sectors for 2011-2013, the Market Trends and Oversight Committee (MTOC) of the RCWIB reviewed labor market projections from the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development. To gain a better understanding of the current landscape, the MTOC also invited representatives from healthcare, manufacturing and financial services to discuss key workforce issues and challenges in their industry.

Following is a review of economic data and industry specific trends in the healthcare and manufacturing industry sectors. The RCWIB will focus on these two industries which represent significant opportunities for jobseekers and employers in the Twin Cities metro region – now and into the future.

### KEY STATISTICS & OBSERVATIONS ON ISSUE

#### Healthcare industry:

- Healthcare and social assistance represents 14.2% of total jobs or 216,000 jobs in the Twin Cities with high employment growth during the recession.
- Healthcare jobs will grow by 25% between 2009 and 2019, with half of the 50 fastest growing occupations in Minnesota being healthcare related.
- Job openings are expected to increase or continue for nurses, therapists, technicians, housekeepers and nutritionists.
- It is difficult to locate clinical sites and instructors for nursing programs.
- Higher qualified nurses are taking positions that require lower levels of certification.
- As the need for electronic medical records continues to grow, it is critical to train people in the emerging field of healthcare information technology. Currently, Minnesota is participating in several grants exploring how to train people to work in this growing field.
- Various care delivery models and education pathways are being piloted and reviewed.

## **Manufacturing industry:**

- Expansion of jobs in the manufacturing industry is expected in the areas of electronic instrument, medical equipment and supplies, miscellaneous, household and institutional furniture and pharmaceutical and medical manufacturing.
- Manufacturing represents 11.8% of total jobs or 153,600 jobs in the Twin Cities.
- Hiring remains difficult for manufacturers. Employers are looking for jobseekers with specific skills in machining but they have difficulty finding qualified applicants.
- A lack of soft skills among applicants (i.e. good work attitude, punctuality, etc.) is a concern.
- Employers are hiring candidates and training them internally and/or utilizing temporary workers.
- Some manufacturers are addressing production and efficiency issues by purchasing higher quality equipment, which is creating a need for skilled employees and equipment that can run 24/7.
- A negative image of the manufacturing industry encourages parents to guide their children away from the sector as a career option. As a result, some colleges are closing their programs, thus thwarting many employers' channel for workers. Employers are trying to overcome these obstacles and promote that the industry is more high-tech than it was in the past.
- The career path for entering manufacturing includes traditional training in school, on-the-job training, and programs that integrate education with workforce development efforts.
- Efforts are currently underway to develop on-the-job training and apprenticeship programs to expose youth to manufacturing careers.

## **SIGNIFICANCE OF ISSUE TO WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT IN RAMSEY COUNTY**

Ramsey County must continue to invest in value-added industries such as healthcare and manufacturing, which provide opportunities for placement, retention and training for livable wage jobs that build immediate and long-term competitiveness for employers and employees in Ramsey County.

## **STAKEHOLDERS, INFLUENCERS, PARTNERS & DECISIONMAKERS INVOLVED IN ISSUE**

This issue involves a broad spectrum of stakeholders, influencers, partners and decision makers in Ramsey County including, but not limited, to the following:

- Community-based organizations
- Economic development organizations
- Education
- Elected officials
- Employers
- Labor
- Workforce system

## **ACTIONS TO BE TAKEN BY RCWIB**

The RCWIB will work to advance and strengthen these two industries by:

- Supporting efforts by Workforce Solutions to increase awareness of and job training for its participants in the areas of healthcare and manufacturing.
- Supporting efforts to change the perception of the manufacturing industry's current working conditions through effective communications programs.