

News Release – EMARGOED: Until 10 a.m. on July 17, 2017

MDHR increases Workforce Participation Goals to reduce barriers for women, people of color

St. Paul, MN: Today, Minnesota Department of Human Rights Commissioner Kevin Lindsey announced increased Workforce Participation Goals for women and people of color throughout Minnesota for state construction contractors. These increased goals aim to reduce barriers to workforce entry, to respond to demographic changes, and to prepare for Minnesota’s emerging workforce shortage.

The increased goals were adjusted with input from an advisory task force comprised of representatives of construction contractors, unions, trades and the public. The task force was co-chaired by Commissioner Lindsey and Christa Seaberg, Diversity Manager at JE Dunn. The increased workforce participation goals are as follows:

Workforce Participation Goals for Women and People of Color as of July 17, 2017

Regions	2012 Goal People of Color	2012 Goal Women	2017 Goal People of Color	2017 Goal Women
Central: Benton, Chisago, Isanti, Kanabec, Kandiyohi, McLeod, Meeker, Mille Lacs, Pine, Renville, Sherburne, Stearns, Wright	3%	6%	15%	12%
Northeast: Aitkin, Carlton, Cook, Itasca, Koochiching, Lake, St. Louis	5%	6%	12%	9%
Northwest: Becker, Beltrami, Cass, Clay, Clearwater, Crow Wing, Douglas, Grant, Hubbard, Kittson, Lake of the Woods, Mahnomen, Marshall, Morrison, Norman, Otter Tail, Pennington, Polk, Pope, Red Lake, Roseau, Stevens, Todd, Traverse, Wadena, Wilkin	6%	6%	12%	9%
Southeast: Dodge, Fillmore, Freeborn, Goodhue, Houston, Mower, Olmstead, Rice, Steele, Wabasha, Winona	4%	6%	15%	9%
Southwest: Big Stone, Blue Earth, Brown, Chippewa, Cottonwood, Faribault, Jackson, Lac Qui Parle, Le Sueur, Lincoln, Lyon, Martin, Murray, Nicollet, Nobles, Pipestone, Redwood, Rock, Sibley, Swift, Waseca, Watonwan, Yellow Medicine	4%	6%	15%	9%
Five-county Metro: Anoka, Carver, Dakota, Scott, Washington	22%	6%	22%	15%
Two-county Metro: Hennepin, Ramsey	32%	6%	32%	20%

The workforce participation goals for state construction contractors were last adjusted for people of color in 2012 for the seven-county Twin Cities Metropolitan area. The goals are an important tool in eliminating explicit and implicit barriers in recruiting, training and retaining talent across the state. Over the past five years, contractors, unions and community partners in construction have made tremendous gains in providing equal employment opportunities and these goals seek to build on that progress.

“Despite recent progress in eliminating bias, barriers to workforce entry still remain for women and people of color in Minnesota,” said Commissioner Kevin Lindsey. “The Department has seen tremendous strides by construction contractors, trades and labor unions over the past five years. In increasing the goals for women and people of color throughout Minnesota, we have the opportunity to build upon the recent work of launching careers, creating economic opportunities, and dismantling barriers to entry. These are ambitious yet achievable goals, as we work to build the most inclusive and best construction workforce in the Nation.”

2017 Workforce Goals built on a Foundation of Consistent Increases

Workforce participation goals apply to all construction contracts over \$100,000 entered into by the Metropolitan Sports Facility Authority, Metropolitan Council, Metropolitan Airports Commission, Metropolitan Mosquito Control Commission and the State of Minnesota on or after July 17, 2017.

Since 2012, when workforce participation goals were increased from 11 to 32 percent for people of color in Hennepin and Ramsey Counties, workforce participation rates for people of color increased from 11 to 28 percent. Similarly, when goals were increased to 22 percent in the counties of Anoka, Carver, Dakota, Scott and Washington, contractors increased participation for people of color from 11 to 18 percent.

Successful projects such as the US Bank Stadium and the State Capitol restoration have met or exceeded workforce participation goals. The US Bank Stadium project reached workforce participation of 37 percent for people of color and 9 percent for women. The Minnesota State Capitol exterior restoration and preservation project exceeded workforce participation goals with 34.89 percent for people of color and 21 percent workforce participation for women with 80 percent of these workers still working in the industry.

Achieving success was a collaborative intentional effort since the 2012 workforce participation goals were implemented. MDHR worked with unions, contractors, and the bid award agencies to increase workforce participation through best practices in human resources. Recently, MDHR released the [“Building an Inclusive Workforce for All”](#) report on the efforts of contractors. The report offers strategies on the importance of senior management’s commitment, the vital role of analyzing its workforce and communicating progress to management to recruit, train and retain talent, engaging community partners and expanding opportunities for people with disabilities.

“I thank and recognize the efforts of construction contractors, our workers, the labor community, the education community, the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development, the Minnesota Department of Labor and Industry, the Minnesota Department of Transportation, Minnesota Department of Corrections and the Metropolitan Council,” Commissioner Lindsey said. “Your efforts have set a foundation to build a diverse workforce that will best serve our citizens and continue economic prosperity of the state.”

Demographic Shifts

The increased workforce participation goals more closely align with changing demographics in Minnesota's workforce. Minnesota's future workforce is growing more diverse each year. With 33 percent of the children in Minnesota's public schools identifying as students of color, 43 percent of Minnesota students in the seven-county metro area identifying as a person of color and 19 percent of all the students in Greater Minnesota identifying as a person of color, ensuring equal employment opportunities is critical to the sustainability of Minnesota's economy. Additionally, the percentage of working age adults is expected to decrease from 63 to 57 percent by 2030.

Currently, Minnesota employers have more than 100,000 open positions. In 2016, there were 5,671 openings in the construction industry, according to Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development. Employers without inclusive hiring practices will be at a competitive disadvantage as more than one in five Minnesotans will be over 65 years old and 43 percent of the Twin Cities metropolitan area will identify as a person of color in 15 years.

MDHR provides resources and technical assistance for contractors on its [website](#). The [2017 Workforce Goals Report](#) that was designed specifically with key information and resources for contractors to strengthen and stabilize their existing workforce is available as well as information on a webinar series specifically designed for those interested in the 2017 Workforce Participation Goals. The next webinar, [Strengthening and Diversifying Minnesota's Workforce](#), is scheduled for 2 p.m. on July 24.

If you need further information regarding workforce inclusion, workforce goals or workforce certificates, you can contact MDHR's Contract Compliance at 651.296.1283, toll-free at 800.657.3704 or online at mn.gov/mdhr/certificates. Visit mn.gov/mdhr for more information or follow the conversation on Twitter at [@mnhumanrights](https://twitter.com/mnhumanrights).

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